

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA: OBTAINING OUR INHERITANCE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION.....	page 2
Chapter 2: THE PREPARATION OF JOSHUA.....	page 5
Chapter 3: ENTERING THE LAND (Chapters 1-5).....	page 11
Chapter 4: CONQUERING THE LAND (Chapters 6-12).....	page 24
Chapter 5: DIVIDING THE LAND (Chapters 13-22:9).....	page 40
Chapter 6: KEEPING THE INHERITANCE (Chap.22:10-24).....	page 59

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Soldiers in battle, nations at war- families and tribes living in a new land- how is this all relevant to us? How can the ancient stories in the Book of Joshua help inspire and guide the modern Christian? As we will see, the history recorded in this book has exciting spiritual parallels and prophetic applications for today. We will consider in detail how Joshua is a type or prophetic foreshadow of our Lord Jesus Christ. And while Joshua led a natural army of soldiers to victory, our Lord Jesus is now leading a spiritual army, the Church. Our studies will reveal how we are the “Joshua Generation” that will arise in these last days to triumph over the gates of hell.

Instead of fighting the Old Testament's bloody battles on the earth, the Christian now conducts spiritual warfare in the heavenlies. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” In the Old Testament we find that the Israelites fought to possess a natural inheritance, a land “flowing with milk and honey.” Now the Christian is fighting, not to obtain an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual inheritance in the kingdom of God.

First the Natural, Then the Spiritual

In 1 Corinthians 15:46 the Apostle Paul gives us a key to help understand the ways of God. There we read, “However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterwards the spiritual.” All throughout the Bible we see how the Lord has worked according to this pattern. The Old Testament was written about the natural children of Abraham, while the New Testament then tells us about his spiritual children of faith. The Old Testament has natural temples that God dwelt in, but now God dwells in a spiritual temple, the Church. Why was the Old Testament filled with natural things that are then spiritually repeated for us in the New Testament? God works this way to show us natural models or patterns of what He wants to accomplish in the spirit. What we cannot see of the invisible plans of God we can begin to understand from His natural works, Rom.1:20. As we study the Book of Joshua we will repeatedly see natural events recorded there that have spiritual applications for us today. Then as we understand the spiritual principles revealed through how Joshua and his troops obtained the Promised Land, we can become good soldiers of Jesus Christ who will obtain our own inheritance in the kingdom of God.

The following chart will help show us these parallels:

OBTAINING THE INHERITANCE		
The BIBLE:	The Old Testament	The New Testament
The PATTERN:	First the Natural	Then the Spiritual
The LEADER:	Joshua	Jesus
The PEOPLE:	Israel	Christians
The ENEMY:	Canaanites	The Army of Satan
The BATTLEGROUND:	On the Earth	In the Heavenlies
The INHERITANCE:	Land of Israel	Kingdom of God

The Book of Joshua can of course be studied as natural history. It tells us how Joshua led the people of Israel into the land that God had promised them. Israel then conquered the Canaanite tribes that had lived there, divided the land, and lived in the areas given to their twelve tribes.

The most important message for us in this book, however, is its spiritual fulfillment. Just as the Israelites were told of the Promised Land that they could inherit, there is still a “promised land” for God's people to enter and possess. This spiritual inheritance is the kingdom of God. It includes the promises of God, the gifts & ministries, and the eternal positions & rewards that God wants us to inherit in His kingdom.

For us, the spiritual application of the Book of Joshua is that Jesus our Captain wants to lead us into God's promises for our lives. We must conquer our spiritual enemies and establish the kingdom of God in our life, family, church, local area, and nation. We will have many spiritual battles before we can enter into all the character, ministries, and rewards of God. Yet as we begin to enter into our inheritance in Christ, we will then also need to learn how to use and keep what God has given to us. These are the keys that we can gain from fully understanding this book.

Outline of the Book of Joshua

The Book of Joshua teaches us these lessons in a clear step-by-step manner. The content of the book is broken down into two equal sections each containing twelve chapters. The first half (chapters 1-12) can be titled “Conquering the Inheritance.” In this section we read about how Joshua crossed over the Jordan River and defeated the armies of the Canaanites in the Promised Land.

