

AN EXPOSITION OF
JOSHUA

by
Tim James



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JOSHUA

An Exposition of The Book of Joshua as Delivered in A Series
of Messages to The Congregation of Sequoyah Sovereign
Grace Baptist Church, Cherokee, NC.

by
Tim James

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FOREWORD

This exposition of the book of Joshua is the sixth expositional work published from Pastor Tim James, and hopefully, there are several others to come. I know all who read its contents will be blessed in seeing the redemptive accomplishments of the Savior. I am humbled and honored to write its foreword and pray it will not detract from this volume.

Having known Tim since the early 1980's, I can honestly say that he has and continues to seek to honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ at every turn. This commentary on Joshua is no different. He begins his expositions by stating emphatically that "Joshua is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. His name in the Hebrew language is translated 'Jesus' (Savior) in the Greek. . . [and] it begins as it must begin, if this salvation is by grace alone." This grand effort to glorify Christ from the life of Joshua continues from the first chapter of the expositions through the end, where Tim observes, "As seen in these studies, Joshua is a prolific type of our *eternal* Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ. In these last verses, we are reminded again of our Lord. . . there is a sweet rhythm in the final remarks of this book, a representation of what our Lord has done for us."

Rest assured, if you desire to learn more of the redeemer of souls, you will not be disappointed! Chapter after chapter is filled with "Christ and Him crucified." The final word is God's Word—"as *He* said unto them." Tim affirms such by saying, "Well, that settles it! If the LORD God has said it, it is done. It is sealed by eternal promise, unshakable, unchangeable and bound to come to pass." Hallelujah, what a Savior!

If the reader is familiar with Tim's previous expositions from Galatians, Hebrews, Judges, Deuteronomy and Numbers, you will continue to view Christ in all His glory and come away the better for reading them. As I have said, these lessons in

Joshua are no different, and as children of the King, how can we get too much of that sweet, refreshing Bread and Water of life?

I am reminded of what the Apostle Peter said under the inspiration of God in 2 Peter 1:12-13; “Wherefore I will not be *negligent* to put you always in remembrance of *these things*, though you know them and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to *stir you up* by putting you in remembrance.” This is exactly what I am sure the precious brethren in Cherokee, N.C. at Sequoyah Sovereign Grace Baptist Church know regarding their pastor! He is not *negligent* to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God and desires to *stir up* not only those the Lord has given him as an under shepherd, but all who read these marvelous works by my friend and brother.

Drew Dietz
Sovereign Grace Church
Jackson, Missouri

JOSHUA

Joshua 1:1-2

1, Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

As I began to read and prepare for these expositions of Joshua, I had occasion to deliver a message from Galatians 3:23-25. After delivering the message and again returning to this study, I was amazed at these first two verses of Joshua 1. It was almost as if Paul, in teaching the Galatian believer about his former relationship to the law, was specifically considering this very passage. I do not know if that was the case, but I do know the Bible is one message, and that Paul was inspired to say,

“Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under the law.” (Gal. 3:23-25)

He who inspired Paul to write those words is the same who inspired Joshua to write the words in the first two verses of this book. “Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people,

unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.”

Joshua is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. His name in the Hebrew language is translated “Jesus” in the Greek. In fact, the name of Jesus was substituted for Joshua twice in the New Testament (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8¹). This is the story of our Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty Savior, leading His people into the Promised Land. The children of Israel have been sojourning in the wilderness for forty years. All who were above twenty years of age when Moses led them out of Egypt are now carcasses in the wilderness. Of the original group only two remain; Joshua and Caleb—the “savior” and the “sinner.” During the immediate thirty days or so previous, Moses has given the children the commandments that would govern them in the Promised Land.

Now the time has come to realize the promise, to go up and possess the land that God had designated for His people. They have not lifted one finger to possess it. Everything that will sustain them, feed them, and protect them awaits them in the land. The entire land and all that is therein is theirs.

“And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which He swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not” (Deut. 6:10).

There will be enemies to fight and cities to subdue, but the Lord will fight for them, as He has to this day.

This is *our* story, the story of God’s elect, and this is your story if it be that the Lord has been gracious to your soul. This is

¹ **Acts 7:45;** Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David.

Heb. 4:8; For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

the story of the final deliverance of the people of God into Immanuel's Land, the land flowing with the sincere milk of the word, honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty rock. This is the story of the salvation of our souls and our deliverance from this present evil world.

If this salvation is by grace alone, it begins as it must begin. It begins *after* the death of Moses (v. 1). He has served the Lord; He has finished his course; He has fulfilled his purpose, and He is buried outside the Promised Land. *Now* is the time of *Joshua*, now is the day of salvation. Now is the time of the faith that “should afterward be revealed” (Gal. 3:23). Though Joshua will carry with him the commandments of Deuteronomy, the second law, entrance into the Canaan will not be attained by keeping the laws. They are designed for the people when they have taken up residence. The commandments are not grievous to be borne and will in no way affect their possession of the Land. They are given, as the Lord commands in the New Testament, for the peace and welfare of the people as they are in the world but not of it (John 17:14-16¹). The law that was conditional, which required obedience in order to be blessed, is buried out of the way. These new commandments are summed up in two words from above. Love God and love your neighbor, and in these two the law is fulfilled (Matt. 22:37-40²). They are not given to bring about possession of the Promised Land. They are for those who abide in the Land. Entrance into the Land is simple. Follow Joshua and you will arrive.

Moses has served in the capacity of the schoolmaster, a servant assigned to keep the people secure and govern them until Joshua takes the reins of governor. Moses did not bring the people to Joshua. Moses brought the people to the edge of the Promised Land, and there, the Lord ended his lovely career and

¹ **John 17:14-16**; They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

² **Matt. 22:37-40**; Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

raised up Joshua to finish the work. The government shall be upon the shoulders of Joshua our blessed Jesus (Isa. 9:6¹).

God *now* speaks to Joshua (Heb. 1:1²). He is the “Son of Nun,” which means “perpetuity.” He is the Son of eternity, the eternal Son. He is said to be Moses' minister, or the servant of Moses. In the fullness of time “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Gal. 4:4-5). Christ served the law and fulfilled every jot and tittle of it. “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law and make it honorable” (Isa. 42:21).

Verse 2 is the great commission which God gave to His Son. This is glorious. It is almost as if we are privy to the heavenly conversation that took place before the worlds were made; privileged to press our enlightened ears to the door of the heavenly chamber and hear our great God covenant with His Son for the task of the salvation of the elect.

The key word of verse 2 is “now.” There is so very much intimated in this little word. Time and tide are wrapped in this word. The theology of grace is bound in this little word. The function of the law and the bringing in of the things of the better covenant are enveloped in this tiny adverb. “There is therefore *now* no condemnation” (Rom. 8:1). *Now* “the hour is come” (John 17:1). “*Now* is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, *now* to appear in the presence of God for us. “Moses my servant is dead.” His time is over. His day is done. His appointment has been met. He has served his purpose. Now, oh Joshua, *now* is your time. “Therefore arise” (v.2). “*Arise*, O Sun of righteousness with healing in thy wings. Arise, oh day star in the heart of thy

¹ **Isa. 9:6**; For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

² **Heb. 1:1**; God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

people. “*Arise*, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations” (Ps. 82:8). “Thou shalt *arise* and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come” (Ps. 102:13). “Arise, O LORD, into thy rest: thou, and the ark of thy strength” (Ps. 132:8).

“Arise, . . . go over this Jordan” (v. 2). Jordan means “descender” and is commonly a type and picture of death. Arise to descend. Arise to die in the room and stead of your people. Arise; “and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to myself. This He said, signifying the death that He should die” (Joh 12:32-33). In the words of the old hymn, “Lifted up was He to die, it is finished was His cry.” The words are directed to Joshua. He will tell the people to follow, but it is *he* who is directed to go over this Jordan, to give his life a ransom for many. He is the forerunner (Heb. 6:20¹). He, by this journey through Jordan, will secure and attain the promise for the people.

“Thou, and all this people” (v. 2). Everyone for whom Joshua goes over this Jordan must be found in the Promised Land with him (Num. 1:2). Just as Christ declared, “All that the father giveth me shall come to me” (John 6:37). As Joshua descends into this Jordan so the people will descend with him (Rom. 6:3-6, 8, 11).

Go “to the land that I do give them” (v. 2). Notice the emphatic manner of the language employ by God. “I do give to them” this land. I *am* giving it to them, *do* give it to them and *will continue* to give it to them. This is the Land of Promise. This is the covenant of promise. This is the will and testament of God for His people. When Joshua goes over this Jordan, the testament will be in force, and the seed will gain their inheritance as “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”

“Even to the children of Israel” (v. 2; Rom. 2:28-29; 9:7-8; Gal. 3:26-29; 4:28; Phil. 3:3²). The stage is now set for this

¹ **Heb. 6:20**; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

² **Rom. 2:28-29**; For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly;

grand adventure, this magnificent realization, the full attainment of the promise of God.

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel” (Josh. 1:1-2)

and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. **9:7-8**; Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. **Gal. 3:26-29**; And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. **4:28**; Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. **Phil. 3:3**; For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

CHRIST, THE VICTOR

Joshua 1:3-9

3, Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4, From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

5, There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6, Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7, Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8, This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9, Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

As seen in the previous lesson, the words that our God spoke to Joshua pictured the commission of Christ for the task of the salvation of the elect. As we consider these words in vv. 3-9, keep in mind that this is also part of that

great commission of Christ, and it is about the promise of success and the encouragement to be strong and faithful.

This is a wondrous passage. One might ask about the necessity of such words to the Joshua who *cannot* fail (Isa. 42:4¹). After all, God is speaking to the second person of the trinity, His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is very God of very God! Here is the sweet mystery of God manifest in the flesh. Joshua was a type of Christ in His condescension—in becoming a man.

The blessed Son of God was given the name of Jesus (Joshua) upon His birth into this sinful world. He would come to His own and they would receive Him not (John 1:11²). He would deal with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and hypocrites, being despised and rejected of men. His close and ever-present acquaintances would be sorrow and grief. He would hunger, and thirst, and find nothing but stones whereupon to lay His weary head. He would be treated criminally at the hands of men, and in His most glorious place of obedience, He would be rejected by His Father. As a human being, the perfect human, He suffered all the pains of imperfect humanity, yet without sin. It is no wonder then that His Father here gives Him words of encouragement for the task (Heb. 5:7-9³).

Remember also that Caleb (“sinner”) is with Joshua (“savior”). The Savior and the sinner represent Christ and His church. The fact that “all this people” (Josh. 1:2) are to enter the Promised Land is also indicative of the church. Though it is Joshua who will lead them in to possess the land, they will enter *with* him also. The importance of this cannot be undervalued because Christ and the work He performed, and those for whom it was performed, cannot be separated. A savior is not a savior

¹ **Isa. 42:4**; He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

² **John 1:11**; He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

³ **Heb. 5:7-9**; Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

without the saved. So, the encouragement given to Joshua is likewise encouragement to the church. This passage is a picture of Christ and His church in the world possessing the promise.

Our minds are immediately drawn to the fact that this is about the covenant of promise. The children who are about to possess the promise do not arrive at it by the works of the Old Covenant but by the promise of the inheritance (v. 6). Going over this Jordan is a picture of the death of Christ which was the enforcement of the testament—the will and testament of *God*—wherein His people, His Children, would receive their inheritance (Gal. 3:23-29; Heb. 9:15-17¹). The covenant of promise is not accomplished *by* the children but *for* the children, and they receive it as an *heir*.

This passage then (vv. 3-9), declares the successful, victorious work of Christ and the promise to both Him and His church. We, the church, must view this as the source of great encouragement in the matter of preaching the gospel to the world and as a source of full assurance. He has insured the unqualified success of His little flock in its sojourn on the planet earth. Note well and find peace in this promise; there is no hint of negativity, no note of anxiety, and not an iota of doubt as to the outcome. “He that has ears to hear; let him hear the word of the Lord” (Matt. 11:15). “Fear not, little flock, it is the pleasure

¹ **Gal. 3:23-29**; But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Heb. 9:15-17; And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

of the Lord to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). You are “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:7).

What then is involved in this covenant of promise?

1. Verses 3-4. As all things are Christ's, so all things are yours (John 3:35; 1 Cor. 3:21-23).

2. Verse 5. As our Lord was promised success, so shall be the church of the living God because God is with you (Isa. 42:1-4; 49:15-16; 52:13; Matt 16:16-19; Heb. 13:15-16¹).

3. Verse 6. Primarily, this is a promise to the Son that He would *accomplish* the work before Him, and all His children would receive the benefits of His grand victory. These words concerning the result of the substitutionary, propitiatory sacrifice of Christ are mirrored in Isaiah 53:12 when Isaiah wrote, “Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

¹ **Isa. 42:1-4**; Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. **49:15-16**; Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. **52:13**; Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. **Matt 16:16-19**; And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Heb. 13:15-16, By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The words of v. 6 are also words of encouragement to the church. We preach the gospel, and oft-times, it seems that no-one cares to hear what we say. We live in a world that seems devoid of interest in things eternal. Be strong and of good courage. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13). Through the preaching of the gospel, the elect, all of them, will be brought into the fold and made to possess the world and all that is therein. This is by the oath of the Father (Isa. 45:23-25; Heb. 6; 17-20; Matt. 25:34¹).

4. Verses 7-8. In order for the work of the salvation of the elect to be a success, in order for all of the elect to be made righteous, it must be accomplished by God being *just*. The law of God must be fulfilled. Our Lord, in the magnificence of His person and the skillfulness of His work, fulfilled the law completely. His face was set as a flint toward the cross. He turned neither to the right nor to the left (Luke 13:31-32; Psalm 2:1²). Undeterred in His mission, He met the requirement of the law, and in doing so, He made it so that God was righteous in the salvation of His people (Isa. 42:21; Rom. 3:24-26; Matt.

¹ **Isa. 45:23-25**; I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. **Heb. 6; 17-20**; Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. **Matt. 25:34**; Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

² **Luke 13:31-32**; The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. **Psalm 2:1**; Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

5:18¹). In the work of salvation having been completed, this passage also applies to the church (Rom. 8:4²). The law, the Word of God, is the food and drink of the ruminants who are God's elect (Rom. 7:25³). Be strong and of good courage, you will prosper!

5. Verse 9. This will most assuredly come to pass because the Lord has *commanded* it. What He has purposed, what He has commanded to be, will be (Dan. 4:35; Is. 46:9-10; John 10:15-

¹ **Isa. 42:21**; Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. **Rom. 3:24-26**; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. **Matt. 5:18**; For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

² **Rom. 8:4**; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

³ **Rom. 7:25**; I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

18; Is. 54:11-17¹). How do I know? I've read the end of the story (Rev. 7:9-17; John 14:1-3²).

¹ **Dan. 4:35**; And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? **Is. 46:9-10**; Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: **John 10:15-18**; As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father **Is. 54:11-17**; O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

² **Rev. 7:9-17**; And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens

TO FIGHT, TO WIN, BUT NOT TO POSSESS

Joshua 1:10-18

10, Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

11, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

12, And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying,

13, Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

14, Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;

15, Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.

16, And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? **John 14:1-3**; Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

17, According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

18, Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

Joshua's words in verse 11 are to the entire twelve tribes of Israel. They are told to make provisions for a three-day journey into the Promised Land. This is troublesome for some Bible commentators because the children of Israel were being supplied with Manna from heaven for their daily bread, and that provision was not to be gathered except for the day it was to be eaten. However, this command probably meant not only bread but meats, as they were camped near Bashan and Og which were both rich with cattle. The important thing to remember is, they are finally about to go in and possess the promise.

However, there are two and one-half tribes that will go and fight but will not possess the Promised Land. After the battles are over, they will return to the wilderness side of Jordan and there reside, never having enjoyed the promise that the remainder of the tribes will possess. The remaining verses of this chapter relates Joshua's words to the two and one-half tribes made up of the tribes of Rueben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh (v. 12).

These tribes had petitioned Moses asking that they not be required to cross over Jordan to possess the Land of Promise (Num. 32). Instead, they desired to abandon their rights to property in the Promised Land in exchange for being allowed to stay in the area of Og and Bashan because it was a great land for raising cattle. Moses, seeing they desired the land that God had cursed because of the children's mixture of Baal-peor with true worship, reminded them of the end of those over twenty years of

age (when they were delivered from Egypt) who were now carcasses in the wilderness. Moses warned them they were doing the same thing that the ten unbelieving spies had done. Namely, they were discouraging the people from entering the Land of Promise which resulted in their wandering forty years in the wilderness.

Moses also confronted them with the inevitable result of not possessing the land that God had given them. After rebuilding the cities that God had caused them to destroy, housing their families and building up their cattle and sheep fortunes, they would in effect be residents of the lands that were the enemies of Israel (Num. 32:6-15¹). To remedy their predicament, the two and one-half tribes came up with a plan to cover any situation if ever Israel was called to fight. They promised that every man of war would leave their wives and children to cross over Jordan and fight on the side of Israel, not to return to their homes until the battle was won.

¹ **Num. 32:6-15**; And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them? Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land. For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them. And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed. And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel. For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people. And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones: But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

This satisfied Moses, and he allowed them to possess the land they desired and not enter into the Promise Land. These refused to enter because they *saw* with *their eyes* the goodliness of the land outside Canaan and thus refused to see as *God saw*. In effect, they despised the land that God had promised. It was in light of this promise that Moses said to these two and one-half tribes, “Be sure your sins will find you out,” if you fail to keep your promise. So, Reuben, Gad and one-half the tribe of Manasseh opted for a land other than that which God had given them.

In the passage before us, it comes time to pay the piper, and these men *do* keep the promise that they had made (vv. 12-18). There are some interesting distinctions made in this text. *Both* these groups are said to have been given rest by the Lord God (vv. 13, 15). So, this passage speaks of those who are in Christ. Both groups fight for the possession of the promise, but the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh will put their lives on the line for that which they will never enjoy.

There is another distinction made as to who gave the lands to the respective tribes. The Promised Land was given to the people by the *Lord* (v. 15). The land outside of Canaan, on the wilderness side of Jordan, is said to have been given to the two and one-half tribes by *Moses* (v. 14).

Both will enjoy the land that they have been given (v. 15). The enjoyment derived by Gad, Reuben and half of Manasseh will be the fruit of their own labor, the *works of their hands*. They will earn their joy by the sweat of their brow. The other nine and one-half tribes will enjoy their land by the *grace* of God. One group will reside in the land of *works*, the other in the land of *promise*. The tribes on the wilderness side of Jordan will never enjoy what has been given them by promise because they will reside outside the promise, on the outskirts, on the outside looking in.

The one rests *in* their works, the other rests *from* their works. The one rests in what they can see and touch by the labor of their hands; the other rests in what they can see and touch by

the gift of God, the reward of believing. This is a powerful lesson and warning. We need not disdain these two and one-half tribes that opted for the joy of the world outside Canaan because to some degree, and at some time in our own lives as believers, we will find ourselves crippled with the enticements of the world and the preeminent natural pleasures that self-righteousness allows. Before we cross over Jordan with the children, I think it would be wise to revisit what these two distinct groups have to teach us.

I am reminded of all this by a verse that carries with it an equally somber message. Psalm 106:15 reads, "And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." These tribes chose not to possess the Promised land. What was the difference between them and those who refused it because of fear in Numbers 14? The only difference was the manner in which their unbelief was manifested. Those in Numbers chapter 14 would not go for fear of men, and these here would not go for the promise of earthly gain. Both desired the wilderness. Both refused to enter the Land of Promise, but remember, all were still of the tribes of Israel, God's chosen race. The New Testament description of their actions are the words of 1 Cor. 10:11, "all these things happened to them for examples [types]." The tribes and their lives are a picture of Christ's Church in the world. This passage carries with it a disturbing truth and is under-girded with a stern and sobering warning.

Think not that as a child of God you are exempt from such a sad example of unbelief. Do not imagine that because you are chosen of God you will refrain from giving up the enjoyment of your divine heritage for the glitter and glamour of this world. The Promise Land was not merely a location; it was the fruit to be enjoyed by residing there. To taste the land that flowed with milk and honey, the feast of fat things, the wine on the lees well refined, you had to be on site. The land was the heritage of Ruben, Gad and Manasseh. God had given it to them, but they would never enjoy what was theirs because they chose what their eyes saw instead of what God had promised. Their view was

wide and horizontal instead of narrow and vertical. Their affections were set on things below rather than on the “things above” (Col. 3:2).

They were looking at too many things instead of the one thing needful (Matt. 6:22-23¹). Salvation is not only the fact of it, but also the position that is the believer's. It is the enjoyment of it, the tasting of the grace of it. Sad as it is, the believer may choose to allow other believers to enjoy His portion because he has opted for the charms of this life and this world.

David's words in Psalm 51:12 are a prime example of this fact. “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.” David belonged to God. He was a man after God's own heart. Yet in a moment of unbelief the beauties of the world caught his eye beginning a time of adultery that ended in murder. He never ceased to be the child of God, but because of a wretched choice, he lost the joy of God's salvation for a time.

Imagine for a moment you have mounted on eagle's wings and below you is the Jordan River. On one side is the Promised Land occupied by the children of God rejoicing in the realized promise. On the other side are some of the children of God living in the riches of this world. On the one side are the songs of Zion, the worship of the Lord, the High Priest, the altar, the temple, the Holy of Holies, and the ark of the covenant. On the other side are the lyrics of filthy lucre. There are no songs of Zion, only the discordant disharmonies of Baal-peor. On the one side is the testimony of God. On the other side, the testimony of man, the testimony that says, “Yes, I am a child of God, but I have planted my roots in a foreign land.” “How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land” (Ps. 137:4)? Ruben, Gad and Manasseh were only a stone's throw away from the Promised Land, but their hearts were a million miles away—

¹ **Matt. 6:22-23;** The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

so close yet so far away. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1).

The testimony of God is sure, and His warnings are to His people. Look at Paul's words in the first Corinthian letter. “But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Cor. 7:29-31). Who is Paul speaking to? He is speaking to the “church,” the “saints,” “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:2). Look at the words of John in His first general epistle to the church. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (1 John 2:15-17). Who is John speaking to? He speaking to the “Children” (1 John 2:1).

“Be sure your sins will find you out.” Ruben, Gad and Manasseh stopped short of the promise and forfeited the right of realizing the joy that attended the promise. These have a name that designates them as a child of God. They defend the name of God and will die for the cause of God, but their testimony is that they love this present world (Rev. 3:1-6¹).

¹ **Rev. 3:1-6;** And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life,

Consider these tribes. See them for who they are, the place they hold in God's heritage and the choice they made, and pray God to forbid us to shirk it off as if it did not apply to us. This can be our story if God allows. Their promise, their life and their end are a chronicle of the believer who has planted his roots on the unstable, shifting sands of this world.

Consider these three things:

1. Consider *their promise* (vv. 17-18). They promised to defend what they refused to enjoy. They promised to fight for what they refused to be a part of. It is a good thing to fight for what is right, but it is suspect if you fight for what is right in order to possess what is wrong. Our Lord said that if His kingdom were of this world, then His children would fight for it (John 18:36). These tribes did not fight for the Promised Land because they loved it or because they wished to reside there. They fought for the Promised Land in order to have what they wanted in this present world. In this they were mercenaries. The defense of the gospel is for Immanuel's Land, not for geographical, political or worldly gain. If you do not enjoy the salvation God purchased for you but fight and are willing to die for it while grasping this world, your warring and reverence for grace will always be suspect.

How many have foregone the fellowship of the church for thousands of reasons, yet staunchly and stalwartly defend the doctrine of God? How many have isolated themselves for the kine of Bashan, yet will fight tooth and nail for the Doctrine of Christ? I am thankful for their defense of the gospel but wonder why they refuse the enjoyment of the fruits that attend the gathering of God's people. It is a sad thing to have a brother or sister with whom there can be no fellowship because they are on the other side of Jordan. We would say to such, "Cross on over Jordan, die to that other world, come and dine. This is your land also, your inheritance!" "Come thou with us, we will do thee good" (Num. 10:29). It is suspect to fight for what you refuse to

but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

enjoy. What testimony do you really have if you, by choice, have come short of the promise?

Nicodemus is a New Testament example. He defended Christ (John 7:50-51¹), he anointed Christ for burial after He had died, and this indicates that he loved Christ, but he never openly confessed Him for the fear of the Jews. By all indicators, he was a disciple of Christ, who made his camp on the wrong side of the Jordan. Proximity to the promise is not realizing the promise. Defending the promise is not enjoying the promise.

2. Consider *their life*. The two and one-half tribes kept their promise to fight but gained their wealth and prosperity outside the land of Canaan. With such choices there will ultimately come a time when the one who made the wretched choice will have to justify what he did. There is no escaping this. The world is not stupid, nor are the children of God. If the life one lives appears as if they have no interest in the things of God, yet are willing to defend the truth, sooner or later their belief is going to be called into question. They have opted for that which cannot be defended or justified by their life.

What will one such as this do? He will endeavor to prove his Christianity in a grandiose and highly visible way. Joshua 22:10 describes their defense. "When they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a *great* altar to see to." They didn't just build an altar, they built a *big* one, one that could be seen by those on the Canaan side of the Jordan.

It was as if they were saying, "We know we don't have anything to do with you folks, but we are still believers. See how big our altar is? We don't come to worship with you, but we have prayer meetings in our houses and teach the truth. We refuse to enjoy the promise with the children of God, but we preach, teach and defend the gospel of grace."

¹ **John 7:50**; Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

One may come to hear a visiting preacher but refuse to hear the pastor or worship with the church. I'm sorry, but God is worshipped in the Promised Land and nowhere else. The High Priest is there, the altar is there, and the ceremony is there and nowhere else (Josh. 22:11-19¹). Christ is in the midst of His church (Rev. 1:10-13²). Those outside the Promised Land with their great altars have come short of the promise. "Be sure your sins will find you out."

3. Consider *their end*. Look at Joshua 21:38; "And out of the tribe of Gad, *Ramoth in Gilead* with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs."

¹ **Josh. 22:11-19**; And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them. And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one was an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel. And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD? Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, seeing ye rebel to day against the LORD, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel. Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD'S tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God.

² **Rev. 1:10-13**; I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Ramoth in Gilead was the possession of the tribe of Gad. When war came to Israel as recorded in 1 Kings, those who encamped and made their homes short of the promise land were the first to fall (1 Kings 22:1-3¹). “Be sure your sins will find you out.”

The acts and choices of these tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh are a somber warning to the children of God of the sin of unbelief that results in coming short of the promise.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

¹ **1 Kings 22:1-3**; And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:19-34).

SOVEREIGN GRACE

Joshua 2

1, And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

2, And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.

3, And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

4, And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

5, And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

6, But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

7, And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

8, And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

9, And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

10, For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what

ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

11, And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12, Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

13, And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

14, And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

15, Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

16, And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

17, And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

18, Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

19, And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.

20, And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.

21, And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

22, And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not.

23, So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them:

24, And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

This chapter in Scripture introduces us to a wonderful trophy of God's grace. She is a woman, a resident of a city marked for destruction. She is a harlot who was probably an innkeeper as those two trades were often combined. Her's is a remarkable example of the grace of God toward the chief of sinners. Here is a prime example of "where sin did abound, grace did much more abound," and where though "sin hath reigned unto death, grace hath reigned through righteousness unto eternal life" (Rom. 5:20-21).

Her profession is not hidden. Her sin is boldly declared by the name of her profession. Her house was a harlot's house. Of her abode Solomon wrote, "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death" (Prov. 7:27). There are no efforts to hide what she was. Her livelihood was gained by selling her body. The beauty of this divine book is that it does not gloss over the facts about the kind of folk our Lord has chosen unto salvation. She was *not* good. She was *not* righteous. Her profession did not make her sin her's alone, but the nature of her sin was that it involved community. Her practice must involve another in her sin.

Rahab would never be invited to the gatherings of polite society, and she would be considered a pariah by the religion of

this day. History has tried to make her profession more acceptable, and there are novels written about her job. Stories of the days of the courtesans abound in English and French literature. Those who practiced the trade were generally presented as women of substance, and during that time, it was true. They were the only women allowed to get an education, own their own property and were often the wealthy suburbanites of society. Hollywood has filled their coffers with movies about whores with hearts of gold.

Over the years, I have heard many preachers try to qualify Rahab's profession by putting more emphasis on the inn-keeping aspect of her life, as if her harlotry was a sideline or somehow excused because she did what she did for the spies. She did what she did because, though she was a harlot, she was a saint. These two words, "harlot" and "saint" do not seem to belong together. Religion would much prefer that she be called a *reformed* harlot, intimating she was no longer such but had changed, turned over a new leaf, and become a better person. Herein lies the wisdom and blessedness of holy writ. Paul, in recalling his colorful career said that he was a persecutor, and that he *is* the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:13-15¹).

Grace is always displayed against the black backdrop of sin. This whore is one of the elect made righteous by the blood of Christ. She is saint Rahab, but God would have us never forget that she was a sinner saved by grace. She, as she was, holds a great place in the history of the elect, and throughout the written Word. The fact of her being an object of grace can never be questioned. In Hebrews, she is described as a harlot "of faith," and in James, she is called a harlot whose "faith is justified by her works" (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25). Saints are not *good* folk. They are sinners of the worst ilk who have been made

¹ **1 Tim. 1:13-15**; Who was before a blasphemous, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

holy by the meritorious, substitutionary, propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They never graduate from the position of sinner till they slough off this mortal coil and are blessed forever in the presence of the King. Rahab *retains* the title of her profession because our Lord is known by the fact that He was numbered *with* the transgressors.

This blessed harlot was one of two Gentile women in the lineage of our Lord. She married Salmon and gave birth to Boaz (the kinsman redeemer). Boaz married Ruth and to her was born Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse who begat David the king whose throne belonged to one Jesus. The *end* of the lineage of Rahab the harlot is forever in the annals of human history recorded thusly; “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ” (Matt. 1:16).

Rahab’s story began in the election of grace in eternity. She, being a child of God, a daughter and heir according to the promise, had her steps ordered by the Lord. She was predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s son. She was the object of divine, eternal love. In the fullness of time, Jesus Christ, the product of her womb, would come into the world, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem her. Being a child of God, she would be taught of God (Is. 54:13; John 6:45¹). She would be recorded in the Book of God as part and parcel of the gospel of Grace. Her name will never be forgotten, this Rahab, this *harlot*, this *saint* made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. God has forgotten her harlotry. He will remember it no more, but we will never forget that we are his by grace alone. Rahab, the harlot will be in that throng alongside the rest of us sinners singing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.”

The story of her natural history begins here in Joshua 2. This chapter is gospel full and warrants that we spend some time

¹ **Is. 54:13**; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. **John 6:45**; It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

here. Let us camp at this gospel oasis and glean the handfuls of purpose (Ruth 2:16¹) placed here for us and drink from the living waters of the fountain of life. In this lesson, we will take an overview of chapter 2 and touch on some things which we will examine in more depth in the coming lessons.

First, these two spies were sent out to “spy secretly.” This may seem to be a redundancy because the very nature of spying is that it is done in secret. The account given here is to reveal that the secret was not concerning the spies discovery by *those living in Jericho*. Their spying was to be kept a secret *from the children of Israel*, lest they think Joshua had doubts about possessing the promise of the Lord. The information the spies gathered was to be for Joshua's ears only, and from the information the spies brought back, it appears Joshua's interest was not in whether Israel could take Jericho but what was the in the minds and attitudes of the people of Jericho (v. 24).

Secondly, when the presence of the two spies was discovered, Rahab hid them and lied about their whereabouts. She lied! Regardless of how some wish to cover this fact or make it a sinful thing to discourage men from lying, this lie will stand in the eternal Word of God as part and parcel with Rahab's works that justified her faith.

Is it sin to lie? Yes, it is. Apart from the fact that God is true, and all men are liars, it is still a sin to tell a lie. Yet this was a sin that justified faith. God is not a man that He should lie, but that does not prevent Him from making use of the sinfulness of men to accomplish His purpose (Psalm 75:10; James 1:20²). Tamar played the harlot to ensure the continuation of the seed, and Judah said she was “more righteous than [he]” (Gen. 38:26). Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Jews and the Gentiles were gathered together against Christ.

¹ **Ruth 2:16**; And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

² **Psalm 75:10**; All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted. **James 1:20**; For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

They vented their vitriol against Him and did what had been “determined [ordained] before to be done” (Acts 4:28). Rahab lied and saved the spies. Her sin did not work the righteousness of God, that is His doing, but her sin did praise God in His grand design of providence.

Rahab believed God. She believed Him for who He was, and she was bowed by His greatness (2:9-11). She heard, believed and sought mercy. Rahab lived in a doomed world and sought to be delivered by mercy. She sought mercy not only for herself but also for her loved ones (vv. 12-14; Rom. 9:1-2, 10:1¹).

Rahab saved the lives of the spies by keeping her promise to them and by letting them down from her window by a scarlet cord. There can be no doubt as to the meaning of this cord as it pictures salvation from the curse of the law. Her words sound very much like the gospel (vv. 15-16, 22). The same scarlet thread on which they were let down was to be openly hung in the window when Israel came to decimate Jericho. Much like the blood on the door posts and lintels of the houses of Israel at the Passover, those who remained in the house were safe (vv. 18-19). Rahab’s hanging of this cord in her window was a public testimony of her faith in the promise. In this too, she pictured the preacher of the gospel.

Finally, she hung this scarlet cord in her window because of a covenant and to declare her faith in the covenant.

This is Rahab the harlot, and in the lessons to come, we will look at the honor our Lord has given this sinner who is a saint.

¹ **Rom. 9:1-2**; I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. **10:1**; Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

PRIDE

Joshua 2:1

1, And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

This verse proclaims that the spies sent out by Joshua came into “an harlot's house named Rahab.” Rahab, as seen in the previous lesson, is a definitive picture of the grace of God for the chief of sinners. She defies the perceived notions of meritorious religion. She does not fit the mold of what the majority of Christendom imagines to be a saint. Religion espouses that a harlot is a harlot, and a saint is a saint, and never the twain shall meet. But grace slaps the face of religion declaring, in no uncertain terms, that this blessed woman was harlot *and* saint, sinner *and* believer at the same time. Her house was a harlot's house.

We would be remiss if we did not consider her trade as it most assuredly means more than the act that defines it. Harlotry is, throughout the Word of God, a metaphorical term that speaks spiritually of false religion and idolatry (Ezek. 16:9¹). The name Rahab means “pride,” and pride is the enemy of grace. Pride is groundless, baseless, empty, and always self-justifying. Pride is the first thing mentioned on the roster of those things most despised by God (Prov. 6:16-17; 16:18; 18:12; 2 Sam. 22:28; Isa. 10:33; James 4:6²). In Proverbs chapter 7, the harlot

¹ **Ezek. 16:9;** Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

and her house are described, and pride is essential in the defining of her character.

“And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows” (Prov. 7:10-14).

From verse 14 we see that her pride is religious pride, for she claims the blessing of God and is about to offer thanksgiving (peace offerings) for what she does not possess. She preaches peace when there is no peace. The end of associating with her is utter ruin (Prov. 7:24-27¹). Religion is a whorish temptress playing on the natural inclination of man's pride, self-satisfaction, impudent self-righteousness, and self-justification, thanking God for salvation that they neither possess nor understand. This is harlotry and is the name of all that manifests itself as an enemy of the cross.

Her name was Rahab. She was a harlot and remained so until God tore down her house. Her profession is man's natural religion, and it is a horrible bondage from which deliverance must come by the hand of the Almighty Sovereign. This is

² **Prov. 6:16-17**; These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, **16:18**; Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. **18:12**; Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility. **2 Sam. 22:28**; And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down. **Isa. 10:33**; And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory? **James 4:6**; But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

¹ **Prov. 7:24-27**; Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

proven in the Word of God by the use of the name Rahab. Rahab's name is not exclusive to this dear sister in the book of Joshua. In the Book of Psalms, the name Rahab refers to Egypt. Compare Psalm 89:10¹ with Psalm 74:12-14². Those verses speak of the mighty deliverance of the people of God from the bondage of Egypt. Egypt is the epitome of false religion, despising the grace of God and considering foolish the notion of freedom for worship and rest from labor (Ex. 5:3-9³).

Then, when the people of God will not relent in their demand for freedom because the sovereign God has revealed himself in the power of His might, false religion reverses itself from its hard line and seeks to incorporate the truth into its lie—"you can practice your religion but just do it *here*" (Ex. 8:25). When that fails, false religion tries another tack—"Don't completely separate yourself; If not here, at least stay near" (Ex. 8:28). When that fails, religion, ever seeking the ecumenical compromise, tries again—"Don't take your children; it is an evil world out there and we have plenty of Christian schools that will bring them up in the right way" (Ex. 10:8-10).

Then, when it is apparent that the people of God will not worship in their pagan land, nor even stay close by, and who will not leave their children to be taught by God hating infidels, the

¹ **Psa. 89:10;** Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

² **Psa. 74:12-14;** For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

³ **Ex. 5:3-9;** And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

final effort of false religion is for the people of God to at least allow Egypt to keep the name of “Christian”—If you must go, let *us* keep the sacrifice (Ex. 10:24). It is to say, “We can all get along if you will just let us say that we are Christians too; we have the sacrifice too.” But God's people declare, “When we go, we take the name with us.”

Religion despises the gospel of Grace because they know that if it is true, they cannot call themselves believers. This is Rahab; this is harlotry that God must destroy (Isa. 51:9¹). Egypt is old covenant, works-religion, the religion that despises the Lord Jesus Christ and those who preach His name (Rev. 11:3-8; 2:9; 3:9²). Rahab is a harlot, and therefore, as she is representative of false religion, her harlotry is the consummation of all that is false in the religion of Babylon, the great whore. The description that our Lord gives of her in the Revelation is pride defined (Rev. 17:1-6; 18:7³). Her destruction is sure. She

¹ **Isa. 51:9**; Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

² **Rev. 11:3-8**; And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. **2:9**; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. **3:9**; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

³ **Rev. 17:1-6**; And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of

will not survive. She and her followers will be abased and confined to the lake of fire for all eternity.

Read Psalm 87:1-7.

“A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah. His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

“I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah. As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.”

This Psalm is the song of the incarnation of Christ and the results of His coming. He is the glorious things spoken of Zion. He is the head of the church, and she is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all. This Psalm also declares that His story (His gospel) will be preached in all the world, even in the places of false religion. Rahab and Babylon will be told of the one born as the only begotten of God—God's foundation in the holy mountains (Psalm 2:6¹). Even the Philistines, the residents of Tyre and Ethiopia will be told of the one born in Zion (Isa. 49:6²). William Romaine said that when Psalm 87:5 says, “this man and that man,” it should be read “a person and a person was

names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. **18:7**; And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

¹ **Psalm 2:6**; Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

born in her,” there referring to the deity and the humanity of Christ as the God-Man.

Here is what I want you to see as it relates to both the harlot Rahab, who was saved by grace, and those who abide in pagan religion. Of those, there will be some that know God (v. 3). Out of those will come many of the people of God. Where sin has abounded, grace doth much more abound.

Read Revelation 18:4

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Compare 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

I was in Rahab—Egypt. I was in Babylon. I was a Philistine under the rule of the king of Tyre. I was an Ethiopian who could not change the color of his skin. But I was delivered by the mighty hand of God when He severed Rahab and broke her head in pieces, when He called and said come out of her, and when He gave me faith and desire to go (John 10:27; 2 Thess.

² **Isa. 49:6**; And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

2:13-14¹). I was in false, freewill works-religion and abject harlotry when I heard of the “Person and the Person” born in Zion. I heard glorious things spoken of Him, things of substitution, satisfaction, imputation, justification and righteousness. Are you yet there?

“Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (Psalm 68:31).

Could that be you? “Come out of her, my people!”

¹ **John 10:27**; My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **2 Thess. 2:13-14**; But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE SCARLET CORD

Joshua 2:18

18, Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

19, And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.

The beauty of the Bible is that, if God has given you understanding of it, it is singularly thematic. Though not a good analogy, its many roads converge into a single avenue. It would be more correct to say that from the avenue many roads branch out. Christ is the Way and all paths flow *from* Him. Though all that is spiritual points *to* Christ, it does so because all that is spiritual flows *from* Christ. He is the theme and the story of Scripture. It is His story. Text and context find their source in their home, the living Word of God, the doctrine of Christ.

However, the Bible has been and will be ill-used. Every imaginable atrocity has been done using it as a reason. Men have and will wrest the book to their own destruction. They do so because they do not know the author and subject of the book. The Holy Bible is the book that records the salvation of the elect by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. There is not a word in Holy Scripture that does not declare

something about Christ and His substitutionary work whereby He satisfied the justice of God and redeemed everyone for whom He died.

The scarlet cord that Rahab hung from her window for the salvation of herself and her house is a picture of the effectual blood of Jesus Christ, the sure salvation of all those who are under the blood, and the sure condemnation of all those who are not (v. 18).

The scarlet cord is the picture of death. The worm or maggot from which the scarlet dye is derived must be crushed in order for the crimson tide to flow. The blood of Christ speaks of the sufferings of His soul which are completed in His giving up of the ghost. Only the crushing weight of God's wrath may exact the punishment that is due the sinner and only the death of Christ will satisfy justice.

The scarlet cord that Rahab hung in her window pictured the salvation of Christ as exclusive but not prohibitive. It was exclusive because it was hung only for the protection of Rahab and her family. However, it was not prohibitive. Anyone who was in her house when the wrath of God came through the city would be spared (v. 19). Some people disallow the doctrines of predestination and election because they feel that they prohibit men from coming to Christ. At the core of such thinking is a sense of entitlement to salvation, and with entitlement, a sense of worthiness. In truth, it is not election and predestination that men do not believe. What men refuse to own is their own depravity which naturally prohibits them from having anything to do with their salvation. Predestination and election prohibit no one, but they do ensure that some *will* be saved. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). *Some* will come. The some who come are "*all* that the Father" gave Christ. *Anyone* may come ("him that comes"), and all who do come will be saved (not "cast out").

The scarlet cord represents the fullness of the salvation wrought by Christ. The same cord that delivered Rahab from

the wrath of God was the means of escape for the spies. In every circumstance, our deliverance and our security are the same. We are saved by the blood, and we are kept by the blood. The blood covers us and guides us. The blood encompasses us and sets us free.

The scarlet cord is a picture of the preaching of the gospel. The cord was publicly displayed, just as the gospel is declared to all creatures.

The meaning of the scarlet cord was important to only those to whom it had been revealed. If any passed by Rahab's house and saw the cord, they may have been intrigued or wondered as to the reason for it being there, but to those who understood, the cord was life from death. To those inside that harlot's house, there was nothing in the world but that cord. There was nothing between them and the wrath of God but that cord. Their past, present and future was that cord. For those who have heard the gospel, been graced to understand and given faith to believe, the blood of Christ is all there is. So-called "religion" is a plethora of duties and activities. Faith only has eyes for Christ (2 Sam. 23:5; Psalm 73:25¹).

The hanging of the scarlet cord was based upon a covenant of promise (vv. 18-19). The promise of salvation was conditioned upon the cord being hung. Some would look at this and conclude that it was faith that hung the cord; therefore, faith is a condition of salvation, suggesting that she might have not hung the cord and would have therefore died with the rest of the city. There is no real answer to such folly of reason though it is common thought in religion. Suffice it to say that faith believes God and when faced with the imminent danger of utter destruction, faith will always hang the cord. When you know you have no hope and a hope is graciously set before you, you will lay hold of it. Only those who do not believe in a real and

¹ **2 Sam. 23:5**; Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. **Psalm 73:25**; Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

present danger come up with the pipe dream of “I can take it or leave it.” Faith is the response of salvation, not the condition of it.

This scarlet cord represents the answer to the law. When the destroyers came through this town, they had but one thing on their mind. Death was the order of the day, and just as the lamb's blood on the doorposts and lintels of the houses of God's people assured their safety because it was seen by God, so this scarlet cord serves the same purpose. The cord proclaimed there was no need to go to that house, death had already visited it in the death of the substitute. The law received its due at *every* house in Jericho, even this harlot's house.

Finally, the hanging of this cord pictures the *rest* of the saint. While terror was in the streets of that town, the people in Rahab's house rested. They did not bar the doors, take up arms, endeavor to help with the slaughter nor pace the floor. They quietly reposed in supreme security because they believed the promise that the scarlet cord was all they needed because it was all that God required (v. 21). (John 3:35-36¹).

¹ **John 3:35-36**; The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

HIDE!

Joshua 2:16, 22

16, And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

22, And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not.

