

Joshua 07-11-09b

We resume our study of Joshua 23. We've been looking at the reminders that Joshua is giving at the very end of his life. He says this day he is going to go the way of all the earth, which is a metaphor, a euphemism for leaving in the sense of physical death.

And he says, be very courageous in verse 6, to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left. How do you avoid turning to the right hand or to the left? Diligence. Just look at the construction of that sentence.

Be courageous. It takes courage and it takes diligence to keep and to do what is written in God's word. It doesn't just happen.

There's sort of a Calvinist view that says, well, God is at work in you to will and to do. And you'll get more spiritual. There's upward progress.

The P in TULIP stands for perseverance of the saints. And you'll just progressively get more and more holy. You just kind of hang around long enough and God will make you more and more holy.

Nonsense. You have to work at it. It has to be an objective.

Nobody gets really, really good at anything without working at it. You can't become a great chess player unless you study games and learn the principles of different openings and how to avoid having your pieces captured early on and getting one or two or three pawns down before you even get out of the opening. To play the piano, it takes practice.

It takes repetition. It takes sticking with it. Playing any musical instrument well requires discipline and sticking with it.

It's no different in any area of endeavor. And most particularly, it's no different in our spiritual life. Be courageous.

Don't let fear get the better of you. Don't let challenges overwhelm you. If you go among the nations, these who remain among you, don't fall into their way of thinking.

When it talks about worshipping their gods, mentioning their names and swearing by them, serving them and bowing down to them, what are the gods that surround us? People say, well, there's no idolatry today. What are the gods of this world? What are the gods of the peoples that surround us as believers today? Paul said in the latter days, there's going to be all kinds of evil in the world. Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure, lovers of money.

We have a very active industry involved in catering to people's desire for pleasure. It

amazes me that you can't just get a phone anymore. Now the phone has to have several other things in it.

It's got to play music and play video games. I just can't talk to somebody. My phone has to entertain me.

My phone has to be a wonder phone that does all kinds of things. There's nothing wrong with nice phones. I've got a PDA and all that.

But what I'm saying is, if you look at the emphasis in our culture, what do the commercials pitch? What do they cater? Where is the money to be made? It's in the music industry. First and foremost, the vast majority of everything is music. Buy music.

The music industry is huge. The RIAA and all of the industry protections and suing the free download of music and so on, anybody that offers that and these networks for sharing and so forth, because entertainment is big, big business. There are billions and billions of dollars in entertainment.

DVDs, movies, video games, Xboxes and PS2s and all these different things. It is all, and of course there's nothing wrong intrinsically with any of these things. It is what they become.

If you make a god of something, if you wake up in the morning and that's what you think of, if as soon as you get away from your responsibilities, that's what you think of, if when you're kind of depressed and you say, well, what would pick me up? What would cheer me up? What would really kind of save my day? I've had kind of a dismal day. Where am I going to get a charge for the day? Listen to me now. That's your god.

What is the fruit of the spirit? Love? Joy? Peace? Where do people, oh, well, you know, if I can put on Enya, then I just become suddenly peaceful and calm. If I can find Yanni, everybody that does quiet music only has one name. Yanni, Enya, these people, you just need one name anymore and then you've made it.

Cher, Brittany, well, I won't go too far down that road. But, well, you had, who was the guy with the candelabra on the piano? Liberace, he just had one name. But we have to be careful.

There are a lot of things in the land that Israel is supposed to take and exploit for themselves. And if you continue reading in that last passage that we looked at in Deuteronomy chapter 20, you can see that when they go outside the land of promise and end up attacking a city, they can offer peace to it and if they agree, if they accept that peace treaty, then they become subjects of Israel. If they do not, then they go in and kill all the males and they enslave and take everything in the city for themselves.

And that's what they were to do to the peoples who are far from them, unlike the

Canaanites who are to be destroyed. But there's lots of opportunities. There's opportunities to take what belongs to these evil people and it's okay.

If it is not korban, if it's not dedicated to God, if it is not stuff that's under the ban, they are to enjoy the plunder. And we can enjoy a lot of the plunder of this life. There's nothing wrong with it.