The second half of the book (chapters 13-24) can be entitled “Possessing the Inheritance.” After the Israelites moved in and defeated their enemies, they had to learn how to settle down and take possession of the land. Each of the tribes had their own geographical area clearly marked out where they were to live. We also read about the specific inheritances which different people sought for and received, such as Caleb, Achsah, the daughters of Zelophehad, and Joshua himself.

The following chart shows us the outline of how the Book of Joshua divides into two halves.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA			
1st Half: Conquering the Inheritance		2nd Half: Possessing the Inheritance	
Section 1: Entering the Land Chapters 1-5	Section 2: Conquering Canaan Chapters 6-12	Section 3: Dividing the Land Chapters 13 to 22:9	Section 4: Keeping the Inheritance Chapters 22:10 to 24

The last row of the chart further divides the two halves of the Book of Joshua into two sections each. We could call these the four “quarters” of the book. They each deal with the main topic of their respective half, but then go on to explain in further detail how the Israelites conquered and possessed the Promised Land.

Each of these four sections needs to be spiritually fulfilled in the life of every Christian who presses on to complete God's plan for their life. The maturing Christian needs to first begin entering into the promises of their inheritance in Christ. This will secondly bring them into facing the conflicts that must be overcome to obtain these promises. Thirdly, as they begin to receive the character, ministries and rewards of God, they will need great wisdom to organize and establish these blessings. Then to complete God's plan for their life, they will need to keep

and multiply their inheritance by passing it on to their following generations of natural and spiritual children.

Authorship and Date

Jewish tradition and the Talmud declare that Joshua himself was the author of the book. Near the very end of the book we read, “Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God” (Josh.24:26). This at least refers to Joshua's last sermon, but possibly refers to the entire book. Joshua was the most qualified person to write this account, both as an eyewitness of the events and as a man of God who was skilled in declaring the word of the Lord. There are a few sections of the book (such as the death of Joshua in chapter 24:29-31) that must have been inserted by the final editor of the book, perhaps one of the high priests or early judges of Israel. Yet if Joshua himself did not basically write the book, then it was written by a contemporary of Joshua who was an eyewitness of what he wrote. This is confirmed by the author using the word “us” in Joshua 5:6, and by the fact that Rahab was still alive when Joshua 6:25 was written. This would place the writing of the book during the early part of the fourteenth century B.C.

Chapter 2

THE PREPARATION OF JOSHUA

Before we study the Book of Joshua it is important for us to consider how the Lord prepared the leader for whom the book is named. The Lord singled out Joshua from among more than one-half million men because of some very clear qualifications in his life.

In our day, the Lord is still looking for men and women whom He may choose and anoint to bring victory to families, congregations, and even to nations. Who will qualify for such an awesome privilege? As we learn how the Lord prepared Joshua, we also learn valuable lessons that can help us to be chosen by God.

Joshua became a Good Soldier

The first time Joshua is mentioned in the Scriptures is in Exodus 17:9, where Moses chose him to lead the soldiers against the army of Amalek. Joshua and his troops defeated the Amalekites, and Joshua went on to become a courageous and wise soldier. If we want to be chosen to lead the people of God to great victories, we must also learn to “be strong and of good courage,” even as Joshua was exhorted many times (Josh.1:6, 7, 9, & 18).

In 1 John 2:12-14 we read about three categories of Christians. In these verses the Apostle John compares our spiritual growth with the natural development of a person from a child to a father. In verse 14 we read, “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.”

Just as a young man can mature and become qualified to join an army, the maturing Christian should develop into becoming a “good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim.2:3). This will cause us to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,” and will help conform us to the image of Christ- for Exodus 15:3 tells us, “The Lord is a Man of War.”

There are times when the people of God will be attacked by demonic powers or the people under their control. Will we be strong and bold when it is time to fight the battles of the Lord? Remember, this is what often separates the men from the boys!

There are many times I have faced battles that in my natural self I wanted to avoid. It can often be as simple as getting out of bed at night to pray. It may be a conflict at church. Once when I was an assistant pastor, I had to stand outside the church's front door and tell a drunken demon-possessed man that he was not welcome to come in. This big, strong man became violent, and went out to the road to grab the church sign. Then he came charging back to the church, prepared to throw the sign through our large front window. Just on the other side of that window our senior pastor was preaching at the pulpit! Right then I wished that some of the bigger men of the church were out there instead of me; but as I was the only one there, I pointed my finger at this violent man and rebuked him in the name of the Lord. He reacted to this as though someone had hit him in the chest with a baseball bat, and turned around to stagger away.

