

Sermon Outline

“AND THE LORD GAVE THEM REST”: A CHRISTIAN READING OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

THE LORD HAS GIVEN ALL THE LAND (JOSHUA 2:22-24)

I. Introduction

II. The Spies Hide in the Hills (Joshua 2:22)

III. The Spies Return to the Israelite Camp (Joshua 2:23)

- A. After three days of hiding, the spies return to the Israelite camp.
- B. The geographic territory is seen in the description of the spies’ journey back.
 - 1. They “came down from the hills.”
 - 2. They “passed over” the Jordan.
- C. The spies report all that had happened to Joshua.
- D. The absence of any disapproval toward the treaty with Rahab shows that Joshua may have approved of the treaty.
- E. If so, this implies that Joshua did not interpret God’s command to destroy the people of Canaan (Dt 7:2) in an inflexible way. He did not interpret God’s command to destroy the Canaanites so inflexibly as to mean that even repentant Canaanites had to be destroyed.
- F. Until judgment comes, there is always time to return to God, who abundantly forgives.

***Questions for reflection:** Joshua seems to have approved of the treaty that was made with Rahab. This implies that Joshua did not interpret God’s command to destroy the Canaanites to mean that even repentant Canaanites had to be destroyed. What does this tell us about God’s character?

IV. The Lord Has Given the Land (Joshua 2:24)

V. Meditations on the Lord as Giver of the Land

- A. The statement—“the LORD has given all the land into our hands”—is a very important one. It holds the key message of the book of Joshua.

- B. It has already appeared **eight** times prior to 2:24.
1. 1:2: “Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them...”
 2. 1:3: “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses.”
 3. 1:10: “...within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.”
 4. 1:15: “until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as he has to you...”
 5. 1:15: “and they also take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them...”
 6. 1:15: “Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan...”
 7. 2:9: “I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us...”
 8. 2:14: “Our life for yours even to death! If you do not tell this business of ours, then when the LORD gives us the land we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”
- C. The fact that this statement occurs so many times should tell us that God’s agenda for the book of Joshua rests in this truth.
- D. Let’s take some time now to really soak in these words: *What is it that our heavenly Father wants us to learn when he says, “the LORD has given all the land into our hands”?* He wants us to learn that...
1. He is the all-powerful God (Isa 40:15; Ex 15:1, 15:3; Ps 115:3).
—Therefore, we must be in awe of God.
 2. He is the all-sovereign God (Ps 24:1-2; 104:3-5; Josh 3:11).
 - a. God has the moral and legal right to exercise his strength over the lands.
 - b. This right is rooted in the fact that he is the Creator of the Universe (Gen 1:1; Ps 24:1-2).
 3. He is the One who defines how we live on his earth (Gen 18:20; 19).
 - a. Because he is the All-Creator, God is the supreme Landlord.
 - b. God has the right to impose terms as to how we should live in his universe.
 - c. God’s right to impose his laws on nations explains why God can punish Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19) and now Canaan.

- d. The land-lordship of YHWH is a basis of universal moral law: One divine Landlord, therefore one divine moral standard for all nations.
- 4. He is the Father of his people.
 - a. God directs his raw power, his lordship to the good of his chosen people.
 - b. As a father provides for his own, God gives land to his people to live, to thrive, and to build a holy civilization that is just and prosperous.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What are four truths that can be gained from “the LORD has given all the land into our hands”? (2) Why does God have the moral and legal right to rule over the lands? What is the basis for this right? (3) “...since there is only one God, then righteousness also has to be one; meaning that there is not one standard of righteousness here in Asia and another standard for Africa, but that there are rules of righteousness that are applicable everywhere.” Do you agree? (4) How does the Lord’s giving of the land show that he is the Father of his people?

VI. A People in Waiting

Although Israel would eventually forfeit the land by disobedience, the promise of the land still stands for all of God’s people. But this is the Gospel: Through the perfect obedience of our Lord Jesus, God has ensured that his people will possess the land forever, no more to be lost to sin. This land will cover not just Canaan but the whole earth. God has always meant for his people to possess the whole world.

But until the time of our possession comes, we must continue to wait on our God. This means trusting in God’s strength, lordship, and loving Fatherhood, no matter what contradictory data the World may present to us. This means staying holy, and not going back into the World.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) On what grounds will Christians inherit the earth? (2) What does God expect of us as we wait for the day of our conquest? (3) What does it mean to trust in “God’s strength, lordship, and loving Fatherhood, no matter what contradictory data the World may present to us”? (4) What does it mean to stay holy and not go back to the World?

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