

Monday Week 20 Conquest of Canaan

Q77 How were the Children of Israel able to take Jericho?

A. When they shouted, the walls of Jericho fell down.

Bible Reading: Joshua 6:17-21, 25

When a large building needs to be demolished, a special crew is hired. They will put explosives throughout the building and hook wires to the explosives. On the day the building is to be blown up, they will make sure no one is in it. At the right time, the wires will be connected to electricity. There will be a loud “boom!” and the building will fall in on itself. It takes careful planning to destroy a building without harming other buildings around it.

They didn’t need dynamite to destroy the walls of Jericho. Instead, they marched around the city. Then they sounded trumpets and shouted. At the shout, the walls came down. God brought the walls down. Remember Rahab? She had a scarlet cord in her window. She was to be saved from destruction. Her house was saved even though the rest of the wall was destroyed. God knew how to protect her because she had faith in Him. He will protect us also as we trust in Him.

Thinking Deeper

One characteristic of the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings of Israel that cannot be overlooked is the divine intervention on behalf of the Hebrews. The instances are overwhelming: ten plagues, Red Sea parting, pillars of cloud and fire, manna from heaven, water from the rock, Jordan River dividing, Jericho’s walls falling. Candidly, these events have no natural explanations. They were obviously supernatural.

You can be an unbeliever and contend that the whole business is made up – the Exodus is nothing but a tale. Or you can believe that God is God and that miracles – either large or small – are part of His intervention in the world. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God” (Heb. 11:3). If we have that bottom line, then we should have no trouble believing in other lesser miracles, like the Exodus. Furthermore we should then have no trouble believing that God can deliver a sinner from his sins and make him a saint. Those who have eyes that are opened see it all the time.

Tuesday Week 20 Conquest of Canaan

Bible Reading: Joshua 7:1-12

Q 78 Why did Israel flee from their enemies at Ai?

A. Israel fled because there was sin in the camp.

“I can beat you at wrestling anytime,” a boy said to his younger brother. He was sure he was stronger than his smaller brother. But one day he came down with the flu. He wanted to spend all day in his bed. Could he wrestle his brother now? No. He could hardly walk without feeling dizzy. He sure couldn’t wrestle his brother, and if he would have tried he would have certainly lost. His trouble was that his own body was being attacked from inside by the flu virus. It took most of his strength to fight off the flu. He didn’t have any strength left to wrestle anyone else.

After Israel defeated Jericho, they felt strong. They thought that the little city of Ai would not be hard to beat. What they didn’t count on was the weakness that came on them because of sin. God was their strength when they fought Jericho. But this time sin was hidden in their camp. God didn’t give them strength. So they ran away from the enemy.

We can’t be strong in the fight with the devil if we have sin in our hearts. God will not bless us until we repent.

Thinking Deeper

Scandals seem to be part of the national landscape these days. In recent times scandals have reached the levels of political power from President of the United States to Senators, Representatives, Governors and mayors. Why has there been so little preaching to these issues from the church? Think about it: on the religious front priests, preachers, and parishioners have been involved in scandals. The church at large seems to have little to say to the world on the subject of scandals and moral failure. When the church is so drenched with sin, it has little position to deal with the world.

In those classic tales of the knights and gallantry, Sir Galahad is quoted as saying, "My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure," It takes a man with a pure heart to stand for truth and virtue. The compromised in heart and actions will be ineffective in dealing with the sins of the age. Achan in pulpit and pew rob the church of its strength in the battle for glory and virtue. Several years ago one of the nation’s most influential daily newspapers was quoted as lamenting that “when we need the church the most, we find it is just like us.”

Unless we as the church want to be “cast out and trampled under foot of men,” we must regain the position of being “salt with savor.”

Wednesday Week 20 Conquest of Canaan

Bible Reading: Joshua 7:19-25

Q 79 How did Joshua deal with sin?

A. He found the sinner and punished the sin.

Rod was saving money in a small box. When he wanted to spend it, he would take out the coins and use them. But he didn't bother taking out the pennies. After while, he noticed that his jar was full of pennies. Rod knew he couldn't buy much with pennies. He also knew that his brother Rob was saving dimes in his box. So Rod took both boxes and hid under the steps, where he switched his pennies for Rob's dimes. Then he put Rod's box back where it belonged. For the next several days Rod was able to buy things again. But one day his brother Rob decided he had saved up enough dimes to buy what he had been saving for. When he opened his box, instead of dimes he found pennies. For some reason he immediately knew what had happened. He went right to Rod. Needless to say, Rod paid dearly for his actions.

When Joshua realized that there was sin in the camp, he didn't wait to deal with it. He found out who had sinned. Achan had stolen things that were supposed to be given to God and buried them in his tent. Joshua found out and punished Achan for his sin. We can't get away with sin. Sin will be punished.

