

There is an Inheritance to be taken

“And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?” - Joshua 18:2-3

God promised an inheritance to Abraham over four hundred years earlier and our text tells us that seven of the twelve tribes of Israel had yet to act on that promise. It was as if they believed that the land was theirs simply because God said that they could have it. But Joshua faults these people for being lazy, allowing the other tribes to “*work out your (their) own salvation*” (Phil 2:12) without lifting a finger for themselves. True, the way ahead was fraught with danger and difficulty, as the other tribes found out, but God insisted that they (as well as us) also confront their own fears and enemies in order to possess the Promised Land. And such is the way for Christians today. The entire world has been promised an inheritance in Jesus but each person must reach out to make it his own, using it throughout life to the glory of God—few people do this.

The inheritance offered to us is the promise of eternal life in heaven through the merits of Jesus Christ. He has purchased and won our redemption from sin by His innocent suffering, death and resurrection from the dead, thus satisfying God’s holy wrath against sin. It is one thing to believe that Jesus has died for our sins but unless we act on that promise according to the Bible we will be no closer to salvation than were the slothful Israelites to their inheritance (they believed in the promise but this belief did not give them the promise). The sacrifice of Jesus cleared the way for all who hear God’s call to repent to approach the mercy seat where sins can be confessed and the comforting word of reconciliation can be preached to the penitent heart, “*...Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee*” (Matthew 9:2). Those that, by the grace of God, can believe this gospel message will “*...receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 2:38) and thus the promise of eternal life in heaven “*...if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*” (Heb 3:6).

God had given victory to the Israelites throughout the land but He had one straightforward request of them: do not compromise your faith in Jesus. If they followed God’s directions they were to do so exactly according to His word and not according to their own feelings or that of others, “*...When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall drive*

out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places” (Numbers 33:51-52). Notice that God directs their attention to getting rid of all vestiges of false doctrine. As with Christianity today, there is no place for questionable teachings in God’s church, let alone in our own minds. Not that false teaching can be removed from all the land, just don’t co-mingle the two: “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*” (2 Corinthians 6:14). Because it is human nature to question the Word, God provided this warning: “*But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell*” (Numbers 33:55).

The Israelites ultimately compromised their faith by incorporating into their God-given beliefs certain parts of pagan worship that seemed right to them. They searched far and wide, selecting those parts that pleased their senses and that appeared to explain God’s Word. This went against God’s command: “*Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods...for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee*” (Exodus 23:32-33). As we read in subsequent chapters, the Israelites soon became more evil than even the pagans. They did not consider themselves to be evil, far from it, “*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*” (2 Timothy 3:13). Today, we are faced with the same dilemma; either accept our neighbors’ non-scriptural beliefs in order to remain friendly with them or reject those beliefs at the risk of being alienated from them. “*Thou shalt make no covenant with them*” does not direct us to be antisocial but merely to remain true to God’s word. Unfortunately, as happened with the Israelites, many Bible-believing churches today have willingly accepted questionable teachings in their pulpits in order to co-exist with their own members and with surrounding neighbors. This ought not to be.

If they had listened to God and not considered other sources of spiritual teachings, perhaps the Israelites would have not angered God as they did. Today we have access to infinitely more sources of teaching than they, but, as Solomon long ago advised, “*The words of the wise are as goads...And further...be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh*” (Ecclesiastes 12:11-12). We are

not to believe others just because they sound good, “*but try the spirits whether they are of God*” (1 John 4:1).

Dear reader, the only source of the Living Word is the Bible. Pray diligently that God would open His Word to you to the saving of your soul through the sprinkling of His blood on your evil conscience: “*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you*” (Matthew 7:7). Take hold of the victory He has prepared for you.

God’s Peace,
Charles Korhonen

June 2	Ken Storm	Holy Communion
June 9	Chad Kuivanen	
June 16	TBD	
June 23	Ken Storm	Confirmation Service
June 30	Charles Korhonen	

Church at 11:00am
Bible Study at 7pm on Wednesday.

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