Joshua - Commentaries by John Gifford Bellett

Notes on Joshua, Conclusion: Joshua 24

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In taking leave of this Book of Joshua, I would say that I read it as occupying morally very much the same place in the Old Testament which the Apocalypse occupies in the New. This may sound harsh and strange, but it is not so. Joshua is the book that reads to us the judgments of the Lord upon the land of the Amorites. The Apocalypse reads to us the judgments of the Lord upon the apostate nations of the last days. Joshua, likewise, is the book of the inheritance, telling us of the division of the promised land among the children of Abraham and the setting of God's name and worship there, as a land brought back to God out of ruin and pollution. The Apocalypse in a New Testament or heavenly character is the same. The seven-sealed book is there opened and the judgments which follow, clear the scene for the glorified Bride of the Lamb to descend and take her connection with the earth beneath.

As Joshua brought in the tabernacle of God into the possession of the Gentiles, so the city of glory, the holy Jerusalem, is seen, in Revelation 21:10, to descend, having "the glory of God" in the midst of her, that the lordship of the world to come may be taken, and the throne of God and the Lamb set up over the redeemed creation.

A solemn thought it is, that in the history of this world, God is displaying righteousness, as well as manifesting and dispensing grace. In the Scriptures we have samples of this, as in His dealings with the world before the flood, with the cities of the plains, with Egypt, with the Amorites, with Israel and with Christendom.

God makes His power known and shows His wrath on the vessels which have fitted themselves for destruction, as He displays the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He has Himself prepared for glory.

But it is solemn, though needed. When His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness, learn that there is righteousness with Him (Ex. 7:1-5; Isa. 26:9; Rev. 15:4). Grace has been already proposed, the purposes and provisions of it are brought forth and revealed; but grace being despised, judgment enters, and righteousness is taught by judgment. Then grace having gathered its own, and judgment having cleared the scene, glory will be revealed and set up, and the kingdom will be the place of living, practical righteousness. The scepter of it will maintain righteousness—and beautiful, let me say, will this be. Grace will be celebrated in a scene of righteousness; redemption will be had in everlasting remembrance in the place where all will be truth and holiness. The grace of redemption will have been introduced to a region of cloudless, unspotted purity.

What a bright and perfect combination! Grace is known; entire debtors are we to it for what we are and where we are; but it is not taken advantage of, as we speak. It will not be wronged. It shall be known and gloried in when all around is righteous and pure, and where nothing will enter that can defile.

Such will be the coming kingdom in the moral realities of it, and such in spirit is now our place in the Gospel. The grace of God has brought salvation, but it has also taught us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly.

It is a simple further reflection upon this book that now the covenant was made good, which gave the land wherein the fathers had been strangers, the land of their pilgrimage, as an inheritance to their children (Ex. 6:5). We are not to forget this. The place that once witnessed pilgrimage and strangership is now the scene of citizenship and inheritance. Significant indeed this is—a child may read the story, and as he reads the story, interpret the parable or draw the moral.

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