

A Time To Remember and A Time To Forget.

Joshua 12.

Sunday evening, May 30, 2010.

I. A milestone to be remembered.

- A. At this time in Israel's history, after about 25 years of warfare, they have conquered enough of the promised land so that they can take an important break from the warfare. As Ch. 11:23 states: "Then the land rested from war."
- B. In Ch. 13:1 the Lord says to Joshua that there remains very much land as yet to be possessed. Obviously then the task of conquering the promised land was not finished as yet. So why give the land a rest from war at this time?

Two important reasons may be cited:

1. In Deut. 7:22 the method of conquest is given. The Lord will give the promised land to His people "little by little." They were not numerous enough to fill the whole promised land all at once. They had to multiply and so grow into the promised land. by destroying the natives of the land all at once a vacuum would be created in which the wild beasts of the earth would get the upper hand.
2. The women and children and the elderly and infirm had now lived in the base camp at Gilgal for 25 years. No rebellion or murmuring had broken out. Perhaps the nation had learned some lessons from their parents' generation. Patiently they had waited on the Lord for the day that they would receive their inheritance in the land.
 - Remember here that at the time they failed to enter into the promised land all those who were over 20 yrs old were promised that they would die in the wilderness over the course of the next 40 yrs.
 - That means that the oldest Israelites who got to cross over the Jordan and enter the land under Joshua were 60 yrs old.
 - Some 25 yrs have gone by since that day, making the oldest residents at the base camp in Gilgal some 85 yrs. old. And the Lord will not allow this generation to die out without letting them see their inheritance in the promised land.
 - Enough of the land has now been conquered that Joshua can divide it up among the tribes, giving each their allotted inheritance.
 - Besides, Joshua himself is getting advanced in years. He is now about 100 yrs old, and he will live to 110. The work of bringing Israel into her inheritance had been given to Joshua, and as such it falls to him to divide up the land between the tribes.
 - It would not be until the days of David that Israel would receive all her promised inheritance.

Application:

See here how slow the work of grace can be as measured against our senses. Along with that see the wonderful wisdom of patience that this generation of Israelites did master, and the goodness of God that did not allow this generation to pass away from the earth without seeing the blessing of their earthly inheritance. And yet that earthly inheritance

was only a type and figure of their enduring and heavenly inheritance which the Messiah would secure for them.

II. It is a time to remember.

- A. Why the long list of 31 kings? Passages like these can be so boring for us to read. Remember what Israel is doing at this time. The land is resting from war, and Joshua is embarking on dividing up the land, giving to each tribe its allotment. It is a time to remember; a time to reflect on the mighty acts of God during the battles of the past 25 years.
- B. It is time to remember and reflect on the words of God given to Moses in passages like Deut. 7. where He foretold what it would be like to conquer the promised land. A time to see how all that the Lord foretold came to pass and how God was faithful to perform all He had promised.
- C. Such remembering and reflecting builds our faith, and it draws us close to the heart of God. It enlivens within us holy desires to walk with Him and to serve Him even all the days of our life.
- D. To aid future generations in the important duty of remembering many monuments were erected during the conquest; also Israel's calendar centered around commemorating important events in her history
- E. There is great grace and glory in the performance of the work of remembering: "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips; when I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on You in the night watches." Psalm 63:5,6.

IV. It is also a time to forget.

- A. Times of remembrance are also times to renew our commitment to, and determination to follow the Lord.
- B. Doing so also means that we choose to forget... and to remember no more... Not because we can't, but because we choose not to.
- C. "No man, putting his hand on the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62. But what are we to forget and not look back to?
 - 1. Remember how Israel in the wilderness looked back and remembered the leeks and the onions and the garlic and the fish of Egypt. With longing hearts they thought back to the days that they could eat those things to their hearts content while the Lord provided only the boring manna in the wilderness.
 - 2. Many a time they sighed and said: "If only we had stayed in Egypt." Or "If only we had died in Egypt."
 - 3. The woman who constantly looks back to the good times she had with former boyfriends is not fit to enter into married life.
 - 4. Remember the Apostle Paul reciting a list of credits and accomplishments he had in Judaism? And then he regards them all as refuse; he chooses to remember them no more so that he might have Christ. Phil. 3:4-9.
 - 5. In writing to the Corinthians Paul cites a list of his sufferings a number of times as in 2 Cor. 4:8-11; 6:4-10 and 11:23-29. Yet in writing to the Romans he says that he considers such sufferings not worthy of being remembered in light of the glory that is to be revealed in the Lord's children.