



June 21, 2024

Change our Focus

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

As many of you are aware, a week and one half ago I had a bicycle accident to avoid being hit by someone who ran a stop sign. I am ever so slowly recovering but have been forced to stop my normal workload and spend several days of resting more which has given me time for further reflection upon my blessings. The pain reminds me how temporal things are in our physical lives.

While taking a little time, sitting on my back porch, and slowing down from the pace I often find myself in, I've also had time to reflect more on my calling, and what God has in store for you and me.

My wife and I have shared that "...all that is happening around us will consume our thinking and focus if we let it!" We concurred that we need to make a purposeful shift of focus to what God has laid out in His plan from before the foundation of the world.

It's interesting how much time we can spend on social media, news outlets, and the like, and it will shift our focus to this world instead of our Father and His Son. Even simple things like the weather updates now are sensationalized to strike fear and worry into the hearts of us all if we're not careful. Some seem to become engrossed in alternate news sources laying out how bad things are going to get. That may have its place, but might I encourage us to sincerely be careful to not put our focus on such?

So, how often do you reflect on and think about what a fabulous future we have as future inheritors of eternal life? In preparing messages for the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles, I'm once again forced to make a definitive shift in my focus.

Have you thought about what will be our areas of responsibilities and service under and with Christ? It's a great focus! And, I might add, it will take your focus off all the doom and gloom and destruction that's here and coming. I didn't say ignore it, I'm suggesting we change our focus.

What planets, galaxies, nations, cities or parts of cities or townships will we have responsibility for? Of course, it is obvious we will have to endure and continue this course as Christians to be there to find out.

"Inheritance" was important in God's instructions to Israel. We've read in Acts 17 of the action of the Most High in dividing or apportioning the inheritance to the nations. He determined boundaries taking into account the number of the children of Israel. The Greek word translated "boundaries" (NKJV) or "bounds" (AV) is *horothesia* and refers to the "setting of boundaries." (Online Bible Greek Lexicon)

God led Joshua to determine the boundaries or territorial borders of the tribes of Israel as recorded in Joshua 15-16. At times, specific cities are mentioned as part of the inheritance or possession of a particular tribe. Numerous cities with their villages are mentioned in Joshua 15 within the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah. There must have been some kind of process to assign plots of land to individual members of the tribes of Israel.

There were several statements in the Pentateuch that dealt with preserving the boundaries of the assigned plots of land owned by individual Israelites.

"You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess." (Deuteronomy 19:14)

'Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!' (Deuteronomy 27:17)

The Hebrew word translated "landmark" is *gebuwl* and refers to border or territory (Online Bible Greek Lexicon). The translators realized that the borders would be defined by landmarks, often stones or stone cairns, and it was these landmarks or monuments that could be illegally moved to try to enlarge one's plot of land and diminish the other's. This prohibition against moving a boundary or landmark is also mentioned in the Book of Proverbs (Prov. 22:28; Prov. 23:10). In the latter reference it mentions the additional offense of taking part of the land of the fatherless by the act of adjusting the boundary by moving the landmark!

One more interesting mention of the serious illegal action of moving a boundary or landmark is found in Hosea 5:10. *"The princes of Judah are like those who remove a landmark."* God was addressing their evil behavior and unfaithfulness and comparing it to that of stealing another man's land.

Individual ownership of property was important in the structure that the Lord set up in how the nation was to be administered. Yes, the Lord owns everything. *"Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it."* (Deuteronomy 10:14)

It is His right to apportion the land of the earth as He determines. Men will try to override God's instructions, and the result is always anything but good and positive.

The Lord developed a legal system to maintain original private ownership of the land of Canaan that was given to the tribes of Israel. It is called the Jubilee. We see the basics described in Leviticus 25. *"And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you*

shall return to his family. "In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession." (vv.10, 13)

It will be interesting to see how Christ as the governing king directs the distribution of land and ownership when He returns. No doubt the principles we have examined above will play a part.

In our current circumstances, we see ownership of land is in jeopardy on multiple levels. How many family farms or other property have been lost to the state when unreasonable property taxes have not been paid because of reduced income or other financial adversities? Some even have stated that the deed to the land is not actually owned by the one who has paid off a loan and is the supposed owner. There is much to change and be rectified in the future. Things as we know it in this nation will be dramatically changed!

We also have an allusion to inheriting something incredibly awesome. Hebrew 2:5-8 states that God will eventually "*put all things in subjection under his (man after his transformation to be above the angels) feet.*" What does "all things" refer to? It evidently refers to more than just this planet earth! Again, we will find out in the future...pretty exciting!

So my friends, focus on the promises of God, dig into His Word, and keep your eyes focused on our Father and Christ the living head of His church. Don't get sucked into the shift of this world, its social media distractions, its fears, and focuses. There's a spirit behind all of this, and it is not of God.

Let's you and I stay strong, vigilant and focused on the God who has called us, allowing Him to live in us, looking forward to that coming Kingdom of God! And, it IS coming! That's a promise.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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