

## Entering a new land (conclusion)

### Introduction

#### Recap

- God's command is to go into the new land, the peoples who do not know him as Lord, and proclaim his Lordship there
  - what is the "territory" that God is calling us to reach like? How can we "spy", or listen carefully to what is really happening there, even getting help from unexpected places, so that his kingdom can advance?
  - call to actually move, enter into the land, not just talk about reaching others...
  - as we do, to be devoted to the Lord
  - and as we enter in, are we ready to see God move in sometimes surprising ways, conquering territory we could not, and in ways we could not conceive...
- Noted that there will be times of failure (*Achan, Ai*) - and we need to guard against them, and deal with them appropriately, for sin is serious
  - but restoration is possible; a return to the devotion to the Lord is called for
  - there will be times when we can't see what is happening around us, and are in danger of being taken in by some new fad or by certain people - need to ask the Lord for discernment
  - for the battle is his; nothing surprises God; the battle is his, and he is able to intervene in the most amazing ways... even when there is still plenty of land to conquer!
  - there will be opportunities to work with others, seeing the land "divided"...

#### Overview

- Basically three observations about what happened towards this period of concentrated kingdom advance:
  - one per chapter, ch.20, ch.22, ch.24...
  - key observations on what happened then that cast light on what should or might happen today...

### God's rule brings practical blessing (Joshua 20)

- God's rule brings justice, protection of the vulnerable, grace rather than the harsh justice of law...
  - explore the implications of the ruling at the beginning of Joshua 20
  - still faced justice, but not summary revenge, had their chance to defend themselves in court...
- Seen these things in history:
  - schooling, rooted out of Christian concern
  - turning over of the slave trade
  - we might look to a more contemporary political agenda, and think about right to die legislation...
- Or away from the political scene:
  - volunteering - "Evangelical Christians volunteer half a million hours each week"
  - Summer Focus, gardens
  - campaigning for asylum seekers
- More personally:
  - do our lives bring practical blessing?
  - listening ear to those who need heard?
  - practical help to those in need?
  - do we see the difference to the *whole* of life that coming to faith brings?
- (*Challenge of people who come to faith moving on from areas of poverty and need - contrast with the society of my grandparents generation?*)

## Seasons of service (Joshua 22)

- *Some are called to specific seasons of service, and then to go home - where their basic task is the same, to see God's kingdom established*
- Sketch in what was going on with tribal allocations (map on screen)
  - refer back to promises of help, and coming with the rest of the Israelites into Canaan
  - nature of nationhood less well established - confederation of tribes...
- (Back to heading)
- What characterised the end of this period of service for the Reubenites, Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh?
  - there was proven faithfulness by them (22:3)
  - there was the fulfilment of promises made to them (22:4)
  - there was encouragement to them to continue walking with God (22:5)
  - there was blessing given to them (22:6)
  - misunderstandings were cleared up (22:11-34); Israelites thought the Gadites etc were setting up an altar to another God, not as a safeguard to their own on-going relationship with God...
- This affects our attitudes to folk who come and join us for a while, but then move on:
  - we hold with open hands; we seek to bless; we seek to encourage and hold them accountable
- And also our attitude to those from our own midst who are called to serve elsewhere
  - we hold with open hands; we seek to bless; we seek to encourage and hold them accountable
- And also how we think about things we set up:
  - are they permanent, or are they always to be "appropriate for now"?
  - will affect how we feel about stopping doing something - doesn't necessarily reflect failure...

## What's next? (Joshua 24)

- *Continuing commitment to serve the Lord, and continue to work to see his kingdom established.*
- Covenant renewal:
  - history rehearsed, God's commitment reaffirmed, people's response sought...
  - this is who we are, this is where we are going...
  - (with practical action to confirm the warm words - throw away your idols, 23:23)
- What's next for us?
  - do we see ourselves as seeking to establish God's kingdom in places his rule has not yet touched?
  - in bringing people to bow the knee to Christ themselves?
  - are we in a campaign, a battle, a conflict?
  - are we committed to that cause, willing to go where God leads, listen to his prompt, do things in fresh ways, be willing for God to do things differently from how he has worked in the past, open to help from unexpected places...?