

The Book of Joshua

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Marching Under God's Orders!

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-- Written in 1988 --

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*"Possess the land, which the Lord your God
giveth you to possess it" (Joshua 1:11).
It is God's to give!
It was theirs to possess!*

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Introduction

*"Possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it" (Joshua 1:11).
It is God's to give! It is ours to possess!*

A Book of Conquest, of Possession

Joshua is the book of conquest. It is the glorious history of the battles and trials as Israel entered into their Canaan heritage as they marched under God's orders. (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6) This book relates the settlement of the children of Israel in Canaan, proving God's faithfulness in keeping promise with Abraham.

This book of Joshua is the book of inheritance in a distinct way, and links with the book of Ephesians. As the children of Israel entered into their material heritage, so we are to enter into our spiritual heritage (Ephesians 1:3-14). As they were to *"possess their possessions"* through faith, labor, tears, warring, and obedience, so we can only enter into our spiritual possessions through faith, labor, tears, and warring against sin, the world, and the devil.

(II Corinthians 6:4-10), We must have victory over the old sin nature.

A Book Bearing the Name of the Leader

As the book is named after the hero, Joshua, the leader of this great conquest, so Jesus, Savior, is our Captain. It is significant that the name Joshua (in Hebrew, Hoshea) means Jehoshua, *"God's salvation."* Joshua was the leader, the appointed one by God, and his name is the same in meaning as the name Jesus and the Greek form of Joshua's name would be *"Jehovah the Savior"* speaking of Christ.

Moses, the Law-Giver, was dead, as he was not permitted to lead them into the Promised Land. Neither can the law lead us into the promised land (Galatians 3:1-23). Joshua took up where Moses left off. Christ took up where the law left off, replacing, and fulfilling the law (Galatians 3:13).

This book takes up where the book of Deuteronomy leaves off. It is a continuation of the history of the chosen people. God used Moses to lead them out of bondage, and now they are to be led into the promised land. In this book, Israel not only overcomes the enemy, but occupies the land God had promised. God never leaves His work. He completes what He has begun (Philippians 1:6).

God had been preparing Joshua for years. He was born into slavery in Egypt, but God led him out and made him a co-laborer of Moses. He was always a valiant captain. He was the one that was almost stoned to death because he urged the children of Israel to advance into Canaan forty years before (Numbers 14:6-10).

Some Important Thoughts

1. Remember as we study this book of Joshua that God gives, but man must take. This book is dealing with overcoming the enemy and occupying the land under God's orders.
2. This book falls into two major parts:
 - Conquest of the Promised Land, chapters 1-12
 - Occupation of the Promised Land, chapters 13-24
3. God has prepared a place for you to labor. Success comes because of our readiness for opportunity. Joshua was ready to take the place of God's choosing. God is looking for men like Joshua who He can use today.
4. Joshua was a humble man who knew how to walk with God and seek His power.
5. Joshua was a man of prayer, courage, faith, leadership, enthusiasm, and honesty. He is a type of Christ in name and work.
6. This book completes the redemption out of Egypt. Our redemption is complete in Christ and we are to be led by our Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ and walk under His command.
7. The **key verse** of this book is **Joshua 1:3**. Israel's ownership was unconditional, but their possession was conditional. The **key word** is **possessing** not victory. Israel was to possess their possessions by faith, and by obedience.

1

The Soldier of the Lord

Joshua 1:1-9

Introduction

Study the introductory materials, get them well in mind. They will help you in this chapter, and with the book as a whole.

As the Israelites were to be blessed with all material blessings in the land of Canaan, we are to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:1-7).

The setting of the book is important. Moses was now dead, and Israel was encamped on the east side of the river Jordan. They were now in the land of Moab on the eastern border of the land that was to become theirs. Moses had gone to Mount Nebo, and had viewed the land, but could not enter in. He pleaded with God, but the Lord did not allow him

to enter the land (Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34:4-12).

Joshua was now commissioned to take his place. Now he was to "arise, go." "Treading upon" that which was to be theirs, it would become theirs. It would take action to possess the land. The title given by God was not enough, they must conquer and take it. We should ask ourselves, "Do we inherit our possessions in Christ as we ought?" (II Corinthians 1:20; Hebrews 5:11-14; Hebrews 2:1). We can have a library of books, but they are not ours until we have the content as ours.

The Duty of Courageous Strength (Joshua 1:2-7)

The first command was a trial of faith -- 1:2. Jordan was in flood stage (3:15). Here was a great host of people (probably nearly three million), with their belongings and livestock. There were no ferries, no bridges, no boats, no possibility of wading the river. What a formidable enemy the river was to them! They had no hint of any means from the Lord, just His command, "Go!"

Consider: Many times in life, if we are going to be used of God, we must face undertakings in which we cannot see the way. God will make the way. God knows and with His commands comes His abiding.

The first encouragement was "be strong" —1:6. The word "strength" comes from a word which means "twisted together." A rope is strong because it has many strands twisted together. This is the meaning of Ephesians 6:10: "Be strong in the Lord..." We are strengthened, "twisted together," with the Lord. Strength is a duty, therefore weakness is sin. See what God says about it in I Corinthians 15:58; I Timothy 6:12; II Timothy 1:7; and Ephesians 6:10. Let Christ's strength be your strength. Walk by faith, believing Him for His power and strength. "...as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." (Joshua 1:5b).

The second encouragement was "be of good courage"—1:6. Courage is also a duty; despair is a sin. God is the God of all encouragement, and He wanted Joshua to be encouraged to trust in His great power (Psalm 27:14; 31:24; Isaiah 41:6,11).

The Duty of Implicit Obedience To the Word (Joshua 1:7-8)

God gave Joshua the recipe of a successful life. Do you want to prosper? Do you want to have success? God gives the key in such a life.

Joshua was fitted to command by first obeying. No one can exercise authority and do it well, until they are first under the authority of another. No person alive is free from authority over him, no matter how many people he may have under his authority, or how much authority he might have. We all must submit to the authority over us, and to God and His Word (v. 7). God's Law (God's Word) is our "marching" orders. Israel was about to march into the land which had been promised so many centuries before. All was to take place under God's command.

God's Word is our law of conduct and action. God's will for us is to take spiritual land for His glory. God's work must be done in God's way, under the direction of God's Word (v. 7).

Consider: Too often teenagers, and adults alike, do not want to submit to authority. We reject or resist the God-given authorities in our lives. The early church said, "We must obey God," (Acts 5:29; John 15:14). God says about the pastor and authority, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews 13:7,17).

Joshua fitted to command by daily meditation—1:8; Psalm 1:1-3. The command was to meditate, not just read. By meditation, we make the Word of God our very own. Mere intellectual acquaintance with the Word of God is not enough. It must be applied to the life. We must appropriate the Word of God for power (Psalm 119:97-104), progress (Psalm 119:9-16), and provisions (Psalms 119:161-169).

The best obedience comes from the best knowledge and best knowledge comes from meditation and brings wisdom. Joshua depended upon the written Word of God to bring him knowledge and wisdom (cf. II Timothy 3:16,17).

Remember: The book of Ephesians is a counterpart in a spiritual way to what the book of Joshua is in a material way. It was physical and material blessings which they were to make theirs. It is spiritual and eternal blessings we are to make ours. .. now.

The Sure Victory of Bold Obedience (.Joshua 1:8.9)

To be saturated with the Word of God is to be assured of victory. No weapon against us can prosper if we are walking, talking, living, acting, and wrestling in the power of the Word of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). Joshua was conscious of his own inadequacy and his weakness. He never thought he "could take them on." But God said, "*Be strong...be not afraid...neither be thou dismayed.*" The Lord was promising sure victory on the basis of bold obedience. This is our promise today.

Many of us are too big for God to use. We are full of our own schemes, our own way of doing things, and our own selfish, proud ways. God must humble us, break us, and empty us. This comes from submission and obedience. It is only through the Word of God that the Spirit of God can come in fullness on your life. There is no short cut to victory or to holiness. We are called to be faithful, and obedient.

It would take bold obedience to lead a nation on foot, a nation that was not used to warfare, that must now face seven warring nations who inhabited "Canaan Land." It would take bold obedience to face a river at flood stage, and say we are going to "march into that land." It will take bold obedience for us to march against the enemy daily. We must have bold obedience to the Lord daily: **HOW?**

1. Resist the Devil (James 4:7)
2. Reject the world John 15:18-23; I John 2:15-17)
3. Reckon the flesh to be dead (Romans 6:11-14)

It was by bold obedience that Paul was mightily used for God. God desires that of us, my friend (Acts 9:6). **Memory Verse:** Joshua 1:8.

Preparing to Obey the Lord

Joshua 1:10-8

Introduction

"...arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them... every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you...." (Joshua 1:2,3).

Israel's long period of wanderings was ended. They were forty years making their way to the land God wanted to give them when it could have been a journey of but eleven days by the shortest route. For forty years they were outside of God's best for them. But now they were to prepare to obey the clear direction under Joshua's leadership.

It had taken them two years (they were encamped for a long time at Mount. Sinai) to get to the place (Kadesh-Barnea) where they had sent out the twelve spies (Numbers 13, 14). They had spent another thirty-eight years in wandering in the desert due to their unbelief and disobedience (Numbers 14:20-38).

The former generation had refused to let God direct them. They had lost out. Now a new generation had grown to adulthood, and was ready to enter into the promised land. God had not forsaken them over those years. Praise Him. God never fails, He fulfills that which He has promised (Titus 1:2). He completes that which He begins (Philippians 1:6; Malachi' 3:6; Isaiah 40:8).

They were looking toward Jordan's stormy banks. They were encamped on the east side, facing toward Jericho. Now the first command comes from the mouth of Joshua (Joshua 1:10-15). Let's study Joshua 1:10-18 and enter into these truths for our own lives.

The Preparation for Physical Needs (.Joshua 1:10.11)

They were to prepare food supplies. About three million people had to be cared for during their travels. All their livestock was cared for along the way. They had to act in faith and prepare for these needs.

The spiritual soul must be fed. We have a distinct call to possess our spiritual blessings in Christ. Romans 4:20 and 21 say that God will perform the work in our lives. John 15:16 tells us that Christ has called us to go and bring forth fruitful. II Timothy 1:8-9 tells us that God has called us with a holy calling. By making these promises our own, and by faith entering into and applying these promises, we feed our souls in the Lord (II Corinthians 1:20,21).

These three days of preparation also were a picture of what is ours in Christ because He arose after three days and nights and made our salvation possible. We can possess our inheritance only as we recognize our death and resurrection with our Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14).

Long before this time Israel had gone a three day journey into the wilderness (Exodus 15:22). This journey speaks of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now these people were to go over Jordan in three days. They were to see God's power in operation in their behalf as they prepared to "go over Jordan." Their very preparation was an act of faith. They must accept that God was going to make it possible or they would not even get ready.

Just so, we must often get material things ready, (like building a building) trusting God, making ready for what He is yet to do in our midst even when it seems impossible. God has given us His marching orders in the New Testament that we become fruitful. Are we willing

to prepare by study, memorizing the Word, and having a fervent prayer life?

The Preparation for Physical Might (.Joshua 1:12-15)

"Possession" is the key word in this portion. The possession was to be on both sides of Jordan, but those who were to have inheritance on the east side were to first help their brethren get the victory across Jordan.

The need was for all the men. All the mighty men of valor were to be involved. All of the men helped in gaining the victory, even the two and one half tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh who are mentioned at this point. Especially these men were being faithful to prior commitments.

The need is for all to be valiant for God. The saved are to be soldiers for God (II Timothy 2:24). They are admonished to *"quit ye like men, and be strong."* (I Corinthians 16:13). They are to *"do exploits for the Lord."* (Daniel 11:32)

Something we must note at this point is that the Lord did not originally plan that any of the Israelites would dwell on the east side of Jordan. These two and one half tribes sought after this as an easier way out. Most Bible scholars feel that this was God's second best for them. These tribes on the east of Jordan were later the first to fall into captivity. They missed many blessings because they stopped short of God's best. They were like the *"world-bordering" Christians* of today. Worldliness never pays. It just brings defeat, heartache, great sorrow, and ruin in our homes and lives.

