

UPLOOK

NOVEMBER 2002

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve...”

**“...as for me and my house,
we will serve the LORD.”
Joshua 24:15**

THE MAN WITH THREE FIRSTS

JOSHUA: THE MAKING OF A LEADER

STRATEGIES FOR VICTORY

JOSHUA'S LAST WORDS

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↑ C O N T E N T S

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THE MAN WITH THREE FIRSTS

A remarkable prototype of our Champion.



The Old Testament is full of exquisite portraits of our Saviour. He can be observed everywhere to those who have eyes to see. But one of the most remarkable of these divine illustrations is the man named Joshua. Although many connections may be drawn, there are three “firsts” that stand out in striking relief.

THE MAN WHO LIVES BY THE BOOK: When Joshua received his commission after the death of Moses, it was bound to the Book: *“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”* (1:8).

As C. H. Waller writes,

Joshua was the first man who received a copy of Holy Scripture to be his guide. The first mention of the Book of books is connected with his name: *“Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua.”* What can it mean but this, that all scriptures from first to last were written for Him who is to fulfill them, the true Joshua, the Lord our Saviour Himself! He it was who said, *“Mine ears hast Thou opened. Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God”*...And when He comes again, He will finish the fulfilling of it. All the laws that have been given, and never kept; the wonders that have been foretold, and never seen; the temple that has been measured, but never built; the feasts that have been appointed, but never observed; the glory that has been promised; the kingdom that we pray for; the life that is now hid...all these will be delivered to the true Joshua when He comes again...Not till we come to the end of His Kingdom shall we come to the end of His Word.

THE MAN WHO BEARS THE NAME: Originally Moses’ minister was named Oshea (meaning “salvation”) by his parents (see Num. 13:8). As Moses saw the leadership ability of this young man, did he fear that the people might begin to think of this young man as their salvation? In any case, Moses renamed his understudy Jehoshua (meaning “Jehovah is salvation”), the name later shortened to the more manageable Joshua. But it is this very name, framed by Moses, that was later given by divine edict to the virgin’s Child that night in Bethlehem. It is well known that the Greek form of Joshua is Jesus. It is perhaps not so well known that the name was constructed to make a more fitting title for the man who would be the type of our Champion.

THE MAN WHO BRINGS IN THE REST: Among the many challenges Joshua faced in coming into hostile territory was the responsibility to bring the people of God into rest. But, says the sacred record in the Old Testament, *“The Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed”* (Josh. 13:1). The New Testament commentary is even more pointed: *“If Jesus (meaning Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day”* (Heb. 4:8). But the measure of Joshua’s success should be acknowledged. The generation that died in the wilderness—Joshua’s peers—*“entered not in because of unbelief.”* But what of their children, of whom Joshua was leader?

They started brightly, promising Joshua, *“All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go”* (1:16). But surely they were a disappointment, too. No, listen to the other end of the book: *“And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua”* (24:31). They did it! The life of service, the path of victory, is a real possibility. But it is only for those who follow the Book-Keeper, the Name-Bearer, the Rest-Bringer.

J. B. Nicholson, Jr.

Evangelicalism Divided

A record of crucial changes in the years 1950-2000, by Iain Murray

You may well legitimately ask the question, why review a book by someone who is a strong advocate of Reformed doctrine, a disciple of John Calvin and the Puritans, and one who would see J. N. Darby and the rise of Dispensational Premillennialism as an unmitigated disaster. The reason is simple. He is a superb historian and an excellent writer.

Although this book primarily deals with the Evangelical scene in England during the last half of the 20th century, it is very instructive to those of us in North America because it deals with key principles we need to grasp.

As another reviewer put it: "Why has Christian unity proved to be such a divisive topic? In the 1950s two movements, evangelicalism and ecumenism, offered differing paths to unity in the Church. But as the decades have passed the influence of ecumenism has exposed a fault line in evangelicalism. Questions of critical importance have been brought to the surface: Is the gospel broader than evangelicals have historically insisted? Can there be unity with non-evangelicals in evangelism and church leadership?"

Does the gospel have priority

over denominational loyalty?" and indeed the most fundamental and divisive question of all: What is a Christian?

Murray shows us how seemingly small shifts in thinking can result in huge consequences with the passage of time. Following the optimism surrounding the 1954 Billy Graham crusades in Haringay, England, it seemed that the Evangelicals' hour had come. No longer were they a despised majority; people were beginning to take notice of them.

The Billy Graham organization began a policy of deliberately courting the involvement of those in more liberal churches, with the hope that new converts would join these churches and change them from within. Thus began a pattern of compromise.

Behind all of this was a longing within Evangelicalism to be accepted within the mainstream. This longing, though real, is unscriptural and harmful.




The true Church will always be outside the camp and bearing His reproach if it is faithful to the truth of Scripture. Yet deep within lies this desire for acceptance by the world at large, whether it be the academic world or the religious world.

Ultimately, a decision was made at the Keele Conference of Evangelical Anglicans in 1967 to seek a more inclusive role within the Church of England with the result that instead of rejecting Anglican Bishops who denied the fundamentals of the faith, they were accepted as fellow Christians.

Effectively this redefined what it meant to be a true Christian. What mattered was not what they believed about the gospel and personal conversion to Christ, as had been previously held, but rather whether they had been baptized and claimed church membership. Thus many who formerly were regarded as nominal Christians at best were now to be treated as genuine, sincere Christians. This fundamental shift in thinking eventually led to the “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” document being signed in 1995. The agreement applies the same reasoning to Catholics as the earlier one did to liberal Protestants.

What are the lessons for our local churches today? Murray clearly demonstrates that compromise is always disastrous to the Church of God and results in weakness, not strength. It seems that many local churches that have had a history of separation now long for acceptance in the wider Evangelical community. But in order to be accepted, some key tenets are being compromised so as not to give offense to evangelicals who might not agree.

What will the end result of these subtle shifts be 30 years from now if the Lord has not returned? As one who was born in England and born again there, I can assure readers that we do not want to go the way of either English Evangelicalism or even many so-called “Brethren” assemblies in England.

Compromise always leads to weakness, even when there are seemingly immediate short-term benefits. Read this book and take the long view. 

—Michael Attwood
saved2serve@nu-z.net
Washington, Georgia

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Bibliophilic Bonanza!

The previous article, entitled “Evangelicalism Divided,” is reprinted from the latest edition (Sept.-Oct.) of *Between the Leaves*, a bimonthly eight-page newsletter full of helpful book reviews. The present issue features reviews of the following:

- *Soul Survivor* by Philip Yancey
—reviewed by Kevin Shantz, editor
 - *Be Holy: the Forgotten Command* by William MacDonald
—reviewed by Sam Thorpe
 - *Preaching to a Postmodern World* by Graham Johnston
—reviewed by Stephen Peck
 - *The Power Bible* (software)
—reviewed by Kevin Shantz
 - *The Universe in a Nutshell* by Stephen Hawking
—reviewed by Larry Ball
 - *A Beautiful Mind: the Life of John Nash* by Sylvia Nasar
—reviewed by Donald L. Norbie
 - *No Time to Quit: the Life of R. E. Harlow* by Della Letkeman
—reviewed by Caroline Cairns
- as well as the review by Mike Attwood.

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The Timothy Conference

Toronto, Ontario

If you have not yet received a copy of the conference brochure and registration form, or if you would like extras to distribute to those in your area who may be interested in attending, contact us at:

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Canada**

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**Phone:
905-426-5449**

**or visit
www.cre8iveminds.ca/timothy**



Conference registrations are coming in from around Canada, the United States and overseas but there is still plenty of room for more! The conveners of The Timothy Conference warmly invite you to join us—no one is too young or too old!

Why not extend your stay in Toronto? Take advantage of our excellent conference rate of \$70/night at the hotel three days before and after the conference. Contact us for details.

Since we are limited by space to 750 attendees, please make your reservations as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

HOLY LAND PRODUCTS ONLINE

One way to help the Lord's work in the Middle East.



George Khalil works with a group of local Christians in the city of Nazareth in the Lower Galilee. The "Emmaus Bible Ministry" distributes Bibles and Emmaus correspondence courses free of charge to anyone interested in knowing more about the Christian faith. This work began in 1975 and since then they have had over 15,000 students enrolled in their correspondence courses.

In addition to contributions from Christians around the world, this ministry is supported through the sale of Christian literature and locally-made products. A new online shop, *yesholyland.com*, makes these products available at very reasonable prices without having to travel to Israel to buy them! A few of the unique items available include: oil lamps as described in the Bible made of baked clay, olive wood carvings, Bibles with olive wood covers, and hand-woven Bedouin table runners, placemats, purses, etc. They also host a website of Arabic Bible Courses at: www.emmaus-bible-ministry.org Contact George Khalil at:



P. O. Box 240, Nazareth 16121, Israel
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Phone/Fax: +972-4655-2047
Shop website: www.yesholyland.com
School website: www.emmaus-bible-ministry.org

CHURCH PRINCIPLES CONF.

The Tavistock Area Conference on Biblical Church Principles is scheduled DV for November 16, 2002 from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Alan Parks is to minister on "The Man's Role and Responsibility in the Home and Local Assembly" and Dr. Boushra Mikhael, on "Headship and the Head Covering." Meetings will be held at the Tavistock Mennonite Church in the village of Tavistock, ON. Contact: Herman Martin (519) 669-3745

WORD ALIVE in WINNIPEG

Several assemblies in the Winnipeg, MB, area are again hosting the following ministry-intensive weekends including a Youth Rally on Friday evening, an all-day seminar on Saturday and, along with the host assembly's regular Sunday morning

meetings, an inter-assembly gospel meeting on Sunday evening:

Nov. 22-24	Chris Schroeder
January 24-26	Rob Lindsted
Feb. 28-March 2	James McCarthy
March 28-30	Michael Attwood

If you are from out of town and would like to attend one or all of these weekends, please contact Ron Hampton for accommodation and information at 204-669-6026 or send an email to hampton@mts.net

SEABROOK ISLAND RETREAT

The Fall Singles' Retreat will be held November 22-25 at Seabrook Island (near Charleston, SC). Several speakers who have shared in this ministry over the years will be responsible for the teaching. Attendees (21 to 40-something) will stay in dormitory-style cabins overlooking the ocean.