From the first time that I read chapter 2 of Joshua, the words of these two verses have spoken to my heart. While preparing the four previous lessons from this chapter, my eyes would always fall on these two verses, and quite frankly, they made me glad. When the Lord teaches you the gospel, your mind is spiritually equipped with the gospel. Certain words and phrases that you study trigger an immediate response and set the mind to thinking and meditating on the gospel of grace.

When I was a young preacher, I was instructed by some more experienced preachers to be careful not to “over-type” the Old Testament. I suppose they felt I might be seeing Christ where they thought He wasn't. They were plagued with the debilitating effects of dispensational theology and shortchanged themselves from much of the benefits of Scripture because they felt as if some of it was about Christ and the rest of it was about the reinstatement of Israel. I did not follow their advice, not because I didn't respect them, but because, even in those

passages that they swore had to do with the last days and the restoration of Israel, I kept seeing stuff that, to me, spoke about Christ. The two verses that we consider in this study seem, to me, to be full of gospel teaching.

Consider for a moment, the language of the gospel in these passages. The first words from the lips of Rahab, “Get you to the mountain” (v. 16), brings thoughts of Mount Zion and Mount Calvary. Only in the mountain will the “pursuers” (v. 22) be unable to find you. The word “hide” is full of gospel import. “Go your way” (v. 16) and “the way” (v. 22) are words often spoken by our Savior. “Three days” (v. 22) is a phrase not unfamiliar to the believer. The words “sought them” and “found them not” (v. 22) are the language of substitutionary satisfaction.

The *pursuers* here picture the Law. The law was not established in a vacuum. The law does not exist where there is no reason for it. The law is a reaction to a perceived transgression. The law imputes or charges guilt for sin. Where there is no sin, there is neither reason nor warrant for a law (Rom. 5:13; Gal. 3:19¹). The law was not instituted to keep honest people honest; it was instituted to assign blame and guilt to the dishonest. The law keeps no one from sinning. It would not exist where there was no sin. The law is not for the righteous man (1 Tim. 1:7-10²). The unlawful use of the law is to try to apply it where no sin exists (1 Cor. 15:56³). Since the law was instituted to assign

¹ **Rom. 5:13;** For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. **Gal. 3:19;** Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

² **1 Tim. 1:7-10;** Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

³ **1 Cor. 15:56;** O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

blame and impute or charge with sin, the law, of necessity, is a relentless pursuer of the transgressor.

I remember once watching a police pursuit on television. A couple had burglarized some houses and was trying to escape the police. The chase lasted for nearly two hours with numerous stops and starts. Every time the criminal would stop there were about eight police cars that stopped directly behind them. When the driver sped off, the law followed close behind. When he stopped, the law was sitting in his rearview mirror. Finally, the criminal surrendered, was cuffed and led away. As I watched, my thought was that this was an exercise in futility for this criminal. Eventually the law is gonna' get you. The law exists to charge the *transgressor* with criminality. During the pursuit, the police passed by many motorists. They pulled over as the law drove by, but not one police officer stopped to arrest them. Why? They were not guilty. So far as the law was concerned, there was neither right nor warrant to arrest people who had committed no crime. The law pursues the guilty and them alone. If you desire to do business with the law, the law will do business with you but never to establish righteousness, only to charge with sin.

Since we know we are sinners, what shall we do? "Get you to the mountain!" Get you to Mount Zion where God has set His king on that holy hill. There the Lord sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. There is safety in that hill because of another hill where this same Lord Jesus hung in agonies and blood on His lonely wooden tower. By a singular glorious act, He put away the sins of His people, satisfied the laws demands for punishment, redeemed, justified and made righteous all for whom He died. If you don't get to the mountain, the pursuers will meet you.

When you get to that mountain, hide! "Hide yourselves!" The only place to hide from God's law is to hide in God Himself (Psalm 17:8; 119:114; 143:9; Ps. 32:7¹). Get you to the

¹ **Psalm 17:8**; Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, **119:114**; Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word. **143:9**; Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me. **Ps.**

mountain and hide in Christ (Isa. 2:10, 32:2; Ps. 27:10; 32:2; Col. 3:3¹). The instruction is to hide there three days (v. 22). This speaks of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We were in Christ when He died, when He was buried and when He rose from the grave (Rom. 6:4, 6, 8-11²). When He was raised from the dead, we were justified (Rom. 4:20-25³). “Justified” is a legal term that signifies not only the absence of guilt but the positive declaration of innocence.

When the pursuers come nigh unto you, pull over to the side of the road and let them pass. If they are seeking to blame you with sin, they will not be able; “They sought them . . . but found them not” (v. 22, Jer. 50:20⁴). Since you are righteous, the pursuers will not find you; they are after the unrighteous. Just pull over and let them pass. They are not looking for you. The

32:7; Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

¹ **Isa. 2:10**; Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty. **32:2**; And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. **Ps. 27:10**; When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up. **32:2**; Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. **Col. 3:3**; For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

² **Rom. 6:4**, Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. **6**, Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. **8-11**, Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

³ **Rom. 4:20-25**; He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

⁴ **Jer. 50:20**; In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

pursuers got their due on Calvary (Ps. 22:12-13, 16¹). There is nothing with which they can charge you, and they can't even find you. If they meet you, *you* will have to set up the meeting, and no good will come of it.

The pursuers have returned to their place, having been satisfied. Now, the message to you is simple. Go your way. Get you to the mountain, hide and then go your way. This is the liberty of the gospel. Go your way (John 10:9; Mark 10:46-52; Gal. 5:1²). Go your way not motivated by fear of the pursuers because they are not looking for you. Go your way constrained by the love of Christ and a heart of thanksgiving and praise, in full assurance of faith.

¹ **Ps. 22:12-13**, Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. **16**; For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

² **John 10:9**; I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. **Mark 10:46-52**; And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. **Gal. 5:1**; Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

THAT YE MAY KNOW THE WAY

Joshua 3:1-6

1, And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

2, And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

3, And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

4, Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.

5, And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

6, And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

The first six verses of this chapter records Joshua's preparation of the people to go over Jordan. In verse 1 he brings the people to the verge of Jordan. We know that this Jordan pictures the death of the children of God in Christ and the beginning of the life of the elect in the realization of the promise by faith. This *new beginning* is indicated by the month of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish year. The

meaning of the word Nisan is “beginning” (v. 5; Josh. 4:19¹). The realization of this death and new life is revealed in the new birth, which comes by action of the Spirit through the preaching of the gospel (James 1:18²). All the experiences, ups, downs, failures and deliverances of the wilderness now culminate at this Jordan. The thirty-day time of mourning for Moses has passed. He had his day and served his purpose, but now he has no place in this new life. Having properly laid his memory to rest, the people are about to embark on a brand-new thing (v. 4c).

Jewish historians account that when Moses died, the cloud that guided the people by day and the fiery pillar that guided them by night was removed. The things that determined their movement and pointed the direction that they should go is no longer with them. They will now be led by Joshua. That which was their guide to this point is now put away. “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:23-24³). The Old Testament testifies of Christ and points men to Him who is *promised*. The cloud was a shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10:1⁴).

In verses 2-4, we have the preaching of the gospel. This is the second time the officers have been sent *among* the people concerning the promise of passing over Jordan and possessing the Promised Land. The first time was to deliver the *fact* of the promise that they would pass over and possess it (Josh. 1:10-

¹ **Josh. 4:19**; And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

² **James 1:18**; Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

³ **Gal. 3:23-24**; But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

⁴ **Heb. 10:1**; For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

11¹). These occasions picture the gospel in the Old Testament; the promise of eternal life by the Messiah shrouded in mystery, type and shadow. The people knew they would see the Promised Land, but their guides, Moses, the cloud and the pillar, were gone. Now the officers pass through the second time carrying not only the *fact* of the promise but *how* they will realize the promise. The words of the officers are divine instruction as to how the people will cross the Jordan and enter into the land.

The instructions are simple and singular. “When you see the ark, . . . go after it” (v.3). Can anything be more plain! “When you see [Christ], . . . go after [Him].” The officers did not command the people to go after the ark *until* they *saw* it, but *when* they saw it, to go after it. Until this command was given, the people surrounded the ark. It was in their midst, but they didn't see it. It was secure behind the veil. When the people moved, the ark did not go before them but in the midst of them. Up to this time, they followed the cloud. Now comes new instruction. “When you see, go after.”

No man can or will follow an unrevealed Christ (John 4:10; Rom. 10:13-17; John 17:2-3²). Herein also is the indisputable fact of the security of the elect. The command was not *if* you see the ark but *when* you see the ark. Election guarantees seeing

¹ **Josh. 1:10-11**; Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

² **John 4:10**; Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. **Rom. 10:13-17**; For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. **John 17:2-3**; As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

(John 6:37-45; 10:26-30¹). Herein also is revealed the object and direction of faith. When you *see* Him, follow Him. The entrance into the Promised Land is in a *look*, in seeing. This seeing is by faith.

Note well the description of the ark (v. 3). It is the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God. Faith sees and follows the Christ of the covenant of promise. All that the elect are, shall be, and all they possess are conditioned upon this eternal covenant, accomplished and ratified by Christ. The elect are saved in this covenant. This is God's covenant established with His Son for the salvation of His people from all eternity. Everything that God has done has been by covenant. The people are not told to go after the Christ of whim and whimsy, manufactured in the minds of self-righteous, self-deified religionists, but when they *see the ark* of the covenant of the LORD their God, go after *it*.

The manner in which the object of faith is carried is also a picture of the *preacher* of the gospel, as well as the object of faith. The ark is carried on the shoulders of the priest and Levites. All of the church are priests unto God, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. They carry the gospel, and it is only seen as

¹ **John 6:37-45**; All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. **10:26-30**; But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

they do. God has ordained preaching as the means of delivering the gospel to His people.

The fact the priests and the Levites carry the ark is also significant. The transport of the ark was assigned to the Levites, specifically the Kohathites of the Levitical tribe. Now, priests in general (not ordained by the law) are said to also be carrying the ark. At the least this suggests that something of a change has taken place, something new, something that had never before occurred. The fact that both are referred to probably pictures the fact that the church does not carry the gospel alone but does so under the authority of and with the help of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20¹). Most certainly, it suggests that things in the Promised Land are not going to be the same as in the wilderness. Everything they had under the law is gone, and a new thing has come to pass (Heb. 7:11-12²).

Though the children are told to go after the ark, they are told not to get too close (v. 4). This seems strange language at first. They are told to put about a half mile between themselves and the ark, and not to come near to it. These words seem to carry a warning like the one given concerning Mount Sinai. But these words are not a threat of death but a promise of life. Don't come near so you "may know the way by which ye must go." This is a beautiful representation of the believer's faith. We "see through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). Our Lord dwells in a light whereunto no man can approach.

We see Him, as it were, afar off. Why? The reason is actually simple. At such a distance, since the ark rests on the shoulders of the priest, when we lift our eyes above the crowd,

¹ **Matt. 28:18-20**; And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

² **Heb. 7:11-12**; If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

the ark will be the only thing we see (Col. 3:1-3¹). We cannot look at the ground or follow the crowd; if we are to cross the Jordan, we must lift our eyes to see the ark. Faith looks to Christ in hope and expectation. Faith sees what cannot be seen by horizontal view (Rom. 8:24-25; 2 Cor. 4:18²). At such a distance you could not see the ark unless you were specifically looking for it. The explanation is the key to understanding this. "You have not passed this way heretofore" (v. 4). There is no Moses, no cloud and no pillar. There is just the ark, on the shoulders of the priests and Levites, leading you to the Promised Land. This is a new and living way (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Heb. 10:19-22³).

Sanctify yourselves (v. 5). This means to put everything aside but the view of the ark. Look steadfastly to the ark and be not cumbered about with the cares of this world. The Lord is going to do wonders among you, and you don't want to miss it by being deterred by worldly burdens.

Verse 6 explains the new thing, the thing to be diligently observed and wondered at. The ark is going over Jordan before you. The river you cross, the dry ground on which your feet will

¹ **Col. 3:1-3**; If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

² **Rom. 8:24-25**; For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. **2 Cor. 4:18**; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

³ **2 Cor. 5:17**; Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. **Gal. 6:15**; For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. **Heb. 10:19-22**; Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

tread is new to you, but it is ground that has already been traversed by the Savior (Heb. 6:17-20; John 14:1-3⁴).

⁴ **Heb. 6:17-20**; Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. **John 14:1-3**; Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

MAGNIFIED

Joshua 3:7-8

7, And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

8, And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

This passage is one of those that jump at you with the gospel. When I first read chapter three, I wanted to immediately preach from verse 7. The reference to magnifying Joshua in the stead of Moses being magnified was specific, at the time, to manner. The people of Israel will, with the parting of the waters of Jordan, know for sure that the mantel of leadership has passed from Moses to Joshua, and the result will be the same (Ex. 14:31; Josh. 1:5, 7; 4:14¹). As is always the case, there is much more to this declaration than the magnification of Joshua before the people. This is the report of the magnification of the heavenly Joshua before true Israel, the elect, the sheep, the church of the living God.

¹ **Ex. 14:31**; And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses. **Josh. 1:5**, There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. **7**, Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. **4:14**; On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

Verse 1 begins with a very specific point of reference. Our Lord says to Joshua, "This day." The specificity of this declaration makes us know that God has placed particular emphasis on this day. What happens on this day is like no other day (Psalm 2:7; Heb. 1:5¹).

Our Lord says, "This day will I begin" (v.7). This assuredly is in reference to an earthly time and place. This is God bringing to pass what He has purposed in eternity. This is not something new; it is something old in purpose newly revealed in time. This beginning is the beginning of the Lord's earthly ministry. This is the beginning of His manifestation and magnification before the people of God which will culminate on the cross of Calvary, where God glorified His Son and will glorify Him again (John 12:28; 17:4-5²).

Notice this magnification of Christ is not to the world in general. It is "in the sight of all Israel." Christ is not revealed to all men. He is revealed to whom He is pleased to reveal himself (Matt. 11:27³). He is manifested to those whom the Father has given Him (John 17:6⁴). The world cannot know Him and therefore cannot know those in whose sight He is magnified

¹ **Psalm 2:7**; I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. **Heb. 1:5**; For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

² **John 12:28**; Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. **17:4-5**; I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

³ **Matt. 11:27**; All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

⁴ **John 17:6**; I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

(John 14:16-17; 1 John 3:1¹). His people, His elect, His sheep know Him, hear Him and follow Him (John 10:14-15, 27²).

Notice also that there is a very evident distinction between the Old and New Covenant that begins with the magnification of Joshua. The Lord God declares that He was with Moses, and He will be with Joshua. The beginning of the earthly ministry of Christ was the end and fulfillment of the Law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 10:4; Heb. 10:9³).

Verse 8 asserts that Christ is the head of the church, that He is Lord. God says to Joshua that he shall command the priests (the church) that bear the Ark of the Covenant (Christ and His gospel). Such authority is given to Christ alone as head of the church (Eph. 1:20-23⁴).

The command given is also very clear and instructive. The priests are to “come to the brink of the water of Jordan” (symbolic of death in Christ), and “stand still” in Jordan. The wonder of the salvation of the elect is that they are ordained to good works, but all these works flow from standing still.

¹ **John 14:16-17**; And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. **1 John 3:1**; Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

² **John 10:14-15**, I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. **27**; My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

³ **Acts 13:38-39**; Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. **Rom. 10:4**; For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. **Heb. 10:9**; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

⁴ **Eph. 1:20-23**; Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Everything the believer does, he does while standing still in Christ. There is an element of this word that suggests taking a stand, being determinate and resolute in a thing. The priests who bear the ark are the same who are determined to know nothing among you but Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2-5; Eph. 6:13-14¹). They do not bear the burdens of the world or the dead weight of religion, they bear the ark. They bear the Word of God. "I will worship toward thy holy temple and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Ps. 138:2).

The fact that this was the beginning of the magnification of Joshua in the sight of the people, and takes place at the Jordan, is fully realized with the heavenly Joshua (Jesus Christ) entering into the Jordan (Matt. 3:13-17²). John had been preaching Christ for six months, speaking of Him who was to come (John 1:23, 26-27³). Now as he stands in the Jordan baptizing believers, Him of whom he spake comes to him to be baptized. Our Lord does so because this is the beginning of His magnification in the sight of the people.

¹ **1 Cor. 2:2-5**; For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. **Eph. 6:13-14**; Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

² **Matt. 3:13-17**; Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased

³ **John 1:23**, He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. **26-27**; John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

This is the coronation of King Jesus as He begins His earthly ministry. The nature of the ministry is clearly revealed. It is the ministry of substitution. When John was reticent to baptize Christ because he felt his own unworthiness to do so, our Lord declares that what He is about to do, He is not doing alone. “It becometh *us* to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15¹). Our Lord, being baptized in the Jordan is symbolic of the death that He would die and the death that all his people would die in Him. When the priests were come down to the Jordan, they were to stand still *in* the Jordan (v. 8). When we are baptized as believers, we then declare that Christ fulfilled all righteousness for us in His death for us. We stand *in* Him. With baptism we declare that we stand still in Christ, our substitute. We declare that we rest in Him (Josh. 3:13²).

As our Lord comes out of the water, symbolizing His resurrection and our justification by it, the magnifying of His name begins. God began to magnify Him in this earthly ministry by fulfilling prophecy by Him. The Spirit of God descended on Him as a dove (Isa. 11:1-2; 42:1-4; 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-21³).

¹ **Matt. 3:15;** And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

² **Josh. 3:13;** And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

³ **Isa. 11:1-2;** And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; **42:1-4;** Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. **61:1-2;** The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; **Luke 4:16-21;**

This magnification continues with the voice of God declaring the person and the work of Christ (Matt. 3:17; John 1:32-34¹). As the Son of God, He is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. Our God further proclaims the majesty of His Son in forever setting aside any notion that man may have, as to what pleases Him. God is pleased with His Son and nothing else. This is clearly the declaration of Christ's propitiation or satisfaction of all that God requires (Isa. 53:10; Heb. 10:16-17; Luke 9:33-35²). What a marvelous beginning this is. Christ is magnified above all in the sight of the people (2 Sam. 7:23³).

“And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

¹ **Matt. 3:17;** And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **John 1:32-34;**

² **Isa. 53:10;** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. **Heb. 10:16-17;** This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. **Luke 9:33-35;** And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

³ **2 Sam. 7:23;** And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan” (Josh. 3:7-8).

ALL THE PEOPLE

Joshua 3:9-17

9, And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

10, And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

11, Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

12, Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

13, And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

14, And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;

15, And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)

16, That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

17, And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan,

and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

Approximately forty years and one month has passed since the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt by the power of God through the blood of the Lamb. Now is the day of the realization of the promise. The people of God, who are chosen, redeemed and kept by God, are kept to this hour. They are about to go into the Land of Promise, a land inhabited by nations who hate God but are doomed to fall at the power of His hand. In verses 9-11, Joshua calls the people to hear the words of the LORD (Jehovah), and the words that Joshua relates to the people are words of *confidence* and *assurance*. In effect, Joshua is declaring the gospel in telling the people the *only* true way they can proceed with *confidence*.

John Newton wrote a song about assurance, or lack of it. The first stanza said, "Tis a point I long to know, and oft it gives me anxious thought. Do I love the Lord or no, am I His or am I not?" It is a beautiful song, and it addresses the fears and doubts of believer's concerning their attitude toward God, their Savior. The song is counted by most to be the voice of one seeking assurance, but such a search will never produce it.

Assurance is a subject that is worth addressing because the Word of God declares that His people *have* it (Isa. 32:17; Col. 2:2; Heb. 10:22¹). Some call it presumption, and it is if you can *prove* you have it. The difficulty with the concept of assurance is that it is something that cannot be seen or measured. The problem is that if you look for assurance, you will never find it. Assurance is a product, a fruit (if you will), that is born and

¹ **Isa. 32:17**; And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. **Col. 2:2**; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; **Heb. 10:22**; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

known without ever looking for it. Those who have assurance do not bother themselves with looking for it or finding it. If you want it, you don't have it. If you have it, you don't think about it. If you don't have it, you think about it all the time.

I know those statements fly in the face of men's pursuit of piety and holiness of life, but the fact is, if you are looking for evidence that you are a child of God, you are chasing a specter, an apparition that you will neither catch nor see. Assurance, being born of faith, is much like faith in that it can neither be exhibited, seen or evidenced, and the one who has it never troubles His soul about whether he has it or not. Any gift that God gives is fully and freely given and is in no way contingent upon some notion of proof accomplished by the recipient. One need not try to get what he has been given! Assurance is real and possessed but not by finding it out or searching for it. Assurance is not about you at all; it is about God; it is about Christ.

According to the words of Joshua, assurance is "knowing" that the living God is among you and that He will, without fail, drive out every enemy that is against you (v. 10). Well, I *reckon* so! If I know that the living God is among us and with us, what else could I possibly be but assured? Whom would I fear if I knew the very gates of hell would not prevail against me? On what basis could any doubt ever enter my heart if the Living God was with me? What enemy could cause me even a moment's trepidation if I knew that God was with me and would ease himself of all His adversaries? What would I change about my circumstance (if I could) while possessed of the knowledge that the living God was with me? Think of it! Name, if you can, one thing that would trouble your soul if you knew, really knew, that God was with you (Rom. 8:31¹).

Is such a thing possible? Can we know that the living God is among us? Can we rest assured because our LORD, the man of war, will fight for us? How can we know? Joshua says that we can know and indeed shall know. "Hereby ye *shall* know" (v. 10).

¹ **Rom. 8:31**; What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

How shall we know? Shall we know because we have been such extraordinary people that God has taken notice of our moral and spiritual rectitude? Does he consequently desire to be with such committed folk? Shall we know because we have held ourselves to such lofty moral standards that we have obligated Him to recognize our achievements and thus own and protect us? Have we been such prayer-warriors that, having prayed through, agreed together and covered the altar with a multitude of tears that God must be moved to meet with us (Mal. 2:13¹)?

Hereby we *know* that the living God is among us. Hereby we are *assured* in our heart that He will fight for us (v. 10). How? “Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan” (v. 11). The words “Behold the Ark” are actually translated from just one word. Hereby shall we know that the living God is among us... “Ark!” That ark of the covenant of the Lord is none other than Jesus Christ. How can you know? Behold Christ. How can you have assurance? *Behold* Christ!

Such simplicity and singularity are foolishness to those who are looking for evidence in their lives to assure them. Even to the believer, this is often too good to be true, and we believe not for *joy* (Luke 8:13²). This is it! This is the answer! This is the assurance—Christ. Marvel not that the world cannot see this. They are beholding something or someone else. The beholder of Christ knows the living God is with him, and nothing can convince him otherwise. The beholder of other things doesn’t know if the living God is with him or not, and his life is a struggle to prove to himself that he is a child of God. Assurance comes with a *look*. Behold the ark.

Note well that this assurance is not baseless. Many are told in this day to behold Christ, and the instructions come complete

¹ **Mal. 2:13**; And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

² **Luke 8:13**; They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

with visual aids. There are pictures, crucifixes, and straw filled mangers that men behold. Men are told to look to Christ, but the one they are instructed to behold is unable to do his will. Men think Christ will do something because *they* do something. Men look to the future, bound by time and tide, and there is truly nothing to behold that would assure them that the living God is with them. There is *no* assurance in *speculation*. The thing beheld, the thing that gives you assurance that the living God is among us is that the ark of the Lord of all the earth (Christ) has passed over Jordan *before* you. The salvation that gives the child of God confidence is the salvation that has already been accomplished. My assurance is that Christ has died and finished my salvation. Beholding Him, I enter into the death that He died, the burial that He experienced, the resurrected life that He lives and the rest wherein He rests. All of this was accomplished *for* me, and I know the living God is with me as I look to Christ, the ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth. The basis of this knowledge is beholding Christ (John 6:67-69¹).

Beholding the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is the only source of motivation for the child of God. Some are motivated by the concept of rewards. Others are motivated by the false notions that they will become what they are *not* by due diligence in the pursuit of righteousness. Others are motivated by fear of censure. Others are motivated by want of acceptance and praise. The children of God are motivated as they behold the Ark of God—The Lord Jesus Christ. These children were about to walk through the waters of the Jordan on dry land while the waters stood up in a heap. They were not even told to increase their faith or perform certain rituals in order to be worthy to cross. They were told to “Behold the Ark!”

¹ **John 6:67-69**; Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

“Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap” (vv. 12-13).

OVER JORDAN

Joshua 4

1, And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

2, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

3, And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.

4, Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man:

5, And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:

6, That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?

7, Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

8, And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

9, And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

10, For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hastened and passed over.

11, And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.

12, And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them:

13, About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

14, On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

15, And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

16, Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

17, Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.

18, And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

19, And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

20, And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.

21, And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

22, Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

23, For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:

24, That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.

Joshua chapter four is the record of the people leaving the wilderness behind and crossing over Jordan into the Land of Promise. The priests that carry the ark have entered the Jordan, and as the Lord did to the Red Sea, He causes the waters of the river to be cut off and a dry pathway to be formed for the children of Israel to pass over. The Lord commands Joshua to take twelve men, one from each of the tribes, to gather a stone and each to carry it upon their shoulders (v. 5). The stones are to be gathered from the midst of the river where the priests stand bearing the ark and were to be placed as a memorial at the location of their first night's stay in the Promised Land (vv. 3, 5).

Before the priests came out of the Jordan with the ark, Joshua chose twelve men to go *back* into the Jordan to gather twelve more stones to be placed and left in the midst of the Jordan when the waters were allowed to return. These stones, both in the river and in the Promised Land, were placed to cause the children to ask of their purpose that they might be told of the wondrous works of the Lord in delivering them out of the wilderness into Canaan.

Since the people of God would soon go to war, the tribes of Reuben, Gad and one-half the tribe of Manasseh join them in their journey through Jordan, as they had promised, in order that they could possess the land on the wilderness side of Jordan. The ark of the Covenant went before the people into the Jordan and stood in its midst while all the children passed over. When all the people were safe in the Promise Land, the ark then came

behind the people. Once the ark was in Canaan, the waters returned to their place. This all took place on the tenth day of the first month of the Jewish year, the same day on which the Passover Lamb was selected. This journey over Jordan took place forty years (less five days) from the day they were delivered out of Egypt.

The historical record before us is very clear and the facts of it are readily understood. However, the true meaning of these things is the record of the spiritual salvation of the elect. I believe this scene is best viewed in its entirety as it truly pictures only one thing; the salvation wrought by the power and wisdom of God through the ark—the Lord Jesus Christ. Jordan is the metaphorical picture of the complete answer to the requirement of the law and justice of God, namely death. The stone memorials, both in the river and on the land, are symbolic of the two memorial ordinances given to the church to confess the death of Christ. Baptism and the Lord's table are both memorials that show forth the death of Christ and the elect with Him (Baptized unto His death and showing for His death till He comes).

The very first thing set before us is that this salvation, this deliverance from death by the death of Christ, is a complete and finished work (v. 1, “clean passed over”; v. 10, “until every thing was finished”; v. 11, “clean passed over.”). This was no haphazard effort to make the crossing of the Jordan *possible*, nor was it the building of a bridge half-way across. Everything involved in the people's salvation was *finished* when every one of them, without exception, had *clean passed over*. Even the two and one-half tribes who had opted to live on the other side of Jordan in eyeshot of the Promise Land, clean passed over. They are representative of the fact that salvation is by grace, and that some of the Lord's people can be lured by the enticements of the world. They are willing to fight for the truth and defend the gospel but never quite able to live among the people of God. I know some who are like this which I trust love the Lord and His truth yet seem unable to be a member of a local assembly.

I have long since stopped trying to figure it out, but this passage teaches that even those who make terrible choices are yet a part of this journey through Jordan and a testimony to the fact that salvation is not based on the good or bad choices of men. Salvation is based on *God's* choice of His elect by free and sovereign grace. Deliverance was not finished until *all* the people had “clean passed over.” This passage, though experienced, does *not* represent the believer's awakening by the gospel; it points to the work of Christ dying in the room and stead of His people.

The crossing of Jordan pictures the *death of Christ*, and it was on the cross that He finished salvation (John 19:28, 30¹). This fact is clearly set forth in verses 1-12 by the movement and positioning of the ark. The ark of the covenant preceded the people into the Jordan. Ere the first footstep was made by the people into death, the Lord had already tasted death for every son whom He would bring to glory (Heb. 2:9-10, 14-15²). As the people traversed the Jordan on dry land, the ark was in the midst of the Jordan. And after the people were all safe in Canaan, the ark came up behind them out of the Jordan.

This symbolism is thick with gospel. Does this not picture the death, burial and resurrection of Christ? Does this not set forth the preeminence of Christ? Is this not Christ as the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last? It is Christ that is the author and finisher of faith, the forerunner entered into the presence of God before us, and it is

¹ **John 19:28**, After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

² **Heb. 2:9-10**, But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. **14-15**, Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Christ who is our rereward. He is all our salvation from eternity to eternity and everything between those two poles. This salvation accomplished is a sure and solid foundation (v. 3; Josh. 3:17; 1 Cor. 3:11¹).

This salvation is a particular salvation represented by the specific number of stones; one stone for each of the twelve tribes, for the twelve apostles, for the twelve gates of the Holy City. There was not a stone for any other people but *this* people. Both Christ and His people are referred to as stones (Psalm 118:22-24, Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:5²). According to history, John the Baptist baptized at this particular place in Jordan. When He told the Jews that their natural connection with Abraham did not make them children of God, He may have been referring to these stones laid in the midst of Jordan (Matt. 3:9³).

Twelve stones were placed in the midst of Jordan and covered when the waters returned. As a memorial, they speak to the fact that the death of Christ is where we abide (Col. 3:1-3; 2 Cor. 1:9-10⁴). In Gilgal the twelve stones were placed when all the people were saved. As a memorial, they speak of the testimony of the gospel, which is the rehearsal of the great things that God has done for His people (vv. 21-24).

¹ **Josh. 3:17**; And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. **1 Cor. 3:11**; For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

² **Psalm 118:22-24**, The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. **Acts 4:11**; This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. **1 Peter 2:5**; Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

³ **Matt. 3:9**; And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

⁴ **Col. 3:1-3**; If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. **2 Cor. 1:9-10**; But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

When all the people had clean passed over, when everything was finished, then “On that day the Lord magnified Joshua” (v. 14; John 12:28¹). He did so in the sight of all Israel. The result was that they feared, revered and loved him because He had done what He said He was going to do. The basis of our love for and trust in Christ is the gospel testimony that He did what He came to do. He finished the work, died the death that the people owed God, and has safely delivered all for whom He suffered death to the land that flows with milk and honey. There is no basis for reverence and trust where only possibilities exist. We have faith in that which is sure. How do we know? We know because, “on that day the Lord magnified Joshua” (Phil 2:8-11²).

¹ **John 12:28**; Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

² **Phil 2:8-11**; And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

REPEATING AND CEASING

Joshua 5:1-12

1, And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

2, At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

3, And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.

4, And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

5, Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.

6, For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

7, And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.

8, And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.

9, And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

10, And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

11, And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.

12, And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

These verses of Scripture declare things that were done to, by and for the people upon their *entrance* into the Promised Land. They are important to understand as they point to and picture the Lord Jesus Christ and His church as they prepare to go into their first battle in the land which the Lord has given them.

The first thing notable is that before the people go into battle, their foes were already defeated. This was so, not because the people were possessed of great power and strength, but that the God whom they served had proved himself to be sovereign over even the elements. He had split the Jordan and made dry land for His people to cross, and He did so in the season when the Jordan was overflowing its banks. Their enemies were so struck with fear that they were consumed with cowardice and unable to imagine victory over the people of God, who were fast on the outskirts of their cities (v. 1).

This is the estate of the church in the world. I am not referring to the giant religion that is called Christendom. That humongous harlot is more like the world than the world itself,

appealing to the baser elements of humanity in the name of Christ. They seem to many as an impenetrable fortress, but they, just as their leader, are defeated foes. Their king's head is crushed, and he is exiled to the pit wrapped in chains. They stand behind the gates of their city knowing that the gates shall *not* prevail against the gospel—the power of God. Their doom is sealed, and they quake in abject fear of the true church because of the truth that salvation in every aspect is by free, sovereign grace. They have heard of the God whom the church serves, they melt at the thought of Him, and their spirit fails (SOS 6:10¹). Numerically, the church is, at any given time in history, not an imposing presence. But the truth they preach and the God they lean upon destroys every hope of the cowardly giant (Acts 17:6²).

Verses 2-8 are the report of the Lord commanding Joshua to circumcise the men who were born in the wilderness or those who were under twenty years of age when they came out of Egypt (vv. 6-7). There is no clear reason given why these born in the wilderness were not circumcised on the eighth day after their birth according to the law. Some have conjectured that the people felt themselves unworthy to do so because they were wandering in the wilderness because of unbelief. I do not think that to be the reason because humility did not stand as a mark of the character of this people during their sojourn. Others have said that because some healing time accompanies this rite and the people's stay for any particular amount of time was dependent on the movement of the cloud, they were reticent to circumcise their young. Since the Lord is silent on the matter, any reason that man might produce is at best speculation, and I believe asks the wrong question. The question to be asked is not,

¹ **SOS 6:10**; Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

² **Acts 17:6**; And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

“Why did they not circumcise while in the wilderness?”, but “Why here and why now?”

In these first twelve verses, four things of great import are set forth. All are done in preparation for the battles in which the people will soon engage, which pictures the church going into the world with the gospel.

The four things to be performed are the *circumcision* of the males, the observance of the Passover (the first in forty years), the observance of the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* with bread made from corn found in the land and the *cessation of the manna*. These all take place in the Promised Land, which pictures the realization of the promise of God both in the revelation of salvation and the final glorification of the church. Each of these things are about Christ and His work realized by His people and indicative of how the church is to prepare for the battle that will ensue.

1. *Circumcision* is reinstated as a reminder that they are in this land and will be victorious in battle because of the covenant of promise. Circumcision was given to Abraham as a token of the relationship between him and his God. That covenant was a covenant of promise wherein the full weight of the accomplishment of the covenant fell solely in the hands of God. The people are reminded that they are here in this land, not because they kept the law of Sinai, but because they were children of Abraham.

Circumcision is a natural rite that pictures a spiritual truth—an outward rite that addresses an inward principle. It pictures the pricking of the heart by grace through the gospel (Deut. 10:16; Rom. 2:25-29¹). Romans 2:25 makes it clear that

¹ **Deut. 10:16**; Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

Rom. 2:25-29; For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is

circumcision is not a legal principle that can be naturally attained. Circumcision is more than that. It involves flesh and blood. Jesus Christ took hold of the seed of Abraham and was made into the likeness of sinful flesh for the suffering of death, as the executor of the covenant of promise. Since circumcision involves the cutting off of the flesh and the shedding of blood, it points to the sacrifice of Christ who in the flesh was cut off from the land of the living and shed His blood for the remission of sin. This rite, being a *type*, was discontinued when the substance came on the scene. Christ fulfilled the law being circumcised under the law and fulfilling every meaning of it in His crucifixion—setting it aside. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision now availeth anything (Gal. 5:2, 6; 6:15; Col. 2:9-11; compare Rom. 6:6¹).

The proper preparation for battle is a *remembrance* and *rehearsal* of the *gospel* and the *reason* why we are in the Promised Land. This is, “Why here and why now?”. Note well the language of accomplishment (vv. 8-9). This day, the day of the Lord, the day our Lord was crucified, the day of blood propitiation, this day when the people are made whole, all the reproach of Egypt is rolled off the people. All the stench of paganism, all the humiliation of slavery, all the penalty of sin, all that prohibited righteousness and justification are rolled off the people.

outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

¹ **Gal. 5:2**, Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. **6**; For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. **6:15**; For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. **Col. 2:9-11**; For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: **Rom. 6:6**; Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

2. In verse 10 the people keep the *Passover* for the first time in about forty years. Note the sequence and the connection. First the circumcision by which the reproach is rolled away and then the feast of remembrance. There is no partaking of the Feast where there is no discernment of the body and the blood of Christ. The Feast of the Passover did not accomplish salvation but was a *recollection* of salvation already accomplished. The Passover pictures the remembrance of our Lord's sacrifice. The ordinances given to the church, the preaching of the gospel, baptism and receiving the Lord's Table, are calls to *remember* (Ex. 12:11; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; Luke 22:15¹). Only the circumcised heart can partake of the feast of memorial. Once the covenant relationship is acknowledged, then the believer feasts on Christ. The partaking of the Passover is symbolic of the fact that the war is *already won*.

3. After the Passover, on the next day, they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They observed this feast by making the bread with the corn that was available to them *in* the land.

4. The necessity of the miracle of *manna* no longer existed. They were *in* the Promised Land, and in that land, Immanuel's Land, there is no miracle or sign from heaven necessary. Everything necessary for worship, praise and sustenance is found in the living and written manna, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord still does miraculously, but only when nothing else will do. We do not look to supernatural evidence; we worship and feast on convenient bread from the land of milk and honey (Prov. 30:8). In the wilderness where nothing grew, we needed the miracle of manna. In the Promised Land all things are ours. The kingdom is at hand. Nothing is kept from us that is needful, and

¹ **Ex. 12:11**; And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. **1 Cor. 5:7-8**; Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. **Luke 22:15**; And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

no miracle is necessary to provide it. With circumcision there is recognition of the covenant ratified in blood. With the Passover there is praise for the delivery from slavery. With the Feast of Unleavened Bread there is the declaration that we have no righteousness but Christ.

Leaven in the old and new testaments is invariably set forth as evil. It is emblematic and symbolic of sin. The sin with which leaven is most commonly attached is self-righteousness (Matt. 16:6-12). Self-righteousness is the high esteem for and confidence in the ability of the flesh and its accomplishments to obtain merit before God. The eating of unleavened bread declares that we have no confidence in the flesh; we live, we are sustained, and we have standing before God based only on the righteousness of Christ (Phil 3:9¹).

We are in the Promised Land. Our life is before us, and how shall we prepare for the battle that is sure to come? We do so by relying on the fact that the covenant of promise has been ratified by the flesh and blood of Christ, by rejoicing in His finished work, by feasting on Him, by declaring that He alone is our righteousness, and by realizing that all things necessary for our life and warring are at our disposal.

This is “Why here and why now?”—circumcision, Passover, unleavened bread and the cessation of Manna.

¹ **Phil 3:9**; And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

Joshua 5:13-15

13, And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?

14, And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?

15, And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

In the last study, the children of Israel prepared for battle. What they were instructed to do in their preparation pictures the preparation of the church for going into the world with the gospel. They prepared by relying on the fact that the covenant of promise has been ratified by the flesh and blood of Christ (circumcision), rejoicing in His finished work by feasting on Him (Passover Feast) and declaring that He alone is our righteousness (Feast of Unleavened Bread), realizing that all things necessary for our life and warring are at our disposal (cessation of Manna).

At the beginning of this passage, we find Joshua, the one who has been typically magnified before the people as he pictured the Lord Jesus Christ in His exaltation, alone in meditation before he leads the people into battle. A man appears before him, a warrior, standing in an offensive battle posture

with his sword drawn. What ensues in the conversation between the two declares the basis upon which the church goes into battle with assurance of unqualified victory.

The first verse of our text shows that Joshua is a man who believes God (See Josh. 1:1-9). Considering what takes place in this scene, Joshua proves to be a man of great courage. He is the captain and leader of the people. The fact that he lifted his eyes and saw this man indicates that, as the leader of the people and bearing the responsibilities of that office, he was alone and in deep consideration of that which lay before him. This is the kind of general you want if you are a member of the army (Luke 14:28-32¹). When he lifted his eyes and saw this man in battle posture with sword drawn, there is no indication of fear or reticence on Joshua's part. Joshua immediately went to him. The words he speaks to this man might well be construed as fighting words. "Are you for us or against us?" (v. 13). His question can be construed as nothing less than throwing down the gauntlet. Joshua was not seeking information but calling for a reckoning.

In the culture of their day, it was not an uncommon practice between warring countries to send one man, their best warrior, to do battle for the people. A prime example of that is David fighting against Goliath. We get our word "hero" from this concept of battle. Since this man appeared before Joshua with sword drawn, it is *very* possible that this was the thought going through Joshua's mind as he stood and prepared to engage this man. The question asked by Joshua certainly indicates that an adversarial or negative response would be construed as a call to battle, and it is also clear that Joshua was prepared for whatever might come. In Joshua there is no sign of fear or suing for peace,

¹ **Luke 14:28-32**; For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

but the heart of a courageous leader emboldened by the promise of God.

The warrior with whom Joshua speaks answers him with one of the most powerful words in any language. His first word is “nay” or “no” (v. 14). Some have conjectured that this warrior was saying “no” to the latter part of Joshua’s question and saying that he was not for the adversaries. I think from what follows, as this warrior reveals who he is, it is an indication that the answer to Joshua’s question is simply “no” on *both* counts. He is not saying that he is not for Joshua, but that the question is not the correct inquiry. Joshua’s words were the words of a general, but the response of the one before him is the words of the Generalissimo—the general of all generals. Joshua asks, “Are you for *us* or for *them*?” His reply is, “No, I’m in charge! I’m running the show! The result of the battle is not if I am on *your* side but whether or not you are on *my* side.” The question is never, “Whose side is the Lord on?”, but “Who is on the Lord’s side?” (Ex. 32:26¹).

“As captain of the host of the LORD am I now come” (v. 14). The description He gives of himself leaves no doubt in Joshua’s mind concerning who is addressing him. First this man is the captain (Is. 55:4; Heb. 2:10; Ex. 15:2-3²). Secondly, this man is captain of the host (Ex. 7:4; 12:41³). Thirdly, this man is captain of the host of the LORD (Jehovah), the particular

¹ Ex. 32:26; Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD’S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

² Is. 55:4; Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Heb. 2:10; For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Ex. 15:2-3; The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.

³ Ex. 7:4; But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. 12:41; And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

revelation of the LORD as Savior of His people. Fourthly, He said “I am come,” which begs the question “Where did He come from?” This man is none other than Jehovah Jesus. This is one of those blessed Christophanies, a pre-incarnate manifestation of the LORD Jesus Christ (Gen. 18:1-3; 28:10-13; 32:24-30¹). Fifthly, the words that this man speaks to Joshua, He previously

¹ **Gen. 18:1-3**; And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: **28:10-13**; And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; **32:24-30**; And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

spoke to Moses (v. 15; Ex. 3:2-6; Deut. 33:16¹). This is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ (Josh. 6:2²).

The response of Joshua is always the response of those who come face to face with the LORD. Joshua took the place of subservience and worship. Here, Joshua the type of the Lord Jesus bows to the substance. The prophecy bows to the Prophet, the shadow bows to the Sun, the picture bows to the express image. This is not only the proper way but the only way to respond to the revelation of Christ (John 20:11-16; 26-28; Acts 9:3-6; Rev. 1:17³).

¹ **Ex. 3:2-6;** And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. **Deut. 33:16;** And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.

² **Josh. 6:2;** And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

³ **John 20:11-16,** But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. **26-28;** And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. **Acts 9:3-6;** And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him,

Notice the manner of Joshua's worship. He speaks as one who is wholly convinced of the majesty that is before him. He does not say, "What will you have me do?" He does not say "What will you do?" He speaks in the plainest of language—"What does my Lord say to His servant?" (v. 14). This is the elemental understanding of the principle of sovereignty. Whatever the Lord says, He will do. Whatever the Lord says is right. He speaks and the worlds come into existence. He purposes and it shall be done, and none can turn it back (Isa. 14:27¹).

Our Lord has spoken. He has left His words with His people and by and through that Word He reveals himself to His people. His people live and act according to what *He* has said. They walk by faith and that faith is grounded in what He has said.

The Lord's people neither need nor seek extra-biblical revelation. Signs and wonders are of infinitely less value than the Word He has spoken. His Word is the power of God unto salvation. His Word endures forever. "My Lord what sayeth thou?" is the response of faith to the revelation of the Sovereign.

Joshua's response teaches us three things.

First, it teaches us that the believer is ready to do whatever the Lord says. There is a readiness of mind and a willingness of heart to hear the Word of the Lord and to act accordingly.

Secondly, this response is a magnification of the person of Christ. Joshua as captain becomes subservient to his Captain and thus ascribes greatness to His God, giving Him the glory that is due His name (Deut. 32:2-4; Ps. 29:1-2, 9²).

Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. **Rev. 1:17**; And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

¹ **Isa. 14:27**; For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

² **Deut. 32:2-4**; My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. **Ps. 29:1-2**, A Psalm of David. Give unto

Thirdly, Joshua's response is indicative of a willingness to wait on the Lord. This is the *fact* of faith. It waits on the Lord (Psalm 37:7; Lam. 3:25-26; Is. 40:31¹).