The Preparation for Directive Leadership (.Joshua 1:16-18)

Promised obedience-- 1:16, 17a. Remember that the name *"Joshua"* is the Old Testament counterpart of the New Testament name *"Jesus."* Joshua was saying, *"Lord, all you command, we will do and where you send, we will go."* (See John 14:21-23; John 15:9,10; and Acts 9:6.) As they had hearkened unto Moses they said, *"We will hearken unto thee."* We must also obey the Lord. We must say *"Yes"* to Him in all things.

*Provided presence—*1:17b. The people said, *"Only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses."* God had promised: *"I will be with thee." "I will not fail thee." "I will not forsake thee."*

God has promised the same to us today. We have our "spiritual Jordans" to cross. We have our spiritual battles to win (Ephesians 6:10-18). We have spiritual possessions that we must battle for, and victoriously take for God. God's presence is promised as we walk with Him (Hebrews 13:5,6). Full blessing is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it. God must see us eager for His blessings.

*Personal Judgment —*1:18. What a strong word the people spoke; a strong directive for personal judgment upon the disobedient! What if God so judged us today? What if pastors had to so act today? What a blessing that we are under the *"grace"* of God! But this grace is not to be a *"liberty"* for sinning.

We must apply I Corinthians 11:28-32 because this is the personal judgment that we must apply. If we would have blessing, we must judge ourselves.

Memory Verse: Joshua 1:16

The Spies and Rahab's Faith

Joshua 2

Introduction

We need to be reminded that *"all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,"* therefore God has a reason for every account in His Word. Here we have a tremendous story that pictures the "abounding grace of God" for where *"sin abounded, grace did much more abound"* (Romans 5:12-21).

As you study this read also Hebrews 11:31 and Joshua 2:12, compared with James 2:25.

The Spies Sent Forth (.Joshua 2:1)

Joshua, who had been one of the spies sent by Moses, now sends two spies to view the land, especially the city of Jericho.

They went to Jericho. Jericho means "fragrance" and is a picture of the world. This city was a stronghold of the enemy. It was surrounded by high walls. It was well fortified and secure. It was situated near Jordan, the river which is a picture of death and judgment. The King of Jericho is the picture of Satan, the god of this age.

The city of Jericho was grossly immoral, so that it was not strange that the spies came to the house of the harlot. Some would like to change her character and call her an innkeeper. But it cannot be done. The New Testament also records her character.

They came to Rahab's house. Rahab is a picture of a sinner, of the lost, bound in immorality (Isaiah 64:6). She is also a beautiful picture of the power of the gospel of grace (Hebrews 1 1:31). The spies came to Rahab's house not by accident, but in the providential will of God. God's will is done in our lives when we are totally yielded and under His direction. Every detail, no matter how small, is important, for little things make up a life.

Rahab's Faith and Works (.Joshua 2:2-14)

"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (James 2:25).

Rahab's Condition. She had belonged to the doomed race, the race against which the curse had been pronounced. In that doomed city of great sin, she had practiced her vile occupation. The city was grossly immoral and wicked (Genesis 6:5, 11-13). God brought judgment upon this old civilization. Rahab's condition is a picture of all lost mankind (Ephesians 2:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9).

God's Mercy. God in His infinite mercy sent His messengers to this woman's house. They brought a message of impending judgment, and of mercy and deliverance. What a great salvation! (Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:3).

Rahab heard the report and believed. She put faith in Jehovah, the God of heaven above and earth beneath. She gave testimony of that faith. Christ came to save sinners. not those who fancy themselves good (Mark 10:24; I Peter 2:24; II Corinthians 5:21; I Timothy 2:5,6; I Timothy 1:15).

Rahab helped the spies and proved her new attitude. Though she had been an idolater,

now she became a true believer. Her soul had been strangely moved. She acted by faith. She had heard of how great the God of the Israelites was; she pleaded for mercy for herself and her family. She knew judgment was coming, and would overtake Jericho, for she knew that God is a holy God. She possibly had heard how He had dealt with Egypt in power and judgment. Her faith was revealed by her words and actions.

The Escape of the Spies and Assurance Given (.Joshua 2:15-21)

Hidden by Faith. God does not like lying, but here He overruled. Also, remember that Rahab did not have the background to teach her not to lie. God does not commend lying; Rahab lived in a system where lying was normal. I think that lying as a way of life is very prominent among heathen nations. God was overruling. He used Rahab's lie to protect His servants, and by this revealed His power.

Rahab's faith was manifest by her works in hiding the spies and sending them away safely. This act surely took tremendous courage (James 2:25, 26). Wherever there is genuine faith in Christ, in God, and the person is saved, it will always be accompanied by good works. Ephesians 2:8,9 tells that we are saved by faith alone, but such faith will be a working faith: "*we are saved unto good works.*" (2:10) Our testimony of faith will be seen by our acts and works for God's glory.

While people of the land were in terror, Rahab was walking now by faith (2:9-22). Now that she was acquainted with the true God, she grasped the opportunity for full deliverance for herself and her family (2:12-14).

An Act by Faith. Rahab had given a wonderful confession (Joshua 2:9-11 and Romans 10:9,10). She confessed her faith by words and then by an act (2:18-21). This glorious act was the tying of the scarlet cord in the window. The scarlet cord was a token to her and a sign to the coming executioners of judgment, when Jericho fell. They saw that scarlet line; she had received it as a true token of their covenant.

Christ has made a covenant for us, for our sins. This covenant is in His own blood, and for our good (Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:14, 22; I Peter 1:18,19). The scarlet line was a picture of being sheltered by the blood. "*When I shall see the blood, I will pass over you.*" This was God's statement to the Israelites as they applied the blood of the lamb on the door posts. (Exodus) Two living witnesses gave their word and assured her of mercy if they stayed behind the scarlet line. The cord that was used to let them down to safety was also the cord that marked her faith and acceptance of deliverance. All were protected by the cord. We are safe only in His blood applied to sins. As those men were her surety, so Christ is our surety, and is for all who trust in Him alone (John 6:37).

The Return of the Spies (Joshua 2:22-24)

The spies returned knowing God was at work. They returned in faith. God was going to do it all for His glory.

They were safe. The spies arrived back at camp safely. We are always safe when we are doing the will of God (Proverbs 3:5,6; Psalm 37:3-5, 23).

They returned, giving God the glory (v. 23, 24). They were thrilled to testify of God's working on their behalf. They recounted the events that had taken place, and praised Him: "*The Lord hath delivered unto our hands all the land...*" We need that wonderful, exuberant faith that trusts God for great things. God is only pleased in a walk by faith (Hebrews 11:1,6). We must take God's best for us by an active faith. (Psalm 62:5-8)

Memory Verse: Ephesians 2:8,9

Crossing the Jordan By Faith

Joshua 3:1-17

Introduction

This great host of Israelites were about to embark on an *"untrodden path."* It is true, *"they had never passed this way heretofore."* They had never crossed the river Jordan before (3:4). Only two of this great number had seen the river before (to our knowledge) and they had crossed over to *"spy out the land."* They were probably mighty swimmers who were able to get across.

A hard task confronted them. In the human it was an impossible task. Jordan, a mighty city to subdue, was before them. The land they were to take by faith was just before them. No doubt emotions were high.

They needed special guidance, special grace, and special miraculous work of God. We want to study three important aspects of this great event.

The Untrodden Path (Joshua 3:4)

This could be said of every day, it is an "untrodden path." We do know now what each day, each year, will hold for us as Christ tarries; maybe death, tests, trials, decisions, joys, victories, or sorrows.

We must face well-worn paths. Much of life involves the same repetitious events, the same duties, day after day. Life is made up of the same trials, the same tests, and temptations. Seemingly, life is often a treadmill, repeating our footsteps time after time. Israel had experienced such a life for thirty eight years as they suffered outside God's will and God's best in the wilderness.

We can expect new scenes. New problems come in life, new sorrows, new tasks, and new trials. Praise God we have the same Holy Spirit, the same promises, and the same victories to claim in the midst of the new challenges. At every new path, new decision, or new temptation, God is able to give us the complete victory (Romans 8:37; II Corinthians 2:11).

Consider: The passing over Jordan does not picture the saint going to Heaven. But it is a picture of the Christian passing from one level of Christian life to another, to a higher, more glorious, and victorious place of service. It becomes ours by entering into our possessions (Hebrews 2:1; 4:11-14; Joshua 13:1; II Peter 1:4).

Are you intensely dissatisfied with the quality of your Christian life? You need new victories, new peace, new joy, and new possession in Christ. This was to be the end of the Israelites' lack of purpose and barrenness. We too must have victory.

The Guiding Ark (Joshua 3:3.6.11.17) Everything for Israel centered around the guiding Ark. It was a symbol of the presence of God in their midst. It is mentioned ten times in this chapter. It was a piece of the furniture from the Tabernacle which was carried in the center of their journeys.

This was a new thing. It had been in the center of the host for forty years. The Israelites had been led for forty years by the pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night. These pillars would cease. Now the manna would cease also. They were to now be led by the guiding Ark. The Ark was to move only at the direct command of God.

The ark symbolized their true leader. The Ark was from the *"Holy of Holies"* out of the

Tabernacle. It was a symbol of the divine presence of the Lord. It was a sign that God was in covenant with Israel, that He'd lead them onward into their possession. Christ leads by the providence He appoints for us (Psalm 27:23), by the example He sets before us (Ephesians 5:1), and by the gracious Word He gave us (John 8:31). Our obligation is to follow Him (John 10:27) and the Holy Spirit who lives within us (John 14:17).

Consider: The Israelites had been mastered by the "self-life"; they had followed their own inclinations and sin, and had rebelled against God. They had experienced the punishment of wandering for forty years in the wilderness. Now they were to follow the direct command of Go They were to follow the Ark, which was "*God with them*" (Matthew 4:19; John 10:27).

The Watchful Following (Joshua 3:3-5)

I am fully persuaded, as I write these lines, that one of the most lacking qualities in our Christian lives is discipline. It took discipline for the Israelites to do what they were told to do. And it demanded watchful following.

We live in an undisciplined age. The old disciplines have been broken down. Even leaders no longer demand of their youth the kind of self-discipline that builds character. The foundations of our nation are breaking due to this great lack. Often we find parents obeying their own children, rather than leading and guiding their children into obedience to them and to God. We need the rugged strength that only comes from a strongly disciplined life.

The first need -- sight. They were to watch for the Ark, and stay about 2,000 to 3,000 feet from it. They had to watch it and see which direction that God was going to lead them, just as we must know what God wants in our lives and following His leading. They were "*looking to Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith*" (Hebrews 12:2) as God led them through the leaders He had given them. But, doubtless, they were not aware of this truth. We must put our eyes upon the Lord, following our "*Ark*", the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second need—follow. A disciple is a "follower," a disciplined person who determines to follow. We are so often guilty of self-will, of doing what we want to do, and of ignoring the will of God. If the Israelites had done this they would never have arrived at the place of God's provision. It probably would have meant sure death to do as they wished.

To walk in our own way, to do our own thing, without regard to the will of God in our lives, will bring misery, remorse, sorrow, guilt, failure, and the loss of joy and fellowship with the Lord. When Christ called His disciples, the chief requirement was to "*follow*" (Consider: Matthew 10:28; 8: 22; 9:9; 16:24; Mark 2:14; 8:34; John 1:43; 21:22).

The third need—sanctify yourselves. The word "*sanctify*" means to "*set apart*," to be separate unto the Lord. This is the separation from the world system and values, from the world's pleasures and sin. The Israelites were to be set apart for God, as they saw God's miraculous leadership and provision as they entered into the Promised Land.

