

The Book of Joshua

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Studies in Joshua, chapters 1-3

Introduction

Each book of the Bible has a prominent and dominant theme.

Whatever that leading subject may be, we should endeavor by all means to familiarize ourselves with it.

For example, Genesis is the book of beginnings.

Every major doctrine of the NT is found in embryo form in Genesis.

Exodus is the book of redemption, deliverance.

Departure of the Hebrews from Egypt.

Redemption is first of all by blood (Passover).

Secondly by power shown in God's amazing power in deliverance and preservation in the wilderness.

Leviticus is the book of worship.

God gives instruction relative to fellowship and worship. In type the book is full of Christ, especially His sacrifice and High Priesthood.

Numbers depicts the walk and wanderings of the Jews in the Wilderness.

Typical of the believers walk today.

Deuteronomy is the book in which Moses reviewed the past and gave instructions for the future.

The old generation had died in the wilderness. Moses is now acquainting the new generation with the law and the claims of God upon them. The word "remember"

occurs 14 times, “hear” over 30, and “do” over 100 times.

Obedience to God is the theme.

To arrive at the aforementioned conclusions entails extensive reading and research and prayerful consideration.

To know our subject we must be thoroughly acquainted with it.

So then I suggest that you read the Book of Joshua in a prayerful and expectant manner.

Joshua has a unique place in the annum of Scripture.

The Pentateuch would be incomplete without it. Genesis foretold that Israel would occupy the Promised Land.

The other four books of the Pentateuch give their history preparatory to their occupation of the land.

Joshua records the entering—the conquest and apportionment of the land, thus culminating the prophecies and journeying recorded in the Pentateuch.

Then Joshua is unique in its setting for what follows, as well as being the capstone for all past history, it is the foundation for all future history.

The five books of the Pentateuch lead Israel up to Canaan.

Joshua complements these by leading Israel into Canaan.

The following twelve books cover Israel’s history inside Canaan.

The Man Called Joshua

Joshua was born in Egypt.

He was given the name Hoshea meaning “Salvation.” Moses changed his name to Jehoshua, taking part of the original name and part of Jehovah’s name, making it to mean Jehovah Salvation. Later Jehoshua was reduced to Joshua.

Joshua is the Hebrew form of the Greek and Jesus. In many ways Joshua is a type of Christ.

With the exception of Caleb, Joshua was the only adult Israelite who left Egypt, survived the wilderness and entered Canaan.

We are abruptly introduced to him in Exodus 17:9. Moses entrusted Joshua to command the forces of Israel at Rephidin, in the battle with Amelek.

Joshua remains in this warrior-like character until the day of his death. He lived 110 years.

The two main things worthy of note in Joshua’s life:

1. The sending in of the spies.
2. His ordination as the future leader of Israel. During his life he “wholly following the Lord.”

General Survey of Joshua

The book readily falls into three divisions:

1. Entering the land—chapters 1-6.
2. Overcoming the land—chapters 6-12.
3. Occupying the land—chapters 13-24.

The above analysis also contains the “key thought.”

Entering—Overcoming—Occupying.

The central message is “the victory of faith”. In this respect Joshua stands in sharp contrast to Numbers. Numbers is full of unbelief and failure; failure to enter the land (14:2-4), failure to overcome (14:44-45), failure to occupy (14:28-34).

Spiritually interpreted, the fightings and experiences of Israel in the land, under Joshua, proclaim the NT truth “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—John 5:4.

Joshua 1

v.1—God’s call. Jehovah spoke to Joshua.

v.2—God’s commission. “Arise go over this Jordan.”

v.3-4—God’s promise. “Every place”, etc.

v.5—“Every promise. I never failed Moses. I will not fail thee.”

v.6-7—This task was not going to be an easy one. Three times Joshua is exhorted to “be strong and very courageous.”

The Law of God was to be their guide:

1. Turn not from it.
2. Let it not depart out of your mouth.
3. Meditate upon it day and night.
4. Do all that is written therein.

The promise—good success and prosperity.

v.9—The final exhortation.

1. Be strong.

2. Be of good courage.

3. Be not afraid.

4. Be not dismayed.

“I will be with you wherever you go.”

Humanly speaking, what God asked Joshua to do was impossible.

Let us look at the inhabitants of the land.

Canaan was packed full of powerful enemies. The land was inhabited by races of giants, men who were famous for stature and strength.

The people were fierce and warlike—they had chariots of iron.—17:16.

The cities as described by the spies were “great and walled up to Heaven”—Deuteronomy 1:28.

Then there was a food problem. In the wilderness they had been fed daily by the manna, but that was to stop on entering the land.

Who was going to feed the great multitude? These obstacles were enough to terrify the stoutest heart.

But that is not all.

Think of the forces that Joshua had, humanly speaking. A bunch of unpromising people—the descendants of rebels—for 40 years they lacked faith in God. Could Joshua rely on their loyalty and cooperation?

