

GT-4 Contents, 5 pgs

INTRODUCTION, from JFH

Chap.1 discusses **14 lessons** Joshua should have learned from his preparation. There were other lessons since by the time he took over for Moses, Joshua was about 45 and had already lived through the **supernatural** plagues, deliverance from Egyptian oppression, God's leading, and several miracles of provision in the desert. He was charged with strict adherence to the word of God as was Moses - the same **basic training** that God had given Moses who nevertheless failed at a critical point.

Chap.2 centers on **three changeless factors** that were to govern the lives of the people.

Chap.3 adds a **fourth** changeless factor.

Chap.4 concludes with a **fifth** changeless factor.

Chap.6 discusses **4 universal factors** under **the principle of judgment** that are relevant to the people of God in all ages. *Sin is the one thing that can spoil the blessing of God upon his people.*

When either life in the church or doctrine is not cared for, the blessing stops as much as when an individual sins. Sin among the people of God either diminishes the blessing or brings it to a halt until it is confessed, judged, and removed. When either a group or one person sins, the whole people is injured. In addition, there was a strong reminder in the placement of the altar of burnt-offerings & peace offerings on mount Ebal, the place of warning, of the curse where the people would eat & rejoice before the Lord. God was saying, You shouldn't sin, but when you do, I will give you a way to return to me through the altar.

The demonstration of this principle was especially important as God's people were entering a new era. Though there were many times when these principles were applied to Israel, **nine critical junctures** are here mentioned where the promises of God were in jeopardy of being suspended unless judgment soon followed those events.

[**Chap.7** discusses **2** more universal factors.]

[**Chap.8** adds a **7th universal factor**: Rahab & the Gibeonites - an oath made in the name of God must be kept.]

Critical Crossroads for the Principle of Judgment

1, when God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and he obeyed. *What do you think would have happened if Abraham had refused?* [Through your offspring (Isaac) all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me] The next crucial event gives us the answer;

2, at mount Horeb God instituted the Law through Moses. As Moses was returning down the mountain, another such crisis point was reached when the people abandoned God and worshiped an idol. God said to Moses, *now leave me alone, so that my anger can burn hot against them, so that I may consume them and make you into a great nation*. God was about to wipe out the people of Israel and raise up another nation of people from Moses' descendants. However this disaster was averted by Moses' intercession. Instead, the Levites carried out God's judgment by killing 3,000 Israelites and were blessed that day by an ordination to the Lord's service.

3, after the tabernacle had been constructed according to the law given to Moses and he had ordained and consecrated Aaron and his sons as priests, his sons immediately disobeyed the command of the LORD by presenting unauthorized fire in the LORD's presence ... Then fire came out from the LORD's presence and consumed them ...

4, a new crisis arose at Kadesh Barnea where the people camped next but refused to go into Canaan to take their inheritance, so God made them wander in the desert until that generation had died.

JERICO, Rahab, Achan, Ai & the Gibeonites

5, After 40 years traipsing through the wilderness, Israel again came to Canaan and this time began the conquest with **Jericho**.

Joshua ... secretly sent two spies to look over the land, especially Jericho. They stayed at ... **Rahab's house** ... she ... said to them, **I know that the LORD has given you this land** ... Just before the Israelites came out of Egypt, they had celebrated the Passover feast in haste with loins girded, feet shod, and staff in hand. Rahab is a tremendous example for us as **she turned against her entire culture to help the spies**.

Joshua's commands to the people made it clear that everything in Jericho except Rahab and all that were with her in the house was **devoted** to God. The city was totally burned. **Supposedly** ... nothing was removed.

AI

Afterward, Joshua sent men to reconnoiter the smaller fortress, Ai, at the top of the mountain. Upon their recommendation, only three thousand men ascended to take it. But they were overwhelmed and 36 were killed. **The whole camp knew that God's blessing had stopped**.

God had the people again **sanctify themselves** as when they first entered the land before they began the conquest. God himself pointed out **Achan** and he confessed that he had taken and hidden some things from the fortress. At his judgment everybody knew he had sinned. **All the people of God joined in the judgment that God directed**, and stoned Achan and his family. After the nation was cleansed, **all the people** moved against Ai. Jericho was the first fruits to God. At Ai the tithe had already been given so the people were free to take it's spoil.

The Gibeonites

When the people of Gibeon **heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai**, they resorted to subterfuge. They contrived to give the false impression that they had been on a long journey from a distant country. They convinced the Israelites of their legitimacy. Then Joshua made a **treaty of peace** with them to let them live and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath in the name of the God of Israel.

Three days later, the Israelites **found out they had been tricked**, that they were actually close neighbors. So they came to their cities, but did not attack them, because of the sworn an oath. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders who answered, We cannot touch them now. We must let them live, so that God's wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them. Let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly. Then Joshua said to

them for your deception You are now under a curse: You will never be released from indentured servitude. They answered Joshua, Your servants found out that the Lord your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants. So we had no recourse, we are now in your hands, **16-27**.

They were probably uncertain whether or not the Israelites would keep the treaty and come to their aid, but fortunately God had a strict policy concerning oaths, so **Israel came to their aid**. About 400 years later, **Saul transgressed the oath made by Joshua by trying to annihilate the Gibeonites**. So during the reign of David, **God brought 3 years of famine upon Israel** because of it.

