

Joshua #23
Joshua Chapter 21
A Kingdom of Priests
17095-A November 26, 2017

- I. **The Lord is not just saving us out of the world. He is saving the World and a People along with it.**
A. He is creating a New Place and a New People—This is the Kingdom that is coming...
B. Christ's people are here for a purpose... Good Works that bring preservation and illumination in Christ—the gospel lived out in love and truth.
- II. **Joshua: A crucial chapter in God's story of redemption.**
A. The Bible is about how God recreates the world and a people in it who worship only Him.
A.1. In the First Testament it is Israel, which points to a fulfillment...
A.2. In the New Testament it is the Church
A.3. In the New Age Israel and the Church are One People in Christ.
A.3.a) Amazingly, this has begun already in Christ. Gal.3:27-29; Eph.2
B. Joshua is the OT chapter where God gives the Promised Land to the Promised People.
B.1. The only people at that time and the only physical location on earth where God says, *I Live Here with these people—in covenant.*
- III. **After 7 years of war under Joshua's leadership, YHWH has...**
A. Disarmed the main Canaanite strongholds. Ch.1-12
A.1. Though there is still much to do in taking the land.
B. Divided the land among the tribes. Ch.13-19
B.1. Though they still needed to move into the territories.
C. **Now He delineates two important structures in His land. Josh.20-21**
C.1. **Places among those people where Mercy and Justice may be exercised. 20**
C.1.a) Centers of legal safety, waiting for justice.
C.2. **People** who represent Him spread through the tribes (Ch.21. 48 Levitical cities)
C.3. *Both of these are unique in world history.*
- IV. **Joshua Chapter 21. The Lord Keeps His promises.**
A. The Lord kept his promise to the Levites. 48 cities.1-3
A.1. The Kohathites: Priests functioning in the Tabernacle.
A.1.a) Moses and Aaron were Kohathites
A.2. Gershonites: Maintenance of Tabernacle.
A.3. Merarites: transport of Tabernacle.
B. The Lord kept his promise to Israel. 43-45.
B.1. Note: it doesn't say the people kept their promise to Him...
- V. **The tribe of Levi—from rags to riches by grace through faith. 4 things to know.**
A. Their history was steeped in violence and curse. Gen.34; 49:5-7
A.1. Jacob prophesied against them that they would not have a tribal allotment. **Gen.49.5-7.**
Why?
A.2. Because Levi and Simeon were violent. The Shechem Massacre. **Gen.34**
A.3. *Levi, though, was redeemed in a very unique way...*
B. Their restoration was based on faith in action. Ex.32:25-29.
B.1. In the midst of the idolatry: Who is on the Lord's (YHWH's) side?
B.1.a) The tribe of Levi defends the Lord's honor against the paganism.
B.2. *The former sin was redeemed and God's word fulfilled through faith based on Grace.*
C. Their inheritance became the Lord Himself. Josh.13:33; 14:4
C.1. The other tribes received tribal land allotments
C.2. Levi received cities and land for the people in the tribe, but not a tract of land.
D. Their story points to a greater reality—the Body of Christ. 1 Peter 2:9.

- D.1. The Lord is gathering and shaping a community of people who worship only Him.
- D.2. A people redeemed from evil and useful to Him Personally.

VI. **1 Peter 2:9. In Christ we are a people who belong to God and have received mercy. 5 spiritual paradoxes:**

- A. We are individuals, but not without the “tribe.” 1 Cor.3
 - A.1. Levi was a tribe, a family. We have a corporate identity that shapes our individual identity. Your “tribe” shapes you.
- B. We are a refuge, but committed to justice. Gal.6:1-5
 - B.1. The cities of refuge were Levitical cities. Extensions of God’s grace and truth.
 - B.1.a) *Not places where unrepentant evil is tolerated.*
 - B.2. *A safe place to tell the truth—but not to hide from it.*
 - B.3. *This is why repentance is so crucial to our administration of grace.*
- C. We own things, but they do not own us. Matt.13:43, Phil.3:7-11.
 - C.1. The Levites had land and ownership, but not an identity tied to that land.
 - C.2. Their ultimate value was in God Himself.
- D. We gather together, but are spread out in the world. Matt.18:19-20
 - D.1. Like the Levitical cities spread out in Israel.
 - D.2. Proclaiming the excellencies of Him who called us...
- E. We are all priests, but not autonomous—we serve a True High Priest. Heb.4:14-16
 - E.1. Kingdom of priests refers to the priesthood of the believer in 1 Pet.2:9
 - E.2. Representing the Lord and interceding for the world—through good works.

VII. **All because we are baptized into God’s Rest based on His Secure Promises. Josh.21:43-45.**

- A. The True Rest is in the Greater Joshua—Jesus Christ. **Heb.4:8-13**
- B. The Secure Promise is the one we receive in Christ, by faith. **2 Cor.1:20-22**