

THE STRONG RECOGNITION OF THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS

JOSHUA 21:43–45

Introduction

Murder is a capital crime, a very serious offense. Killing people is a violation of the sanctity of life. The most valuable asset a person has is life itself, his own life. Therefore, to take a person's life is to steal the most prized possession he has. The *sanctity of life* cannot be over-stressed. For this reason, murder is a capital offense and is subject to the most severe penalty under law.

But there is a difference between deliberate, premeditated murder and accidental, unintentional murder (manslaughter). A man who intentionally kills a person with malice and forethought differs from a man who is sawing a tree that falls and kills a person. Being guilty of killing a person by accident is far less condemnable than killing someone deliberately with premeditation. For this reason, the penalty for deliberate murder needs to be different than for accidental, unintentional murder.

Long ago, years before the Israelites ever crossed the Jordan River to enter the promised land, God had instructed His people to make special provision for the person who committed accidental murder. He also charged His people to make special provision for the ministers of God. These are the subjects of this important passage of Scripture: *The Cities of Refuge and the Special Cities for the Levites: A Picture of Christ Our Refuge and of Ministers Being Willingly Provided For*, Joshua 20:1-21:45.

- I. The cities of refuge were set aside: a picture of Christ who shelters us from judgment (vv. 1-9).
- II. The special cities for the Levites (ministers) were claimed: a picture of strong zeal and faith in claiming God's promises (ch. 21, vv. 1-2).
- III. The cities for the priests were assigned: a picture of the people willingly and abundantly providing for the ministers of God (vv. 3-42).
- IV. The strong recognition of the LORD's faithfulness (vv. 43-45).

Joshua 21:43–45 The Strong Recognition of the LORD's Faithfulness

These verses conclude the inheritance of the promised land received by the Israelites. Note the focus of the verses: the strong recognition of the LORD's faithfulness. He is the subject in each of the verses, being mentioned two times in verse 44.

1. The LORD Himself gave His people their inheritance in the promised land (v. 43). The promised land was His to give. It was His inheritance; He could give it and divide it as He wished. Just as an earthly father often gives his inheritance to family or charitable institutions, so it is with God. God gives the inheritance of the promised land to His dear people, to those who believe and follow Him, supporting Him and His
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cause. Beginning with Abraham, God had promised that He would give the promised land to Abraham and his descendants — if they would just believe and obey His commandments (see notes, Gen 12:1-3. Also see Gen 24:7; 26:3; 50:24; Num 11:12; 14:16, 23; Deut 1:8, 35; 6:10) (Marten H. Woudstra. *The Book of Joshua*, p. 314.)

At long last, a generation of Abraham's descendants had proven faithful in following God and obeying Him. And the result was wonderful: they received the inheritance of the promised land. God proved to be trustworthy, true to His Word. God gave this faithful generation of Israelites, the descendants of Abraham, the promised inheritance. The great inheritance first promised to Abraham had been divided among his descendants. God had proven faithful.

2. The Lord gave His people rest — physical and spiritual rest, rest of body and heart (v. 44). The idea of spiritual rest is rich and full of meaning. Remember, the Israelites had always been pilgrims and sojourners on this earth, wandering about from place to place. They owned no land; consequently, they could not build homes nor farm crops for produce to eat, buy or sell. They had even been slaves in Egypt for about 400 years. And ever since their deliverance from slavery, they had been wandering about, living in tents, constantly having to break camp and move from place to place, never able to settle down and have a permanent residence. They had no permanent home, no permanent land, no permanent place to call their own. As stated, they were pilgrims and sojourners, wandering over the face of the earth with no permanent place to settle.