Another time I was teaching a pastors' seminar in a province of the Philippines that was largely controlled by the communists. The message that the Lord told me to speak was that if the churches would boldly preach the gospel, the Lord would change the province and break the power of communism there. That preaching earned me a death threat that in the natural made me

want to get on the next plane out! However, I knew that if I left in fear my ministry would become of no effect and could even leave the pastors in defeat. So I prayed through, and stayed the next few days until the seminar was completed with victory.

That seminar helped encourage some of the ministers in their aggressive evangelism. Within eight years they had over 10,000 converts while the strength of the communist movement was broken! I then started a Bible school there for 120 pastors and workers in the church of a local pastor who had formerly been a part of the local communist assassin squad.

What is our reaction when the battles get tough? The Lord wants to teach us how to “endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim.2:3). This is a qualification that we need in order to become leaders that are chosen by God and followed by men.

Another lesson to be learned by Joshua's defeat of the Amalekites concerns the heritage of Amalek. He was a grandson of Esau, who represents the carnal man and the works of the flesh (Gal.4:22-29). If we want to become successful Christian leaders, we must battle the works of the flesh in our own lives. We must declare war against the “Amalekites” that would seek to destroy our own spiritual ministries. King Saul was a leader who compromised with the Amalekites when the Lord told him to destroy them, and in the end it was an Amalekite who boasted that he killed Saul. To become a good leader, we must not be content with only gaining temporary victories over the lusts of the flesh. We must declare total war and seek to eradicate them from our lives, or else in a time of difficulty or personal weakness they may return to sneak up and destroy us.

Joshua was a Servant

In many of the early references to Joshua we read that he was called the servant of Moses (Ex.24:13, Num.11:28, Josh.1:1). In his youth, Joshua was not one of the leaders of Israel, nor did he come from a priestly family. He did not look like a promising leader. In modern terminology we could say that he was not an elder in the church or the son of a minister. Joshua was like a deacon whom God chose to promote and make the next senior pastor! Even Moses did not realize that Joshua was God's choice to be the next leader until the Lord showed him this near the end of his life (Num.27:15-21).

Being a servant (or according to the Greek language, a *deacon*) is not in the natural seen as an important ministry or a steppingstone to greatness. Yet God's thoughts are different from our thoughts, and His ways are higher than our ways. The Lord Jesus Himself taught us, “whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant” (Mk.10:43). It is as we learn to serve that we are becoming prepared to be able to lead. The reason for this is because every leader is still a man under higher authority- unless you want to be a dictator or a pope! The more we learn to be faithful servants and channels of the authority over us, the more we can be promoted and entrusted with higher levels of that authority. This is the opposite of the ways of carnal man, which will teach that you must promote yourself and climb the ladder of success to become a high ranking professional leader. If we would follow God's ways and gain His promotions, we should instead heed the exhortations, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up,” “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might,” “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much” (Jam.4:10, Eccles.9:10, Lk.16:10).

As Moses' servant, Joshua also learned many valuable lessons as he was close to Moses and learned his wisdom. In Numbers 11:26-29 when Joshua wanted to stop the two elders who were prophesying in the camp, Moses helped show him how open the heart of God is. If Joshua had not imparted this same nonsectarian attitude to Israel, the tribes that settled west of the Jordan

might have destroyed the tribes east of the Jordan when they built the altar as recorded in Joshua 22:10-34.

Joshua had his Name (and Character) Changed

A very important key to Joshua's preparation was that God changed his name. This signified that the Lord was changing Joshua's character and calling. After Joshua had already served Moses as his assistant and military captain, we read in Numbers 14 how he was also chosen as one of the 12 spies that were sent into Canaan. There in verse eight he is called Hoshea according to his original name, but in verse 16 we further read, "And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua."

Names are often prophetic of our character and calling. Abigail correctly discerned how her husband's name corresponded to his character when she said, "For as his name is, so is he," 1 Sam.25:25. If we find out the meaning of a name, we can often gain understanding from the name about God's calling. We know that Abraham fulfilled his name to become a "Father of Nations," and that Jesus' name prophetically meant "The Lord is Salvation."