The question is never, "Is the Lord on your side?" It is always, "Who is on the Lord's side?" He is the Captain of the host of the LORD. He is LORD! In His presence, the ground whereon you stand is Holy ground and the very best thing you can do is wait for His Word. As Captain, He is the *hero* who will fight *for* you. The victory will be *His*, and *you* will win the day (Deut. 9:1-3²). The Lord has appeared to you in the way with sword drawn and at the ready (Rev. 1:16; 2:12; 19:15, 21³). In His authority we go forth to battle (Matt. 28:19-20; John 17:2-3⁴).

the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. **9**; The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.

¹ **Psalm 37:7**; Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. **Lam. 3:25-26**; The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. **Is. 40:31**; But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

² **Deut. 9:1-3**; Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

³ **Rev. 1:16**; And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. **2:12**; And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; **19:15**, And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. **21**; And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

JERICHO

Joshua 6:1-2

1, Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

2, And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

Anyone who has spent time in a church is familiar with the story of Jericho. I remember well in my “Sunbeams” class at Antioch Baptist Church being led in the song “Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, and the walls came tumbling down.” Before reading this chapter several times, I wondered if I would have much more to say about it than what I remembered from the song. Having heard the story from my youth, as well as several sermons from this account, I could not recall ever hearing anything about Christ and His church, or of salvation by grace and the power in connection with it. As I read, however, I began to see this passage is gospel full. It relates to the *preaching* of the gospel; the church with gospel in hand going into battle; the seed of woman; the deliverance of the elect; the manner of the victory of the church; the destruction of Babylon; the exaltation of Christ, and the glory of

⁴ **Matt. 28:19-20:** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. **John 17:2-3;** These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

God in the salvation of the elect by His sovereign power and grace. I think we will be camped at Jericho for a little while and privileged to see the great grace of our great God.

In this lesson, I want to consider the first two verses of this chapter. In these few words are the introductory synopsis of what is to follow. The one speaking to Joshua is Christ (v. 2) in a pre-incarnate manifestation as the Captain of the Lord's host. He has declared the battle is His, and that He will be doing the fighting in the war (Ex. 14:4; Deut. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4¹). He is Jehovah-Jesus, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. As is always the case, the promise is sure because of the One who makes the promise. "For all the promises of God in Him [Christ] are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

Let us consider these two verses in reverse order to observe the wisdom of God in ordering all things according to His purpose in grace.

The outcome of the war was never in question (v. 2). One of the reasons the believer is at peace in this world is that he knows how it will all end. I marvel at how many who profess to know Christ, even those who profess to preach Him, live lives of fear, anguish, worry and doubt. All they need do is read the last chapter of the book, and they will see that what the Lord has promised, He is able to perform—and will perform. "Faithful is He who calleth you, who will also do it" (1 Thess. 5:24). That does not mean that troubles and trials will not attend our way. The Lord promised that His children would have everything they need and more, but with tribulation. There is a war that is

¹ **Ex. 14:4**; And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so. **Deut. 1:30**; The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; **3:22**; Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you. **20:4**; For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

to be engaged, and with every war, there are casualties (Phil. 1:29¹).

The manifold trials of the war are on purpose and for our good. We will not enter glory on flowery beds of ease. We are indeed, as the old hymn says, “prone to wander.” Trials come our way as chastisement (loving discipline) to put us back on track and to fix our hearts and minds on Christ. God will wean us from the world, and that weaning is life as we know it. With the battle before us, our Lord comes and assures that the victory is a done deal. The script has already been written; all the actors have taken the stage; the final act is already accomplished, and the Lord says to us, “see” (v. 2). King David said, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living” (Ps. 27:13). The words of the Lord in verse 2 means more than “look” or to “view.” He tells Joshua to “see.” This word means to perceive and understand, and though the battle is in the future, the result is in the past (Ecc. 3:14-15²).

Our Lord does not tell Joshua to look at what He is about to do, though He is about to do great things. He tells Joshua to see what He *had* done (Ex. 33:20-23; 1 Cor. 2:12³). In essence, this is what it is to preach the gospel. It is to tell men what God *has* done. Any reference to future events is but a rehearsal of what God has purposed, and therefore already accomplished, because if He has put His hand to it who can turn it back. “See,” our

¹ **Phil. 1:29**; For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

² **Ecc. 3:14-15**; I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

³ **Ex. 33:20-23**; And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen. **1 Cor. 2:12**; Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

LORD says, “I *have* given into thine hand.” Though these things may not have experimentally been realized and the battle lies before us, the LORD says, “See,” not what I *will* do, not what I *will* give, but what “I *have given*.” He has given because all things are his to give, and He says to us, “See,” all things are yours. I love absolutes. In absolutes there are no ifs, ands or buts, no mitigating circumstances, no unseen traps or pitfalls, only things that must be because they have already been—“See!” You may look at possibilities, but you can only *see* what already is.

We may assuredly take this to heart as a word to the church of God, but this is primarily a picture of God the Father declaring to His Son what He *has* given Him (Psalm 110; John 3:35; 5:20¹). Remember, the things that the Lord has given into Joshua's hand are for the realization of the promise. This is the assurance given to the surety that the accomplishment of His mission is already in His hand. Forget any notion that Christ came into this world to make the promise a possibility, or to make the promise available! Before He stepped out of Glory into this world, everyone and everything that was involved with the absolute success of His grand work had been given into His hand. Victory was not his to gain. Victory was His to display.

Our Lord lists three things that had been given into Joshua hands: Jericho, the king, and the mighty men of valor.

¹ **Psalm 110**; The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head. **John 3:35**; The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. **5:20**; For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

Jericho is representative of that world that is at enmity with God. The enemies of God have been given into the hands of Christ (Psalm 2:1-9; Acts 2:23; 4:28; Luke 19:27; John 17:1-2²).

The *king* is representative of anyone or anything that reigns. The two things that reign over the people of God (the people of God represented singularly by Rahab, the only elect in that entire city) are sin and Satan (Rom. 5:21a; Luke 11:20-22; Eph. 2; 1-3; Heb. 2:14-15²). The king had been given into the hand of Joshua. The mighty men represent the hierarchy of religion, the religion of works for justification and righteousness (e.g., The Pharisees and rulers of the Jews). These hold sway over men

² **Psalm 2:7-9**; I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. **Acts 2:23**; Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: **4:27-28**; For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. **Luke 19:27**; But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. **John 17:1-2**; These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

² **Rom. 5:21a**; That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. **Luke 11:20-22**; But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. **Eph. 2; 1-3**; And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **Heb. 2:14-15**; Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

for advantage, keeping them in check with threat of judgment and unlawful use of the law (Matthew 23:3-4, 33¹).

The *mighty men of valor* were given into the hand of Joshua. Simply stated, the whole of those who comprised the enemies of God were given into the hands of Christ ere the first shot was fired. This effectually made the enemies of Christ into the tools and pawns of the King of kings, and they would, by the numbers, according to a predetermined course, do His bidding. Men may cry, "That makes men puppets," but the LORD replies, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" "See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor" (v. 2). "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living" (Ps. 27:13).

What of the mutability of men? Can the evil wills and cruel imaginations of men's hearts be controlled to the point that they will follow a designated course and arrive at a predestinated end (Jer. 10:23²)? What if they change their minds and go a different route? They will go a thousand ways while going one way. The mighty Mississippi sometimes goes west and sometimes east and always to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Lord has not only prepared His Son and His people for the task, but He has likewise prepared the enemy for the task. "Now Jericho was straitly shut up" (v. 1). The words "straitly" and "shut up" are the same word with the only difference being the tense of the verb used. They both mean "to be enclosed fully without any route of escape." The tenses of the verbs declare the occupants of Jericho (the enemy) are continually shut up, and they were passive in being shut up. Though they willingly shut their own gates and barred their doors, they were acting as those

¹ **Matthew 23:3-4**, All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. **33**; Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

² **Jer. 10:23**; O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

who are acted upon. They were summoned to dinner, and they were the main course, already prepared to be consumed (Num. 14:6-9). The walls they erected were for protection, but in reality, were but a prison from which there could be no escape.

“None went out or came in” (v. 1; see also Rev. 3:7¹). Why? The reason is clear. They were straitly shut up “because of the children of Israel.” There is no doubt the reaction of Jericho was because of their fear of impending doom (Josh. 2:10-11²). However, there is a greater meaning than that of reacting out of fear. The word “because” means “being turned,” along with the concept of “being prepared.” They were shut up because they were being prepared for the Children of God. They were shut up on behalf of the children of God (1 Sam. 2:25³).

“Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour” (Joshua 6:1-2).

The salvation of God's elect is a sure thing. The elect's realization of the promise is done because the enemies have been shut up and given into the hand of Christ.

¹ **Rev. 3:7**; And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

² **Josh. 2:10-11**; For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

³ **1 Sam. 2:25**; If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

THE COMMISSION

Joshua 6:3-5

3, And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4, And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

5, And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

In this passage, we see the command of the LORD concerning the manner and means to be employed that would eventuate in the fall of the city of Jericho. This is a picture of the LORD's commission to go "into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). The outcome of this endeavor is not a matter of conjecture. The gospel will have its day and the Word of the Lord will find purchase in the hearts of the elect (Isa. 55:8-12; 2 Cor. 2:14-17; Jer. 23:29¹). Jericho was shut up

¹ **Isa. 55:8-12**; For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. **2 Cor. 2:14-17**; Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the

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and made a captive audience to what would transpire in the next seven days (Josh. 6:1¹).

The promise of victory was made by Jehovah-Jesus, and because He holds humanity in absolute sway, every possible element of resistance was subdued and readied for destruction. The king (representative of human government) was a designated target for defeat (Prov. 21:1²). Nations are no match for the gospel (Is. 43:3-4³). The men of valor, representative of the organized religious enemies of the gospel, are likewise set for defeat because courage turns to cowardice when the Lord puts fear in the heart (Josh. 6:2⁴). As we go into the world with the gospel, we do not do so timidly and full of concern for the outcome. We are not keeping score, and though men may turn us away with a deaf ear to the words we speak, we do not fall into despair.

The results of carrying the gospel into the world are not our concern. I know that statement flies in the face of the methods and message of the organized religion of works and freewill, but remove their idea of visible results, and you will effectively remove their motivation and reason for existence. The idea that there is a people who trust God for what He has promised, willing to preach the gospel and leave men to deal with the God

savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. **Jer. 23:29**; Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

¹ **Josh. 6:1**; Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

² **Prov. 21:1**; The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

³ **Is. 43:3-4**; For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

⁴ **Josh. 6:2**; And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

who made them, does not fit the scheme of the *mercenary* who lives to see the fruits of his labor.

I know also that those who hold to the truth of God's *promise* are often considered cold and uncaring, but they are warm toward the gospel and, in the fire of assurance, go forth to preach. One may say, "But preacher, did not Paul beseech men to be reconciled to God?" Indeed he did, but he did so to *believers* on the basis that they were new creatures made righteous before God by the blood of Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-21¹). Paul was declaring that the Corinthian church, a church filled with every manner of schism, should leave off their differences and be reconciled because *they* had been reconciled. In short, He was saying "Walk worthy of your calling." Did not Paul say to the Philippian jailer, "Believe of the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"? Indeed, he did but he did so in response to the question "What must I do to be saved?" Such is the proper response to such a specific question. Generally speaking, we do not meet many folks who ask such questions.

The design of the gospel is not to answer questions that have not been asked. It is to declare the sure and complete salvation that God accomplished by the blood of Christ knowing that the elect will hear whether we are ever made aware of any particular instance of it. We know the results are a predetermined thing, and every one of God's elect will hear the gospel and be given faith to believe. The rest will hear the gospel and be sealed in their doom by it. The same heat that melts the ice hardens the clay. The problem arises when we look for the results, when the

¹ **2 Cor. 5:17-21**; Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

fact is, we may never be around to see them (Mark 6:10-12²). Jericho did not fall, and Rahab was not delivered until the appointed time.

Because religion seeks visible and recordable results, they have invented ways by which they can keep score. The invitation system (decisional regeneration) was invented so men could show that their existence was credible. The church altar was invented to induce men to follow the crowd, to fit in and not stand out. These inventions are psychological tools that have proven results and are the basis for the success of organized religion. The importance of being able to numerically record results is the driving force behind evangelical religion (so called). The believer with the gospel disdains these practices because they smack of sight and not faith. Organized religion speaks of the power of man to accomplish what is specifically the area of God's expertise. They reveal an absence of faith and a want of confidence in the gospel.

Our text puts that illegitimate notion to rest. Everything about this commission is a revelation of precisely what it is to declare the gospel.

The first thing that is evident is that the preaching of gospel is repetitive. The commission was to do the same thing six days in a row (v. 3). This was the responsibility of the priests and the men of war—both indicative of the church. They were to march round the city six days in a row. To repeat an action over and over without any contact with the enemy or visible results is hardly the common practice of making war. For six days they marched around the city in silence, except for the blowing of the ram's horn. There was not one in the entire city of Jericho who understood, save for Rahab the Harlot. Her understanding of this strange eerie sound was limited to the fact that it had to do

² **Mark 6:10-12**; And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

with the *promise of deliverance*. Each day she awoke to the sound of the ram's horn, and each night she lay down her head in assurance. The walls had not yet fallen, and she had not yet been delivered, but her salvation was as sure on the first day as it was on the sixth.

We cannot know the preparatory work of the gospel, that blessed prevenient grace that attends the preaching of the gospel. We cannot see men hearing the gospel. But to those, to whom the promise has been made, it sounds like freedom, and they wait to know. Our responsibility is *not* to tear down the walls, to assault the city and rescue the fallen. Our responsibility is *not* to affect the release of the prisoner or to tell the prisoner what to do to be released. Our responsibility is plain and singular; to keep marching, keep blowing the trumpet and do so knowing that the victory is the Lord's. The glory for the salvation of the elect will not be our doing but the Lord's, and that by the use of the most unlikely means—the blessed, resplendent, redundant rehearsal of the gospel. It is not by a multitude of theological arguments or debates but the continual blaring of the *same note* in obedience to the command of God. In God's good time, the walls will come tumbling down, the elect will be rescued, the enemies of the gospel will be destroyed, and all the glory will belong to the Lord. Don't be discouraged. Be strong and of good courage. You may repeat the message over and over, and even many times in one day without any visible results, but be assured, the elect will be saved, and the barriers built by man will fall. The enemies will be destroyed at the *sound* of the gospel.

What are the instruments of war given to those who have been commissioned to march about the city?

The primary instrument of war is the ark of the covenant borne upon the shoulders of the priests. It is the Christ of the gospel that gives the gospel of Christ its power. Christ, our forerunner, goes before us to display His power. He is the object and therefore the subject that fills the sight of the one who has

the gospel. It is perfection; seven priests, seven horns and on the seventh day a perfect result.

The other instruments are the horn and on the final day the shout. The gospel is delivered by noise—by voice. The elect are brought to faith in Christ by words, a voice crying in the wilderness! The gospel is noised out. The Spirit of God takes the Word of God and implants it into the elect, and they are born from above, born again, born anew (1 Peter 1:23-25; James 1:18¹). Men and women are not converted at the end of a sword, nor by legal wrangling or moral legislation, but by words—noises—sounds; the preached gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Preaching is possibly the least respected profession in all of society. Preachers are afforded some deference among men, but for the most part, that deference is more akin to the respect given a black cat crossing your path than to the recognition of anything worthwhile. I have long avoided telling people what I do because I have grown weary of the fact that when I do, it opens the floodgate of religious prattle that seems to be bubbling just beneath the surface of the depraved mind. When asked, I usually tell folks, “I live off the Indians.” That usually assures a bone crushing silence.

What men do not and cannot know, save by divine revelation, is that the universe is controlled by words, and men are saved through the sweet noise of the glad tidings of good things (Heb. 11:1-3²). It is interesting to observe that the ram's horn (“job-el” in the original language, meaning “the horn, and

¹ **1 Peter 1:23-25**; Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. **James 1:18**; Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

² **Heb. 11:1-3**; Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

the sound it makes”), the horn which the priest blew, is the horn that was used to begin the year of Jubilee. The noise, the singular bright sound, meant that the slave was set *free*, the debtor was forgiven, and all that was lost was returned.

Finally, the entire commission is bookended by the promise (vv. 2 & 5). What God has promised, he will perform. So, march around the city today and sound out the Jubilee. Do it again tomorrow and repeat the next day. March again and again, knowing the elect will be saved and the enemies will be destroyed. The walls will come down, and no weapon formed against you shall prosper. No barrier erected by puny creatures will stop your progress, and the very gates of Hell will not prevail against you. When the gospel horn is blown, Jubilee ensues. The world will say there has to be more to preach than the gospel, but these are the manner and means of warfare given unto the hand of the people of God.

Be strong and of good courage.

THE COVENANT HONORED

Joshua 6:17, 22-23, 25

17, And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

22, But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.

23, And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

25, And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

In verse 20 of Joshua chapter 6, we see the culmination of the amazing gospel. Without a sword being drawn, without a shot being fired, the walls came tumbling down by faith (Heb. 11:30¹). The people marched around the city seven times, blew the ram's horn of Jubilee and shouted, and the city was instantly decimated. This is the manner of the gospel. The Word of God is noised out; the enemies of the Lord melt before its invisible power, and the elect are saved.

¹ **Heb. 11:30;** By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

In the verses quoted for this lesson, we see the design, intent and results of the gospel. Resting wholly in Christ as designated in the Covenant of Promise, the Holy Harlot Rahab is the target of grace in the midst of a crumbling world. “Only Rahab the Harlot shall live” (v. 17). Those of her household were spared and all that she possessed, but only because they were in close familial proximity to the object of God's great purpose in Christ. How many families have been spared to this day; how many worlds still stand because there is among them the elect of God? The sun shines *on* the just and the unjust, but it shines *for* the just.

We know nothing of Rahab's family because they are collateral deliverance. However, we do know that in this harlot-saint is the predecessor to the mother of Christ. In preview of what was to come, on this day, in a foretaste of divine prophecy fulfilled, the seed of woman bruised the serpents head. Our Lord states, “Only Rahab the Harlot shall live” (Mark 13:20; 2 Tim 2:10¹), and then gives the reason why; “Because she hid the messengers that we sent” (v.17). She did so because she feared the Lord and knew that her only hope was the good will of God (Josh. 2:8-11²).

This is not a natural reaction but super-natural. By nature, men do not fear God. Scripture declares, “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:18). Grace had taught Rahab's heart to *fear*, and grace her fears *relieved*. It is remarkable that

¹ **Mark 13:20**; And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. **2 Tim 2:10**; Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

² **Josh. 2:8-11**; And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

throughout Scripture, the God who alone is the dispenser of faith continually honors the faith that He gives. She believed the promise and relied on the covenant because she was one of the sheep, and the singular mark of the sheep is that they believe (Heb. 11:31; James 2:24-25¹).

On this day her earthly house was destroyed, but she cared not for it. As a recipient of faith, she had no confidence in the flesh, she gained no assurance from the walls that surrounded her, she looked to no army to protect her, she cared not for the profession that had kept her existing to this hour, she looked only to Joshua for salvation (2 Cor. 5:1-7²). On that day the grace and power of God put all things in their proper perspective. On that day the only safe place was the tribe of Israel. Everything else was just fuel for the burning. Look around you, all that you have, everything you see is but fuel for the fire.

Your sole, eternal possession is Christ, and with Him, a prison would prove a palace. As Rahab was led out of Jericho to the comfort and safety of the people of God, she was privy to see the wrath of God, exhibited through the power of the gospel noised out, turn the city of Jericho to dust and burned with fire. And what did this exhibit bring about? It brought about the salvation of the elect, purged the city by fire, cleared the land of

¹ **Heb. 11:31**; By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

James 2:24-25; Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

² **2 Cor. 5:1-7**; For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

the pagan city and made it to be the Land of fully realized Promise.

Rahab was delivered because of the covenant (v. 22). Everything God does is based on His covenant oath. What God has promised, He will perform. The eternal covenant of grace guarantees the salvation of all the elect. We, with the gospel, go into the world with a single commission. We preach the gospel to *all* men, but our arrows are all guided missiles. We are on the hunt for the sheep. We have a message for them. Our message is the story of a covenant, the covenant of promise wherein God chose a people unto salvation before the world began, predestinated them to be like His Son who became their surety, who took upon himself the responsibility for the payment of the sin debt that they would incur, who came into this world of woe and lived among them, shed His blood and died for them as their penal substitute, was buried, rose and ascended to the right hand of the Father for them, who sent His Spirit to irresistibly call them by grace through the preaching of the gospel, who took up residence in their hearts and continually points them to the work of Christ as their only hope of righteousness, seal them and finally bring them home to be with their heavenly Father—all for the glory of His grace.

Since God instituted time, there has not been a nanosecond of history when the final glorious estate of God's sheep was in doubt. Though they stumbled through life full of sin and plagued with troubles, the preachers of the gospel were marching around their town seven times, bearing the ark of the Covenant, and blowing the sound of deliverance, the songs of Zion, the melodious dulcet tones of Jubilee, and with one voice shouting, "Tis done the great transaction is done; the Master calleth for thee" (Acts 4:23-28¹). Stand still and watch the world

¹ **Acts 4:23-28**; And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were

crumble around you! You are safe in the hollow of God's hand. Behold the goodness and the severity of God. You are fenced by grace while men, women and children are destroyed all around you,

Does He not indeed show mercy to whom He will show mercy and be gracious to whom He will be gracious? Men may find fault with God, but the fault is not with God—it is with them (Rom. 9:19-20¹). Shall not the judge of all the earth do right (Psalm 145:17²)? Be not afraid, only believe. God has covenanted with His Son and His Spirit to save you, and who shall withhold Him from His appointed purpose (2 Sam. 23:5; Isa. 55:3³)? The result is set, written in stone with the pen of a ready writer (v: 23; Ps. 45:1; Isa. 45:17-19⁴). “He shall save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

When all is said and done, when the last trumpet is blown and all the elect are delivered from this doomed, present, evil world, the glory will not be to the preacher, the message, the

gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

¹ **Rom. 9:19-20**; Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

² **Psalm 145:17**; The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

³ **2 Sam. 23:5**; Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. **Isa. 55:3**; Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

⁴ **Ps. 45:1**; My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. **Isa. 45:17-19**; But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

sound, or the marching. The Word will be plain and gloriously singular; “Joshua saved Rahab” (John 12:28; 17:2-5¹).

“Joshua saved Rahab” and “she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day” (v. 23; John 6:37-40²).

¹ **John 12:28**; Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. **17:2-5**; As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

² **John 6:37-40**; All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

SOME THINGS OF JERICHO

Joshua 6:1-27

1, Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

2, And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

3, And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4, And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

5, And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

6, And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.

7, And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.

8, And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

9, And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

10, And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

11, So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

12, And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

13, And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

14, And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15, And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16, And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

17, And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18, And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19, But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

20, So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up

into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

21, And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

22, But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.

23, And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

24, And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

25, And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26, And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

27, So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.

I once read an explanation of Old Testament prophecy and its fulfillment in the New Testament. The writer said that Old Testament prophecy is like looking at a mountain range from a long distance away. Though up close the mountains would be separated by miles of valleys, from a distance they appear to be one stacked against another. Such is Old Testament prophecy. We know that it is all about Christ and His church, but from the distance of time, what may appear

to be jammed together is actually separated by years, even millenniums. and is only understood when you get to where the mountains are. The destruction of Jericho is a true incident which we have already seen is full of the gospel of Christ. The fall of Jericho is also a prophetic mountain range that speaks to what has and shall take place in the purpose of God.

The things employed in the destruction of Jericho are familiar and found likewise employed in the New Testament in the destruction of Babylon, the Great Whore Church of this and the final day. Jericho and Babylon were renowned for their wickedness (Rev. 17:4; 18:2¹). Jericho stood and Babylon stands endeavoring to block the path of the elect of God from receiving the promise (Rev. 11:15; 19:1-8²). The fall of Jericho was sudden as will be the fall of Babylon (Rev. 18:7-9³). The bringing down

¹ **Rev. 17:4;** And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: **18:2;** And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

² **Rev. 11:15;** And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. **19:1-8;** And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the LORD God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

³ **Rev. 18:7-9;** How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for

of Jericho by the sounding of the ram's horns each day and seven times on the seventh day is repeated in the fall of Babylon. Babylon's fall in our day comes by the preaching of the gospel and will come on that final day when all who are opposed to Christ and His church will be utterly destroyed (Rev. 14:6-9; 10:7; 16:17, 19¹). As Rahab the Harlot was spared in the destruction of Jericho, the elect of God will be so spared in the destruction of Babylon (Rev. 18:4-5²). As the City of Jericho was never to be built again, Great Babylon will never arise (Josh. 6:26; Rev. 18:21³).

There is a double application here.

First, the Lord does not say that Jericho will not be rebuilt, but declares that the one who rebuilds it, and all his progeny,

strong is the LORD God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

¹ **Rev. 14:6-9**; And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, **10:7**; But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. **16:17**, And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, LORD God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. **19**; And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

² **Rev. 18:4-5**; And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

³ **Josh. 6:26**; And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. **Rev. 18:21**; And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

will be cursed. Jericho *was* rebuilt (1 Kings 16:34¹). Though some say it was built on another sight, Jericho stood in the time of our Lord (Mark 10:46)². This teaches us of the tenacity and willful disobedience of false religion. Even when faced with the curse that attends preaching another gospel, religion sets their heart to have it their way and is cursed for it. The gospel destroys Jericho and Babylon wherever it goes, but religion will go among the ashes of that city consumed by truth, and build again, laying other foundation than what God has laid and will receive the recompense of their deeds.

The second application is the final destruction of Babylon—all which is false and opposed to God. It will *never* be rebuilt. One day, and that right soon, the Lord will end Babylon's reign of terror, and her name and her doctrine will be heard no more.

But there is a further application. The destruction of Jericho and the saving of Rahab by Joshua is a picture of the gospel going to the Gentiles. In that great doomed city, there was one who would hear the trump of Jubilee and be spared, though her former world would crumble at her feet. How wonderfully this pictures the gospel, the powerful iconoclast of the Word, going into the pagan worlds and causing men to turn from their idols to serve the living God, causing their consciences to be purged of dead works and causing them to count everything but Christ as dung. The fall of Jericho is gospel prophecy.

Not only is a curse promised to those who would rebuild Jericho, our Lord promises a curse to anyone who takes accursed things from Jericho unto himself. In doing so, he will make the entire camp of Israel accursed (v. 18). I will spend more time and look at this more in depth in Chapter 7, but for now, to understand this prohibition, the word “accursed” must be seen in

¹ **1 Kings 16:34**; In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

² **Mark 10:46**; And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

light of the word “consecrated” in verse 19. These two verses stand together. The accursed thing that Achan took in Chapter 7 was that which God had declared to be holy in verse 19 (compare Josh. 7:21¹).

The word “accursed” in verse 18 means “devoted.” Though these things may have been devoted to the false gods of Jericho and therefore accursed, the Lord simply by the word of His mouth had declared them holy. This is all our Lord has to do to sanctify something. He simply separates it unto Himself and claims it for His use, and it is therefore Holy. We have but to consider our own salvation to know that this is the case. The elect were sons of Adam cursed by the fall, yet before the world began, God separated them unto Himself in the election of grace and declared that they were His and for His use. Thus, they were holy.

They are not holy of themselves; they are holy by divine edict. Once God has devoted a thing to Himself, it is not for the use of another. It is for His glory and none other. To take it for oneself is an attempt to rob God of His glory. For example, if anyone takes credit for the salvation of themselves or another, or the holiness of themselves or another, he is taking the holy things of God and using them for what they were not designed (Dan. 5:1-6, 24-31²). By taking the things which God has

¹ **Josh. 7:21**; When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

² **Dan. 5:1-6**, Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed,

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declared belong to Him, men bring a curse upon their heads. Salvation, mercy, grace, power, and holiness belong to God and are not the property of the creature.

There is yet another application here. When God took all the silver, gold, brass and iron for Himself, the only riches the people could have was that which God would provide from His treasury. God brings His children to depend on Christ alone for all things spiritual. If all of His blessings are in Christ, then whom do we have but Him if we are to be blessed of God (Psalm 73:25; Hab. 3:17-19; Col. 2:2-3; 3:10-11¹)?

Finally, we end our study of Chapter 6 with the reason and purpose of it all. Look at verse 27 and see Christ. “So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.”

“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye

and his knees smote one against another. **24-31**; Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

¹ **Psalm 73:25**; Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. **Hab. 3:17-19**; Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. **Col. 2:2-3**; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **3:10-11**; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:10-12).

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever” (Rev. 5:9-14).

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress

of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:11-16).

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: being found in fashion¹ as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5-11).

SIN

Joshua 7:1-26

1, ¶ But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

2, And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

3, And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

4, So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai.

5, And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

6, ¶ And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

7, And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

8, O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9, For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our

name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

10, ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

11, Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

12, Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

13, Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

14, In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man.

15, And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

16, ¶ So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken:

17, And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

18, And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19, And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession

unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

20, And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

21, When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

22, So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

23, And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

24, And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

25, And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

26, And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

There are many particulars in this chapter which relate in specific and unique ways to Christ and His gospel. We will study those in lessons to come, but for this study, I want to take a general view of an overriding principle established by this terrible and instructive incident in the life of the children of God.

Several things must be noted in order for us to grasp the import of this chapter.

The first thing is that this is about *us*, the elect redeemed church of God. We must not view Achan as some unholy vile sinner or spiritual anomaly who is lost. He is part of the family of God who have been redeemed by the blood, delivered from bondage, cared for by God throughout the wilderness journey, received the instruction in Deuteronomy, crossed over Jordan on dry land, possessed the Promise Land and is fresh with exuberance from the defeat and fall of Jericho. The sin in the camp is not committed by an infidel, but a child of God acting in disobedience to God and sinning against the light of the truth. The sin that ruined Achan is in every one of us, and we dare not think that we are exempt from falling in the same manner.

Secondly, this must not be viewed as sin in a generic sense. We all know by experience and the clear declaration of Scripture that we, in ourselves, are a veritable warehouse of unbelief. We are made aware with our every breath that we can do nothing that is free from the taint of sin. The doctrine of God is perfect, but our understanding and belief of it flow from a nature that, though inclined to do right, cannot because of our sin. When we would do good, we find that evil is present with us. This is *general* truth and *experiential* fact. What is being described in this chapter is not addressing that general aspect of our sinfulness, but a wretched choice that is made in the light of declared truth and against the glory of God.

This is a crass and brazen act of disobedience the likes of which is possible with everyone who reads these words. When Achan did this deed, he did not cease to be one of the elect. He did not become unredeemed. He did not lose his place in the household of God. He lost his integrity, his honor, his ill-gotten gains and he lost his life. We may view his end as punishment because he was living under the constricts of the old covenant. However, we may not make the same application to Immanuel's Land and its inhabitants, which are pictured in this context. In Immanuel's Land there is no punishment because Christ is the penal substitute for all its inhabitants. For them to be punished,

it would cast doubt on the efficacy of Christ's work. However, In Immanuel's Land, there is consequence for sin, chastisement for sin and loss for sin. The grace of God is not license to sin. God has ordered the matter of sin and disobedience to always affect the life of the believer in a negative and painful way.

Make no mistake about this, your disobedience and my disobedience might even end up in our physical death. We have examples of that with Ananias and Sapphira in the early church, and with those who took the Lord's Table unworthily (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:29-30). In both those cases the people of God took that which was designated for the Glory of God and used it for a purpose other than which it was designed. I do not say these things to scare you, but a little healthy fear might prevent you and I from some wretched choice. Disobedience to what God has directly prohibited will not go without consequence. Sin is never inconsequential. Never be guilty of the heart of the infidel who takes the sovereignty of God as an excuse for disobedience saying, "Why doth he yet find fault for who has resisted his will?" (Rom. 9:19). The disobedience of the child of God is more grievous and shameful than that of the infidel because it is always done in the presence of and against the knowledge of the Light of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Peter's bitter tears flowed not only because of the fact that he was a betrayer, but more so because he had betrayed the One who freely loved him, had chosen him and had done all things for him. At the heart of every disobedience of the child of God is a gross ingratitude which, when realized, ends in the bitter tears of repentance. Many of us have shed similar tears after sorely disappointing our parents. Achan sinned against redemption, love, mercy and grace (Jonah 2:8; Psalm 144:1-2).

When Achan sinned bears some attention. This is not necessarily a sure formula, but it was after the great victory at Jericho when the camp was full of vigor, enthusiasm and absolutely sure that God was with them that Achan disobeyed God. Our Lord warned those who were "at ease in Zion" and

forgot the “dreadful day.” It is sad but true. When things are going well, it makes fertile soil for the seeds of sin and disobedience (Luke 12:15; 1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 6:7-8; Heb. 3:12-13¹).

There is another important thing here. Confession of sin does not bring about absolution, nor does it remove the consequence of sin. I think much of Christianity (so-called) has bought into the papacy's idea of absolution—that upon confession sins are absolved. If your sins are absolved, it took place on Calvary when Christ purged your sins. But that blessed act does not remove the *natural* consequence of our disobedience. David sinned against God, confessed his sin and was summarily and immediately forgiven, yet suffered fourfold for the sin that he committed.

David's suffering was not meritorious, it was consequential. It was the consequence of his actions (2 Sam. 12:13-18²). Achan sinned and confessed, and the consequence of his sin was that he was stoned to death, burned, and a solemn memorial raised in

¹ **Luke 12:15**; And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. **1 Cor. 10:12**; Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. **Gal. 6:7-8**; Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. **Heb. 3:12-13**; Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

² **2 Sam. 12:13-18**; And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

warning of the consequence of disobedience (vv. 1, 20-21, 25-26). This chapter teaches an unchangeable principle concerning sin. Sin operates on a formula; it follows a predestined course. It will always have the exact same result (James 1:12-17¹). When we disobey, we suffer loss. We are striped of dignity, and integrity. We suffer damage in the close relationship with our blessed God. He never changes toward us but what shame, disgrace and heart-pains attend us when the heavens are as brass, and our shame overwhelms us. When we disobey something in *us* dies. It is the awful natural course of sin and disobedience and always ends up in sorrow.

Observe also that verse 1 of this chapter declares “the children of God committed a trespass.” Of course, this is a general application. Since the guilty party was known only to God, the whole of the camp was suspect until Achan was discovered. But a greater principle applies, and that is that no man is an island. Achan's sin cost the lives of thirty-six men! Do not be fooled to think that what you do being a part of the church, does not affect all of the body. The church is a wonderful organism fitly formed (Eph. 2:21; 4:16²). Each part has to do with the rest, and when one part is in disobedience, it has viral consequence.

You and I may hide our sin, but what is done in secret cannot be hid from the light. If you wonder why the people of

¹ **James 1:12-17**; Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

² **Eph. 2:21**; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: **4:16**; From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

God seem to know when you are in disobedience, it is because they do. They may not know the particulars, but they sense the wresting of the spirit and know there is something amiss. This always, if only for a while, interrupts *their* view of Christ because they are looking at you (1 Cor. 12:26¹).

Finally, notice the first word of Chapter 7 is “But.” This little conjunction means that what takes place after is opposite of what took place before. The last verse of chapter 6 is about the fame (the glory) of Christ. But sin is precisely the opposite. Sin is always the opposite of and against the fame of Christ. Sin and disobedience does not glorify the Lord. It is against His glory because it is done in the light of His glory. His glory is that He died for your sin, underwent the wrath of God, was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was finally forsaken of God on your behalf, and all was for His glory. For us to disobey Him is to, in base ingratitude, oppose that which is His Glory.

These are the overriding principles of this passage of Scripture.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren” (James 1:13-16).

¹ **1 Cor. 12:26**; And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

HOLY!

Joshua 7:19-21

19, And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

20, And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

21, When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

In the last lesson, we looked at sin in a general sense and that which the Bible teaches concerning the exceeding sinfulness of it and its horrible consequence. We saw that one possible consequence of sin is physical death at the hand of God as seen in the death of Achan in our text, Ananias and Sapphira in the early church and a number of people in Corinth who had taken the Lord's Table unworthily. Some would consider this punishment, but if you are in sin to the point that it has consumed your mind so that you refuse to repent and cease, the best thing that God could do for you is kill you and stop your shameful career. Be assured that God will guard His church, and though He may allow His people to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, death will surely ensue. It may not be physical death, but it will be death, death to peace, death to

fellowship, death to trust and even death to love. Sin pays a horrible wage.

From these verses of chapter 7, I want to consider the sin of Achan in particular as it relates to the vilest and most common of sin; taking that which belongs to God, keeping it for yourself and thus using it in a manner for which it was not designed. God had declared the silver and gold that was found in Jericho belonged to Him. He had made it holy by decree and designated it for use in the temple. The consequence for disobedience in this matter was death and incineration.

God had designated the silver, gold, brass and iron to be “consecrated unto the LORD” (Josh. 6:19). These belonged to God and no one but God. To take them for yourself was to believe that you had a right to them and smacked of self-deification. To take them for yourself was to rob God of that which belonged only to Him. We know that what God has made holy is for His glory, and His glory is tied up lock, stock and barrel in the salvation of His elect by the blood, death and righteousness of His Son. To claim this glory for oneself is to insinuate yourself into the thing that most glorifies God and diminish the value of God's glory in the person and work of Jesus Christ. *Everything* that God declares to be *holy* in His Word is linked inextricably with Christ and what He has accomplished for His people.

In Exodus and Leviticus, God speaks of a holy convocation wherein no servile work is to be done (8 Sabbaths). This refers to the rest that Christ has accomplished for his people. He speaks of a holy habitation, which is His church that was purchased with his own blood. In Exodus, He speaks of holy men in referring to the holy royal priesthood made up of every believer. He speaks of holy garments which are the garments of salvation, the pristine robe of Christ's righteousness. He speaks of an atonement that is most holy unto the Lord, referring to the propitiatory work of Christ wherein God's justice and wrath were satisfied. In Leviticus, He speaks of His people being holy

unto Him because He has severed (elected) them from other people.

God declares in Ephesians that the elect were elected to be holy, and that none shall profane His holy name. He speaks of His holy hill Zion—the church—where He has placed His Son as head. He speaks of His holy temple which is the church. He speaks of His holy One in the Psalms and the Acts referring to Christ. He speaks of His holy promise referring to the covenant of promise wherein every one of the elect are named as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. In Luke He calls his holy promise the holy covenant. He calls *all* His works holy and righteousness. The marriage bed is said to be holy and undefiled in reference to the marriage relationship. The physical love between a husband and wife is holy because it pictures what marriage is designed to picture, the unity and oneness of the relationship between Christ and His church.

All those declarations carry the same message. All of salvation and its attendant glory are the Lord's. He has decreed it to belong to Him and Him alone and done so in his *proclamation* that they are *holy* and *consecrated*. “Salvation belongeth to God” (Ps. 47:8; 3:8; 62:11-12; 94:1; Da. 9:7¹).

Achan stole and secreted in his tent that which God had decreed holy and consecrated to Himself, the gold, silver, brass and iron. Respectively, gold in Scripture refers to the royalty of Christ and the royal priesthood of the believer. It also is used in reference to the result of the trial of faith. Silver refers to blood and the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. Brass refers to judgment

¹ **Ps. 47:8**; God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness. **3:8**; Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. **62:11-12**; God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work. **94:1**; The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. **Da. 9:7**; O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

and the ability to withstand the fiery wrath of God. Iron refers to solidness, solidarity and hardness and is usually picturing judgment as well as the intractability of sin and enmity. All of these point to some aspect of the work of Christ in and for His people. When our Lord inspired Isaiah to write of the salvation of the elect, He used these very elements to represent the effects of the salvation wrought by the Redeemer (Is. 60:1, 14-17). So, when we speak of Achan stealing these holy elements, we are speaking of any and all who commit the sin of stealing salvation or stealing the glory of salvation from God and applying the accomplishment of it to themselves.

According to the confession of Achan, he understood the character and nature of sin. He understood that sin, all sin, is against God (v. 20; Ps. 51:3-4¹). In doing so he did what Joshua had commanded him to do. Joshua told him to “give glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession unto Him” (v.19).

How does confession of sin glorify God? First, it clears God (as David said) to deal with the sin in a manner that is just in His sight. Secondly, it bows to God in the principle that the judge of all the earth shall do right, even if it means that the consequence is your death. Thirdly, it glorifies God in the fact that grace and mercy are His to withhold or to give. Confession of sin is glorifying God in that thing which He *declares* is His glory (Ex. 33:19-20²).

Also, as we look at Achan's confession, we see that it follows precisely the deception of sin that ruined our mother Eve and the natural course of sin declared in the book of James (v. 21; Gen. 3:4-6; James 1:14-15³). Achan saw, coveted, took, and hid

¹ **Ps. 51:3-4**; For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

² **Ex. 33:19-20**; And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

³ **Gen. 3:4-6**; And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the

that which belonged only to God. It requires no stretch of the imagination to draw a parallel to the prevalent religion of this day. Salvation has been stolen from God and hid in the tents of men. All that Christ has accomplished has been ripped from His hands.

Salvation is a beautiful thing and a thing that is to be desired above all. But men will not have it if it is wholly in God's power to perform. Religion has taken the finished work of Christ and declared it to be unfinished. Men have taken Christ from his holy throne and put Him squarely in the hands of His creatures to do with Him as they will. Men have taken the gold of His royalty and declared themselves to be kings of their own domain. They have taken the gold of faith (the gift of God) and made it to be an act of their will. They have stolen the silver of blood propitiation and made its effectuality dependent upon their affirmative vote. They have stolen the brass of judgment and used it for their own regional prejudices and personal convictions which are all based on the notions of their own presumed merit. They have stolen the brass of judgment accomplished on Calvary, and by use of the law, have made it so that those who have been forgiven all their sins will yet face judgment in the end of time. They've stolen the iron of solidarity with God based on the accomplishment of Christ and made salvation to be conditioned on their iron will. They are thieves and robbers who will not enter by the door of the sheep but rather climb in another way.

However, Achan did *not* steal the *brass* and the *iron*. This is significant because their value, though holy to God, is secondary to that of the silver and the gold. Men do not consider *judgment* and *oneness with God* of great importance because their doctrine asserts that God's love and Christ's death are universal. Thus,

tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. **James 1:14-15**; But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

the value of the love of God and death of Christ are secondary to their own royal standing in personal merit. If God loves everyone and Christ's death paid the sin debt of everyone, then God's love and Christ's death are valuable to no one. What then is salvation? It must depend on my own merit.

This is also seen in the placement of the silver. It was hidden in the dirt under the gold that was wrapped in the beautiful Babylonish garment. What a picture of false, plundered salvation! The silver, representing the blood of Christ, is cast into the dirt. It is viewed to be as common as dust. How else can it be viewed if it is universal? The silver is covered by gold wrapped in the garment of false religion (the garment of Babylon). The garment of self-righteousness enwraps the stolen royalty and the stolen faith. The Babylonish garment was marked for destruction by God along with all other things in Jericho, except that which God had declared holy. Yet it was the first thing that caught the eye of Achan.

Men will steal that which belongs to God, but they will cover it with the robe of their own righteousness. In effect, the holy things of God, in stolen salvation, are never the object of the eye of false faith. The eye of stolen salvation is fixed on the Babylonish garment which God has fitted for destruction. Their salvation, false and condemned, contains the words of Salvation and gives nominal glory to the God of salvation, but His holiness cannot be seen. It is either hid in the dirt (humanity) or wrapped in the Babylonish garment of human merit.

This is the sin of Achan that cost the lives of many in the church, and finally the life of Achan and his family.

THE SINNER'S PLEA

Joshua 7:6-9

6, And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

7, And Joshua said, Alas, O LORD God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

8, O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9, For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

In the past three lessons, we have looked at sin and the effects of it on the believer. We have considered sin in a general sense as well as the particular sin of Achan in taking that which belonged only to God and keeping it for himself. Clearly the message is plain. That which is prohibited by God is never, under any circumstances, acceptable to God.

All sin in the life of the believer runs a specific course, temptation, inclination, enticement, lust, conception and finish. The finish, the end result of all sin is death. It can be physical death as in the case of Achan, Ananias and Sapphira, and the people in Corinth who partook of the Lord's Table unworthily, and it may also be death to a particular aspect of the believer's life; death to worship, prayer, love, trust, fellowship etc. This is always the course of sin but is especially the course of sin as it is committed against a clear prohibition of God. Concerning the church, everybody in the body is affected by it.

Those things having been said, I want us to look at the actions and words of Joshua in verses 6-9.

