

DANGERS TO WATCH FOR

Joshua 18:1-3; 20:1-6; 22:9-34

Introduction: Satan is always finding ways to keep Christians from living like God wants them to and the Christian must be "on his/her toes" all the time watching for the dangerous tactics that Satan uses to draw them from living as God wants.

Years of fighting for/in the promised land has just about ended, most of the enemy gone and each tribe has received their promised land. There is still the difficulty of staying in their land and they will be tempted to wander off across the river and into places that were in the land of promise.

The Christian also has to learn to "stay in his/her own promised land" and not wander off when Satan attempts to draw away. It is absolutely vital that Christians learn how to live in their land of blessing. There are many dangers to watch for in learning to live as God wants.

I. THERE IS A DANGER IN BECOMING IDLE AND SLACK

1. God assigned certain areas of the promised land to certain tribes, such as:
 - Benjamin was to live in a land "between the shoulders of God."
 - Issachar was given a land of the ocean and sand.
 - Asher was given a land of vineyards.
 - Naphtali was given a land wherein they would be immensely blessed by /God.
 - All these lands and others to the other tribes were given by God IF they would go into the lands and possess them.
 - *"...How long will ye be slack to go into possess what the Lord God of your fathers has given you?..."*
2. Every Christian has also been given a "land" full of blessings by God. Many have been enjoying the benefits of living in the "land." However, there are a great number who have yet to "possess their land." They have yet to give up their attachment to the world or something else they want to hold on to, therefore they are missing the blessing that would be theirs if they would completely "possess the land" God has given to them.
3. Many Christians expect little from God and even in "worship" they are slack and careless in possessing that which they already have from God.

II. THERE IS THE DANGER OF NOT TRUSTING

1. Two and one half tribes didn't want to cross over into the promised land. It was agreed that they could providing that they helped the other tribes conquer their assigned lands. They did and immediately wanted to go back across the river to their own lands.
 - An attitude of not trusting these two and a half tribes arose. They might just decide to pull out from the original 12 tribes and go their own way.
 - All turned out well eventually, but there was the problem of lack of trust among the tribes.

2. Christians also have a "not trusting" problem, called "misunderstandings." Quick to listen to gossip, quick to assign wrong motives to people, quick to believe a rumor concerning someone's character.
3. How many Christians have been "misunderstood," misjudged and hurt? If God's Children could learn to not gossip or believe negative things, God could bless so much and fewer of God's Children would be wounded by other of God's Children.
4. Israel had the problem of misjudging the two and one half tribes and gossip and rumors went around the tribes until a committee was appointed to find out what was going on.
 - The same problem exists today of not trusting each other.

III. JUST PLAIN IGNORANCE CAN BE DANGEROUS

1. God set up several "cities of refuge," three on each side of the Jordan river giving easy access to every tribe in the land.
 - These were places of refuge for anybody who unintentionally killed someone. A place to go to for safety but a place to be judged by the Levites.
 - If innocent, he could stay there until the high priest of his time died, then he was free to go home.
 - Ignorance on the part of friends and family of the one killed cried out for the death of the slayer, whether innocent or not, caused God to create these cities of refuge.
2. Anything contrary to God's perfect holiness is sin! Ignorance, carelessness, haste in judging, and misunderstanding others intentionally or unintentionally grieves God.
3. Christians also have a place of refuge to flee to and it is on the side of Jesus, our High Priest. At His side, the guilty can find cleansing and forgiveness and freedom. One will find safety there for our High Priest lives forever and we won't ever have to leave His protection.

CONCLUSION:

1. Israel longed for the land God had promised them.
2. Israel was slow to conquer and occupy their land.
3. Israel was quick to judge, not knowing the true facts.
4. God established cities of refuge where one could flee and be safe from those who sought his life.
5. The Christian also has a land, but tends to wander from it, is also quick to judge in ignorance and also has a place of refuge to flee for safety.