Then look at his army—they were not soldiers, they had been slaves—they were wanderers in a waste howling wilderness.

Apart from being untrained, they were poorly armed and lacked training.

This then was the situation and this was the task which Joshua was given.

What would you have done in the same circumstances?

Jordan is not an illustration of death, neither is Canaan of heaven.

Canaan was a place of warfare and full of enemies.

Heaven will not be like that. If that is what it is not, then what is it?

Hebrews 3 and 4 teach us that the land of Canaan was a place of rest and victory. Typical of the spiritual rest and victory which can be enjoyed by every spiritual believer.

The Ephesian epistle talks of the “heavenly places”, this is not “heaven”, but is a spiritual sphere upon earth in which a spiritual believer can live in rest and victory in our Risen Lord.

Canaan was the goal to which God was leading His people. His promised Moses at the burning bush not only the deliver from the bondage of Egypt, but also to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. They could only live in one of two places.

The Wilderness or Canaan

It was God’s will that they live in Canaan. Many chose to live and die in the wilderness, thus falling short of God’s ideal for them.

The Personal Application.

If we are born again we are in one of two places. “The Wilderness” or “The Heavenly Places.”

1. The wilderness—is a place of defeat, spiritual stagnation, it is almost joyless, fruitless and unproductive. There is little progress and there is much wandering and floundering and disappointment. Many Christians live and die in this condition, never having realized God's ideal.

2. The heavenly places: (Ephesians)

A. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ (1:3).

B. It is a place of power “at God's right hand” (1:20).

C. It is a place of fellowship, sitting together with Christ (2:6).

D. It is a place of testimony. We are manifesting the wisdom of God to principalities and powers (3:10).

E. It is a place of warfare and victory. We are wrestling against the rulers of the darkness, but with victory assured (6:12).

Look now at verse 3.

God had given the whole land to the Israelites, but they could only possess the portion which they conquered and claimed. It is so with the believer—we must claim our possessions in Christ.

The first thing that we have to do is “cross over Jordan”. This speaks of our death with Christ. When He died, He died to the world, flesh and the devil. We in turn have to crucify the world, flesh, and devil if we ever hope to enjoy the fullness of blessing and victory.

Galatians 2:20—“I am crucified with Christ.” This is not easy—there were seven nations in Canaan.

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us of our enemies then displays for our use the armor of God which assures spiritual victory.

v.2—“Go over this Jordan.”

As we hasten to obey this Divine command, we see the formidable enemies who will contest every inch of the way...our courage fails.

“Be strong” is God’s exhortation.

“Be not afraid”—1:9.

“I will be with you”—v.9.

“I will not fail you nor forsake you”—v.5.

Joshua went on the strength of these promises and conquered. Should we do less?

Notice how the people that God can use:

1. Joshua was a “faithful man”—he “wholly followed the Lord.”

2. The second qualification for leadership is a distinct and definite call—v.1.

3. His source of power and strength was the power of the indwelling Word of God—see v.9.

A. Turn not from it.

B. Let it not depart out of your mouth.

C. Meditate upon it day and night.

D. Do all that is written therein...the promise. Good success and prosperity.

Days of Preparation Joshua 1:10-11; 2

Prepare food...wait for three days.

Waiting is one of the hardest things to do. God has a purpose for any hold up in progress or activity. We should find out what that purpose is.

Psalm 46:6—"Be still and know that I am God." "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." "Tarry at Jerusalem—wait for the promise of the Father."

Paul's impatience—See Acts 16:6, 7 and 9:10.

Paul waited three years in the Arabian desert before God commissioned him to go forth with the Gospel. 8-9 years in Tarsus.

Prepare food supplies.

What they prepared was to be their sustenance during the period between the stopping of the manna and the eating of the old corn of the land.

The three stages in Spiritual victory:

1. Preparation
2. Progress
3. Possession

Spiritual application.

For each spiritual conquest there must be a period of preparation or waiting. Our Lord's prayer in Luke 7. Experience is gained in the streams of life. Strength of character is formed in the presence of God. The spending of time in God's presence makes spiritual progress and victory a reality. Take Jacob's case as an example. After spending a night with God—God changed his name from Jacob to Israel...a prince with God. Moses, David. As the Jews were preparing themselves for God's work. God was already at work.

The story of the spies...His servants were preparing the way. Soon the first prize and possession in Canaan would be theirs.

The city of Jericho. They did not know this, but God's way is the best way.

There were at least three important things about this waiting period:

1. A soul must be saved.
2. Separation must be confirmed.
3. Sanctification must be completed.

A Soul Must Be Saved

Describe Jericho—rich, strong, godless. Rahab was there—she had heard of the God of the Israelites...she had heard of His great works and she believed that this God was the real God. One could not describe Rahab's faith as an intelligent faith, it was rather a blind faith or a total faith.