The name that Joshua was given at his birth was Hoshea, which means "salvation" or "save." Moses was led by the Holy Spirit to change his name by adding to the beginning of Hoshea's name. This addition was a "J," and made his new name to become Jehoshua, or Yehoshua. Today this is spelled Joshua, Yeshua, or Jesus in its modern shortened form. The complete meaning of his name became "the Lord Saves" or "the Lord is Salvation."

The great importance to Joshua's new name can be seen when we compare his name with the name given to our Lord at His birth. In the original Bible languages, Joshua and Jesus were the same name! An example of how these two names can be interchangeably used is shown to us in Hebrews 4:8. The King James Version of this verse says "if Jesus had given them rest," while most modern translations say "if Joshua had given them rest." In this verse it is actually Joshua who is being spoken about, but because these two names are interchangeable from the original Bible languages, the King James translators put the name "Jesus" in this verse.

Joshua became an Old Testament type of Christ, even to the exact similarity that they both have the same name. They both entered into a similar calling of becoming deliverers, as their name means "The Lord is Salvation." When the Lord appeared to Joshua in chapter 5:13-15, He manifested Himself as the "Commander of the Army of the Lord." This was also the major aspect of the character of Christ that Joshua entered into. The Scriptures tell us in 1 John 3:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 that we are changed to be like the Lord when we see Him. For this reason Christ revealed Himself to Joshua as the Commander, to transform Joshua into also becoming a victorious army commander.

Joshua became the Old Testament leader that conquered the enemies and led the people of God into their inheritance. In this way he was like Jesus, who has conquered sin, hell, and death to lead the New Testament believers into their inheritance. Moses the lawgiver could lead the people of God out of darkness, but it took Joshua to lead them into the Promised Land. The New Testament now similarly teaches us that while the law given by Moses begins the redemptive work of God in our lives, it takes the grace of Christ to lead us into its completion.

The transforming work of God's grace that prepared Joshua is still seeking to prepare Christian leaders for today. The Lord Jesus Christ said in Revelation 2:17, "To him who overcomes I will give ... a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." Just as Christ gave Joshua a new name, character, and calling, there are now a multitude of believers who are being prepared to be the "Joshua Generation" of church history. (We will study this further in chapter three.)

Eighteen years ago I was a very discouraged minister. God had given me gracious promises about what He wanted to accomplish in my life, but up to that time I had seen very little results. At my lowest point of discouragement the Lord chose to intervene and begin to prepare me for my calling.

At a very unusual service about 15 people prophesied over me one after the other. All the prophecies were about how the Lord was going to make me a Joshua. Then a prophet declared something that made me fall to the ground in deep weeping and travail. He said that the Lord was giving me a new name, the name of Joshua.

That declaration was a living *rhema* word that entered deep into my spirit. It was a turning point from my discouragement that has led me into many very fruitful years of ministry. Just as Joshua led the Israelites and planted them in their inheritance, I have been able to help lead and establish thousands of pastors in their ministries (their spiritual inheritance) through writings, pastors' seminars, and Bible schools that I have ministered for in many nations. God is still in the business of changing His people today, and is preparing us to be part of the great army that will help prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ. As God is raising up a multitude of Joshuas for these last days, may we ever more confidently proclaim, "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place" (2 Cor.2:14).

Joshua became a Man of Vision and Faith

As the Lord prepared Joshua we also can see how he became a man of vision and faith. Every Christian leader needs these qualities to become effective and established in their ministry.

Moses chose Joshua to be one of the 12 spies who walked through the Promised Land (Num.13:16-26). After his journey Joshua said from personal knowledge that it was "an exceedingly good land" (Num.14:7). The average Israelite only heard a few often-repeated stories about the land. However, Joshua was able to taste and see the big picture of what the Lord wanted to bring all His people into obtaining.

The scripture is true that says "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor.2:9). Yet the next verse goes on to tell us, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit." Obtaining this revelation is one of the breakthroughs that we need to move from the natural into the supernatural, from our own plans and programs into obtaining the purposes of God for our lives. We need to pray like the Apostle Paul that God will give us "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling" (Eph.1:17-18). We need to receive a clear vision of what the Lord has prepared for us to enter into. Abraham was told, "Lift up your eyes now and look from the place where you are- northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever" (Gen.13:14-15). Our Lord Jesus told His disciples, "Lift up your eyes and look at the fields" in John 4:35. There is a "promised land" for all of God's people, and we need to gain revelation from God to know exactly what the Lord is offering to each one of us.