The cost of the retreat is \$95. For more information, contact:

Skip or Cathy Elliott
843-873-7083

SKI RETREAT WEEKEND

The Smoky Mountain Ski Weekend in Bryson City, NC, will be held January 17-20, 2003 with speaker Ken Additon (FL). A time of good fellowship and encouragement from God's Word. The cost is \$125 per person, which includes three nights' lodging, meals, lift ticket and ski rental. Contact:

Camp Living Water
828-488-6012
DCLW@juno.com

PARK OF THE PALMS

If you are thinking about heading South this winter, why not join the

Christians at Park of the Palms in Keystone Heights, FL, for a week of ministry and fellowship? Here is a list of the scheduled speakers:

January 18-24	Mike Attwood
January 25-31	Jamie Hull
Jan. 31-February 7	Ken Daughters
February 8-14	Fred Hartman
February 15-21	James Ayers
February 22-28	Daniel Smith
March 1-7	Alan Parks
March 8-14	Peter Colon

Excellent conference accommodations are available as well as duplexes for retirees who are interested in buying a home. For more information:

Park of the Palms
706 Palms Circle
Keystone Heights, FL 32656-8016
Phone: 352-473-4926
E-mail: pop@techcomm.net

ONTARIO WORKERS' & ELDERS' CONFERENCE

Looking ahead to the spring, the Ontario Workers' and Elders' conference is scheduled to be held May 6 through 8 at Scottlea Bible Chapel in St. Catharines, ON. The invited speakers are Don Norbie (CO) and Steve Hulshizer (PA). Although the conference is planned primarily with workers and elders in mind, all are welcome to attend. Perhaps you

might consider coming as a group from your local assembly. Contact:

Patrick Long at pbl@msc.on.ca

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY

West Woods Christian Academy

West Woods Christian Academy in Hamden, CT is seeking a Headmaster for the K-12, 150-student school. This ministry of West Woods Bible Chapel serves families from all the surrounding towns and numerous Bible-believing churches.

The applicant must be mature in his relationship with the Lord and have a Masters degree in Christian School Administration. Teaching and Administrative experience is desired. The applicant must be able to oversee and inspire the spiritual climate and pulse of the school and promote fidelity to the school's Christian philosophy of education. Apply to the school board at:

West Woods Christian Academy
2105 State St.
Hamden, CT 06517
Fax: 203-786-4730
Phone: 203-562-9922

COMMENDATIONS

Merran Arnold

The assembly at Bethel Bible Chapel (Shelburne, ON) wishes to

make known the commendation of Merran Arnold to the grace of God for His care and blessing in her work with New Tribes Mission.

Merran has been in happy fellowship there for the past thirteen years. During this time she has been involved in teaching Sunday School, helping with Kids' Club, starting a College and Careers group, and has been active in the life of the assembly.

Following high school graduation, Merran attended several years of training with New Tribes Mission.

As a result of exercise of heart and prayer, it is Merran's desire to serve the Lord in Brazil. She expects to spend the first six months in language study in the city of Manaus. Following this, she is looking forward to working at the Paraquequara school in western Brazil.

Tammy Crooks

The assembly of believers in Anderson, SC, commends Tammy Crooks who has committed her life to following Christ in the ministry of teaching in Pakistan.

Tammy has been in fellowship for five years. She has shown a desire to serve others and to present the gospel. Tammy has been active in organizing activities for women in our area and has been very involved in AWANA.

HOMECALLS

Elsie Davey

In 1909, Elsie was born in Cardiff, Wales. Her family moved to Regina, Saskatchewan when she was a young girl. One day while passing out tracts on the streets of Winnipeg (she was attending Winnipeg Bible School) she met Grace Roach. This was the beginning of a long and fruitful partnership in the work of God.

In 1939 Elsie and Grace moved to

STUDIES in JOHN

Monthly Bible Studies on the Gospel of John will be held at Hopedale Bible Chapel (342 Sherin Dr., Oakville) 9:00 until noon. Below is a list of dates, topics and speakers:

November 16	Metaphors of Christ in John	<i>Harry Graham</i>
December 14	Signs in John	<i>Wm. Burnett</i>
January 18	Discourses in John	<i>Brian Gunning</i>
February 15	The Upper Room Ministry	<i>Randy Amos</i>
March 15	Crucifixion Scenes	<i>Jim Paul</i>
April 12	Post-Resurrection Appearances	<i>Ernie Sarlo</i>

Contact: W. H. Burnett at 905-634-6345 wh.burnett@sympatico.ca

Tapes are available from: H. W. Allison hw.allison@sympatico.ca

Vessels of Honor 2003

"...a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use..." (2 Tim. 2:21)

A Young Adults Conference convened by East Tulsa Bible Chapel is scheduled to be held on the campus of Baker University, Baldwin City, Kansas, May 23-26, 2003.

The theme for Vessels of Honor 2003 will be "Broken Vessels." General session speakers are: David Dunlap, Warren Henderson and Harold Summers. Seminar speakers, along with the general session speakers, will be Craig Rolinger, Nancy Rolinger, Bill Wortman, Keith Trevolt, and Steve Price. Contact:

Jim Lindamood at 918-663-1121 or jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org

Dan Moffitt at 918-744-6484 or danmoffitt@juno.com



Emily Cowden writes: On May 24-27, 2002, 165 individuals gathered in Baldwin City, KS, to pursue God...The conference challenged all to desire more and more the "pure milk of the Word" (1 Pet. 2:2) for the purpose of discipleship and personal growth. The climax of the weekend for me was the precious time ...the Remembrance meeting on Sunday.

There are not words to describe the fullness of joy and love that pervaded the conference. We went searching for God and found Him just as is promised...God was there in the fellowship of like-minded believers, in the challenges set forth by the men and women of God in the teaching sessions, and in the evangelistic word that went forth on Sunday afternoon to the residents of Baldwin City. Would to God that we could constantly call to mind that God is with us, desiring to use us for His glory!

northern Manitoba to the Swan River Valley as missionaries with the Canadian Sunday School Mission. They taught the Bible to children in many country schoolhouses.

The two women used one bicycle to travel. One would ride for a half a mile, leave it on the side of the road and walk the next half mile. The one walking would reach the bike and ride to meet the other at the mile crossing. They eventually reached their destination, rather hot and tired!

One of the friends they made in their travels was Percy Stringer. It was the offer of his farmyard for a summer camp in 1958 that marked the beginning of Pretty Valley Bible Camp. This was a work that Elsie envisioned when the schoolhouses were no longer used.

In 1976, Elsie's co-worker, Grace was killed in a car accident. This

great loss almost devastated Elsie, but her servant heart rallied and with the Lord's help, she continued as before. She often said, "It is the Lord's work and He alone can supply the workers and the needs."

Shortly before Elsie's homecall on August 27, 2002, she was visited in the nursing home by staff of Pretty Valley Bible Camp where she was pleased to receive an update on the ministry. Many children still attend the camp and hear the Word of God. *"And their works do follow them."*

NEW CORRESPONDENT

Please note the new contact person for Washington Bible Chapel (Washington, GA):

Mr. Ben Cox
6356 Highway 191
Comer, GA 30629
Phone: 706-783-2127

PRAYER FELLOWSHIP in DC

On September 14, four assemblies gathered at Maranatha Gospel Hall (Washington, DC) for a prayer meeting from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM as part of the ongoing Inter-Assembly Fellowship Meetings conducted each month in a different assembly. They also have joint outreach ministries in the communities.

The meeting included three prayer sessions for the assemblies—their leadership, programs and activities, the sisters and their activities, the young people, missionaries and commended workers, those who are sick, various levels of government, etc. There is much to pray for! In addition, they had singing, two short messages and a light refreshment.

For information on upcoming inter-assembly meetings, contact:

Joe Jeremiah at 301-445-1624

India Enacts Anti-Conversion Law

How soon until it happens here?



A new law was passed in India by the Tamil Nadu state government banning religious conversions “by force, allurement or fraudulent means”—without defining the terms. Violators are subject to three years’ imprisonment, except in cases where the converts are minors, women, or members of scheduled castes or tribes. In those cases the imprisonment could extend to four years with an additional fine of 100,000 rupees (\$2000). In every instance, both the convert and the minister involved must report to the magistrate. The law may encourage people to bring false charges against Christians and intimidate new believers. Some fear that chapel services in Christian schools, hospitals and children’s homes may even be viewed as violating the new law.

Although India’s constitution guarantees freedom of religion, this ordinance follows the pattern of those passed by the Madhya Pradesh state government in 1968, and the Arunachal Pradesh state government in 1978. Census figures showed the Christian population at 5.69% in 1991, down from 5.78% in 1981 and 5.75% in 1971. The All India Christian Council said it will challenge the new law in court as a violation of human rights. —www.crosswalk.com

ISLAMIC YOUTH MOVEMENT

Al Muhajiron, a radical Islamic youth movement, is boosting its membership among children of immigrants in Britain.

Scotland Yard, headquarters of the London Metropolitan Police, estimates 3000 Muslim Britons have joined Al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. Many members are suspected

to have come through youth movements like al Muhajiron.

The parents of most al Muhajiron recruits eked out a living in factories and driving buses, but they never really learned English and failed to assimilate. The second generation grew up confused. They didn’t belong to their parent’s culture or to the secular non-Muslim world. —*Pulse*

DISILLUSIONED in RWANDA

Islam is making strides in Rwanda (65% Catholic; 9% Protestant). The increase is attributed to disillusionment with Christianity following the 1994 genocide that claimed 800,000 lives. 14% of Rwandans are Muslims—up from 7% before the genocide. New mosques are trying to build unity between Tutsis and Hutus.

LITTLE WHITE LIE?

Most people lie in everyday conversation, trying to appear likable and competent. In a study conducted by Robert S. Feldman (U. of Mass.), 60% of people lied at least once during a 10-minute conversation.

Men do not lie more than women or vice versa, but they do lie in different ways. Women were likely to lie to make the person they were talking to feel good, while men often lied to make themselves look better.

We try to teach our children to be honest, but tell them it is polite to pretend they like a birthday gift. These mixed messages impact how they behave as adults.

“SPECIAL OCCASION” NEWS

The Boston Globe has joined 139 American newspapers—including the New York Times, The Charlotte Observer (NC) and the St. Louis Dispatch (MO) in their decision to open their wedding pages to gays. The announcements, including photographs, run under the “Special Occasions” page, where weddings and engagements appear, under the heading, “commitments.” To be listed, the editor of the Boston Globe noted at the bottom of the page, same-sex couples must have their partnership affirmed in an officiated ceremony.

Joshua: the Making of a Leader

The sunrise of this life anticipates the strength of its coming zenith.

“We never hear of great men until the time when all other men are small,” wrote the late nineteenth century British author Gilbert Keith Chesterton. Momentous times produce leaders of renown. Joshua came on the scene when Israel desperately needed spiritual, courageous leadership. Moses, Aaron, and the rest of the old guard (except the venerable Caleb) had passed on, and the nation was on the verge of a major military campaign to occupy the promised land. The Son of Nun had been the heir-apparent to Moses’ leadership position for some time; now God brought him to the forefront of national affairs.