At this point in time, Joshua is unaware of the particular sin of Achan. What he does know is that the army has been defeated by the enemies of God, and thirty-six men have lost their lives. There is no question to him as to the reason. It is sin. The result of and the penalty for sin is death, and thirty-six corpses are sure evidence that someone has sinned against God. In the actions and words of Joshua we see the reaction of the believer to the obvious presence of sin when no culprit is named. What Joshua does here is not an anomaly; it is the reaction of every believer when he realizes that something has gone terribly wrong. Joshua does not know specifically what has gone awry; he only knows that something is dreadfully wrong in the camp because the end and consequence of sin has been manifested.

The first thing he does is assume that the problem is within himself. This is remarkable in that it is so opposed to human nature. The first thing that Adam and all his progeny do when something goes bad is to seek someone to blame—"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree" (Gen. 3:12). When the believer realizes that something has brought death, he immediately points his finger at himself. The reason is simple. The believer knows himself to be a sinner and is aware of a thousand things in his life that deserve the wrath of God. Joshua did not draw his sword and go about pointing it at everybody to get someone to confess. Not knowing *who* was responsible for the death that entered the camp, he did know *why*. It was sin, and for that, he needed to look no further than himself (Matt. 26:22¹).

He rent his clothes because he was naked before God, fell to the earth, entered the dust where he belonged and did so before the face of the ark. There he stayed until he heard from God (v. 6a). He took the place of the sinner, the place that truly defined his heart, and did so *toward* the only place where there is mercy

¹ **Matt. 26:22**; And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

(Ex. 25:21-22¹). This is the primary response of the child of God when he realizes that something is horribly amiss. He immediately blames himself, takes the place of the guilty sinner and seeks mercy at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not an affectation. This is the heart knowledge of every believer. If something has gone wrong, I cannot divorce myself from the blame for it. I must be the first culprit in the lineup.

In Joshua's response, he is also a type of our blessed heavenly Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ, who freely took the blame and sin of all His people before the wrath of the thrice holy God. When our sin was made to meet on Christ it was not by duress. He *freely* took our sin upon himself and bore the full punishment for it. In verse 7, Joshua speaks as one who is to blame. Notice how he approaches God. The name of God is in all capital letters. The pronunciation is *Jehovee* along with Lord (Adoni) and used by Joshua from a place of humiliation and reverence for God. It is from this place and state of penitent humiliation that Joshua speaks. Joshua lays hold of the only one who can help him and give him peace (Isa. 27:5²). He does not flee *from* God as he considers his sin, he flees *to* God. This assures us the words spoken are not in the same attitude as others who spoke similar words (Ex. 17:3; Num. 14:1-4³).

Here, Joshua is questioning his own motives concerning the things of God. He did not desire to stay on the wilderness side

¹ **Ex. 25:21-22**; And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.

² **Isa. 27:5**; Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

³ **Ex. 17:3**; And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? **Num. 14:1-4**; And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

of Jordan but wonders if, in his heart, there was something more in his desire for the promised land that the honor and glory of God. "Have we now lost the lives of many because we were not content with the state we were in? Did we grow weary in our waiting for the hand of the Lord?"

In seeking an answer, Joshua does not blame God, he blames himself by confessing that which he knew was often the plague of the child of God, unbelief and impatience toward God. Mark well this attitude because often, when we find ourselves in sin, the first thing we do is absent ourselves from the worship of God and the fellowship of the brethren. Joshua's example is, when you find that you have left the Master, draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto you.

The remainder of Joshua's words teach us of the believer's heart in truly confessing sin before the Lord God. True confession is giving glory to God (v. 19). He first speaks to the reputation of God's faithfulness. The Lord God has promised to deliver His people and destroy all their enemies. This is the holy mantra, the testimony that God has given to Joshua. Joshua asks, "What shall I say?" (v. 8). It is as if he asks, "What can my testimony be when Israel is seen fleeing from their enemies (Isa. 45:17¹); How can I explain that you always keep your promise when your enemies surround us and cut our name off from the earth?" (Psalm 83:4²). Joshua speaks as one confounded, which is the end of sin and unbelief (1 Peter 2:6³). "What shall I say to comfort your people when the enemies will say that the God of Israel is unable to deliver them? Will you be charged with weakness and unfaithfulness to your promise?" Joshua's interest is plainly in the glory of God's Word. Again, this is not an

¹ **Isa. 45:17**; But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

² **Psalm 83:4**; They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

³ **1 Peter 2:6**; Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

affectation. These are the heart sounds of a believer whose interest is in the glory of God.

These words of Joshua speak to the knowledge that he has concerning the response of the enemies of the cross when they see the children of God in trouble. Be not deceived, when you fall into sin, the name of your God will be defamed by those who hate Him. You say God is sovereign and yet he can't keep you in line. You say that God doesn't punish the sin of His people because Christ has been punished in their place? Then why does your sin wind you up in such a fix? Trust this; your sin, my sin will confound us when we face the taunts of our enemies concerning the faithfulness of our God. Sin is against God's glory. What shall *I* say? Trust this also. When you are brought to confess your sin, your interest will not be in forgiveness but the honor and glory of God's person and character (Ex. 32:11-14; Num. 14:12-20; Deut. 9:24-27;¹).

¹ **Ex. 32:11-14;** And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Num. 14:12-20; I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as

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The whole of this confession is summed up in the last phase of verse 9. “What wilt thou do unto thy great name?” (Isa. 42:8; 48:11; Ps. 111:9²). This is the believer's confession when he knows that things have taken a bad turn. He does not look outside himself to find fault. He first assumes that it is *he* who is to blame because he views himself as the worst of the lot. How much diminished would be our troubles in this life if this were always the reaction to the troubles that attend our life.

Give God the glory that is due His name.

thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word: **Deut. 9:24-27**; Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you. Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the LORD had said he would destroy you. I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O LORD God, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin:

² **Isa. 42:8**; I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. **48:11**; For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another. **Ps. 111:9**; He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

CONFESSION

Joshua 7:19-20

19, And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

20, And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done.

This lesson will finish chapter 7 by revisiting the principle of confession of sin. The sin of Achan was typical of the sin of the child of God. It was a sin against light because it was committed in taking the things of God and assuming that they might be the possession of man. Man's venture into presumed deity has and always will result in horrible consequences. Adam took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the only tree in the garden that specifically belonged to God alone, and the result was physical and spiritual death for the entire human race. He took of the tree because of unbelief, which is the core of all sin. In doing so, he declared that what belonged to God also belonged to him.

He, somewhere inside the dark recesses of his heart, considered himself to possess deity. Achan's sin was also typical of the sin of the child of God because it was committed in the light of precise knowledge. God had prohibited the taking of that which he had reserved for Himself, and what he had declared holy became accursed if taken and used for any purpose other than the glorification of His name. The sum of the entire matter is that the child of God belongs to God. The child of

God is declared holy by God, made holy by the work of Christ, bought with a price, and therefore, God has absolute claim on every aspect of his existence. As children of God, you and I are bought with a price; you and I are not our own. If God has prohibited a thing, the child of God is in no way allowed that thing. If God has not prohibited a thing, then the believer is free to use it but not abuse it, and the use of it is solely for the glory of God and the welfare of fellow citizens in the household of faith.

These things are clearly declared in the Word of God and therefore are not matters of debate or conjecture. To disobey is sin, and the consequences of sin will naturally follow. Since all that we have and are is because of grace, all sin for the believer is sin against the light of knowledge. God has written His Word in the hearts of his people, and they are immediately aware of their sin. In fact, believers know that it is sin before they commit it. Sin, though it may be committed in secret, is not secret. It is known both by the committer of it and especially by the God who has graciously saved him.

This is primarily seen in the manner in which Achan was discovered. Though it is not clearly stated, Achan was discovered by the casting of lots. In this particular instance, the word "taken" in verse 18 refers to discovery by casting lots, and the guilty party is the one upon whom the lot falls. This is not a matter of chance but a declaration of the sovereign omniscience of God (Prov. 16:33¹). The Word of God in us discovers our sin. The cast lot falls on us. Some may say that men only repent if they get caught, and that may be true of the lost man, but the child of God is always caught in the act and is in fact caught in the thought that precedes the act. The lot of God's Word is cast in the heart, and thus, all sin is willful and against light.

Confession of sin, since guilt is already established and the consequence is sure, is not made to escape the natural and logical end of committing it. The consequence of sin for Achan

¹ **Prov. 16:33**; The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.

was death and incineration. The confession of sin is made because mercy is sought, not for avoidance of the ramification of the act, but for his future estate. This is important because it is generally felt that to confess sin and to receive forgiveness is the same as avoiding the consequence of sin. It is not. Confession of sin has to do with the glory of God. Confession has to do with accepting the fact or coming to a verdict that your sin is worthy of death (Lam. 3:39; Mic. 7:9¹). It has to do with placing yourself in the hand of the sovereign to do with you as He sees fit. Confession of sin is not done with any presumption; it is laying yourself bare before God (Psalm 51. 3-4²). For the believer, confession of sin is done with an eye on another world where sin does not exist. When our Lord was crucified,

“. . .one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? *And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds:* but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me *when thou comest into thy kingdom.* And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:39-43).

This man’s confession could not have been to avoid the proper end of his sin; he was on the cross for it. His confession was about mercy—“Lord remember me.” His confession was about Christ’s glory—“when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

Certain elements of the incident of Achan’s confession teach us much about the matter of confession.

First, his guilt for sin was not in question.

¹ **Lam. 3:39;** He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked. **Mic. 7:9;** I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.

² **Psalm 51. 3-4;** For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Secondly, confession was made to God the Judge. Some say that confession is good for the soul, but that is true only if you are confessing to the right person. It is true that we are to confess our faults on to another. James speaks those words in reference to praying for the sick, and as a general principle, that prayer comforts the sick with the knowledge that their sickness is *not* the *judgment* of God. Confession of faults in that context assures the sick one that you are not saying, “If you were righteous, you wouldn't be sick.” The statement by James is not a subpoena to air all your dirty laundry in public, nor is it a summons to confess your sin before the church. To confess publicly is about *you*, not about God. Testimony meetings are rightly called brag-a-mony meetings because they create a kind of tearful cleansing of the guilt of the flesh. Confession of sin is directed toward God alone, thorough Christ.

Thirdly, confession is made for the Glory of God.

Fourthly, the words of Joshua make it clear that He was the type and picture of an intermediary between God and Achan; “tell me now what thou has done” (v. 19). This is important because there is but one mediator between man and God, the man Christ Jesus. We confess our sin to God, but we do so through Jesus Christ. As God, He has access to the Holy God whose eyes are too pure to behold evil. As man, Christ can lay hold of us, having been “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:5).

This complete scenario is laid out precisely in 1 John 1-2 of the New Testament. The first seven verses of 1 John 1 make it clear that the child of God walks in the light of the gospel, and that light brings fellowship with God because of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. The believer, he who walks in the light (1 John 1:7¹), operates from a standing of being redeemed, justified and sanctified. No charge will ever be laid to the elect because *Christ* has been charged to be propitiation for their sin, and God

¹ **1 John 1:7**; But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

is satisfied with them. All sin is therefore against this blessed estate of the light of what God has so graciously wrought for us and in us by His Son Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:33-34; 1 John 4:9-10¹). In 1 John 7:8-10 we plainly see that the fact of our sin is sure, though we might wish it were not so.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 7:8-10).

Those verses cover the entire spectrum of sin, from the nature of it to the commission of it, and there is no way that we can say we are not guilty of it. To honestly confess such is to reveal that the Truth is in us—that is, Christ in us. To honestly confess this is to declare God to be true and reveal that His Word is in us. Is this not the casting of the lot in the lap and having it fall on us?

1 John 7:9 makes it clear that confession is done to glorify God. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Remember, the believer walks in the light that God has forgiven his sin and made him righteous by the blood of the Lamb. It is in that light of knowledge that the believer confesses his sin. Confession of sin declares that God is both faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us from it because Christ has satisfied God's justice and wrath concerning it. It is God's glory to forgive sin because of the person and work of His Son (Ex.

¹ **Rom. 8:33-34**; Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. **1 John 4:9-10**; In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

33:19; Rom. 3:24-26²). That we *are* sinners and that we *do* sin is fact, and when we sin, “if we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.” This glorious truth may never rightly be used to excuse our sin. 1 John 2 makes that very plain;

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:1-2).

Thank God that when we sin, we have an advocate with the Father. “And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me” (Joshua 7:19). What a thing! Though sin is confessed to God, it is by Christ and therefore in the familial relationship of a son confessing to his father.

Sometimes we look at the word “advocate” in a purely legal sense, as if to say that Christ here appears for us as our lawyer, pleading His blood as our defense when we sin against God. However, since that bloody substitutionary sacrifice has already been accepted on behalf of the elect, and God “remembers our sin no more,” such legal advocacy is called into question as to its necessity. Note with whom our Lord is our advocate. It is not with God as “Judge of all the earth,” but it is with God “the Father.” Christ, rather than appearing as legal defense, is appearing as our elder brother with our Father.

² **Ex. 33:19;** And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. **Rom. 3:24-26;** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The word translated “advocate” is “paráklētos,” or paraclete, which means an “intercessor or comforter.” This is the title given to the Holy Spirit in John 14:16—“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (Paráklētos), that he may abide with you for ever.” The key to understanding this passage is the fact of this advocacy. Rather than being a treatise on the aspects of this advocacy it is designed to cause poor saved sinners to be comforted in the truth of it. Do you see? When we sin, we have in place, right now and always at the right hand of the Father, a comforting intercessor. The design is to cause us not to despair when we find ourselves in sin. As vile as it is and as much as it troubles and causes us to mourn, look away from self! Yonder, at our Father's right hand, is our comfort, our intercessor, and our advocate—Jesus Christ. We have an advocate! (See: Rom. 8:34; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:24-25; 9:24¹).

The ground of our Lord's advocacy with the Father is the ground of our salvation and comfort. He is the Righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21; Isa. 40:1-2²). John is not bringing to our attention a *legal argument* but a *cordial* from heaven to soothe our troubled souls and an apt reason to confess our sin, giving God the glory. “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

The fact that Christ is here presented as the advocate for “the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2) is not a declaration of

¹ **Rom. 8:34**; Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. **1 Tim. 2:5**; For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; **Heb. 7:24-25**; But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. **9:24**; For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

² **2 Corinthians 5:21**; For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. **Isa. 40:1-2**; Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

universal redemption. One way of looking at this is that John was a Jew and the “whole world” was simply his inclusion of the Gentiles (John 11:49-52¹). However, I think the context defines the text. John is still referring to the fact that “we” (1 John 1:8-10²) are *all* sinners, that *we all* sin and *we* are to confess our sin. The phrase “the “whole world” is synonymous with the “we” in verses 8-10, meaning all of us, the world of believers. It is inclusive to mankind but distinctive to manner. The manner by which we approach God for forgiveness applies to anyone in the whole world who approaches God for forgiveness, namely, through the advocate for sinners, Jesus Christ the righteous. The whole world may approach God to confess sin, but they must approach for forgiveness by Christ alone. This assures the believer that when he sins, his sin is against God, and in that sin, he differs from no other sinner in the whole world. His sin is just as heinous, if not more so, and he is not to use the privilege of his estate as an excuse for it.

Finally, this creates a dilemma in the minds of many. Men often endeavor to apply human mathematics to God's science of arithmetic. They wonder why the Word says that we are to confess our sins when in fact God remembers our sin no more. To human logic these seem to be contradictory. They are not. We confess our sins because we have the *promise* of forgiveness, and as sinners, we need the *assurance* of it. The fact is that everything we do Godward is a confession. Confessing Christ in Baptism is a confession of sin. Taking the Lord's Table is a confession of sin. Preaching the gospel is a confession of sin.

¹ **John 11:49-52**; And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

² **1 John 1:8-10**; If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Worshipping God is a confession of sin. God has forgotten our sins, but they are ever before us. We confess our sins for His glory, and because we need to continually remind ourselves that we are forgiven, not because we confess, but because He is just to forgive us by the advocacy of Christ. Because we have been forgiven all our sin, and because we yet sin, we are ever mindful that we live and breathe by the mercy of God (Prov. 28:13; Isa. 55:7¹).

“And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done” (Joshua 7:19-20).

¹ **Prov. 28:13**; He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. **Isa. 55:7**; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

WAR AND MERCY

Joshua 8:1-2

1, ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

2, And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.

Chapter 8 records the defeat of the army of Ai, the manner of warfare that Joshua is to conduct, and the spoils of the warfare being given to the children of God. Notice the striking difference from the first and the second battles of Ai. The Lord, in the first instance gave no directions to Joshua concerning the taking of Ai. He had told Joshua to leave nothing alive in Jericho, save Rahab the harlot and her family, and designated the precious metals of the land were for His use alone (Josh 6:17-19¹).

Unbeknownst to Joshua, Achan had taken the holy things of God and coveted them for himself (Josh.7:1²). Following what

¹ Josh 6:17-19; And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

² **Josh.7:1**; But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled

he thought was the normal course of action and having the victory of Jericho notched on the hilt of his sword, Joshua simply went on to the next city, having no reason to doubt that victory was sure. It was not to be, because sin had entered the camp. Achan had stolen from the Lord and must receive the just reward of his evils deeds. Jericho had been sacked without a shot being fired. With the Jubilee trump and the shout of the people, the Lord had brought Jericho to the dust, but Joshua's foray into Ai cost the lives of thirty-six men and saw Israel's best soldiers cower and run with their tails tucked between their legs. After the issue of sin had been settled with Achan's confession, capital punishment, and burning, the Lord's fierceness was assuaged, and He encourages Joshua to take Ai. Unlike the battle of Jericho, in this case, the spoils of the city are to become the possession of the victors of the battle.

Chapter 7 began with words of law and justice. In Chapter 8, we hear words of encouragement from God. He tells Joshua to "fear not, neither be dismayed." He is told to take all the people (the army) to war and to sack Ai. He speaks in the same manner as He did before the battle of Jericho. He speaks in absolute assurance. "See," He says, "I have given you the king of Ai and all that is in Ai" (Josh. 6:2). There is much for us here in the rehearsal of the gospel.

First in this story, we see the *fall of man* well represented. God gave the land to his people and prohibited only one thing from them. But the one thing He prohibited was the one thing that Achan could not resist. The single act of *one man*, Achan, brought *death* to the nation. You do not have to stretch your mind to see the story of Adam in the Garden of Eden. God gave man everything (Gen. 1:26-30¹). God only prohibited the

against the children of Israel.

¹ **Gen. 1:26-30**; And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue

use of one thing in that garden (Gen. 2:16-17¹). The one thing that God prohibited, Adam could not resist (Rom. 7:7²). Achan might have stolen anything from Jericho. He might have taken precious jewels or weaponry, but he could not resist that which God had designated for His own use. Man, the worm who would be God because he is mutable, will mutate believing his mutation is upward to the place of deity, but it is always downward to the place of ruin and death. Like water, which always seeks the lowest level, unstable man will always pursue the basest things, and all the while do so believing that he is bringing himself to a higher, nobler, even deified plain of existence (Gen. 3:5³).

Achan's *one* act brought *death* to *Israel*. Adam's *one* act brought *death* to the entire *human race* (Rom. 5:12, 19⁴).

Here also is the story of *sovereign providence*. One might think, if he knew not God, that what Achan did caused a glitch in the plan and purpose of God. Achan's sin did not derail the juggernaut of predestinated purpose. Instead, it introduced a central truth in the life of the believer. Sin and disobedience always ends in death. Of that there can be no doubt. But just as

it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

¹ **Gen. 2:16-17**; And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

² **Rom. 7:7**; What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

³ **Gen. 3:5**; For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

⁴ **Rom. 5:12**, Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 19; For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

the sin of Adam served the purpose of God in the recovery by the last Adam, the sin of Achan served the purpose of God in finally giving Ai to the people.

Sin disrupts our lives, ruins us on a thousand levels, brings death to lie at our door, but sin does not alter one aspect of God's purpose. Sin and how far it will go, the limits of its destruction, the power to commit it, and the use of it for God's glory and the good of His people, belongs to God alone (Ps. 76:10¹). Achan, whose name means "trouble," brought trouble to Israel. But out of that trouble came great blessing as we see in the first two verses of this 8th chapter. God was still fulfilling the promise he made to Abraham. The people had been given the land, and no act of a mere mortal man could disannul that purposed promise to any degree. It is the testimony of every believer that out of their greatest trials and troubles come their greatest blessings (2 Cor. 12:9-10; 1 Peter 1:6-7²). When our Lord guaranteed his disciples that they possessed all and that their lives would be blessings heaped upon blessing, he assured them also that those blessings would be attended by trouble (Mark 10:29-30³).

Where Achan was killed and burned, there was a great heap of stones erected, and the place was called the valley of Achor or the valley of "trouble." Look at the record of this in Josh. 7:26;

¹ **Ps. 76:10**; Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

² **2 Cor. 12:9-10**; And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. **1 Peter 1:6-7**; Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

³ **Mark 10:29-30**; And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

“And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.”

Words are important. Language and the way it is used are important. Achor is a transliteration of Achan. Notice the account of this place being named “the valley of Achor” begins with the word “wherefore.” “Wherefore” means “because of this.” Because of this, “the name of that place was called, the valley of Achor, unto this day” (symbolizing perpetuity). What then is the cause of this place being named this? Look at the preceding sentence. “The Lord turned the fierceness of His anger,” and because of that, this place was so named. It would seem that the turning of God's anger would be the removal of trouble, but here the turning of his anger is said to be the *reason for* trouble (Amos 3:6¹).

This passage teaches us what the Lord taught His disciples. The child of God's life of blessing is attended by tribulation, not because of punishment but out of *necessity*. One man said, “If the Lord wants to have his people call on Him, He must pour on the pressure.” This is clearly seen in the recovery of Gomer, the whorish wife of Gomer who symbolizes Christ and His bride (Read Hos. 2:9-23).

Here also is the *story of redemption by propitiation*. Chapter 8 begins with the promise rehearsed and ends with the people possessing that promise. God always keeps his promise. Chapter 8 does not begin with a reminder of the sin of Achan and its cost to the people. This story does not involve the recollection of sin. It is a disclosure of *blessing* and the encouraging words of the Lord. The reason is that sin has been dealt with. God must get His before you get yours. In Jericho the only thing to be kept was what belonged to God. In Ai, the spoils belonged to the

¹ **Amos 3:6**; Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?

people. God cannot justify until sin is punished. But when sin is punished, when remission is made, there is no more need of sacrifice (Deut. 25:1-3; Heb. 10:12-18¹). There was sin in the camp and God has got His death for it; now there is nothing left for the people but to receive the blessing (v. 2).

Their blessings come on the wings of satisfied justice! God is righteous, and has shown Himself to be so, and being just, He justifies the sinner (Rom. 3:24-26²). Once again, we see that where sin did abound, grace did much more abound. Where “sin hath reigned unto death,” grace hath reigned “through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21³). Rejoice in the blessings of grace; lay hold on the promise of God; go thou up and possess the land, and remember that all of it is yours because your substitute satisfied God for your sin. Never take disobedience and sin lightly; the price of your blessing was the death of the Son of the Most High God.

Here also we are reminded that this life of the child of God is not advanced on flowery beds of ease. We are at war (Ecc.

¹ **Deut. 25:1-3**; If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee. **Heb. 10:12-18**; But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

² **Rom. 3:24-26**; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

³ **Rom. 5:21**; That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

8:8¹). We take the gospel into the battle arena and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. Ai means “the heap of ruin,” and the origins of that word “ruin” is “rebellion, perversity, and iniquity.” The king of that city is the prince of the power of the air; our former malevolent monarch (Eph. 2:1-2²). We also, primarily, war within ourselves seeking to bring every thought and every high thing that is against God in our minds and imaginations to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5³).

Thank God that the battle *is* won, and the victory *is* ours (Rom. 16:19-20⁴).

¹ **Ecc. 8:8**; There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

² **Eph. 2:1-2**; And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

³ **2 Cor. 10:3-5**; For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

⁴ **Rom. 16:19-20**; For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

AMBUSH!

Joshua 8:2-29

2, And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.

3, So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night.

4, And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready:

5, And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them,

6, (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them.

7, Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand.

8, And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you.

9, Joshua therefore sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people.

10, And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai.

11, And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city,

and pitched on the north side of Ai: now there was a valley between them and Ai.

12, And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city.

13, And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

14, And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city.

15, And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness.

16, And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city.

17, And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel.

18, And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city.

19, And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire.

20, And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers.

21, And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai.

22, And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape.

23, And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

24, And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword.

25, And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai.

26, For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

27, Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua.

28, And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day.

29, And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.

These verses from chapter 8 may seem a bit confusing as to the order of events, but there are in these passages two accounts of the same battle. Some things seem to contradict each other. For example, the 5,000 men that were the initial ambush were said to have “set the city on fire” in verse 19, and then the record is that Joshua burnt the city to the ground in verse 28. However, these are not contradictions but are the record of the beginning and the end of the battle.

The setting of the city on fire was a partial burning, designed to send a signal to Joshua that the city was taken, and to make the enemy see the terrible error in judgment they had made in abandoning the city without leaving any guard in place (vv. 17, 20-21). It was a smoke signal. After the men of Ai had been slain, the king hanged, and the spoils of war taken (v. 27), then Joshua burned the city to the ground and raised upon it a great pile of stones, a kind of grave marker.

Rather than try to jump back and forth in the context to show the particulars of each segment of the battle, I will try to explain how the battle went.

The battle would ensue in a valley or ravine just outside the city. The strategy of the battle was ambush (v. 2). The Israelites were to engage the enemy and then turn tail and run as if this battle was an instant replay of the first battle of Ai wherein thirty-six Israelites were killed, and the remainder fleeing before the men of Ai (vv. 5-6). This stratagem was designed by the Lord, the man of war, and it is here we see the overruling providence of God for the good of His people.

We may be in awe of the fact that the sin of Achan, its results, the loss of the lives of thirty-six brave men, and the fear that struck the remainder of the army, all lead to this great victory. We need not even try to second guess the first cause of all things. The very things that cause Israel temporary fear and loss were used of God to give the enemy momentary bravado and confidence that Israel was there for the taking (vv. 5-6). Unbeknownst to the men of Ai, Joshua had set 5,000 men behind the city, lying in wait to sack the city when the men of Ai pursued the fleeing Israelite Army. Joshua had also placed about 30,000 men on the valley side of the city near its borders, also lying in wait to block the men of Ai from returning to the city.

When the men of Ai pursued the army of Israel to the valley of ambush, the 5000 set the city on fire. This stopped the men of Ai in their tracks and made fear to take hold of them. Then, the part of the Israelite army that had seemingly fled turned back to

attack the men of Ai, and the 30,000 that were lying in wait came at them from the rear. In a giant squeeze maneuver (the hammer and the anvil), the men of Ai were summarily slain and their king captured. The signal that began the ambush and victory was Joshua, who at the command of God, raised up his spear toward Ai and kept it raised until the battle was won. This is reminiscent of Moses in the battle against Amalek in Exodus 17:11-12¹.

This spear, as was common to captains, was not merely a weapon but usually had a banner or flag attached, serving as an ensign to the people during the battle that their flag was not taken. After the battle was over and the enemy was thoroughly routed, the king of Ai was hanged, and his body removed before sunset.

There are many things taught in this passage about Christ and His church and the defeat of the enemies of the cross.

The first thing we can glean from this passage is that the enemies of the cross have no idea who and what they are up against. I remember years ago hearing of a pastor preaching a message entitled *It Ain't Like You Thought It Was*. I don't remember the message but while I was reading this account of the ill-conceived and misplaced bravado of the men of Ai, that title came to my mind. Our Lord said, "If the world *hate* you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18). The world so despises the gospel and the believers of it that they set aside all rational thought in their blood-thirsty pursuit to destroy them. Their vehement anger is fueled because the church at any given time in history seems small, insignificant and does not appear to be battle worthy. The world has no idea that the providence of God is playing them like a fiddle, even to the

¹ **Exodus 17:11-12**; And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

point of making His people appear weak and giving the enemy a temporal victory to draw them to their destruction.

As I read of this battle and the way it ensued, I thought of Saul of Tarsus, confident from his success in threatenings and wreaking havoc to the church, setting out with the full support of organized religion to finish off the followers of Christ and to wipe His name from the face of the earth. By all appearances, the little groups that followed Christ were on the run, hiding in caves and catacombs for fear of Saul the slayer. Like a bloodhound, he could smell the demise of the church. He had no idea that he was walking into an ambush.

On that road to Damascus, he was ambushed and waylaid by Christ himself. Siege was laid on his soul! Saul of Tarsus *died* that day. The bright, burning light burned to the ground the life he formerly lived. Saul of Tarsus died that day, and from the ashes arose Paul the Apostle. The Lord, as it were, laid in wait for the rebel to ambush and kill him—and make him alive. Saul looked to former victories as the guarantee of future success. Those little wins were providential teasers, divine carrots on a stick, that played on his pride and assurance and led to his defeat.

When the men of Ai saw the Israelites fleeing, they knew the battle was theirs. They didn't know that God had set the strategy and was messing with their minds, making them blind to their own interests and the things that belonged to their peace. Those who are in most danger are often the least aware of it. So sure was the king of his victory that he left nobody to guard his rear. Often, the enemies of the gospel run themselves into destruction by their own fury and violence against the church of God (Ex. 15:9-11; Job. 20:5; 24:24¹).

¹ **Ex. 15:9-11**; The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? **Job. 20:5**; That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? **24:24**; They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low;

The gospel, itself, often comes as an ambush. In fact, it is the testimony of most all who believe that they were pursuing their own agenda and confident in their sinful pursuits when the gospel, as it were, laid siege on their souls. Those who preach the gospel are sheep and often seen as weak, timid, narrow and more ready to flee than to fight. But they carry an invisible sword that does not pierce the body but enters the mind, heart and soul (Acts 2:30-37; Heb. 4:12-13¹). The believers, themselves, never know if they have struck a fatal blow, but the gospel, the sword of the Lord, always has its day and is always victorious (2 Cor. 2:14-17²). Invisible though it may be, nonetheless, it is like a hammer and a fire (Jer. 23:29³). It is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and it lies in ambush for the elect.

they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

¹ **Acts 2:30-37**; Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? **Heb. 4:12-13**; For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twodged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

² **2 Cor. 2:14-17**; Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

³ **Jer. 23:29**; Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

The sheep will hear the gospel and follow Christ, and the enemies of it will be utterly destroyed. Every enemy of it will perish. They all will be made the foot stool of Christ. Just as Joshua held up the spear (the banner, the ensign) and pointed the gospel spear toward the enemy until the battle was over, Christ in the gospel is held up and will be preached till the last enemy is made the footstool of Christ (Is. 11:10-12; 1 Cor. 15:25-26; Heb. 10:12-13¹).

The church is admonished to be as “wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matt. 10:16). The world sees the dove and fears it not, totally unaware the serpent lies in wait under its nest. The believer does not endeavor to blindside folk nor sneak up on them with the gospel. He knows that he cannot clothe the gospel in religious finery and have folks supposedly believing it even though they don't know it.

The believer declares the unadulterated wide-open truth and leaves the Word with men for God to do what He will. The believer knows that the battle has *never* been his. He knows that he may even have to flee the scene, but the gospel, the living Word in strategic genius, lies in wait for the appointed time of ambush, and just when the enemy thinks the battle is won, the gospel falls on the enemy with vengeance or mercy. Onesimus robbed his master Philemon, went on the lam and thought he had clean escaped. What he did not know was that before the creation of the world, in the counsel of eternal grace, God had chosen him to salvation. And running for his life he was

¹ **Is. 11:10-12**; And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. **1 Cor. 15:25-26**; For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. **Heb. 10:12-13**; But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

ambushed by the gospel, which had laid in wait for him since *before the foundation* of the world, and became a sinner saved by grace.

Finally, and preeminently, I see in this passage, in the actions of Joshua, a vivid portrayal of the glorious victory of our Heavenly Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ. Joshua conquered by yielding, *as if* he had himself been conquered. Likewise, our Lord Jesus, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost, seemed *as if* death had triumphed over him and *as if* he and all his interests had been routed and ruined. His enemies stood round about His cross and railed on Him, accusing and mocking Him, fully assured that they were done with the Nazarene. His rag-tag army of followers had fled and were no where to be found.

They had no idea that He had *given* Himself to them, *given* his back to the smiters, *given* His face to them that pluck off the hair and turned not His face from their shaming and spitting. He, to His enemies, appeared to be weak and no threat at all (1 Cor. 1:25¹). The cross was an *ambush*. Christ our Joshua who hung there in agonies and blood, His vesture dipped in blood, at that very moment was about to perform the ultimate surprise attack. From the depths of His divine soul welled up the cry of victory that would split rocks in twain, cause the earth to tremble on her axis, and rend the veil of the temple from top to bottom. Our glorious Captain, warrior extraordinaire, has conquered even while appearing to have been defeated. By death, He has conquered death. By weakness, He has overcome the strong. It is finished, complete, accomplished—perfect! By His cross, he has spoiled principalities and powers and openly triumphed over them. He has given the powers of darkness a total shellacking; he broke the serpent's head by suffering him to bruise his heel. A glorious stratagem!

Our Lord is a man of war!

¹ 1 Cor. 1:25; Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

WORSHIP

Joshua 8:30-35

30, Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal,

31, As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

32, And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

33, And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.

34, And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

35, There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

This, the remainder of Chapter 8, records for us the proper actions of the people of God after the victory that the Lord had accomplished for them. We also see the nature and incentive for worshipping God. True worship is

from a heart of thanksgiving. It is done not to gain anything from God, but rather to praise God for what He *has* done. The preaching of the gospel, public worship and prayer is not accomplished for the purpose of getting God to do something or to get Him in the mood to do something. It is to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for Who He is and what He has done for us (Heb. 13:15¹). All the elements of worship have to do with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the altar (Heb. 13:10²). He is the ark, the priest and the sacrifice (Heb. 9:3-14³). He is the subject and object of worship. Worshipping God is not about fun or feelings; it is about giving God the honor that is due His name and based entirely upon accomplished salvation.

If you read various writers, scholars and ancient works, you will find that the *time* of this altar building, law writing, and

¹ **Heb. 13:15**; By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

² **Heb. 13:10**; We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

³ **Heb. 9:3-14**; And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

sacrifice is a point of much disagreement. Many Jewish writers put this incident immediately following the crossing of Jordan. Others put the time at seven years after the crossing. Josephus puts the time at five years. This is often the case with Bible exposition among scholars, and it has some historical and chronological merit, I suppose. The problem with it lies not in the pursuit of knowledge but the kind of knowledge that is pursued. One may have the exact answer to the precise time and still have no interest in the meaning. One may become an expert on one tree and miss the entire beauty of the forest. Let men bicker about times if they choose. The meaning of this passage is what is important. This is about worshipping God because of the victory of Christ over sin and Satan and the full and complete salvation of the elect. The value of history resides in the realm of sovereign providence—God working all things together for the good of His people and the glory of His great name.

The first thing to be noted about this worship is that it is done in obedience to the command of God (30-31, 33c). All things and all people are commanded to worship God, and for one reason or another they will. They will worship Him because of His wrath and will worship Him because of His mercy. This particular building of an altar and sacrificing are the fulfillment of what God told Moses to command the people to do during their thirty-day preparation for entrance into the Promised Land (Deut. 11:29; 27:2-8¹). Though true worship is voluntary and

¹ **Deut. 11:29;** And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

27:2-8; And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister: And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister. And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any

gladly done by those who have been redeemed, it is nonetheless obedience to God and is indeed a higher obedience than the law entails, for it flows from *love* for Christ and not *bondage* of the law. The Lord tells his people not to “forsake the assembling of themselves together” (Heb. 10:25). Worship is loving obedience from a thankful heart.

The first thing to be done is to build an altar. The specifics of this altar represent Christ and the fact that the work of salvation, and therefore the praise, belongs only to Him. It is to be “... an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron” (v. 31). The altar was to be made of unhewn stone upon which no tool was used—unaltered by human means.

These unhewn stones represent the humanity of Christ who was truly human and subject to all the trials that attend humanity. They also teach that His sacrifice accomplished salvation without any help or assistance of man. Christ is our altar and sacrifice, and He saved us without our input and in a manner that absolutely excluded and prohibited the works of men (Ex. 20:24-26¹).

The altar is a place for sacrifice, and the Lord is particular in the offerings that were to be made (v. 31). Again, we are reminded of a divine omission in reference to the sacrifices offered on the altar. The offerings that were to be offered on this altar were burnt offerings and peace offerings. Why? To understand, we must consider *where* these people are when the laws are plainly written, and the altar erected. They are in full possession of the land. They are where the milk and honey flow. They are in possession of gardens that they did not plant and

iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God: And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

¹ Ex. 20:24-26; An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

houses that they did not build (Deut. 6:10-12¹). They are fully and completely saved; they have need of nothing (Col. 2:9-10²). The issue of sin has been settled, and they are of all men most happy.

The sin offering has to do with confession of sin, but since that has been settled, they offer the sacrifices that speak to sins being put away by the blood of Christ and the peace established by that work (Col. 1:20-22³). The burnt offering declared that they were accepted by God conditioned only on the righteous blood offering and death of Christ. The peace offering was the declaration of thanksgiving for what Christ had done. The commandment of the law was before them, but rather than condemning them, they could rejoice that the law was satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ. It is interesting to note, that at the giving of the Ten Commandments the same sacrifices are referred to in reference to the altar (Ex. 20:24⁴). The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving can only be offered where sin before God is no longer an issue (Heb. 10:17-18⁵). This is true worship.

Verse 32 records that Joshua wrote the laws that God had given Moses on stones. He did not write them on the stones of the altar because no iron was to be raised upon them. He wrote

¹ **Deut. 6:10-12**; And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

² **Col. 2:9-10**; For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

³ **Col. 1:20-22**; Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

⁴ **Ex. 20:24**; An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

⁵ **Heb. 10:17-18**; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

the laws on pillars of stones that were plastered over (Deut. 27:2-4¹). He did not write the entire Law of Moses. What he did write probably consisted of the Ten Commandments and the curses to be pronounced on Mount Ebal found in Deuteronomy 27:13-26. If you remember, Mt Gerizim was to be the place of the pronouncement of blessing, but no blessing was pronounced in Deuteronomy 27, only cursing. The people were to be divided into two groups of six tribes each. Six were to stand at the base of Ebal and six at the base of Gerizim.

Between the two groups was the ark of the Covenant. This represented Christ in the midst of His people and is especially significant in that He is there as the law is being penned. You may recall from the expositions in Deuteronomy, the names of the two mountains are significant. Ebal means “barren or bald.” Gerizim means “cut off. These, of course, point to the Christ and His sacrifice for sinners. One of the definitions of the word “Golgotha” is “skull or bald” (Mark. 15:22²). Not only was the law placed on Ebal but so was the altar. On that mountain, Mount Calvary, the barren mountain, the place of the skull, our Lord was cut off, forsaken by God when He was made sin for His people (Is. 53:8; Dan. 9:26³). On that mountain the burnt offering met with the Holy Law and satisfied it, fulfilling its holy requirement of blood and death for sin. On that mountain,

¹ **Deut. 27:2-4**; And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister: And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister.

² **Mark. 15:22**; And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

³ **Is. 53:8**; He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. **Dan. 9:26**; And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. Ebal and Gerizim picture the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ.

Now the record reveals that Joshua reads the blessing and the cursing in the law (v. 34). Note however that the latter part of verse 33 declares that from Gerizim and Ebal they “should bless the people of Israel. Herein lies the beauty of the gospel. Because Christ went to Golgotha (Ebal) and was cut off (Gerizim), and in doing so fulfilled the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13¹), now Christ is in the midst of the people, and as they see the law and hear it read, they also see the altar and the sacrifice thereon. Even the law is now a blessing to the redeemed. They look on it as Holy, just, good, fulfilled both *by* Christ and *in* them. The law demands that they are now pronounced not guilty by reason of justifying blood. The law flows down from Ebal and Gerizim as a blessing to the people, and as Joshua reads the law, both cursing and blessing, the people see that both are met in Jesus Christ; He who resides in their midst, their mercy-seat, their propitiation.

What are a blessed people to do? Offer up peace offerings.

“The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the *sacrifice of praise* into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD” (Jer. 33:11).”

“By him therefore let us offer the *sacrifice of praise* to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving *thanks* to his name” (Heb. 13:15).

¹ **Gal. 3:13**; Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

SEEKING MERCY

Joshua 9

1, And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof;

2, That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.

3, And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

4, They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;

5, And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy.

6, And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

7, And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?

8, And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?

9, And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt,

10, And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth.

11, Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.

12, This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:

13, And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey.

14, And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.

15, And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

16, And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

17, And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim.

18, And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

19, But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.

20, This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.

21, And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.

22, And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us?

23, Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

24, And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

25, And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

26, And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.

27, And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

This historical record of Gibeon's approach to Joshua, and Joshua's dealing with him, is one of those places in Scripture that you can put your finger on just about any verse or word and find sufficient material to declare the gospel of grace. This is the story of two responses to Joshua and his people coming to town and hearing the news of Joshua's God. It is a picture of the two responses that all men have upon hearing of the true and living heavenly Joshua and the account of his dealings with men. Rolf Barnard once said that the gospel is a confrontation, and when men meet Christ in the way, they will bow, or they will fight.

False religion has so diminished the gospel, and the Christ of the gospel, that it is little more to men than an offer from a desperate milquetoast deity to be judged worthy of acceptance or rejection by the power and will of *men*. But when the true gospel is preached; when men hear of *the true and living God*; when they hear that He is God and will *do as He pleases*, when He pleases and with whom He pleases; when men hear that He sent

His Son into this world to save the people *whom he has chosen* and that all of them will be saved; when men hear that Christ, *by Himself*, accomplished salvation for His elect and there is no possibility that He will fail, men must and will react to it in one of two ways. They will gather their weapons and make alliances with their enemies to fight, or they will come as paupers to the coming King and beg for their lives at mercy's door (Is. 55:11; 2 Cor. 2:14-17 [Illustration. Acts 2:36-37]¹). This is, and always will be, the reaction of men and women to the truth. Since the issue is one thing, singular in object (Christ) and subject (bowing), men will either be in or out.

The first two verses of the chapter are a picture of the *natural* response to the knowledge of the sovereign Christ. Men feel that if they get in league with numbers of others, even their own enemies, they will have enough power to defeat Him. In these words, we are reminded of another alliance that took place many years later. "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves" (Luke 23:12). There is an old saying, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Religion has its social, moral and political scraps that keep them busy and give them a reason for existence. They are often found marching against abortion, homosexuality or some other social evil. Usually on such occasions, religion (in the name of Christ) is on one side of the

¹ **Is. 55:11**; So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. **2 Cor. 2:14-17**; Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. **Acts 2:36-37**; Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

street and the reproductive or gay rights folks are on the other, carrying signs and hurling barbs full of venom and vitriol.

The strategy is to give the folks a common cause and bring them to gather in one accord. Tell the religious folk and those on the other side of the street who Christ really is, and they will join hands to put you out of business. The natural reaction to hearing *false religion's gospel* is moral and righteous indignation against perceived sinners. The *natural* reaction to hearing the *true gospel* is moral and righteous indignation against Christ and His church. The *spiritual* reaction to *false religion's gospel* is indignation based on jealousy for God's glory. The *spiritual* reaction to *God's gospel* is indignation against self which eventuates in begging for mercy at the hand of Him to whom it belongs and who, alone, exercises the prerogative concerning who will be a recipient of it. Those kings in the first two verses of this chapter heard of Joshua, and they heard of the horrible end of those whose misfortune it is to meet him on the field of battle. Their response was to gather their forces, thinking that with sufficient numbers they could defeat the undefeatable. Man's notion of his power and will are mere pipe dreams and exercises in futility when facing the sovereign. They make the Sovereign laugh (Ps. 2:1-4).¹

But there is a second response to the heavenly Joshua's presence and power. On the other side of the coin, we see Gibeon and his wonderful approach to Joshua. Before we look at it, we need to remember that this is an Old Testament type of a New Testament principle.

When our Lord worked miracles, in all cases, with the exception of opening deaf ears and raising the dead, the persons in need came to Christ. His giving hearing to the deaf and raising of the dead pictured how faith comes by hearing the

¹ **Ps. 2:1-4;** Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

gospel. The giving of faith necessitates a personal encounter with the Spirit of God in the new birth through the preaching of the gospel (“he that hath ears to hear”). Life from the dead requires the act of sovereign power. Both speak to natural inability and God's absolute ability. Those who come to Christ for help picture the awakened sinner made aware of His need, and without exception, coming out of desperation because they heard of Christ and His power. In all cases they sought the Lord for their life, however their seeking was for healing of their natural life, and they received it. Being that they eventually traveled the route of all flesh, they died, their physical healing was a picture of some aspect of spiritual salvation.