But despite being temporary residents upon the earth, the Israelites had one great thing: the hope of the promised land — the hope of God's rest. God had promised them *His rest*, rest of body and rest of spirit. God's promised rest meant receiving the inheritance of the promised land and being able to settle down, no longer moving about as pilgrims upon this earth. God's rest meant having a permanent home, being free from the hardships, trials and temptations of the wilderness wanderings. It meant no longer having to go without water and food, but having plenty to drink and eat. It meant having a land with an abundance of milk and honey and all other provisions necessary for life. God's rest meant having purpose, meaning and significance in life, a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction, of peace, security and protection — the provision of everything a person would need. Simply stated, God's rest meant the victorious life that knows God's care and provision, presence and guidance day by day.

Note what the verse says: the LORD Himself gave His people rest, physical and spiritual rest, rest of body and of heart. God was faithful in providing rest to His dear people — All the enemies had been conquered and the people now had their own land upon which they could settle and experience the day-to-day rest and guidance, peace and provision of God. (See notes, 1:10-15; 11:23, pt. 5; 14:15; 21:44, pt. 2; 22-4; 23:1-2).

3. God gave His dear people a victorious life. He helped them conquer all their enemies. In fact, He Himself delivered all their enemies over to them (v. 44). God's people

had now gained control of the promised land. They had defeated the great southern alliance and the mighty northern alliance of enemies that had tried to keep them out of the promised land (see notes, Josh 10:1-43; 11:1-12:24). Not a single enemy was now able to form a strong coalition against the people of God. The land had been brought under their control. The LORD had been faithful and had empowered His people to conquer all their enemies. No enemy remained, not an enemy of significant power — all because of God's faithfulness. God's faithfulness had given His people victory.

4. The LORD fulfilled every good promise He had made to Israel. Not a single promise failed (v. 45). Every promise was kept and fulfilled. God was faithful.

Thought 1. The LORD was faithful to the Israelites. He fulfilled every promise He ever made to them. This tells us something: the LORD will be faithful to us. He will keep His Word to us, fulfilling every promise He has ever made to us.

- (1) The LORD will give us the inheritance He has promised. And the inheritance is of more value than all the wealth and riches of this world.

Mat 16:26 *“What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Mat 6:20 *“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”*

Mat 19:21 *Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

Luke 12:33 *“Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.”*

Acts 20:32 *“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.*

Rom 8:16-17 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit, that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Gal 3:26-29 *So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Col 1:12 *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

1 Pet 1:3-4 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade kept in heaven for you.*

(2) The LORD will give us *His rest*, the rest of God Himself. He will give us both physical and spiritual rest, rest of body and of heart. For us, God's rest means living the victorious life, conquering all the enemies that face us as we walk day by day, the enemies that try to defeat and destroy us, that try to keep us from living a conquering, victorious life. *God's rest* means peace of heart and mind, a sense of purpose, meaning and significance. It means possessing a sense of deep fulfilment and satisfaction in life. It means confidence and assurance. It is having God's guidance and care. It is knowing that God's presence and guidance are with us moment by moment, day by day. *God's rest* is experiencing the fullness of life and having absolute assurance of living eternally with God. This is the rest that God promises to give us. And God is faithful to fulfil His promises.

Mat 5:6 *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."*

Mat 11:28-29 *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

John 4:14 *"But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

John 6:35 *Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

John 6:51 *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

John 7:37-39 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

Heb 3:18-19 *And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

Heb 4:1-3 *Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"*

Heb 4:9-11 *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.*

Rev 7:17 *For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

Rev 14:13 *Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labour; for their deeds will follow them."*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Exo 33:14 *The LORD replied, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

Psa 17:15 *And I — in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.*

Psa 107:9 *For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.*

Psa 116:7 *Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.*

Isa 28:12 *To whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest;" and, "This is the place of repose" — but they would not listen.*

Isa 55:1 *Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.*

Isa 58:11 *The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.*

(3) The LORD will give us a victorious life, helping us to conquer all the enemies that confront us and try to keep us out of the promised land of God. A victorious, conquering life over all enemies is the promise of God. And God is faithful to fulfil His promises.