Pastor Yonggi Cho of Korea has a powerful testimony concerning the importance of our having God's vision for our lives and ministries. When he was a young pastor, his hope and prayer was that he would eventually lead a successful church of 300 people. Yet as he sought that goal, the Lord showed him that the church should grow to have 3,000 members. When that mark was reached the Lord showed him that he could have a church of 10,000 members. As he obtained that also, the Lord led him on to believe for 50,000, then 100,000, then 500,000, then a

million members in his church! Today he has 700,000 members in his church, and when the members of his outreach churches are added up, the number is well over one million. His ministry and church are having a great national impact, and are even helping to change the world. But think what would have happened if he had remained content with the limited vision of only having 300 members in his church! How many ministers today may be content with a comfortable salary and church, while the Lord wants to lift their vision to conquer cities and nations? “Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession” (Ps.2:8).

However, it was not just because he had a vision of what God was offering them that Joshua was chosen to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. It was also because Joshua believed that God would bring it to pass! Ten of the other spies who went with Joshua saw the same Promised Land that flowed with milk and honey; yet they did not exercise faith to believe that they could enter into it (Heb.3:19). They reported to the people that the difficulties in conquering the land were too great to overcome (Num.13:25-14:10). These 10 spies poisoned the Israelites with their unbelief, and the result was that the entire generation was disqualified from entering into the Promised Land (Num.14:26-30). The only exceptions to this judgment were the two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb, who were allowed to enter Canaan because of their faith.

It is true that we first need to gain a vision of what the Lord is offering us for our lives and ministries. Yet to obtain the fulfillment of that vision, the next step is that we need to exercise faith. If the Lord is showing someone that He is offering them church growth, revival, an enlarged ministry, or whatever, then they need to believe Him and begin to press into obtaining the fulfillment of that promise. The carnal natural mind will find excuses not to press in, such as: “It's not the right time,” “We don't have the money,” or, “You're only dreaming, it is not practical.”

Before we can enter into God's promises, a major battleground we first need to gain victory over is our mind. Our thoughts must submit to God's vision and His will instead of our circumstances. While the 10 Israelite spies complained about the walled cities in Canaan that stood against them, the New Testament tells us that there are walls and fortified strongholds in the Christian's mind that need to be cast down. In 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 we read, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” When our own mind and heart fully submit to Christ, then the Lord will have made us a mighty warrior ready to accomplish His works of faith. We will be able to look beyond the difficulties and declare like Joshua, “If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land...do not fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us” (Num.14:8-9).

Joshua Gained the Anointing

Another key to Joshua's life was that he gained the anointing that he needed to be a successful leader of God's people. We know that all our natural talents and abilities will be useless if the Holy Spirit is not working in and through our lives to accomplish the works of God. Joshua gained this anointing through the same two basic ways that we each need to receive more of the Spirit of God.

One way we receive the anointing is to receive the Holy Spirit directly from the Lord. The other way is to receive from anointed men and women of God. This “vertical” release down from

heaven along with “horizontal” impartation through the Body of Christ can equip each of us to become anointed Christian leaders.

Joshua began to gain the anointing through this first way as he developed his own relationship with the Lord. We can see this from the story in Exodus 33:8-11 of how Moses would go into the tabernacle to meet with God. In verse 11 we read, “So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.”

At this time, Moses was already a mature man of God who was very intimate with the Lord. Moses could enter the tabernacle, quickly meet with God, and get the answers he needed. Yet while Moses would return to the camp to probably resume his duties there, Joshua would linger in the tabernacle. Joshua learned to wait upon the Lord and draw near to Him. Joshua wanted to develop the same intimate relationship with God that Moses already had!

We need to cultivate this same attitude in our own lives. We can all stand amazed at times when we see someone who is much more mature in the Lord, who can quickly meet with God and flow in the Spirit while we just feel as if we are only getting warmed up to start! They may have spent many years developing that sensitivity, which is what we must begin to do if we want to obtain what they have in God.

At times the senior leader may have to leave a service near the end to counsel with someone or conduct some business. Many of the church members may still be worshipping or meeting with God at the altar. If you want to mature in the Lord, then be one of those people who are lingering in God's presence! Perhaps everyone else concludes the church service and then leaves. However, the Lord may still be there- and if you tarry in His presence longer than the other believers, then you may also spiritually grow faster than them.