It is in this light that we need to consider what Gibeon did. He pictures an awakened sinner, in fear for his life, in desperate need and taking desperate measures.

Gibeon, men of his city, and men from the surrounding cities Chephirah, Beeroth and Kirjath-Jearim, had *heard* how Joshua and the people of God had sacked Ai and Jericho. Having heard, they hatched a plan by which they hoped they would be spared the wrath of Joshua and His God. They rightly feared meeting with the same end as every enemy that Joshua encountered (v. 3; Heb. 10:31¹).

The Word says that they did work “wilyly” (v. 4). That word means “with guile,” but the root of the word is “subtlety” and can mean “with prudence and wisdom.” They made as if they were ambassadors from a far country. They loaded their beasts of burden with old raggedy sacks of stuff, old torn and repaired wine sacks. They wore old worn-out shoes, mended with patches of differing colors and fabrics, and ragged, worn raiment on their backs. They put in their food-bags old, dry, moldy bread, and they came to Joshua as if they were weary travelers who had long been on a sojourn. When they arrived, they told Joshua that they had come from a far country and asked Joshua to make a league with them.

¹ **Heb. 10:31**; It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Though they did not know it, they were asking Joshua to do what God had *prohibited* (Deut. 7:1-2¹). We may be offended at them because they acted in a less than honest manner, but we must also recognize that men will do what they deem necessary to save their lives. Also, the manner in which they came demonstrates that they understand the concept of *mercy*. We have but to consider their poor and decrepit demeanor to understand that when they said, “make ye a league with us,” it was *not a demand* but a *plea* (Matt. 8:1-2²). They did not come bearing gifts to exchange for mercy, or weapons to join in the battle in order to merit mercy; they came with no garments, no provender and only a hope that Joshua would show *mercy*. If garments are symbolic of righteousness, the only righteousness they had was filthy rags. Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling (1 Ki. 20:31-32³). It is clear that these men of Gibeon understood that if a league was formed and peace was made, even though they did all they could to make it happen, peace would still be solely on Joshua's terms.

Are they not also a picture of the gentiles, of us, who, “in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ being aliens

¹ **Deut. 7:1-2**; When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

² **Matt. 8:1-2**; When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

³ **1 Ki. 20:31-32**; And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life. So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? he is my brother.

from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world”? (Eph. 2:11-12¹)

Joshua's reply to the beggars is, if you do live among us, “how” or on what basis shall we establish a league or covenant of peace with you (v. 7)? Now, their reply is very important. They are indeed wise and clever, so much so that other writers have called them serpents because of their subtlety. Though it was a serpent who deceived Eve, the believer is also admonished to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matt. 10:16²). In this scenario, these wily beggars certainly fit that description.

The manner of their answer sets forth, in absolute terms, that they have cast their lives and their future estate entirely upon the good will of *Joshua*. They did not say we will be your slaves, as if they would exchange servitude for salvation. They said, specifically to Joshua, we *are* your slaves (v. 8) and thus yours to do with as *you* will. We are your servants (slaves), and you are our Master. Do not the “dogs eat of crumbs which fall from the master's table” (Mat 15:27)?

When asked who they were, their reply was the same (v. 9). They did not say, we are “deciding” to follow you, or we will “let” you save us. Such a reply would have cost them their heads. They fell down at mercy's door and waited for the Master to speak.

The language of their answer was that of ascribing power and glory to the God of Israel (vv. 9-10). We have “come because of the name of the LORD (Jehovah-savior) your God ... we have heard of His fame,” and we come to you as slaves to their master (John 6:45³). Look at us, we have nothing to give, our bread is old and “moldy” (v. 12). We have heard of a bread

¹ **Eph. 2:11-12**; Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

² **Matt. 10:16**; Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

which a man may eat and never hunger again (John 6:35¹). Our wine bottles are rent, and we have no wine (v. 13). Our joy has leaked out of us, but we have heard of the feast of fat things and wine on the lees, well refined. Our garments are become old, but we have heard of the garments of salvation (Isa. 61:10²), a robe of righteousness, without spot, blemish or any such thing, a garment that will never grow old (Eph. 5:27³). Our shoes are in tatters, but we have heard of men's feet being shod with the gospel of peace (Rom. 10:15⁴). We come from a far country, so far that we cannot go back and have no desire to. We come because we have heard of a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10⁵).

Then Joshua made peace with them (v. 15). He was blinded by their condition and need, and with a heart full of mercy, he made a covenant of peace with them (Matt. 15:28⁶). He made peace (Ezek. 16:8; Col. 1:20-22⁷).

³ **John 6:45**; It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

¹ **John 6:35**; Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

² **Isa. 61:10**; I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

³ **Eph. 5:27**; That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

⁴ **Rom. 10:15**; And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

⁵ **Heb. 11:10**; For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

⁶ **Matt. 15:28**; Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

⁷ **Ezek. 16:8**; Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the LORD God, and thou becomest mine. **Col. 1:20-22**; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he

In making peace, Joshua did what God had *prohibited* and yet showed mercy. *However*, God had made, along with His prohibition, *a way of peace* (Deut. 20:10-11¹). The sinner has nothing to offer; he is a liar, and in suing for mercy, he fears more for his soul than has interest in the glory of God. But even knowing that everything about him is worthy of death, he knows that God's glory is his only hope of mercy. The death sentence is already upon him (Deut. 7:1-2, John 3:18-19²). But every sinner in Scripture who begged mercy at the saviors feet found mercy.

What a glorious gospel we have to preach!

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:20-21).

reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

¹ **Deut. 20:10-11**; When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

² **Deut. 7:1-2**, When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: **John 3:18-19**; He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF GRACE

Joshua 9:15-27

15, And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

16, And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.

17, And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim.

18, And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

19, But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them.

20, This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.

21, And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.

22, And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us?

23, Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

24, And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and

to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

25, And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

26, And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.

27, And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

In verses 1-15 of this chapter, we saw a picture of the sinner approaching Christ in order to obtain mercy. Though Gibeon used wily means, and the measures that He took were greatly detailed by inspiration, it would be a mistake to dwell on the negative, if it can even be called that. The concept put forth in those verses is that a sinner in need is a desperate thing, and the message is plain; if your soul is in jeopardy, there is no avenue, no means, that is outside of the realm of endeavor to obtain mercy.

Another underlying principle is that, even though a sinner will ultimately give all the glory to God for salvation and gladly fall on sovereign mercy as his only hope, the primary driving force of the sinner's mind, when approaching Christ, is the saving of his own soul (v. 24c). Though Gibeon lied and acted wilily, who can fault him for doing whatever he felt necessary to be saved from the wrath to come? Somewhere inside Gibeon, even in his chicanery, was a seed of God-given faith wrought in him by the report of the conquering Joshua and his God (Rom. 10:13-17¹). Somewhere inside this man, he believed that Joshua

¹ **Rom. 10:13-17**; For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith,

would show mercy (Heb. 11:6¹). Oh, to find one in this day in such dire need and so inclined to try anything to obtain mercy, even to the extreme measure of coming as one destitute, having nothing to offer, risking life and limb, having nothing but great need and saying in his heart, even though he slay me, I will serve Him (Job 13:15²). Gibeon had no place in Israel. He was not of the covenant people. He did not deserve the children's bread, yet nothing would stop him from seeking mercy (Isa. 60:3³). For such, the gospel is indeed good news.

In verses 15-27, we are privileged to see a kind of chronology or method of grace. Before us are the mercies of the covenant God toward ruined, helpless and needy sinners. Though the chapter begins with the Gibeonites seeking mercy, the history of grace begins with verse 15. Indeed, sinners seek salvation by Christ, but they would never do so without God performing a work of prevenient grace on their hearts by His Spirit through the hearing of the report of the Heavenly Joshua. That report is a most wondrous thing to the sinner. It is not what must *be* done, but what *has been* done. Jesus Christ *has* made peace by the blood of His Cross (v. 15)! This is the good news of the gospel! This is the charming sound of the trumpet of Jubilee. Joshua made peace with them (Ezek. 16:1-8⁴).

Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

¹ **Heb. 11:6**; But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

² **Job 13:15**; Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

³ **Isa. 60:3**; And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

⁴ **Ezek. 16:1-8**; Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, And say, Thus saith the LORD God unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I

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Joshua made “league” with them to save their lives (v.15b). He was numbered with the transgressor, bore the sins of the transgressor, and by His skill justified many. And the princes of the congregation, the church, likewise covenanted with them in agreement with the Savior (15c). There was no watch-care program put into effect, no council of clergy to make sure that their doctrine was correct. They were gladly received based merely upon the fact that *Joshua* had made peace with them.

After three days, symbolizing the burial and resurrection of Christ and our justification by it, the truth about us came out (v. 16). Though we are justified, yet we are sinners in ourselves. In our flesh dwells no good thing (Rom 7:18¹).

Choice of words is always important. What charge might have been laid against Gibeon and those with them. The Word does not say that after three days their lies were discovered, or that their wily trick on Joshua had been disclosed, or that they were proven to be wicked men. Instead, we have a most generous and meaningful description of these ones with whom Joshua made peace. They were discovered to be *neighbors* living among them. They were *not* discovered as *enemies*. Even a staunch legalist cannot find a hint of vengeance or retribution in this description. Is not the law fulfilled in loving your neighbor as yourself? Can the word “neighbor” ever rightly carry anything other than a pleasant thought? They were *not* discovered to be despised infidels, but rather they are described in a most benign unthreatening manner. They were *neighbors*. All present knew of what they had done, but what they had done does not play into

passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the LORD God, and thou becamest mine.

¹ **Rom 7:18**; For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

who they are *now*. They are now a people with whom a covenant has been made, to whom peace has been spoken and whose lives are spared by covenant oath (Heb. 6:17-20¹). But they had done wrong? Indeed! But let him that is without sin cast the first stone. Every believer is a sinner saved by *grace alone*.

This does not mean there will be no religious opposition to the saving of the worst sinner, especially among those who feel that their religious standing and service afford them some sort of recognition (vv. 17-18). Those who hold that salvation is by heritage or according to personal merit are unable to rejoice in the free gift of grace. These murmurers are much like the son in Luke chapter 15. The son who stayed home was *angry* when the prodigal son was received and accorded with so much rejoicing and favor (Luke 15:26-28²).

Verses 17-18 also picture the Jewish response of anger to the saving of the Gentiles, and it is *all* according to the plan and purpose of God (Rom. 11:11; Isa. 49:6; Eph. 3:6³). The opposition of any group, no matter their motive, changes nothing. The security of those who have been made heirs according to the promise is absolute. None will suffer death; none will be lost, and all will be saved alive because of the sworn

¹ **Heb. 6:17-20**; Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

² **Luke 15:26-28**; And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry,

³ **Rom. 11:11**; I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. **Isa. 49:6**; And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. **Eph. 3:6**; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

oath of God (vv. 19-20; Isa. 45:22-25; Jer. 50:20; John 6:37-40; 2 Peter 3:9¹).

In verse 21, we see the princes of Israel living up to their oath but still seeking to punish Gibeon and his followers for their manner of approach. “Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water [servants] unto all the congregation.” Note the specificity of these words. They will be servants of the congregation, according to the words of the princes. When I was a boy, I used to read *Uncle Remus*. I know that it is now politically incorrect to do so, but at the risk of offending any who are politically sensitive, when I read this passage, I thought of B'rer Rabbit being cast into the briar patch. The one who cast him there thought to do him harm, but the briar patch was the home and safe haven of the rabbit. To curse Gibeon with *servitude* was, in reality, nothing more than treating him according to what *he claimed himself to be* (v. 8-9). When confronted with what they had done, they immediately confessed and willingly took the place that was afforded them (vv. 22, 24-25). *Joshua* cursed them to servitude (v. 23a). A curse is a *blessing* if it makes you a servant of the *Lord* (Deut.

¹ **Isa. 45:22-25**; Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. **Jer. 50:20**; In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve. **John 6:37-40**; All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. **2 Peter 3:9**; The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

23:5¹). The overriding providence in the care and protection of His people is a theme taught throughout the Word of God (Gen. 20:3-7; 50:19-20²). Was this not also the fulfillment of prophecy (Gen. 9:25-26³)?

There is a subtle but profound distinction between the curse pronounced by the princes and the curse pronounced by Joshua. The princes declared that Gibeon and those with him would be servants of the congregation. Look at the words of Joshua in verse 23; You will be “hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.” In verse 27, “Joshua made them ... hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation [the house of his God] and the *altar* of the LORD [Jehovah], even to this day [forever].” Who attends the altar of the Lord? Priests and Levites attend the altar of the LORD. “Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests unto our God” (Rev. 1:5-6; see also Isa. 66:18-21; 1 Peter 2:5, 9⁴).

¹ **Deut. 23:5**; Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee.

² **Gen. 20:3-7**; But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine. **50:19-20**; And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

³ **Gen. 9:25-26**; And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

⁴ **Rev. 1:5-6**; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. **Isa. 66:18-21**; For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that

To the world, servitude is a disgrace, but to the saved sinner, servitude to the congregation in the house of God and at the altar of the Lord is not a disgrace. It is pure grace and far above what he could ever deserve, think, imagine or ask.

Finally, hewers of wood and drawers of water were jobs reserved for the lowliest of the people (Deut. 29:11; Ps 84:10 [“doorkeeper” to sit at the threshold]; Acts 3:2; Phil. 2:5-7¹). If you are condemned to death, and all that awaits you is sure destruction and never-ending torment in the bowels of hell, servitude in God's house at His altar is an incomparable promotion. Like Mephibosheth of old, we are lame, dead dogs, ruined in the fall, yet we sit at the King's table feasting on royal dainties; servants all, subjects all, and full of joy unspeakable to be so.

I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD. **1 Peter 2:5**, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. **9**; But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

¹ **Deut. 29:11**; Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water: **Ps 84:10**; For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. **Acts 3:2**; And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; **Phil. 2:5-7**; Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

MIRACLES

Joshua 10:1-14

1, Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them;

2, That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty.

3, Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

4, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.

5, Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it.

6, And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

7, So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

8, And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

9, Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night.

10, And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

11, And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

12, Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

13, And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

14, And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

15, And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

This the 14th chapter records the end of the campaign to destroy the cities in the southern part of the promised land (v. 3). All the armies of these cities, along with their kings, their captains and their noble men, were utterly routed by Joshua because the Lord fought for Israel (v. 14c, Josh. 10:42¹).

There are two notable miracles that aided the Israelites in their battles. The first is the hailing down of great stones from

¹ **Josh. 10:42**; And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

heaven that destroyed more enemies than the swords and lances of the Israelites (v. 11). The second is the record of the Lord causing the Sun and Moon to stand still, each holding its position on the edge of the horizon, to give Joshua ample light to finish the battle (v. 12).

The question might be asked as to why the kings of these doomed cities did not sue for peace, as did the Gibeonites, because they knew how that the Lord of Israel had destroyed Ai and Jericho. The answer is twofold.

First, there is a notion among men that numbers and alliances equate to power and assure victory. The Bible, as well as human history, records that such thinking is false. In one great battle in the history of Sparta, 300 Spartans not only held back an army of tens of thousands of Persians but delivered against them such a fierce battle that the Persians retreated, licking their wounds having suffered the loss of thousands. Jericho fell without a sword being drawn. Human alliances, even religious ones, are no match for God's "little flock" because the church has the power of God, the gospel, the double-edged sword of God's Word, and none are able to withstand the Word by which the universe is upheld. Even the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

The second reason is that God has providentially arranged history for the salvation of His elect, and the rest of humanity He will harden against His people and against the truth (Josh. 11:20; 1 Sam. 2:25; John 12:40¹).

I have entitled this lesson "Miracles" because that is how these two wondrous things must be viewed. It is important to

¹ **Josh. 11:20;** For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses. **1 Sam. 2:25;** If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them. **John 12:40;** He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

note that all miracles are not about the miracles themselves. They are about the Lord who accomplished the magnificent feats and metaphorical lessons concerning Christ, His gospel, and those who are recipients of the effects of the gospel by grace. This is not to say these miracles were not actual events. They were! But they are not recorded so that scientists and mockers may use them for fodder, though I am sure that is part of God's wisdom—that by human wisdom men cannot know Him. The miracles are doctrine put forth in metaphor and allegory. The fact is that the Lord does things that cannot be explained by humanity's ciphering intellect. However, the just do not live by proof. “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17¹).

Before we look at these two miracles, I want first to consider this king of Jerusalem. The first thing to note is the underlying *principle of faith*. This king is called the “king of *Jerusalem*,” though the city was not given the name Jerusalem until it was taken. Yet it is so called in anticipation of an assured victory, or better, anticipation of the result of assured victory. Once the battle is over, victory won, and the enemy subdued and destroyed, all that remains is peace. One rendering of the name Jerusalem is “they shall have peace.” Our heavenly Joshua, having destroyed sin in the flesh and having bruised the serpents head, speaks peace to His children, and they are inhabitants of “Jerusalem which is above” (Gal. 4:26). The name of this king, Adonizedek, is also significant. It is composed of two words, “Adoni” and “Zedek.” Adoni means “Lord” and Zedek means “righteousness.” His name means “the Lord of righteousness.”

Since Adonizedek was utterly defeated and slain by Joshua because the true LORD fought for Israel, we can be assured that this was a title that he took for himself, being one of a number of counterfeits that are found in Scripture and history. What we learn from this is that if a person is to rise up against God, he must assume in his mind that he is as God or greater than God—He must *self-deify*—become the *captain* of his own destiny. In

¹ **Rom. 1:17**; For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

every scenario where men rebel against deity they do so by taking to themselves the attributes of deity. There is no small religious significance here. Everyone knows that to stand before God requires righteousness; there is no acceptance before God without it. The righteousness by which men are accepted before God is imputed righteousness, which is nothing less than God making Christ to be righteousness to the elect (Jer. 23:5-6, 33:16; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21¹).

To fight against God is to say that you produced that righteousness on your own, by your own merit, and the same as saying that your name is Adoni Zedek, the Lord of righteousness. This is the very heart of all warring against God. It is an assault of the *only* righteousness that God will and has accepted. Jesus Christ is the *true* Lord of Righteousness, Jehovah Tsidkenu. If you dare to join in battle with the Lord over whose righteousness He accepts, prepare for your righteousness to go down to utter defeat and your assumed name to perish in infamy. Adoni Zedek was proved neither lord nor righteousness.

The second thing that stands out about this “king of Jerusalem” is the *target of his hatred*. Note that he does not say that he is going to go against Joshua, but rather designs against *Gibeon* (v. 4). The reason he gives for desiring the destruction of Gibeon is that they have made peace with Joshua. This is a lesson that is well learned by those who, through the cross of the heavenly Joshua, are at peace with God. Their calm assurance and satisfaction with Christ and His work are an outrage to those who are laboring to establish their own righteousness (Is.

¹ **Jer. 23:5-6**, Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. **33:16**; In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. **1 Cor. 1:30**; But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: **2 Cor. 5:21**; For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

32: 17¹). Our Lord said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

Now, let us consider the miracles of God during this battle.

The battle that is covered by this entire chapter is of great historical significance. The tactics employed by Joshua are studied in war colleges unto this day. He employed the element of *covert surprise*. The five kings were encamped west of Gibeon in a valley. Joshua, under the cover of darkness, marched his men between twelve and twenty miles that night and camped on the hills east of the enemy encampment. As soon as the sun rose, Joshua and the army of Israel, with the sun at their back shining full in the face of the enemy, attacked swiftly and effectually. The enemy, blinded by the sun and assaulted by the silhouettes of the engaging hordes, was confounded and ran for their lives. Sun Tzu, in his famous book *The Art of War*, said to always, when possible, fight with the sun at your back. The use of the sun in battle is an integral part of the tactics of war as it was most certainly on this day, a day that was like no other (v. 14).

As Joshua whipped the enemy kings at Gibeon because God always keeps His promise (Josh. 9:19-20²), the kings fled toward Bethhoron. As they were going down to Bethhoron, the Lord rained down giant boulders from heaven upon them. In the King James Version, they are called both stones and hail. I think that hail should be considered as the manner in which the stones arrived. God hailed down great stones. The Jews have a saying that when you go to the valley of Bethhoron and see the great stones, you are bound to bless God.

What means these stones from heaven? They speak of our Rock, the stone that the builders refused that is become the head of the corner. They also speak of the contrasting results of

¹ **Is. 32: 17**; And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

² **Josh. 9:19-20**; But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.

encountering Christ as related to what happened to Gibeon and what happened to Adonizedek and the opposing armies (Matthew 21:44¹).

The next miracle is that of the Sun and moon standing still. This is the most notable miracle and the fodder of many scientific claims that the Bible is not true. The Bible is not a book of science and the only explanation and understanding of this miracle is that it is spiritual.² This is not to say that it did not happen; it did, just as it is stated. We have all seen like phenomena, when the Sun rises on the east horizon while the moon is still visible on the western horizon. It is interesting to note that in the year 2554 BC during the reign of Yao, the seventh Emperor of China, Chinese history records a time when the sun did not set for a number of days, and that year coincides with the approximate time that Joshua battled for Gibeon.

What shall we make of this miracle? I think it is important to note that the words used for the sun and the moon do not refer to the *physical* sun and moon but rather to the *light* given off by each. Symbolically, we know the sun and moon are Christ and his church. The sun is that true light (Christ), light being intrinsic to it, and the moonlight (the church) is reflected light from the sun, its luminescence derived from the sun, having no light of its own.

God and His Son both are referred to as the Sun in the inspired canon (Mal. 4:2; Ps. 84:11; Isa. 60:19-20³). The

¹ **Matthew 21:44**; And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

² In the late 1960's, someone circulated a story that NASA had discovered there was a missing day in the solar system. Using this passage in Joshua, they accounted for about twenty-one of the missing hours and the account in Isaiah 38:8 to account for the other three hours. This story is a complete fable and has absolutely no basis in fact.

³ **Mal. 4:2**; But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. **Ps. 84:11**; For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. **Isa. 60:19-20**; The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light,

manipulation of natural forces is not foreign to the sovereign of the universe. When our Lord hung on the cross, God shut down the sun for three hours while he poured out His wrath on Christ, who was made sin for His elect. It is said that in that final day, the sun will be turned to blackness and the moon will be turned to blood. Natural laws were established by God and it is within His power to suspend them at his will, if it pleases Him to do so. Let the scientists harangue and carp till their tongues cleave to the roof of their mouths, they are but fuel for the fire.

This is not a scientific phenomenon; it is a spiritual miracle, and its lesson is full of grace and mercy for the elect. To understand what truly took place on this glorious day, we must ask ourselves what the underlying reason for this battle was. We know that it was part of the campaign to possess the Promised Land, but this particular battle and the miracles that accompanied it were of particular designation. *This* battle was fought because of a *covenant* and was engaged as an answer to a petition made by one to whom peace had been spoken and protection had been promised (v. 6-7 compare Luke 18:7-8; Rev. 6:10¹).

What would stop the Sun in its course? What would make the Sun stand still? The answer is in Mark 10:46-52:

“And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have

and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

¹ **Luke 18:7-8**; And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? **Rev. 6:10**; And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And *Jesus stood still*, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.”

Our text in Joshua is not about that created star of heaven which Joshua caused to stand still, but about Christ the Sun of Righteousness, who, as He was coming up out of *Jericho* on his way to *Jerusalem* to redeem his people, heard blind Bartimaeus crying for mercy. At the sound of his cry we are told, “Jesus stood still!” What a wondrous and amazing picture we have before us! Here, the omnipotent God is stopped in his tracks, held fast by the cry of a needy soul for his mercy.

The Lord Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, His face set as flint to accomplish the redemption of his people, to fulfill the will of God. Nothing could stop him. Nothing could cause him to pause. Nothing could deter him from his work—not Herod, not Satan, not the Pharisees, not his disciples, not even his own mother. He said to her, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” (Luke 2:49). But Bartimaeus, like Gibeon, was one for whom Christ had *covenanted* with God, and at the sound of his cry, the Sun of God, Jesus Christ, the true Adonizedek, comes to a screeching halt. This is a day like no other when the Sun stood still (v. 14). This is the day when Christ comes to his people in the inextinguishable light of the gospel reflected on the church of God, and the light will remain till the job is complete. Gibeon will be spared, and he will be spared by the Light of the world, even Jesus Christ.

This is the day that the sun stood still, and God's people, His elect, were delivered from the false lord of righteousness by the true Lord of Glory. This is why the sun stood still on that day in Canaan. It was for the salvation of Gibeon, the elect of God (Hab. 3:11-13¹).

¹ **Hab. 3:11-13**; The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck.

AN OVERVIEW

Joshua 10-12

Joshua 10:

1, Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them;

2, That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty.

3, Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

4, Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.

5, Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it.

6, And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

7, So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

8, And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

9, Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night.

10, And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

11, And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

12, Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

13, And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

14, And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

15, And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

16, But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.

17, And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah.

18, And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them:

19, And stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand.

20, And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities.

21, And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

22, Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave.

23, And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.

24, And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

25, And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

26, And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.

27, And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day.

28, And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho.

29, Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah:

30, And the LORD delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the

sword, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho.

31, And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it:

32, And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah.

33, Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining.

34, And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it:

35, And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

36, And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it:

37, And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that were therein.

38, And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and fought against it:

39, And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king.

40, So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded.

41, And Joshua smote them from Kadeshbarnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon.

42, And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

43, And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

Joshua 11:

1, And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

2, And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west,

3, And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh.

4, And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

5, And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

6, And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

7, So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them.

8, And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephothmaim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

9, And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

10, And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms.

11, And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire.

12, And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded.

13, But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn.

14, And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

15, 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.

16, So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

17, Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

18, Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19, There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle.

20, For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

21, And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from

all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

22, There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

23, So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

Joshua 12:

1, Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east:

2, Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon;

3, And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea on the east, the way to Bethjeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdothpisgah:

4, And the coast of Og king of Bashan, which was of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei,

5, And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

6, Them did Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it for a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

7, And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto

the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions;

8, In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites:

9, The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one;

10, The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one;

11, The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one;

12, The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one;

13, The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one;

14, The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one;

15, The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one;

16, The king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one;

17, The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one;

18, The king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one;

19, The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one;

20, The king of Shimronmeron, one; the king of Achshaph, one;

21, The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one;

22, The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one;

23, The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one;

24, The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.

Chapters 10 through 12 record Joshua's complete victories over all the kings of the southern and northern areas of the Promised Land. Chapter 12 recalls the victories of Moses over the kings encountered in the wilderness, along with the victories of Joshua on the Canaan side of the Jordan. I will not try to do an exposition of these chapters, but I hope to point out some basic truths concerning the salvation of God's elect by our great man of war, our heavenly Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ.

These three chapters teach us of the *absolute victory* of Christ over all His enemies, who are also the enemies of the church. These chapters not only teach the protection of those elect who are assaulted by the enemy, as in the case of the battle for the protection of Gibeon when the Sun was made to stand still until the battle was finished, but they also speak of that great day of the Lord when all who oppose Christ will suffer utter defeat, culminating in their becoming permanently damned denizens of the lake of fire. This is the theme of these three chapters, and it is an outstanding source of encouragement to believers who live and reside in a world gone mad and enraged against the God of heaven. The lesson is simple. Be of good courage, the Lord fights for you and will not be done till all of His people are delivered to the safety and serenity of the new heaven and the new earth.

In Bro. Don Fortner's study of the Revelation, he related a story about a group of men who met at a local high school gym to play basketball on Saturday nights. The janitor of the school, while these men played ball, usually sat off in a corner reading his Bible, preparing for worship the next day. Normally, he read until the men were finished with their game, and then he would close up and go home. One night a young man asked the janitor what he was reading. The old fellow replied, "the book of Revelation." The young man, with kind of a snicker, asked, "Do you understand it?" The old man said, "I sure do, it says that Jesus is gonna' win!" This is what these chapters in Joshua teach us. With every victory, with the summary annihilation of every foe, the book of Joshua teaches that "Jesus is gonna' win."

In later chapters 13-20, we have the record of the division of property and things that attend human beings when dealing with earthly matters. Problems arise and some enemies are not totally conquered. Though Israel loses no battle, they do not win some, and though the undefeated enemies are indentured as slaves, they are allowed to live among the people of God. The end result is trouble. The later chapters 13-20 speak to the church in the world, and she is often plagued by association with

the world. However, chapters 10-12 considered in this lesson, speak of the *sure* victory of Christ.

Throughout the Word of God, this principle is repeated without failure. Part and parcel of the salvation of the elect is the destruction of the enemies of the elect. There is no true salvation unless all who oppose God and His church are utterly routed and finally put out of business altogether. Our Lord, having accomplished the work of salvation and bruising the serpents head, is now about the business of making all his enemies his footstool (1 Cor. 15:25-27; Heb. 10:12-13¹). He is doing this in time with His church and His gospel (Matt. 16:18; Heb. 2:8; Rom. 16:20²). The cost of your salvation is the life and death of the substitute. Part of that salvation is the utter destruction of every enemy of Christ (10:22-27; Col. 2:15; Ps. 91:13; Ps. 149:8-9³).

The fact of sure victory is seen in the last phrase of 11:21 and relates to what men will say when all is said and done. For the enemies of the gospel to be mute and not raise a word against the people of God can only mean one or two things. Either the fear of God is such that they are not able to utter a sound, or the victory is so complete, the enemy so fully

¹ **1 Cor. 15:25-27**; For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. **Heb. 10:12-13**; But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

² **Matt. 16:18**; And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. **Heb. 2:8**; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. **Rom. 16:20**; And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

³ **Col. 2:15**; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. **Ps. 91:13**; Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. **Ps. 149:8-9**; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

eliminated, that there can be no question that these warriors are the people of God and any further opposition would be mindless futility.

One day the enemies of God will only raise their voice in praise to Him who dangles them over hell on a spider's web. Just before they are bound and cast into outer darkness, they will not pop off in anger and hatred but will cry out in defeat—"Jesus Christ is LORD!" The Chaldee paraphrase makes this phrase an expression of Israel's unalloyed joy for this victory—reading it, "There was no hurt nor loss to the children of Israel, for which any man should afflict his soul." When the army came to be reviewed after the battle, there was none slain, none wounded and none missing. So cheap, so easy, so glorious was this victory that not one Israelite had occasion to lament either the loss of a friend or the loss of a limb. The success of Christ in the salvation of the elect is that everyone for whom He died will be finally and gloriously saved. Not one will be lost (John 17:12, 23-24¹). (Compare 11:15; John 6:37-40; 19:30²).

Note that after the enemies were killed (in the case of the northern armies it involves the slaying of 300,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 cavalry), Joshua was instructed to hough (hock) the horses and burn the chariots (11:6, 9). When you hock a horse, you cut the hamstring tendons behind his knee, making him useless for running, pulling a chariot or carrying a rider. I'm sure

¹ **John 17:12**, While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. **23-24**; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

² **John 6:37-40**; All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. **19:30**; When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

this would anger the folks at PETA and may even seem unusually cruel to us, but two things here apply.

First, though so-called Christianity has been in this day reduced to a philosophy of tolerance and inclusion, the war in which the true church is engaged is all-out war. No quarter is allowed, no enemy is to remain alive. Secondly, nothing that belongs to the enemy is to be left in such a state that it would or could be used by the people of God.

The church of God does not make use of the gimmicks of human religion or the ways of the world. The inventions of men are doomed. The wisdom of the world is marked for destruction, and the Lord commands his people to disdain anything other than the means he has set in order for the salvation of the elect (Heb. 11:26¹). If the things that belong to the enemy are not dealt with for what they are, the frailty of flesh may look at them as things that might be used. They must be destroyed by the clear preaching of the gospel, that two-edged sword that decapitates the heads of the kings, hocks the horses and burns the chariots (Ex. 14:18, 28; 15:4 Is. 31:1; Ps. 20:7²). When all is done, when every enemy is finally defeated, then according to the Word, the land shall rest (11:23; Zech. 14:21³).

Finally, chapter 12 is a recounting of the victories of Joshua, and the Holy Spirit inspires the writer to account of the victories

¹ **Heb. 11:26**; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

² **Ex. 14:18**, And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. **28**; And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. **15:4**, Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. **Is. 31:1**; Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD! **Ps. 20:7**; Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

³ **Zech. 14:21**; Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

of Moses in the wilderness. The reason for this is plain. On occasion when we are faced with a *present* battle or trial, and when perhaps our resolve begins to waver, our Lord reminds us of *past* victories, past deliverances, and past blessings to boost us up and make of good courage. Though yesterday's victories will not do for today's battle, the remembrance of them will help gird us up for what is before us. Has the Lord ever forsaken you? Can you not recall countless times when He has rescued you from what seemed to be sure and imminent doom? Will He, who cannot lie, break His promise to never leave you or forsake you? Polycarp, the martyr, when asked to recant his profession of Christ to save his own life as the enemies of the cross were about to burn him at the stake said, "I have served the Lord, lo these many years, and He has never, for one moment, forsaken his servant; I will not forsake Him now in the hour of my glory" (Deut. 32:7; Ps. 42:5-6¹).

¹ **Deut. 32:7;** Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. **Ps. 42:5-6;** Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

THE LAST ENEMY

Joshua 11:21-23

21, And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

22, There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

23, So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

In these three verses we have the record of the *last* battle that Joshua fought as captain and deliverer of the people. Joshua was old and stricken in years (Josh. 13:1¹). Some put his age between 100 and 110 years. What is left for Joshua after this battle is to apportion the land according to the promise of God. That apportionment, and what attends it, takes up the remainder of the book of Joshua. We will see in the days to come that other battles will be fought but not *led* by Joshua. The conquering of the areas that remain unconquered will be done by those who have been allotted their particular land areas. Joshua's campaign will be finished after this last battle, and he will sit as the conqueror, dispensing the inheritance to the heirs

¹ Josh. 13:1; Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

according to the promise. Though skirmishes will ensue as the remainder of the land is possessed by the respective owners, the people of God are not fighting to gain anything but rather dealing with various enemies to fully realize and enjoy what was given them by God.

The last battle for the promised possession has been fought. *The war is over.* This pictures the work of Christ on Calvary utterly defeating every foe, securing the inheritance for the people of God, and the time that follows until Christ comes to make all things new. The church during this time in history will fight individual battles—“mopping up” details—but their battles are not to gain anything. They are complete because the battle for “man-soul” is finished. All things are theirs, so the battles they fight are for the glory of God, and they are engaged on the land that is already theirs by inheritance. The people of God are not interested in real estate. They do not weep because there are no more worlds to conquer. They fight as defenders of what they already possess. The land is theirs, a gift of grace bought and paid for by the blood of their conquering hero, the Lord Jesus Christ—the heavenly Joshua. The war is over (v. 23, last phrase).

In our text Joshua confronts and defeats the *last* enemy. The gospel allusion is obvious and the context of these three verses set forth the glories of our Lord is his confrontation and defeat of the last enemy.

Several things are here for us in this passage.

The first is the singularity of the language as it relates to *who* fought and won this battle. There is no doubt that the army of Israel was with Joshua when he engaged the enemy, but God inspired no name to be entered onto the ledger of the victory but that of Joshua. “*Joshua* came and cut off the Anakims” (11:21)—“*Joshua* destroyed them utterly” (11:12)—“*Joshua* took the whole land” (11:23).

The reason is simple. “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts

4:12). All glory for the salvation of the elect belongs to Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ. The people who were with Him are representative of those who were spiritually *in* Him as he lived, and died, and rose, and ascended. Our Lord's life and death were attended by all whom He came to redeem. All the elect were *in* Christ when He went to the cross, when He rose from the grave and when he ascended on high to take His rightful place at the right hand of the Majesty on High. The victory and the glory for it belongs to Him who, *by Himself*, put away our sin, who by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified (Rev. 5:9-13¹).

The second thing of great import in the text is the enemy that is engaged and destroyed in the last battle (v. 21). The *Anakims*, the descendants of Anak, played an important role in the history of the people of God. They were a people giant in stature and fierce in battle. The Anakims were the source of the fear of Israel in possessing the land and a deciding factor in their refusal of the words of Caleb and embracing the lies of the false men that had spied out the land. To the people of God, the Anakims represent "fear of death." Because of them, the people refused to possess the land that God had given them. Read Numbers 13:31-14:1:

"But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we they brought up an evil report of the land which they had

¹ **Rev. 5:9-13;** And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

“And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.”

In the *final* battle, Joshua destroyed the Anakims. The Anakims are the proverbial elephant in the parlor, the thing that all of the people constantly see looming before them. Their entire lifetimes are spent in fear of *death*. But “Joshua came and cut off the Anakims”—“Joshua destroyed them utterly”—“Joshua took the whole land.” This is the story of what the Lord Jesus Christ did for His people (1 Cor 15:25-26; Heb. 2:14-16; 2 Tim. 1:9-10¹). The land rested from war.

The response of the people to the report of the Anakims in Numbers is the revelation of the nature of unbelief. Unbelief is the mother of all sin. Unbelief was the reason why Adam partook of that which was prohibited by God, which plunged the whole world into the ruin of unbelief. The result of that was death (spiritual and physical). Unbelief is not the absence of belief; it is the refusal to believe God. Unbelievers believe in themselves. Unbelief does not believe the truth, yet it does believe the lie. Therefore, all unbelief is in reference to Christ

¹ **1 Cor 15:25-26**; For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. **Heb. 2:14-16**; Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. **2 Tim. 1:9-10**; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

and His accomplished work (John 16:8-11¹). The people refused to go in and possess the Promised Land because they did not believe that God had already *finished* the work of giving them the land. Men do not fly to Christ alone for salvation because they do not believe that He has finished the work. They believe there is work left to do, and they manifest their unbelief by believing in their own ability to accomplish it.

This manifestation of unbelief is seen in two ways, revealed in the reaction and action toward the report of the Anakims and the Amalekites.

First, in Numbers 13:31, the false teachers are not confessing their inability, though it would seem that way. They are confessing that the possession of the land actually relies on their *own* ability. They are much like the man who says that he will “get saved” after he “cleans up his act” and “straightens out his life.” This is false humility born of belief that he can make himself suitable to be accepted by God. It is also like the man who says that he has done too many awful sins to be forgiven. This again is nothing more than saying that if he was a better person, he would be suitable for salvation. Both of these excuses are belief in self and unbelief in the truth that salvation (the Promised Land) has already been secured by God. Unbelief is always rejection of the gospel (Num. 14:6-10²).

¹ **John 16:8-11**; And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged

² **Num. 14:6-10**; And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

Secondly, unbelief is manifest not in excuses but in a stupidly bold and egregious self deception that one can, by his own tenacious power, accomplish salvation by himself. Again, the basis of this is unbelief of the truth. God had killed the false teachers, left alive those who told the truth (Num. 14:37-38¹), and now has commanded the people, because of their unbelief, to turn back into the wilderness. They respond in unbelief as unbelief must and will always respond. God had told them that they will not possess the land, and unbelief now says, "I'll go possess the land" (Num. 14: 40-45²). Now the Lord has said that they cannot go up, and they say, "we are *here*, and we *are* going up to possess the land."

Note the reason they say they are going to possess it. They say they will possess it for the same reason God says they will not. God said, "You sinned therefore you cannot have the land." They say, "We have sinned, therefore we will possess the land." Note, they are not saying that sin gives them rights to the land, but saying that by going up and possessing the land, they will undo or overcome the effect of their sin. They will by obedience undo their disobedience. How many manifest their unbelief in going to the law for salvation rather than obeying the gospel?

How many presume to go up and possess the land when it only belongs to those who trust that God has possessed it for them? Unbelief, once again, is manifest in the belief that

¹ **Num. 14:37-38**; Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still.

² **Num. 14: 40-45**; And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you. But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

salvation, possession of the promise, is dependent on man and not on the accomplishment of Christ. Unbelief always results in death (Num. 14:45). But Joshua had destroyed the *last* enemy and given the people their inheritance, and the *primary* gift that is bestowed is *faith* to believe. Though they are plagued by unbelief, they are believers that seek no other salvation, no other inheritance than that which God, through Christ, has fully procured for them (Eph. 2:5-10¹).

The whole land is their inheritance. Is it theirs by the law? No, it is theirs by the *promise* given to Abraham in the covenant of promise (Gen. 12:1-7; compare Zech. 14:21²). In this last great battle, Joshua destroyed the Anakims, removed the fear of death and the source of it (unbelief) and divided the inheritance to those to whom God had promised it (Gal. 3:26-29³).

¹ **Eph. 2:5-10**; Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

² **Gen. 12:1-7**; Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. **Zech. 14:21**; Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

³ **Gal. 3:26-29**; For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor

“And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war” (Joshua 11:21-23).

female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

LEVI'S PORTION

Joshua 13:14, 33

14, Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them.

33, But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them.

This chapter is the record of Joshua, now advanced in years and no longer able to wield the sword, confirming the words of Moses in granting the inheritance on the wilderness side of Jordan to the two and one-half tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh. In an overall view of these facts two things are readily seen.

The first is that God always keeps His promises (2 Cor. 1:20¹). The possession of these lands pictures the inheritance of the believer. These lands were given as a promise to the heirs of Abraham setting forth the glories of the covenant of promise or covenant of grace. What the child of God receives is a gift, bought, paid for and conquered by our Lord—the man of war. The believer does nothing to possess, gain or keep this gift. It was freely ordained and freely given by the grace of God to those who, by the blood of Christ, were made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. What we learn from the granting of these properties is that what God has given

¹ 2 Cor. 1:20; For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

us is ours to possess and enjoy. Even the temporal gifts are by His hand.

The second thing is this. The warrior who led the battle for the possession of this land is now old and unable to engage in war any longer. This is the end of all men, weakness and frailty (Zech. 1:5¹). This teaches us of the glory of the substance as opposed to the shadow. Joshua was a type of the heavenly Joshua, Christ, who being the same yesterday, today and forever, whose eternal youth and vigor assure us that He who still fights our battles for us will never die. What Christ has possessed for us by His substitutionary sacrifice, He lives to keep and defend for us. The believer is kept by His power, a power that will never diminish, and He will never leave nor forsake His people. All that he has promised, He is able to perform, and though the earthly Joshua has passed from the scene, our heavenly Joshua ever lives to make intercession for us (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; Rev. 1:18²). Thus, our inheritance is as sure as God himself, because our inheritance is God Himself. (Rom. 8:16-17; 1 Cor. 3:21-23³).

In this chapter we also have the record of the slaying of Balaam (v. 22). This is the end of *all* false prophets. Balaam said some right things about God, as many false teachers do, but in the end, they proved false because for filthy lucre's sake, he showed the enemy of God's people how to mix the truth with

¹ **Zech. 1:5**; Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?

² **Rom. 8:34**; Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. **Heb. 7:25**; Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. **Rev. 1:18**; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

³ **Rom. 8:16-17**; The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. **1 Cor. 3:21-23**; Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

that which was false and thereby bring about destruction and dismay (Num. 31:16; 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14¹). Balaam's efforts to curse the people of God were providentially overridden because God alone can curse or bless (Deut. 23:4-5; Neh. 13:2²). Balaam is slain as it must be (Jer. 14:15-16³).

In this chapter, our Lord speaks twice concerning the inheritance of the tribe of Levi, and that is the glory of the child of God. The tribe of Levi was designated as the priesthood. His life was spent in service to the Temple of the Lord, and he was to live off the sacrifices and the offerings of the people (See: Num. 18. 20-32; Deut. 18:1-8).

This priesthood, which no longer exists, pictured the priesthood of all believers in Christ, with Christ as the Great High Priest. God has made his people, by the work of the Great High Priest, to be priests and kings unto Himself (Rev. 1:5-6;

¹ **Num. 31:16**; Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. **2 Peter 2:15**; Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; **Jude 1:11**; Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. **Rev. 2:14**; But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

² **Deut. 23:4-5**; Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee. **Neh. 13:2**; Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing.

³ **Jer. 14:15-16**; Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.

5:9-10¹). The believers life is about attending to the things of God in the house of God. Our Lord refers to believers as lively, living priests, a royal priesthood with a specific and wondrous task (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10²). These sacrifices are specifically set forth in the Word of God. According to Hebrews 13:15³, they are singular in nature. They are a sacrifice, encompassing all that a believer is and does. They are the sacrifice of praise, to be offered up to God continually.

