

## **221109-4 Jos 23, Joshua Warns the Nations to Cleave to the LORD—CThurman**

In chapter 22 it had become evident to Joshua that the time had come for the tribes that have inherited land on the eastern side of the Jordan River to return to their inheritance. They had satisfied the arrangement that they had made with Moses, to help their brethren take possession of the land of Canaan. (cf. Nu.32) So Joshua dismissed Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh's men of war to return to their families and possessions. But before they crossed the Jordan River they erected a large altar. Then word began to spread among the ten tribes about this altar, but the purpose for it was misunderstood by them all. It was thought that the altar was a way of saying that the tribes east of Jordan were turning from following the LORD to serve Him their own way. Therefore the tribes of Canaan feared that such a breach in the nation to rebel against the LORD would result in the LORD laying His hand of judgment upon them all. So, as a prelude to war Israel sent Phinehas and one prince from each tribe to warn them to repent or be destroyed. It was then that the purpose for this altar was clarified. First, the pattern or form of the altar is not such that burnt offerings and sacrifices should be offered upon it. (v.18) And second, it was an Ed. It was only meant to be a witness to the succeeding generations of Israel that the eastern tribes have a part with the western tribes to sacrifice to the LORD wherever the tabernacle is raised. By this civil war was averted.

### **Chapter 23**

**1 ¶ And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest**

*had given rest*, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb נָאַח, noo-ach,  
*to rest, to cease, to lay, to set down, to set, to become confederate.*

***unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.***

Included in this idea of rest is confederacy. Israel had become united together in the conflict against their enemies to take the land of Canaan. Though the tribes of Israel had differences they were united in a common goal. They had differing lands to dwell in and as a result had differing vocations; some fishing, some agricultural, some mining, some rock

quarries, some timber, etc., etc., etc. They each had their own enemies to combat, but they were united in that they were to abide faithful to the word of God and engaging the enemy through conflict.

Though there are necessary differences between us we should be united in a common goal to glorify Christ, to edify this church, to help and love one another to the end that we are all conformed to the image of the Son of God. Though we work different jobs, face different trials, vary in upbringing experiences, vary in gifts to serve Christ in this body, we should be agreed in the goal of all that we do.

**2 And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and**  
to to its to its

***for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them,***  
to its                            to its

## ***I am old and stricken in age:***

*elders, an adj., ئەزىز, zah-qeyn, tss. aged, old, ancient men.*

*heads*, a masc. noun שָׁרֵךְ, rōhsh, tss. *a head, the top, a captain.*

*judges, the verb פָּתַח, shah-pat, to judge, to rule, to execute.*

*officers, the verb שָׁתַּר, shah-tar, to officiate, to oversee, to rule; cf. 1.10; 3.2; 8.33; 23.2; 24.1.*

So, Joshua calls all the men that have some capacity to lead the nation in their varying offices to assemble to him. In this chapter the place where they were to assemble is not revealed, but because of the tone in which this chapter ends, stating the blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience, Shechem is likely the city where Joshua assembles them. For this refer to Jos.24.1.

Shechem is located between mounts Ebal and Gerizim, respectively the mount of cursing to the north and Gerizim, the mount of blessing to the south.

**3 And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you.**

*that hath fought*, Niphal (simple pass.) part. of the verb **לָחֶם**, lah-cham, tss. *to fight, to eat, to devour, to overcome, to war, to prevail;* vss. 3, 10.

There is no question that Israel was personally involved in the fight against their enemies, but it was the LORD that gave them the victory. Israel believed God and God blessed their faith with success. Israel could have fought the same battles in their own strength, but without the LORD it would have been a vain exercise regardless if they had met with success or failure. When Israel believed in God, when he obeyed the word of the LORD He fought for them. Faith works.

Listen, the children of God have jobs to work, families to provide for, substance to maintain, while being a witness for Christ in a dark, dark world, but for lack of faith, trust, obedience, putting Him first, fighting against the enemy that is in us and outside of us He will not prosper us in the battle, the spiritual battle. The more we try to fight in our own strength and by our own way we'll lose ground, until we give it over to Him. Until we are willing to put Christ first the Lord will not help us fight. But when we yield to Him He begins to shine upon us and water the good soil of the heart so that it begins to bear fruit. We are all learning to trust the Lord more and to put Him before and above everything else. In this life it will never be without trouble. But by His grace He will prosper us.