Perhaps Joshua first began to learn how to wait upon the Lord when God called Moses to the top of Mount Sinai in Exodus 24. Moses and Joshua both started up Mount Sinai, but only Moses went all the way to the top. Joshua apparently waited halfway up the mountain until Moses came down again (Ex.32:15-19). Joshua did not enter the fullness of God's glory that Moses experienced on the mountaintop. Nevertheless, as Moses' servant he was able to draw closer to the Lord at this time than even the elders and leaders of Israel (Ex.24:13-14).

The result of Joshua's times of waiting upon the Lord was that the presence of God began to become imparted into his own spirit. When Moses prayed near the end of his life that the Lord would appoint his successor, the Lord told him, “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight” (Num.27:18-19). The one descriptive phrase that the Lord mentioned about the man He had chosen as the next leader was that Joshua was “a man in whom is the Spirit.” And the one way that the Scriptures record that he had gained the anointing up to that time was that he had habitually lingered in the tabernacle learning to meet the Lord.

When Joshua was commissioned by Moses as the new leader of Israel, he gained a further anointing in a second manner. Deuteronomy 34:9 then tells us, “Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.” While the Lord had shortly before this time commended Joshua as “a man in whom is the Spirit,” we see here that Moses imparted a further anointing to him when he laid hands on Joshua at his ordination. In a similar manner, we also need to receive impartations of the Holy Spirit both from heaven and from the spiritual leaders who are over us in the Lord. If we are faithful in serving our leaders, as Joshua was faithful to Moses, then we can receive spiritual blessings, anointings, gifts, and mantles from them that will help equip us to carry on the ministries that they have begun to accomplish.

Chapter 3

ENTERING THE LAND

(Joshua Chapters 1-5)

We have seen that the first section of the Book of Joshua describes Israel entering the Promised Land. Chapters one through five tell us how Joshua became the new leader who then led the Israelites over the Jordan River, where they prepared for their first attack.

However, before we study these chapters we must remember that the Lord had already been preparing the Israelites for many centuries. More than 300 years before, Joseph had left specific instructions for his embalmed body to be buried in the Promised Land when the Israelites returned there (Gen.50:25-26). And long before that, the Lord had promised Abraham that his descendants would return and inherit the land after living as foreigners in a strange land for 400 years (Gen.15:13-16).

From Genesis to Joshua

We can observe that a major theme of the first five books of the Scriptures leads to the entering of the land. The Book of Joshua, the Bible's sixth book, brings us to the fulfillment of this important theme.

The following chart will help us to see this in a clearer perspective, both in the Old Testament natural fulfillment and in the New Testament spiritual fulfillment of this theme.

PREPARING TO ENTER THE INHERITANCE			
The Old Testament Natural & New Testament Spiritual Fulfillments			
the BOOK:	the PURPOSE:	O.T. Fulfillment:	N.T. Fulfillment:
Genesis	the Promise of the Land	Genesis 13:14-16	I Pet.1:3-4, Gal.2:29
Exodus	Leaving the Old Land	Exodus 13:3	Colossians 1:13
Leviticus	Laws of the New Land	Leviticus 18:2-5	Ephesians 4:22-24
Numbers	Wandering out of the Land	Numbers 32:11-13	Hebrews 3:17-4:1
Deuteronomy	Preparing for the Land	Deuteronomy 8:1	Mt.3:2, I John 3:3
Joshua	Obtaining the Land	Joshua 21:43-44	Mt.28:19, Eph.2:6-7

In the Book of Genesis, the Lord promised His friend Abraham that He would make his descendants a great nation that would inherit the land of Canaan. We read in Genesis 13:14-16, “And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: ‘Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are; northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.’ ” The Lord's promise that He would give Abraham's descendants the Promised Land becomes a central theme or purpose for which they are prepared throughout the rest of Genesis and the Old Testament.

A spiritual fulfillment of this promise is given for every believer who is a child of Abraham by faith. In Galatians 2:7-29 the Apostle Paul dwells on this theme and tells us that we received Abraham's spiritual blessings and inheritance when we become Christians. We do not receive a natural promised son as when Abraham received Isaac, but instead we receive the spiritual promised Son- the Lord Jesus Christ. While the Israelites were promised an earthly inheritance and land, the Christian is offered "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven" (1 Pet.1:4). We will look more closely at the inheritance or "promised land" given to the Christian in chapters four and five. However, for now we want to understand that the glorious inheritance given to us in Christ is a central theme and goal for the New Testament believer, just as the Promised Land was a major part of the purposes of God for the Israelites.