Numbers 27:18-21 indicates this change in power: *“The Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him.”*

As with all great leaders, Joshua had formative experiences that shaped his character and prepared him for his future role as a general and ruler. His early successes as a warrior, coupled with his devotion to the Lord and Moses, equipped him for a glorious career as the Conqueror of Canaan. Perceiving the importance of Joshua’s training under Moses is an essential prerequisite for understanding the mature leader who took Israel into the Promised Land.

JOSHUA THE WARRIOR

Significantly, the first time one reads of Joshua is in a martial context (most scholars agree that he was

probably about forty-five years old at this time.) Exodus 17:8-16 details the insidious attack on Israel by their inveterate enemies, the Amalekites. Israel vanquished their foes by looking to the Lord for help. Overlooking the battlefield, Moses sat on a rock with the rod of God and his own hands raised; below in the thick of the fight, Joshua led the troops into combat. The combination of the former’s intercession with the latter’s bravery proved to be lethal to the marauding Amalekites.



The scriptural account concludes with these significant words: *“And Joshua broke the power of Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And Jehovah said to Moses, Write this [for] a memorial in the book, and rehearse [it] in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi. And he said, For the hand is on the throne of Jah; Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation!”* (Ex. 17:13-16, JND). Joshua was never to forget the treachery of Amalek and their destiny to be wiped out by the Lord’s forces wherever they might be found. This incident also bolstered his confidence in the power of God, who would be the source of all of his future victories.

JOSHUA THE UNDERSTUDY

The Bible is filled with stories of mentors and protégés such as Samuel and David, Elijah and Elisha, and Paul and Timothy. For a young believer to have spiritual guidance from an older, more seasoned man or woman of God is a very valuable asset. These wise veterans of the pathway of faith provide warnings against potential pitfalls, correction for mistakes, and encour-

aging words in times of distress.

In his early days we find that Joshua was continually in the presence of Moses as his devoted helper. From accompanying with the meekest man on the earth, Joshua learned important lessons of patient restraint and decisive action. When Moses went up Mount Sinai to meet with God, Joshua accompanied him part way, and faithfully awaited his return (Ex. 24:13). Already, Joshua was known as Moses' "attendant" (or "servant" according to other translations.) While the nation below was reveling in their idolatry and other immoral celebrations, the Son of Nun was occupied with the spiritual activities on the mount. Although he could not ascend all the way with Moses, he was as near as possible. Even at this early stage in his career, he was concerned with the things of God.

It is important that Christians devote themselves to spiritual things as soon as possible. Attendance at the meetings of the local assembly, personal Bible study, prayer, serving others, and witnessing are all activities to which young Christians need to dedicate themselves. Preparations are often made for secular vocations, but how much do believers today get ready for spiritual service? Many times young Christians go through academic training to become equipped for the Lord's work. Apart from real life experience, however, this can result in top-heavy Christianity (that is, mental faculties that are overdeveloped at the expense of practical spiritual growth). Joshua's training took place in the company of an experienced man of God in the midst of the real struggles of daily life. Everyday problems taught him dependence on the Lord.

That Joshua benefited from spending time with Moses was apparent during their descent of the mount. When the two men heard noise in the camp, the younger warrior mistook the noise for battle. The elder man correctly identified it as singing. Moses had been forewarned by God of the Israelites' sin. Thus, he told Joshua the real situation: Israel was engaging in shameful debauchery around the golden calf. The mentor's wisdom instructed the young man, and gave him a valuable lesson in discernment.

Moses further taught Joshua to esteem the Lord's honor and the good of the people above personal zeal for his own reputation and clout. When the Lord appointed seventy of the elders to assist Moses in governing the people, two of these men remained in the camp, prophesying (as opposed to doing this at the Tabernacle). The Son of Nun saw this as a threat to his

teacher's authority. Moses corrected him, however, saying, "*Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!*" (Num.11:29, NKJV) This correction reminds one of a similar lesson that the disciples learned from the Lord Jesus (Mk. 9:38-39.) A student's loyalty should be to God alone with no taint of parochial or sectarian attitudes.

ZEALOUS FOR THE PERSON OF GOD

Exodus 33 records for us Moses pitching the "Tent of Meeting" in order to speak with the Lord. When he departed from the Tent, verse 11 tells the reader that "*his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.*" Most commentators agree that he stayed behind to guard the holy site. Whether this be the reason, or whether he remained there to worship, one can see his keen interest in this holy place where God's glory was regularly seen.

JOSHUA THE FAITHFUL SPY

Certainly the most famous incident in the Son of Nun's early career was his participation in the military reconnaissance of Canaan. Twelve spies were selected to go on this mission, which required exploration skills, stealth, and courage. Each of the tribes produced a prince for this arduous scouting assignment. The fact that Joshua was among them gives an indication of his importance to his native tribe, Ephraim. Like his celebrated ancestor Joseph, Joshua was a dependable man who succeeded in every undertaking.

Young believers need to remember that God's way is to begin with faithfulness in small tasks and then take on greater responsibility as the Lord leads. In the parable of the ten pounds the Lord Jesus commended the wise servant, saying: "*...because thou hast been faithful in that which is least, be thou in authority over ten cities*" (Lk. 19:17, JND).

The servants chosen to distribute aid to the early church's widows were selected because they had previously proved themselves to be "*of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom*" (Acts 6:3, NKJV). Similarly, an elder was not to be "a novice" (1 Tim. 3:6). Advancement in the things of God is based upon reliability in past service.

At the time of this event, he was still called "Oshea" (meaning "Deliverance/Salvation.") In honor of his past devotion to God and recognizing his future exploits in dependence on the Almighty, Moses re-

*So let it be. In God's own might
We gird us for the coming fight,
And, strong in Him whose cause is ours
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons He has given—
The light and truth and love of heaven.*

—J. G. WHITTIER

named him “Jehoshua” (shortened to “Joshua”—“Salvation of Jah.” See Num. 13:16.) Similar to the elongation of “Abram” (“High Father”) to Abraham (“Father of a Multitude”), this new moniker reflected greater trust in the Lord with better results. The name was a harbinger of the bright future ahead when Moses’ trustworthy aide-de-camp would succeed his mentor as commander-in-chief.

Caleb and Joshua agreed that the task was achievable. When the other ten spies began to argue against the mission, Caleb urged the people to obey the Lord, saying: “...*Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it*” (Num. 13:30). Nevertheless, the other scouts reasoned based on sight, affirming that the odds of success were negligible. They told a tale of giants and mighty, fortified cities. The two faithful spies asserted that God would give Israel the victory no matter what foes they faced. To the detriment of the nation, human reasoning and emotion prevailed in the discussion. The Israelites wept and said the unthinkable: “*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*” (Num. 14:2-4).

This apostasy resulted in that entire adult generation missing the opportunity to enter the Promised Land. Moses and Aaron mourned, and Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes in grief. Only these latter two would make it into their inheritance. Sadly they would have to wait forty years in order to enter Canaan.

This tragic story reminds one that the godly often find themselves in the minority. Even when others depart, however, the Christian must side with the Lord

by obeying His Word. Joshua and Caleb withstood enormous peer pressure, and remained faithful to the One who delivered them from Egypt. Consequently, He honored their loyalty by preserving them for the conquest of the Land.

THE COMMISSION

The early career of Joshua, marked by numerous celebrated deeds, led into a brighter future as the great leader of Israel into the Promised Land. Before his death, Moses commissioned his right-hand lieutenant to “*Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed*” (Dt. 31:7-8). It is delightful to read these final words from the older servant to his replacement; they are entirely without envy or ill feeling. Moses had done his part in preparing the next generation of leadership, and Joshua had responded with steady spiritual growth.

Likewise, it is imperative that the elders of today’s assemblies pass on the truth and the responsibility to capable younger men. 2 Timothy 2:2 sets forth this truth: “*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*”

The well-crafted words of John McClintock and James Strong, biblical scholars of a bygone era, are a fitting summary of the son of Nun’s exceptional career:

Joshua’s life has been noted as one of the very few which are recorded in history with some fullness of detail, yet without any stain upon them. In his character have been traced, under an Oriental garb, such features as chiefly kindled the imagination of Western chroniclers and poets in the Middle Ages: the character of a devout warrior, blameless and fearless, who has been taught by serving as a youth how to command as a man; who earns by manly vigor a quiet, honored old age; who combines strength with gentleness, ever looking up for and obeying the divine impulse with the simplicity of a child, while he wields great power and directs it calmly, and without swerving, to the accomplishment of a high, unselfish purpose.

(Article on “Joshua,” John McClintock and James Strong, *The Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, & Ecclesiastical Literature*, CD-ROM edition, Ages Digital Software, 2000.)

Rahab Perished Not...

How God saves Gentiles.

The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that Rahab did not perish with the others in Jericho. Why was she chosen from among the many others of this ancient city to become an object of divine grace? Why is Rahab used so frequently by New Testament writers to illustrate genealogy, faith, and theology? Spiritual minds bow in wonder at the God of infinite mercy who reached down low to lift her up to the very lineage and genealogy of the Messiah. May faithful Rahab be a shining example to every Gentile who has come to believe in Christ. Has not God reached down low to each of us? Are not we, likewise, innumerable objects of His matchless grace? Are we not sons and heirs of God? The apostle Paul has well said, *"You...being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world...have been brought near by the blood of Christ"* (Eph. 2:12-13, NKJV). How does God take the "far off" sinners of the Gentiles and transform them into sons, heirs of God, and joints-heirs with Christ?

THE FEAR OF GOD

To those who have no knowledge of God, the "lofty One who inhabits eternity" loves to first reveal Himself in majesty and power. This revelation of God would deeply grip Rahab's heart and mind. This fear of God brought her to her knees and to faith in the high King of heaven. Rahab testified, *"The terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainting because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you...and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites...our hearts melted...for the Lord, your God, He is God in heaven above and earth beneath"* (Josh. 2:9-11, NKJV).

Godly fear is the sacred awe of God's majesty and holiness. It is that dread and amazement with which men and women are overwhelmed by the awesome power of God. Rahab was never so impressed with a conviction of her insignificance until she contrasted herself with the majesty of God.

Godly reverence also involves the proper fear of God's displeasure. True faith acknowledges God's right



to chasten, to punish, and to judge because of sin. This truth cast divine light on Rahab's false gods and the empty worship of Canaan. All of Jericho was challenged by the majesty, glory, and power of God. They were all bowed by the power and terror of God, but not all believed.