Her faith was of such quality that it is mentioned in God's Hall of Fame—Hebrews 11:31.

James also remarks that unlike some people's faith, Rahab's faith was seen by her works. She identified herself with God's people by putting out the scarlet cord from her windows.

Her faith was rewarded:

1. She became a sharer in all the blessings of the land.
2. She became part of the line of ancestry of our Lord Jesus.

Consider further.

During these three days of waiting and preparation, God's judgment was held back until Rahab was saved. Same thing in Lot's case.

Oh the grace of our God.

How did Rahab get her faith?

There was a combination of two things:

1. She heard of the greatness of God—v.10.
2. She saw evidences of it in God's people—v.9.

These things convinced Rahab and led to her conversion.

Might I challenge each of you believers with the question. What evidences of the work and power of God do people see in you?

It is not the correctness of our creed, but the chastity of our character that counts. It is not so much what we believe, but it is how we behave.

Separation Must Be Confirmed

Read Joshua's address to the tribes in 1:12-18. These tribes wanted to stay in the wilderness—Numbers 32. They did not want to live in Canaan. Moses agreed with their decision with reservations. Now Joshua wants to "confirm their separation". They had promised Moses that they would go into the land and help their brethren. Joshua then is asking them: What are you going to do? Their reply is found in verse 16. These men were committed men—separated men—valiant men. Joshua gave them the key position of leading the nation into the land—v.14.

There is a tragic note in the history of these tribes. These people though brave and strong, valiant and rich, were the first to be defeated by the Assyrians. They were carried away as captives and never returned.

Spiritual Application.

They lived with one foot in the world, so when they were captured by the world they just stayed there.

Sanctification Must Be Completed

Joshua 3:5—Sanctify yourselves, etc.

The manifestation of the power of God depends on the sanctification of His people. During those three days of waiting they were to set themselves entirely apart for the Lord.

The days would be filled with:

1. They were a separated people.
2. They were a sanctified people.
3. They were a powerful people.

The sanctified life has two aspects:

1. Godward—positive.
2. Manward—negative.

A. When God sanctifies us it is a once for all time experience. Complete—perfect.

B. Then our daily sanctification is accomplished by the indwelling and infilling of the Holy Spirit. Who when allowed to lead, expresses the life of the Lord Jesus in us, and through us.

Negatively.

We sanctify ourselves as we put away the flesh, cast out sin, and pride. “This is the will of God even your sanctification.”

Before God can use any of us for His ultimate glory:

1. Our separation must be confirmed.
2. Our sanctification must be completed.

Three days speaks of resurrection, or a new beginning.

As we stand on the borders of the Promised Land, or the “Heavenlies”, let us:

1. Prepare our food—Joshua 1:11.
2. Sanctify ourselves—Joshua 3:5.

Introduction to Joshua

Joshua was a prepared vessel for the service of the Lord.

The history of His name is interesting. He was born in Egypt and was given the name “Hoshea”—salvation. Later, Moses gave him the name “Jehoshua”—Jehovah salvation.

The Hebrew name Joshua is the equivalent to the Greek name Jesus.

Joshua in many ways is a type of Christ.

Joshua had been chosen by God to succeed Moses—Numbers 27:18-23.

Joshua had been the servant of Moses for many years.

The qualifications of Joshua—“A man in whom is the Spirit.”

Deuteronomy 21:7, 8—Joshua is commissioned before all Israel.

Deuteronomy 24:5, 6—The death of Moses.

Deuteronomy 24:9—Joshua takes up his omission as leader of God’s people. Joshua was assured of God’s presence.

Deuteronomy 34:9—Note that Joshua was full of the Spirit of wisdom.

These must always be the qualifications for the leaders of God’s people.

The result—“The people harkened unto him, and did as the Lord command Moses.”

Note now the complete qualifications of Joshua:

1. Filled with the Spirit
2. Filled with wisdom
3. Filled with the Word

God can only use us to the extent that we are filled with these attributes.

Chapter 1

v.1—The Lord spoke unto Joshua.

Few things are sadder than running without being sent or answering without being called. See 2 Samuel 18:19-33.

v.2—He is instructed to go over Jordan into the land which I will give them.

v.3—Quote and explain. To possess their inheritance they had to put forth an effort in faith.

Note now the promises God made to Joshua.

v.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.”

Not now God’s admonition to Joshua.

v.6—“Be strong, and of good courage.”

v.7—“Only be strong and very courageous.”

Note now the part that the law was to play in Joshua’s life.

v.8—It was not to depart out of his mouth.

He was to meditate in it day and night.

Then he was to do the things written therein.

For obeying the law, he would make his way prosperous, and would have good success.

The secret of power is to know the Word.

The Word is the raw material of every Christian product.

It is the Word that blesses. It is the Word that sustains, directs and keeps God's servants.

Joshua was to meditate upon the Law. He was to eat it, chew it, digest it.