This sacrifice is said to be the “fruit of our lips.” This assures us that this is not a work of the flesh but a fruit that is born by our connection to the vine—the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the spiritual product of union with Christ. It is *fruit*. It is not *labor*. This sacrifice is not a burden. It is not something which the believer *must* do but rather something that is as natural to the spiritual man as is his breath. The nature of the sacrifice is indicative of joy and happiness. It is not some notion of righteous resignation to the will of God (e.g., “Praise God anyway”), but the expression of heartfelt thanks to God for all things because it is for our good and His glory (1 Thess. 5:18⁴).

It is called a *sacrifice* because the nature of it requires the giving up of something. One cannot be thankful and praise God

¹ **Rev. 1:5-6**; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**5:9-10**; And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

² **1 Peter 2:5**; Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. **9-10**; But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

³ **Hebrews 13:15**; By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

⁴ **1 Thess. 5:18**; In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

and at the same time be thankful and praise self. Praise and thanksgiving to God declares that you are the *recipient* of the grace of God and that you cannot look to yourself for what you have been *given*. This praise and thanksgiving is made by Him, because of Him, toward Him, for Him, to Him and through Him. This sacrifice effectively removes you and me from the equation as anything other than a vessel of mercy, a dirt pot into which the blessings of God are poured, pressed down and running over.

Here also, the glory of the inheritance of Levi is declared in two wonderfully distinct ways.

First, this is our *heritage*, the inheritance that the Lord bequeathed to us in the covenant—the will of promise—ratified by the death of the testator and thereby possessed by all His elect. In verse 14, the inheritance is declared to be “the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire.” Those sacrifices were of a sweet smelling savor unto God, and each represents a specific aspect of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross (2 Cor. 2:14-15; Eph. 5:1-5¹).

Notice the upper-case designation of the title “LORD.” This is “Jehovah Savior” and proclaims that this inheritance is *eternal* because Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. This declares that our inheritance is *effectual* (Matt. 1:21; 2 Tim. 1:9²). This declares that there is nothing left

¹ **2 Cor. 2:14-15**; Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: **Eph. 5:1-5**; Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

² **Matt. 1:21**; And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. **2 Tim. 1:9**; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

undone in our receiving this inheritance (Heb. 10:12-17¹). This declares that our inheritance is the *finished* work of Christ (John 19:30²). This declares our union with Christ when he accomplished salvation—His *sacrifices* are our inheritance. As sacrifices made by fire and a sweet smelling savor to God, our inheritance is eternal and fully accepted by the Father (Eph. 1:6³). Our inheritance is propitiation, justification, sanctification, holiness, righteousness, forgiveness, peace, joy, comfort, understanding, light, life, contentment, conformity to Christ and eternal glory (Rom. 8:28-30, 33-34⁴); “The sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance.”

Note also another distinction. Verse 14 declares that he did *not* give Levi inheritance. This distinguishes an *inheritance* from a *gift*. If it is an inheritance, it is *not* a gift, it is something you are *born* to, a thing that is *rightfully* yours by virtue of your being a son and not a servant. You did not earn it; you were born to it in regeneration and adoption. This inheritance is rightfully yours because the LORD God is your father. You are heirs according to the promise, kings and priests in the royal household of faith, snatched from the dunghill, brought to live in the prince's

¹ **Heb. 10:12-17**; But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

² **John 19:30**; When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

³ **Eph. 1:6**; Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

⁴ **Rom. 8:28-30**, And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. **33-34**; Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

palace, robed in the royal garment of salvation, and made to know that you are a son of God. “The sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance.”

The second distinction made concerning the inheritance of the tribe of Levi is a kind of all-encompassing glorious declaration (v. 33). Now, even the inheritance of the “sacrifices made by fire” are swallowed up in this proclamation—“But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them.” Again, the inheritance was not given, He (God) was their inheritance. If He *was*, then He *always* was (Ecc. 3:14-15¹). If God was their inheritance, then all that He is and has done is engulfed in that wondrous truth. I cannot begin to grasp the import of this statement. The Hymn *I am His and He is mine* comes to mind, but in no way does it suffice to enunciate the sheer magnificence and volume of this blessedness.

The LORD God is the inheritance of His people! He who dwells in a light unto which no man can approach is my inheritance. He who is the creator, sustainer and consummator of all things is my inheritance. He who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the earth, the fullness thereof, all that dwells therein, before whom the sun moon and stars are not pure in His sight, He who is the sole proprietor of destiny, who does His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, who sent His son to be propitiation for our sins, who righteously saved and justified us—He who is *all* is my inheritance! If He was (and is) my inheritance, then I have never lacked for anything; I have need of nothing, never have had, and I have all things. I am a fortunate son (Lam. 3:24; Col. 2:9-10²).

¹ **Ecc. 3:14-15**; I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

² **Lam. 3:24**; The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. **Col. 2:9-10**; For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Finally, I have a sure and unshakable confidence that this is so. In both verses 14 and 33, the final word is His word, “as He said unto them.” Well, that settles it! If the LORD God has said it, it is *done*. It is sealed by eternal promise, unshakable, unchangeable and bound to come to pass (Isa. 46:9-10; Mal. 3:6; Titus 1:2¹; compare Isa. 14:24 with Jer. 29:11²).

“Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them. But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them” (Josh. 13:14, 33).

¹ **Isa. 46:9-10**; Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. **Mal. 3:6**; For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. **Titus 1:2**; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

² **Isa. 14:24**; The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand. **Jer. 29:11**; For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

FAITHFUL CALEB

Joshua 14:6-15

6, Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea.

7, Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

8, Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

9, And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

10, And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

11, As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

12, Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.

13, And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

14, Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

15, And the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba; which Arba was a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war.

Chapter 14 begins the dividing of the land on the Canaan side of Jordan. In the latter part of the chapter, beginning with verse 6, we see Caleb coming to Joshua, accompanied by the heads of the tribe of Judah, to petition him for the land which the Lord had specifically promised him. In these ten verses before us, there is a wealth of information concerning the man of faith. There were but two who were above the age of twenty when the Lord delivered Israel from Egypt who entered the Promised Land. It has been said that these two represent the entire makeup of the family of God. There was Joshua, a type and picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, and there was Caleb, whose name means “dog”—the faithful servant of the Lord.

This is the family of God—the Savior and the sinner, the Savior and the faithful dog, the Savior and the faithful servant of God. There is but one Head, One King and One Savior, and there is no hierarchy in His kennel, no big dogs and little dogs, no doctor dogs and no reverend dogs in this family. *All* are dogs, common curs with uncommon faith seeking crumbs from the Master's table; content to sit at the Master's feet, kiss His feet in adoration and worship, and trusting the Master to do exactly as He has promised.

Caleb stands as an example of faithfulness. When the ten spies who spied out Canaan caused the hearts of the children to melt, Caleb stood strong and valiant in declaring the faithfulness of God (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9¹). Caleb was like his predecessor

¹ **Num. 13:30**; And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. **14:6-9**; And Joshua

Abraham, who “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief: but was strong in faith, giving glory to God and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able to perform” (Rom. 4:21). Now, Caleb comes to Joshua to possess what he was promised (v. 6; Deut. 1:34-36¹). Here is a wonderful picture of the child of God seeking the Savior's face, looking to Him alone for the fulfillment of the promise.

Note also that he comes with other members of his family, the tribe of Judah from which our Lord sprung. The promise to the oldest member of the family is the same promise to the youngest. The promise is salvation by the person and work of Christ, the inheritance of the saints bought and paid for by the blood of the testator of the covenant. The promise was not only to Caleb but to his seed, so he brings his seed with him. They were not with him for moral support or to gang up on Joshua, they accompanied him because they too were the children of promise. What was Caleb promised? He was promised the land that he set his foot upon (Num. 13:21-25²).

the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

¹ **Deut. 1:34-36;** And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.

² **Num. 13:21-25;** So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath. And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

The land that he had been promised was the land of the giants, the land of Anak and the Anakims. Caleb's humility and the testimony he gives is based on the promise of God, and the declaration of *his* strength (v. 11) must be viewed in direct relationship to what he is about to possess. The words of Caleb could only be viewed as proud if not for the fact that they were entirely based on the promise of God. Assurance is wrong only if it is wrong to believe God. Assurance is presumption and utterly false if it does not rest wholly on the promise of God.

It was the LORD Jehovah who testified of the faithfulness of Caleb, and what a testimony it was! He said, "...my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num. 14:24). This other "spirit" was spoken of in contrast to the spirit of the ten spies that returned shaking in their boots. They went out to see if they had the wherewithal to, of themselves, possess the land, and they return in fear and failure. Caleb went out in the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of faith, and merely surveyed the land which he *knew* that the Lord had given him.

The ten spies viewed the land as belonging to the Canaanites. Caleb viewed the land as belonging to *him*. He did not look to himself or weigh if he had enough power to possess it. He looked to the One who had already secured the land for him, and then merely reported of the temporary and soon to be evicted squatters that were residing there. He was the *LORD'S* servant. He had another spirit in him, and the LORD said that Caleb had followed him fully. What a thing is this, that the Lord would lay such an accolade on one of his servants? This declaration is not unique to Caleb; it is the LORD God's estimation of all His children (Rev. 12:10-11; 14:4-6¹).

¹ **Rev. 12:10-11**; And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. **14:4-5**; These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which

In our text we see Caleb, this child of the Most High, possessed of a spirit that is not like the spirit of the world, coming to Joshua to realize the promise of God. His words are a lesson in faith and assurance. His first words to Joshua are spoken in reference to the promise, “Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said...concerning me” (v. 1). The Lord has promised that whatsoever we ask in the name of Jesus Christ will be given us. James said, “Ye have not, because ye ask not” (James 4:2). It is not presumptuous to approach the Lord on the basis of the covenant of promise. It is both reasonable and sure!

Such an approach is not claiming worthiness or making some lame demand based on *your* ability to perform. Faith believes that God will perform, has performed, and what He has said, He will do. Has not the Lord said, “All things are yours”? Go thou up and possess it in the name of Christ. Has the LORD not said that the very gates of hell shall not prevail against the church? Go thou up arrayed in the armor of God and realize the promise because it is God who has promised!

Notice the confidence of Caleb as he speaks. He, in fact, quotes the Lord's testimony concerning himself. In verse 8 he says, unlike the false spies, “I wholly followed the Lord my God.” This is the same thing that he spoke of in verse 7 when he said that the word he brought back to the people was as it was “in [my] *heart*.” Here we see the meat of the matter. To wholly follow the Lord is a *heart* matter, and we know that the heart of Caleb was the heart of faith. When he came back with the report, having seen the same things the fearful spies had seen, he simply quoted the Word of the Lord. In his heart, he knew that the Lord had given them the land, and he was not about to say otherwise. “The Lord is with us. Fear them not.” I know that men are fearful, and I know that the task sometimes seems insurmountable; the enemies of God are behind every tree, but they all are temporary, soon-to-be-evicted squatters in your

follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

world, in your life, in your death, in your future and in your past. You are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Go thou up and possess because God has promised (1 Cor. 3:22-23; Is. 55:11; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:23-24¹).

Caleb is recollecting the promise that was made to him forty-five years earlier. He is now eighty-five years old. His words in verse 10-11 are not words of boasting in himself. He is saying that forty-five years have passed, and I am as strong now as I was in what men call the prime of life. He is not so because he has been “working out.” He is so because God has *promised* that he would possess the land that he walked on, and that he would drive out the enemies—though that promise is not yet realized. For him to be faltering, and unable to do what the Lord said he would, would mean that God's promise was not true. That can never be the case! It is now forty-five years later, and “Behold, the LORD hath kept me alive,” vital and ready to make war both coming and going (v. 11). Caleb is not speaking of his own strength but of the strength of God's promise (v. 12).

This is notable because Caleb believed his *own* report. He believed the gospel that he had preached forty-five years before. This land is the land of giants, the Anakims (vv. 12, 15; Num. 13:33²). This 85-year-old man, resting in the promise of God, knows these giants will be his evening meal, and will not stand against him (Num. 14:9³). The very enemies that brought the

¹ **1 Cor. 3:22-23**; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. **Is. 55:11**; So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. **Rom. 1:16**; For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. **1 Cor. 1:23-24**; But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

² **Num. 13:33**; And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

³ **Num. 14:9**; Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the

Israelites to tears and left them to be carcasses in the wilderness are doomed by promise—and Caleb believes. This is remarkable in one sense, but in truth, it is common faith. It is remarkable only if faith is an anomaly in the believer. Caleb has patiently waited forty-five years for the fulfillment of the promise, but the faith that the Lord gave him is still the same as it was in his youth (Isa. 40:31¹). His faith has not faltered because God's promises are as unchangeable as God himself. He has magnified His Word even above His name.

Verses 13-14 are the fulfillment of the promise. How could it be otherwise? He inherits Hebron because God had put his name on the deed in the covenant of promise. Hebron has an important place in the history of God's people. Sarah was buried there (Gen. 23:2²). It became a city of refuge and the home of the priests (Joshua 20:7; 21:13³) and later became the royal city of King David (2 Sam. 5:3-5⁴). Hebron is the resting place of the spirits of just men made perfect—we rest in Christ. Hebron is a city of refuge—Christ is our refuge. Hebron is the habitation of priests—the priesthood of the church resides in Christ. Being a royal priesthood, we dwell in the city of the King—Zion, city of our God.

Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief.

LORD is with us: fear them not.

¹ Isa. 40:31; But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

² **Gen. 23:2**; And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

³ **Joshua 20:7**; And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. **21:13**; Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs.

⁴ **2 Sam. 5:3-5**; So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

A BRIDE FOR THE CONQUEROR

Joshua 15:13-17

13, And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.

14, And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

15, And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjathsepher.

16, And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

17, And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

The first twelve verses of chapter 15 establish the borders of the portion of the Promised Land given to the tribe of Judah as their inheritance. In verses 13-17, we have the record of Caleb conquering the sons of Anak and possessing Hebron as promised him by God. We also have the account of Caleb's promise of his daughter's hand in marriage to any man who would go up and battle for the city Debir. Othniel takes up the challenge and wins the hand of Achsah, Caleb's daughter.

In this lesson, we will consider verses 13-17 as they declare the gospel of God. Before we look at the compact between Caleb and Othniel, it is important to note that this portion of Scripture is an account that God is faithful to His promise, and that Caleb was a man whom God gave faith to trust His word. The sons of Anak (v. 14) were the same that were so feared by all of Israel except for Joshua and Caleb. These terrible giants

were the excuse of Israel's unbelief which eventuated in their being turned back into the wilderness for forty years. These men brought such fear to Israel that when Israel looked upon them, they felt themselves to be grasshoppers, mere bugs in their own sight.

The Sons of Anak were fierce and terrible, but Caleb knew that he would have them over for lunch, and they would be the main course. So, in matter-of-fact language, Caleb is said to "drive thence" the sons of Anak. This octogenarian knew that God had kept him strong for this very moment, and his faithful God would give these giants into his hand. Hebron (Kirjatharba) had *always* belonged to Caleb. Anak and his sons were but temporary inhabitants. They were there to build the cities, erect the houses, dig the wells and plant the gardens for Caleb and his family to later possess (Deut. 6:10-11¹). Unbeknownst to Anak and his sons, they were an expendable advance team of contractors and farmers that prepared the land for Caleb and his family to inhabit (Is. 43:3-7; Rom 8:28; John 17:2-3²).

Having possessed Hebron, Caleb now sets his sights on Debir. Debir was formerly known by two other names,

¹ **Deut. 6:10-11**; And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full.

² **Is. 43:3-7**; For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. **Rom 8:28**; And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. **John 17:2-3**; As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Kirjathsepher and Kirjathsannah. Those names mean “city of books” or “city of letters” and were probably the seat of records for Canaan. Many believe the city was ancient and had a great library as the Arabs were great record keepers, advanced in science and math, and were great enthusiasts for knowledge. I saw recently that in a dig in ancient Phoenicia (thousands of years before Christ) there was discovered a jar that had two metal rods coming out of it and sealed with wax. The archeologists were dumbfounded as to what it was until one clever fellow popped the lid, poured in vinegar, and found that the jar was an ancient battery producing 3-4 volts of electricity. Debir was an important city, a city that contained the collective mind of natural wisdom.

Caleb was the leader of his family, the *chief* of his tribe, and the offer of his daughter was no small thing. To have her for a wife was to immediately advance in rank and stature, and this was not lost on Othniel. He knew that he would make himself a name and receive honor as well as a bride. So, he sacked Debir and took his bride. Achsah was the daughter of Caleb born of his union with a concubine (1 Chron. 2:48-49¹). Some controversy has been raised about this marriage because Othniel, it seems, is called the brother of Caleb in verse 17. This would mean that Achsah would be marrying her uncle, and that was prohibited by God. But that is a misreading of the text. Othniel was the son of Kenaz. Kenaz was Caleb's brother and Othniel was therefore Caleb's nephew. That made Achsah his first cousin and thus the marriage union was not prohibited.

As we consider this, and that which follows, we need to once again remind ourselves that these Old Testament incidents are all, in one form or another, a picture of Christ and His work on behalf of the elect and for the honor of God.

What is before us?

1. We have a city to be conquered.

¹ **1 Chron. 2:48-49**; Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bare Sheber, and Tirhanah. She bare also Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah, and the father of Gibeon: and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah.

2. We have a conqueror.
3. We have bride given by her father.
4. We have a conqueror who volunteers to the task for the sake of having this bride.
5. We have a contingent which states that in order to have the bride the conqueror must be successful in his conquest.
6. We have success, and the bride and conqueror are wed.

In short, we have the gospel!

First, we have a *city to be conquered* and deposed of its king. This city contains the wealth of human wisdom and knowledge. The name of the city is important because in not only signifies worldly wisdom but one of the names “Kirjathsannah” contains the word “Sanna.” This was significant both to the Phoenicians and the Arabs because it means “law, doctrine, and manner of life.” To Islam it is the secondary law to the Koran. Islam is typical of works-for-righteousness religion and parroted by what most would call “legalist, freewill, fundamentalism” in this day. Religion looks at the Old Covenant as law, doctrine and manner of life and sees it as an adjunct to grace, but not about grace. It is the mind of the flesh and is the *city* that our Lord came to conquer. By natural wisdom, men cannot know God (1 Cor. 1:17-21¹). God destroyed the wisdom of this world and made Christ to be the wisdom of His people.

Second, we have a *conqueror*. His name is Othniel which means the “lion of God,” and he is of the tribe of Judah. We need not press our imagination into service. There is one who is

¹ **1 Cor. 1:17-21**; For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and He *has* prevailed (Gen. 49:9-10; Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5¹). His name is Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God. He voluntarily undertook to conquer, and conquer He did (John 10:15-18; Gal. 2:20²)! He besieged the city of man-soul, and being stronger than the king who temporarily reigned there, He bound the strong man and spoiled his house (Rev. 6:2³). From the cross he cried with a loud voice, "It is finished," and the earth shook, the rocks split in twain, and the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom.

Third, we have a *father betrothing his daughter* to him who is able to conquer the city.

Fourth, we have *the conqueror* taking on this battle for the possession of the bride. She is the daughter of Zion, the elect, those given to Christ before the world began (John 6:37-39; 17:2-3, 6, 9, 21-26; John 18:8-9⁴).

¹ **Gen. 49:9-10**; Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. **Heb. 7:14**; For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. **Rev. 5:5**; And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

² **John 10:15-18**; As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. **Gal. 2:20**; I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

³ **Rev. 6:2**; And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

⁴ **John 6:37-39**; All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Fifth, we have a *contingent*. If the city is not conquered, then the conqueror is not a conqueror, and he cannot possess his bride (Judg. 3:9¹). But Christ cannot fail. He has redeemed His bride, His church, everyone whom God has betrothed to Him.

Sixth, He comes forth as a *successful bridegroom* coming out of his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race (Matt. 1:21; Eph. 1:20-23; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rev. 21:9-11, 27²).

17:2-3, As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. **6**, I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. **9**, I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. **21-26**; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. **John 18:8-9**; Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

¹ **Judg. 3:9**; And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

² **Matt. 1:21**; And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. **Eph. 1:20-23**; Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. **2 Tim. 1:9**: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. **Rev. 21:9-11**, And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and

This is the story of God's sovereign grace. It is the story, the old old story, of the absolute success of the Lion of the tribe of Judah in conquering the law, the doctrine and the manner of the life of the world of His elect, making a name for himself and taking his bride to realms of glory.

Hail the conquering hero, our sovereign substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ!

shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 27; And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN

Joshua 15:17-19

17, And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

18, And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?

19, Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.

When we last examined verse 17, we saw Othniel as a type of the conquering Savior. He conquered the city, representing the collective wisdom of the world, to have the hand of the woman whom Caleb had promised. That single passage (v. 17) declared the successful work of the Lord in His mission of mercy and for whom that great work was accomplished, the bride—the elect (Judg. 3:9¹). Caleb (the father) gave Achsah (the bride) to Othniel (the conqueror) because He conquered all for her. We also saw that Othniel's name meant “the lion of God,” a name specific to Christ—“the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” The bride's name is Achsah and means a “trinket, anklet or a bangle” worn on the ankle, which makes a sound of bells. At first, I did not see the significance of her name, but further study into the original language revealed the root word of Achsah's name means to

¹ Judg. 3:9; And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

“sound out” or to “expound or disclose,” and may even refer to a bell on the hem of a garment.

Achsah is not only a picture of Christ’s bride, but she is also a metaphor for the gospel, that blessed ornament of Christ which causes the elect to hear of Him, the ornament or message that expounds and discloses the glory of His person. There is no small allusion to the bells on the hem of the robe of the high priest that sounded out the fact that atonement had been made. The conqueror has conquered! He has won the hand of His promised bride. She is his adornment, “the fullness of Him that filleth all,” and she noises out the gospel of the full and complete salvation accomplished by Christ the Great High Priest. He is known through the sound *she* makes (1 Cor 1:21; Rom. 10:13-15; SOS 5:9-15¹).

In verses 18-19, we have the record of Achsah seeking a blessing from Caleb and being granted her desire by Caleb. This pictures the bride of Christ seeking a blessing from the Father. This blessing is born not of selfishness of fleshly desire, but it is born of need, and that need is specific. She has been given the south land that has nothing in it that can aid him on his journey. It is a dry and arid place. It does not have in itself the capacity or wherewithal to fulfill the need of its inhabitants.

¹ **1 Cor 1:21**; For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Rom. 10:13-15; For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

SOS 5:9-15; What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

What a picture of the child of God in the world. The world is where he lives, but it is not his home. It is a dry and arid *desert*. Change and decay are all around. Sin and death are on every corner. The believer cannot live here. His needs are such that nothing here will meet them. His need can only be fulfilled by God. His need is for God to make this place inhabitable. Only the help of God can turn Jabbok into Penuel. The need is not to leave the world but to make the world a joyous place. Achsah asks for a “field.” The word means a “wide expanse,” but the word comes from an ancient base that means “gladness” or “joy.” What the believer needs is that which would make even the dry dead world a place of joy. In this dry place the believer needs springs of living water (v. 19; Ps. 46:4; 65:9; John 7:37-39¹).

Notice the manner in which she approached Caleb (v. 18). She “*moved*” Othniel, her husband, to ask of her father a field. She approached her father through a mediator. What a tender word this is. Though no power is able to move the Lord, He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He lives to intercede for His bride. There is but “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). The import of this principle is paramount, especially as we look at what Achsah did in light of the language of the New Testament. Our Lord has promised something to His children who approach Him with a need in this manner (John 14:13; 15:7, 16; Luke 11:19; 12:32²).

¹ **Ps. 46:4**; There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. **65:9**; Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. **John 7:37-39**; In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

² **John 14:13**; And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **15:7**, If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. **16**; Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth

The old hymn says, “He giveth and giveth and giveth again” (Rom. 8:32; Isa. 43:20, 45:11, 61:3¹).

The record is plain and true. He gave her what she asked (v. 19). He gave her “the upper and the nether springs.” We may take the nether, or lower springs, to mean that the Lord causes the earth to provide for His people (Hos. 2:18-23²). The upper springs are the covenant blessing from above, the sustaining power of His grace and mercy, the effectual power of the person, offices and relations of the Lord Jesus Christ, wrought for us by His Holy Spirit. God has ordered the universe to serve His people and secures their happy end from His sovereign throne (Rom. 8:28).

Finally, all of this is so because the children of God are *heirs* according to promise (v. 21; Col. 1:12³).

fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. **Luke 11:19**; And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. **12:32**; Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

¹ **Rom. 8:32**; He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? **Isa. 43:20**, This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. **45:11**, Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. **61:3**; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

² **Hos. 2:18-23**; And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

³ **Col. 1:12**; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

HOW IT IS

Joshua 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13

Joshua 15:63, As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

Joshua 16:10, And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

Joshua 17:12, Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

Joshua 17:13, Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

In these three passages, we see a pattern. We see the *supposed* inability of these three tribes to drive out the respective elements of the Canaanite tribes that inhabit their inheritance. I use the word “supposed” because the promise of God is *sure*. God had promised that He would fight for and enable them to overcome their enemies as they went into battle. We know that God does not change, and He always keeps his promise. We know also that this nation was under the Old Covenant, a conditional covenant in which the blessings or curses that ensued were conditioned upon the obedience or disobedience of the people (2 Chron. 7:14). Disobedience is but

a symptom of the greater problem, the mother of all problems, the sin of *unbelief*.

Had these believed God they would have driven out the enemy. Though some may attribute their action to sloth, the final two text references make it clear that it was not sloth but covetousness that engendered their disobedience, and covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5¹). Logic and common horse-sense reveal that if these tribes possessed enough power to exact taxes on these pagans, they were strong enough to drive them out. The fact is that having the enemy in their midst, though destructive to their spirit, was a boon for their financial coffers (Hos. 12:8²).

Unbelief paid off for them in the financial arena but brought the pagan element into every aspect of their life, and that ultimately created a mixture in worship, a mixture of truth and error. Our Lord made it clear that one cannot serve God and mammon else he will wind up loving one and hating the other (Matt. 6:24³). It is obvious in these passages who was loved and who was hated. Unbelief may profit you in this world, but it will be at the cost of your eternal soul (Matt. 16:26⁴).

We do not have to put our imagination into overdrive to see the correlation of what went on in these passages with what is going on in religion today and has been since the early days of this nation. Religion is *big* business. I will never forget hearing Rex Humbarb's wife describe Christianity back in the 70's. She said, "Religion is big business and the outfit that has the prettiest line of balloons will draw the biggest crowd and make

¹ Col. 3:5; Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

² Hos. 12:8; And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.

³ Matt. 6:24; No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

⁴ Matt. 16:26; For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

the most profit.” It is no surprise that almost every religious program or institution has some aspect of fund raising tied to its existence. The religion that refuses to drive out the enemy but rather embraces the Canaanite will fare well in the financial arena. Faith based ministries (so-called) are but collection agencies begging men and women to give in order to receive.

Almost every TV evangelist asks for “faith partners” to donate to their cause. They are beggars because their god is a beggar who is entirely reliant upon the wallets of men to keep him solvent. This strategy began in our nation about 175 years ago when men decided that a regenerated membership was not a thing to be pressed for in the preaching of the gospel. Playing on the natural bent of men to be recognized for their works, the church began a determined campaign to boost membership.

The motto for one large southern convention in 1954 was “A million more in '54 and everyone a tither.” The tithe was a tax or tribute legally required under the Old Covenant. Because it was a legal requirement, to meet it was to meet your obligation to God. Having met that obligation, you could then feel the pride of works and thus feel superior to other men (Luke 18:9-12). Membership drives are designed to fill the church with unregenerate men who give ten percent of their income to build the edifices of works that house freewill money laundering schemes. It is nothing more than refusing to drive out the enemy and instead opt to take tribute from them.

The only way the enemy is driven out is through the preaching of the gospel, the glorious gospel of free and sovereign grace that declares salvation fully accomplished by Jesus Christ through His substitutionary sacrifice. This renders the recipients of this gracious salvation nothing to glory in but Christ. If that truth can be diminished and man given a situation by which he may glory in himself, then the church would not need a regenerated membership, only a natural, physical one. This could be accomplished by making rebels believe that God loves them, that Christ died for them, and that salvation and grace were offers they could accept or reject according to their personal

whim. If they accepted them, they would put themselves in the place of God being able to either frustrate or fulfill His desires. *Freewill* is heady stuff for the unregenerate. It gives them power over God.

Having done this, the membership can then set up requirements, rules and regulations for fellowship, the *main* one being to fill the treasury with enough filthy lucre to keep the ship afloat. If the members refuse to obey, they are forced to walk the plank. They are promised blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience. The fear of censure and loss keeps the cash rolling in and the tribe financially well off and spiritually pagan (1 Tim. 6:3-9; James 5:1-5; Prov. 15:8; 21:4; 28:9¹). Though the world may view such rich churches as successes, the Lord will do no work there (Mark 6:5-6; Matt. 13:58²).

¹ **1 Tim. 6:3-9**; If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. **James 5:1-5**; Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. **Prov. 15:8**; The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. **21:4**; An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin. **28:9**; He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

² Mark 6:5-6; And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. **Matt. 13:58**; And he did not many mighty works there because

The enemy that is to be driven out is *unbelief*. Knowing that, we can look at our first text in Joshua 15:63 and see another, more personal application.

When I first read this, I was immediately struck with the fact that within me dwells the enemy that is *myself*. This enemy, though I would desire to, I cannot drive out, and it remains in me unto this day. That enemy is *my* unbelief. Whether you want to call it the “two natures,” “principles that reside in the believer,” “the old man and the new man,” “the old nature and the new nature,” “the flesh and the spirit” or any of many terms, the fact remains that I cannot drive it out.

I know that men like to fuss and fight about terms. I have good friends who altogether discount the principle of two natures in one man. I have in the past toyed with the idea myself, but no longer. This I know; what a person does flows from his nature. This I also know; my flesh is not getting better, and my spirit is already perfect. In my flesh is no good thing, and in my flesh I can never do a good thing. In my spirit there is no evil thing, and by my spirit I can do no evil. With my mind I serve the law of God, and with “the flesh [I serve] the law of sin” and death (Rom.7:25). I am convinced this conflict is beneficial for me, so that if anything good ever comes from me, I must attribute it to grace alone, and the evil that proceeds from me, I must take all the blame to myself.

This does not relieve me of the shame of my sin. I cry with Paul, “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death” (Rom. 7:24). I am a resident of Immanuel's land; I have been brought to the Promised Land. I possess the Land of Promise by the free and gracious generosity of God. I am unable to drive out the enemy. I pray the Lord will keep me from taking tribute from my enemy. I am a saint *and* a sinner. I'm a believer who cannot get rid of my unbelief. It is the dilemma of a perfect salvation residing in an imperfect man.

of their unbelief.

I am thankful, though this struggle will continue till the day I cast off this mortal coil and put on immortality, that God will not remember my sin because He has accepted the payment that my Savior has made for it (Heb. 10:12-17¹). I am thankful that the old man was crucified with Christ, and in the economy of God is dead, though his carcass seems alive and thriving in me (2 Cor. 1:9²). I am thankful for grace fully sufficient to meet every need. I am thankful that though I struggle with sin, it shall not have dominion over me because I am not under the law but under grace. I am thankful that it won't be this way forever (Zech. 14:20-21; Rom. 16:20³).

Until that day, however, this is simply how it is;

“As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day” (Josh. 15:63)

¹ **Heb. 10:12-17**; But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

² **2 Cor. 1:9**; But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.

³ **Zech. 14:20-21**; In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. **Rom. 16:20**; And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

Joshua 17:3-6

3, But Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

4, And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

5, And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side Jordan;

6, Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

In these chapters that record the dispersal of the property to the respective tribes, the Lord is revealed to establish the boundaries for the people. As sovereign of all that is, this is His absolute domain. There is no area of our existence in this world upon which God does not set our boundaries. How, when, and to whom we are born, our race, the time of grace, the number of breaths we are assigned, our days and months which we cannot pass, the number of hairs on our heads, the depth, intensity and duration of our trials, the way of escape, our works, our station, our promotion, our economic status, and every other aspect of our inheritance are with Him. Whether we are vessels of mercy and honor or vessels fitted to destruction, our existence

and purpose in this world are mapped by sovereignly established latitudes and longitudes (Job 14:5; Acts 17:26; Deut. 32:8¹).

In this text, we have the reiteration of such a boundary set by the Lord God. The daughters of Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, are brought to our attention. Theirs was a unique circumstance which actually brought about a new aspect of the Law. I think it would behoove us to visit the story of these six daughters in the book of Numbers.

Numbers 27:1-11,

1, Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

2, And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

3, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.

4, Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father.

5, And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

6, And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

7, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

¹ **Job 14:5**; Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. **Acts 17:26**; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. **Deut. 32:8**; When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

8, And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

9, And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren.

10, And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.

11, And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Numbers 36:1-12,

1, And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel:

2, And they said, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters.

3, And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance.

4, And when the jubile of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.

5, And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well.

6, This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them

marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.

7, So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

8, And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

9, Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

10, Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad:

11, For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons:

12, And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

Even before God finished the work of destroying all the men who were above the age of twenty when they were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, He established that the land belonging to their father's, whom He had destroyed, would pass to their sons so that all tribal lands would remain with the families (Num. 26:53-56¹). When He had finished ridding Israel of those who would not enter because of unbelief, there was not a man left among the original number save for Joshua and Caleb.

¹ **Num. 26:53-56;** Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him. Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

Among those who wound up as carcasses in the wilderness was this Zelophehad who had five daughters, as named in Numbers 27:1, and no sons to possess his inheritance. These five daughters came before the princes, Eleazar the high priest and Moses, with a petition. Their petition is found in verses 3-4 of our text. Moses, being the one assigned to judge in such matters, evidently did not feel that he had the wisdom to decide in such a matter of law so, as he had done at other times when no precedent had been established by God, he sought the Lord for the answer (Num 27:5). The Lord not only granted the petition of the five daughters but spoke of them in a manner that revealed that the Lord was pleased with them; “The daughters of Zelophehad speak right” (Num. 27:7a; Prov. 8:6¹).

What a thing this is! The five daughters *pleased* God. There is but one way that God is said to be pleased by anyone, and that is by faith (Heb. 11:6²). This is especially poignant in that it is revealed in light of the penalty suffered by the masses, including their father, for unbelief. In their petition they distinguished themselves from their father in the matter of unbelief. Their petition proved to be a testimony of *faith*.

First, they honored and justified God in the punishment of sin. Though their father had not taken part in the open rebellion of Korah, he had nonetheless evidently not believed the word of truth proclaimed by Caleb and Joshua concerning the possessing of the promise land. He had died justly “in his own sin” (Num. 27:3). His daughters ascribed honor and righteousness to God in the slaying of their father.

Secondly, in faith, they approached the matter of their standing on the condition of God's equitable dealings with the people.

¹ **Prov. 8:6;** Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

² **Heb. 11:6;** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Thirdly, they approached the matter in honesty and in belief, declaring that they believed the testimony of Caleb and were ready to go up and possess the land that God had promised. In Jewish writings these daughters of Zelophehad are called “five wise virgins.” Though their father died in unbelief, they believed God and sought to possess what rightly belonged to faith—the promise of God. “The daughters of Zelophehad speak right.” This is the testimony of God and is also the response of God to faith wherever it is found in Scripture (Matthew 15:28¹).

Imagine this scene for a moment. The possession of property was a matter of law and it primarily belonged to the firstborn male. Zelophehad's name means “first born.” Women did not play a part in the matter of ownership but were possessors only as they were connected by marital status to an heir. Here, before Moses, Eleazar, and all the princes of Israel, these women came to gain possession of the land portion that belonged to their father, a man whom God had slain because of unbelief. The petition, being far outside the arena of human wisdom, must be adjudicated by God himself.

In the face of all these men, the rightful owners of the inheritance of their fathers, God so honors these women's faith that He made their request a law of the land, establishing it as a statute (Num. 27:8; Josh. 17:4b “according to the commandment”). God always honors faith; simple, plain, unadulterated, honest faith. The Word of God is replete with examples of God honoring such trust in the Word of God. Barren Hannah prayed in faith and God opened her womb. Deborah believed God and defeated the enemies of the God. Ruth believed the word of God and married the Kinsman Redeemer. Mary believed God and was graced to be the mother of Jesus. Elizabeth believed God and birthed into this world one who was greater than the prophets, even John the Baptist. The

¹ **Matthew 15:28**; Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Syrophenician woman believed God and was told by Christ, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour” (Matt. 15:28; See also Luke 7:50; 18:42¹). Though Zelophehad's bones lay moldering in the wilderness and there was no son to claim the inheritance, the faith of these five women transcended these seemingly insurmountable obstacles, and they believed God to possess the land.

Faith cannot overdraw its account on God's bank. He delights to give and give and give again. The Spirit of God in the believer is there to reveal the things freely given to us of God (1 Cor. 2:12²). These daughters exemplify the faith of the elect (James 1:2-8³). They asked in faith (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24⁴). They asked, and their request was graciously granted. They knocked and it was opened to them. They sought and they found. The testimony of God Himself, who cannot lie, was, “The daughters of Zelophehad speak right.” They spoke right because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Only the righteous can speak right before God.

¹ **Luke 7:50;** And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace. **18:42;** And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

² **1 Cor. 2:12;** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

³ **James 1:2-8;** My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways

⁴ **John 14:13-14;** And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. **15:16;** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. **16:23-24;** And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Their faith is not to be grouped in with the false faith of the “name it and claim it” crowd that is nothing more than the presumption of useless religion. True faith does not *presume*. It *believes* the promise of God based upon the standing that God has given the believer in Christ. Faith comes to God as the father of the faithful, believing that if bread is requested, a stone will not be forthcoming. These women believed God, and they received the blessing. They did not act timidly but with confidence in their God who had promised, and their faith is a glowing example of believing in the midst of the church in the wilderness.

There is another principle taught by the life of these five wise virgins. This is not the end of this story. Faith is honored by God, but never at the expense of truth or the cost of the inheritance of other believers. Faith operates in the realm that God has appointed to it and within the bounds that God has put upon it.

“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's” (1 Corinthians 3:21-23).

But what if that which is rightfully yours could bring harm to your brother or sister? Could such a thing be? (Rom. 14:5-6, 13-23; 1 Cor. 8:9-13¹.) It *is* possible that what is rightfully yours

¹ **Rom. 14:5-6**, One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.**13-14**; Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. **1 Cor. 8:9-13**; But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in

in faith may not be an edification of your brother or sister and may be used only at the expense of their faith and good conscience, thus putting a stumbling block before them.

In our text, the daughters of Zelophehad, who were of the tribe of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph, gained by faith the possession of the portion of land that belonged to the descendants of Joseph, and rightfully so. However, there was a possible problem. Being unmarried women, there was the possibility that they might marry someone of a different tribe than that of Joseph, and in the year of Jubilee, that land would come into the possession of their husband, and the tribe of Joseph would lose part of its rightful inheritance.

Look again at Numbers 36:1-4. There, God sets an additional boundary. No principle of faith shall annul any other principle of faith. The laws concerning property were paramount to the identity of the children of Israel. For one to lose part of his inheritance was to lose his equal standing before the other tribes and call into question the righteousness of God's dealings and promises to His people. The people of God are heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ. There is no hierarchy in the body of Christ. All God's sons and daughters are on a perfectly equal standing. When Moses was confronted with this possible dilemma, he settled it in a way that both honored the faith of the daughters and the rightful claims of the sons of Joseph (Num. 36:5-9).

The daughters were free to marry whoever they wanted as long as it was in the lineage of Manasseh. Faith did not overturn or despise the law but rather honored it. The daughters of Zelophehad were believers. Read again Numbers 36:10-12. In faith, they believed the promise, possessed the promise, and obeyed the Lord for the good of the people and the glory of

the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

God. In faith they established the law, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Rom. 3:31).

“Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad.” Faith believes God. Faith seeks God alone for the promise. Faith obeys God. Faith works for the welfare of the people of God, considering others in spite of what it rightfully possesses (Gal. 5:5-6; Rom. 13:10; Phil. 2:1-4¹).

The daughters of Zelophehad stand as a shining examples of the faith of the believer, and the faith of these women is worthy of emulation.

¹ **Gal. 5:5-6**; For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. **Rom. 13:10**; Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. **Phil. 2:1-4**; If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

SHILOH

Joshua 18:1

1, And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

Shiloh was a prominent city in the history of the Jewish people. In this chapter we see the people gathering to move the tabernacle from Gilgal to its last place of residence until it was moved to Jerusalem. Shiloh was near Jerusalem and is believed by many to have been the city of Salem, the home of Melchizedek. How long the tabernacle was in Shiloh is not known. Jewish historians place the amount of time at about 369 years. Shiloh was centrally located in the Promised Land as was proper because it was designated to be the center for the worship of God and at equal distance from each tribe; “in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28; See also John 4:23; 14:6; Phil. 3:3¹). The tabernacle was a picture of Christ as it represented the glory of God dwelling among men (John 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:6²).

¹ **John 4:23**; But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. **14:6**; Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. **Phil. 3:3**; For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

² **John 1:14**; And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. **2 Cor. 4:6**; For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in

At the time of this writing there were seven tribes that had not yet taken possession of their inheritance (Josh. 18:2¹). The final settlement of all that the children possessed was settled at Shiloh. This too pictures Christ as the singular person from whom all spiritual blessings flow (John 3:35; Eph. 1:3²). Every reference to Shiloh in the Old Testament, *except one*, refers to it as a city, a location, a place of spiritual significance relative to the church and the gospel. In Judges 18:31, the Bible teaches that “the house of God was in Shiloh” (Eph. 2:19-22³). In Jeremiah 7:12, the Lord says that it was in “Shiloh, where I set my name at the first” (Acts 4:12; Phil 2:9-11⁴). In 1 Samuel 3:21 the Bible teaches that *revelation* took place at Shiloh; “And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD” (Matt. 11:25-26; John 1:18; Eph. 1:8-9⁵). Shiloh as a locality, *where* the

the face of Jesus Christ.

¹ **Josh. 18:2**; And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.

² **John 3:35**; The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. **Eph. 1:3**; Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

³ **Eph. 2:19-22**; Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

⁴ **Acts 4:12**; Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. **Phil 2:9-11**; Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

⁵ **Matt. 11:25-26**; At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. **John 1:18**; No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. **Eph. 1:8-9**; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

tabernacle was, *where* the house of God was, *where* God set His name at first, *where* God appeared and revealed Himself by the word of the Lord, and *where* worship is centered, are references in type and picture to the person and work of Christ—His singularity, and for whom His work was accomplished. These Old Testament references are spiritually understood by all believers of the truth (John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44-45; Acts 10:43; 24:14¹).

Both Old Testament Jews and New Testament believers hold that Shiloh is another name for the Messiah. The Old Testament Jews, not grasping the spiritual significance of the types and shadows pointing to Christ, believed that Shiloh was the coming Messiah because of a singular use of the name of Shiloh being applied to a person. That reference is found in Genesis 49:10 and *is* spoken concerning the coming Messiah.

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until *Shiloh* come; and unto *him* shall the gathering of the people be.”

In this passage, Judah is representative of the Old Covenant. Two things are declared as necessary occurrences when Shiloh (the Messiah) arrives. They are that the “lawgiver” and the “scepter” must depart from Judah when Shiloh comes, and when Christ came these two things were gone. The Jews boasted as if they still had the Law when they demanded the death of Christ. Unknowingly, they were setting up the putting aside of the law

¹ **John 5:39**; Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. **Luke 24:27**, And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. **44-45**; And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, **Acts 10:43**; To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. **24:14**; But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

because by the death of Christ, the law would be fulfilled, and they and their religion would be forever put away (John 19:7; Heb. 10:9¹). By their own words, the lawgiver passed from between Judah's feet. Likewise, speaking in ignorance and hatred for Christ (the Messiah, Shiloh), they declared that the scepter (representing the king and his rule) had departed from Judah (John 19:14-15; Heb. 1.8²). We *know* that Shiloh has come because the lawgiver has passed from beneath Judah's feet and the scepter has departed from him.

Shiloh (Christ) has come and to Him shall the gathering of the people be. This is what we must ask ourselves; Is our knowledge of Him purely in the fact that he has come, or has He also gathered us to Himself? Has He called us by name and entered our hearts by faith, given through His Word? Has the Father drawn us to Him, taught us and caused us to approach to Him? To know that Shiloh is come is of great importance, but there is no salvation for us unless and until He has gathered us to Himself (Eph. 1:10³). "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; *and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*"

Shiloh is a sweet name. It rolls off the tongue with ease and has a poetic nature upon the lips. It is an appropriate name of our Savior because all of its various meanings point singularly, specifically and precisely to Him.

¹ **John 19:7**; The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. **Heb. 10:9**; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

² **John 19:14-15**; And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. **Heb. 1.8**; But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

³ **Eph. 1:10**; That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.