Conclusion

The Lord worked a mighty miracle. As the sole of the feet of the priests who bore the Ark touched the water of the river Jordan, God caused it to back up, or pile up far above them. They passed over on firm dry ground. The priests continued to stand in the midst of the river with the Ark of God as the people passed completely over the Jordan.

God will work miracles for us. We must meet the requirements of having His power in our lives. We must know Him, follow Him, and set ourselves apart unto Him.

Memory Verse: John 10:27

What Meaneth These Stones?

Joshua 4:1-24

Introduction

Joshua's leadership was magnified in the sight of all Israel. They knew that he was God's mighty leader in the will of God (Joshua 3:7; 4:14). The miracle of crossing the Jordan was but a token of what God was going to do in their midst in the coming days. Joshua had said, *"Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanite, and the Hittites, and the Hivites...."*

Now chapter four is a continuation of the mighty miracle of God in their midst, and the way that they were to be reminded of God's act on their behalf.

A father walked with his son by the river Jordan. Looking into the water, the boy saw a neatly piled marker of twelve stones. To his surprise, he stumbled upon an identical pile of stones on the bank. With curiosity aroused, he asked his father, *"What do these stones mean?"* The father, an obedient son of Abraham, obeyed the Word of the Lord and related how Jehovah had delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and across the Jordan into the Promised Land. In detail he described how God had stayed the waters of the river as the priests held the Ark of the Covenant in the midst of the river bed. He reported how at that spot the priests had brought the Ark over into Canaan. After all the people had passed through the Jordan, God, he told his son, had commanded that the two piles of stones should be placed as they were to remind each succeeding generation of this miraculous deliverance (Joshua 4:5-9). So we ask today, *"What do these stones mean?"*

It Means God Wrought a Miracle.

They had marched from Shittim to Jordan (Joshua 3:1-3). Joshua had already given the preliminary orders to the priests and the people. Then came the miracle. God gives us two chapters to unfold this mighty miracle.

The waters recoiled—3:15-17. When the priests' feet rested in the overflow of the river, the river was driven back. It recoiled and stood up as one heap. As far as the eye could see the river bed was dry, till all Israel passed over (Joshua 4:18). It did not flow elsewhere, but God made it stand up in a heap (Psalm 114:1-3). This miracle was all the greater because Jordan's banks were overflowing as a consequence of the April rainy season, and the melting of Hermon's snows (Joshua 3:15, 16; 4:10,11).

Joshua had been present when God had twice supernaturally divided waters: first the Red Sea, and now the Jordan. This initial miracle proved that God was with Joshua as He had been with Moses. It established him as the divinely elected leader of Israel. It was a day that magnified Him (Joshua 1:5; 3:7; 4:14). The people doubtlessly were encouraged and the Canaanites were weakened (Joshua 5:1).

God was leading miraculously -- 1-9, 19-24. This was the final act of separation from the bondage of Egypt and from the past. Only God could work this miracle. They were being *"led by the powerful hand of God"* (Psalm 78:52-55; 107:1-8), into the Promised Land, the promised inheritance which was theirs "in union" with the Lord God (Psalm 77:14-20).

The stones were raised up in two places: in Jordan, which pictures *"going through the place of death"*, and on the bank of the river, which pictures *"living on by His indwelling life."* These are spiritual truths for today. In this age, our Lord has also given us two memorials. The two memorials for us today are baptism and the Lord's Supper, *"inside the water, and*

outside the water." The memory of our redemption by His redemptive power for us is seen in these two memorials. It is our Lord's will that revealed truth should be passed on as a precious inheritance to each succeeding generation. *"Those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever."* (Deuteronomy 29:29). We are not surprised when Satan seeks and often succeeds to tear down and rearrange, to destroy the memorials so that the truth they are to portray and perpetuate are altered or lost.

The two stone memorials were not to be worshiped, but were symbols of God's miraculous deliverance for His own people. So our two memorials, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are not sacraments but symbols of our deliverance from sin through God's grace.

The Meaning of the Memorial in the Water

Water baptism pictures for us Christ our Great High Priest's standing firm in vicarious death, keeping back the waters of divine judgment from flowing over us. He thus fulfills the picture, made by the priests and the Ark, that is memorialized here. The priests set up a stone for each tribe in obedience God's command. The memorial marked the spot where the priests' feet stood firm, holding the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was a part of the Mercy Seat (Hebrews 9:4,5), and Christ is our propitiation or Mercy Seat (Romans 3:25; I John 2:1,2). Salvation is only in Him (Acts 4:12). Baptism is our "memorial" in the water:

By commandment (Matthew 28:18-20).

Because of example (Matthew 3:13-16).

Because of salvation (Acts 8:12; 16:32-34; 2:41).

After we are saved, baptism pictures His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 15: 1-4; Colossians 3:1-4). The order in Scripture is clear: belief, baptism, then membership in a local assembly (Acts 2:38-41). Always people were first saved, then they were Scripturally baptized.

The Meaning of the Memorial Outside the Water

After Israel had passed through Jordan, the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant to the bank of the river. The memorial pile of twelve stones was constructed in their place to ever remind the people of what God had done.

Our Lord, who at the same time was both the priest and the Ark, came through the Jordan of death and has departed into glory. In His absence He has commanded us to observe His table, to so *"show the Lord's death till He come"* (I Corinthians 11:26). His table reminds us that we are responsible to maintain, not our standing before the Father, but our fellowship with the Father, and with His people. We are to be "dead to sin" and alive to Him.

It means we are God's miraculously. The new birth, salvation by His shed blood is a miracle (Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:8-20). Our deliverance from sin and bondage is of God entirely, wholly, and fully (Colossians 1:13,14). Salvation is all of grace alone (Ephesians 2:8,9).

It means the elements symbolize our salvation. Just as the placing of the twelve stones is so clearly related in Joshua chapter 4, so God clearly relates to us the "memorials" which are symbols of our redemption. His body was broken for us (I Peter 2:24; II Corinthians 5:21; I Timothy 1:15; 2:5,6; Isaiah 53:6). His blood was shed for us (I Peter 1:18,19; Matthew 26:26,28; Luke 22:20; Ephesians 1:7).

The ordinances properly keep the message of the Gospel pure and preserve the doctrines of grace. They tend to maintain our unity in the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring about our close full fellowship with the Lord and His people. Praise God for these memorials which are ours today, one in the water and one out.

Memory Verses: Acts 2:41, 42

Lessons At Gilgal

Joshua 5:1-15

Introduction

God had thus far given the Israelites a leader, prepared them, led them over the Jordan, and given them a sign of His power for future generations. Now they were in the land; now they were ready for new things and new duties before the conquest of the land.

The enemies were terrified at the evidence of God's miraculous intervention for His people (Joshua 5:1). An His promises were kept. The wilderness was behind them and they faced the marvelous land with its riches and resources, the land flowing with milk and honey. The fear of God took hold on the kings of the Canaanites. Their hearts melted for fear. Our God is just as great today. When we are saved, we are *"in"* Christ, risen with Him, and seated in the *"heavens"* in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 3:14; Ephesians 1:19-23). We are to be strong in the power of His might.

Sharp Knives at Gilgal (Joshua 5:2-9)

Gilgal stands for the judgment of self. Gilgal, the new ground gained and occupied by the people brought over Jordan, is the picture of the resurrection ground upon which our feet have been planted. There we are to judge self as people who are in Christ. The name *"Gilgal"* means *"rolling"* and speaks of rolling away personal guilt by personal judgment.

The rite of circumcision was kept. Circumcision was carried out for all males. It was previously given by God as an order to His Old Testament, Israelite people (Leviticus 12:1-3, Genesis 17:9-14). This rite of much deep meaning had been neglected for at least thirty-eight years (Romans 4:9-12).

The rite of circumcision is a picture. Circumcision set apart the people of Israel from the people around them. It speaks of *"self-judgment."* It stands for the carrying out of the sentence of death to the flesh. *"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ"* (Colossians 2:11).

The sharp knife has to be applied to the flesh, to the things of sin:

- "mortify" your members (Colossians 3:5).
- "put to death" (Ephesians 4:22).
- "put off these" (Colossians 3:8,9).
- Consider: Galatians 5:6; 6:15; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11.

We are called to the *"circumcision of the heart,"* the putting away of sin and being completely separated from the works of the flesh (Romans 2:29). The rite for the Israelite men meant a peculiar setting apart from the rest of the world. We are to be His *"peculiar people,"* set apart from the world (Titus 2:14).

The Passover Kept (Joshua 5:10)

What blessed memories the celebration of the Passover would have brought. They remembered that fearful night in Egypt, and how God had passed over them when He saw the blood of the lamb. Now they kept the Passover as those who were delivered and brought into the Land. This was a feast of remembrance. It was to be kept, realizing they had gone through the place of death and resurrection (pictured in going through Jordan and

pictured in our baptism) and that they were now "risen with Him" and that they had judged self in putting away sin.

The remembrance of the past is often an excellent preparation for the trials of the future, and often is a support for the future tests. Recalling the Passover caused them to recall the first great miracles on their behalf. It was a precious encouragement both to faith and hope.

Three Kinds of Food (Joshua 5:11-12)

When the Israelites entered the promised land, there were three kinds of food they ate at their first passover.

The passover lamb. The flesh of the lamb was roasted with fire. This pictures Christ, the "Lamb of God." We feast upon the One who made our way of salvation (John 1:29). Christ is our sustaining spiritual food.

The manna. Manna was a heaven sent bread. Manna pictures Christ, the "Bread of God" sent down from Heaven (John 6:30-37). He is our "living bread." Manna was found in the morning, eaten daily, enough only for one day, and to be gathered personally. Christ is our daily spiritual strength, and we are to feed upon Him.

The old corn of the land—Hebrews 5:116:1. The manna was food for the wilderness, but when they crossed over into Canaan and entered into their possessions, the manna ceased. The "*corn of the land*" was already there ready to be harvested. They could appropriate it for their needs. The "*corn of the land*" speaks of Christ, the One who, as the "*corn of wheat*" (John 12:24), would give Himself in death and come forth in resurrection. We are to be occupied with our living, resurrected, glorious, victorious Savior. Christ is fully ours and we are to appropriate Him.

The Captain of the Lord's Hosts (Joshua 5:13-15)

Joshua had gone out possibly to meditate and seek a quiet time alone with God. He was doubtless thinking upon the best method to attack the city of Jericho and the tremendous task of taking the land for the Lord.

Suddenly a man was before him with a drawn sword in his hand. What a courageous man Joshua was, for he met the man alone and coming near, asked for whom he stood. It was a theophany, or a time when God revealed Himself in physical form. This is usually considered to be a preincarnation manifestation of Christ on earth.

This was a revelation of Christ Himself. Christ revealed Himself to Joshua as He had revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush. He revealed Himself as He had when He had spoken out of the cloud at the Tabernacle to Israel. And as He revealed Himself by speaking through the mouth of a donkey.

The Lord is the Captain of the Lord's Hosts. He gave His power to Joshua to be the true leader to the Israelites. He gave direction for victory to Joshua. As Joshua realized that he was talking to God, he removed his shoes because he was on holy ground.

Christ is the Captain today. The Lord Jesus went to Heaven, but he said, "*All authority is given unto me in Heaven and earth, go ye therefore...*" (Matthew 28:18). He is our general, our commander, we are under His command. The cause is not ours, but His. We see Him as our ally in all the warfare with the enemy of our souls (Ephesians 6:118; I Peter 5:8,9).

Joshua did not resist the Lord. He listened and then followed the directions that the Lord gave Him. We often resist the Lord's leading to our own detriment. He comes to us with drawn sword, the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). What will we do with His instructions to us?

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 1:30

The Fall of Jericho

Joshua 6:1-27

Introduction

The walled city of Jericho was the first obstacle that met the people. It was already theirs by title because God had promised it (Joshua 1:3,4; Deuteronomy 34:4). But now they must make it theirs experientially, by taking the land. This would mean driving out the inhabitants, and destroying them.