But the warning is do not let it become your God. If it becomes the basis of your happiness, if you're happy on a day that you have your music and you're unhappy on a day when you don't have your music, if you're cross when your mp3 player breaks, or if somebody scratches your favorite CD or you leave your DVD and it's gone, if that wrecks your day, have a care. That's caution.

That's a warning. Watch out. What is the basis for your happiness? What is the center and the focus of your life? That's your God.

In the latter days, the Bible warns men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure, et cetera, rather than lovers of God. Now, most people would sneer or smirk if you were to suggest that after a long, tough day, after a lot of difficulty and challenge, that the best way to relax and to find peace and contentment and joy would be to think about the things of God. People say, what? I want to turn on the TV.

I want to hear some music. I want to go out. You give me some excitement.

What do you tell me? Go quote Bible verses to myself? What a bore. What a drag. What a dismal, flat experience that would be.

Anybody who thinks that way doesn't know God, doesn't know the riches and the treasure of His word, and has not actually connected with the things that are in heaven. Those of us who have will tell you that there is nothing more restorative and more refreshing, more encouraging, more strengthening, more renewing and regenerating than after a long, hard-fought battle in whatever area of life to get into the things of God. We have a natural resistance.

It reminds me, I apologize, my illustrations tend to come from my own experience, and you may have something completely different, but I always think of this. When I was a little boy, I was older than all of my siblings. They were in diapers and crawling around, bumping into things, and I was old enough to help my mother.

So when there were chores to be done, especially in the evening, there would be the dishes. And so my mother would need help with the dishes, and I was the only guy old enough and able to help with the dishes. So for several years there, I was the dish boy.

And after supper, it would be time to do dishes, and I kind of knew it was coming, and I would be tempted to want to kind of drift off and wander off and hope that maybe she

would just do them without me. And I had a little bit of a dread. I can see none of you can relate to this at all.

I had a little bit of a dread in doing the dishes. However, once we got started, there was a little wooden stool that she would stand next to the sink, and she would wash, and I would rinse and set them over to be dried and so on. But when I was standing there next to my mother, and she was washing and talking to me, and I was talking to her, I always ended up really enjoying it.

And it's one of the first times that I really stopped and thought, Why is it that I initially dread this so much, and yet after I start doing it, I really enjoy it? It's a special time with my mother, and we're there doing something productive. I always feel really good when we're done, and we've accomplished this thing, and it's just she and me, and the others are off someplace, and I have her to myself, and I always ended up really enjoying it once I got over that initial weird, instinctive dislike of work. And it's the same, I think, maybe it's the same for you, I know it's the same for me, sometimes when it comes to spiritual things.

Initially, when we have a little bit of free time, and we've had a tough day or a hard time, and we're ready to do something different, and we think, Well, you know, I could sit and maybe do a little devotions or review, or hear a little bit of Bible teaching or something, and we think, No, no, no, let me turn something on, let me go do, have an experience of some sort. We have, I think, that same sort of instinctive dislike, because we're fallen, we're corrupt. And in the same way that a little boy is inherently lazy, but once you get past that and start to do the work, you have great satisfaction because it's right, it's good, and it's actually very enjoyable.

And the same thing is true in our spiritual life, and we have to be courageous. We've got to be proactive and say, I'm not going to let my corrupt self get in the way of doing what I know has eternal value, that actually will give me genuine peace, genuine joy that lasts beyond the end of a song, or beyond the end of a movie. It always tickles me, especially when the girls are younger, they say, Oh, Dad, can we watch this and such a show, some program that would be on, and so we would watch it.

And as soon as it's over, Oh, can we see another, it's like all of the benefit of that is over. As soon as the credits start rolling, there's an equal amount of hunger to see another one, or see a different one, or do something different. It's like chewing gum.

It only keeps your jaw working while it's in your mouth, but it has no lasting, you don't sit and say, let's just savor that episode. Let's just sit here for 15 or 20 minutes and just bask in the glow of that. As soon as it's over, we've got to see another one.