*Mr 10.28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.*

*29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,*

**30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.**

*persecutions*, διωγμός, a noun and always tss. with the English *persecution*; the verb διώκω, is tss. *to persecute, to follow, to follow after, to suffer persecution, to be pressed, to ensure.*

The Lord will bless us but it will always be accompanied with some sort of trouble, some sort of pressure. That's the present, temporal experience of the child of God at this time.

**4 Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.**

(the Mediterranean Sea)

What an interesting statement! The LORD divided to Israel by lot these nations that remain. Every tribe has their own peculiar enemy to fight. Their enemies constituted a part of the lot the LORD divided to them. Notice that the LORD has *cut off* their power against them, but not eradicated them. Let's think of this in terms of the child of God, the NT Christian and the nature to sin that remains in us even though we have come to Christ by faith. The LORD has chosen to leave within every child of God his own enemy just as the LORD left among every tribe their own enemy to war against. Did you notice that? Every tribe of Israel had their own enemy to fight against. Perhaps a highlander, lowlander, a valley dweller, or in the plains. (cf. Jos.13.13; Jud.1.19-34)

Like this the child of God has remaining in him a nature against which he must wage a continual battle against for as long as he is in this *body of sin*. (cf. Ro.6.6) That nature or inclination to sin differs from child to child as far the *kinds* of sins he might be particularly attracted to and to what *extent* he is inclined to them, but the nature to sin is present in them all. Every child of God has to war against this bent to sin. It is the common experience to

them all. Every enemy which Israel warred against in the land of Canaan was related to the other. Yes, different enemies in one sense of the word yet at the same they are all related, there is an unbroken enmity against Israel. The enemies of Israel were all Canaanites, or of the children of Canaan, son of Ham, son of Noah. Let's turn to ...

*Gen.10.6 ¶ And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.*

...

*15 ¶ And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,*

*16 And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite,*

*17 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,*

*18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.*

*19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.*

The LORD left the enemies of His people there in Canaanland as their portion. And the LORD has left for us enemies also against which we must fight. Particularly I think of the inward enemy; the *enemy within*, the presence of sin, the sin nature, not sin, but the inclination to sin. I think it is true that the LORD gave the enemies as Israel's lot as a disciplinary means, to prove them.

*Jud.3.1 ¶ Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them (similar wording in v.3), even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; (Those of Israel not involved in the original conflict would be proved by these nations.)*

*2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; (In other words every succeeding generation of Israel is to learn to war against the enemy [understanding, until the LORD is pleased to eradicate the enemy altogether].)*

*3 Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath.*

*4 And they (these nations) were to prove Israel by them* (same as verse 1, meaning, by their continued presence among the Israelites.), *to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.*

Parallel to this one man wrote that our old nature is left in us as a disciplinary measure to teach us to trust God through this inner conflict.

'The Bible has ... isolated the germ called sin, identifying it as the fallen nature received from Adam. This nature remains in the individual even after God has saved him, as we learn from 1John 1:8, "If we up and say that we are not constantly having sin (the evil nature), ourselves we are deceiving, and the truth is not in us." God, in salvation breaks the power of this sinful nature over the believer, but leaves it in him as a disciplinary measure. When the believer refuses its behests, and says a point blank NO to it, he glorifies God, defeats Satan, and grows in spiritual strength and stature. If the believer expects to gain consistent victory over this nature, he must know two things: first, what God has done in his inner being with regard to that nature; and second, what adjustments it is necessary for him to make in relation to it. *Kenneth Wuest, vol.3, Great Truths to Live By, pp.76,77*

As Israel learned to war against the enemy they found they had the victory. And so it is for the child of God. We do not have to be dominated by sin any longer.

***5 And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.***

***6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;***

What is this but to abide, continue, dwell, endure, remain, stand, tarry in the truths of the word of God. (the Greek tss. for the verb μένω.)

**7 That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:**

**8 But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.**

follow hard, follow close

abide fast, stick

*cleave*, Qal pret. of the verb **דָּקַת**, dah-vaq, also tss. *to join together, to follow hard, to stick to, to keep to, to abide fast, to keep fast, to follow close.*

Israel was to believe God and be proactive against their enemies, unwilling to give them an inch of ground. It doesn't say how long that they were to do this, but as they continued in faith the time would come when the LORD would fully eradicate from the land every enemy. In the meantime fail and suffer judgment. Obey and the LORD would strengthen.