FAITH IN GOD

The news of God's acts of power moved among the cities of Canaan with mysterious swiftness. Soon the news had reached Jericho. All the citizens had heard about the defeat of the Amorites, and now Sihon and Og, the king of Bashan, had fallen. Terror, melted hearts, and fear filled the breasts of the people, but there was one in the city that confessed, *"I know that Jehovah hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us...Jehovah, your God, He is God in heaven above and in the earth beneath"* (Josh. 2:9, 11).

Long before, in the song of Moses, the children of Israel heard, *"The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold of them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away; fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be still as stone"* (Ex. 15:14-16).

All had now heard of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All had heard of His power, judgment upon sin, and victory over the heathen gods of Transjordan. But now Rahab turned her back to Canaan's false gods; she believed, and took a stand among the people and received the promise. The writer of the book of Hebrews comments, *"By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she*

received the spies with peace” (Heb. 11:31). One believed; one said “I know that the Lord...He is God...”; and one did not perish. The others of the city had every chance to believe as Rahab did, but refused.

Rahab possessed the costly marks of faith:
 Rahab heard “how the Lord dried up” (2:10);
 confessed “our hearts did melt” (v. 11);
 believed “I know that the Lord” (v. 9);
 entreated “I pray you, swear” (v. 12);
 received “we will deal kindly” (v. 14);
 worked “she let them down” (v. 15); and
 obeyed “bind this cord” (v. 18).

FAITH PROVEN

When did Rahab believe? After she received the spies in peace? How did the spies know to seek out her dwelling in the wall? There is evidence that Rahab believed days or even months before Joshua and his spies made plans to investigate the city. Her reception of the spies was evidence of her genuine faith in God.

The New Testament book of James tells this side of Rahab’s faith. James chapter 2 teaches that true faith in Christ will be evidenced by works. The touchstone phrase in this section is James 2:20, “Do you not know...that faith without works is dead?” James is making the point that genuine faith is always followed and proven by works, using the Old Testament illustrations of Abraham and Rahab. He explains that when Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar, Abraham was proving his faith by works (2:21-22). But when was Abraham justified? James explains that Abraham was justified forty years prior, in Genesis 15:6, when “he believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (2:23). Abraham proved his faith in God by works after he believed.

What of Rahab? James says, “Likewise, also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?” (2:25). James presses the point that Rahab first believed, then later proved her faith when she received the spies. Men are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is not alone; it is proven by works. So Rahab is chosen by the Spirit of God from out of the many in Israel to be an example of true faith demonstrated by works. This truth must not be missed by those in our day who would mistake a decision for salvation and occasional church-going for genuine new life in Christ. We must reject the current notion which suggests that those who live continuously unholy and careless lives


can have confidence that they are true Christians.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Those who know something of new life in Christ soon discover that the ways of God are perfect. And so it is with Rahab. Why was it that Rahab did not return with the spies to dwell among the people of God? She alone knew the grave danger that lay before the city. Before Rahab there lay two issues that were still of great importance: the deliverance of her family and the Word of the Lord. For the spies had said, “...bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, and your brothers, and all your father’s household to your own home...” (Josh. 2:18, NKJV). Rahab was about to discover that in the ways of God the most dangerous place in Jericho was the safest place in Jericho.

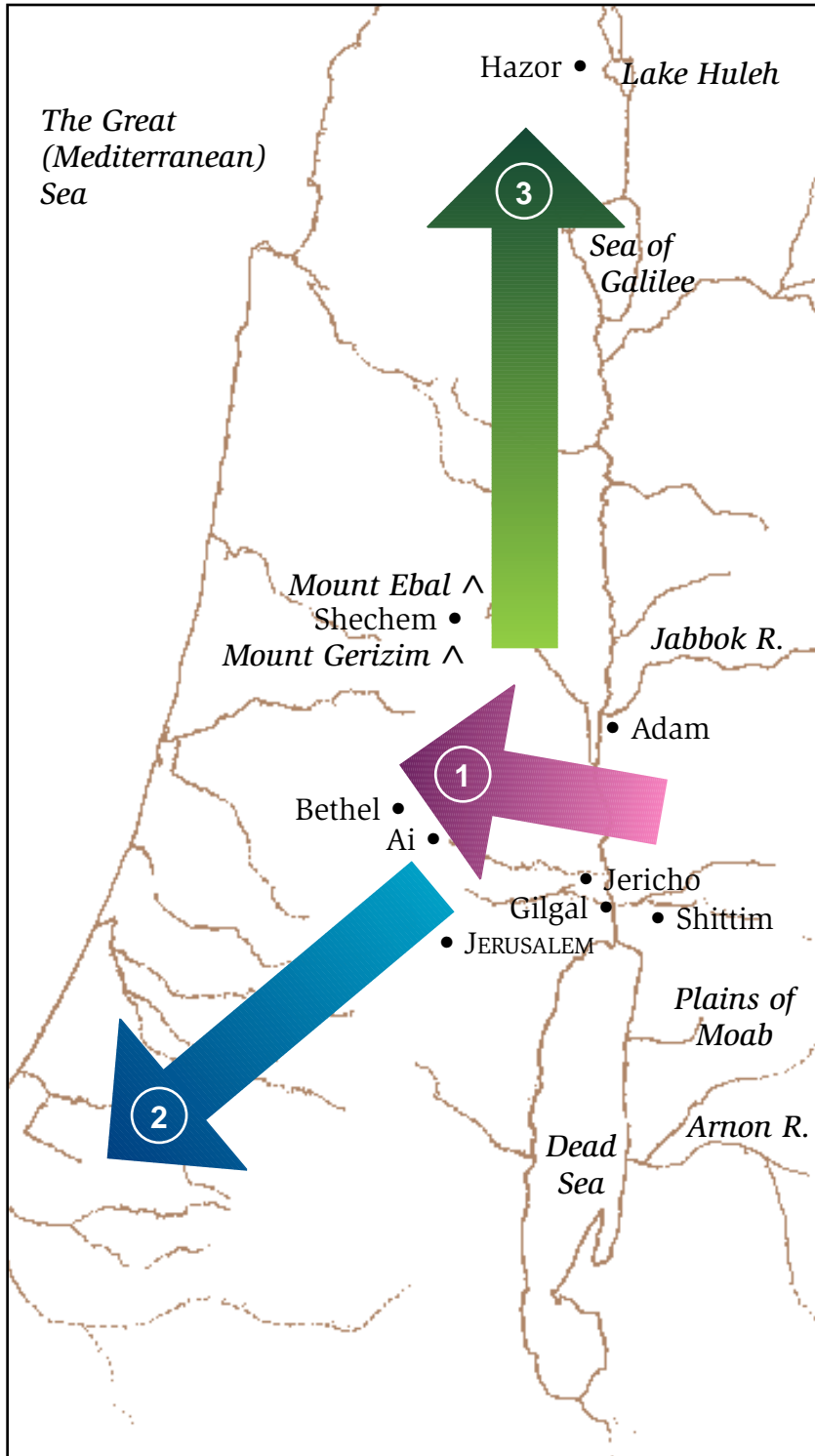
God had ordained that her house on the wall, the place of greatest danger, was also the place of divine deliverance. God’s ways were higher than Rahab’s ways and God’s thoughts than her thoughts. It mattered not that other houses had thicker walls and firmer foundations. Regardless of the fact that the walls were always the first point of attack for invading forces, Rahab’s house on the wall was the safest place because God’s sovereign will had designed it to be so. Self-denial, faith in God, and heartfelt devotion were all in order. The Word of God via the spies was to remain in the house. Rahab’s responsibility was to believe God.

In war, the walls of ancient cities usually fell either inward because of the continual battering of opposing forces, or outward as defending soldiers forced the walls to break down upon the enemy below. In either case, Rahab would be in danger. Rahab would shortly discover that the high God of heaven and earth had other plans for falling walls. “And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat” (6:20).

Rahab’s lessons in the school of faith would be life-transforming. She learned that the God she once feared now could be loved and trusted because of His mercy and faithfulness. She came to know that God, who was gracious in every way in the past, would be infinitely merciful in the future, eventually placing her, a harlot, in the very lineage of King David. May we also, like Rahab, be ready learners of God’s boundless grace in the school of faith. 

STRATEGIES

JOSHUA'S THREE MILITARY CAMPAIGNS



An OVERVIEW of the BOOK:

Part One: The PREPARATION (chs. 1-5)

- a) The call to mobilize (ch. 1)
- b) Reconnaissance (ch. 2)
- c) The Jordan crossing (3)
- d) Gilgal base camp (4:1-5:12)
- e) Meeting the Captain (5:13-15)

Part Two: The CONQUEST (chs. 6-12)

1. The Central (Bridgehead) Campaign (6:1-8:35)

- a) Victory at Jericho (ch. 6)
- b) Defeat at Ai (ch. 7)
- c) Victory at Ai/Bethel (ch. 8)

2. The Southern (Aijalon Valley) Campaign (9:1-10:43)

- a) Alliance with Gibeon (ch. 9)
- b) S. confederacy (10:1-27)
- c) Other conquests (10:28-43)

3. The Northern (Waters of Merom) Campaign (11:1-15)

4. Summary (11:16-12:24)

Part Three: The INHERITANCE (13:1-21:45)

1. Dividing of land (chs. 13, 14)

- a) Joshua's old age (13:1-7)
- b) 2¹/₂ tribe concession (13:8-33)
- c) Caleb's reward (14:1-15)

2. Main inheritance (15:1-19:48)

- a) Judah's lot (ch. 15)
- b) Sons of Joseph (chs. 16, 17)
- c) Other 7 tribes (18:1-19:48)

3. Other special issues (19:49-21:42)

- a) Joshua's reward (19:49-51)
- b) Cities of refuge (ch. 20)
- c) Levitical cities (21:1-42)
- d) Summation (21:43-45)

Part Four: CONSECRATION (22:1-24:33)

1. The eastern tribes (22:1-34)

- a) Joshua's charge (22:1-9)
- b) The altar of testimony (22:10-34)

2. The western tribes (23:1-24:28)

- a) Joshua's charge (ch. 23)
- b) The covenant renewed (24:1-28)

3. The Afterword (24:29-33)

for VICTORY

DIFFERENT TACTICS FOR DIFFERENT BATTLES

BRINGING DOWN THE WALLS BY LIFTING UP THE VOICE: Strategy at Jericho (ch. 6):

1. Implicit trust in the word of God (v. 2) *“See, I have given into thine hand Jericho.”*
2. Claiming the territory where your feet tread—standing on the promises of God (see Josh. 14:9).
3. Blowing the trumpet and the shout of victory: *“the joy of the Lord is your strength”* (Neh. 8:10).
4. Every man straight in (v. 5); *“Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might”* (Eccl. 9:10).
5. The ark was central to their activities (vv. 8-9), and the measure of their progress (v. 11).
6. There was to be no compromise with the enemy (v. 21); the sword must do its work.
7. The firstfruits were for God (v. 24); Jericho became a burnt offering to the Lord.
8. There was victory over the flesh (with one exception); the rebuilder of the place cursed (v. 26).