Psalm 1:2—The blessed man meditates on the law day and night.

No wonder the next verse says, "And he shall be like a tree planted by rivers of water."

The secret of knowledge is obedience. God only gives us additional information as we make proper use of the knowledge we have.

v.9—Joshua, like his predecessor Moses, and many others of God's servants, was very timid.

So once again God hastened to reassure him.

v.10-18—The response of faith.

On the premise of God's promises Joshua immediately goes into action.

"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people."

They in turn commanded the people to "prepare food supplies."

In these days they would pass over Jordan. But how?

Consider Joshua's faith here. Food not boats.

Joshua had a special message for the two and a half tribes who had been allotted land on the desert side of Jordan.

Reubenites, Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh.

He first of all reminded them of their promise and obligations to help the other tribes to get settled in the land.

v.16-18—These men were faithful to their word.

They pledge their allegiance to Joshua.

They who disobey, will be put to death.

Joshua 1

Jordan is not an illustration of death, neither is Canaan of heaven. Canaan was a place of warfare and full of enemies. Heaven will not be like that. If that is what it is not, then what is it?

Hebrews 3 and 4 teach us that the land of Canaan was a place of rest and victory. Typical of the spiritual rest and victory which can be enjoyed by every spiritual believer.

The Ephesian epistle talks of the “heavenly places”; this is not “heaven”, but is a spiritual sphere upon earth in which a spiritual believer can live in rest and victory in our Risen Lord.

Canaan was the goal to which God was leading His people. He promised Moses at the burning bush not only to deliver from the bondage of Egypt, but also to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. They could only live in one of two places: the wilderness or Canaan.

It was God’s will that they live in Canaan. Many chose to live and die in the wilderness, thus falling short of God’s ideal for them.

The personal application: if we are born again we are in one of two places—the wilderness or the heavenly places.

1. The wilderness is a place of defeat, spiritual stagnation, it is almost joyless, fruitless and unproductive. There is little progress and there is much wandering and floundering and disappointment. Many Christians live and die in this condition, never having realized God’s ideal.

2. The heavenly places is where (in Ephesians)

a. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ (1:3).

b. It is a place of power “at God’s right hand” (1:20).

c. It is a place of fellowship, sitting together with Christ (2:6).

d. It is a place of testimony. We are manifesting the wisdom of God to principalities and powers (3:10).

e. It is a place of warfare and victory. We are wrestling against the rulers of the darkness, but with victory assured (6:12).

Look now at verse 3. God had given the whole land to the Israelites, but they could only possess the portion which they conquered and claimed. It is so with the believer—we must claim our possessions in Christ. The first thing that we have to do is “cross over Jordan”. This speaks of our death with Christ. When He died, He died to the world, flesh and the devil. We in turn have to crucify the world, flesh and devil if we ever hope to enjoy the fullness of blessing and victory.

Galatians 2:20—“I am crucified with Christ.” This is not easy, as there were seven nations in Canaan.

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us of our enemies then displays for our use the armor of God which assures spiritual victory.

“Go over this Jordan”—verse 2.

As we hasten to obey this Divine command, we see the formidable enemies who will contest every inch of the way...our courage fails. “Be strong” is God’s exhortation.

“Be not afraid”, “Be not dismayed”, “I will be with you”,
“I will not fail you; nor forsake you.”

Joshua went on the strength of these promises and
conquered. Should we do less?

Notice now the people that God can use.

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Lord.”

2. The second qualification for leadership is a distinct
and definite call—verse 1.

3. His source of power and strength was the power of
the indwelling Word of God—see verse 3.

a. Turn not from it.

b. Let it not depart out of your mouth.

c. Meditate upon it day and night.

d. Do all that is written there.

The Way To Blessing, Joshua 3

Chapter 3 is the story of the momentous crossing of Jordan by Israel. This was one of the great days in their long history; they crossed from the wilderness, where they had wandered for 40 years; into the land of Canaan. This crossing of Jordan does not illustrate the passing of a soul into eternity but rather illustrate the passing of a Christian from one level of Christian life to another. It marks the end of the self-life and the beginning of the Christ-life.

Between these two levels lies the Jordan, which we might well call the “river of impossibility.” Is this how you feel? That the odds are too great for me to attain a higher spiritual level of Christian living?

Ephesians 1—spiritual blessing.

Consider now the position of Israel in the wilderness side of Jordan. 2.5 million people standing before this river. It was harvest times which meant that the river was in flood. It had swollen to twice its size. Consider some of the questions which could have filled some of their hearts.

Joshua 3:11—“Behold the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.”

The Ark was the symbol of the presence of God. It is mentioned 10 times in chapter 3. Joshua said the Ark will go before you. Describe the priests carrying the Ark—they approached within a yard of it and nothing happened, but as their feet touched the water, it rolled

back by the mighty hand of God, and the priests walked into the bed of the river on dry ground.