Psa 44:5 *Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes.*

Luke 21:18 *"But not a hair of your head will perish."*

Rom 8:35, 37-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?....No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Rom 10:13 *For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Eph 6:10-13 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

1 Tim 6:11-12 *But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

1 Pet 5:8-10 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

1 John 5:4-5 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Exo 14:14 *The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.*

Exo 23:27 *I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run.*

2 Chr 16:9 *For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.*

2 Chr 32:8 *With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.*

Psa 34:7 *The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.*

(4) The LORD will fulfil every good promise He has made to us. Not a single promise will ever fail.

Mat 5:18 *"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."*

Luke 21:33 *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."*

1 Cor 1:9 *God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

2 Th 3:3 *But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.*

Heb 2:17 *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

Heb 10:23 *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

1 Pet 4:19 *So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*

Rev 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.*

Deut 7:9 *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.*

1 Kng 8:56 *Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.*

Psa 36:5 *"Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies."*

Psa 146:5-10 *Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God. He is the maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them — he remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, The LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD. ■*

THE FINAL ADMONITION GIVEN BY JOSHUA TO THE EASTERN TRIBES JOSHUA 22:01–05

Introduction

A “borderline believer” is a believer who compromises with the world. Compromising with the world is sin. Far too many of us lose sight of the great inheritance God promises us and begin to focus upon the world. When we look at it and see what it has to offer, we begin to covet the things of the world...

- coveting more and more money and the things it buys
- seeking illicit sex and fleshly pleasures
- craving larger houses, properties and other luxuries
- desiring more and more recognition, esteem and honour
- grasping after higher positions, authority and power
- wanting the fame and attention of the world

The things of the world can consume the human heart. And far too often, believers become engrossed in the world and become “borderline believers,” believers who are compromising with the world. They become half-hearted followers of Christ.

The East Jordan tribes of Israel had become “borderline believers.” The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had coveted the land of East Jordan. They knew that East Jordan was outside Canaan, was not a part of the promised land of God. However, this fact did not stop these tribes from insisting that Moses allow them to settle there, giving them the land as their part of the inheritance. (See notes, Num 34:2-15.)

The motive of the East Jordan tribes is a picture of worldly compromise. They became a prime example of “borderline believers.” They were always to be “on the other side,” “across the Jordan.”

This passage begins the last section of the great book of Joshua. Final preparations for living a full and victorious life were now to be made. Joshua would soon leave this earth and go home to be with the LORD. Consequently, he must do all he could to make sure the tribes of Israel lived a full and victorious life before the LORD. This is the subject of the present passage of Scripture: *The Final Admonition Given by Joshua to the Eastern Tribes: Warnings That “Borderline Believers” Must Heed to Secure God’s Promised Rest*, Joshua 22:1-34.

- I. The summons and strong commendation given them: a lesson on loyalty, faithfulness and completing one’s mission (vv. 1-3).
 - II. The “honourable discharge” given them: a picture of securing God’s *promised rest* (v. 4).
 - III. The strong admonition and charge given them: a lesson on keeping the commandments and law of God (v. 5).
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- IV. The wonderful rewards given them for their faithfulness (vv. 6-8).
- V. The dangerous crisis created by the eastern tribes, the appearance of rebellion: a lesson on guarding against turning away and rebelling against God (vv. 9-20).
- VI. The passionate defence by the apparent rebels: a lesson on the need to remember God and not forget Him (vv. 21-29).
- VII. The reconciliation and unity renewed: a lesson on the need to guard the unity and oneness of spirit among God's people (vv. 30-34)

I. *Joshua 22:01–03 The Summons and Strong Commendation Given: A Lesson on Loyalty, Faithfulness and Completing One's Mission*

The East Jordan tribes were summoned by Joshua and given a strong commendation. They had been faithful and loyal, and had completed the mission given them, the mission of fighting side by side with their Israelite brothers. Remember, the East Jordan tribes had inherited their land years before the other tribes of Israel. Moses had agreed to give them the East Jordan land only if they helped the other tribes conquer their inheritance. In fact, Moses had given them a very special mission: they had to be in the forefront of the battles, the spearhead division of the army. They were to lead the attack and be the first to engage the enemy. If they were willing to meet this condition, they could have the East Jordan lands as their inheritance.