BACK INTO THE FRAY AFTER CRUSHING DEFEAT: Strategy at Ai (chs. 7, 8):

Four reasons for failure at Ai: i) unjudged sin (v. 1); ii) the people divided (v. 3); iii) they underestimated the enemy (v. 3); iv) they asked not counsel of the Lord.

1. Again the promise of God (v. 1) but now the words added, *“neither be thou dismayed.”*
2. United forces (v. 3) *“So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai.”*
3. Victory through apparent weakness; knowing when to flee/when to fight (see 1 Tim. 6:10-12).
4. Co-operation and co-ordination (vv. 18-19); keeping your eye on the commander-in-chief.
5. Total victory (v. 24) followed by a reaffirmation of the covenant (vv. 30-35).

BEING FAITHFUL TO OUR COMMITMENTS: Strategy at Gibeon (ch. 10):

1. Again the promise (v. 8); note the blessed past tense: *“I have delivered them into thine hand.”*
2. The need to keep our promises even *“to our own hurt”* (vv. 6-7; see also Psalm 15:4).
3. The victory is the Lord’s (v. 11). The Lord could do it Himself but wants us to share the victory.
4. Notice the great value of intercession (v. 14). The Lord still listens to the voices of His own.
5. All were included in the victory celebration (v. 24); Note also Gen. 3:15 and Rom. 16:20.
6. It is vital to capitalize on every opportunity (vv. 28-42).
7. Six Gentile kings hanged on trees; for the only Jewish king thus treated, see Acts 5:30.
8. It’s good to go back to Gilgal (v. 43), the place of the witness stones and circumcision hill.

THE USE OF THE SWORD AND THE FIRE: Strategy at Hazor (ch. 11):

1. When it comes to fighting the people of God, the enemies find a common bond (vv. 1-3, 5).
2. The numbers were great (v. 4) but God’s promise is greater (v. 6), *“all slain before Israel.”*
3. We must know where our trust lies (v. 6b) *“I will deliver them up...”*
4. We do not trust in man’s resources: *“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God”* (Ps. 20:7). See vv. 6, 9. Solomon later made this one of his chariot cities (note 1 Ki. 10:28-29 with Deut. 17:16).
5. The sword separates (Heb. 4:12); the fire evaluates (1 Cor. 3:12-15). Again, total victory (v. 12).

COURAGE

Fear that has said its prayers.



Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord...Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Psalm 27:14; 31:24

* *Not on the gory field of fame*
 * *Their noble deeds were done;*
 * *Not in the sound of earth's acclaim*
Their fadeless crowns were won.
Not from the palaces of kings
Not fortune's sunny clime,
Came the great souls, whose life-work flings
Luster o'er earth and time.

For truth and tireless zeal they sought;
In joyless paths they trod—
Heedless of praise or blame they wrought,
And left the rest to God.
The lowliest sphere was not disdained;
Where love could soothe or save,
They went by fearless faith sustained,
Nor knew their deeds were brave.

The foes with which they waged their strife
Were passion, self, and sin;
The victories that laureled life
Were fought and won within.
Not names in gold emblazoned here,
And great and good confessed,
In heaven's immortal scroll appear
As noblest and as best.

No sculptured stone in stately temple
Proclaims their rugged lot;
Like Him who was their great example,
This vain world knew them not.
But though their names no poet wove
In deathless song or story,
Their record is inscribed above;
Their wreaths are crowns of glory.
 —Edward Hartley Dewart

Strange as it may seem, it calls for a great deal of courage really to believe in God.

Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly...and let the Lord do that which is good in His sight. 1 Chron. 19:13



God incarnate is the end of fear; and the heart that realizes that He is in the midst... will be quiet in the middle of alarm.

—F. B. Meyer

Only he who can say, "The Lord is my strength," can say, "Of whom shall I be afraid?"
 —Alexander MacLaren

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. Joshua 1:9

The Stones of Witness

What did they commemorate? Do we have such cairns today?

The Old Testament is God's picture book. It teaches by type and illustration. We are told in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that *"All these things happened unto them as examples and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the [ages] have come."* There are a great many people who recognize the fact that some things written in the Old Testament were typical but they hesitate to acknowledge that this is true of all. We need to learn the lesson of these words. Some will tell you that the books of the Old Testament, the so-called historical books, are largely made up of Hebrew myths and legends, and we cannot attach any credibility to them, but the Holy Spirit says, *"All these things happened...."* Therefore, he who believes God accepts the various experiences of Israel as actual history.

In the second place, there are certain typical lessons, which we learn from them. *"All these things happened unto them for types."*

The ark going down into the waters of Jordan typified our Lord Jesus Christ going down into the waters of death when He could say, *"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me"* (Ps. 42:7). By His death on the cross He has annulled him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Through Him the fear of death is gone, and Christians can say, *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"* (Gal. 6:14).

The believer is identified with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection. This comes out very clearly, very beautifully in the present chapter. We are told that when the people were clean passed over Jordan, the Lord gave another command to Joshua. The priests bearing the ark of the covenant still stood in the

river bed, but the people had passed over, when God said to Joshua, *"Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man 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."*

The twelve stones were to be a memorial of Israel's deliverance. They were to take up these stones from the river bed and carry them to the other side, and they

were to be piled up as a monument that generations to come might look upon them and remember how God delivered His people.

"Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: and Joshua said unto them, Pass ever before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: 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? 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" (Josh. 4:4-7).

God wanted to preserve this as a testimony. May I say that similarly the two ordinances given to Christian people were intended by God to emphasize these truths. Take the ordinance of baptism, Christian baptism which is set forth as a memorial—*"so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?"* (Rom. 6:3). When a believer is baptized he is bearing testimony to the fact that Christ has died



and that he takes his place in identification with Him in His death. God sees every believer dead, buried, and risen with Christ. I hesitate to participate in baptizing anyone if he does not really understand this. Baptism is not a means of salvation; it cannot wash away the filth of the flesh. In baptism a person is bearing witness to his death, burial, and resurrection from the dead through Jesus Christ. The intelligent person being baptized says, "I deserve to die, but Christ died in my

stead; therefore His death is my death, and I take my place now in identification with Him. I have died with Him; died to all that He died to as a Man. I have died to the world, to sin in the flesh; I have died to the law; I stand on altogether different ground before God."

The other ordinance is that of the Lord's Supper. As we gather about Him to partake of the broken bread and of the cup which represents the body and the precious blood of Christ, we remember that Christ died for

GILGAL: a "must" for the new believer

Israel's base camp, whose name means "rolling away," was intended to be the place of the new beginning. When the Jordan River resumed its flowing, it closed Israel off from their old way of life. They were no longer labor camp slaves, for what was rolled away was *"the reproach of Egypt."* They had been called the children of Israel but now they were *in* Israel; they were home. Joseph's bones, transported in the longest funeral entourage in history, could now be put to rest. So the new Christian must make a clean break with the old life, and *"purge out the old leaven"* (1 Cor. 5:7) or its influence will continue its corrupting work. *"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"* (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

At Gilgal the males were circumcised. As Paul points out, in our day *"circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God"* (Rom. 2:29). It's good to be done with the applause of the world and desire only to please the Lord who bought us out of Egypt's slave market.

It was also here that the manna stopped and the people first ate the *"old corn of the land,"* meaning the crop that had been a full year in getting ready for harvest. And it is helpful for us to know that whether God provides for us supernaturally by the day, sending us bread directly from heaven, or provides for us naturally through daily toil, it is all from His generous hand.

At Gilgal they first kept the Passover in the land. The first Passover had been "the real thing," the act of the Lord in passing or hovering over the blood-stained households the night the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt. How far away that must have seemed at Gilgal—just like Calvary might seem to us when we gather to remember that "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." But they never would have been in Canaan without it, and apart from Calvary, we would still be slaves as well, Satan's "goods," in the clutches of the *"strong man armed."* —*ed.*



The Jordan River
Photo: Wolf Schubach

us, but that He is now living, and is coming again to take us to be forever with Himself.

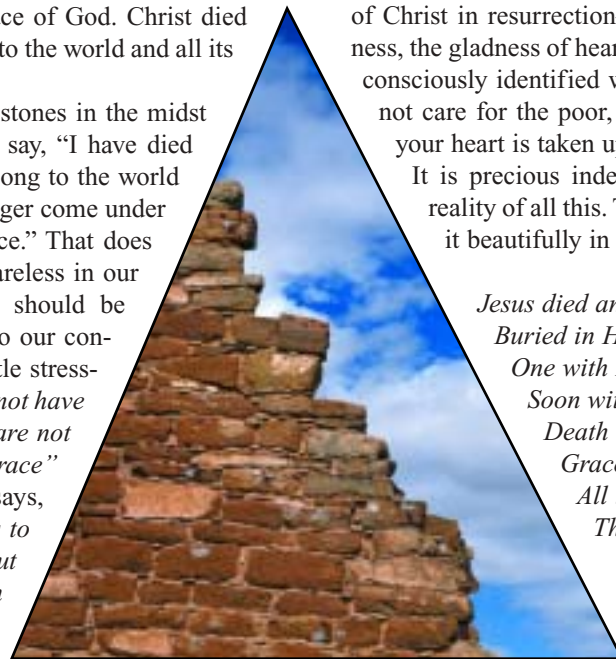
When your children ask you, “What mean ye by these ordinances?” we should be prepared to say, “Our Saviour died, and we died with Him; He arose in triumph, and we have been made alive together with Him. Now we are dead to that to which He died, and are called upon to live unto God.” We have this set forth in the twelve stones taken out of the midst of Jordan—resurrection with Christ.

But there was more than that. We read in Joshua 4:9-10, “Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priest which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua.”

How that should remind us of that word that the Saviour uttered before He departed to the Father. I say that “word” for in our translation we have three words, “It is finished,” but in the Greek there is only one word. What Jesus cried was *tetelestai*—“completed,” “finished.” The consummated work of redemption was finished for all those who put their trust in Him.

The twelve stones were set up in the midst of Jordan, and when the priests bearing the ark came up out of the river, the waters flowed back and covered up those twelve stones. There is a lesson for us in this. We can see the infinite grace of God. Christ died for us and now we are dead to the world and all its sin.

That is what the twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan tell us. They say, “I have died with Christ; I no longer belong to the world that crucified Him; I no longer come under its judgment but under grace.” That does not mean that we can be careless in our behavior. As believers we should be more careful than ever as to our conduct. That is what the apostle stresses when he says, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). Again he says, “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11).