First, the name Shiloh declares Christ's sovereignty. Shiloh means "to Him it belongs" (See: Psalm 24:1; Ezek. 21:27; Zech. 6:12-13; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 2:10¹).

Secondly, the name Shiloh declares the deity of Christ. Shiloh means "the Son" (See: Is. 9:6; Matt. 3:17; 16:15-17; John 1:49; 10:30-33²).

Thirdly, the name Shiloh declares that our Savior came to this world on a covenant mission. Shiloh means "the sent one" (See: John 6:38-39; 17:8, 21, 25³).

¹ **Psalm 24:1**; The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. **Ezek. 21:27**; I will overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him. **Zech. 6:12-13**; And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. **Rom. 11:36**; For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. **Col. 1:16-17**; For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. **Heb. 2:10**; For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

² **Is. 9:6**; For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. **Matt. 3:17**; And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **16:15-17**; He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. **John 1:49**; Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. **10:30-33**; I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

³ **John 6:38-39**; For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. **17:8**, For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. **21**, That they all may be one; as thou,

Fourthly, the name Shiloh declares the success and accomplishment of that mission. Shiloh means “prosper” (See: Isa. 52:13, 53:10-12¹).

Fifthly, the name Shiloh declares the result of that mission. Shiloh means “peace” (See: Is. 9:6; John 14:27; Eph. 2:14; Col. 1:20-22²).

Finally, the name Shiloh declares the estate of those for whom Christ accomplished His mission. Shiloh means “rest” (See: Psalm 116:7; Is. 28:12; Heb. 4:9-11; Matthew 11:28-30³).

Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. **25**; O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

¹ **Isa. 52:13**, Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. **53:10-12**; Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

² **Is. 9:6**; For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. **John 14:27**; Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. **Eph. 2:14**; For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. **Col. 1:20-22**; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:

³ **Psalm 116:7**; Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. **Is. 28:12**; To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. **Heb. 4:9-11**; There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. **Matthew 11:28-30**; Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49:10)

“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them” (Josh. 18:1).

PLACES AND PEOPLE

Joshua 19:39

Please read the entire chapter

39, This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

I've chosen this text as a starting point for this lesson from Joshua 19 in order to look at several passages that have an important spot in the New Testament. As these different tribes inherited their respective lands, they also inherited a future in the life and times of the Messiah and the cities in which He ministered.

Naphtali's portion of the Promised Land was the locale for Capernaum and Bethsaida. It was in Capernaum that our Lord paid tribute to the temple with a coin from a fish's mouth. Though He upbraided Capernaum, even in that instance He declared the gospel and manner in which men may know Christ, and that the wisdom of the children of God is justified because they, in the face of hatred, believed the message of John the Baptist and the message of Christ (Matt. 11:19, 25-27. Compare Gen. 49:21 with John 6:63, 68).

In verse 48 of Joshua 19, we see the tribe of Dan receive their portion. This is the prophecy concerning Dan in Gen. 49:17-18:

“Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.”

The first part of this prophecy relates to Samson who was of the tribe of Dan. But the prophecy as a whole relates to the coming of the Messiah and the men who declared His coming. Simon Peter was a resident of Joppa, which was part of the Land belonging to the tribe of Dan. It is said of the people of God that they will be judges (Is. 54:17; 1 Cor. 6:2-3¹). The command of our Lord was that His disciples be as wise as serpents, and the nature of the message is that it both condemns and quickens (Is. 28:13; 2 Cor. 2:14-17²). Jacob himself, after declaring this prophecy, connects it to the salvation which the Lord will bring.

Joshua 18:21-28 reads:

“Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Bethhoglah, and the valley of Keziz, And Betharabah, and Zemaraim, and Bethel, And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah, And Chepharhaammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages: Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth, And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah, And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah, And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, and Kirjath; fourteen cities with their

¹ **Is. 54:17**; No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. **1 Cor. 6:2-3**; Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

² **Is. 28:13**; But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. **2 Cor. 2:14-17**; Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.”

These are the cities inherited by the tribe of Benjamin. There are many notable cities that vitally connect to the preaching of the gospel; Jericho (the good Samaritan; blind Bartimaeus), Bethel, Ramah and Jerusalem. The Prophet Jeremiah and the Apostle Paul were of the tribe of Benjamin (Jer. 1:1; Phil. 3:5¹). Genesis 49:27 reads,

“Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.”

These words may be applied to the Apostle Paul who in the day of his youth wreaked havoc in the church and in the later part of his life divided the spoils of the gospel with the Gentiles. The language may also be applied to our Lord, as the same is used to describe His character and work in:

Genesis 49:9, “Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?”

Isaiah 53:12, “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

We are all familiar with the tribe of Judah as it is the tribe from which our Lord sprung and the prophecy concerning

¹ **Jer. 1:1**; The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. **Phil. 3:5**; Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.

Judah is gospel full (Gen. 49:8-12; 43:8-9; Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5¹).

In Joshua 19:10-16 are the cities of the inheritance of Zebulun. Both Bethlehem and Nazareth are in the territory of Zebulun. Our Lord's ministry was mainly in this area. He never traveled more than fifty miles from His hometown. The Sea of Galilee was in Zebulun, and Tabor was where our Lord was transfigured. Isaiah prophesied about the appearance of Christ in the land of Zebulun (Is. 9:1-2; Matt. 4:12-16²).

Finally, beginning at Joshua 19:31, are the cities of the inheritance of Asher. The prophecies concerning Asher are seen in Genesis 49:20 and in Deuteronomy 33:24-26.

Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties (Gen. 49:20).

¹ **Gen. 49:8-12**; Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. **43:8-9**; And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. **Heb. 7:14**; For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. **Rev. 5:5**; And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

² **Is. 9:1-2**; Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. **Matt. 4:12-16**; Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky (Deut. 33:24-26).

These prophecies are fulfilled in one of my favorite characters in the Gospels. In Luke 2:36-38 is the report of an old prophetess named Anna. The report of this woman sums up what it is to preach the gospel. Upon observing the actions and hearing the words of Simeon concerning the Christ whom he held in his arms (Luke 2:25-35), she was immediately given saving faith. In that instant she gave thanks and began to point everyone seeking redemption to Jesus Christ. The record of this woman is the record of every true preacher of the gospel—"she spake of Him" (Acts 2:36; 3:13-16; 4:10-12; 13:38-39; 1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Cor. 2:17¹).

¹ **Acts 2:36**; Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. **3:13-16**; The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. **4:10-12**; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. **13:38-39**; Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. **1 Cor. 2:2**; For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. **2 Cor. 2:17**; For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE!

Joshua 20:1-9

1, The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying,

2, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses:

3, That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4, And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

5, And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

6, And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

7, And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

8, And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

9, These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither,

and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

The six cities of refuge named in this text picture Christ as the refuge of guilty ignorant sinners, fleeing for their life from the rightful claims of the Law for their death.

There are some who mistakenly believe that we must interpret Scripture from an eschatological format. In other words, their interpretation of the Word of God begins with the notion that they must make it fit their idea of the events of end times. Many who hold to the most prevalent view, that of premillennialism, assert that the Bible teaches there will be a physical restoration of the nation of Israel, the rebuilding of the temple on the sight of the Mosque of Omar, the resumption of the priesthood, the reintroduction of sacrifices and the Messiah sitting on the literal throne of David.

Generally, those who approach the Scriptures in this manner hold that the cities of refuge picture that restoration of natural Israel. They teach that Christ is the man who was slain by accident, and the Jews were the manslayer. Since they did this slaying in ignorance, supported by the words of Christ from the cross, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," they are now kept in providential care (the city of refuge) until Christ resumes the throne of king and priest, and what they had lost, they will then be able to reclaim. They further assert that certain things about the manslayer may not be applied to the believer who has fled to Christ.

First and foremost, they say that a believer cannot leave Christ, unlike the manslayer that may leave the city of refuge albeit to his own jeopardy.

Secondly, they say that the manslayer may rightly be judged and slain if he leaves the city. This *cannot* speak of the believer because he was already judged in Christ on Calvary.

These are reasonable assertions, if you rely wholly on the premise that the Bible is to be interpreted by an eschatological

equation, but the Bible is *not* to interpreted in that manner. The Bible is interpreted by Christ. It is about Christ, His work for the satisfaction of God and the welfare of His elect (John 5:39; Luke 24:27, 44-45; Rom. 15:4; 1 John 5:13¹).

We know that the Old Testament Scriptures are the testimony of Christ in types, shadows and pictures. The book of Numbers is about Christ and his church in the world, and the book of Deuteronomy is about the church in the gospel age. The New Testament declares that these things were recorded for us as examples and warnings concerning belief and unbelief. However, no type, picture, or shadow is ever a complete representation of the substance. A picture is two-dimensional. It is on a flat plane and requires the skill of the artist to add shadow and light to make it appear to have depth and dimension. You cannot turn the picture sideways and see anything more than a flat piece of paper. Even so-called 3D pictures are but optical illusions that play on the inability of the brain to view two opposing colors of the spectrum at the same time. The illusion of dimension occurs with the brain's constant shifting from one color to another and by confusion, creating the illusion of depth.

This is a three-dimensional world. Old Testament pictures are two-dimensional. They are *shadow* and *not substance*. To see Christ as He is, while looking at the picture, a third dimension must be in place. That dimension is the spiritual and is only seen

¹ **John 5:39**; Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. **Luke 24:27**, And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. **44-45**; And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. **Rom. 15:4**; For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. **1 John 5:13**; These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

by God given faith. Thus, “faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

The only proper interpretation of the *picture* displayed by the cities of refuge is to view it in light of the *spiritual* truth they are teaching. Without any arduous efforts at systematically wringing out every minute detail that is involved, there is a single glorious lesson that is taught. To get to that lesson several things are set before us.

We have before us, the *sin*, the *offended law*, the *sinner*, the *gospel preacher's duty*, the *refuge*, the *death of the high priest*, the *warning* and the *plain and simple message*. This passage, though grounded in the doctrine of grace, is more about the elect's *experience* of grace. For the elect, having long been cared for by God, having been delivered from the bondage of Egypt, fed and watered in the wilderness, gloriously ushered across Jordan into the land flowing with milk and honey, the message is still simply and succinctly; with all speed and determination, flee to the Savior!

The *Sin*. The sin is *manslaughter*. It is *not* murder because the Scripture makes it clear that a murderer is to die for his sin. The result of the crime is no less grievous. A person has been killed, a life has been taken and someone is accountable. This crime however is one of mitigating circumstance. There was no malice afore thought and there was no premeditation (v. 5c). However, there was the breaking of the law. What is being taught is a singular principal. Sin is sin though it may be committed unwittingly. The fact is that all we as sinners can do is sin. Everything we do, think or practice is corrupted with our own flesh and flows through the law of sin in us (Rom. 7:18-24¹). Herein, we see the grace of God and the tenderness with

¹ **Rom. 7:18-24**; For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin

which He views his elect. He views their sin with an eye on the remedy (Ps. 103:9-14¹). God does not count the sin any less worthy of death. His requirement for justice is not assuaged by merely adding the concept of intent as a mitigating factor. Sin requires *death*; sin always ends in death, no matter what the extenuating circumstances surrounding it. The thrice holy God demands death for sin.

The offended Law. The avenger of death represents the offended Law. The Law of God is exacting in its judgment. Everybody is guilty, and the result of a sinner dealing with the law, or the law dealing with any sinner on any level, is death (Rom. 3:19-20²). The sin is that the law *has* been broken, and the death of the offender must summarily ensue. There are no exceptions. This is an immutable and irrevocable principle. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The law is right and true in its judgments. It is holy and just and rightfully requires the death of the lawbreaker. You and I, and everyone who sins (and all do), will and must suffer the penalty of the law. Do not be deceived, sin will not go unpunished. From the moment of our birth, we unwittingly come forth from the womb speaking lies, beginning a career of self-manslaughter. As soon as we draw our first breath the sword of unyielding, inflexible justice hangs over us as the pall of sure execution.

The sinner. The sinner is the *manslayer*. This is where we see this picture is about the *experience of grace*. Though the sinner has slain a man unwittingly, he is yet aware of the fact that he has

which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

¹ **Ps. 103:9-14;** He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

² **Rom. 3:19-20;** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

done it! This reveals that this man is aware of his sin. He knows that he is a sinner. One man said, "The sinner is a sacred thing; the Holy Ghost has made him so." One may give generic and mental assent to his lack of perfection, or his bent to err, but no man knows his sin is worthy of eternal damnation but by the revelation of God. He knows it because, by the preaching of the gospel, he hears the fast footsteps of the avenger of blood gaining on him (Rom. 7:7-14¹). Note also that the stranger is included along with the Israelite denoting the inclusion of the Gentile. *Any* sinner who knows his guilt can flee to the refuge.

The *refuge*. Behold the mercy and grace of God. He has established six cities of refuge, three on each side of the Jordan. Three inside the Promised Land and three on the other side of Jordan. Three for those who enjoy what God has provided for them, and three for those who have foregone the fellowship and the enjoyment, instead opting for the gain of the world. No matter the spiritual estate, no matter how far you may have drifted from the enjoyment of what God has provided for you; within your reach is the city of refuge. *Christ is that city!* For every child of God, *He* is our refuge (Ps. 9:9; 46:1, 7; 62:7-8; Heb. 6:18-20²). Get to Him and you are safe and secure from

¹ **Rom. 7:7-14**; What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. or sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

² **Ps. 9:9**; The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. **46:1**, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. **7**; The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. **62:7-8**; In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. **Heb. 6:18-20**; That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold

the rights that the law has over you, from the death that is due your crimes (Rom. 6:14¹). “Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you.” He is not far from us, for “in Him we live and move and have our being.” In that city no harm can come to you. The avenger of blood cannot enter (Rom. 8:38-39²).

The *gospel preacher's duty* (Deut. 19:3³). The roads to the cities of refuge were tended by men assigned to keep the way clean. Signs were erected that pointed to the cities with the words “refuge, refuge” printed on them. The roads were to be kept smooth and all means of stumbling were to be removed. Nothing was to be a hindrance to the manslayer having access to the city. This is the duty of the pastor, the gospel preacher. He is to point to the city. He is to remove any hindrance or stumbling block between the sinner and the savior. His message is plain and unencumbered with religious notions, ceremony, law, personal convictions; all of which can take a man's eyes off the city. Behold the Lamb of God!

The *death of the high priest* (v. 6). Once the slayer had reached the security of the city of refuge, he was to remain there until the high priest died. At the death of the high priest, he was set free to return to his home and all that he had left behind. This teaches us that the *person* and *work* of Christ cannot be separated. In Christ the believer is secure, and all who are in Christ were in Him from the foundation of the world (Eph.

upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

¹ **Rom. 6:14;** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

² **Rom. 8:38-39;** For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ **Deut. 19:3;** Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither.

1:3-4¹). Those in Christ by purpose were made free from the penalty of the law and restored to all they lost, and much more, when Christ died (Heb. 9:12-17²). The death of the High Priest secures the release and restoration of the sinner. The liberty of the believer is blood-bought. The manslayer had to leave *all* for the sake of his life; house and home, family and friends nor anything else could be of any value to him if he wanted to live. He had to leave it all behind for the city, but when the high priest died, he was free to go. (Mark 10:28-30; Gal. 3:12-13³).

The *warning*.

“But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but

¹ **Eph. 1:3-4**; Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

² **Heb. 9:12-17**; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

³ **Mark 10:28-30**; Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. **Gal. 3:12-13**; And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession” (Num. 35:26-28).

We know that a person who is in Christ can never be lost. This is the clear declaration of Scripture. What then is this warning? It is simple. There is no safety outside of Christ. Outside of Christ is the avenger of blood and a myriad of ways to die. The only safe place is in the city of refuge—in Christ.

Finally, the plain and simple *message*. Make haste. Move with all diligence and speed. Put forth every fiber of your energy to be found behind the walls of this sacred precinct. Do not wait for a bolt of lightning. Do not fold your arms and fatalistically wait for a sign. Consider nothing but your life. Value nothing of this world but your soul. Do not muse as to whether you were meant to be delivered. Sinners in need and under threat do not countenance such frivolous things; their words are simple—“I must have Christ or I die.” Flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11:12).

When the gospel comes home to the publican and the sinner, when dire need overrides the slavish fear mongering status quo, the established standards of what religion says is a “real” Christian, violence erupts in the heart of the awakened sinner, and sink or swim, he will get to Christ. If mama's religion gets in the way, mama's religion is goin' down! If the destitute world of “works and will” stand in the path, then they will be trampled underfoot. Theologians and doctrinarians, if they seek to add anything to the gospel, are shoved aside by those who must and will have Christ. “Get out of my way, I'm coming through—it is Christ, or I die!” Flee to the city of refuge, Flee to the secure arms of the Savior.

CARE FOR THE LEVITES

Joshua 21:1-45

1, Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel;

2, And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle.

3, And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs.

4, And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the priest, which were of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities.

5, And the rest of the children of Kohath had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities.

6, And the children of Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

7, The children of Merari by their families had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.

8, And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

9, And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are here mentioned by name,

10, Which the children of Aaron, being of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot.

11, And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

12, But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession.

13, Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs,

14, And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs,

15, And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs,

16, And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, and Bethshemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes.

17, And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs,

18, Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs; four cities.

19, All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs.

20, And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim.

21, For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs,

22, And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Bethhoron with her suburbs; four cities.

23, And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs,

24, Aijalon with her suburbs, Gathrimmon with her suburbs; four cities.

25, And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gathrimmon with her suburbs; two cities.

26, All the cities were ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.

27, And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh they gave Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Beeshterah with her suburbs; two cities.

28, And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs,

29, Jarmuth with her suburbs, Engannim with her suburbs; four cities.

30, And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs,

31, Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities.

32, And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Hammothdor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs; three cities.

33, All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their suburbs.

34, And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs,

35, Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahalal with her suburbs; four cities.

36, And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs,

37, Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities.

38, And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs,

39, Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs; four cities in all.

40, So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were by their lot twelve cities.

41, All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs.

42, These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus were all these cities.

43, And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

44, And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

45, There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

Having received their inheritance in the Land of Promise, this chapter is the account of the tribes distributing some of the cities to the Levites. This was done according to the command of God recorded in Numbers 35:2-8.

“Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them. And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about. And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities. And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. So all the cities which

ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth” (Num. 35:2-8).

One theme is *continually repeated* throughout the record of Joshua apportioning the land to the tribes. “Levi hath *no part* with his brethren, for the Lord is his portion.”

We know that whatever the children of God have, they have received of the Lord so that they might not boast as if they had not received it. So ultimately, these cities given to the Levites found their origin in the goodness and munificence of God. This chapter, however, is about the flock's care for those who *minister to them*. This is, in effect, an account of the church caring for their *Pastor*. I am always reticent in preaching about such things because of my own pride, for which I ask your forgiveness. I am reticent because I fear that it will sound as if I am asking for something when God's people has so faithfully cared for me since the day they called me as Pastor. But that is *my* problem, not *yours*., This, however, is the account of the *generosity* of the *church*.

It is the tribes who give this land to the Levites for their use as God has commanded them. It is the order that God has established. The minister of the gospel is to be about the business of preaching the gospel—feeding the flock. He is perhaps the only independent man on the earth. Though he loves the flock for whom God has given him oversight, his calling is that of the servant of the Most High. He is a willing bond-slave. All his judgments and decisions are to be dictated by his office. He must give account of the souls to whom he ministers. God is his portion, and if required, he must leave all for the glory of God. He cannot gear his message to particular issues except as they arise in the body of believers under his

watch. He is a debtor to all men to preach the gospel, and he is ready to do so in season and out of season (Rom. 1:14-17; 2 Tim. 4:1-4¹). He does not choose his appointments but is glad to obey the command and warrant to preach the gospel *wherever* God allows him the privilege to do so.

He is the servant of God and is not a man-pleaser. He feels neither compunction nor need to address issues that might arise between churches or brethren outside the realm to which he has been assigned. He is a friend to every member of the flock but cannot be the best buddy of anyone. His allegiance is to Him who separated him from his mother's womb and called him by His grace to preach the gospel. God has blessed the church to have a part in this grand design by giving of what they have to care and feed the one who has been sent to them (1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:17-18²). This chapter speaks to the generous benefaction of the people of God to the ministers of the gospel.

The first thing of note is that the Levites made their request in Shiloh (v. 2). This is no small recognition of the manner in which the people of God ask God for help. The New Testament is clear that the believer asks in the name of Christ, and the promise is that it will be granted. Shiloh is a picture of Christ, as

¹ **Rom. 1:14-17**; I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. **2 Tim. 4:1-4**; I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

² **1 Cor. 9:9**; For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? **1 Tim. 5:17-18**; Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

we have seen in a previous study. The Levites did not wish to return across Jordan to Mt. Sinai to make their request. They came to Shiloh, the Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly Joshua.

Secondly, the Levites asked for what God had commanded to the people. This should not be construed to mean the people were reluctant to give these cities to the Levites, but it teaches a wonderful principle. Though the Lord has promised these things to His children, He has also purposed that they would inquire of Him for them (2 Sam. 7:27; 1 Chron. 17:25; Ezek. 36:37¹).

Thirdly, though the Levites were chosen of the Lord to minister to the people, they are the last of all the tribes to be supplied. This is indicative of the truth that, though the preacher of the gospel is called to the highest of earthly offices, he is a servant of the people, and it is only right that the children should receive theirs before he gets his. Our Lord is the primary example of this truth. He came to minister and not to be ministered to (Matt. 20:26-28; Luke 22:26-27²). Before He was exalted, his people had received all the benefits of His death.

In verse 3, it is said that the children “gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance.” They *gave*. They were not *taxed* or *fined*. They gave. The verb means to “bestow,” and it is in the imperfect tense which adds to the fact of the act, color, depth and movement. They did not give as if they were resigned to the fact that they had to, or should, or that they unwillingly surrendered

¹ **2 Sam. 7:27**; For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. **1 Chron. 17:25**; For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him an house: therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee. **Ezek. 36:37**; Thus saith the LORD God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

² **Matt. 20:26-28**; But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. **Luke 22:26-27**; But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

to the command. They *purposed* in their heart, and so they gave. They willingly and gladly gave (2 Cor. 8:7¹). They gave cities in the midst of their land and on the borders of their land, and the dispersal was such that no tribe, at any time, was far from the ministers of the Lord's things. Every tribe was near to the Levites. This is also a revelation of Christ in the midst of His people. In Him they live and move and have their being (Act 17:28²). He has promised never to leave them nor forsake them (Zech. 2:10; 8:3; John 1:14³).

The declaration of verses 41-42 is a manifold representation of the Lord and His people.

First, this great dispersion of the Levites pictures the people of God scattered throughout the world. They take the gospel to the utter most parts of the earth. This is that "holy priesthood," those who by the blood of Christ are made kings and priests unto God, a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation," a purchased people, "living stones" made to "offer up spiritual sacrifices to the Lord, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5-9). The acceptable sacrifice is the fruit of their lips, giving thanks to the Lord which is simply believing and declaring the gospel (Heb. 13:15⁴).

Secondly, the Levites among the people also intimates the Lord, our Great High Priest, being ever among and near to His people. The lesson here taught is that the church of God cares for their immediate servants. They do so because the Lord is the

¹ **2 Cor. 8:7;** Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

² **Act 17:28;** For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

³ **Zech. 2:10;** Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. **8:3;** Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain. **John 1:14;** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

⁴ **Heb. 13:15;** By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

portion of the Levites. They are esteemed for the work's sake. The Lord is in the midst of His people and because He is, the gospel is carried through the world.

Finally, the overall truth established is that the Lord is faithful to His people. He always keeps His promises. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13).

GOD IS FAITHFUL

Joshua 21:43-45

43, And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

44, And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

45, There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

The character and attributes of the LORD God are of such magnitude, such depth, breadth and height that no matter what particular attribute that a man might seek to know, he will never reach the end of it. We try, with our restricted human expression, to speak of God's sovereignty, but the further we go with it the more we find our wisdom to diminish and fail. His sovereignty is truly beyond finite description. The believer loves the fact of it, worships God because of it, finds great comfort in the storm by resting in it, yet when truly considering it, he finds that God's sovereignty becomes illogical to the human mind when trying to explain it.

For God to love Jacob and hate Esau, while both were in their mother's womb, having not yet been born, neither having done good or evil, both having proved to be sinners, and those facts not changing God's love for one and hatred for the other, begs the logical conclusion that God is unrighteous, but He is not. He acted toward these two brothers in this manner that the purpose of election might stand so that men would know that

the love of God has nothing to do with the works of men. The man in Romans 9 that reproached God's sovereignty, declaring that since God is sovereign and has made me the way I am, how can He then find fault with me, was expressing that humanly speaking the concept of sovereignty does not logically fit the idea of righteousness or equity.

Neither will the answer our Lord gave ever satisfy humanity. Our Lord simply states that no matter what God has made man to be, he has no right to question it. Gordon Baylass, an English preacher, once said, "This (Bible) is a very logical book, but not to us." Spurgeon said, "It is at the precise place where our logic and understanding fail that, in awe, we worship God." The believer is absolutely sure of things he cannot ever explain. He knows and understands, not by the exercise of human logic, but because God has given him faith, and that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). That definition of faith itself defies any and every effort to explain it. Faith, itself unseen, is both the substance and evidence of that which is expected and invisible. Try to explain that in terms of human logic.

What is revealed to faith throughout the Word of God is that God is the God of the covenant, the promise, and that He is faithful to His covenant. "Faithful is He who calleth you, who will also do it" (1Thes. 5:24). Our unfaithfulness and unbelief do not affect His faithfulness to His purpose. What He has promised, He is not only able to, but will surely perform (Psalm 89:26-34; Mal. 3:6; Phil 1:6; 2 Tim 2:13; Titus 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:20; 1 Cor. 1:9¹).

¹ **Psalm 89:34**; My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. **Mal. 3:6**; For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. **Phil 1:6**; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. **2 Tim 2:13**; Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. **Titus 1:2**; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. **2 Cor. 1:20**; For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. **1 Cor. 1:9**; God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

These final 3 verses (vv. 43-45) of Joshua 21 declares the faithfulness of our covenant God to His elect. The words declare that God has kept His promise to Israel, and more than that, they declare the truth that God has kept His promise to spiritual Israel. They picture the salvation of the elect set forth in terms of the Israelites possessing the land that God had promised to their fathers.

First, this possession of Immanuel's land does not begin in the lifetime of this people but began *before they were born*. The realization of this possessed property, and all that attends it, is based on the *promise* that God made to their *fathers* (vv. 43-44). The first thing that we encounter is the aspect of predestination and purpose. This takes us back to *before* the conception of the world when God chose a people unto himself, elected them unto salvation, determined that they would be His people and that he would be their God. In that great counsel of purpose, He covenanted with His Son for their salvation, and the Son took the office of surety for them promising to bleed and die for them in order that the Father could be just in justifying them. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4¹).

Why did God not give this land to their father's? Did He not swear it unto them? Does this mean that His covenant with the fathers failed? Here again we must apply to revelation and not to the exercise of human logic. Human history is not a story of God *reacting* but the story of God *acting*. Human history is not the story of man; it is the story of Christ. You and I, and every event of time, are but the story of redemption played out on the stage of this tiny planet. The principle of the elder serving the younger, the first born serving the second born, is reiterated throughout Scripture. Adam was the first man; Christ was the second man in history. Adam was the first Adam; Christ was the last Adam in history. The covenant in the Garden and that

¹ **Eph 1:4**; According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

of Sinai was the first revealed. The covenant of Grace was the second revealed. In each case the elder served the younger.

In our salvation, our first birth is subservient to our second birth. The fathers did not receive the promise because they could not enter the Promised Land because of unbelief. The fathers did not receive the promise because God had purposed to give it to the sons. Moses did not lead the children into the land because Joshua must. The first Adam did not stay in innocence because the last Adam must. It is nowhere explained but is everywhere declared. Human history is the story of the recovery of fallen man by the God-man Christ Jesus. That is not an explanation, it is a declaration. The tree was put in the garden to reveal that salvation is not by works. The covenant of works was given to reveal that salvation was not by works. In both cases the first served the purpose of the second. The second declared salvation by grace.

Secondly, we see in this passage (vv. 43-45) the mercy and grace of God. That which was lost by the fathers through unbelief is returned to the elect by grace (Rom. 5:14-19¹). It is not returned by belief because we know that these sons are guilty of the sin of their fathers. They were given this land promised to their fathers by Joshua— by grace. The recipients had nothing to do with this land but to *receive* it (Deut. 6:10-12; 9:4-6²). The

¹ **Rom. 5:14-19**; Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

² **Deut. 6:10-12**; And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses

gift of faith is given in order that the believer might understand that it is all by grace (Rom. 4:13-16¹).

Thirdly, we see the promise fulfilled (v. 43c). The children, by the grace of God, possess the land and dwell therein. At that time and even to this day, Israel is seen by most of the world as occupiers of someone else's land. And so it is with the elect of God. The world sees them as a bunch of interlopers with their claims of dwelling in Immanuel's land by grace alone. But the Lord declares that His children are heirs of all things and all things are theirs (1 Cor. 3:21-22²). Though the believer is not of this world and looks heartily for another caring not for the things of this world, he owns it and dwells in it, and at the same time owns and dwells in the world to come. The believer does not seek to gain from this world because it would be foolish to seek that which he already possesses. The believer does not inhabit the world, he is proprietor of it. It is his to use, though not to abuse. Nor does he lord himself over those who inhabit

full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. **9:4-6**; Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

¹ **Rom. 4:13-16**; For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.

² **1 Cor. 3:21-22**; Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

his planet because he knows that it is his by grace alone. He knows that it was the Father's pleasure to give him the kingdom.

Fourthly, it is clear that the people of God rest in the purpose of God (v. 44). He gave them “rest round about.” This is an all-inclusive statement. He gave them rest on every side—complete rest. All fears and anxieties are removed concerning loss of anything. They were at rest (Zeph. 3:13-17, Matt: 11:28¹). Their rest was based upon the fact that the work was *finished* by Christ. If there is no work to do, if the work is finished, if the work is *done*, then what can be done but to rest?

Fifthly, this rest is the rest of *victory* (v. 44). The work of Christ, in satisfying the law and satiating the justice of God, also included the defeat of the enemies of God and His people. The believer rests in his dwelling place because the enemy is controlled by the Captain of their salvation (Isa. 63:1-4, 54:17; Matt. 12:28-29²).

¹ **Zeph. 3:13-17**; The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. **Matt: 11:28**; Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

² **Isa. 63:1-4**, Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. **54:17**; No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. **Matt. 12:28-29**; But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

Finally, we see the performance of the gospel (v. 45; Is. 52:7¹). “Good things” is what God has for His people (Jer. 32:38-41²). This goodness is according to promise “which the Lord had spoken.” God has purposed this for His people and so it shall be—“all came to pass” (Josh. 23:14-15; Is; 46:9-10³). The possibility of failure does not exist. “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain” (Is. 40:4)!

¹ **Is. 52:7**; How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

² **Jer. 32:38-41**; And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

³ **Josh. 23:14-15**; And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof. Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. **Is; 46:9-10**; Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

LOVE NOT THE WORLD

Joshua 22

Joshua chapter 22 contains a record of the suspicions of the children of Israel for the children of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, and their intentions to go to war with them. Though this incident falls next chronologically in these lessons, before proceeding, I believe it essential to have a fresh knowledge of the history of these two and one-half tribes and the record of how and why they chose to remain outside the Promised Land. The record of how the two and one-half tribes came to possess this land is contained in Joshua 1:10-18 and in Numbers chapter 32. In this study, let us review the record found in Numbers 32 that we might better understand Joshua 22 in our next study.

Numbers 32

1, Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle;

2, The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,

3, Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

4, Even the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:

5, Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.

6, And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?

7, And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?

8, Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land.

9, For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them.

10, And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying,

11, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:

12, Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.

13, And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.

14, And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel.

15, For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people.

16, And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:

17, But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their

place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

18, We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

19, For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward.

20, And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

21, And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

22, And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.

23, But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

24, Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.

25, And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth.

26, Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, shall be there in the cities of Gilead:

27, But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith.

28, So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel:

29, And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession:

30, But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.

31, And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do.

32, We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours.

33, And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about.

34, And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,

35, And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,

36, And Bethnimrah, and Bethharan, fenced cities: and folds for sheep.

37, And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim,

38, And Nebo, and Baalmeon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded.

39, And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it.

40, And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein.

41, And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havothjair.

42, And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

In this chapter is found one of the most well-known phrases in all of Christendom. It is a phrase that has been both used and abused for a varied list of reasons too numerous to account. In verse 23 we find the words, "Be sure your sins will find you out." The basic and primal meaning of this phrase is real to every

believer and makes us all wince a bit if we ponder it for just a moment. These words are a kind of detective that we need in our mind but often wish was not there. Even outside the context in which they are written, the phrase carries a somber weight and cannot be spoken without stirring something in us deep down where we live. The words are simply, in and of themselves, true. "Be sure your sins will find you out."

These words are spoken to the tribes of Ruben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh concerning a promise they had made. The promise was made because of a wretched choice they had made. These two and one-half tribes had petitioned Moses asking that they not be required to cross over Jordan to possess the Land of Promise. Rather, they would stay outside the Promised Land and give up the rights to their property in exchange for being allowed to stay in the area of Og and Bashan where there was great land for raising cattle. Seeing that they desired the land that God had cursed because of the children's mixture of Baal-peor with true worship (v. 4), Moses, as it were, saw the handwriting on the wall.

Having reminded them of the end of those over twenty years of age when they were delivered from Egypt, who are now carcasses in the wilderness, Moses confronted them with the inevitable result of not possessing the land which God had given them. Moses warned that after rebuilding the cities that God had them to destroy, housing their families and building up their cattle and sheep fortunes, they would in effect become the enemies of Israel if Israel was called to fight against the countries in which they lived. Their answer was to promise to leave their wives and children behind and cross over Jordan with every man of war to fight on the side of Israel, if ever necessary. They further promised not to return to their homes until the battle was won. This satisfied Moses and he allowed them to possess the land and not enter into the promised land.

I wonder what it did to Moses when he, who longed to enter the promised land but was not allowed because he sinned,

saw these refuse to enter because they saw with their eyes the goodness of the land outside Canaan and refused to see as God saw. In effect, they despised the land that God had promised. It was in light of this promise that Moses said to these two and one-half tribes, "Be sure your sins will find you out" if you fail to keep your promise. So, Ruben, Gad and one-half the tribe of Manasseh opted for a land other than that which God had given them.

Most Bible commentators leave the record there and deal with this circumstance only as historical fact. However, I am reminded of another such verse that carries with it an equally somber tone. Psalm 106:15 says, "And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." These tribes chose *not* to possess the Promised Land. What was the difference between them and those who refused it because of fear in Numbers 14? The only difference was the manifestation of *unbelief*. Those named in Numbers 14 would not go for *fear of men*, and those named in our text would not go for the promise of *earthly gain*. *Both* desired the wilderness. *Both* refused to enter the land of promise.

Remember these things. Remember; these were yet of the tribes of Israel, God's chosen race. Remember; the New Testament theme of Numbers is the words of 1 Cor. 10:11, "All these things happened to them for examples [types]." Remember; these tribes and their lives are a picture of Christ's Church in the world. In remembering those things, this passage carries with it a disturbing truth and is under girded with a stern and sobering warning.

Think not that as a child of God you are exempt from such an example of unbelief. Think not that because you are chosen of God, you will refrain from giving up the enjoyment of your divine heritage for the gain of this world. The promised land was not only a place, but it was also the fruit gained by being in that place. To taste the land that flowed with milk and honey, the feast of fat things, the wine on the lees well refined, you had to be there. The land was the heritage of Ruben and Gad and

Manasseh. *God* had given it to them, but they would never enjoy what was theirs because they chose what their eyes saw instead of what God had promised.

Their view was wide and horizontal instead of narrow and vertical. Their affections were set on things below rather than on the things above. They were looking at too many things instead of the one thing needful (Matthew 6:22-23). ¹Salvation is not only the fact of it, but the position also that is the believer's, the enjoyment of it, the tasting of the grace of it. Sad as it is, the believer may choose to allow other believers to enjoy his portion because he has opted for the charms of this life and this world.

David's words in Psalm 51 are a prime example of this fact. He said, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit" (Psalm 51:12). David belonged to God. He was a man after God's own heart. Yet in a moment of unbelief, he fell into horrible sin beginning in adultery and ending in murder. He never ceased to be the child of God, but he, because of a wretched choice, lost the joy of God's salvation.

Imagine for a moment you have mounted on eagle's wings and below you is the Jordan River. On one side is the promised land, occupied by the children of God rejoicing in the *realized* promise. On the other side are some of the children of God living in the riches of this world. On the one side are the songs of Zion, the worship of the Lord, the High Priest. On the other side is the lyric of filthy lucre, no songs of Zion, only the discordant disharmonies of Baal-peor. On the one side is the testimony of God, on the other side the testimony of man; the testimony that says, "Yes, I am a child of God, but I have planted my roots in a foreign land."

Ruben, Gad and Manasseh were merely a walk from the promised land, but their heart was a million miles away—so

¹ **Matthew 6:22-23**; And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

close yet so far away. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1).

The testimony of God is sure, and his warnings are to his people. Look to Paul's words of the first Corinthian letter;

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Cor. 7:29-31).

Who is Paul speaking to?

“Grace be unto *you*, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given *you* by Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:3-4).

Hear these words of John in his first general epistle to the church.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Who is John speaking to?

“I write unto *you*, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto *you*, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I

write unto *you*, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto *you*, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto *you*, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto *you*, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (vv. 1 John 2:12-14)

“Be sure your sins will find you out.”

Ruben, Gad and Manasseh stopped short of the promise and forfeited the right of realizing the joy that attended the promise. As the eagle sees, these have a name that designates them as a child of God. They defend the name of God and will die for the cause of God, but their *testimony* is that they love this present world (Rev. 3:1-6¹).

Consider these tribes. See them for who they are, the place they hold in God's heritage, the choice they made, and pray God to forbid us shirking it off as if it did not apply to us. This can be our story if God allows. Their promise, their life and their end are a chronicle of the believer who has planted his roots on the shifting sand of this world.

Three things:

1. Their promise (vv. 17-19). They promised to defend what they refused to enjoy. They promised to fight for what they refused to be a part of. It is a good thing to fight for what is right, but it is suspect if you fight for what is right so you can possess what is wrong. Our Lord said that if his kingdom were

¹ **Rev. 3:1-6;** And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

of this world, then his children would fight for it. These tribes did not fight for the promised land because they loved it; they fought for it so they could have what they wanted in this world. In this, they were mercenaries. The defense of the gospel is for Immanuel's Land, not for geographical, political or worldly gain. If you do not enjoy the salvation which God purchased for you, but fight for it while grasping this world, your warring is suspect.

How many have foregone the fellowship of the church for thousands of reasons yet staunchly defend the doctrine of God? How many have isolated themselves for the kine of Bashan who will yet fight tooth and nail for the doctrine of Christ? I am thankful for their defense of the gospel, but I wonder why they refuse the enjoyment of the fruits that attend the gathering of God's people. It is a sad thing to have a brother or sister with whom there can be no fellowship because they are on the other side of Jordan. We would say to such; "Cross on over Jordan, die to that other world, come and dine—this is your land also—your inheritance."

It is suspect to fight for what you refuse to enjoy. What testimony do you really have if you by choice have come short of the promise? Nicodemus is a New Testament example. Whether he was a believer or not, I do not know. Most commentators believe that he was because he defended Christ (John 7:51¹). The defense seems a little lame, and there is no indication that when he was pressed to confess Christ (John 7:48²) that he did. Scripture simply states that he dispersed as did the rest of the bunch. Nicodemus has always been known in Scripture as the one who came to Jesus by night (John 7:50; 19:39³), and we

¹ **John 7:51**; Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

² **John 7:48**; Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

³ **John 7:50**; Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. **19:39**; And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

know what Christ said about such (John 3:2, 19-20⁴). He did anoint Christ for burial after he had died implying that he loved Christ, but he never openly confessed him for fear of the Jews. By all indicators, if he was a disciple of Christ, he made his camp on the wrong side of the Jordan. Proximity to the promise is not realizing the promise. Defending the promise is not enjoying the promise.

2. Their life. These tribes kept their promise to fight but gained their wealth and prosperity outside the land of Canaan. With such choices, there will ultimately come a time when the one who made the wretched choice will have to justify what he did. There is no escaping this. The world is not stupid, nor are the children of God. If the life you live appears as if you have no interest in the things of God, but you are willing to defend the truth, sooner or later your belief is going to be called into question. You have opted for that which cannot be defended or justified by your life.

What will such a one do? He will boast of his Christianity and that in a big and visible way. Joshua 22:10 describes such boasting. “And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a *great* altar to *see* to.”

These two and one-half tribes did not just build an altar; they built a *big one*—one that could be seen by those on the Canaan side of the Jordan. It was as if they were saying, “We know we don't have anything to do with you folks, but we are still believers—see how big our altar is. We don't come to worship with you, but we have cottage prayer meetings and teach the truth. We refuse to enjoy the promise with the

⁴ **John 3:2**, The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. **19-20**; And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

children of God, but we preach, teach and defend the gospel of grace.”

I'm sorry; God is worshipped in the Promised Land and nowhere else. The high priest is *there*, the altar is *there*, the ceremony is *there* and nowhere else. Christ is in the midst of his church (Rev. 1:10-13¹). The big altar does not wash. They have come short of the promise. “Be sure your sins will find you out.”

3. Their end. Joshua 21:38 reads, “And out of the tribe of Gad, *Ramoth in Gilead* with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs.” Ramoth in Gilead was the possession of the tribe of Gad. When war came to Israel in 1 Kings, those who encamped and made their homes short of the promise were the first to fall (1 Kings 22:1-3²). “Be sure your sins will find you out.” (See: Gen. 44:16; Isa. 59:12; Psalm 51:3-4³).

This chapter in Numbers is a somber warning to the children of God.

Finally,

¹ **Rev. 1:10-13**; I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

² **1 Kings 22:1-3**; And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

³ **Gen. 44:16**; And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. **Isa. 59:12**; For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them. **Psalm 51:3-4**; For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Mathew 6:19-34).

ZEAL

Joshua 22:1-34

1, Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

2, And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you:

3, Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

4, And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan.

5, But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

6, So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents.

7, Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given possession in Bashan: but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them,

8, And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

9, And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

10, And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to.

11, And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel.

12, And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

13, And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest,

14, And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one was an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.

15, And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying,

16, Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD?

17, Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD,

18, But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, seeing ye rebel to day against the

LORD, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel.

19, Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD'S tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God.

20, Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity.

21, Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel,

22, The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day,)

23, That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require it;

24, And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel?

25, For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the LORD: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the LORD.

26, Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice:

27, But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD.

28, Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may

say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you.

29, God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that is before his tabernacle.

30, And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them.

31, And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.

32, And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again.

33, And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

34, And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed: for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God.

As we reviewed the account of these two and one-half tribes from Numbers chapter 32 in the last chapter, we saw that though they were willing and glad to fight for the possession of the Promise Land, their choice to dwell outside the land proved fruitful ground for suspicion.

This text is not an indictment against the remaining tribes for reacting the way they did when the two and one-half tribes raised up a great altar on the world side of the Jordan. Though the remaining tribes were proved mistaken in their assessment of the reason for the altar the two and one-half tribes built, they are not to be blamed for their initial reaction. They were zealous for the glory of God. They knew there was but one place where sacrifices were to be made, on the brazen altar at the door of the tabernacle, and those sacrifices were burnt offerings designed to appease the justice of the one true God for sin by a substitutionary sacrifice.

The objection of the tribes living in the Promised Land was reasonable because the altar of the two and one-half tribes was erected in the wrong place (being any place other than Jerusalem), and if erected in a pagan land, it could only mean that its design was to make sacrifice to a strange god. Their reaction flowed from a jealousy for God's glory and a zeal for His honor. Such a thing, even if found to be a mistake, is never worthy of censure. But even we, who believe Christ to be the altar, the sacrifice, the offended, the offence, the satisfaction, and the singular place where God and man meet, would react in the same manner if our brother seemed to be setting up another Jesus, or another Spirit, or another gospel (2 Cor. 11:2-4; Gal. 2:11¹). We would immediately prepare ourselves for the battle as did these tribes in Canaan (vv. 12-13, 17-18; Phil. 1:17²). The children of God cannot and will not countenance anything that smells of another way other than Christ alone. They will be called narrow, hard, sectarian and heretical, but they will wear

¹ **2 Cor. 11:2-4**; For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. **Gal. 2:11**; But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

² **Phil. 1:17**; But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

these disparaging titles as badges of honor if it means giving no quarter and taking no prisoners when it comes to Christ alone for their complete salvation.

