

Joshua Series #6

“He Keeps His Word” — Joshua 21:43-45

I. INTRODUCTION

A. RR

B. Trophies

1. As young boy in Chicago, friend with several older brothers
2. All involved in sports, quite good
3. Parents had put up a display case with their trophies
4. I was enthralled; nothing like that at our house
5. For years after that, whenever I saw a trophy case, stopped to look at it
6. Each trophy stands for a victory
 - a. each bears a plaque
 - b. name of contest
 - c. when it took place
 - d. the place taken
 - e. Finally - the person's name
7. There is a trophy in the book of Joshua; found in vs. 43-45 of Ch. 21

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 43-45

43 So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it.

44 The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

1. At this point, Israel has finally taken possession of the land
 - a. they had defeated the major kings and cities of the Canaanites
 - b. Joshua and the elders had divided the land between the tribes of Israel
2. These words put the seal on the part of the book of Joshua that describes the conquest of Canaan

B. The Promise

1. 500 years before, God had appeared to Abraham and made him an incredible promise that included 3 things . . .
 - 1) God told Abraham that He would give him a marvelous home land
 - 2) He said that He would make him into a great nation
 - 3) Finally, God promised that He would bless all nations through him
2. The Promised homeland was Palestine
3. The great nation was Israel
4. The blessing for all people was the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who came to set man free from sin and death
5. That three-fold promise was continuously renewed to Abraham's descendants
 - a. Isaac
 - b. Jacob
 - c. Jacob's 12 sons
 - d. Moses
 - e. finally, to Joshua
6. In ch. 1 we read that God said to Joshua . . .

2 "Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them; the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.

5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."

7. Now that we come to ch. 21, God has fulfilled His promise
8. I like to keep things organized
 - a. one of the things I do is keep lots of "To Do" lists
 - b. then I cross off what's been accomplished
9. That's what we find here in vs. 43-45; this is God's lining through the parts of His To Do list

C. He Did It ALL!!!

1. These verses are meant to teach us about the total Faithfulness of God
2. Look at them again . . .

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3. God proved His complete fidelity to Israel
4. Not one word of His promise failed
5. He did ALL that He had said
6. John asked his wife Mary out for a date
 - a. because of their busy schedule, they had had little time for each other
 - b. she with kids, he with work; then on weekends, stuff around the house
 - c. he realized the need to renew their relationship
 - d. set the date, made the reservations, got a baby sitter
 - e. John an engineer;
 - that day at work, his boss gave him an extra, rush project
 - had to have it done by 5
 - then a couple friends asked him to go with them to lunch; they often spent longer at lunch than they should
 - he had a great time with them, but knew if he did, he would have to stay late to finish project
 - declined, because he had promised Mary he would take her out
 - f. John had learned that a marriage is a relationship of trust and fidelity; that faithfulness in the big things is built by faithfulness in the small
7. In the OT, God refers to Israel as His wife
 - a. though she was often wayward
 - b. He was always faithful
 - c. these verses remind us of the total fidelity of God to His people
8. In the NT, the church is referred to as the betrothed bride of Jesus
9. Just as God proved His fidelity to Israel, we can be absolutely confident in the fidelity of God toward us

D. The Obstacles

1. Consider some of the obstacles to God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises to Israel

2. They were slaves in Egypt,
 - a. under the heavy hand of Pharaoh
 - b. the most powerful man of the mightiest nation of that time
 - c. yet God delivered them from bondage
3. Then, even His own people turned against Him at Kadesh Barnea
4. But God eventually brought them in and settled them in the land, just as He had said!
5. God has made many promises to you, promises of blessing and not of cursing
6. You might look at your situation and say, “But how can He help me? My situation is totally bleak. There is no hope for me.”
7. If God can rescue Israel and give them victory over the mighty Canaanites, He can certainly give you victory over your enemies and those circumstances you find so troubling