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had agreed to the terms laid down by Moses. This agreement had taken place over seven years before the present event. These tribes had been faithful, loyal to the mission given them by Moses. They had spearheaded the attacks against the enemies of the promised land, been the first to engage the enemy throughout the seven years of military conquest. The major battles were over, and the promised land had now been conquered. It was time to go home. This was the reason Joshua summoned the tribes of East Jordan to appear before him and the Israelites, appear in military formation and array.

Note that Joshua commended the soldiers of the East Jordan tribes for their loyalty to their military commanders and to Moses. Then he commended them for having obeyed his orders throughout the difficult years of battle. But that was not all the commendation they received. Note what Joshua then said: they had been loyal to their fellow soldiers, to their fellow Israelite brothers. They had not deserted them, but rather they had carried out the mission given them by God Himself. They had proven faithful and loyal and had completed the mission given them.

Thought 1. What a dynamic example on faithfulness, loyalty and completion of one's mission. Imagine fighting in a war for over seven long years, always being in the spearhead division, always being out front in the battles, always being one of the first to engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Not in just three or four of the battles, but in all the battles over seven long years. This was the mission of the soldiers of

Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh from the East Jordan territory. And they were faithful in their mission, loyal in persevering to the very end of the conquest of the promised land.

God demands faithfulness, loyalty and perseverance to the end of our mission upon earth. We are to complete the call, the task God has given us to do. We are to persevere to the very end, laying hold of the inheritance God has promised us. The call of the hour is for men and women, boys and girls who will be faithful to God and His mission of reaching the world so that every human being can inherit the promised land of God. To achieve the mission of God, faithful and loyal witnesses are needed — witnesses who will persevere to the very end. Just as the East Jordan tribes helped their fellow brothers of Israel, so we must help our fellow brothers and sisters all over this world, help them to achieve their inheritance of the promised land. We must be faithful in reaching out to assist them, loyal and persevering to the very end.

Mat 10:22 *“All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”*

Luke 19:17 *“‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’”*

1 Cor 4:2 *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.*

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

Gal 6:9 *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time He will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Heb 3:5 *“Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house,” bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future.*

Heb 3:6 *But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*

Heb 12:1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

1 Pet 1:13 *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

2 Pet 3:13-14 *But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.*

Josh 23:8 *But you are to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have until now.*

II. *Joshua 22:04 The “Honourable Discharge” Given Them: A Picture of Securing God’s Promised Rest*

The East Jordan tribes received an “honourable discharge” (Warren Wiersbe. *Be Strong*, p. 137) from Joshua. They had been fighting for over seven long years, fighting and struggling to defeat the enemies of the promised land. They had witnessed the screams and horrors of war: the bloodshed, mutilated bodies, missing limbs and agonizing death of soldier after soldier. But through it all they had been faithful in helping their Israelite brothers secure victory over the enemies of the promised land. For seven long years they had been waging the battle against the enemy, never able to return home to their families, wives, children, parents and loved ones. But now, since the victory had been won, the promised land was at rest. The tribes of Israel could now experience the *promised rest* that God had pledged to give them. Since the *promised rest* had been achieved, the East Jordan tribes could now receive an “honourable discharge” and go home. (See notes, Josh 1:10-15; 11:23, pt. 5; 14:15; 21:44, pt. 2, 23:1-2.)

Thought 1. God promises to give us *spiritual rest*, the rest of body and the rest of soul. The *rest of God* means peace of heart and mind, the assurance of security and protection, purpose and meaning, fulfilment and satisfaction in life. Simply stated, *God’s rest* means that we live the victorious life over all the enemies that try to defeat and destroy us day by day; that we know the peace and security of God’s presence, provision, and guidance.