Joshua essentially says, Look at all what the LORD has done for the measure of faith you have shown to this day. Keep on keeping on!

**9 For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong:**

disinherited

cast out

*for ... hath driven out*, Hiphil (causative act.) pret. of the verb **שָׁרַשׁ**, yah-rash, *to possess, to succeed, to enjoy, to inherit, to drive out, to expel, to consume, to drive you, to cast out*, and so also the idea of *to disinherit*; vss. 5, 13.

*strong*, the adj. **גָּאֶזְעָם**, [g]ah-tzoom, tss. *mighty, strong*.

**but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.**  
in your own sight

*hath been able to stand*, Qal pret. of the verb **שָׁמַד**, [g]ah-mad, *to stand, to stay, to remain, to continue, to withstand, to stand up, to endure, to stand still, to be present.*

*before you*, the masc. pl. noun **פְנֵיכֶם**, pah-neem, lit. *with your faces, in the sight of*; Ez.20.43; 36.31, *in your own sight.*

The enemy has been disinherited, cast out. Sihon and Og defeated. Many a giant has fallen. None of which was possible apart from faith in God.

**10 One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, put to flight**

*shall chase*, Qal fut. of the verb **רָהַדְתִּי**, rah-daph, tss. *to pursue, to follow, to chase, to persecute, to put to flight.*

It doesn't make any sense, but this is what the LORD will do through you if you'll trust Him.

**he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.**  
wars, prevails

*that fighteth*, Niphal (simple pass.) part. of the verb **לֹחֵם**, lah-cham, tss. *to fight, to eat, to devour, to overcome, to war, to prevail*; vss. 3, 10.

**11 ¶ Take good heed therefore unto yourselves,**  
Be very or greatly, or exceeding watchful, ware

*take ... heed therefore*, Niphal (simple pass.) pret. of the verb **שָׁמַר**, shah-mar, tss. *to keep, to observe, to take heed, to wait, to watch, to mark, to preserve, to lay wait for, to save, to beware, to be circumspect.*

*good*, the masc. noun **מְאֹד**, m<sup>e</sup>-ōhd, *very, greatly, exceeding, etc.*

**that**                    ***ye love the LORD your God.***  
to purpose

*that ye love*, a Qal infin. of the verb **חָבַךְ**, ah-hav, tss. *to love, to like, to be friends of, to be lovers of* (cf. 2Ti.3.4).

*Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

It takes very little to become dulled and cold to love the Lord. It takes purpose to keep ourselves in the love of God.

**12 Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:**

**13 Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.**

So if Israel turns from their love of God to cleave to their enemies, to become intimate partakers with them, to turn after their gods their circumstance is in no way improved. One would think that when they make peace with their enemies that Israel might find relief. But not so. The enemy will not love them, will not help and comfort them. Rather they will seek to have dominion over them to gain the advantage. Since the LORD called Israel to be His chosen, natural people they could never be to their enemies what they used to be, nor could their enemies ever be what they were to Israel. The two cannot be reconciled. The same is true to the child of God. Since faith in Christ the child of God will never be the same to the world and the world to him. That is absolutely impossible. Try as we do sometimes, we will never fit in with the world since we have come to faith in Christ.

*Ga 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

The only way to be blessed is to follow hard after Christ with the whole heart, soul, mind and strength. Whatever we do, let it be done for the glory of God. Be a Christian father, son, mother, daughter, friend, brother, student, master, or servant.

**14 And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth:**

Joshua is saying that the time of his death was nearing.

*1Ki.2.1 ¶ Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,  
2 I go the way of all the earth ... (cf. He.9.27)*

***and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you;***

*hath failed, Qal pret. of the verb נָפַל, nah-phal, tss. to fall, to die, to perish, to fail, to fall down, to fall away, to overthrow, etc.*

***all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.***

***15 Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.***

*he have destroyed you, a Hiphil (causative act.) infin. of the verb נָמַד, shah-mad, tss. to destroy, to perish, to overthrow, to bring to nought.*

***16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.***

Joshua says, See how the LORD has blessed you for obedience, so shall he destroy you for disobedience.

Our Lord blesses His children when they are obedient, and he certainly chastens them for sin.

*1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

But not all chastening is on account of sin. But all chastening is to make us partakers of His holiness.

*Heb 12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

One last time Joshua will summons these same men, the men of the various offices in the nation to Shechem, the last chapter of this book, chapter 24.