The Canaanites, or Amorites, were by this time under the judgment of God (Leviticus 18:25). There was unspeakable corruption among them, so vile that God could tolerate them no longer. Their cup of sin was full and God was using Israel to bring that long awaited judgment. The land could only be cleansed by judgment.

God's Instruction Given: (Joshua 6:1-5)

The inhabitants were afraid of the Israelites. Jericho was securely shut because of their fear. God said, *"See, I have given unto thy hand Jericho and its king, and mighty men of valor"* (v. 2).

The Israelites were to march around the city once a day for six days. All the men of war were to march around it. The priests bore the ark, and before the ark priests carried seven trumpets of ram's horns. On the seventh day, they were to compass the city seven times. Then God said the priests should blow on the seven trumpets. At the sound of the trumpets the people were to give a great shout. God said then the walls of the city would fall down and the people could ascend into the city.

God's Instruction Obeyed (Joshua 6:6-24)

This is an interesting and detailed account. The priests and people were called together to do their parts. The armed men went before the priests who blew with the trumpets. Then came the Ark, and that was followed by the *"rereward"*, meaning the *"rear guard."*

The people were to be very quiet. No shouting, no noise with the voice, not even a word from the mouth as they compassed the city from day to day. Each evening they were to return to their dwellings.

What a spectacle this must have been to the inhabitants of the city of Jericho. Daily seeing this army march around their fortified city and return, in absolute silence, must have been a great joke to them. Possibly they were close enough to hear the mockery and taunts that came from the lips of the people of Jericho. But to Israel, the city looked the same, an impossible mountain before them as a great trial of their faith. Doubtless each day the conviction grew that God must work a miracle, because they could not take it in their own strength.

The city was taken on the seventh day (Joshua 6:15, 16, 20, 21). The Israelites arose early, and marched seven times around the city under God's direction. Then as they shouted when the trumpets were blown, the wall fell out flat, so that they were able to take the city. Under the command of God they utterly destroyed life by the edge of the sword. Full judgment fell as they burned the city. Only Rahab and her family were saved, those who were behind the shelter of faith in God, under the protection of the scarlet line cord (Joshua 6:17, 22, 23, 25).

The wealth and riches of the city belonged to God as spoil of the battle (Joshua 6:18, 19, 24). The people did not touch the riches of the city, because they did not win the battle, God did. What a wonderful lesson: what God redeems is His. When God saves us, we are not our own. The riches belonged to Him as the spoil of the battle. All the riches we have in Christ are from Him alone. We are "*heirs and joint-heirs*" in Christ the Savior (Romans 8:16, 17). We must not presume upon God that what we have in Christ we have earned, worked for, or deserve. It is from God and for God that we are saved. We must lay everything at His feet.

The city of Jericho is a picture of the world in the depths of sin, and has been forever under the curse of God (Joshua 6:26,27). Jericho as a city was the "*city of the curse*" just as the world today is under the curse of God and is doomed. Only Christ has the answer for men's hearts and for the future as He comes as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

God's Blessings Come by Faith

The instructions were implicit. There was not room for human reasoning, human scheming, or approved military tactics. All was ordered of the Lord and Joshua and the people were to obey by faith. Hebrews 11:30 tells us that Jericho fell "*by faith.*"

We have our "*Jerichos*" which are formidable barriers to our possessing all that should be ours in Christ. These problems must be conquered by faith. Before God can entrust us with any real measure of spiritual power, victory, or blessing, He must bring us to the place that we see that our battles are too big for us. We must admit our total inability, and submit to His total ability. "*This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*" (I John 5:4,5).

In this simple lesson of victory, I want to remind you that you and I must face the tremendous "*Jerichos*" that stand in the way of our "*walk*" for the Lord.

1. There is the "Jericho" of sin (Proverbs 28:43; Psalm 32:1-5).
2. There is the "Jericho" of indifference (Luke 8:13).
3. There is the "Jericho" of materialism (Luke 8:14; Mark 4:18,19).
4. There is the "Jericho" of disloyalty (II Timothy 4:10).

The world makes inroads into our lives because we are indifferent to walking by faith, and having complete victory. I am sure that those in false religions, the worldling, even the average unsaved citizen of America laughs at the feeble attempts of churches to reach the world. We are in a desperate and losing situation because we are unwilling to "*conquer in His power by faith.*"

Faith is "*taking God at His Word*"; it means "*Forsaking All, I Trust Him.*" It is giving God complete right of way in our lives as the Israelites did when they marched about the city. The victory came at a mighty "*shout of faith.*" The shout of faith is in direct contrast to the wavering faith and the wails of discouraged hearts. Israel indulged many times in moaning, wailing, and murmuring. But here they shouted in faith as they believed God for His miraculous power and intervention.

Faith is important for us today. We must learn to walk by faith, and not by sight. Our enemy, Satan, is already a defeated foe and in Christ the victory is already ours.

The Attitude of Faith.

1. Faith reckons. With faith we reckon the truth of what God says. We enter into it (Romans 4:20,21).
2. Faith responds (Romans 6:13). We yield our bodies, and we respond to the

promises in complete acceptance for ourselves. This is what Israel did as they compassed the walls. They were obeying the commands by faith.

3. Faith receives (Galatians 3:14; Hebrews 11:1,6). Having reckoned and responded in an act of trust and full expectation, then we will be received by faith.
4. Faith rests (John 15:4). This is the meaning of abiding in Him. We are to abide in Christ continuously, for power, for pardon, and for life.

The Foundation of Faith. Faith must have a foundation—the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word (Romans 10:17). It springs up in the soul in response to the Divine Word. Faith is believing, trusting, and confiding in Christ.

Memory Verse: Romans 4:20

8

The Effects of Disobedience and Sin

Joshua 7:1-26

Introduction

Sin possesses a fatal fascination. Sin always looks attractive, pleasant, and profitable, but it is like fire as it burns and destroys. It is like a drug as it stupefies. It is like a poison, for it kills quickly. Sin degrades, debases, deceives, dams, and destroys. Sin always brings with it the bitter fruit and after effects which we cannot escape.

In this chapter we have a classic example of the power and effects of disobedience and sin. So strong is sin and its effect that we can speak of the potency of sin. Sin has not lost its power or its bitter fruit today. It is still the same.

The Potency of Sin

Sin brings defeat. Before this Israel had victory, blessing, and wonderful power. God-given power and miraculous blessing was theirs in crossing the Jordan River and in taking the city of Jericho.

There was sin in the camp. Sin that was yet undiscovered, yet unrepentant and unconfessed. As they tried to take the small city of Ai, their *"hearts were faint"* and they *"ran like children."* A total of three thousand men acted like children and ran in shame and disgrace with thirty-six losing their lives. God's blessings were gone from them.

Disaster settled upon Israel. What had happened? What had gone wrong? What if their enemies heard of this? Sin had been covered up and had brought defeat and failure (Proverbs 28:13). In the New Testament we also read of the effects of sin, that some of the Corinthian church were sickly, weak, and some even died prematurely because of sin that was unconfessed (I Corinthians 11:29-32).

Sin brings ruin and death. In sorrow, in fear, and in consternation, the rest of the soldiers returned after losing thirty-six of their men. Sin had ruined the blessings. They had lost God's leadership, care, and provision (Joshua 7:12).

When sin reigns, it is insidious like disease, it ruins like rot. It hardens the will, disorders the affections, and darkens the understanding. This is true in the life of any

Christian.

The Perturbation of Sin (Joshua 7:6-20)

To "*perturb*" means to "*agitate, to trouble profoundly, to perplex and to disquiet.*" Sin brought all this to Joshua, and to the nation as a whole.

Joshua's perturbation. Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to his face. He and the elders put ashes on their heads. In agony Joshua poured out his heart unto God, "*Wherefore hast thou brought us forth . . . what shall I say . . . what will thou do unto Thy great Name?*"

Prayer was not the need of the hour. There are times when prayer is out of order and will not get results, because the need is for restitution repentance and removal of sin. There are times when requests mean nothing because confession is the order (II Chronicles 7:14).

God's perturbation. God was also troubled (Joshua 7:10-13). God was agitated, and disquieted (Genesis 6:5,6). God blamed Joshua and Israel because Israel had sinned. It was a personal matter, as if the whole nation had done it. Achan's sin had affected all around him.

We dare not cuddle sin, cover sin, live in sin, or treat it lightly. Remember Israel was God's chosen people of the Old Testament. The saved are God's chosen people now. We must hate sin and put it away. Evidently Israel was to blame. They should have taken steps to insure that no transgression took place. They knew God's commandments. When we permit sin, it will effect others. It will hurt the home, the church, and the nation.

Joshua was instructed to find out where the sin was. God told him to find out (Joshua 7:14-18). It was his responsibility as the leader to root out the sin and bring about restitution. When we sin, we must find out the cause of broken fellowship. We must search out the hindering sin (Psalm 19:12-14). Israel had to find the sin, punish the sin, and take sides against the sin. It is the same today. God's people must stand against sin. We must stand on God's side, and see sin as God sees it.

Imagine the awe, the sense of solemn dread, the fear, as the tribe contemplated the effect of sin upon them all.

The Progress of Sin (Joshua 7:19-21)

Achan had to face the facts and the finger that pointed to him. God brought about the truth. Achan confessed how sin progressed in his life.

"I saw." Achan saw the garments, the silver, and the gold. He gazed upon them, fastened his sight upon them with desire to had them for his own. It would have been so much better if he had walked away from this temptation. Far best for the Christian not to see at all than to walk in sin which comes from "looking" upon sin.

"I coveted." Seeing these lovely things, he coveted them. The thought life "*in desiring after*" led him to covet after and brought him to the act of taking them.

"I took." After coming through the stages of looking, desiring, and coveting, he yielded to temptation, took the garments, silver, and gold, and hid them under his tent. He possibly never expected to fall into this temptation, nor did he realize the consequences of his sin. We must guard against the downward steps that lead into sin.

David had never planned to fall into adultery. There are no limits of where we may fall if we permit sin to progress in our lives. The only safety is to hate sin, to shun the appearance of evil, to flee sin, and to take sides against sin (Galatians 5:16-24; I Timothy 5:20; II Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:11-13; I Peter 3:11-12).

The Predicament of Sin (Joshua 7:22-26)

What a terrible predicament to be in! What a terrible situation Achan found himself in! He had brought God's judgment of destruction and death upon his tribe, himself and his family. Many people are active in their churches, teach, give, and even witness, and yet are living in private sin. How terrible, how horrible! Sin in the private life will bring failure, defeat, and dishonor. It will quench the work of the Holy Spirit in the life, in the family, and in the church.

Sin brought judgment. Was God's judgment on Achan's sin too severe? too terrible? No, No! Achan's sin had brought ruin and defeat to the entire nation of Israel. It had caused the death of thirty-six men. Such gross, deliberate sin brought the effect of public punishment (II Timothy 5:20).

Doubtless lips quivered, hearts were rent, eyes were red and tear-filled that day. Sin had to be judged but what a price.

Sin brought death. Sin brings sure results. Sowing of sin brings sure reaping. Achan perhaps had thought that he could deceive the leaders of Israel and God. But his deceit and sin only brought judgment and death. Many times people believe that they can get away with sin and avoid reaping any consequences. *"Be sure your sin will find you out."*

Conclusion

The answer to sin is first to be saved, to know Christ as personal Savior (John 1:12; Isaiah 1:18; Isaiah 53:6). When a person has been saved, he still must repent of sin, forsake sin, and do right (Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 66:18; 1 Peter 3:11-14).

Memory Verse: Proverbs 28:13

New Victories Under God's Direction

Joshua 8:1-35

Introduction

The previous chapter was a sad story of the result of sin and disobedience. Unhappily, Achan's confession came too late. Had he dealt with his sin earlier, rather than having to be discovered, it would have been forgiven. Evidently the family was also implicated in the evil deeds of the head of the house. Also, we must realize that "*sin in the camp* will weaken those involved, bring judgment, and bring about the loss of blessing. God had to deal with them. When people live in sin today, it hurts the church, the home, and the nation. No man lives unto himself (Romans 14:7-9). What we do has a tremendous effect on others.