In this particular instance the tribes in the Promise Land were mistaken about the motive that Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had in raising the altar. Though they were right in their desire to do battle for the glory of God, they were mistaken in applying the wrong motive to those who erected the altar. The motive of the two and one-half tribes was to assure those on the Canaan side of the Jordan that they were worshipping the same God. Their design was to build this altar and build it big enough to be seen so as to say to those in the Promised Land that though they had opted to live away from the fellowship of the public worship of the Lord, they still worshipped the same God.

The altar they erected was *not* for sacrifice. They knew that their atonement was accomplished by the high priest once a year in the Holy of Holies with the blood of the Lamb. By the erection of this altar, they were witnessing to the fact that though they were not present, they were of the same mind and heart, trusting in the same God to receive them by the death of the Lamb (vv. 25-29, 34). Though we cannot always understand why some seem unable to be part of a local assembly, and yet are ardent supporters of the gospel, we need to be careful not to apply motive without properly finding out the matter.

It should be sufficient to us to know that God has included such in His family. Though our immediate reaction of jealousy for the glory of God is right and true, our reason for it might be mistaken. Moses *thought* that by slaying the cruel Egyptian that he would gain the affection of the Israelites, but he thought wrong. Paul *thought* that by performing certain Jewish rites that he would gain the ear of the Jews, but he was wrong. The tribes of the Promised Land *thought* that the tribes of the wilderness were erecting an altar of sacrifice, and probably to appease a pagan God, but they were wrong. God's thoughts are not our thoughts. By and large, our thoughts rarely prove us right, and

that because they are generally a reaction to what we see in a moment and a flash—hardly a view of the whole story. It is no wonder that the Lord said that we should be quick to hear and slow to act (Prov. 16:32; James 1:19¹). The people of God are people, and there is no end, it seems, to the manifold ways we can fail each other by giving ample reason to our brethren that our sincerity is suspect.

There is much instruction for us here in the manner this was handled.

The first thing that should be noted and put into practice in our lives is this. Though the people of the Promised Land were ready to defend the gospel with their lives, they did not immediately go to war. They first addressed the situation personally. Before they struck a blow, thrust a spear or sent an arrow flying, they spoke to those of whom they were suspicious.

Herein is a principle of life worth emulating. Before you strike, and usually the strike we make is with the tongue, find out the truth if you can. Before you talk *about* someone, talk *to* them. If you have a problem with a brother or sister, talk to them instead of talking about them. People are going to get burrs under their saddles. Human beings will rarely run a straight course, especially the course that *you* have laid out in your mind for them. Preachers may get out of pocket and for a time seem bent on dividing folks, and you may get so angry that you want to gather your wagons in a circle. Before you do, send an emissary of peace to speak with the brother. If after you do find that you and your brother are at odds and cannot agree on a particular thing, then put it to the test of the gospel. If the disagreement is not a disallowing of the gospel, then leave it where it is, but do not make your brother a topic of conversation. Be as the Reubenites were when they were accused of erecting an altar to a strange God, they replied that God would judge in the matter (vv. 21-23).

¹ **Prov. 16:32**; He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. **James 1:19**; Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

Secondly, in such situation you need a mediator, someone who has understanding and is without question singularly interested in the glory of God. There is but one mediator between men and God, the man Christ Jesus. In this context, Phinehas is a picture of Christ (v. 13). There was no doubt among the people that Phinehas is the man for the job. He had before proved himself a deliverer whose interest was the glory and honor of God. When you have a disputation with a brother, do not go with your suspicion only, go with Christ. Make sure it is Christ that you are bringing and not just your interest in being right. The settlement of the dispute must always be about the gospel and its value and not the momentary pleasure of self-satisfying debate. No matter what the issue, the central thing that is of value is the glory of God, not our own glory.

Thirdly, when Christ is the mediator, the primary desire of the confrontation will not be war but recovery and reconciliation. These Promised Land tribes did not shoot first and ask questions later. They did not strike a blow and then afterwards try to justify their actions. They first sought to reclaim and recover those whom they thought had committed this grievous error (v. 19). The people of the Promised Land were ready to even give up their own possession in order that the two and one-half tribes be recovered. The fellowship of believers in the gospel is a precious thing. The primary desire must never be to dismiss or excommunicate but to recover. We must never feel that we have so many brethren that we can afford to lose one (Matt. 18:15-17; Col. 3:12-14¹).

¹ **Matt. 18:15-17**; Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. **Col. 3:12-14**; Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are

Fourthly, this mediatorial intervention did not make those in Canaan unhappy because they did not get a chance to slay some folk. To hear that they were mistaken about the altar did not make them crawl off and lick their wounds. They were happy, they were pleased and gave God all the Glory (vv. 30, 33).

Finally, let's pause for a moment and see this in light of Heaven. We believers are here on the earth, and many of our brethren have gone over Jordan and are inhabitants of the eternal Promised Land. In that scenario, we are akin to the two and one-half tribes on the other side of the Jordan. How shall we assure them that we are of one mind and one heart? Shall we erect a great altar in this strange land to be a witness to them that we are one? Indeed! Let us in our heart build upon the foundation laid by God Himself and worship at the altar, the only altar (Heb. 13:10-15¹). In Christ, we fellowship with those on the other side of Jordan (Heb. 12:22-24²). Christ, our great altar to see it, is our witness.

called in one body; and be ye thankful.

¹ **Heb. 13:10-15**; We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

² **Heb. 12:22-24**; But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

THE FINAL MESSAGE

Joshua 23:1-11

1, And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.

2, And Joshua called for all Israel, and for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old and stricken in age:

3, And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God is he that hath fought for you.

4, Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.

5, And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

6, Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left;

7, That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:

8, But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.

9, For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

10, One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

11, Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

Though the words of chapter 23 are not the final words of Joshua, they make up the final sermon that this servant of the Most High preaches. They are the words of departure of a man who has come to the end of his days, and thus they bear the weight and gravity of all that he has experienced as the chosen leader of the people. The words of the dying generally are held in esteem because at such a time all that might prohibit honesty, worldly ties, cares of the world and fear of censure, are removed, and that which is truly important comes to the fore. As leader and surrogate father of this people, Joshua sets before them the things that he knows to be important in hopes they will not be sidetracked to live for the things which are of no true value and meant to pass away.

Primary upon the mind of Joshua and the one thing which stands as instruction from one who knows God, is a rehearsal and recollection of the great things that God has done for his people. Joshua wastes no time lauding and applauding the deeds and accomplishments of the people because their happy estate is entirely due to the good pleasure and power of God. The best thing in life and the best thing when approaching death is the rehearsal of the gospel. Joshua declares that the people are where they are because God has brought them there. It is God who has fought for them and done what He has done to the nations because of them. It is Christ who has put you in His family by overcoming sin, defeating the enemy, putting away your sin by the sacrifice of himself and becoming your righteousness before God. You and I are recipients of divine favor freely given by grace through the sovereign mercy of our God.

We cannot look at our blessed estate and find one thing that we have received and even suggest that we had anything to do with receiving it. All Glory belongs to God (vv. 1-5). We have received the inheritance, being heirs according to the promise, based solely upon the death of the testator upon which the covenant was enforced. We can say with Paul, "I am what I am by the grace of God." I heard a preacher define "favor" as "what you get when opportunity is accompanied with your preparation to act." That preacher knows nothing of grace. We are children of God and saints of God because *God* would have it so.

If opportunity came, we would not recognize it, and our preparedness resided in a nature and penchant to get as far away from God as we could. Almighty grace cried, "arrest that man," and we were apprehended by divine favor. We found that God had *done* all these things *for us*, had fought our battles, brought us to a state of blessed rest and given us all things without our knowledge, consent or desire.

It is also important that the admonitions that follow and the courage to face the days ahead are accomplished by looking back at what God has done and His promised to keep you. This is ever the heart of the child of God. He does not know the future. What lies ahead is according to the promise of God, and the believer is able to look back at the manifold mercies he has received to see that God has never failed him, and since God "changeth not," future enemies will be handled in the same manner (v. 5; Eph. 2:10¹).

I have often asked this question. If your life was at an end, or if *my* life was at an end, and we knew that this would be the last message we would ever hear, what would I preach and what would you desire to hear? As I lay down my head to die, do not tell me of *my* life, tell me of the *life and death of my Savior* and what He secured for me by His life and death. Tell me the battle is over because it is the Mighty Christ who has fought for me. Tell me that I possess all things because it is the Mighty Savior

¹ **Eph. 2:10;** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

who has kept His promise. Tell me I am at rest and peace because He has made peace and reconciled me to God by the blood of His cross. Tell me of what He has done, and when you are finished—tell me again!

The admonition that Joshua gives in verse 6 is the same admonition that *he* received in chapter 1 and verse 7. He does so under inspiration because the promise of the Lord has seen him through to this day. We need courage to face the incessant vanities that are on every hand. There seems to be no end of those who oppose the truth and speak in glowing terms of strange gods whom we know not. Pressure is brought to bear to join in with the multitudes and not stand so far outside the circle of religion. But the admonition of the Lord is true. Neither turn to the right nor the left. Set your face like a flint. Be not carried away with every strange wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14¹). Let not incidents of human failure govern your path. Oh Lord, lead me in the “path of righteousness for your name's sake.”

Do not give the gods of this world the time of day. Do not try to fit them into some supposed pantheon where tolerance is the elixir of false peace. Don't even mention their names. “Hear, O Israel, our God is one God.” He is the true and living God. Their rock is not like our Rock (Deut. 32:30-35²). Do not bow to them, serve them or swear by them. They are the inventions of the infidel and are not to be countenanced as having any value at all.

¹ **Eph. 4:14;** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

² **Deut. 32:30-35;** How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

This is accomplished but one way. “Cleave to the Lord your God as ye have done to this day” (v. 8). Herein lies the crux of the matter. No instruction other than this is needed, no other instruction is useful, and no other will follow. My heart is *fixed*, O Lord, on thee. What will sustain you as you sojourn in this God-hating world? Will you look to your righteousness? Will you cling to your works? Will you put stock in your confession? Paul told Timothy to “Lay hold of eternal life.” Cleave, latch on to, be glued to the Lord your God, and where He goes you will always be with Him. I am thankful that He will never leave us nor forsake us, but as for me, I want to be where He is, and the only way to do this is to cleave to Him. The verb “cleave” is in the imperfect tense meaning that this is a continuous act that intimates the idea of holding on for dear life.

The Word declares ample reason for us to cling to the Lord our God (v. 9). It is because He has never failed us. Every enemy that has been in our path, He has defeated. The accuser of the brethren has been chained and jailed! Sin that so easily besets us has been annihilated by His blood and death. Self has been subdued by the indwelling of His Spirit. No man has been able to stand before you. In yourself you are nothing. You are a former dunghill denizen. You can, of yourself, overcome or prevent nothing. You are a blip on the radar of history, and your Lord has made every enemy that thought to come against you to fear you. It is not you that they fear but the truth that you cling to. It strikes fear in the garrisons of religion. One man shall chase a thousand (v. 10)! A fool fleeth when no man pursueth.

When my wife and I attended Rosemont Baptist Church years ago, we were but a small group of believers. The local bible college made a policy that if any of its students attended the church, they would be expelled because it was a sovereign grace church. The church that was on campus had hundreds of members, yet they were fearful. Why? They were afraid of the *truth*. They knew if one of their students got hold of the truth, it meant that everything they believed and taught would be proven just so much chaff, and what is the chaff to the wheat? They

knew, in their heart of hearts, that when the student was found of Christ, that he would no longer have use for the professors, theologians and the rules and regulations of their system of control. Such would be free and look only to Christ to fight for them. Nothing is scarier to religion than one who has no need of them and counts them as useless, trite, silly and grown men playing children's games.

I will end this study at verse 11. This verse is the catalyst for courage and cleaving to the Lord your God. "Take good heed." Be about this business and nothing else (Col. 3:1-3¹). Love the Lord your God. Herein is the final blow to useless religion. Men are not kept by rules, regulations, false promises *to* church covenants, or by legal threats of censure and reprobation. That is religious duress and of no value. The singular motivation of the believer is *love for Christ*. Love for Christ will cause you to weigh everything you do and every decision you make in light of that sweet relationship. Love for Christ will make you joyful in the direst of circumstances. Love for Christ will make you a "puzzlement" to religion because there is nothing else that constrains you but that love. Love is stronger than death. Love for Christ will cause you to love the brethren and forgive them as you have been forgiven (1 Cor. 13:4, 8a; Jude 1:21-25²).

"Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God" (v.11).

¹ **Col. 3:1-3**; If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

² **1 Cor. 13:4**, Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 8a; Charity never faileth **Jude 1:21-25**; Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

LOVE'S WARNING

Joshua 23:11-16

11, Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

12, Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:

13, Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

14, And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

15, Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

16, When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

In the first part of this chapter, Joshua shows the people their blessedness by proclaiming what God had done for them. He gave them the land, drove out their enemies and fought for them. Verse 11 is a kind of hinge in this context. Loving the Lord God is a reasonable response from anyone who has been so blessed by the grace of God. Such magnanimous mercy and grace should, without question, cause the heart to pour out with love toward the benefactor. All men ought to love God. He is their creator and has given them all things. But men, because of the fall, do not love God. In fact, the opposite is true. All men by nature hate God.

Believers are no different by nature, but the believer is *made* different by *grace*. The love we have to God is *derived*. It is purely *responsive*. “We [believers] love Him because he first loved us” (1 John 4:9¹). That fact not only states the reason why we love God, but also states that His love is indeed the cause of our love. His love causes our love. However, love for God and love for the brethren comes to us as divine edicts. We are commanded to love God, which effectively takes love outside the realm of emotion and feelings. This is not to say that we do not have emotion, sentiment, passion and feeling toward God; we do. But love is action and deeds.

“Take good heed...that you love the Lord your God” (v. 11) is an admonition and a warning about actions. The emotional side of love provides motivation, but the strength of love resides in deeds and truth (1 John 3:18; Gal. 5:6²). Verse 11 points us back to the love of God revealed in his gracious actions toward us and carries us forward to the actions that our love for Him should produce. Only love for God will cause us to refrain from what our Lord warns us against in the following verses.

¹ **1 John 4:9**; In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

² **1 John 3:18**; My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. **Gal. 5:6**; For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

The word “else” in verse 12 directs us to the end of those who do not act in love toward God. If we do not “take heed” (act of the will) to love the Lord, if we fail to act in love toward God, the result will be that we will act in love to all that *opposes* God. The singularity of love makes it impossible to love both God and that which opposes Him. One cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24¹). If he loves one, he will hate the other. The warning of verse 11 is to avoid any mixture with the false religion that is on every hand (v. 12). Because Israel had not completely driven out the enemy and in some cases had indentured them to slavery, their very presence presented a danger. The enemy still held to their gods, and proximity, over time, beginning with tolerance, eventuated in their cleaving to the enemy and even marriage with them, which not only involves prohibited carnal knowledge, but worse and more insidious, intimate knowledge. Natural love would bring about the melding of minds and the exchange of ideas, ideals and values. Joshua had commanded the people to cleave to God, the initial action of love (v. 8). Without that love to God, they would cleave to that which is false.

Verse 11 is also an indicator of love toward God and has to do with minding the things of God. Love for someone continually reminds the one who loves of the benefits of knowing the one loved. Joshua asserts this fact and holds these people to account that God, in his active and gracious love, has never failed them. Everything that He had promised He had also performed. God's love had never let them down. God's love had seen them through every trial and defeated all their enemies. If any enemy remained, it was because the people *wanted* it to be so. Remember that though these things point to the full success of Christ, they, because spoken under the Old Covenant, made the blessing of the covenant conditioned upon obedience to it (2

¹ **Matt. 6:24;** No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Chron. 7:14¹). The believer in Christ is blessed, not because of his *own* obedience, but entirely upon the *obedience of Christ*.

Though our blessings are solely by grace, the enjoyment of them is dependent upon our looking continually (cleaving) to Christ. The words of verses 13, 15-16 set forth the principle of chastisement often employed by our loving Father. Notice what our Lord says.

The words of verse 13 indicate that if the children cleave to the false gods and join themselves to enemies of God, He will let them have their way. He will not drive out the enemy but will let sin run its course. The result will be that they will be ensnared, scourged and the vision damaged by the associations they *desired*. If you would desire a mixture of the false and the true, God may let you have it and send leanness to your soul. Love to God will prevent this while we act in love (vv. 6-7). Lack of love to God will surely bring about the worst possible scenario (2 Thess. 2:10-12²). This, I believe, is what happened to the man in Corinth whose flesh was turned over to Satan to destroy that his soul would be saved. God gave him the desire of his heart, used Satan to sift him, and stripped him of everything but Christ (Read: 1 Cor. 5).

Notice in verse 15 that the blessing remains. The good land which the Lord gave remains, but because of your error, your disobedience, your sin, you will not be able to enjoy it. Verses 15 and 16 is a “therefore” and “when” situation. Therefore, when you have transgressed and counted as nothing the good land that God has given you, He will bring evil upon you. Because you served and bowed to other gods, you will be removed from where God meets with His people.

¹ **2 Chron. 7:14**; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

² **2 Thess. 2:10-12**; And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The means that our Lord employed was to put His people into captivity. This is the natural end of the mixture. It always ends in captivity and finally the outcry to God for deliverance (Ps. 106:7-15¹). This will be the end of this people throughout their history.

Some principles apply to this.

The first is clear and singular. Take heed to love the Lord you God. The things listed as evidence of the lack of love are idolatry (a mixture of the false and true), and fellowship with the enemies of God. The actions of love toward God most assuredly are worshipping Him alone, refusing any mixture and having no fellowship with those who espouse false teaching (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1²).

Secondly, it is important to remember that these are not empty warnings. The word “when” (v. 16) suggests this will be something we will continually be confronted with. There is a world religion out there that will most willingly swallow up the truth and fellowship with you but only as long as *you* are willing to *keep quiet* about the truth. False religion will lead you into all

¹ **Ps. 106:7-15** Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea. Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

² **2 Cor. 6:14-7:1**; Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

manner of things that will seem right and moral—to keep you busy while enwrapped in their love. You will not even have to divorce yourself from the truth. You can believe what you will as long as your presence and behavior is tantamount to acknowledging that the enemies of God are yet believers (Ex. 5:1-9¹).

Finally in this passage, I see the true pastor. Joshua is about to pass from this earth. He is not looking to establish a legacy or to bring attention to himself. In his final sermon, He points to the one thing needful and warns against turning to the right of the left (vv. 11-12). Joshua was a picture of Christ in His earthly ministry. Our Lord gave no quarter to false religion. He told the truth, warned His people against all that is false, and spoke peace to all His seed.

¹ Ex. 5:1-9; And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.

COVENANT

Joshua 24:1-3

1, And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

2, And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.

3, And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.

Whether the words of this text were part of Joshua's final sermon in chapter 23, I do not know, but they are definitely the last words of this great servant of God, this prolific type of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this old soldier and conqueror, who is about to enter into his final glorious rest.

First, this entire chapter 24 is compelling on many levels. The first thirteen verses are a rehearsal of the manifold deliveries of the people of God by the sovereign might of the Lord. It is fitting that the last words of the one whose name means "savior" or "deliverer" should begin his epitaph with the story of salvation. Our Lord began his ministry at twelve years of age with the words, "Shall I not be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49), and ended it with, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Our Lord began His public ministry preaching "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). He ended His public ministry with the command to the disciples to "go into the

world and preach repentance and the remission of sin in the name of Jesus Christ” The dying words of Joshua, the type and the substance of Christ are regarding deliverance by the power of God.

Secondly, looking at the entire chapter, there are three basic themes; 1) remembering that redemption is by sovereign deliverance, 2) serving the Lord and 3) to keep from idolatry. What I found extremely compelling in these words of Joshua is that he warned and commanded these things and never mentions the keeping of the law of Moses as motive or reason for any of what was said. In Joshua’s record of the manifold deliverances and his concise history of the patriarchs, there is not one allusion, one reference to Sinai. Moses and Aaron are declared only in their capacity as instruments of God in bringing Israel out of the cruel bondage of Egypt.

However, Joshua does clearly declare the *reason* for these recorded salvations, and they are summed up in the subject I want to address in this study. This blessed summation is found in the words of verses 2 and 3. The words are the words of the LORD Himself; “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel.” A powerful and absolute distinction is made in the way that our God reveals Himself in this phrase. The capitalization of the title LORD God indicates more than the fact that He is God over all. He *is* God over all, but that is *not* the capacity in which He now reveals Himself. He speaks as Jehovah God, the *just* God and Savior, and in that capacity, He is singularly the God of a particular, peculiar and purchased people (Is. 45:20-25; Phil. 3:3¹). He is not Jehovah Savior to anyone outside this

¹ **Is. 45:20-25**; Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that

designated people. He is the Savior of the elect, the chosen, true Israel, the church of the living God.

In that particular character, He reveals Himself first and preeminently in the capacity of the God of the covenant of grace, the covenant of promise, the new covenant ratified in His own blood. The motive for all that follows; the successive deliverances, serving the Lord and refusing idolatry, is that God has made an eternal covenant with His Son for the salvation of His elect. He does not take Israel to the account of Sinai but to the day when He took an idolatrous man and made Him the father of many nations, the father of the faithful. Abraham was not a special man, except by sovereign *designation*. He was like all those who lived before the flood, whose “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). Abraham lived after the flood, but the Lord’s choice of words is further proof that salvation is by covenant grace.

Those eight souls who lived through the flood came out on the other side and begat children with the same penchant for sin as those who were destroyed by the flood. The judgment of God may have changed behavior for a moment, but it was just a short one. Lot got drunk *immediately* after his deliverance. His daughters committed incest with him, and he was the one to whom God had shown great grace. The record is clear that humanity was the same before and after the flood, and judgment *never* eventuates in salvation, faith or repentance (Gen. 8:21¹). The Lord used this terminology to assure that salvation is by grace, and that by covenant. Abraham was a sinner, an idolater, just like every other son of Adam when the Lord made a covenant with Him (Rom. 4:1-5²). The LORD said I “took” Abraham (v. 3). The word “took” means to “fetch, lay hold of,

are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. **Phil. 3:3**; For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

¹ **Gen. 8:21**; And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

seize, receive, acquire, buy, bring, marry, take a wife, snatch or take away.” Abraham, the idolater, was apprehended by Grace.

Our LORD further declares that He “led” Abraham (v. 3). “The steps of the good man are ordered by the Lord” (Psa 37:23). “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). The covenant that The LORD God made with Abraham was a precise picture of the eternal covenant of Grace (Gen. 12:1-3¹). The Lord multiplied His seed. Our Lord speaks of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the multiplication of Abraham's seed and the multiplication of Christ's seed (Gal. 3:16-18, 29; Isa. 53:10-11²).

The final phrase of verse 3 is the capstone of the fact that our Lord God is speaking as the covenant God. This is a blessed, sweet, succulent, savory truth. The LORD God of Israel declares of Abraham, “I gave him Isaac.” Isaac was the *supernatural* son born to Abraham and Sarah. Ishmael was the product of the virility of Abraham's flesh and could never be the heir of the promise. Ishmael must be cast out with the

² **Rom. 4:1-5**; What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

¹ **Gen. 12:1-3**; Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

² **Gal. 3:16-18**, Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. **29**; And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. **Isa. 53:10-11**; Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

bondwoman because the flesh cannot abide with the spirit. “I gave him Isaac.” “Isaac” means to “laugh” and not only speaks of the joy of Abraham and Sarah but speaks of the mockery made against the idea that what God has promised could ever be accomplished by the power of human endeavor (Rom. 4:17-21¹; Read Ps. 2). “I gave him Isaac” and in doing so, set at odds forever *grace* and *works*. In Isaac is the multiplication of the seed (Rom. 9:6-7²). “I gave him Isaac” and forever declared the difference between the two covenants (Gal. 4:22-28³). “I gave him Isaac” and for all time established the boundaries and consequences of being the child of God (Gal. 4:29-31⁴). Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, the covenant God of His chosen people. This is grand motivation to remember redemption, serve the Lord and keep ourselves from idols.

¹ **Rom. 4:17-21;** (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

² **Rom. 9:6-7;** Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

³ **Gal. 4:22-28;** For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

⁴ **Gal. 4:29-31;** But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

COVENANT MERCIES

Joshua 24:3-13

3, And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.

4, And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

5, I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out.

6, And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea.

7, And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.

8, And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you.

9, Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you:

10, But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.

11, And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand.

12, And I sent the hornet before you, which drove them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but not with thy sword, nor with thy bow.

13, And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.

As we saw in the last lesson, the encouragement that Joshua gave to the people was found in the covenant of Grace, pictured by the covenant made with Abraham (v. 3). What follows through verse 13 is a rehearsal of the benefits of that blessed covenant as Joshua speaks of the covenant mercies of God.

The covenant of grace is solely found in the mind, will, counsel and action of God toward his chosen people. The nature of that covenant is that those who are included in it take no part in the execution of it and stand in it only as recipients of God's benefaction. In this portion of Scripture, you will see this declared in no uncertain terms. Notice carefully:

- v. 3 (From the mouth of God), "I took," "I led," "I multiplied," "I gave;"
- v. 4 "I gave;"
- v. 5 "I sent," "I plagued," "I did," "I brought;"
- v. 6 "I brought;"
- v. 7 "I brought," "I covered," "I have done;"
- v. 8 "I brought," "I gave," "I destroyed;"
- v. 10 "I would not hearken," "I delivered;"
- v. 12 "I sent;"
- v. 13 "I have given".

This is the life story of the sinner saved by grace. His testimony will ever be "To God be the glory, great things *He* has done." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." When our

Lord healed and saved the demoniac of Gadara, he told the man to, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19). This is what it is to preach the gospel. It is a resplendent, redundant, repetition of the mighty works of God for His glory and for the good of His people.

John Flaval wrote a wonderful book entitled *The Method of Grace* in which he detailed the scheme of grace from eternity to eternity. This passage from Joshua 24 is a beautiful picture of the method of Grace as it sets forth the covenant mercies of our sovereign God. It is a veritable checklist of the operation of grace for us.

In verse 3, we see the covenant declared in the calling of Abraham and the giving of Isaac. Since we looked at this in the previous lesson, we will forego further comment here.

The first thing mentioned after the introduction of the covenant is the distinction of the election of grace (v. 4). Jacob and Esau stand as examples of the grace of God in sovereign execution of election (Mal. 3:2-3; Rom. 9:11-13; Eph. 1:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:13¹). Election is *unto* salvation. The elect will be saved because that is what they are chosen *unto*.

The second thing we see is that the elect are put in a place where they are brought to the knowledge that they are without hope and without help in the world (v.4). The non-elect are

¹ **Mal. 3:2-3**; But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. **Rom. 9:11-13**; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. **Eph. 1:3-4**; Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. **2 Thess. 2:13**; But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

given the things of the world to enjoy, as Esau was given Seir (Deut. 2:5). The elect are caused to look for another world. Jacob, the elect of God, is sent into ultimate slavery, the bondage of sin, and the slavery of false religion. Men spend much energy and time trying to figure out the dynamics of the fall of man in Adam. They describe the fall of man, in light of God's sovereignty, with words like "allowed" or "determined," and address the provision made for the fall with big words, such as "infralapsarian" and "supralapsarian." The fact is that the Lord sent Jacob and Israel into slavery for the purpose of *grace* (Gen. 15:13-14¹). God will have his elect call on Him and hunger for the release of salvation.

The third thing we see is that God will send His elect a preacher (v. 5). I know that men quibble about the necessity of this, often even applying to the sovereignty of God to disallow it. But the fact remains that no one will call upon the name of the Lord for deliverance until God sends them a preacher (Rom. 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13²). The Ethiopian Eunuch did not ask to confess Christ until God sent Phillip to him (Acts 8:36-39³). Cornelius did not believe and was not baptized until

¹ Gen. 15:13-14; And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

² **Rom. 10:13-17**; For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. **1 Cor. 1:21**; For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. **Eph. 1:13**; In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

³ **Acts 8:36-39**; And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot

God sent Simon Peter (Acts 10:6, 47¹). The scales did not fall from the eyes of Saul of Tarsus until God sent Ananias to declare the gospel to him (Acts 9:17-18²). The method of grace is that if you are one of the elect, then God will send you a preacher.

The fourth thing we see is that sin, Satan and self will be made to release their grasp upon you (v. 5b). God will *plague* the enemy—the slave master—so that he will, being soundly whipped, let go. Our Lord's victory over death was victory over every facet of our bondage (vv. 6-8). After the enemy is defeated, then the Lord will bring His people out of bondage (John 12:31-32; Luke 11:20-22; 1 Cor. 15:25-26; Heb. 2:14-15³).

The fifth thing we see is the Lord protecting His people from *false doctrine* (vv. 9-10). Balaam was a sly dog, and though he knew he could not curse those whom God had blessed, he still took money for trying and ended up with a subtle plan of

to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

¹ **Acts 10:6**, He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. **47**; Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

² **Acts 9:17-18**; And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

³ **John 12:31-32**; Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. **Luke 11:20-22**; But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. **1 Cor. 15:25-26**; For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. **Heb. 2:14-15**; Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

asphyxiation by assimilation. He directed Balak to do business with the people of God, to inter-marry with them, and the ultimate end would be that they would embrace the false god Baal-Peor. Religion is subtle and seeks to include all things religious in hopes of eventually, by sheer force of time and number, causing the believer to embrace the lie. Christ has promised that none of the elect will be deceived. The elect will not hearken to false teachers who are actually seeking the demise of God's people. God has and will deliver his people out of the hands of false teachers.

The sixth thing we see is that even after we have crossed into the Promised Land there are enemies aplenty to war against us (v. 11). Our greatest wars are those within us that play on our bent to self-righteousness (2 Cor. 10:3-5¹). It was at Jericho that the walls fell by the sound of the trumpet and the shout of the people marching behind the ark, symbolizing the preaching of Christ. The importance of a consistent, constant and unwavering declaration of the gospel cannot be overestimated. The preacher may give men rules, regulations to follow and theological tidbits to debate, but that will only lead to a life of judgment against those who are perceived to do less and know less. The gospel sets things in order, puts all men in the same sinking boat, and never gives man a reason to boast in anything but Christ and Him crucified. "Where is boasting then: It is excluded" (Rom. 3:27). "What have ye that ye have not received...?" (Rom. 8:15). When the walls are knocked down by the gospel, the only one saved is the whore-saint, and she will ever remain—Rahab the Harlot.

The seventh thing we see is that God controls even the beasts for the good of His people (v. 12). Some say that this hornet is metaphorical for the concept of fear, and I see no difficulty with that, nor does anyone who has ever been dive-

¹ **2 Cor. 10:3-5**; For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

bombed by a ring-tail wasp. But be reminded, the Lord sent actual frogs, locusts, and flies, and even controlled the spread of murrain (anthrax) so that it infected none of His people's cattle. This is a glorious declaration that God works all things “for good to them that love [Him], to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). And He does it for a specific purpose. He does it to declare that your deliverance, your salvation, is by His grace alone (v. 12b) and “not with *thy* sword nor with *thy* bow” (v. 12d).

Finally, we are continually reminded by the gospel that what we are, where we are, and what we have is by the gift of grace —“I have given” (v. 13; Deut. 6:10-12; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:12; Gal 2:20¹).

This is the method of grace.

¹ **Deut. 6:10-12**; And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. **1 Cor. 15:10**; But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. **2 Cor. 1:12**; For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. **Gal 2:20**; I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

PLAIN TRUTH

Joshua 24:14-23, 26

14, Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

15, And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

16, And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

17, For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

18, And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God.

19, And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

20, If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

21, And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

22, And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

23, Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.

26, And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.

Having declared to the children of Israel the gospel, which they had heard, by which they had been delivered many times and wherein they stood (vv. 2-13), Joshua now calls them to account concerning the worship of the *one* true God. The words that he speaks must be viewed in context of the fact that the children of God are susceptible and naturally inclined toward worshipping strange gods (Deut. 31:16-18¹). In all likelihood, they had in their possession statues and teraphims of these gods of Egypt and had come into possession of Gentile gods, as they are now in possession of their lands.

If God is to be served, there is no place in that equation for any other god but Him. Jacob required the same of his family in Genesis 35:1-4.

And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let

¹ Deut. 31:16-18; And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem (Genesis 35:1-4).

The words of Joseph here are akin to the words of our Lord when He told His disciple “if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt 16:24), “And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. . .” And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. . .” (Matt. 5:29). Though some things in the life of the child of God are matters of indifference and can be used or not used according to the measure of love for the brethren (concerning meats, drink, and days), in this matter of serving God, no quarter is given. A man cannot have two masters; he cannot serve two masters. God will not be worshipped in the presence of false, man-made deities or where such idols are entrenched in the heart of the people.

The admonition of Joshua (v. 14) is founded on his declaration of the person and work of God on behalf of His people in verses 3-13. True worship is worshipping God because of *who* He is, therefore being worthy of worship. Who He is to His people is understood in the things that He has freely done for them. Before Joshua calls the people to fear and serve the Lord, he sets before them the great things that God had done for them, and all they have they have freely received by grace. He has given nations for them and men for their lives.

It is not, however, the temporal stuff of the Promised Land and all that attended it that brings a child of God to worship. Worship of God is done in spirit and truth. The believer, like Job, may lose all worldly possessions and yet worship God because what he has truly been given can never be snatched away. He has been given eternal life and all spiritual blessings in Christ. In truth, as far as temporal allotments are concerned, the

believer worships God for nothing. Yet he worships because God has done things for him that he could never deserve or merit. So, *worship* is an *expression of thanksgiving*.

So, Joshua, having declared the works of the Lord on behalf of the people says, “Therefore, fear [love, cherish, reverence, venerate, be thankful] the Lord and serve Him in sincerity [entirely, completely: Greek; without wax] and truth” according to His Word, His gospel. That worship is only possible when all other gods are cast away (v. 14).

The last words of verse 15 are often quoted by the people of God; “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” Those words picture the heart of every true believer. The context in which they are spoken is very interesting and teaches us a great deal about the worship of God. True worship must be, and is, a *voluntary* act. The notion of worship being compelled by duress because of threat of loss, gain of reward, fear of censure, or from a place of guilt, is wholly against the teaching of Scripture. Joshua does not say, and neither does any believer, that someone *must* worship the Lord, but rather that if he does, it must be only the Lord that is worshipped.

Believers have no desire to convert men at the business end of a sword, and they hold no anger for those who refuse to worship God. Worship is and must be a free expression from a heart of thanksgiving. The words “if it seem evil to you” (v. 15) might well be interpreted “if it is irksome, burdensome, unpleasant to you,” and suggests that no force will be applied to you to worship the Lord. John 4:23 reads, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” This does not intimate that the Father is in *need* of such worship but declares that if He is worshipped, it is only acceptable if that worship is freely done.

God the Father does not seek men to worship Him as if he were looking to find some, but rather seeks “such” to worship Him—*such* as have His Spirit and know and acknowledge His

truth (Christ); *such* as *want* to worship Him (Deut. 5:29¹). The idea of compelling men to come to church, putting them under “watch care” and threatening them with excommunication if they do not meet an arbitrary attendance quota is foreign to the teaching of Scripture and to the heart of grace. If you will not worship God, then worship the god you choose. But know this, you can't worship God and cleave to your idols also (Josh. 23:8, 11-13²). The believer says, “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (in sincerity and truth). Here we see Joshua as patriarch, leading his house in the worship of God (Heb. 3:6³).

The response of the people is a good response and worthy of emulation (vv. 16-18). Such is the *heart* of every believer, but it is not always the *act*. Paul said, “with [my] mind I myself serve the law of God but with [my] flesh I serve the law of sin and death” (Rom 7:25). It is important to note that they spoke nothing of putting away their strange gods. They are right, and they do well to remember why they are to worship God, but while they spoke these words, there were still false deities among their hidden treasures (v. 22).

This fact prompts the words of Joshua in vv. 19-20. These verses are to be viewed together. If they were spoken in today's vernacular they might well be reversed in order because that is the meaning of what Joshua is saying. He is *not* saying to this people that they cannot serve the Lord at all. There is no restriction from serving the Lord, but rather, as he said before,

¹ Deut. 5:29; O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

² **Josh. 23:8**, But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day. **11-13**; Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

³ Heb. 3:6; But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

that if they harbor idols in their houses or their hearts, they cannot serve the Lord. The transgression that the Lord will not forgive is forsaking Him for what you deem to be a rival. The reason why you cannot (impossibility) serve the Lord along with your idols is because the Lord is Holy. In this context the word “holy” means “separate, unique and singular.” There is no God but God, and He alone is worthy of worship (Is. 45:19-22¹).

God is a jealous God. Jealousy among humans is rarely worthwhile, but it is *essential* to God. Jealousy has to do with an entitlement and refusal to allow someone to have what you deem to be yours *alone*. Honor and glory belong to the Lord alone, and thus, He is entitled to full and complete worship and service from His creation. He will countenance no rival, and therefore will not leave men unaccountable who embrace something that would challenge His right to what is truly His alone. He is a rightfully jealous God.

Having heard this, the people respond again with the promise and pledge to serve and worship God alone (vv. 21-24). Their response is spoken in the language of positive negative. In verse 16 the people said, “God forbid,” or be it far from us to worship idols. In verse 21 they say practically the same thing, but remember that as they promise and vow, they are still in possession of their false gods. Joshua declares that their words are binding words (Job 9:20²). It is better *not* to make a vow than to make a vow and then break it. Joshua calls upon them to realize that the words they speak will stand as a witness against them if they fail to keep their promise (v. 22). Thus, Joshua said,

¹ **Is. 45:19-22**; I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

² **Job 9:20**; If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

basically, that the end result will be their mark of success or failure. “Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you;” the gods which you are able to carry and secret in your houses; the gods that never bought anything to you but trouble; the gods that cannot save you, deliver you or keep you. You have declared that you will serve and obey God alone; get rid of the other diminutive, desolate deities now—now!

Upon their promise, Joshua renews in their mind the covenant. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me; thou shalt not make any graven image for anything; and thou shalt not bow down to them. God’s people bow to Christ alone. Joshua wrote the words of the Law on a stone, and as Jacob erected his pillar (Gen. 31:45¹) and Samuel his Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7:12²), it stood as a witness “by the sanctuary of the LORD” (v. 26), The believer has such a witness erected in his heart and mind by God Himself, and it is set up near to the sanctuary—Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:12-17³).

The covenant being established and ratified, the people are set free to enjoy their inheritance (v. 21). They are free to worship the Lord, free to put away their idols and free to enjoy the benefits and blessing of the grace wherein they stand. If you desire, you may worship the Lord, but you cannot worship if any rival to Him finds purchase in your heart.

May the Lord cast down all our idols, destroy even the sweetest frame that we might lean upon and put in our heart the

¹ **Gen. 31:45;** And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar.

² **1 Sam. 7:12;** Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

³ **Heb. 10:12-17;** But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

words of our heavenly Joshua, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

JOSHUA

Joshua 24:25, 28-29, 33

25, So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

28, So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

29, And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

33, And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

The time has come for Joshua to die. He has run the race, finished the course, and will go to be with his maker and redeemer. As we have seen in these studies, Joshua is a prolific type of our *eternal* Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ. In these last few verses, we are reminded again of our Lord in several ways. As we will see, there is a sweet rhythm in the final remarks of this book, a representation of what our Lord has done for us.

In verse 25, we are blessed to see Joshua make a covenant with the people. That covenant is a picture of the covenant of promise made with the elect people of God by our Lord. As described in Galatians and Hebrews, it was a will and testament in which all the elect are named, and all things necessary for the people's acceptance with God, their eternal welfare and their temporal supply, are met. That testament secured the freedom of

the elect and set them at liberty to go out into the world and enjoy the benefits of being a child of God (v. 28). He gave them rest wherein they find sweet rest. That testament was ratified and put in force by the death of the testator (v. 29; Heb. 9:15-17¹).

Having finished the work that he was assigned and purposed to do, the Savior, the Captain of the host dies. What a picture this is of our redemption! After our Lord finished the redemption of His people, He cried, "It is finished," gave up the ghost, committed His spirit into the hands of the father and salvation was done, once and forever.

But then in the last verse of this chapter (v. 33), we see the death of Eleazar the High Priest, another type of the Lord Jesus Christ. His name means "God has helped," and Scripture declares of Christ that God has "laid help upon one that is mighty" (Ps. 89:19). Here, the *Samaritan Chronicle* records that Joshua and Eleazar died at the same time, though Eleazar's death may have occurred a short time later. The thing to see is that the *captain of the hosts*, the *prophet* and the *high priest* died. What a day that was! On that day, all those who had long stayed in the city of refuge, manslayers all, walked out as free men, men whom the law could not touch.

Interestingly, and perhaps of some gravity, there is no record of Israel mourning the deaths of Joshua and Eleazar the customary thirty days. Sometimes an omission is a powerful message. But the fact is that the people of God do *not* mourn the death of Christ. They mourn the fact that it was their sins that nailed him to the cross. They wonder in terror of the punishment that He incurred on their behalf, but His death is the cause of celebration because in that wondrous death the law and justice of God was forever settled on their behalf. They

¹ Heb. 9:15-17; And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

gladly confess the Lord in baptism celebrating His death, and they receive the Lords Table in memorial celebration of His death. Perhaps this is why the Lord did not record any mourning for the deaths of Joshua and Eleazar.

As we finish these studies, I think it will do us good to remind ourselves again of how Joshua was a picture and type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first typification of our Lord is the name “Joshua.” It is the Hebrew version of the name “Jesus,” and both are derivative of that glorious name Jehovah. It means “savior.” This is the reason our Lord, as He entered this world to accomplish salvation, was given this name (Matt. 1:21¹). He is the Savior of His people, and He saved them from their sins. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim 1:15²). He is not the savior contingent upon a person accepting Him, nor is He the savior only if men believe Him. He is the savior because He has saved all for whom He died, and that salvation includes the faith and repentance by which his saved people embrace Him!

Secondly, Joshua led the people all *the way* into the Promised Land to receive of the Lord’s deliverance from temporal and external enemies. Our Lord, being *the way* by the merit of His person and sacrifice, brought all His people to the Promised Land, Immanuel’s Land, and delivered them from all internal and external enemies daily. This is seen in contrast to the fact that Moses could *not* bring the people into the Promised Land. The law could never deliver the people in that it was weak through the flesh, but the Lord did what the law could not do (Rom. 8:1-4³).

¹ **Matt. 1:21;** And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

² **1 Tim 1:15;** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

³ **Rom. 8:1-4;** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For

Thirdly, Joshua, as captain of the host, was a mighty conqueror. He overcame every enemy of the people. Christ, the Captain of our salvation and Lord of lords, has conquered every enemy of our soul and delivered us from the hands of every enemy. He has conquered Satan, mortally bruising his head, binding him up and spoiling his house (Matt. 12:28-29; 1 John 3:8¹). He has conquered sin, the merciless king that ruled us since birth (Rom. 5:12-14; 21²). He has taken sin to himself and utterly destroyed it for His people (Heb. 9:26³). He has conquered death, the bane of humanity, and delivered His people from that which held them in fear and servitude all their days (Heb. 2:14-15⁴). Death's sting has been consumed by the death of the Mighty Conqueror, who conquers and is still to conquer (Rev. 6:1-2⁵).

what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

¹ **Matt. 12:28-29**; But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. **1 John 3:8**; He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

² **Rom. 5:12-14**; Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. **21**; That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

³ **Heb. 9:26**; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

⁴ **Heb. 2:14-15**; Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

⁵ **Rev. 6:1-2**; And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Fourthly, all the promises of God to Israel were fulfilled by the hands of Joshua. All the promises of God are in and fulfilled by Christ (Rom. 15:8; 2 Cor. 1:20¹).

Fifthly, Joshua saved Rahab the Harlot who in faith hung the scarlet cord from her house in Jericho. Our Lord saved His people, harlots all, and they all believe Him to the salvation of their souls. No sinner should ever despair of the grace of God because it is sinners alone who are the object and trophies of His grace (Matt. 9:10-13²).

Finally, Joshua accepted the Gibeonites when they came without anything and sued for peace. He gave them a place in the assembly of the saints. Our Lord receives every humbled sinner who comes empty handed to His throne to seek mercy.

What a picture of the heavenly Joshua does this earthly Joshua paint!

¹ **Rom. 15:8**; Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. **2 Cor. 1:20**; For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

² **Matt. 9:10-13**; And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

