

Avoiding Apostacy

Basis=Joshua 23:6-16

Intro:

- (1) We are dedicated to New Testament Christianity, restoring and maintaining.
 - restoring the faith and practice of the New Testament church.
 - dedicating to preaching and living the pure Word of God.
- (2) In so doing we must never forget the possibility of apostacy.
 - Apostacy = "an abandoning of what one believed in" "falling away from the pure Word".
 - New Testament writers warn repeatedly of this danger.
 - (1) Jude 3 (apostacy creeps in, Jude 4)
 - (2) I Tim 4:1-3
 - (3) II Tim 4:1-4
- (3) How can WE avoid drifting off into apostacy?
 - The Israelites faced the same problem just before Joshua's death.
 - Joshua gathered the leaders together and warned them of the dangers they faced and how to remain true to God, Joshua 23:6-11
 - His plan to avoid apostacy will work even today
- (4) Let's study his 4 safeguards to help prevent apostacy.

I. The Safeguard of Obedience

- (1) Joshua warned "do all that is written in the book"
 - Joshua 23:6
 - "be firm", not tossed about, Eph 4:14-15
 - "do not turn to the right or left"
 - this presupposes that they have a knowledge of laws.
- (2) God has always expected his people to strictly observe His laws. (children of Israel in Egypt)
 - Cain and Abel
 - Nadab and Abihu
 - Uzzah
 - King Saul and the Amalekites
 - Mt 7:21
 - Lk 6:46-49
 - even Jesus had to learn obedience, Heb 5:8,9
- (3) If we are to avoid apostacy, we must do exactly as God says (New Testament Christianity requires nothing less)
 - don't expect God's Mercy and Grace to substitute for obedience, Rom 6:1
 - there is no room for compromise
 - are you willing to build your life on the rock?
- (4) I Tim 4:13-16

II. The Safeguard of Separation

- (1) It is extremely important that the Israelites keep themselves apart from the surrounding nations.
 - Joshua 23:7-8,12
 - association with them would (and did) result in their destruction, Joshua 23:13,16
- (2) To avoid apostacy, Christians, too, are to be separate
 - Christians are sanctified people = set apart, I Cor 6:9-11
 - the church itself must remain as pure as possible.
 - (1) I Cor 5:9-13
 - (2) this we must do (on doctrine, not expediency)
 - 2 Cor 6:14-18 (Jehovah Witness=Jesus A god; instrumental music)
 - (1) what common ground do Christians have with the world?
 - (2) we must be distinctive...be the light for the world to see, John 3:19-21

III. The Safeguard of Introspection

- (1) Joshua told Israel to take a long, hard look inward
 - Joshua 23:11
 - diligent = "done with careful, steady effort; painstaking"
- (2) Comparing ourselves with His Word will help us avoid apostacy
 - examine yourself! 2 Cor 13:5
 - when confronting God's Word, we must be willing to make necessary changes, Jam 1:22-25 (look in a mirror)
 - corrections are always not easy, but are always necessary if we are to walk the straight and narrow path to heaven!
- (3) We should examine while we have the time
 - God will be true to His Word, Joshua 23:15
 - He is patient with us, 2 Pet 3:9-10

IV. The Safeguard of Love

- (1) Make every effort to love the Lord your God
 - Joshua 23:11
 - do not mention, swear by, serve, or bow before any other, 23:7
- (2) Love is the greatest safeguard to help avoid apostacy
 - Mk 12:29-31, if we love with heart, soul, strength, mind, then...
 - (1) we will keep HIS commandments, John 14:15
 - (2) we will forsake all other things to serve Him.
 - (3) we will not want a religion to please us foremost.
 - genuine love advertises true discipleship, Jn 13:34,35
 - love characterizes true Christianity, I Cor 13:4-8a

Conclusion:

- (1) These 4 safeguards will help avoid apostacy
- (2) Let's all resolve now to make these principles part of us.
 - strict obedience to God's Word
 - seperation from the world and its influences.
 - self-examination regularly
 - love God...devotion to Him.
- (3) Unfortunately, Israel did not keep Joshua's instructions
- (4) Will we? Our history has yet to be written.

10-7-90 P.M.

THINGS WE CANNOT ESCAPE Intro:

1. In the San Francisco Bay, a twelve acre island of solid rock is found. From 1933 to 1963, site of Alcatraz prison. Hardened criminals confined. Thought to be escape proof. Yet, attempts were made; some thought to escape to safety. ("Bird Man of Alcatraz).

1. Houdini, thrilled audiences with escapes from situations thought impossible. Died in an attempt to escape from shackles while submerged under water.

2. Some things which it is impossible to escape. We might be ignorant of these, disbelieve and reject them, but cannot do away with them. Might ignore, neglect, or even despise, but this does not free us from the inevitable.

DISCUSS: THINGS WE CANNOT ESCAPE

I. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:

- A. To God. He has always held men responsible for obeying His will, receiving His grace, salvation.
 1. Today, man must come to God through Jesus. "What will you do with Jesus?" He has given his law in order for one to become a Christian: Faith (Jn. 8:24); Repentance (A. 17:30); Confession (Rom. 10:9); Baptism (Mk. 16:16).
 2. Each responsible for decision to obey. No one can do this for us. (Acts 2:40) May decide to ignore or reject; but does not free from responsibility. (Acts 13:46)
- B. Each Christian has personal responsibility in remaining faithful. "Working out own salvation with fear, trembling." (Phil. 2:12).
 1. Those who endure to end will be saved (Mt. 24:2-13; ;Rev. 2:10).
 2. We must not be just hearers, but doers. (Jas. 1:25)
 3. Those who are not faithful, will be lost. Can't make excuse that temptation too great, or others did not do enough to help...Inevitable fact we must face.
- C. Every Christian is personally responsible in helping to save souls: both aliens and fellow Christians (2 Tim. 2:2; Jas. 5:19,10).
 1. Should realize personal responsibility as did Paul. (Rom. 1:14)
- D. Parents have responsibility in training children.
 1. Owe them spiritual training. (Eph. 6:4) Many give children everything but that which is the most important....Concerned with food, clothing, home, money, good education.
 2. Never concerned with proper example, Bible study, worship, proper conduct, speech. (see Deut. 6:4-7).
- E. Reason we cannot escape:
 1. The all seeing eye of God: Omnipresent—"Eyes of Lord in every place beholding the evil and the good." (Prov. 15:3).
 - a. All things are naked and open to God's eyes. (Heb. 4:13).
 - b. Truth should keep us from sinning; cause us to always watch words, deeds. "Be