The valley of Achor speaks of the trouble that we bring upon ourselves by our own sins. But if we judge ourselves before God and turn to Him He will forgive, deliver, and bring us into blessing.

Now, with the trial of sin behind them, they were ready to go forward with the Lord's blessing. If any burden remained upon Joshua's heart, the Lord had insured him with "*Fear not, neither be thou dismayed.*" The failure was no longer mentioned, but instead comfort and assurance was given and victory was promised.

The Advance is Commanded (Joshua 8:1,2)

When we deal with sin, judge it, and put it away, God deals with us as He did with the Israelites. He assures our hearts, and wants His own to go "forward" for His glory.

God outlines the plan. The former presumption was not overlooked, for now they were to send forth not three thousand men, but 30,000 men of war. They were to learn the lesson that pride and self-reliance is to be put away. God always wants His people in the place of lowliness and dependency upon Him. They needed God's enabling, and His wisdom.

God assures their success. God said, "*See I have given unto thy hand the King of Ai, and his people....*" He said that the prey was to be theirs. What a blessing when we believe God for the victory in our lives.

Consider: We need to realize that when we fail to follow the Lord the first time, some barrier is before us, or some temptation is not overcome, that will be far harder to overcome at a later time. .

The Advance Carried Out (Joshua 8:3-29)

The strategy of Joshua-- 8:3-13. Ai was not a large city, but it became a difficult situation because of their former failure. Joshua set all in readiness. He sent some soldiers away at night, setting an ambush behind the city. Then he set the rest before the city gate to draw the men away from Ai. He hoped that the men of Ai would pursue the Israelites when they pretended to flee in fear, and those hidden in ambush could enter the city.

The fall of Ai -- 8:14-29. Here you read the historical account of the victory in battle. As Joshua and those with him, about 5,000, feigned as if they were beaten and fled, the others came into the city. All the men of Ai pursued after the fleeing Israelites. Not a man was left

in Ai—they had left the city open. Then Joshua raised his spear as a signal for the about 25,000 men to take the city, burn it, and fully subdue it. All the men of Ai fell in battle that day and the King of Ai was also taken.

It was wisdom and dependency upon God that made it possible for them to take the city. There was no place for the warriors of Ai to go as they were totally surrounded (vv. 20-26). Ironside points out in his book that it was a signal victory for Israel. They were only strong as they acted in obedience to God's commands.

Consider: We must have victory daily. Often it is in the so called "*little things*" that we fail. Ai was a little place compared to Jericho and other cities they had to face. Ai was like the "*little foxes that spoil the vine*" (Song of Solomon 2:15). It is wise for us to note and face the facts of the little things that often cause us to have failure.

1. Like a "*Little Folly*" (Ecclesiastes 10:1) A little folly is like a fly in the ointment; like dirt in the milk. Sometimes we treat sins in our lives as if they were minor things. The word "*folly*" means foolishness—folly in actions, in speech, in thought life.
2. Just a "*Little Sleep*" (Proverbs 6:10; Proverbs 24:30-34) God describes the "*sluggard*," the slothful, the lazy, halfhearted, and careless person. Far too many people are asleep to spiritual things. Too many saved people want a "*little more slumber*," but God says "*wake up*" (Romans 13: 11-14).
3. Just "*Little Foxes*" (Song of Solomon 2:15) The land may be tilled, vineyards worked, harvest promising, but if the little foxes get in, they will eat the harvest. What does this mean? Ah, it is the little sin, so called, that we allow to grow into bigger things. And they spoil the life; they take the fruit; they bring hindrances.
We must battle the little things. Victory over bigger things comes from having victory in the little things. Faithfulness in little things will bring the blessing of bigger and better things (Luke 19:17; 1 Corinthians 15:58).

The Altar Raised Up (Joshua 1:31-35)

Now that God had given the victory, Joshua leads them into a closer covenant relationship with the Lord.

The altar built. This is an altar to Almighty God. This was in accord with a former command (v. 31; Deuteronomy 27:2-). What an impressive sight the altar was!

The commands rewritten and retaught. They had gone to Mount. Gerizim and Mount Ebal and there they had built this altar and proclaimed the Law of God. The altar was built of whole stones, upon which no tool had been lifted, as Moses had told them in Exodus 20:25. This altar speaks of Christ, as does the offering placed upon it. Christ came as the God-man. No person shaped Him, He was provided of God as the stones were.

Mount. Ebal was barren, speaking of curses that come if we are disobedient. The other mount, Mount Gerizim, was green and fertile, speaking of God's blessing. Half the people were assembled on one mountain and half on the other. Joshua then read the words of the Law, the blessings, the curses, and commanded them in the Word of God.

Note: We must make much of God's Word. It is our lamp (Psalm . 119:105), our life (Psalm 119:: 116), our gold (Psalm 119:127), our way (Psalm 119:33-35), our source of faith (Romans 10:17), our light (Psalm 119:130), our counselor (Psalm 119:24), and our victory (Psalm 119:9-11).

Memory Verse: Psalm 119:11

The Enemies' Strategy

Joshua 9:1-27

Introduction

Remember the key word of the book of Joshua is "*Possession*." Just as Israel was to possess their material blessings which were given to them by God, so the saved today are to possess their spiritual blessings which are already theirs in Christ.

But in the midst of this we have a great enemy, Satan. In the ninth chapter of Joshua, we come to a classic illustration of the strategy and cunning of the enemy. His wiles are many, his ways are varied, and his ability to trick us is real. Every time we step into an experience of victory and blessing as a Christian, Satan is on hand to bring another assault in some way. Our blessings and our battles go side by side.

The Confederacy of the Enemy (Joshua 9:1.2)

The kings of the hill country, the central highland ridge including Jerusalem and Hebron, of the low hills and the shores of the Mediterranean Sea all united to fight Israel. As the word went out to the other Canaanite peoples that Jericho and Ai had fallen, these kings planned a concerted attack on Israel.

The Deception of the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:3-13)

They planned to trick Joshua—9:3,4. The Gibeonites were a tribe of people that inhabited an area northwest of Jerusalem on the road to Joppa. They were fearful, and knew that they were no match for Israel. They had heard of the victories over Jericho and Ai, and decided on diplomacy rather than war. They hoped to avert certain destruction of their capital city, Gibeon, by misleading Joshua about their identity and the location of their homes.

They carried out that trickery—9:4-13. The Gibeonites sent a group of their men to Gilgal to meet Joshua. What a sight they were! They arrived with old, dirty, torn clothing, terribly worn, with moldy bread and every appearance of having traveled a great distance. They spoke of their knowledge of the battles on the other side of the Jordan River, but pretended no knowledge of the recent victories over Jericho and Ai. They asserted their belief in the God of Israel and their respect for His great name.

What a strange sight these "*ambassadors*" must have been as they appeared before Joshua and his leaders. They looked so truthful as they pled for mercy and gave a convincing appearance of humility and piety. They were liars, just as Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).

The Mistake Made by Joshua (Joshua 9:14. 15)

Joshua did not seek God's will—9:14. Joshua and the leaders of Israel did not seek God's will. They failed to pray about this matter. They failed to seek "*counsel at the mouth of the Lord*." It all looked so genuine. They were convinced by the hypocritical pretense of the Gibeonites.

Consider: Often a saved person who is not following close to the Lord will make alliances with Satan and sin. Satan speaks to us about a certain part of our life and suggests that

Christ has no authority over that part. Or he gets us to think that we have a right to do certain things *"if we feel like it."* Satan challenges our dedication and consecration to the Lord. He speaks to us about the *"danger of overdoing it."* He warns us of the danger of being *"too narrow."* He will do anything he can to get us to compromise, to be lazy, indulgent. He will take the edge off our testimony, get us into sin, defeat our lives and destroy our service.

Are you aware of Satan's attacks and tactics? Is he working his games on you? Does he come in disguise, suggesting certain things are your right? Doesn't he try to get you to neglect obedience to Christ?

Have you learned that neglect of prayer will lead to trouble? That such neglect will destroy the spirit of discernment? When we do not pray it is usually because of pride in our own judgment, which is fatal. Satan comes as an angel of light and his suggestions seem so plausible (II Corinthians 11:14). Give Satan an inch and he will take a mile! He will take all he can get!

A treaty was made-- 9:15. Joshua made a peace treaty with an enemy. The Gibeonites had gained a singular victory over God's people through deceit. Joshua now was guilty of making league with an enemy that he was supposed to annihilate or drive out of the Promised Land. This is what a Christian does when he does not recognize the subtle attack of Satan against his life. He is in danger of making a peace treaty with Satan. Satan does not always come in an open frontal attack. Usually he brings temptation in a cunning, scheming, hidden way (II Corinthians 2:11).

I am sure that the Gibeonites were thrilled with their success. Joshua had failed to discern their lie. The treaty was made and the deceivers departed in glee to inform their fellow citizens that all danger was now gone. What a victory for the enemy! Satan works to get such victories today.

The Deception Discovered (Joshua 9:16-27)

They were found to be neighbors. The Gibeonites were not long in revealing themselves as close neighbors and enemies. Now Israel could not deal with them as God had commanded. Their disobedience had brought a severe problem. The enemies were left among them. Although the Gibeonites were given menial tasks, woodcutting and water carrying, the fact remained that they were enemies.

They were allowed to live even though they were under divine judgment. Now the Israelites had no right to break their treaty and take the lives of the Gibeonites. They had to abide by their word, and take the consequences of their pride and disobedience.

When we allow Satan to trick us and we compromise our Christian walk by falling into sinful habits, we are making a covenant with sin and Satan. We will reap the consequences just as the Israelites did.

Conclusion

In Ephesians six we are especially warned against the wiles of the devil. We are to stand against the wiles of the devil. He will come as an *"angel of light"* (II Corinthians 11:14). He will try to get an advantage over us.

These cunning enemies that Israel encountered are a good picture of our enemy, the devil. The conflict of God's earthly people is a picture of our conflict today. Their enemies were flesh and blood; ours are wicked spirits in heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).

We must learn to gain the victory through the power of God.

- >> By the blood of Christ (Revelation 12:11).
- >> By submission to Christ (James 4:7).
- >> By resisting sin and Satan (James 4:7).
- >> By putting off the old sinful habits and lifestyle (Ephesians 4:22-30).
- >> By putting on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:12-18).

1. If you are being pressed on every side and are in the thick of the battle, praise God.
2. If you are finding temptation is strong, go on with God.
3. If you are miserable, look to Him and He will give you joy.
4. If temptations are coming from all sides, it is because you are doing right and following God's will. Satan fights those who are doing a job for God.
5. If you don't have any trouble with the great adversary, Satan, then you are in a terrible state because he has already gained the victory in your life.

Memory Verse: Ephesians 4:27

11

On the Winning Side for God

Joshua 10:1-43

Introduction

It may seem strange to many Christians, especially those recently saved, but the *"land of full blessing is a land of intensive warfare."* We have to learn to conquer and then we have to learn to possess all that is ours in our Risen Lord.

In the entry into Palestine, God wrought many miracles for Israel. He gave the miracle in crossing the Jordan and taking Jericho. The conquest of the land was a result of three specific campaigns, with decisive battles in each. First, there was the central campaign, in which Joshua and his armies split the opposition and prevent a united counterattack. In the central campaign the decisive battles were Jericho and Ai. Then there would be the southern campaign (Joshua 10:29-43) in which the enemy would be defeated. Last, the northern sweep would complete the invasion (Joshua 11). All this was according to God's design and purpose.

In chapter ten we find that new situations, new dangers are matched by faith, action, and ruthless, uncompromising, daring warfare. The result was total victory. God wants us today to be on the **"winning side"** in active combat with Satan, sin, self, and the world (I John 5:14; James 4:7; I Peter 5:7-9; I Corinthians 16:13).

