The Terre Haute SPEAKER

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God…" (1 Peter 4:11).

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"Take Diligent Heed"

by John Isaac Edwards

Joshua chapter 22 records the return of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh unto the land of their possession on the east side of Jordan. Joshua sends them away with a blessing and with a solemn charge to "…take diligent heed…" (v. 5). To take diligent heed is to give careful attention to. Let's notice some areas in which the 2 1/2 tribes were charged to take diligent heed.

1) **To Do the Commandment and the Law.** The Lord's commandments constitute His law, and the Lord's law consists of His commandments. Wise Solomon said, "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee" (Prov. 3:1-2). Again, "Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye" (Prov. 7:2). Moses, in his obedience speeches in the plain of Moab, put a lot of emphasis on doing the commandment and the law, as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. Doing the commandment and the law involves not adding unto the word, neither diminishing from it (Dt. 4:1-2). The final beatitude of the Bible pronounces, "Blessed are they that do his commandments…" (Rev. 22:14).

2) **To Love the Lord Your God.** Moses called upon Israel, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God…" and he admonished them as to how to love the Lord: "… with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Dt. 6:5). "This is the first and great commandment" (Mt. 22:37). It is such love for the Lord that prompts one to "…keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway" (Dt. 11:1). In Joshua's farewell address to the leaders of Israel he urged, "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God" (Josh. 23:11). When we take diligent heed to love the Lord wholeheartedly, everything else will fall into its proper place!

3) **To Walk in All His Ways.** You might underscore the word "all." Some want to walk only in the ways which are

agreeable to them. We need to learn, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55:8-9). One thing that contributed to the downfall of Israel was, "…they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law" (Is. 42:24).

4) **To Keep His Commandments.** In the giving of the Ten Commandments God said, "…shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Ex. 20:6). Again God was heard to say, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Dt. 5:29). This is the whole of man (Eccl. 12:13). God's commandments for us today are within the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; Ps. 119:172). May we keep 'em!

5) **To Cleave unto Him.** This word "cleave" is the same word used of the husband/wife relationship (Gen. 2:24) and of the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship of Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:14). It is to adhere, specially firmly, as if with glue, to be glued. Moses said of the Lord, "…to him shalt thou cleave…" (Dt. 10:20). One of the things that made King Hezekiah of Judah so great was, "… he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him…" (2 Ki. 18:6). Let us do the same!

6) **To Serve Him with All Your Heart and With All Your Soul.** Too many want to serve the Lord half-heartedly. As Samuel said unto all Israel, "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you" (1 Sam. 12:24).

Joshua's parting charge to the 2 1/2 tribes to take diligent heed is a good charge for us today!

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