Thinking Deeper

Sin is not always punished swiftly as it was in Achan's case. Many people who are very blatant sinners live long lives and seemingly don't pay for their sins. The psalmist considered this and it almost made him lose his faith. "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Ps. 73:3,4). What are we to think when evil people triumph and seem to enjoy the evils of sin and don't reap its fearful consequences?

For one thing, we don't really know what goes on in their lives behind closed doors. The college community surrounding Penn State University is affluent. It is also marked by great tolerance for "alternative lifestyles" (translate that to mean sin). There is a sense of aloofness to spiritual things in that community. Yet, these intellectual elites have issues beneath the surface. One Christian man found that family troubles in that community were rife. Homes of these university types were marked by dysfunction. Their children were rebels, addicts or drop-outs. Pride and affluence masked the reality of heartache and spiritual poverty.

Another truth must also be factored in. These so-called elites will one day stand before God and give an account of their lives to Him. What will be their defense when they stand before Him who has said He "resists the proud but gives grace to the humble?" That is what finally brought the psalmist to his senses when he thought this over. "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castest them down into destruction" (Ps. 73:17, 18).

Don't envy the wicked. Their day in court is coming.

Thursday Week 20 Conquest of Canaan

Bible Reading: Joshua 11:15-25

Q 80 How much of the land did Joshua take?

A. Joshua took all the land that the Lord told him to take.

On September 16, 1893 an amazing thing happened on the border of Oklahoma. Thousands of people were stationed along that border, waiting for a signal. Right at noon, the sound of a gun started a race. It was a race for land. People raced into Oklahoma and staked a claim to land if they got there first. The race for land became known as the Oklahoma Land Rush.* When people came to land they liked, they could claim it and then begin to settle the land.

Actually, that was only one of several times the government allowed people to race for land in Oklahoma. Some of the people went in before the race and staked a claim. People from Oklahoma are sometimes called “Sooners,” nicknamed after those people who got there too soon.

The land God promised to Israel was divided among the twelve tribes. But first they had to conquer the land. Years before, God had promised Abraham this land. The Lord was with Joshua as he took all the land God told him to take.

*“The Oklahoma Land Rush of 1893,” Eyewitness to History, www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (2006).

Thinking Deeper

Christians often speak about going deeper with God. After coming into God’s family there is a lot for a new Christian to learn. The follower of Jesus is to learn all the things Jesus taught the disciples. The experience of the new birth is the beginning. Letting God have control of a person’s heart, soul, mind and strength is the foundation for building a life that is pleasing to God. The conquest of the whole person for God is the goal of Christian discipleship.

Israel’s conquest of Canaan is a picture of the Christian’s conquest of his life. There are places to be conquered, areas to be cleared out, thinking to be changed, actions to be altered, motives to be purified. It is the transformation of the whole person that is the challenge. These things take time. Sanctification is both crisis and process. A Christian yielding his will completely to God is foundational to the ongoing process of conforming him to the image of Christ. When the Holy Spirit fills the heart of the believer, that believer is at the beginning of seeing ongoing changes, “from glory to glory,” in his whole life.

Israel was in the Promised Land when they had all the conquests before them. We gain much by being filled with the Spirit, but the conquest continues. Don’t be discouraged when you see new ground to gain. It is God’s purpose to continue His work in us, to make us more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Friday

Week 20 Conquest of Canaan

Review the Week's Questions

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Q 80 How much of the land did Joshua take?

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A young boy got in trouble for being disobedient. His dad gave him a whipping for what he had done.

"You don't love me," whined the boy.

The dad was quiet for a moment. Then he said, "That's not true. I gave you a spanking because I love you too much to allow you to be disobedient."

The father had read the proverb that says "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes[from time to time]" (Pro. 13:24).

God brought punishment to Israel when there was sin in the camp. He wanted them to come back to Him. If they had nothing happen to them, they would not know how wrong they were to disobey. Israel did what they needed to do. They got rid of the sin.

God will bless us as we turn our hearts to Him.

Thinking Deeper

God was with Israel when they crossed the Jordan and took Jericho. But when there was sin in the camp, God withdrew His help and the people fled before their enemies. However, God did not abandon them. When they uncovered their sin and dealt with it, the Lord blessed their efforts again. There were able to continue their conquest of the Promised Land.

There are two applications of this that we must not overlook. First, we cannot afford to countenance hidden sin. It is surely to bring defeat, destruction and desolation. Whole churches have felt the chastening rod of God as a result of covering over secret sin. There is reason to believe that some Christian businessmen have lost God's favor in their business because they countenance secret sins that they have "buried under their tent." Every Christian must honestly live his life, in the open and in secret, with the constant awareness that "thou, Lord, seest me."

Second, we must not despair when sin is found out. Deal with it. Make the necessary reproofs and corrections. One has said that God does not bless a man based on where he is, but on the direction in which he is headed. "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." Then continue to take the land that God has laid before you.

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