The Confederacy (Joshua 10:1-6)

The enemies of Israel set about to war against the Gibeonites, who had made league with Israel. Immediately Israel became involved because of this legal treaty. Compromise and alliance brought further involvement.

When the nations of the surrounding territories heard of this alliance, they formed a confederation headed by Adonizebek, king of Jerusalem. Their goal was to attack the

Gibeonites (whose land area was larger than Ai) and so warn other tribes not to make peace with Israel.

The Gibeonites naturally called upon Joshua and the Israelite nation to go to battle with them. They sent messengers to Joshua at Gilgal. From Gilgal the Israelite soldiers descended to aid Gibeon against the five kings of the Amorites (Joshua 10:3-5) who had gathered to besiege Gibeon.

The Conquest (Joshua 10:7-11)

God's message to Joshua was clear: *"Fear them not; for I have delivered them into thine hand. There shall not a man of them stand before thee"* (v. 8).

As Joshua ascended with the mighty men of valor they went in the power of God. God's power is always at our disposal when our hearts are right and we are truly facing our enemies in His power and might. and not in the energy of the flesh (Ephesians 6:10,11; Romans 8:37).

Joshua came upon them suddenly, unexpectedly, and slew the Amorite forces with a great slaughter. The Lord also intervened as He sent hailstones upon the enemy which caused more death than the armies of Israel had caused. These enemies who had been in confederation fled in panic and did not even attempt a united stand against the host of the Lord.

The Crowning Event (Joshua 10:12-15)

What a miracle! This was the day that the sun stood still! Scientists using modern methods and equipment have confirmed an unexplainable *"extra day"* in history past. God's Word is true and is always vindicated!

The light continued on nearly another whole day until the battered host of the enemy was destroyed and their kings taken captive. To human sight, the *"sun stood still"* as God lengthened that day. While this miracle of the Lord has often been held up to ridicule as infidels have sneered at it and critics have scoffed, yet God's Word is true! The sun and moon held their course in the midst of the heavens until the triumph was perfect. It was Joshua's prayer that the light of day might be prolonged and the darkness of night be retarded, and God answered miraculously to his faith. This miracle terrorized the heathen nations because they worshiped the sun and moon.

When this age ends with the Battle of Armageddon and the Lord Jesus Christ appears the second time in great power and glory, these signs and far greater will take place (Matthew 24:29-30). Then the sun and moon will be darkened. What terror will take hold of the masses of religious lost who reject the miraculous and Christ Himself (Revelation 6:12-17).

The Lord desires today to work miracles in the midst of His people. He did mightily as recorded in Hebrews 11:32-40, and why not today? Remember what Christ said, *"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto yonder mountain, be thou removed and cast into the sea."*

The Conquering and Conquered (Joshua 10:16-27)

The victory fully won—10:16-21. Following this great miracle and victory, Joshua returned to Gilgal. There the five confederate kings were brought out from the caves in which they had been imprisoned while the battle was on (w. 22-24).

Joshua's request that the captains of the warriors, with all the men looking on, *"come near, and put your feet upon the necks of these king,"* may seem strange. But it was a sign that God would continue to give victory over all the enemies, and that they were not to fear,

but be strong and of good courage (v. 25). It is also a spiritual truth for us today—we are to stand victoriously against our enemies (Ephesians 6:13-18).

The five kings slain—10:22-27. The story is not a pretty sight, but remember that these nations were under the judgment of God. In a similar way we are to be hard on sin, compromise, and anything that defeats God's work and dishonors His name. We must hate sin (Jude 22, 23), and "*put it to death*" (Colossians 3:5; Galatians 6:14).

The Further Conquests (Joshua 10:28-43)

The following battles covered a vast area and were under the direction of the will of God. They conquered an area from Kadesh-Barnea unto Gaza, all the country of Goshen unto Gibeon. Why? Because God was at work in their behalf, for God "*fought*" for Israel (v. 42).

If God is "*for us, who can be against us?*" (Romans 8:31). How wonderful it was for Israel to return after victories to Gilgal, the place of self-judgment and confessed weakness. They were learning to walk in God's power, as we should also, in order to have victory over the enemies of the Christian life. We must admit our weakness, and walk in His strength (John 15:5; Ephesians 6:10).

The judgment of God upon these seven wicked nations had long been deferred, but now His righteous wrath against their vile, immoral habits and religious rites was poured out upon them through the conquests of Israel. Romans 1:21-32 is a good description of the heathen nations of that day, and of many countries today. God will bring judgment upon any country where "*wickedness abounds.*" ***Woe to America!***

Conclusion

The result of all this was "*that none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.*" From that time forward the people of God were finally established in the land of Canaan as a people to be feared.

I believe with all my heart that God's purpose in His church today is the same. That people will have an awe of God and a holy fear of disobedience when they see the power of God upon a local body of believers. The unsaved should sense the power of God there and will be converted. A reverence for God will develop as they see a church composed of people with uncompromising testimonies, courageous faith, and holy lives. We must put our feet spiritually on the neck of the enemy -- pride, jealousy, critical spirits, harsh tongues, sinful habits. We must be a holy people used of God!

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 16:13

God's Word Tested and Proven

Joshua 11 and 12

Introduction

Many years ago a lady had many small “*t’s and p’s*” written in her Bible along the margin. Someone looking at it asked, “*What does the little ‘t’ and ‘p’ mean that I see so often in your Bible?*” “*Oh,*” she exclaimed, “*those are verses that I have tried and proven.*”

The Word of God does not mean much to any Christian unless it has become a personal word. In making it ours we try to prove many verse and portions by application in our daily lives.

We often sing the song Trust and Obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus. How true! In the practical daily reading and obeying of God's Word we learn to trust and obey.

By this means God's Word is tested and proven. We must “*prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Romans 12:1,2; I Thess. 5:16-24).

Now let's see how God's Word was tested and proven in this portion of the book of Joshua. Many other wonderful lessons for us today are seen in what may at first appear to be dull reading.

Jabin and His Confederacy Prepare (Joshua 11:1-5)

In this opening portion, we read of the last great coalition of Canaanite nations that stood in the way of Israel possessing their God-given inheritance. Two of the more famous leaders of this confederation, Jabin and Jobab, had authority over the tribes of the North which included some mountain areas and the plains near the Sea of Galilee. They had “*much people as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.*” But Israel was the rightful owner of the land as it was promised to Abraham and his seed (Genesis 15:18-21; 17:8).

Think About It: The Christian faces a great foe daily, indeed three great foes could daily bring defeat to any saved person unless they walk in the power and victory of the Risen Savior! We must learn to have victory over these foes the world (John 16:22; I John 2:15-17), the flesh (Galatians 2:20; 5:24), and the Devil (I Peter 5:8,9; Revelation 12:11).

God Encourages and Gives the Victory (.Joshua 11:6-14)

The encouragement given—11:6. All fear was to vanish because God said, “*Be not afraid of them.*” We need not fear any enemy that we face either (II Timothy 1:7; John 14:27; Hebrews 13:6).

Victory was assured, as the Lord said, “*tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel.*” Complete victory is also assured every Christian who will claim it and receive it fully (Romans 8:37; II Corinthians 2:4).

The victory experienced—11:7-14. With such assurance, Joshua rushed at once against the enemy. It does not matter how strong the enemy is, how cunning his plans, or how terrifying his forces, God will give the victory, we shall be more than conquerors. Joshua's faith was rewarded; the victory was complete. The chariots of the enemy were burned with fire and the horses destroyed (Psalm 20:7). Utter extermination was carried out. “*Not any were left to breathe.*” An awful picture indeed.

Infidels have made the best of it by denouncing the record and blaspheming the righteous God who commanded such treatment. Joshua acted in obedience to the Divine will. God's time for execution of His righteous judgments had come and Israel was but His instrument (Genesis 15:16). The iniquity of these nations was now full, God's wrath and vengeance had fallen upon them.

Think About It:

Don't forget that the Sword will fall again. What happened here is but prophetic of the judgment and wrath in store for the earth. Just as these kings hardened their hearts (v. 20), so many in a coming day will harden their hearts and blaspheme God while they are unwilling to repent (Study the following... Revelation 6:16, 17; 9:20,21).

Continued Conflict and Full Victory (Joshua 11:15-23: 12:1-23)

Notice these phrases as given in chapter eleven:

"And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him." (v. 9)

"And he utterly destroyed them, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded." (v. 12)

"As the Lord commanded Moses, his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses." (v. 15)

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses..." (v. 23)

Full victory would never have come, except that Joshua fully obeyed the Lord in everything God had commanded.

Continued conflict is a part of life. Every Christian will be tempted daily to sin. Temptation comes when we are *"drawn away of our own lust (desire) and enticed."* Then falling into that enticement we commit sin (James 1:13-15).

God has given every provision that we *"sin not"* (Psalm 119:11 and I John 2:1). We have no excuse for sinning. Christ is our victory, and God has given a way to escape in every time of temptation (I Corinthians 10:13).

Going back to our text (Joshua 11:23), we notice that Joshua now was able to begin the dividing up of the inheritance unto Israel. And the land rested from war. Chapter 12 gives us a rehearsal and further account of the kings whom they smote on both sides of the Jordan River. It is a full accounting of the victory which God had so graciously given. Israel had a triumphant march from the day of victory over the Amorites on the east side of Jordan until the last of the cities had submitted to them.

Conclusion

God's Word to Israel and particularly to Joshua had been tested and proven. God always keeps His promises; they are *"yea and amen in Christ Jesus"* (II Corinthians 1:20). If Israel would keep His law and act in accordance with His commands they would never know defeat! And it had come to pass!

Joshua's victories are an illustration of the triumph the Christian is to have today. We must have daily victory over every foe. Christ has defeated every foe we will ever face, even death itself.

Notice what it says of Joshua...*"he left nothing undone."* He obeyed the Word; he followed close the Divine instructions. That led to success and blessing. This is what God had promised. Please reread Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1.

Many of us are defeated daily when we ought to be *"more than conquerors through Him that loved us"* (Romans 8:37). Because sin is allowed in our lives and because of our indifference and lethargy, we fail to walk in His victory.

Thirty-one kings are mentioned by Joshua. The land the Israelites captured from these kings was about 150 miles from north to south, and 50 miles from east to west. They took it by faith. Their victory was a result of obedience to the Word of God.

We can have victory through the power of the Word of God. We must make it ours by testing and proving God's Word. We are urged to:

1. Meditate upon God's Word -- (Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 1:2).
2. Study God's Word -- (II Timothy 2:15).
3. Obey God's Word -- (James 1:21-25).
4. Search God's Word -- (Acts 17:11).
5. Rejoice in God's Word -- (Nehemiah 8).
6. Memorize God's Word -- (Psalm 119:11).
7. Share God's Word -- (Nehemiah 8:10; II Timothy 2:2).

Memory Verse: Joshua 1:8

13

Caleb, the Wholehearted

Joshua 13 and 14

Introduction

The wars of Canaan were largely at an end. About seven years of warring were ended and largely completed. Israel had found temporary rest in the Promised Land, while much land was yet to be possessed (Joshua 13:1). Vast tracts of land were not yet settled by Israel. While they had possession of many valleys, cities, and some mountain areas, many rich desirable areas had not been conquered yet.

Many of us have known the Lord for years, but there is much land yet to be possessed spiritually. To what extent have you entered into the enjoyment of the precious things of Christ? (I Corinthians 2:9-13). Think about it!

Joshua chapter 13 deals with the apportionment of the land. The Lord clearly faces them with the land which yet remained to be possessed (v. 2). Under the direction of the Lord, the land was divided among the tribes. .

It could be said of Caleb that he wholly followed the Lord. What a mighty man of God! In this chapter we want especially to study about his unusual life. His testimony was:

A Life Built Upon God's Promises (Joshua 14:6-8)

1. Five times Caleb made the plea of, "*The Lord spoke*," as he claimed what God was going to yet do for him. He had hidden the Word of God in his heart. For forty-five years he had lived with the promise of what God was going to do. He and Joshua were the only ones who were alive of the older generation when Israel had gone into the land. This was true because they were the only ones of the spies who believed God (Numbers 13,14). God had promised Caleb a special part of the land because of his faithfulness.