Mat 11:28-29 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

John 4:14 “But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Heb. 4:1-3 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, “So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’”

Heb 4:9-11 *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.*

Rev 14:13 *Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them."*

Exo 33:14 *The LORD replied, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

Psa 17:15 *And I — in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.*

Psa 23:1-6 *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Psa 107:9 *For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.*

Psa 116:7 *Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.*

Isa 28:12 *To whom he said, "This is the resting place, let the weary rest;" and, "This is the place of repose" — but they would not listen.*

Isa 30:15 *This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.*

III. Joshua 22:05 The Strong Admonition and Charge Given Them: A Lesson on Keeping God's Commandments

The East Jordan tribes were given a strong admonition and charge by Joshua. As these tribes returned home, one thing was an absolute essential: they must continue to be faithful to the LORD. They must keep God's commandments, always obey Him. If they were not faithful, if they failed to obey God and keep His commandments — they would lose the promised land. They would lose their *inheritance*. The spiritual rest they were now experiencing would be gone. All their hopes and dreams would be wiped out, crushed and dashed upon the rocks of despair. Joshua had to do all he could to prevent this from ever happening. Therefore, he gave a strong admonition to the tribes: they must be careful, very careful, to be faithful to God. They must take careful heed to keep the commandments and law of God. Joshua issued four strong charges to the East Jordan tribes:

1. The East Jordan tribes must be careful to love the LORD their God. Loving God is the first and greatest commandment. God's people must love Him with all their heart, mind, body, soul and strength. Note how practical the commandment is when it spells out mind, body, soul and strength.

Mark 12:29-30 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'"

Col 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Jude 1:21 Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Deut 6:4-5 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Psa 31:23 Love the LORD, all his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full.

2. The East Jordan tribes must be careful to walk in the ways of the LORD. They professed to be believers, the people of God; therefore, they must follow God. They must walk after the LORD, walk in the path He had laid out before them, and follow all His ways.

2 Cor 5:7 For we live by faith, not by sight.

Gal 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Eph 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Eph 5:2 And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Eph 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise.

Col 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 2:6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Rev 15:3 And sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of ages."

Psa 18:30 As for God, his way is perfect: The LORD's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.

Hab 3:6 *He stood, and shook the earth; he looked and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed — but he marches on forever.*

3. The East Jordan tribes must obey the LORD, keep His holy commandments (v. 5). God's promises were based upon obedience. If the people obeyed the LORD, they would be blessed by Him; but if they disobeyed Him, they would be cursed (Deut 11:26-28). Furthermore, a person who truly loves the LORD keeps His holy commandments. A person's love for God is proven by his or her obedience.

Deut 11:26-28 *“See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse — the blessing if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commandments of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.”*

Josh 1:8 *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

Mat 7:21-23 *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evil doers!”*

John 14:21 *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

John 15:10 *“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.”*

4. The East Jordan tribes must be careful to cling and hold fast to God. They must stand firm and never let go of the LORD. They professed to know the LORD and to follow Him; therefore, they must never let go of their profession. They must remain true to Him, true in their devotion and worship of Him.

Luke 9:23 *Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

Phil 3:7-8 *But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

Heb 3:6 *But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*

Heb 10:23 *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

Prov 3:5-6 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

Prov 23:26 *My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways.*

Isa 43:10 *“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”*

Jer 29:13 *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*

Joel 2:12 *‘Even now,’ declares the LORD, ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.’*

5. The East Jordan tribes must be careful to *serve* God; and note, they must *serve* the LORD with all their heart and all their soul. They must guard themselves against false gods and false religions. Their loyalty was due God and God alone. For God and God alone had given them the wonderful inheritance of the promised land. It was He and He alone who had empowered them to conquer all the enemies who had tried to defeat and destroy them, attempting to steal their inheritance from them. Because of who the LORD is and because of what the LORD had done for them, they were to *serve* the LORD with all their heart and all their soul.

John 20:21 *Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

John 21:16 *Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”*

Gal 6:2 *Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.*

Gal 6:10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

Eph 6:7 *Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men.*

Heb 12:28 *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.*

Exo 23:25 *Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.*

Deut 10:12 *And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Psa 2:11 *Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. ■*