Those twelve stones on the other side in the land of Canaan speak of resurrection with Christ. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1). May I try to make this very personal? Have you taken your place in baptism as confessedly in association with our Lord Jesus Christ in His death? Are you living it out? Let me ask you, some of you dear young people who have confessed your faith in Christ in baptism, what does that mean to you? Do you recognize the fact that God now claims you as His own? You should walk absolutely apart from the world and all its joys and idols. That is what God desires for you. When you talk to some people about coming out from the world they will say that they cannot see any harm in this thing and in that thing, and yet their own lives manifest their harmfulness. They are useless Christians; they do not count for God.

Those twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, how they ought to speak to our hearts of the grace of Christ and of what He endured for us. Have you taken your place with Him so that you can say from the heart, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:14)?

But you say, “That means giving up so many things.” Yes, but you get so much more in their place. Those twelve stones on the other side of Jordan speak of Christ in resurrection—the blessedness, the happiness, the gladness of heart that comes to the one who is consciously identified with the risen Christ. You will not care for the poor, trivial things of this world if your heart is taken up with Him.

It is precious indeed when one enters into the reality of all this. The hymnwriter has expressed it beautifully in the following verses:

*Jesus died and we died with Him,
Buried in His grave we lay;
One with Him in resurrection,
Soon with Him in heaven's bright day.
Death and judgment are behind us,
Grace and glory are before,
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,
There exhausted all their power.*

Excerpted from the author's commentary on Joshua



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BRETHREN, PRAY FOR US!

That all who attend may get a fresh vision of the Person and glories of our Lord Jesus Christ;

That all who attend may grow in understanding of the will and ways of God for His people;

That all who attend will gain fresh purpose of heart to follow the Lord;

That assemblies, marriages, and families will be strengthened;

That all hearts will be encouraged and revived;

That God might challenge us with fresh insights into the implications of the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ;

That the Lord might open the windows of heaven with blessing upon us.

Lord God...

Grant journeying mercies to all those who travel from near and far to the Conference. Empower us to be win-some testimonies of the Lord Jesus to all the staff who faithfully serve us at the Hotel. May the radiance of our countenance and the joy of our singing permeate the milieu of the Conference.

O Lord. . .

Fill our hearts with the joy of knowing You. Give us a hunger and thirst for Your Word. Help us to be doers and not hearers only. Pour out a Spirit of wisdom upon us. Give us perceptive and understanding hearts. Help us to discern Your priorities in our lives. Guard us from temptation and keep us from idols...for the glory of Your Name!

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM: HEROES OF THE FAITH (HEBREWS 11)

We are offering a children's program for children ages 5 through 12 and a baby-sitting program for children ages 3 and 4 during all plenary sessions and seminar sessions.

Sessions will be led by Nathan and April Thomas (OH), joined by Gary and Nancy Foster (PA).

Theme: "Let us run the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus" (Heb. 12:1-2)

We will look at those that have gone on before us in the faith—a great cloud of witnesses. We will use ventriloquism, chalk art, object lessons, story telling, as well as singing and Scripture memorization to share truths from the Word of God concerning our "running the race set before us." We will offer crafts with a missionary emphasis. We want to encourage the young ones to go on for the Lord and "run the race."

The True Inheritor

“In nothing terrified by your adversaries” (Phil. 1:28).

It is not without purpose that the divinely-inspired historian places on record the bright and brave spirit of Caleb, the true Possessor, before detailing the extent and the boundaries of the inheritance of the nine and a half tribes in the land of Canaan. The soul requires fire within, strength and courage in God.

From the fourteenth to the end of the nineteenth chapter we read of the apportioning of Canaan to the nine and a half tribes. The incident of the noble purpose of Caleb to possess Hebron introduces this important history.

These nine and a half tribes had to make their own foothold in their inheritance, though the situation of their possessions was determined by Jehovah Himself; “By lot was their inheritance,” but upon themselves, as upon the Christian in spiritual things, depended their foothold of the possession. Israel had reached that stage in their history in Canaan when they stood where the two ways of slothfulness and of earnestness met. At

this stage how many would be Calebs? How many would be true possessors who would arise and pursue the path of earnestness to victory?

“As the Lord commanded...the children of Israel did and they divided the land” (Josh. 14:5), and then it was to Joshua, at the camp of Gilgal—Gilgal with its grand associations of Jehovah-given freedom—that the men of Judah came. Caleb stood up before the leader and all Israel, and, in the burning spirit of the true possessor, put in his claim to the mountains of Hebron with its great and fenced cities.

Caleb’s words must have stirred every faithful soul, as addressing Joshua, he said, “*Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea*” (Josh. 14:6). The Lord was the same unchangeable Lord to Caleb, though forty-five years had gone by, and a new dispensation had arisen for Israel, and though Caleb’s old associates were dead and gone—buried because of their unbelief in the wilderness, for he alone believed in the faithful promise of the Lord.

In the dark hour of Israel’s rebellion against Jehovah at Kadesh, Caleb had stood firm for his God. When the fainthearted spies urged the people to unbelief, brave Caleb stayed himself on God, and, regardless of the favor of his old associates, he answered their unbelieving words by saying: “*Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it*” (Num. 13:30) while, to the wails and despondency of Israel, his firm heart answered, “*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*” (Num. 14:8).

The Lord had said of him in that day: “*But 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). Caleb’s faith lifted him out from the murmurs of Israel, their cowardice and their reproaches of the Lord. He trusted in God, held on to Him and left in His hands difficulties and giants; one thing only he sought—the Lord’s delight in him.

Moses swore that day, promising Caleb the land whereon his feet had trodden. God grant His people the



Photo: Jack Hazut

courage to put down their feet upon His promises, for every one shall be made good.

From that day in Kadesh-barnea Caleb occupied a peculiar position in Israel. In the darkest hours of the wilderness, in the dreariest nights of Israel wanderings, amid pestilence and divine displeasure, Caleb was sustained by the promise of his God. He had to suffer with the unbelieving host, to be afflicted with them (which principles are as true today as then, for all suffer together, and the unbelief and rebellion of one affects others). But while Israel's warriors might perish, Caleb knew that his feet would stand on the mountain of Hebron; and while thousands might die at his right hand, he knew that his family would possess the great fenced cities of Anak, for the Lord had said it.

Caleb is an example to us in our day of the believer's right response in the face of weakness and murmuring. In him we behold a sample of the finest qualities of Christian soldiership: whole-heartedness for God, unabated strength through God, and continual dependence on God. Four and a half decades of habitual reliance on God had not given his soul in old age a false self-reliance, nor had nearly half a century of God's continued favor in any way diminished in Caleb the sense that in God alone is our strength, as his words declare: *"If so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord sai."* (Josh. 14:12). How this noble possessor shames the feeble, nerveless soul! To have lived for 38 years in a very chorus of murmurings and yet still to sing *"the Lord is my strength and my song"* is a miracle indeed, and a miracle it was, as Caleb acknowledged, *"And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as He said."* (Josh. 14:10). *"As He said"*— three great words, greater than the accumulated murmurings of all Israel for 38 years!

All his wilderness way, and all his soldier life, the Lord's delight in His people was Caleb's source of courage—courage which, when he was 85 years of age, impelled him to battle with the giants of Canaan with ardor equal to that which had enabled him, when he was 40 years old, to withstand greater giants than they—the murmuring and unbelief of Israel. *"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...Now therefore, give me this mountain"* (Josh. 14:11-12). Few soldiers of Christ can so speak. Too many an aged Christian soldier seem to regard his long term of service as a plea for immunity from that hourly



Photo: Jack Hazut

dependence on God which at the first won him his victories; and *"if the Lord be with us"* becomes exchanged for the vainglorious *"I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself"* (Judg. 16:20).

Joshua blessed Caleb as he spoke; and a special blessing from Christ, our Leader, rests on every Caleb-like Christian. The Lord honored Caleb's dependence on Himself; He drove out the sons of Anak and through him smote Kirjath-arba, then restored to the city its old name of Hebron. This associated the locality with the Abraham, father of the faithful, and not with the great man among the giants.

Caleb is a name of rude significance, for it means a whelp, defined as "one of the young of various carnivorous mammals, especially the dog." Some regard this as an index to his faithfulness, for as the dog follows his master, so did Caleb follow the Lord with true purpose. Others regard the name as indicating the special glory of Judah, for, *"Judah is a lion's whelp"* (Gen. 49:9). Be the true significance of his name what it may, Caleb, the faithful man, had his portion in the great inheritance of Judah, meaning "Praise." And thus it is to this day in spiritual things among God's soldiers: faithful men dwell in praise, and *"they will be still praising Thee"* (Ps. 84:4). His brave spirit arose to its greatness among the murmurers of Israel, and he inherited in the noblest portion of the promised land; God, as it were, granting to the man who spoke well of His Name in the place of murmurings a home in the land of Praise.

The Spirit of God includes a joyful note after recording Caleb's faith and victory, *"and the land had rest from war."* When a Great-heart rises up in the Church of God and smites the giants, there is rest among His people and joy in the ramparts of glory.



EVIL FROM GOD'S HAND

Do we understand it? Not always. But can we accept it?

In recent months a friend or relative may have experienced some serious illness or injury. You may have gone through these things yourself. In these matters, we often question the role of God and His degree of involvement. Does He cause these calamities? Or merely allow them? How much power does Satan have to inflict God's people? Do these things always work for good?

Recall the case of Job and his wife. To our amazement, we hear Job's seemingly non-human response, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). Job was not confused about God's role in his tragedy.

After the second round of affliction, Job proclaims, "What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). Can we receive evil from the hand of God? Job could; and so could Joseph (Gen. 50:20); and the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 12:7-10). But why is it that we struggle with this concept? There are three issues that believers stumble over when dealing with this question; 1) God's sovereignty; 2) man's finiteness; and 3) the Bible's definition of evil.

1. We fail to recognize that God is in total control and exerts divine authority over all things. Job's case reveals the controlling hand of God over all. We must submit our lives fully to a sovereign, omniscient, omnipotent God.

This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? (Isa. 14:26-27).



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: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it (Isa. 46:9-11).

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 (Col. 1:16-17).

2. We fail to recognize that the ways, thoughts and purposes of an infinite God cannot be fully grasped and understood by the finite intelligence of His creatures. We may try to demand of God that He act and conduct Himself in ways only understood within our limited knowledge of Him. His sovereignty far surpasses our fleshly wisdom. It is faith that bridges the gap.

I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number (Job 5:8-9).

Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. Lo, He goeth by me, and I see Him not: He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not. Behold, He taketh away, who can hinder Him? Who will say unto Him, What doest Thou? (Job 9:10-12).

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 (Isa. 55:8-9).

O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen (Rom. 11:33-34, 36).

3. We fail to understand the full meaning of the word “evil” and how it is used in Scripture, specifically in relation to God.

Who first used the term “evil”? (Gen. 2:17). It was God! He introduced the term before the fall of man and even before the appearance of Satan. It was His plan for the consequences toward those who either obeyed Him or disobeyed Him. Death was God’s idea—first introduced in this same verse, before man’s fall into sin.

A closer study of the word “evil” in Scripture will reveal that it is used in a broad spectrum of meanings. On one side of the continuum it can speak of the punishment or judgment of God upon man to fulfill His purposes, such as the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. (Search the prophets to see this—Jer. 18:11; 32:42; 39:16; 44:27; Micah 1:12). On the other extreme, it can be used to describe the wicked, vile and sinful lusts of man’s fallen and depraved nature (Jas. 1:13-15). The afflictions and troubles coming from the hand of God, either in testing or chastening, often appear “evil” to the finite view of man, yet are actually “good” in the overall infinite purposes of God. It is a matter of perspective as to whether we can see things as good or evil. Job, Joseph, and Paul were able to see “evil” things by faith through the eyes of God, as from the hand of God, only because they recognized Him as God, and their own frame as vessels of clay.

These principles are dramatized in Job 2:6-10. We see God, who has all things in control, including Satan and his evil plans. *“And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold he is in thine hand; but save his life”* (Job 2:6). We can see the failure of the man when blind to the hand of God behind the circumstances and troubles of life. Job’s wife, representing those who want to define and judge God’s role by their own finite understanding, instructs Job to *“curse God and die”* (Job 2:9). Finally, we see the man of faith with spiritual understanding. He refuses to question God’s sovereign authority or redefine God’s role. He declares, *“We have also received good from God, and should we not receive evil?”* (Job 2:10, DARBY).

Within Job chapter 2, the word “evil” occurs 3 times—in verse 3, 10 and 11. It is the same Hebrew word, *ra’* or *ra’ah*. (Strong’s # 7451). In this passage it is used in three different ways. In verse 3, it describes the wicked and sinful world in which Job lived, and of which he refused to be a part. Next in verse 10, the same word is used by Job to represent the troubles he

has received from the hand of God. Then in verse 11, the same word is used to describe the troubles of Job, only this time from the human, carnal perspective of his three friends, who failed to understand the principles previously discussed.

When Job-like trials come into our lives, I know of no greater source of comfort and strength than that found in the testimony Job, Joseph and Paul. Only with a biblical understanding of God’s hand can we say, *“the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away”*; *“ye thought it evil against me, but God meant it unto good”*; *“the things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel”*; *“most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”* We can further rejoice in the truth of 1 Corinthians 10:13.


There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Notice that God is the author of trials and testing that come into our lives. Two important facts are also introduced in this verse: i) God knows exactly how much we can bear, and ii) with every testing He sends to us He has already provided a way to bear it, so we can profitably endure under the load.

Job 2:6-10 gives us an overview of the three great influences in human history, packaged in this snapshot of Job’s personal experience:

- God is controlling;
- Satan is deceiving;
- Faith is believing.

With this in view, we can begin to appreciate and then fully embrace the message of Romans 8:28; Ephesians 5:20 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. May we also avoid the trap so many have fallen into, that of attempting to force the sovereign God *“who doeth all things well”* into the finite mold of our small minds. Might we heed the warning of Zephaniah 1:12,

And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. 

—Sam Thorpe

Joshua's Last Words

The old soldier reminds us of the timeless secrets of victory.

Joshua, the mighty warrior (retired), was “*stricken in age*,” actually around 110 years old, and knew that the time of his departure from this world was imminent. He was comfortable in the knowledge that he was soon to go “*the way of all the earth*” because he had had a living relationship with his God. He had no regrets.

He had led a full life, one which had taken him from slavery in Egypt to the leadership of his nation, Israel. It had included servitude, military service, espionage, and rendering assistance to Moses the man of God. He had been used by the Lord to conquer many nations and, by way of Jericho and its amazing fall, to lead his people into the Promised Land—a full life indeed, and one lived in happy fellowship with the Lord.

But this thrilling chapter of his life was now over and, after some quiet years, he was concerned that after his departure the nation should continue to serve God and wholly follow the Lord. He was therefore—in spite of personal debility, being “*stricken in age*”—determined to address the people through their representatives and also directly.

In chapter 23, he summoned the leaders and officials of the nation together; in chapter 24 he spoke to all the nation, thus discharging his own personal exercise in this matter and challenging the people to a spiritual enjoyment of the things of God with a variety of dire warnings and rousing encouragements.

In chapter 23 all the elders, heads of families, judges and officers were summoned and gathered together to hear what Joshua had to say to them. They represented the legal, social and political aspects of society and provided a good cross-section of the nation as a whole. The words of this speech, together with those of the one following in chapter 24, were to com-

prise the last words of Joshua. Therefore both he and the people took them very seriously indeed. His passing would bring to a close a successful era in the things of God and who knew what the future would hold?

Certainly Joshua was aware of many potential pitfalls for the Lord's people and he sought to warn them. The emphasis of Joshua's words was to

remind his hearers of God's goodness in bringing them out of a land where they

were strangers, to an inheritance in

the Promised Land. While Joshua

himself had been the warrior-

leader in the conquering and

subduing of the nations already

in the land, he unreservedly put

the secret of those victories

down to the activity and power

of God Himself. “*The Lord*

your God, He it is that fighteth

for you, as He hath promised

you,” he exclaims. God had driven

out from before them those

nations great and strong. Contin-

ued allegiance to Him was required

if future victories were to be assured.

Aware that they were listening to the

last words of a great leader, the people

were impressed with the truth that whoever

was their earthly leader it would be the Lord who

would continue to fight for them in driving out the

remaining inhabitants of the land. Only in this way

would they enjoy peace and security, and not be

adversely influenced or debilitated by the lifestyles of

those around them.

Such influence would start in a minor way by simple

friendships which, unrestrained, would grow into

intermarriage and an eventual toleration of their gods

and, in extreme cases, the worship of them, too. Friend-

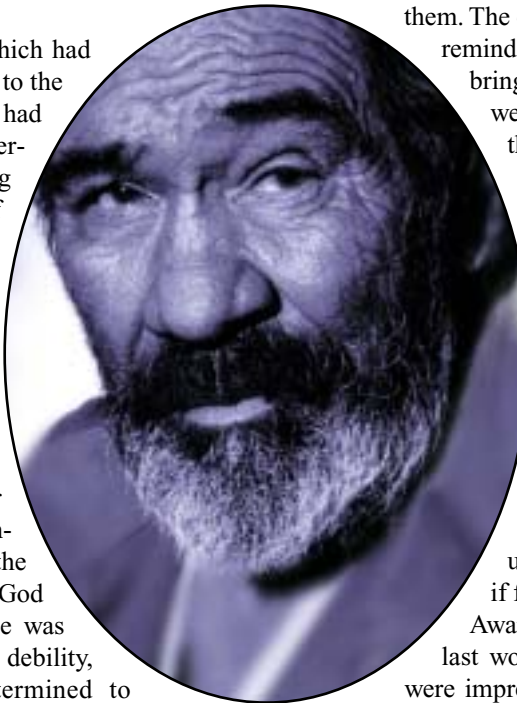
ship with them would bring snares, traps, scourges and

thorns until ultimately they would be overcome. With

God on their side, however, Joshua affirmed, one of

them could put even a thousand men to flight! Thus

encouraging them in God's continuing goodness,



Joshua urged them to be “*very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside...to the right hand or to the left.*” This could only be achieved by separating themselves from the nations and their false gods. Failure to do so would result in their own expulsion from the good land and that without having fully entered into its blessings.

The call is therefore to obedience and separation. These principles still hold good, even in the twenty-first century. Disobedience, and fellowship with the world, leads to debility in the things of God. We are urged by Scripture to come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing (see 2 Cor. 6:17). This is much more difficult than it at first seems. However this should not be only an ambition, but a reality. Those who mix with the world or tolerate the way worldlings live find that their own enjoyment of the land is diminished and they are in danger of losing what they now have. The result is expulsion from the land, not from salvation, but from losing the joy of it, as David discovered.

In chapter 24 we have Joshua’s national “farewell” speech, delivered at Shechem where all the people had gathered. While invited to come to listen to Joshua, it is clear that they really heard the voice of God through His aged servant. In fact God speaks directly to the people, using Joshua as His mouthpiece.

God recounts the actions He took on behalf of His beloved people: “*I took...*” (v. 3); “*I gave...*” (v. 4); “*I sent...*” (v. 5); “*I brought...*” (v. 6), “*I brought...I gave...I destroyed...*” (v. 8), “*I delivered...*” (v. 10). His goodness in calling Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, preserving the children of Israel in Egypt from famine and persecution, providing for their needs during forty years of wilderness journeying, bringing them into the land and settling them in that place of milk and honey, is detailed before them. They were now inhabiting a land for which they had not labored, resting in cities they had not built, and enjoying the fruit of vineyards they had not planted. Thus, the goodness of God and His ample provision was evident and the continuing benefits to His people clear.

Such blessings now, as then, call for recognition, reverence and committed service, but it is important that corporate fervor is directed into individual lives, so Joshua throws down the gauntlet with the challenge, “*Choose ye this day whom ye will serve,*” and like the leader he was, he set the example by saying, “*As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord*” (v. 15).

Rising to the challenge and following Joshua’s example, the people cry out that they too will serve the Lord, and they articulate their reasons in verses 16-18. They are a virtual repetition of the words of Joshua, but were honestly meant and were not just a vain repetition of what they had so clearly heard.

Joshua faithfully points out in the midst of this enthusiastic response that there is a downside to committing oneself to serving the Lord in this way. It is that He is a holy and jealous God and any unfaithfulness will be dealt with, as He will not look lightly on any departure to serve other gods. Nevertheless, they insist that they will indeed serve the Lord and they resolve to obey His voice. This covenant between them and their God was recorded for them and for posterity by the setting up of a great stone under an oak tree by the sanctuary of the Lord.

Shortly afterwards, Joshua died as did some other leaders too, but the people keep the covenant by God’s grace for a least a generation. Their children fell away, however; they had not known the great leaders, nor their God and so fell into the trap so eloquently explained by Joshua earlier.

Joshua was a great man and his influence lived on even after his death until destroyed by the ravages of time, disobedience and a lack of separation resulting in debility and a drifting away from the good things of the land once enjoyed by Joshua and his contemporaries.

