

Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 20: Commissioned (23:1-16)

As his time on earth neared its end, Joshua seemed to sense the danger of impending compromise. Perhaps he simply knew the human heart; perhaps he observed its deceitfulness at work among the people.

Joshua was surrounded by a people who lived in the promised land but who were "apparently content to share the occupation of the land with the people whom God had commanded them to drive out".¹ Undoubtedly, God's words, spoken some twenty years prior, plagued his thoughts. *"I know the inclination of their behavior... When they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant"* (Deuteronomy 31:21, 20).

If Joshua could prevent God's people from "going back" (Joshua 23:12) and "clinging to the customs" (NLT) of the people of the land, he would do it with his last breath.

Read Joshua 23:1-16.

1. For what purpose did Joshua call the leaders together? What was his concern?
2. What would determine Israel's victory? (v.6) How did Joshua know this was the key to success? (Joshua 1:7-9)
3. Joshua allocated the unconquered lands among the tribes as if they already possessed them. Why did he do this? Why couldn't he conquer the lands for them?

Additionally, how does this represent the believer's walk with Jesus?

4. What five things were the people told *not* to do with the remaining nations? (v.7)

5. How does this apply today?

6. What *should* the Israelites do? (v.8)

7. Define the process of backsliding.

8. What are the marks of apostasy in a man's life?

9. Why will the Lord cease to drive out the enemy if one chooses *not* to heed His instructions? (v.12)

10. Per verses 13 and 16, what will the individual experience who has chosen to forsake his faith in the true God?

11. What is a snare and trap? Describe how it feels to have a constant thorn. Why did the Lord use this language to describe intimate associations with the Canaanites? How long would this endure? (v.13)

12. Not only would the Israelites experience powerlessness, defeat, discomfort, and disgrace, they would be entrapped in relationships of unceasing spiritual, mental, and physical pain and suffering.

According to 2 Peter 3:9, why won't God allow His people to "rest" in their sin?

13. At what point would God relent and their suffering end? See Psalm 106:44-45.

14. What safeguards against backsliding, and ultimately apostasy, are found in Joshua 23? Reread verses 6, 7-8, 11.

How do the following verses apply? Read Psalm 1:1-3, 119:1-11, John 15:4, 10, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, 13:5, 1 John 1:5- 2:6.

15. Return to Joshua. What did Joshua insist that these men understand? (23:14-15)

16. What did Joshua know? Review Deuteronomy 31:14-18, 21.

17. As the leader of the people, what *was* and *wasn't* his responsibility?

18. Back to Joshua 23. What prophecy is given by Joshua in verse 16? How must he have felt?

ⁱ Redpath, Alan. (2013). *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua*. (pg.201). The Redpath Family.