Do we have time? Oh, can we stay up? What have we just spent 43 minutes plus commercials watching this? But as soon as the credits roll, it's over, it's gone. And this is

the way with so much in this life. So I say all that to say, when it says in Joshua 23, be courageous to keep and to do.

Courage means you've got to go against resistance. Courage in battle is not automatic. There is a fear, there is a dread of being wounded or killed that is a natural, healthy, God-given, preservative instinct.

But there are times when you have to overcome that and do what needs to be done. And if we didn't have people willing to do that, we would have no nation, we would have no freedom. We would all be communists speaking German or Russian or something by now.

But courage means I will do what needs to be done against resistance. If there's no resistance, it's not really courage, is it? Well, there was a bar of gold laying on the ground, and I took seven steps forward and picked it up. There was no resistance to doing that.

But when it's difficult, and when you have to push against opposition, and you get it done, that's courage. Be courageous to keep and to do. Where's our courage? God hasn't asked us to go drive out the Amorites.

God hasn't asked us to go attack walled towns. Our courage is just, can we be good stewards of our time? When our tasks are done and we've got a little bit of flexibility, a little bit of opportunity, what do we choose to do? Are we going to mesmerize ourselves? Are we going to hypnotize ourselves? Are we going to entertain ourselves with something that has no lasting value, no real meaning? It just passes the time. Now, you can make something of entertainment.

Believe me, I like entertainment as much as the next person. But we ought to at least make an effort to make something of it. If you watch a movie, if you watch an episode of something, think about it.

Were the characters that were presented as having integrity and being the protagonist that you're supposed to root for, were they really worth rooting for? Were their motives good? What sort of moral and ethical decisions did they make? Were they self-interested or were they altruistic? Was there anything related to God? Was there anything that reflects biblical values? Take a few minutes and think. Try to redeem that time by applying a spiritual perspective. Try to weave it into the fabric of our spiritual life.

We can't be so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good, but we can certainly take the plunder of the Philistines or the plunder of the Amorites and put it to good use. What do you think the Israelites were supposed to do with the stuff that they got from those towns and villages? Well, they tithed a tenth part to the Lord. If we do avail ourselves of the wonderful technologies and opportunities in this life, can we not take a tenth? If you

watch an hour-long show, can you take six minutes and put it into a spiritual perspective? Have a conversation.

Well, you know, was that really admirable or is that being presented as admirable by people who actually have a different agenda? Why did they have to put this scene in? What are they trying to say? Is there a subtle message being slipped in about accepting certain perverted lifestyles? Is there a hidden message here about not holding a hard line against corruption, against perversity, against evil? Is this sort of a subtle message that's trying to wheedle us and deflect us and deceive us into accepting something we should not accept? Are they using humor to put something across that we really ought to be offended by? You know, the gay character is always the funniest one. Oh, how could you hate them? They're so funny. Take six minutes out of an hour of programming and think about the message.

Think about the purpose. Think about viewpoint, biblical principles. Be courageous to keep and to do.

We are believers. We are God's people. We are supposed to shine as lights in the world.

We are supposed to be different. There ought to be something different. If we sit and watch a thing or listen to a thing or attend a thing or observe something, it ought to be different in our souls.

We've got hundreds, maybe thousands of hours of Bible study under our belt. Have we no viewpoint that differs from the world? Do we have no perspective that is elevated above the mundane? Are we just like another Amorite or another Canaanite? Or do we not make mention of the name of their gods, not swear by them, not serve them, not bow down to them? Just because someone is presented as the next American idol, does that make them our American idol? Because 80 bajillion Americans are watching Dancing with the Stars, are we going to watch Dancing with the Stars? Are we just doing something because we're part of the herd? Do we have any perspective? Do we have any starch? Do we have any sand in our craw? Do we have any spiritual life and depth at all? Or are we just another American being led by the nose by whatever the flavor of the day is? We ought to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Zealous, a zeal, a courage, a leaning forward, let's take this thing, let's hold this thing, let's stand up and be counted in the army of the Lord and not sitting down with the Amorites and breaking bread and naming their gods and participating with them.