In the things of God simple lessons need to be learned and relearned. God is still the same as He ever was: He is generous, providing blessings; He is holy, requiring separation of His people; He is jealous, longing for an ongoing relationship with us. Are we living up to these expectations by His strength? Are we still enjoying the benefits of the good land in our spiritual lives? We need to constantly remember that without the Lord we would still be wandering “*on the other side of the flood,*” trapped in Egypt, fighting enemies already defeated and standing only on the fringe of the deep things of God.

Everything is in our favor. God is for us. As one, we can chase thousands. Let us therefore renew our commitment to serving the Lord. In the words of Joshua, we say with enthusiasm and sincerity. “*As for me... I will serve the Lord.*”



The Cities of Refuge

There were six in the Old Testament; the seventh would be a Man.

Sometimes believers sing with great joy:

*Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.
God will take care of you,
Through every day,
O'er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you. (Martin)*

That confidence, that protection, is never more clearly illustrated than in the cities of refuge located in ancient Israel. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had said to Moses, *"I will appoint thee a place whither he (the one guilty of involuntary manslaughter) shall flee"* (Ex. 21:13) long before Israel had even left Sinai in their journey towards Canaan.

That would be expected from a God who could say, *"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. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord..."* (Jer. 29:11-14).

So let's consider the cities of refuge and look for some practical lessons from the Scriptures to encourage our hearts.

We learn from Numbers 35 that the Levites were to have 48 cities for their inheritance when the children of Israel took possession of the promised land. Six of those cities were to be designated as cities of refuge—three to the east of Jordan and three to the west. The cities were available to all men—*"both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them"* (v. 15). The principles by which the cities of refuge would function are clearly delineated in this chapter, though the cities were not named as yet.

Then in turning to Deuteronomy 4 we learn the names of the three cities east of the Jordan: *"Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in*

Bashan, of the Manassites" (v. 43). Keeping in mind Numbers 32 and the place of compromise chosen by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, isn't it an encouragement to our hearts to know that Jehovah was still making provision for His people in spite of their poor choices? Little wonder we sing, *"Great is Thy faithfulness."* Again, in Deuteronomy 19, Moses reiterates the necessity of having cities of refuge and details how they should function.

Now as we turn our attention to Joshua 20, we will learn the names of the three cities to the west of the Jordan. We'll also notice in both verses 2 and 7 that the Israelites were to appoint (meaning "assign" or "hallow" as Darby states, or "sanctify, to honor God" as Matthew Henry suggests) these cities. Since they belonged to the Levites, they not only were places of refuge, but of rest as well.

It is also striking to notice that the phrase *"avenger of blood"* mentioned in verses 3, 5 and 9, refers to one who is to *"do the part of the kinsman"*—the same concept that is mentioned in the little book of Ruth (the Kinsman-Redeemer). The avenger had the ability to show mercy or exact punishment at his discretion. One writer suggested, *"we are pursued by the 'avenging law' which decrees judgment and death."* Thank God justice was served at Calvary!

F. B. Meyer writes, *"The roads were kept in good repair; clearly written directions at the cross-ways indicated the route; and according to Jewish tradition, runners, learned in the law, were stationed at various stages to direct and help the fugitive."*

No Israelite was more than thirty miles (about a half day's journey) from a city of refuge. *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"* (Ps. 46:1).

H. A. Ironside says: *"Christ is not only the Man slain and the city of refuge Himself, but He too is the High Priest, and as such He will never die again. His is an everlasting priesthood; so those who find refuge in Him are eternally saved."*

The cities of refuge were of no help to those who were declared guilty of premeditated murder. Some commentators portray the Jewish leaders at the cross as the guilty party, albeit unintentional murderers, for the

Lord Jesus stated on Calvary's cross *"they know not what they do."* Peter repeats that charge in his second sermon, *"that through ignorance ye did it"* (Acts 3:17). Since that is the case, forgiveness (refuge) is available even to those who crucified the Saviour. The apostle Paul gratefully records: *"I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief"* (1 Tim. 1:13).

The writer of the book of Hebrews gives us the only use of the word "refuge" in the New Testament. He speaks of those *"who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us"* (6:18). What a joy, what calm assurance is to be *"found in Him"* (Phil. 3:9) where the believer is seen as *"perfect in Christ Jesus"* (Col. 1:28). At least 40 times in the New Testament we find the phrase *"in Christ Jesus."* *"There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus..."* (Rom. 8:1).

It is interesting to note that there is no recorded incident in Scripture of a man actually fleeing to a city of refuge, though some suggest that one of the reasons King David mourned over Abner (*"Died Abner as a fool dieth?"*) was that he was found in the gate of Hebron and not in the city—"almost, but lost!"

The significance of the names of the cities of refuge should not go unnoticed for they also remind us of our Refuge. There is some conjecture as to the specific meanings of some of the names, but generally scholars agree on the following possibilities: Kedesh—sanctuary or holiness; Shechem—shoulder or strength; Hebron—communion or fellowship; Bezer—fortress or uplifting; Ramoth—the heights or happiness; Golan—rejoicing or safety.

Apparently at least three of the cities were assigned to the descendants of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari—the three families responsible for the Old Testament tabernacle (Deut. 4:43; Josh. 21:34-36; 1 Chron. 6:54-56). Those three families labored long and hard to disassemble the tabernacle, pack it up, and move it to another location in Israel's travels, then set it up for use in that new environment. Now it would seem God was rewarding them for their faithfulness and service by giving them cities of rest and a place of refuge for others. How the Church needs to demonstrate that provision for lost souls today.

William MacDonald notes several parallels between the temporal salvation found in the cities of refuge and the eternal salvation found in the Lord Jesus Christ:

1) The roads were clear and well marked—the Scriptures give us the plan of salvation pointing to the

finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ in such simple terms that even a little child can understand it.

2) The cities were spread throughout the land—the message of the gospel is available to all men—we have a universal salvation, i.e., Christ died for *all*.

3) Crisis drove people to the cities of refuge—and many have found Christ after some extenuating circumstance has brought them to an end of "self."

4) There is no neutral ground for the guilty—either a man is in Christ or lost—there is no other position.

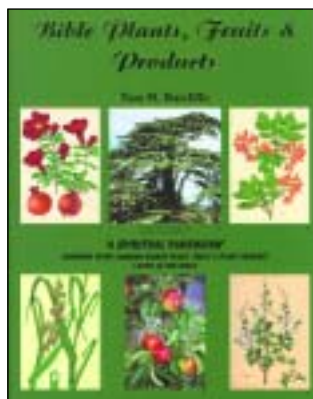
The word "refuge" is mentioned 46 times in the Old Testament—eighteen of the first nineteen occurrences have to do with the cities of refuge. It is also found in the book of Psalms eighteen times. For example: in Psalm 9, He is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble; in Psalm 14, He is the refuge for the poor; in Psalm 46, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Later in that psalm it is the God of Jacob (the scheming supplanter) who is our refuge. In Psalm 48, God is known in the palaces of kings as a refuge; in Psalm 57, our refuge is in the shadow of His wings; while in Psalm 59, He is our refuge in the day of trouble. Psalm 62 reminds us that God is a refuge for us; while in Psalm 78, He is a strong refuge. Because the Lord is my refuge I can trust in Him according to Psalm 91. That refuge later in the same psalm becomes our habitation. Finally, in Psalm 94, we learn that God is the rock of my refuge.

"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and His children shall have a place of refuge" (Prov. 14:26). To quote the title of a famous booklet, what "safety, certainty, and enjoyment" we find in the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of how many times this principle is mentioned in our hymnology. Examples are: "He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock"; "O Rock divine, O Refuge dear, a shelter in the time of storm"; "Thou the refuge of my soul, when life's stormy billows roll"; "Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee"; "How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe, I have fled to my Refuge and breathed out my woe"; "A mighty fortress in our God, a bulwark never failing"; and "Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow."

Be encouraged, Christian, even in an unsettled world! *"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"* (Deut. 33:27).



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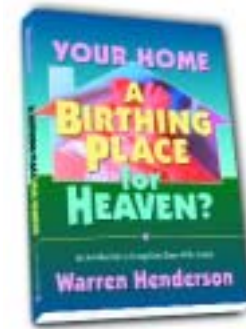
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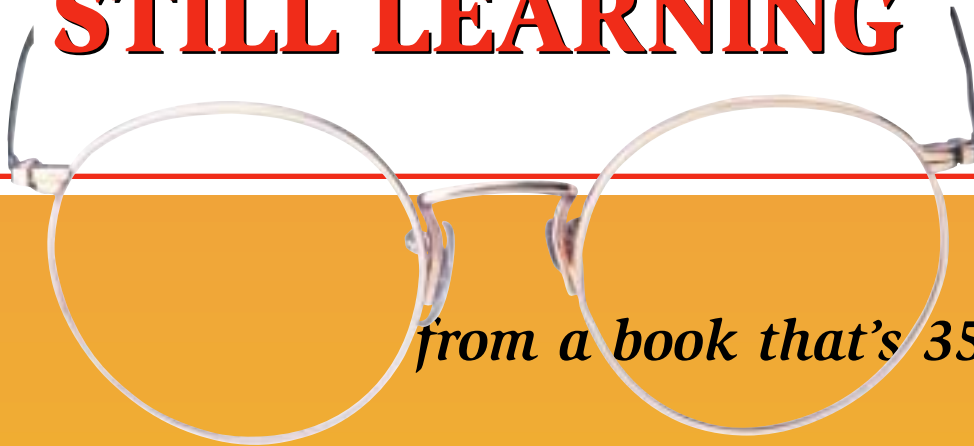


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- *that as long as sin lasts, conflict with it will be necessary*
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- *that in this fight with evil we have a divine Captain*
- *that to follow Him obediently and courageously makes us more than conquerors*
- *that no evil is so insignificant as to allow partial measures in dealing with it*
- *that when we are defeated, the cause may be discovered by prayer, but it will take more than prayer to repair the damage*
- *that the work of subduing our enemies is not sudden, but gradual*
- *that success in one battle does not win the campaign, and defeat in one battle does not mean that the whole campaign has been lost*
- *that divine help and human exertion must go together; that God uses our efforts to fulfill His ends, and fights for them who fight for Him*
- *that trusting and trying are not contradictory, but complementary*
- *that as the enemies of God are manifold, the method of dealing with them must also be multi-form*
- *that the Word of God is given, not for our admiration, but for our obedience; the Word in which there is an Ebal as well as a Gerizim*
- *that when extermination of foes is commanded, confederation is a sin*
- *that we should keep a record of spiritual victories for the glory of God, for our own encouragement, and for the instruction of others.*

—W. Graham Scroggie