2. Caleb believed God's Word as given through the lips of Moses (14:9,10). He had cherished that word those forty years in the wilderness wanderings, and during the time they had subdued the land. Caleb was to possess the territory he had so bravely entered back when he and Joshua had spied out the land (Numbers 13:30; Joshua 14:9,10).

3. Caleb came to Joshua to ask for the right to possess that which God had promised. He had been forty years old when God first promised him the land. God had kept him alive for forty-five years more and now by faith he was going to possess that which was to be his.

A Life That Bears Review

When we look back on our lives, what do we see? When we look back, are we happy with what we see? Could our past bear the close scrutiny of others? Caleb's could. Think about it!

Caleb Had Been True. In the midst of unbelief and cowardice, Caleb had stood firmly on God's promises. He gave his report with sincerity and veracity. He could say, "*I wholly followed the Lord.*" He could look back on nearly half a century in which his faith had not dimmed (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-10).

Caleb was not disappointed. If he had not walked in faith, self, pride, passion, or covetousness would have taken over in his life (Hebrews 11:6). As he thought about the past years he could do so rejoicing in God's hand on his life. What a commentary—"...for he wholly followed the Lord."

A Life Which Discovered the Secret of Perpetual Youth

A life given to God as a youth. Caleb is a great Bible character. How deep, and yet how simple, was the secret of his greatness. What we mean by "perpetual youth" is that the spiritual vitality, faith, and energy of youth can be maintained throughout life by those who "*wholly follow the Lord.*" Of course this must be God's will for the life -- to give such physical strength. Caleb was known as a godly young man and when Moses chose the spies, he was an obvious choice. He had tremendous strength as the many years passed, as much strength when he was eighty-five as when he was forty! God's hand was still upon him! He remained strong in the call of God upon his life.

The faith which is ours in youth may be undimmed in old age. The vision of the Lord should be clearer as we grow older... if we have a faith that never wavers (II Timothy 4:6,7).

Joshua and Caleb had measured the giants in the land (Numbers 13:28; 14:8) against the power of God. Caleb had a great God. He walked all those years with this great God (Jeremiah 33:3; 32:27).

A realization that life lies ahead. The aged who are unsaved often feel that life is gone and that the future holds little for them. For the saved person, life constantly lies ahead. Even when on the sinking sand at the last moments as one goes through the "*valley of the*

shadow of death," life is still ahead for the Christian. Praise God, for the servant of the Lord the future is as bright as the promises of God.

A dedication to the purposes of God. By going out to battle for the Lord, serving with all we have, youthfulness can be maintained. Such youthfulness is the vigor of the spiritual man, the inner life, even though the outer man may be perishing.

In thankfulness, Caleb praised God for an undiminished strength. Therefore, he could say, *"Give me that mountain,"* even though it was yet possessed by heathen people (w. 11, 12). Caleb's readiness for one more fight was fed by his reliance on God's help—*"I will drive them out as the Lord spoke"* (v. 12).

Too often, as people get older they can only speak of past experiences, past victories, past triumphs, and past service. There are great blessings in store for those who give their all in service to God to the very last days of their life.

Conclusion

Here was a life with a stirring record. Caleb was determined to do God's will no matter the cost. His name, Caleb meant *"one who followed closely,"* or *"wholehearted."* His life could be illustrated by the way a dog might follow always at the heels of his master, always alert to do the master's will. One can imagine a loyal dog that has its eyes fastened upon its master with total loyalty and obedience. Such was the life of Caleb. This is why God blessed him so richly and he is an example of one who could look back on his life with no regrets, and remain strong in the full vital active faith of a youth.

Caleb was spared:

- from discouragement which is so often used by the devil. He did not have sinking or fainting "fits" (Isaiah 40:28-31).
- from unbelief which so often destroys and takes its toll in the lives of Christians (Hebrews 3:7-19).
- from death itself (Joshua 14:10). Moses had promised him the inheritance as he had *"gone all the way"* with God.

Caleb's life was strong:

- in continuity as he lived in the power of God - (Ephesians 6: 10).
- in warfare, going out to battle, standing and fighting, and facing giants.
- in victory (Joshua 14:12 *"I shall be able to drive them out..."* (Joshua 15:13-19).

What is your life like in the midst of the failures of so many Christians on every hand?

Memory Verse: Isaiah 40:31

Satisfaction in Life

Are you happy with your lot in life?

Joshua -- chapters 13 and 15-19

Introduction

Our purpose is not to give a complete study of the areas each tribe inherited under the direction of the Lord through Joshua, but to share some very practical truths which come out of these chapters.

We must be reminded that chapter thirteen begins with the word, *"There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."*

1. God had determined the precise area which each tribe should occupy.
2. Each was responsible for total possession of that which God gave them.
3. Each needed to apply the same principles the tribes had learned in united warfare.
4. Each had to subdue fully that area which was theirs and not be content to allow heathen, vile, corrupt peoples to remain the land which was theirs in the will of God.

Far too often we do not possess all that should be ours in spiritual experience. Often we refuse to accept our lot in the will of God for us in Christ.

God's Inheritance for Them was Important

It would be wise to mark certain words in your Bible, the words *"inheritance," "inherit,"* or *"lot."* Notice these words in:

- Joshua 13:6,7,8,14,15,23,24,28,29,32,33.
- Joshua 14:1,2,3,9,13,14.
- Joshua 15:1,13,20.
- Joshua 16:1,4,5,8,9.
- Joshua 17:1,2,4,5,6,14 18.
- Joshua 18:2,3,4,7,8,20,28.
- Joshua 19:1,2,8,9,10,16,23,31,39,41,48,49,51

From all these verses it is evident that God was tremendously concerned that Israel enter into *"their inheritance"* by completely possessing the land. But Israel never responded to the fullness of God's gift to them. How great their failure, as well as our failure as His spiritual people, to possess our possessions, which God's grace has put at our side.

Chapter fifteen mentions about 150 names. The Lord distributed the inheritance to His people and placed them as it pleased Him. He knew their faithfulness and their ability, and accordingly they received their portion. We, too, as members of His body, receive our portion and inheritance from himself, *"dividing to every man severally as He will"* (I Corinthians 12:11).

In chapter 15:13-18 we read of Caleb receiving Hebron, which means "communion." The application in spiritual lines is interesting. Faith longs for communion, but the giants, the Anakim, are there, preventing real communion with God. They must be dispossessed. Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak. Only as we follow the Lord wholly, as Caleb did, shall we conquer and enjoy our Hebron with our Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapter 16:1-4 we read of Joseph's lot, which was to begin at Jordan, the river of

death, up to Bethel, which means "*the house of God.*" What a place to dwell spiritually, near the "*house of God.*"

Then Ephraim comes next. Ephraim means "*doubly fruitful.*" Yet the Ephraimites failed to drive out the Canaanites which dwelt in Gezer (Joshua 16:5-9). A Jewish historian says they indulged in luxury and pleasure. Later in the book of Hosea it says that Ephraim was "*joined to idols.*" What a failure! We are often warned in Scripture about idols of the heart. Often it is idols of the heart that destroy our walk, keep us bound in sin, brings about our failures, and lack of fruitfulness. No wonder many Churches are weak -- because God's people have idols of the heart.

Next in chapter 17:1-13, half of the tribe of Manasseh comes into the picture. The other half were to have their inheritance on the east side of Jordan with the tribes of Reuben and Gad. They claimed the inheritance which the Lord had promised them. They exhibited great courage of faith.

Then we read of the complaint of the children of Joseph. They were dissatisfied and selfish. Joshua took them at their word and challenged them to take the wooded hills and mountains still inhabited by the Perizzites and the giants (Joshua 17:14-18). Their answer showed their unbelief and failure. They pled weakness as they looked at the enemies and did not look to the Lord.

Seven tribes at this time were without their inheritance and seemed to be content. They probably had become tired of the war and the conflict. Joshua urged them onward, "*How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?*" (Joshua 18:1-10).

It was difficult for these seven tribes to go forth and conquer, to occupy new territory and meet the enemies. They possessed many things for their comfort that they had not had in the wilderness, and were content with what they had. In time, if they did not go forth to possess the land, the enemies would become "*scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes.*"

Many famous battles were fought by the tribe of Benjamin. Although it was the smallest tribe, it distinguished itself by valor in battle (Joshua 18:11, 18). The territory they inherited had high places and they came into the possession of a rich inheritance from the cities they captured. They were faithful and God delighted in their faithfulness and made them great. (Consider: I Corinthians 1:26-31)

Finally, in chapter nineteen, we have the names of the cities and villages which became the inheritance of the six remaining tribes. Many blessed lessons we must leave untouched. It is interesting for example that Simeon's inheritance was closely connected with that of Judah. Simeon means "*hearing*" and Judah means "*praise.*" These two are linked together. If our hearts are open to hearing our Lord, then our mouths will be open to praises.

God's Inheritance For Us Is Important

In chapter 19:49-51 we read of Joshua's inheritance. This is a blessed type of the inheritance which the Lord Jesus has received. We must not overlook the fact that the children of Israel gave Joshua the inheritance. May we give Him that inheritance. Christ is our inheritance and we are His inheritance (Ephesians 1:18).

Think about it: How slack we are to *"go forth and possess"* new blessings, victories, joys, and opportunities to serve. In the book of Hebrews we are warned about *"giving the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip...for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation."* This is written to the saints.

Our inheritance is in Christ. Our inheritance comes through salvation, through being made a son in the family of God. *"If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ..."* (Romans 8:17).

Our inheritance comes only through Christ (I Corinthians 3:21-23). *"All are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."* All is ours in Christ, for we have been made *"partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light..."* (Colossians 1:12-14). The saved have been *"called to receive the promise of eternal inheritance"* (Hebrews 9:15). *"If a son, then an heir of God through Christ"* (Galatians 4:7).

Our inheritance comes through suffering: "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Some children in this world only inherit because they are the first born sons and have been willing to suffer in a job, factory, or work which they later inherited. They had to first suffer the apprenticeship and time of learning the business.

Our inheritance is eternal (I Peter 1:4). *"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you..."*

Our inheritance is for service now. Too often the saved do not appreciate God's present call to full service. Such a call includes the inheritance of His choosing, spiritual gifts He bestows and spiritual enabling to carry out a given task. When we fail to appropriate the inheritance of His divine, chosen call to service, we forfeit the spiritual gain it would bring. Esau forfeited his inheritance for a mess of pottage. Some Christians do the same today (Hebrews 12:16,17).

1. We are chosen to bring forth fruit (John 15:16; Acts 9:15).
2. We are chosen to offer up spiritual sacrifices (I Peter 2:5).
3. We are chosen to receive spiritual gifts and the enablement to use that gift whether it be teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, or consoling (Romans 12:4-8).
4. Some are chosen to be pastors or deacons (I Timothy 3:8-13). *"Thereby they purchase to themselves a good standing, and a great boldness in the faith..."*

Memory Verse: I Peter 1:4

Perils to Avoid

Joshua 13:1; chapters 20, 22

Introduction

We can learn from Joshua. Romans 15:4 says, "*Whatsoever things were written aforetime were...for our learning. . .*" There are many New Testament counterparts of the events of the book of Joshua. The things that happened were indeed examples for us today (I Corinthians 10:11). The book of Hebrews imparts many applications to us from the events of the Old Testament.

The Peril of Falling Short (Joshua 13:1; Hebrews 6:12)

One of the great burdens upon Joshua's heart was that Israel did not enter into all the land and possess it as they should have. "*There was much land left, much yet to be possessed...*" (Joshua 13:1). God had given it to them to possess.

New Testament Application:

For "God ... hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus..." (Ephesians 1:3). Mapped out in the pages of God's Word is all the territory which we are to possess. We sing the song, "*Lord, lead me on to higher ground.*" Yes there is higher ground to be taken for the Lord. The peril is that we will be unfruitful and refuse to advance on that higher ground.