We can enjoy a lot of the plunder of this life. There is nothing wrong with entertainment, don't misunderstand me. I love a game or a movie or a song as well as anybody.

Go look at my record collection. I've got a jukebox in my entryway for crying out loud. I love that stuff.

But we have to keep it in perspective. It's not my God and it doesn't define my day and it doesn't undergird my happiness. I can go for weeks, never hear a tune played.

I can go for weeks and never have any form of entertainment because that's not what defines me. That's not what forms the substance of my day. And that's how it should be.

If you are going to be courageous to keep and to do all that is written, you've got to know it and you've got to think about it. It's got to make a difference or we are wasting our time. Now, I want to get to something here before we get to the end of our time.

The Lord has driven these things out. God gives us the power, He gives us discernment. God the Holy Spirit helps us to see if we will listen, if we will cultivate His speaking, His voice, His presentation of truth in our souls.

We will see. If you want to know whether what you are doing has a good balance or not, ask. Ask and it shall be given.

Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened. God the Holy Spirit is there to lead us into the truth.

If the truth of it is that we've been deceiving ourselves, God the Holy Spirit will reveal it if we seek. Our heart is deceitful. God the Holy Spirit is not deceitful.

He will tell it exactly like it is. Sometimes our toes get stepped on, but that's what we need. Joshua says, Look, I am going the way of all the earth.

You know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. Reflect back on the faithfulness of God, the fulfillment of God's promises. I can honestly say, I remember when I was a teenager being taught from the pulpit about God's faithfulness and the pastor said, You young people, you teenagers, if you will commit your life to God, you will never regret it.

God will bless you. He will lead you. He will make your life so fulfilled and so enjoyable and you can actually live a life of no regrets.

And he was right. It is true. God has not one thing that fails of all of his promises.

To the extent that we are faithful and to the extent that we are obedient, there is not a single promise of God that will fail. By the same token, all of the promises of discipline are equally faithful and equally sure. Now, I want to point out one thing which we sort of glossed over here.

There is a lot you can talk about and much of this is right on the surface. You can read Joshua's words and they are so plain and so clear. What you see is what you get.

That is the kind of guy Joshua seems to have been. But look at this. Back up in verse 3 and 4. I am old, advanced in age.

You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you. For the Lord your God is He who has fought for you. He says, Look, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain to be an inheritance for your tribes.

Where? Where is the inheritance Joshua is talking about? From the Jordan with all the nations that I have cut off as far as the great sea westward. What patch of ground is Joshua talking about? It is the ten tribes land. What land is he specifically not talking about? Transjordan.

The east side. Sihon and Og. Who lives over there? What is the name of the tribes that live over on the other side of the Jordan? Reuben, Gad and half Manasseh.

It is a funny thing because they are a half tribe and it is also half the tribe. There is some confusion in some of the passages about which meaning is it. It is half the tribe of Manasseh over there because some of Manasseh is on the good side of the Jordan but they are also a half tribe.

Ephraim and Manasseh making up the 11th tribe of Joseph. I was thinking about this because Joshua doesn't bother to include Transjordan. He doesn't bother to include Gilead and Bashan.

The areas of Sihon and Og. Who conquered those and who divided those to Reuben, Gad and half Manasseh? Who did that? It was before Joshua, so who did it? Moses. They were still under Moses' leadership when they defeated Sihon and Og.

Those tribes asked for that land. They liked the grazing, kind of like Lot. Green grass.

I have lots of flocks and herds. Can't we keep this? They said, okay. You have to come over and fight but you can live over there.

That is what they did. I was thinking about this because why in the grand scheme of meaning and later significance, it is Reuben and Gad and Manasseh. I haven't done this in a while so in case you think I am becoming predictable and set in my ways and no longer out in the weeds and controversial, I will tell you something that I think is easily construed in that way.

I asked myself this question. These things are written for our instruction. Israel, as goes the nation of Israel, so goes the individual believer today.

