

Staying on Track.

Joshua 23:1-11.

Sunday evening, October 10, 2010.

I. The occasion.

- A. Joshua is now old and he senses that the time of his departure is at hand. He calls Israel together, presumably at Shiloh where the tabernacle stood, so that he might address the nation one more time. That is what the final two chapters in the book of Joshua are all about.
- B. Joshua looks ahead and he senses the danger of upcoming generations forgetting all that the Lord did for Israel, forsaking the ways of the Lord, and in so doing making themselves liable to the covenant curses clearly set forth in the Lord's covenant with Israel. Deut. 28:1-14 for the covenant blessings and 15-68 for the covenant curses.
- C. In his address to the leaders Joshua seeks to set a course before them that, if heeded to, would prevent such a thing from ever happening.
- D. The principles set forth by Joshua are instructive for the covenant people of God of all times and places, for the dangers of forgetting and forsaking the right ways of the Lord are present in all times and places.

II. Some truths that under gird this passage.

- A. There was no way that Israel could stop being the covenant people of God. They could not resign from the position and choose to be like other heathen nations which did not know God, and with whom God had no covenant dealings.
- B. This also meant that there was no way for Israel to get out from under the consequences of God's covenant. Not the blessings, but not the curses either.
- C. There is a direct application of this truth to those who join themselves to the covenant people of God, and then, for one reason or another they fall away. We do not have the luxury of giving the Lord a "bill of divorce," and be done with Him. If we attempt to do so, the covenant curses go into effect. Here is the reason why in our earthly relations we may not be casual about divorce; it is because it is a reflection on the Lord's covenant with us.
- D. Peter, in speaking of such people, says that the end of such is worse than their beginning, and that it would have been better for them never have known the way of righteousness, rather than, having known it to turn away from it. 2 Peter 2:20,21.
- E. A similar truth applies to our covenant children who turn away from the Lord. They too make themselves liable to the covenant curses in doing so.
- D. There is a broader application of this truth to the nations of the earth. In the preaching of the gospel, God's covenant, like a blanket is being pulled over the nations and peoples, and they become liable to its blessings and curses. In New Covenant times the kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Revelation 11:15.
The Father, in the resurrection of His Son, and His ascension, says to Him: "You are My son; today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as Your possession." He

goes on to say: “You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Psalm 2:7-9. This goes to show us that the nations also are not their own, but that they have become liable to the covenant blessing and curses of God’s covenant as the Lord reclaims the earth as His own.

III. Four principles outlined by Joshua.

- A. Resolve to Remember. Vs. 3. “You have seen all that the Lord has done...”
1. This was one of the purposes of Israel’s great religious festivals.
It also was the purpose behind the observance of the holidays of the Christian Church, (Christmas; Good Friday; Easter; Ascension Day and Pentecost.)
 2. More than that, we should familiarize ourselves with, and bring to remembrance the things Jesus began to do and to teach from the days of John the Baptist on forward. Here we have the heart of our God and father revealed to us.
 3. In addition to this we should call to remembrance the things Jesus continued to do, from the right hand of the Father, and through His church, in the book of Acts.
 4. To grasp something of the significance of these events we should remember God’s covenant dealings with His people in Old Testament times.
Here we see something of the importance of the concept of Christian Education.
- B. Continue with Courage. Vs. 6. “Therefore be very courageous...”
1. Courageous because you will face enemies within and without; enemies that seem much stronger than we; enemies which discourage us and de-spirit us.
Even enemies from among your own family and friends as did Joshua and Caleb once they returned from spying out the promised land.
 2. Courage, not in yourself, but in the Lord; He will fight your battles for you.
 3. Courage which has as a goal to continue to walk faithfully with the Lord and in the paths He has outlined before us, without deviating from it.
- C. Flee and Forget. Vs. 7 “You shall not make mention of the name of their gods”
There are things that we were meant to flee from and forget.
1. The former idols and the many lovers of our hearts the which we spent all our time with and we did our devotions before them.
 2. Forget, not because we can’t remember them, but because we choose not to pay them any further attention.
 3. The same way in which the Lord doesn’t remember our sins anymore. It’s not that He can’t remember them, but, having been dealt with in the cross of Christ, He chooses not to dwell on them any further.
- D. Love Lavishly. Vs. 11. “Take careful heed... that you love the Lord your God.”
1. Seek Him out as your chief treasure.
 2. Set your heart on Him first and foremost.
 3. Guard against other illicit lovers lurking about in your soul. Set them aside and choose to remember them no more.
 4. Humbly take your position next to the Lord Jesus Christ as He “sanctified Himself on our behalf” John 17:19. So let us do the same with Him, and set ourselves apart to those we may minister to in His Name.