The priests remained in the river bed with the Ark —“They stood firm on the dry ground, until all the people of Israel were passed clean over Jordan.”

Is it possible that some of you have aspirations for a deeper or a higher spiritual life, but the river Jordan the river of impossibility, lies between your longings and their realization? As you look at that river may you hear the words, “I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” Joshua 1:5.

“As thou goest step by step the way will open up before thee.”

Abraham—Genesis 12—“Now the Lord said unto Abraham, ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy fathers house unto a land which I will show thee.’”

Gideon—Sarah and Abraham.

Bethlehem—When Christ is born.

Calvary—When we die with Christ.

Pentecost—When the Holy Spirit comes and takes control.

Joshua 3:11—“Behold the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth, passeth over before you into Jordan.”

“The Lord of all the earth”—this is the God who has promised to be with us today.

“I will be with you; I will not fail you, nor forsake you”—Joshua 1:5.

Present day application: no matter the trial or circumstances the Lord has gone before. He sweetens every bitter cup, he strengthens the feeble arm for the fight, he makes the cowardly spirit brave, he even guilds the bed of death with light.

Describe the thoughts of the 2.5 million as they stood by the flooded river, the river of impossibility.

Now their attention is being diverted and centered on the Lord. Doubts and fears have vanished and in their place is joy and confidence.

The practical lesson: Are our problems and difficulties impossible? As we contemplate the move from the self-life to the Christ-life, does it seem impossible? Turn your eyes upon Jesus, etc.

One day He went into Gethsemane, then on to the cross. He died and was put in the tomb and a huge stone was put at the entrance. But He arose the third day triumphant over all His foes. Paul wrote that in doing so “He spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them” (Galatians 2:15).

Look now at the victorious Christ—victorious over Satan, death, hell, and the grave.

The way to spiritual victory for the child of God is a deep appreciation of the Risen Christ who places His unlimited power at our disposal.

Peter walking on the sea—Matthew 14.

The disciples—Matthew 8.

As a Christian have you been wandering in the wilderness till now? Has your Christian life been a disappointment this far? You understand God’s will for

you and how you long for its realization in your life, but there lies the river of impossibility, of self, pride, flesh, and defeat. Might I encourage you to advance, put your feet in the waters. They will separate for you just as they did for Israel—3:15-16.

If you do this, this experience could be described as emerging from the “self-life” into the “Christ-life.”

It means leaving a life of defeat in the wilderness for a life of victory in the Lord. The royal road to blessing is to keep your eye on the Lord.

Chapters 4-5—Israel is now in the Promise Land. Note how God kept them from immediate conflict with the enemy. There was still more preparation.

The first step to possessing the land was accomplished:

1. The crossing of the Jordan.
2. They then encamped at Gilgal.

God had great lessons to teach them at Gilgal:

1. Remembrance—from whence they came.
2. Resurrection—the memorial.
3. Renunciation—cutting away the flesh.
4. Restoration—the Passover.
5. Realization—the manna ceased, they ate the old corn of the land.
6. Revelation—the Divine Captain revealed Himself to Joshua (13:15).

Consider the fact that God did not allow them to go immediately into conflict.

There was still some preparation.

The first indispensable step to possessing the land was:

1. They must cross Jordan—death and resurrection.
2. Vs. 2-9 is the record of what took place at Gilgal. The circumcising of Israel.

The Passover had only been observed twice since they were delivered from Egypt.

1. The Passover in Egypt.
2. The Passover at Mount Sinai.

Since then there had been no Passover held. No one could partake of the Passover unless they were circumcised. Exodus 12:48.

The moment they obeyed (i.e., were circumcised) they held the feast of the Passover. They kept it in the plains of Jericho, right under the nose of Satan.

Joshua 6

Israel is now in the land.

Much of what had been left undone in the wilderness had been put right.

1. The males had been circumcised at Gilgal.
2. They had kept the Passover. The first time in 40 years.
3. The manna had also ceased, and they had eaten the corn of the land.

Following these events Joshua had received a divine revelation—5:13-14.

God appeared to Joshua in the same way He appeared to Moses. This was one of the Theophanies of Christ. At this point the Leader was revealed.

After much preparation of heart the people were ready for the conquest of the land.

v. 1—The people of Jericho trusted in the strength and height of the walls. In the eyes of the carnal spies Jericho was one of the cities that was utterly unassailable. This whole episode was a challenge of faith.

v. 2—"I have given it into thy hand."

v. 3-5—Although God had promised them the city, they had to do something. Describe.

Humanly speaking these instructions were foolish. To add to the complexity of the situation, how could a bunch of inexperienced slaves who knew nothing but desert ever hope to capture a fortified city?

Had Joshua consulted his commanders, they would have suggested many ways to subdue Jericho.

1. Starve them out through a protracted siege.
2. Make ladders and scale the wall.
3. Use heavy battering rams.
4. Tunnel under the walls, etc.