Paul's burden—Philippians 3:7-19. Paul counted all things of the world "loss" so that he might gain Christ. He desired only to be "*found in Him,*" not having his own righteousness, but Christ's. He desired the excellency of the knowledge of Christ (v.10). He constantly pressed on for the things of Christ (w. 14 19).

Peter's teaching—II Peter 1:4-9. Peter taught that we need to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. We must go on, even when we have fallen short of these ideals, and strive to add these Christian graces to our lives. We do not want to be barren and unfruitful in the Lord. We should not blind ourselves to our short comings, but put on these godly characteristics.

There are three great words which must be our experience if we are not to fall short of God's best for our lives. They are surrender. consecration. and appropriation. First we must be utterly *submissive* to Christ. We must *consecrate* all we have, our life, talents, body, to Him. Then we must *appropriate* by faith the Spirit filled life that is ours in Christ. This was Christ's experience. He surrendered all to the divine will, gave Himself in consecration, and then appropriated the power of the Holy Spirit in His life and ministry (Romans 12:1,2; 6:13).

"*How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?*" Israel's problem is our problem; their peril is our peril. We too often shrink from pressing on because we lack self denial and self-sacrifice. We love our ease, we love our attachment to the world, our present and past achievements. We are like a soldier on furlough, glad to be out of the midst of the battle. We must get back into the battle; we must not fall short.

The Peril of Falling Out (Joshua 22:1-34)

There is a brief story in chapter twenty two of an unnecessary division and strife among

the Israelites. It is sad that God's people often have a "falling out" with one another. They lack the determination to get along with other people.

The background—22:1-9. The two and one half tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, were going to return to their inheritance on the east side of Jordan. They had helped the other tribes for seven years. They had been obedient to the command of the Lord. Joshua commended their steadfast, courageous spirit and urged them to continue faithful to the Lord. Then he blessed them.

The burden—22:10, 24-29. These tribes had a burden that their future generations would continue to follow the Lord. They built an altar, naming it "**Ed**" or *witness*, that it might remind their children of the greatness of God, of their service to Him, and of the bond between them and the other tribes.

The blight—22:10-20, 30-34. The other tribes jumped to conclusions and presumed that this altar was for sacrificing to false gods. They prepared to fight these that had given seven years of help. They determined to attack the supposed apostates.

The Peril of "Falling Through Ignorance" (Joshua 20)

Chapter twenty goes into detail about the "Cities of refuge." The tribes sent a committee to question the two and one half tribes and this committee found out the pure motive for the altar. They had hastily judged them and this led to gossip and slander.

Think About It: What a lesson we have here! What a peril for Christians to hastily judge their brothers in Christ! Why are we so ready to listen to gossip? Why are we so quick to believe wrong motives in others? We must not yield to the temptation of a critical spirit, but learn to stand lovingly and graciously for the truth. God hates discord (Proverbs 6:18,19). He hates a false witness (Proverbs 6:19). He hates division and strife (I Corinthians 1:10). God is not pleased when His people have a "*falling out*" and let strife, envy, and jealousy divide them (Philippians 2:1-4).

There were six cities of refuge, three on each side of the Jordan River. All of them were easily accessible to everyone in the land. These cities were places of refuge for anyone who had unintentionally killed someone (Deuteronomy 19). These cities speak to us of God's mercy. Sins of ignorance, accidental sins that were not intentional were dealt with in mercy (Psalm 19:13, 14). The unfortunate person could flee to a city of refuge and be free from vengeance. Then his case was to be judged by the Levites and if proven innocent of malice in his actions, he was permitted to stay in the city of refuge.

Think About It: We should praise God for our place of refuge. God is our refuge (II Samuel 22:3). He is a refuge for the oppressed (Psalm 9:9). He is a refuge in times of trouble (Psalm 46:1). We praise God for mercy and forgiveness. Because of His mercy we are not consumed; His compassions do not fail (Lamentations 2:22, 23). He crowns us with loving kindness and tender mercies (Psalm 103:4). Mercy and forgiveness are in Christ, and are available to everyone who comes to Him in repentance and humbleness of spirit (Ephesians 1:7).

Memory Verse: Hebrews 2:1

Warnings to Heed

Joshua 23

Introduction

Joshua was close to death. His many years of faithful service were nearly at an end. As a man "*old and stricken in years*" he called together the Israelite national leaders to present to them his plea and burden.

Joshua had been faithful to God. He had served well and was ready to lay down his leadership. He reminded them of God's faithfulness in caring for them, and in fighting for them (Joshua 23:3). He reminded them that God had not failed "*in one good thing*" (Joshua 23:14).

The Warning Against Apostasy

The land was to be fully theirs -- 23:4. The land was divided by lot. By God's covenant they had the right to possess all the land.

The land was to be subdued—23:5,9,10. Joshua urged them to drive out the enemies of God. They needed to possess the land as God had commanded them. He would energize them for this task.

They were to be a separated people—23:6,7. God wanted them to be courageous people who would keep on doing what He commanded. He wanted them to be obedient and not turn aside. He wanted them to be separated from the heathen gods to never take an oath by these gods, to never serve or bow down to these false gods.

Joshua sensed the danger of compromise and confronted these leaders about their responsibility to continue to serve God. Many heathen people from the conquered nations still lived in the land and shared the land with Israel. God was prepared to thrust them out because their presence would lead to mixed marriages and idol worship. Joshua tried to warn about the peril of the situation. We also need to be aware of the peril of compromise, the problem of idolatry in the Christian life (Corinthians 10:7,14; I John 5:21; Colossians 3:5).

Think About It: How few there are today who "run well" the race for the Lord (Hebrews 12:1). The awful danger of apostasy is in the path of every Christian. It begins first in practice and then takes over in doctrine.

Paul was concerned about apostasy and prayed and wept with the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:28-31). He warned them to "*take heed unto yourselves*" (Acts 20:28). He urged them to feed the flock that was "*purchased by His blood.*" He cautioned them about false teachers, grievous wolves that would enter in and destroy the flock. He advised them to watch and warn day and night with tears (v. 31). He recommended that they commit themselves to the Word of God which was able to build them up in the faith (v. 32). In the book of I Timothy, Paul admonishes us to be nourished in good doctrines (I Timothy 4:6), to be attentive to doctrine (4:13) and to take heed to good doctrine (4:16).

The Warning Against Disobedience (Joshua 23:8.11 13)

Two deterrents to disobedience---23:8,11.

1. The first deterrent to disobedience is to "cleave" to the Lord. As we cling to Him, walk with Him, and seek His guidance daily, we will be obedient to Him (acts 11:23)
2. The second deterrent is to "love" the Lord with our whole heart. When we love someone, we want to please and obey them.

Two terrible results of disobedience—23:12,13.

1. God would not deliver them from the enemy if they disobeyed Him. Victory over our enemies is only by God's grace and power. Disobedience severs us from God's blessing and results in defeat. Continued victory for Israel hinged on their continued obedience.
2. The enemy would try to snare and trap them. Disobedience would cause the enemy to become "*scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes.*" Disobedience would bring their future loss of the land that God had given them.

The Warning About Severe Judgment (Joshua 23:14-16)

Tolerance of apostasy and of disobedience will always bring severe judgment. Sin that is not rooted out will bring apostasy and God's swift judgment. Every great Christian movement that is now modernistic and liberal was at one time fundamental and biblically sound. But a little "leaven" leavened the whole lump. A little compromise on the part of the Israelites would bring discomfort and difficulty from the enemy, but more seriously, would bring God's judgment on them.

If they transgressed, Joshua warned that God would bring evil things upon them. He would destroy them off the land (w. 5,16). If they served other gods, God would be angry with them, and cause them to perish.

Conclusion

God has given us safeguards to keep us from apostasy today.

1. He wants us to be separated from the worldly system and philosophy of life (II Corinthians 6:14-18).
2. He wants us to be obedient to Him (Joshua 1:8; 23:6).
3. He desires our loving submission to His will for our lives (Joshua 23:11; John 14:21).
4. Apostasy and disobedience bring defeat (Joshua 23:13), discomfort (23:13), and disgrace (23:16).
5. A compromising Christian is not a happy Christian. Who wants thorns in his eyes, and scourges in his side?
6. Who wants the chastening hand of God on their life?
7. God's anger will be kindled and His blessing removed from the life of a disobedient Christian.

Memory Verse: Titus 2:14

Joshua's Farewell Message

Joshua, chapter 24

Introduction

Joshua, an aged man, gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem to give them his last charge. He spoke to them out of a heavy heart, desiring God's best for their future. It must not be overlooked that the words of Joshua were not his own, but the words given to him by the Lord. What a climax this must have been to this man who so faithfully, victoriously served that nation.

We always do well to heed the warnings, admonition, and direction of God's leaders. This is why God says to His people concerning their pastor (Hebrews 13:7,17):

- obey those who have the rule over you,
- whose faith follow,
- submit ourselves unto them.

Joshua Recounts the Historical Past (Joshua 24:1-13)

1. Joshua retraced the steps of God's hand upon them. He presented a clear picture of the work of God that had brought them through so much.

2. He rehearsed the great things that God had done for His people, how He gave, He took, He sent, He brought them out, He brought them in, He destroyed their enemies.

3. In retrospect, Joshua related the marvelous history of God's leadership and power in their lives.

4. He reminded the assembled congregation once more of the mercies and faithfulness of God. From beginning to end, Israel owed everything to God's intervention and power.

Think About It: We also need to be constantly reminded that all is “*of God*” and that He must have the glory in all things (Ephesians 1:12; 3:21). In the experience of the Christian, God reveals Himself to us (Ephesians 2:4 6; John 17:3). He gives us salvation through His Son (Ephesians 2:7 9). He calls us to service (Ephesians 2:10). Salvation from beginning to end is all of God.

Joshua Challenged The Men About the Future (Joshua 24:14-27)

The call to serve—24:14-26. The word “*serve*” is used fourteen times in these verses. God emphasizes a service from the heart (Ephesians 6:6; 2:10). He desires a whole hearted service (v. 14), with a wholesome godly fear, in sincerity and truth.

Joshua was an example to them of one who had chosen to serve God. He presented the choice before them, of serving God, or serving the heathen idols. Some were already serving the gods of Egypt and of the Amorites. He pled with them to choose to serve God alone.

The people responded strongly to Joshua's challenge. They affirmed that they would not forsake Him, but serve Him, because they knew God had won the victory for them. We too must determine to serve God and recognize that the victories won in our lives are only won through His power.

The warning about their service---24:19-20. God knew their hearts and He doubtless had given Joshua insight into their future failures. The fact that Israel had not yet driven out all the heathen nations had already brought conditions that would lead to failure. He warned them about half hearted service, reminding them that God is holy, a jealous God who must have first place. God would not put up with continued sin.

He warned them about the temptation of idolatry. If they forsook God and followed after the gods of the heathen nations around them, God would consume and judge them.

God takes us at our word. God demands that we keep our vows. It is a serious thing to make a dedication or consecration decision and then consider them lightly and break them. (Romans 14:9; 6:16-20)

The response of the people---24:21-28. The people were determined that they would serve God in the future. Joshua demanded that they put away all strange gods and serve and obey their Lord God only. Then they made a covenant, a vow before God, and Joshua made their covenant a statute or ordinance. The words were written down and a stone set up as a witness of their vows made to the Lord that day.

Conclusion

The sentiments which governed Joshua pervaded the people in general in his day. The whole history of God's chosen people during the time of Joshua's leadership demonstrated a vigorous faith and sincere fear of God.

We need the evidence today of the "*first love*" which the early church vigorously displayed. We need the power of that love controlling our lives and service. We must have spiritual men like Joshua in the church today. May God help us to yield our lives to Him, to seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and to dedicate our all so that we might see the power of God at work in and through us.

Memory Verse: Joshua 24:24