You have the nation of Israel who initially has a generation drop in the wilderness. Subsequent generation goes into the land. Metaphorically speaking, spiritual application wise, what does it mean for us? We say, well, we are delivered.

The blood of the Passover lamb came out of Egypt across the Red Sea and that is kind of a picture of our salvation. And then we have this sojourn. And it depends on whether or not we are faithful.

We can have the Caleb and Joshua attitude or we can have the everybody else attitude and drop. And it is that next generation that is faithful that goes in with Yeshua, that goes in with Joshua. And they go in and take the land.

So I say, well, okay. At first blush, we want to seasonally hold of our inheritance. We've got treasure in heaven and so on.

But now, here is my sort of wild thought. And you can either agree or disagree. You can think I am overly stretched or not.

But I ask myself this question. Okay. This is a picture and it applies to us.

And in a way, the generation that goes for 40 years, that is the time of testing. And they drop in the wilderness. And the second generation, this is sort of like our earthly life.

And that second generation going into the land and possessing inheritance, that is kind of like our resurrection. God used two generations in Israel. But it really represents the believer.

Our flesh is going to drop and die. But faith and obedience will take us into the land to possess. Make sense so far? And so I think, well, how come the land was not empty? I think of treasure in heaven.

And when we are resurrected, Jesus comes back. Rapture of the church. Bride of Christ.

Okay. Overcomers. Seven letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3. Okay.

Great. We are going in. But what is the absolutely outstanding, overwhelmingly obvious feature about the land when Joshua and Israel go in? The inheritance is not just laying there to be taken, is it? They have to fight for it.

And this is after. This is the second generation. This is crossing the Jordan.

You know, I am bound for the promised land, Jordan. Stormy banks I stand. You know, a picture of going over and going in and possession.

This would be after resurrection, after glorification. And we are going to go in. But those people had to fight all kinds of battles.

You say, well, but really, it was the faith they had. Well, Caleb and Joshua are already a picture of faith and waiting for the inheritance. They make that picture.

These guys went in and fought. Most of them. But there were some tribes that settled for

stuff on the other side of the Jordan.

Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. So, bear with me. I am going to suggest something to you.

Maybe I am out in the weeds, but it won't be the first time or the last. Think about it. For the sake of argument, suppose that I am right about this and that this second generation going in and laying hold of inheritance pictures in many ways overcomers with the Lord Jesus going in and taking the spoils of victory.

But it is being taken from those whose iniquity is full and who are being judged. Now, in the grand scheme of human history, with resurrected saints crossing the Jordan, as it were, into eternal realms with the Lord Jesus, Joshua, Yeshua at their head, who are those who are evil whose time for judgment has come? Post-rapture. Whose time has come? What happened to the Legion and all of the demons and all of the followers of Satan? Satan is bound.

He is in the bottomless pit for 999.9 years during the tribulation period. It is singular to me that in the revelation during the millennial kingdom, there is no mention made of what happened to the demons. Where are the demons? Now, think about it.

Pre-history. This is a reach and this is a stretch. Forgive me.

But there is a civilization before mankind ever comes along, right? There is God in His throne. He's got a throne room. Lucifer is the guardian cherub.

He talks about his merchandise and his dealings. There is a great civilization. They live somewhere.

They do stuff. They have stuff. It's a giant kingdom of the sons of God pre-human history.

It's a kingdom. It's a place. It really exists.

They don't just hang suspended on threads like two-dimensional cutouts of cherubs with trumpets and wings shaped like babies over a crib. They're real creatures. They live somewhere.

They did stuff. They had a culture and a civilization surrounding the throne of God. There is an angelic kingdom, if you will.

And these episodes took place. There was a revolt. There was a rebellion in heaven.

Some of the sons of God went off on a different course. And they were cast out. Well, they are still circulating.

Their iniquity has become full as they have continued to manipulate and to interject themselves into or inject themselves to interfere in human history. They're muddying the

water. They're messing with things.

