

Joshua Generation, Part 5

Joshua 1:2-3 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall **tread** upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

DARAK (“tread”) – “Take up your weapons and fight!” – command still used with Israeli army today – “every place that you FIGHT FOR, I will give you”

Joshua 3:3-4 And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and **go after it**. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for **ye have not passed this way heretofore**.

TRANSITIONS are difficult, but transitions are necessary if we are to be all that God has called us to be. The people of Israel have been **landless** for nearly five hundred years, and now God says – “**Take the land**.” And it is at this point in their history that God begins to transition His people from a **nomadic culture** and a **slavery complex** to a nation of conquering warriors. Wandering and bondage have been in their DNA for five centuries – that is all they have ever known.

But you can't act like wanderers and think like slaves and function like conquerors at the same time!

God is not transitioning them (or us!) to a place where there are no more battles, but to a place where the battles are more STRATEGIC – and therefore the results are more SIGNIFICANT, influential and eternal.

There was a long list of enemies that could have prevented Israel from entering into their Promised Land – Amalekites, Ammonites, Amorites, Canaanites, Edomites, Gebalites, Geshurites, Gibeonites, Girgashites, Girzites, Hittites, Hivites, Horites, Jebusites, Kenites, Moabites, Perizzites.

That's why God told Israel to **DRIVE THEM ALL OUT!**

Numbers 33:51-53 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 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: And ye shall **dispossess the inhabitants of the land**, and dwell therein: for **I have given you the land to possess it**.

God is saying “I will shake the devil loose” IF YOU WILL FIGHT FOR IT!

To understand the event we will discuss today, it is necessary to go back in time several years before Joshua to a **CONCESSION** made by Moses for the tribes of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh (half-tribe). They were attracted by the land just outside the Promised Land (it was “a place for cattle”) and didn't want to cross the Jordan River. **Apparently, their first concern was making a living, not having an inheritance.**

They represent the many **BORDERLINE BELIEVERS** in the church today, who are in **CLOSE PROXIMITY** to God's promise but never claim it. They are willing to serve the Lord and help their brethren fight **FOR A TIME**, but they eventually head back to their **COMFORT ZONE**. The fact that they don't live in God's place of promise doesn't seem to faze them at all!

Numbers 32:5-7 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and **bring us not over Jordan**. And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, **Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel** from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?

ONLY NINE AND A HALF TRIBES INHERITED THE PROMISED LAND!

Joshua 14:2 By lot was their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe.

Their agreement with Moses was “**we will live HERE, but we will help you fight THERE**” – but when it was time to take the land, they left the majority of their fighting men behind to protect their property! Only a small portion of these three tribes ever kept this agreement, and at the earliest opportunity even they headed back (BACKWARDS!) to the eastern side of the Jordan.

Joshua 22:10 And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there **an altar by Jordan**, a great altar to see to.

When the rest of Israel sharply questioned them, they defended their motives and claimed that their altar was an innocent symbol. Not so!

Joshua 22:28 Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold **the pattern of the altar** of the LORD, which our fathers made, **not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices**; but it is a witness between us and you.

“This altar isn't for sacrifices! It's just LIKE an altar. **It represents our covenant with YOU, not necessarily our covenant with GOD**. Don't worry about us! Every once in awhile, we'll still make the arduous journey from where we LIVE to where we need to be to WORSHIP ...

... **We're content to live farther away from the tabernacle and closer to the enemy.** This altar we have made is just NEAR the Promised Land. It is a great altar to SEE, but really, it's just a **PART TIME ALTAR.**"

Was this altar really an altar to God? No! It was an altar to convenience! It was an altar to "the best of both worlds!" These tribes had crossed the Jordan River temporarily into their promise, and then gone back again! Moses and Joshua let them "settle for less" and it eventually killed them!

The choice of the two and a half tribes may have been good for the CATTLE, but it was disastrous for their CHILDREN. Because they lived just outside the Promised Land, these tribes became a "buffer zone" between Israel and the heathen nations around them. Of course, that location made them extremely vulnerable to military attack and to ungodly influence – and both of these liabilities eventually brought about their downfall. They quickly fell into idolatry and were eventually captured by Assyria. They ended up not only losing their promise, but losing their possessions as well.

1 Chronicles 5:25-26 And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

On **September 30, 1938**, British Prime Minister **Neville Chamberlain**, just back from Germany, told a gathering at 10 Downing Street: "My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honor. **I believe it is peace for our time.** We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. **And now I recommend you to go home and sleep quietly in your beds.**"

Less than a year later, England was at war with Germany; and WW II had burst upon the world.

On **May 13, 1940**, with the world engulfed in conflict, British Prime Minister **Winston Churchill** sounded quite a different note: "**I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.** We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. **You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war**, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. **You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory**, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; **for without victory, there is no survival.**