

The Conquest and Corruption of Canaan # 25

Nehemiah 9: 22-31

Tonight we continue to consider the prayer of Ezra and the people of Jerusalem. Through this prayer the people have offered worship, adoration, and repentance unto the Lord. As they considered all they had faced and the blessing of being able to return to Jerusalem, they sought the Lord in prayer. Their hearts were reminded of the trials Israel had faced as well as the rebellion of the people. Through it all God had been merciful and faithful to them, and they sought to praise Him for all His blessing in their lives.

This portion of the prayer focused on the blessings of Canaan, the attitudes and actions of the people, and the response of the Lord. God had been faithful to His promise and the people enjoyed His abundance, but sadly their continued rebellion brought the judgment of God.

As with much of Israel's history, we find great application for our lives as well. We can see an accurate depiction of our modern society in these verses. Time has passed and societies have changed, but the actions and attitudes of people are much the same. The attributes of God revealed in the text have not changed and they never will. They reveal the divine nature of God and He never changes. Let's take a few moments to consider the [details](#) of the text and seek to make application to our lives as we think on: [The Conquest and Corruption of Canaan](#).

I. The Abundance of the Land (22-25) – The people recall much in regard to the abundance of Canaan. Notice first of all:

A. The Inheritance (22) – [Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan.](#) God had promised Abraham that He would bring his children into this great land and God had kept His promise. The people inherited the land, just as God had said. He was faithful to His covenant with Abraham.

- We are heirs of promise, but it is a much different promise. Through our Lord, we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We have been promised an eternal home in the heavens, being prepared for all who belong to God by faith. I don't stand to inherit much in this life, as far as worldly possessions or real estate, but I have the assurance of an inheritance that is out of this world. [Phil.1:6 – Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:](#) [2 Tim.1:12b – for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.](#)

B. The Inhabitants (23) – Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it. The land was not given temporarily to those who followed the Lord from Egypt. God had promised this land to His people, and He blessed their children with the inheritance as well. Once they entered Canaan, God blessed them in such a way that they multiplied as the stars of heaven. God's blessing wasn't temporal, but enduring.

- We ought to rejoice in that tonight as well. I rejoice that the offer of salvation was not reserved for a few select generations and then withdrawn. I am glad that I too was offered salvation and have the privilege of enjoying the blessing and abundance of God. The same Jesus who died for the sin of previous generations died for my sin as well. He is the one and only Savior! All who look to Him in this day of grace have the opportunity of salvation. Our world may be dark, but hope is not lost. Our children and grandchildren have the opportunity of salvation today, just as we did. That offer will stand until the Lord comes again for the church!

C. The Intervention (24) – So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would. The land was inhabited by people greater and stronger than the Israelites, but God subdued their enemies and gave them victory over them. He drove the enemies out and allowed them to dwell there.

- We too face a formidable foe in our spiritual Canaan. We are no match for him; he is stronger than we are. However, he is no match for our Lord. The battle isn't ours. The saved are secure in Jesus and Satan can't undo our salvation or prevent our eternal hope, [1 Pet.1:3-5](#).

D. The Increase (25) – And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness. Once they inhabited the land, they found great abundance that God had provided for them. The land flowed with milk and honey and it was God who provided all that for them. They just went in and enjoyed His goodness. [Josh.21:45](#) – There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

- I don't preach the "health and wealth" doctrine that is so popular in our day, but I am convinced that it pays to live for God. He will care for His own. We may face trials and difficulty, but God will meet our needs. We can enjoy His goodness in this life and the promise of better things to come when we meet the Lord in eternity. [Mat.6:33](#) – But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

I. The Abundance of the Land (22-25)

II. The Apathy of the People (26) – It would appear that a people so blessed would have been faithful to the Lord and continued to serve Him, but sadly that was not the case. Notice:

A. Their Rebellion (26a) – *Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs.* The people became *disobedient*, that is “*contentious and rebellious.*” They *rebelled* against the Lord. This has the idea of “*revolting against authority.*” They cast the law of God behind them, refusing to acknowledge or adhere to it any more. The people developed an apathetic attitude that they no longer needed the ways of God and refused to walk according to His will for their lives.

- We see that in alarming fashion in our day as well. Modern society has rejected the Word of God, refusing to acknowledge it or submit to it. People live as they please, in blatant defiance and insubordination to the Lord, refusing to accept any accountability to Him.
- This is even common place in the modern church. We know what the Word says. We know what God expects and how we are to serve Him, and yet many refuse to submit to the authority of God. Anytime we live or behave contrary to God’s Word and His will for our lives, we have literally thrown His Word aside and chosen to live in rebellion.

B. Their Reproach (26b, 29b) – *and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations. [29b] yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.* God had chosen this people; He had brought them out of bondage and into a great land of abundance. He had given them His Word and a place to worship Him. They were given the privilege of a relationship with the God of heaven and yet their lives denied His very existence. They grew hard-hearted, rejecting His Word, and even killed the prophets who preached the Word. This people became a reproach to the God who had so abundantly blessed them.