Each would lean on his own understanding.

Joshua did not consult his commanders, he trusted God. He had confirmed with God and implicitly would obey His instructions. God's ways are so different from ours.

The mighty lawgivers of Israel was preserved in a frail basket. The mighty giant of the Philistines was overcome by a sling and stone. Elijah was sustained on a handful of widow's meal.

The forerunner of Christ lived in the wilderness, dressed in a coat of camel hair, wore a leather belt, ate locust and wild hen.

The Savior was born in a stable and cradled in an animal's feeding trough.

The ones whom the selected to be His ambassadors were unlettered fishermen.

v. 6-9—Notice the place "the ark" was given.

It was central in the order of procession.

1. The men of war.
2. The ark preceded by the seven priests.
3. Finally came the people.

As they walked around they were told not to speak, only the trumpets were heard—v. 10.

v. 12—they rose up early the next morning.

v. 14—the second day they encompassed the city, then they returned to camp. They did this for six days.

v. 16—on the seventh day they encompassed the city seven times. Joshua then commanded the people to shout.

v. 20—when the trumpets blew and the people shouted the walls fell down flat.

Hebrews 11:30—“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were encompassed for seven days.”

Is it possible that after last week’s lesson that some of you crossed over Jordan and passed from the “self life” to the “Christ life”, and before you knew it there stood Jericho, immense, impregnable, impossible.

To overcome this obstacle:

1. Put God first, make Him your leader.
2. Have implicit faith in Him, blind faith if necessary.
3. Obey the Word of God.

If we do, victory will be ours in Christ.

A New Testament event to illustrate this. Mark 4:25-41.

Jesus said to His disciples, “Let us pass over to the other side.” On the way the storm arose. Describe the attitude of the disciples. “Master don’t you care if we drown?” Jesus replied, “How is it that you have no faith?” Jesus calmed the storm. He can calm every storm and remove every obstacle from our path. “Have faith in God.”

Achan's Sin and the Conquest of Ai, Joshua 7 & 8

The sin of Israel which led to the defeat at Ai was threefold:

1. The sin of Achan was really the sin of Israel—v. 11.
2. The decision to send only a few men because the city was small (v. 3) indicated a sinful dependence on human strength rather than upon God.
3. There is no record of an communication with God for direction in taking Ai, as in the case of Jericho (6:1-5).

The sin of Achan and its results teach us the great truth of the “oneness” of God’s people.

Achan had sinned, but Israel is accused of the sin—v. 11.

Compare 1 Corinthians 5:17—“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

The story of the conquests of Israel is a story of success. Now the tables have turned...Israel is in full retreat. 36 men have been slain...Joshua us lying on his face before the Lord...the elders are with him there—v. 6.

The possibility of defeat had never crossed Joshua’s mind. This was a serious situation. Joshua could foresee the result of this defeat, the inhabitants of the land would join together and surround them and kill them.

The Cause of Defeat

This was the only defeat that Israel suffered in their conquest of the land.

The cause of the defeat was threefold.

1. Self-Confidence

Ai was only a small city, but few—v. 3.

This fact and also the ruins of Jericho in the background caused them to be self-reliant. Don't send up the whole army, two or three thousand will do—v. 3. This line of action was based on the supposition that Israel had captured Jericho.

Actually all they had done was to walk around the walls and then shout at the appropriate time. It was God who had taken the city. The smoking ruins of Jericho was not a testimony to the strength of Israel, but was a testimony to the power of God Himself.

Now please observe when they were defeated. Their defeat came in the wake of victory. We are more vulnerable at this time than any other. At such times our pride takes over, we glory in our achievements, we become self-confident, this attitude brings defeat.

The greatest lesson that a child of God can learn is that "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing" and that "when I am weak then I am strong."

2. Neglect of communication with God.

v. 2—Joshua sent men to Ai. Poor Joshua, he was carried away with the victory at Jericho, so he made immediate plans for the capture of the next objective. But in the flush of victory and in the excitement of conquest he forgot one thing. He did not ask God what His will was.

The result was abject defeat. The moral of this is if you pray in time of victory, you will never have to plead in time of defeat.

3. Disobedience.

Read 7:11—“Israel has sinned...for they have taken the accursed thing.”

In the R.V. an important change is made here. It says “devoted thing”, i.e., something set apart for God.

Read now 6:18-19 to see what the devoted thing was. The silver and gold, the vessels of bronze and iron were the Lords. So then Achan actually stole from the Lord (see Malachi 3). Because he sinned in this way the whole nation suffered. Cp. Miriam’s sin here, and note the results.

May each of us grasp the truth here. As members of the local fellowship, and as being one in Christ, when one person steps out of the line of God’s will, the entire body suffers. The whole church is affected.

When a child of God gets cold at heart there is a lowering of temperature of the whole body, which has an adverse affect on the spirituality of the whole.

What was it that brought victory at Ai?