The Gibeonites were of the **Hivite** race, a people who remained enemies of the Israelites throughout the period of the judges. There is no note that they were unfaithful. So they not only left the **confederacy**, they neither joined their **former allies** nor their **blood relatives** in wars that followed. They remained in the midst of the people of Israel by choice. Rahab and family were the only people saved out of Jericho ... She believed, left Jericho and came among the people of God. The **Gibeonites** were the only people in the land who turned to God, and they flowed on through all the years of Jewish history. **This is who we are ... that we who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us might have strong consolation.**

The Conquest of Canaan

Joshua took the the whole land according to all the Lord had said to Moses. Thus the land rested from war and Joshua gave it to Israel for an inheritance, **11:15, 23. JFH.12** is a **summary** of the total campaign: **chaps.1-6** describe the campaign under Moses on the east side of the Jordan; **7-24** describe it under Joshua on the west side.

6 Though the major campaigns were concluded, **the land still remained to be secured**. Israel had broken the main force of opposition, but they were still an **island** in the midst of those who were not the people of God. *I myself will drive them out. Go on, divide the land - I'm going to give you **the strength to possess it**. But they simply did not take hold of that which was theirs.*

However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely. They did not go on to do what God told them to because: they wanted peace at any cost. So they let the people stay in their land and through the time of the judges and beyond, instead of gaining ground, the Israelites lost it. Therefore on the basis of the conditional portion of the covenant of God, **the blessings stopped**.

Caleb

Once the campaigns had broken the heart of the land, **Caleb** claimed his portion. *The Lord helping me [believing God], I will drive them out just as he said. Then Joshua blessed Caleb ... and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So Hebron has belonged to Caleb ever since, because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly.*

Joshua's Warning

After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel **rest** from all their enemies around them, **Joshua** ... warned ... if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them ... the

LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become **snakes and traps** for you, **whips** on your backs and **thorns** in your eyes, until you perish from this good land .

7, The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel. After that whole generation had [died] , **another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel** . Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them . They were in great distress.

The Lord's land where Israel was to enter into rest, lay under her feet; it remained only for her **to occupy it, to displace the Canaanites, and to cleanse the land of paganism** . The time had come for Israel to be the kingdom of God as an established commonwealth on earth. But Israel quickly forgot the acts of God that had given her birth and established her in the land . Consequently she lost sight of her unique identity as God's people, chosen and called to be his army and loyal citizens of his emerging kingdom. She settled down and attached herself to Canaan's peoples, morals, gods, religious beliefs and practices, and so **forfeited the blessings of God** once more until he determined to deliver them from foreign oppression .

The Kingdom Under David

8, With David as King, we find the southern kingdom dominant in the land because God had greatly blessed David and Judah. **The breakdown of justice** under David's rule began the disintegration of the united kingdom. He who once conquered the land and united the northern and southern kingdoms would be responsible for its dissolution.

Possessing Our Possessions

9, The church had just experienced a second great filling of the Holy Spirit. Power to face the lost Graeco-Roman world was there. Had the sin of Ananias and Sapphira not been followed by judgment, it would have stopped the church's advance. But after judgment, the early church went on in power . Though there were many other times in the church's history when God's blessings ceased until judgment was applied, these nine seem to be key points.

For those of us who have cast themselves upon Christ, **the central battle has been won**. What lies before us is to **possess our possessions**. God's promises of the fruit and power of the Holy Spirit are for Christians. Since we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in Him. Because they wanted their **peace and materialism**, many Israelites did not claim their heritage. Such things always stand in the way of the people of God. Bring forth fruit with patience: enduring the cares of this world and troubles that accompany Christianity. **If it does not bring you troubles**, you haven't been active enough **in this war** for the hearts and minds of people and in resisting being caught up in its temptations. A tragedy of the modern church is that our spirituality and brotherhood often stop at the point of material possessions.

Israel's Ancestry and Ours

Joshua reminded Israel that their past pagan heritage was NOT as God's people, Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her detestable practices and say to Jerusalem: Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanites. I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants.

You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit which is now at work in those who are disobedient. **All of us also lived among them at one time**, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. *This is not just Israel, it's who WE were. Joshua challenges us*, Now **fear the Lord** and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord ... **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods your ancestors served ... or the gods of the Amorites ... But as for me and my household, we will continue to serve the Lord.

My Choice and Yours

God's people are about to enter a struggle unlike anything we have experienced for many generations. For each of us as Christians, **the important thing** is that there are some people who can be thankful that we have lived and that God has worked through us.

Personal choice stands out as a key theme in the book of Joshua. We are seeing the same shift in our own generation. My generation and those immediately preceding it made a bad choice that brought us into the current post-Christian age. The choices of faith have been set aside and forgotten, and so, the confusion, sorrow, and lawlessness of the time of the judges is occurring in our generations.

There has been a **world spirit** that has existed ever since man revolted against God. It is **the spirit of anti-law, of rebellion, and rejection** against God himself – **humanism, rationalism**. Our country was founded on the base that there is a God who is the Creator, **who gave the inalienable rights and freedoms which our constitution secured**. The US constitution gave us a balance between **form** and **freedom** in society, government, and law that is unique in history. **It is not natural in the world** and the widespread acceptance of **humanism** has been eroding it away until it has almost been lost entirely in our day.