E. A Simple Message

1. God is faithful
2. None of His words shall fail
3. We must learn to trust in Him and His word, not in our own faith
4. John was going through a testing time and his faith began to weaken. He was sharing his struggle with a believing friend and said, “I am ill. My faith in God’s promises is lessening each day.” The friend replied, “Are you not making the mistake of examining your faith rather than the promises of God, upon which your faith should rest? If you were traveling a new highway and approached a bridge of whose strength you were not sure, would you stop to examine your faith in the bridge or the bridge itself?”
5. In Heb 10:23 we read, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”
6. Israel waited over 500 years from the time the promise was first given to Abraham to the time it was fulfilled in the days of Joshua
7. Even then, the last part of the promise wasn’t fulfilled
 - a. God brought them in to the land
 - b. and he made a great nation out of them
 - c. but the promised Messiah would not come for another 1400 years
8. Now, as we look back, we see that God fulfilled that part of the promise too
9. The delay was long, but God kept His word
10. Spanish Proverb = “Dios tarda pero no olvida” “God delays but

He does not forget”

11. God not only keeps His promises, He keeps them PERFECTLY
12. That is, He brings them to pass at just the right moment
13. Paul said that Jesus came in the fullness of time
 - a. He came at just the critical moment of human history
 - b. God had been preparing the world stage for centuries
 - c. He had allowed the Alexander the Great to conquer the world so that Greek language and culture would spread throughout the area
 - d. then God allowed the Romans to conquer the world, so that movement throughout their empire would be safe and swift and so that the gospel could spread in just a few decades across the known world
14. As we look back over history, it is easy for us to see the faithfulness of God
15. We need to have that same kind of vision as we look at our own lives
16. If God can steer whole continents to accomplish His word, certainly our lives present Him no trouble

F. More

1. The careful bible student will notice that there is an apparent contradiction in these verses
2. We read in v. 44 The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.
3. At several other points we read that the Israelites DID NOT defeat all the people
 - a. while Joshua had led the united armies of Israel in a victorious campaign against the major kings and cities
 - b. there were still many smaller cities and villages of Canaanites living in the land
 - c. as each tribe received it's allotment, they were supposed to go in and mop up the last settlements of Canaanites
 - d. they didn't; instead, they settled down among them and lived side by side with them
4. So, how do we resolve this apparent contradiction?
5. Very simply; V. 44 says God gave them rest so that none of their enemies could stand against them — that's exactly what He did
 - a. God broke the back of the Canaanite military force
 - b. all Israel had to do was go against the last remaining pockets of resistance
 - c. but she didn't; she wouldn't

- d. she became complacent
- e. rather than pressing on and finishing the job, she gave up and settled for a life of compromise with her enemies
- f. think of it — God gave them victory, but they never took it
- 6. As always, God was faithful, but Israel failed to take advantage of His faithfulness
- 7. Many today are living a compromised and complacent life because while they have seen the faithfulness of God demonstrated time and again, they will not step out and actively prove it
- 8. The walk of faith is ever moving forward
- 9. There is no standing still in the Christian life
 - a. either we are moving forward
 - b. or we are slipping back
- 10. The great confidence we have, is that God is faithful
 - a. He will fulfill every last one of His promises
 - b. not one of them shall fail

III. CONCLUSION

A. God's Promises

- 1. Let's say you found a book one day
- 2. In it's pages was a detailed map and instructions on where to find a buried treasure
- 3. Would you put it on your coffee table as a conversation piece?
- 4. Would you carry it to work and occasionally leaf through it's pages, carefully reading the instructions, but that's all?
- 5. Would you merely argue with skeptics over whether or not it was trustworthy?
- 6. Wouldn't you get a shovel and go digging?
- 7. The Bible is a virtual treasure house of promises
- 8. Some 3000 promises have been discovered in its pages
- 9. They have all been made by God who cannot lie
- 10. Let's read them, study them, but let's not stop there
- 11. Let's dig them out and use them!

B. Don't Settle Down

- 1. Let's not let ourselves settle down with the enemies of our soul as Israel did
- 2. Let's keep pressing forward, relentlessly pursuing the foe till our Captain returns and puts an end to the war by defeating the devil once and for all

C. One Thing

- 1. There is only one thing we need to remember from this passage

2. But that one thing is a truth that will radically effect our whole lives
3. God is faithful!
4. All that He has spoken shall come to pass concerning you.
5. ALL of it.