- I fear much that is labeled Christianity today has become a reproach to our Lord. The Word of God has been cast aside in an attempt to please the masses. We have created a gospel that lacks repentance or any accountability. Preachers and teachers that stand for truth are ostracized and rejected. There is little tolerance for truth in our day. Many are becoming like the church of Laodicea, lukewarm on the Lord. They are neither cold nor hot. Many possess a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. I never want to be guilty of becoming a reproach on the church or my Lord. Let us seek to serve Him in purity and obedience!

I. The Abundance of the Land (22-25)

II. The Apathy of the People (26)

III. The Affliction of the People – Sin and rebellion came with a heavy price. God is holy and He will never condone sin or allow it to remain without being dealt with. Consider the affliction that sin brought the people. We see:

A. Their Bondage (27a, 28a, 30b) – Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: [28a] But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: [30b] yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. Sin resulted in bondage for the people. When they arrived in Canaan, God drove their enemies out and gave them rest, but because of sin and rebellion, He allowed the surrounding nations to afflict them and put them in bondage. It didn't have to be that way, but God dealt with their sin.

- We all know that we were born in the bondage of sin. In salvation, we are freed from the penalty of sin and its eternal bondage, but many believers suffer in bondage to the desires of the flesh. They choose to serve the flesh and its lusts rather than the Lord. There is no victory when we allow the lusts of the flesh to dictate our lives. We become slaves to our desires, even though we are no longer condemned by sin. Many Christians have lost their joy and victory because they have given in to the lusts of the flesh.

B. Their Brokenness (27b, 28b) – In these verses we find that the people eventually **cried out** unto the Lord because of their sin and bondage. Sin led them down a path that brought suffering and despair. The flesh may have enjoyed fulfilling its lusts for a time, but eventually they became broken over their sin and saw their broken state.

- I am glad for the conviction of the Lord that reveals my need for repentance, but this is never an enjoyable place for the child of God. Sin will always take you farther than you meant to go; it will keep you longer than you ever meant to stay; and it will cost much more than you want to pay. The most miserable people on the face of this earth are those who knew the blessings of God and His fellowship, but have strayed from that and into sin. We must do all we can to walk in close fellowship with our Lord, according to His will, and in complete submission to Him. When we begin to reject the ways of God for the desires of the flesh, we can count on brokenness somewhere down the road.

I. The Abundance of the Land (22-25)

II. The Apathy of the People (26)

III. The Affliction of the People

IV. The Attendance of the Lord – This powerful lesson does not end without hope. God would have been just to have left them to their sin and abandoned them altogether. However, He is a God of mercy and grace. We too have the assurance of His mercy in our lives as well. This is no license or encouragement to sin, but the Lord is always ready to forgive and welcome us back into fellowship with Him. We discover that:

A. God was Faithful – This is seen throughout the text that we have studied this evening. God had promised His people a possession and He was faithful to His promise. Even when they rebelled against God and abandoned His ways, God remained faithful to them. When they began to cry out in despair, due to their sin, God was faithful to hear their pleas, forgive their sin, and restore them again.

- Aren't you glad that our Lord is faithful? Even when we aren't, and many times we are not, He remains faithful. His faithfulness is not dependent upon me. He is faithful unto His own. His love for us is not based on our actions or deeds. He loves us because He chooses to! We would have to agree that God would have been just to have removed His hand of blessing and provision from America long ago, and yet He remains faithful.

B. God was Merciful (30a, 31) – *Yet many years didst thou forbear them, [31] Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.* God was merciful year after year. He withheld that which they rightfully deserved. He was gracious to them in that He provided that which they could never deserve. He withheld His judgment when it was deserved and provided blessings when they weren't.

- I rejoice in a gracious and merciful God. We could never have merited the favor that He has shown to us. Apart from His grace we would yet be in our sin, lost and condemned. In His mercy God withheld the judgment we deserved for our sin. We lived life contrary to His righteous standard. We were guilty as charged. We deserved eternal punishment, but God offered mercy instead. *Rom.6:23 – For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Wages are earned and deserve to be paid, but the gift of grace is free and undeserved. He loved us enough to offer grace and mercy!

Surely there is a parallel to all our lives within these verses. All who are saved have received the abundance of our Lord and yet many times we rebel against our Lord and choose a path of sin rather than one of obedience. There are times when God brings chastisement to our lives because of sin, but He will never forsake His children. I have been challenged to surrender my all to Him, in every aspect of life, seeking to serve and honor Him in all I do.

Also I am greatly reminded of the tender mercies and abundant grace of our Lord. He was gracious and merciful to Israel, but there came a time when mercy was withdrawn and judgment came. We live in the age of grace, but it will not last forever. One day grace will be removed and judgment will come. Have you trusted the Lord in salvation? Do you know for certain He is your Savior? Christian are we concerned for those who are yet unsaved and face a real possibility of standing before the Lord accountable for their sin? I pray that we will all sense the need of our day and respond accordingly.