They're taking charge of nations and starting wars and inciting all kinds of violence and hatred of God and misinformation and deception. They are the rulers of the darkness of this age. They are in opposition to God and they continue to manufacture evil all through human history just like the Canaanites in the land manufactured evil against Abraham and against Isaac and against Jacob and against his descendants.

And God told Abraham, I'm going to let them run until their iniquity is full. And when the iniquity of the Amorites is full, your descendants are going to come back and kick their Canaanite rear ends out. They are going to judge them.

Their iniquity will be full. And your descendants, my people, are going to come in and take possession. I would suggest, I speculate, I hypothesize that it is important for us to learn how to fight this spiritual war now in our souls because we are going to be fighting a much more literal spiritual warfare in days to come after we are raised when we rule and reign with Christ.

Remember, more than once we are described as a great and mighty army riding on horses. Why? Who's to fight? The battle is won. It's the millennial kingdom.

People confuse it with heaven, streets of gold, pearly gates. Everybody will be happy over there. What's with the army? What's with the horses? What's with the vast host and multitude? The Lord Jesus Christ, Yeshua, I think, perhaps, is going to engage this evil population whose iniquity is now full.

One of the things we are going to be doing in the heavenly realms is doing just what Joshua did, the southern campaign and the northern campaign because before they took possession and before they had the rules for living in that land, what did they have to do? What happened in the first 12 chapters of Joshua? Conquest, conquest, conquest under the generalship of Joshua who never lost a battle. There is territory to be taken. There are Amorites in the spiritual realm that are going to be judged.

And I would submit that there are overcomers who by faith and by obedience are going to cross the Jordan into that land. God could speak a word and they would instantly be judged. They would instantly be in the lake of fire, right? I think I have often, and you have probably often figured that once the tribulation is over with, in the new kingdom, Gog and Magog and all that, but basically God is just going to say, okay, demons and Satan, lake of fire for you, and it's all over with.

God could speak it. But look, God could have done that in Canaan and He didn't, did He? He sent His own people and said, I can turn bad into good. I can work bad things together for good.

God works all things together for good. And think of what we can learn and think of what

we will remember. Just like Israel, when they went into the land and God was with them and God fought for them and God used them to judge the evil in the land.

I think it is at least possible that God will use us, the overcomers. Jesus said, you will walk with Me in white. You will sit with Me on My throne.

You will have the white stone and the new name and the hidden manna. The overcomers are going to take hold of possession in the same way that these people took possession. And it is by first judging the evil inhabitants of the land.

Now this brings me to Transjordan because there were those who were not ready to dwell in the land. And while they sent some warriors over to help fight, they did not maintain possession. They were content to dwell on the other side.

And who are they? Reuben. What do we know about Reuben? Reuben is Jacob's firstborn. Who does God say is his firstborn? Israel is My firstborn.

Israel is My son. God says it explicitly. So while there is conquest going on in the land, where are most of the Reubenites dwelling? You've got some warrior Reubenites who are men of faith and men of obedience and men of their word, and they go across and fight, just like you've got some Old Testament overcomers who will be in that great army, I think, with the Lord Jesus, doing this spiritual warfare.

But most of the rest of the tribe of Reuben is where? Not across the Jordan. In the land. In the land of the Millennial Kingdom.

On this earth. Not across the Jordan yet. You say, okay, I can see Reuben representing the nation of Israel, resuscitated Old Testament saints living in the land.

Not those who by faith and patience inherit the promises and go across and become a part of what Jesus is doing with His glorified army. What's the next tribe? It's the tribe of Gad. What's unique about Gad? Well, you probably can't remember.

I couldn't remember either. I had to go look it up. But Gad, his name means a troop.

And what happened in the birth order, how he got that name, Leah had four sons right in a row. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. And then she stopped bearing.

And Rachel got very unhappy with her sister having four sons and she having none. And so she gave her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob. And with Bilhah, Jacob had two more sons.

Leah decided that she was losing ground in the race. And so she sent her maid Zilpah into Jacob. And he had two sons with her.

And the first son with Zilpah is Gad. So this is a half-brother to Reuben. And is much later.