1. Confession.

The sin was brought out into the open. Describe the sifting process.

7:14—Brought according to tribes, families, households, man by man.

7:16—the tribes were brought before the Lord. Judah was taken.

7:17—the family of the Zerahites was taken man by man.

7:18—Achan was taken.

7:19—“Tell me what you have done; hide it not from me.”

7:20—"Achan said, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel."

7:21—I saw, I coveted, I took. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life. See 1 John 2:16. This was also the sin of Eve.

2. Obedience.

This was not easy for Joshua. Achan and his family were taken and stoned. Before blessing and victory could come to Israel, the evil and sin had to be:

a. Confessed b. Removed c. The offender had to be dealt with

As it was then so it is today, sin in all shapes and forms must be eradicated from the church if blessing and progress is to be enjoyed.

Notice now the different tone of chapter 8.

"And the Lord said unto Joshua."

The first 29 verses of this chapter describe the conquest and fall of Ai under the guidance of God. Success came when sin was dealt with, communication was restored with God, and when there was obedience to God's word.

Spiritual success is assured when we:

1. Engage in prayer.
2. Read the Word.
3. Confess our sins.
4. Obey the will of God.

Psalm 40:8—"I delight to do Thy will O my God."

1 John 2:17—"For he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Joshua 8 & 9

Most of this chapter is a record of the ultimate victory at Ai.

Chapter 7 is the record of the defeat at Ai and the exposure of the sin of Achan, then his death by stoning.

Now before we go on let me remind you of a great truth uncovered in this experience

1. The defeat at Ai.

Ai was less formidable than Jericho.

7:3—“Let not all the people go up, but let about two of three thousand men go up.” The plan, purpose and will of God was not taken into consideration, and they were routed by the enemy.

2. To recover from this humiliation was costly.

a. There was the judgment of sin: Achan’s death.

b. Then there was the recognition of the will of God.

c. There was a willingness to comply with the will of God. In other words, they were willing to obey.

Obedience is better than sacrifice.

d. Every able man was flung into the battle to implement God’s plan.

This was the cost of victory. As it was then, so it is today.

The recovery of lost ground is one of the most difficult tasks that a Christian can have. No sooner had they recovered and Ai lay burned just like Jericho, did God take them to Mount Ebal. There Joshua built an altar to worship. There the law was read to them. His divine

principles by which they might possess the land.
Describe the valley.

The reading was also an insurance against a similar disaster in the future.

As Christians, we need to be reminded of what the Word of God teaches. Worship of God is the most important function in a believer's life.

We ought to read it:

1 Timothy 4:13—"Give diligence to reading."

2 Timothy 2:15—"Study to be approved of God."

Psalm 119:11—"Thy word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."

9:1-3—Enemy reaction.

They gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord."

Wherever there is a work of God there will be devilish opposition. The opposition of Canaan was accomplished by a series of battles. There were always enemies, constant opposition. As it was then, so it is today.

Let me remind you at this point that Satan attacks in one of two characters:

1. A roaring lion—1 Peter 5:8.

2. An angel of light—2 Corinthians 11:14.

Satan is a master strategist and he can outmaneuver any of us.

The coming of the Gibeonites: v. 3-13. Describe these men.

When dealing with them the Israelites did not ask counsel of the Lord—v. 14.

v. 15—Joshua made peace and a league with them.

v. 16—This was a great mistake.

Because of the covenant which they had made they could not kill them.

v. 22-27—Joshua made them cutters of wood and drawers of water.

The Gibeonites brought only trouble to Israel. In the next chapter they are plunged into trouble because of them.

2 Samuel 21:1-14—Saul had slain some of the Gibeonites. The result was a famine for 3 years.

Some ways Satan has tried to hinder God's people:

1. Opposition by ridicule.
2. Opposition by discouraged brethren.
3. Opposition by greedy brethren.
4. Opposition by craft.
5. Opposition by threat.

Joshua 10

The Israelites are firmly established in the land.

Their enemies can see the “writing on the wall” but they never gave up. In fact, they intensified their opposition.

This led to the heavy fighting described in this chapter.

The chapter recounts victory after victory.

It is obvious that the secret of their victory lay in the fact that Joshua and the elders were in close touch with God.

Lessons:

1. There is still heavy opposition in the heavenlies. See Ephesians 6.

2. The secret of their success was their unbroken fellowship with God.

Sanctification—“This is the will of God even your sanctification.”

Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians, 5:23—“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God that your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Timothy 2:21—“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and fit for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”

Another reason for their victories was that they lived between battles at “Gilgal.” Gilgal is mentioned five times in this chapter.

To the Israelites Gilgal was a place of:

1. Remembrance—they went down into Jordan, into death.
2. Resurrection—where they came up out of death with their new leader.
3. Renunciation—where they renounced the flesh and its activities and power.
4. Restoration—where they came into real fellowship with the Lord.
5. Realization—where they began to taste of the strong food of the land.
6. Revelation—where they met their Captain with a drawn sword.