There's been some other sons in the interim. And so you have Gad. And he's actually the son of a concubine rather than the son of a wife.

So the sons that are actually from the wives of Jacob, there's six of them. There's four from Leah. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

And then Joseph and Benjamin from Rachel. The other six sons are slave sons. Well, no, there's four.

Each of the concubines has two sons. And then Leah had two more. And so you've got six from Leah.

You've got two from Rachel. And then you've got four from Bilhah and Zilpah. But Gad is the first one from Leah's concubine.

Before I get that too mixed up, here's the point. Gad has prophecies made about him. And those prophecies are what give us the clue as to what he represents.

His descendants, his name means troop or also good fortune. And he had a lot of livestock, and he wanted to stay on that side of the Jordan and sent the warriors across, of course. But they're going to settle in Gilead.

And the prophecy that Jacob made about him in Genesis chapter 49 is there's a play on his name. And he says he is going to be pursued by many, but he will pursue them in the end. And it literally says he will attack their heel.

He will be attacked by many, but he will turn and attack their heel. And so he's at the tail end. And to cut a long story short, I think that Gad represents the tribulational saints.

They are related to Jacob, but they are distant in time. They're related to Reuben, but they're distant in time. And they are going to be those who are at the end.

The other tribe you have is Manasseh. And what do we know about Manasseh? That's Joseph's oldest son. And there's that reversal where Ephraim gets the blessing.

And that tribe is split. Half of them are on one side, and half of them are on the other. And basically, if you think about all of the Old Testament saints, whether they are pre-flood or they are in the patriarchal age, all of those who are not in Israel represented by Reuben, you can pick them up under Gad or Manasseh.

And they are the ones who are going to end up remaining on the earthly side of the Jordan, if you will, for a time. But eventually, that is going to go away. In the later history of Israel, that side of the land is gone and it's no longer even mentioned.

And when Joshua talks in Joshua 23, he says, you know what, I'm just talking about between the Jordan and the great sea. That's the true land of promise. That's the place

of possession.

This is where we drove the nations out. This is where you need to be faithful and obedient. He doesn't even mention the other.

When he talks about living in the land for the future, we're no longer in conquest and we're no longer in the taking possession phase, he only talks about the portion between the Jordan and the great sea. And this is where the kingdom of the Father is. Ultimately, there's going to be no earth, and the place and the location of the millennial kingdom is going to be melting with fervent heat and rolled up like a scroll.

And all there's going to be is the heavenly realm, the heavenly kingdom where the new Jerusalem is, the new heaven and the new earth. That's where everything is going to take place. And those who pitch their tents and settle for an inheritance on this earth, even if it's in the millennial kingdom, if you settle for that and you don't come across and dwell in the land, you're going to lose it because that's going to go away.

God made no promises about driving out nations in Gilead and Bashan. He said, I will dwell with you, and I will drive out the nations before you across the Jordan. That's where we have to have our focus.

That's where we have to have our goal and have our sights set. This is the reason for faith and obedience. We think, well, it's just about getting through my day or my week or my month.

But there is a lot of activity ahead in the resurrection. There are things that we can't even wrap our minds around that are going to take place in God's plan. And this is just a shadow.

This historic account of what God did with that generation in Israel, under Joshua, in the land, is just a bare outline of some of the things that God is going to do. This is why we have to be ready. This is why we have to train our minds and condition our souls and develop the habits and the pattern of faith and obedience now because it is going to make a difference in the days ahead.

Look at Joshua's warning. You've got to remember who you are and why you're here. That's essentially what he tells Israel.

Don't forget the God that brought you into this land. Don't abandon Him. Don't turn aside to the right hand or to the left because possession of the land and maintaining that possession all depends on maintaining that perspective.

We have to think in exactly the same way. There are huge things coming in the eternal future. And the only way to get ready is to keep this perspective and develop it and cultivate it now.

We'll pick up here and see if we can finish Joshua 23 next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the exciting things that it reveals to us.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will remind us of our opportunities even as Joshua reminds the Israelites in this great passage. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.