We need to return to Gilgal to remind our hearts of these things.

The power of prayer—describe the miracle (chapter 12-14).

Note the accuracy of the Scripture. Compare Joshua 10 with Isaiah 28.

How did this miracle happen?

“The Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man.”

This reveals three things:

1. The graciousness of God.
2. The power of God.
3. The power of prayer.

Elijah prayed—no rain for 8.5 years. He prayed again—a deluge of rain.

See James 5:16-18—"The effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man availeth much." "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for a space of three and a half years. And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

See Judges 6:36-40—The faith of Gideon.

See Acts 12—the faith of a praying church.

Prayer moves the hand of Him who moves the universe.
The power of God is unleashed by prayer.

God's promises—5:13-15. They never fail.

The hand fought for Israel—verses 14 and 42.

This was the reason why Joshua was successful:

v. 10—And the Lord routed them before Israel.

v. 11—The Lord cast down great stones.

v. 19—The Lord has delivered them into your hand.

v. 25—Joshua's faith in God.

v. 30—The Lord delivered it also.

v. 32—The Lord delivered Lachish.

We should treat the sins in our life as Joshua treated the five kings.

Romans 8:13—"For if you live in the flesh, you shall die; but if you through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live."

Colossians 3:5-10. Mortify means "to put to death."

Galatians 6:14—"God forbid that I should glory", etc.

Joshua 11

The southern Palestine campaign is now over. Joshua returns to Gilgal in 10:43.

v. 1-5—the gathering of Israel’s enemies.

Jabin is the leader—his name means “intelligent.”

1. Note the numbers—many people, even as the sand that is upon the seashore for multitude.

2. Their equipment—horses and chariots were very many. The Israelites were no match for their enemies.

v. 6—The Lord said, “Be not afraid because of them”, etc.

Consider now:

Ecclesiastes 9:11—“The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.”

Zechariah 4:6—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Psalms 91—“The place of security...secret place...shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

The opposition to Israel by Jabin and his cohorts is a picture of the devil’s enmity against spiritual believers.

Quote Ephesians 6:12.

None of us are immune from these attacks.

Satan attacked the Lord. Temptations. Matthew 4. Then Satan left Him for a season.

v. 6—The Lord’s reaction to this formidable group.

“Tomorrow about this time I will deliver them up all slain.”

We cannot really estimate or imagine the power of God which is at our disposal.

“He is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think according to the power which worketh with us.”—Ephesians 3:20.

“Greater is He who is in you than He that is in the world.”

“I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.”—Philippians 4:18.

This force was by far the greatest that had ever been assembled against them.

It came after they had been in the land a long time. The longer there were in the land the greater the opposition.

This is the roaring lion aspect of Satan’s attack. Quote 1 Peter 5:8.

“Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

v. 7—Joshua took the initiative and launched a sudden attack upon his enemies. He took them by surprise.

v. 8—“The Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel.”

v. 9—Joshua’s secret of success: obedience to God’s commandments.

He showed no quarter and expected none. He did not compromise with her enemies, he destroyed them. The secret of the success of our spiritual warfare will be in our uncompromising attitude toward our spiritual enemies.

It took Israel seven years to conquer the land.

Caleb was forty years old when Moses sent him to spy out the land—14:7.

According to Joshua he is now 85 years old—14:10.

40 years old + 38 years wandering = 78 years

78 years from 85 years leaves 7 years

This was the time it took to conquer the land.

v. 21—When the spies saw the Anakites they were afraid.

Read Numbers 13:28-33.

The Anakites were giants. They lived in caves and fortresses in the mountains.

The nation that died in the wilderness were afraid of them, and would not go into the land.

They were still there as numerous and strong as ever; despite this, the new nation under God, assailed their strongholds and defeated them.

v. 22—There were Anakites in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

1 Samuel 17:4 tells us that Goliath was of Gath.

Application: Satan's pains and attempts to hinder and destroy our spiritual progress never lessen, in fact they increase. Victory can only be had by abandoning fleshly means of warfare and by putting ourselves in the hand of God. To accomplish this we must know God's will then be obedient to it.

"If God is for us who can be against us."

Joshua 12

The final six verses tell us of the conquests of Moses.

Verses 7-24 describe the conquests of Joshua. The conquests of Moses were in the wilderness. The conquests of Joshua were in the land.

God wanted the Israelites to possess all the land.

See Joshua 1:2-4.

There was a vast difference between what God had promised them and what they actually possessed. Never in all their history have the Jews achieved God's intention—but they will one day.

Describe them in the past.

Now having said that relative to the Jews' failure, are we guiltless in this respect? What the land was to Israel, Christ is to us.

Mapped out on the pages of our Bible is all the territory regarding Him which we are to possess. We have failed, too. "The things which were written aforetime were written for our learning, etc."