While the Book of Genesis develops the theme of God promising the land of Canaan, the second book of the Bible shows the next step towards bringing this to pass. After God multiplied the Israelites in the land of Egypt, the Book of Exodus shows God delivering them out of Egypt's bondage and starting them towards the Promised Land. To prepare the Israelites to enter Canaan land, the Book of Exodus shows how they first left behind their old land of Egypt.

For us to fulfill God's plans, we also have an "old land" to be delivered from. Salvation rescues us, not from Pharaoh's slavery, but from slavery to Satan and sin. The Apostle Paul writes, "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col.1:13 NASB). Also, as born-again Christians we are also able to leave behind the old adamic nature to enter into the new nature of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col.1:27).

The Old Testament then continues on to reveal God's next step for the Israelites. The Bible's third book describes the priestly laws God gave them, to teach them how they should live in the Promised Land. In Leviticus 18:1-5 we read, "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "I am the Lord your God. According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord."'" "

When we become Christians, we must likewise be taught to live a new life as citizens of the kingdom of heaven. In Ephesians 4:22-24 Paul exhorts "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

We can go on to see the warning in the Bible's fourth book that the people of God can fall short of fulfilling God's plans. The Book of Numbers describes Israel's experiences when they disobeyed the Lord and then wandered in the wilderness for 40 years instead of marching into Canaan. They still experienced many blessings from the Lord during those years; such as guidance, divine healing, and miraculous provision. Likewise, we must be careful not to assume that we are moving on with God just because we experience many of His blessings.

In the New Testament, chapters three and four of the Book of Hebrews repeat and interpret the story of Israel in the wilderness. Christians are warned that they can also fail to enter into God's promises, just like the Israelites who failed to enter the Promised land because of their hard hearts, disobedience, and unbelief. We read, "Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they

could not enter in because of unbelief. Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it” (Heb.3:17-4:2).

Many times disobedience and unbelief will delay the Christian from entering into the plan of God for their life. Their spiritual life seems to wander aimlessly in circles until they return to face the same trial or situation that they had failed in months or even years before. This can also happen to churches and entire organizations that receive a calling from the Lord. Yet God's purpose during these delays is to prepare us for the day when we can face our past failures and overcome the hindrances that had previously held us back.

After the failure and delay of the Israelites, the purpose of the fifth book of the Bible was to prepare them to finally enter the Promised Land. Moses spoke the Book of Deuteronomy to the new generation of Israelites that had grown up during the wilderness wandering, at the time when they had just arrived at Canaan's border. In Deuteronomy the Israelites were prepared to enter the land as Moses repeated the laws of God to them and appointed Joshua as the next leader.

As Israel ate the manna and followed the cloud for 40 years in the wilderness, the delay caused that unbelieving generation to grow old and die. At the same time, however, a new generation arose to take their place- a new generation that was not in bondage to the slave mentality and other limitations that their fathers had gained during their long years of servitude in Egypt. This is analogous to how the old adamic nature in each of our lives will grow old and die as we eat the manna of the Word of God and as we follow the cloud of His presence. As our old adamic nature dies off, the new nature of Christ within us arises to prepare us to enter into God's calling and inheritance. Then we will be ready to follow the laws of righteousness and become part of the “Joshua Generation” of the last days!

So the first five books of the Bible led the Israelites on towards a very specific goal. That goal is fulfilled in the sixth book, the Book of Joshua. We will now focus on this as we study how Joshua led them in to conquer and possess the land.

Chapter 1: Joshua Takes Command

“After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: ‘Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them; the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.... Only be strong and very courageous.... This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.... Be strong and of good courage’ ” (Joshua 1:1-9).

The Book of Joshua starts with the Lord acknowledging the transfer of leadership from Moses to Joshua. Moses had already supported Joshua and installed him as the next leader, yet now we see how the Lord stood with Joshua to encourage and guide him in his new ministry.

When the Lord spoke to Joshua, He repeated three times that he was to “be strong and of good courage.” Joshua was probably very insecure when he looked at his own inability to lead Israel into Canaan. He had never been a prince or leader of the people. He was not a great prophet like Moses. Joshua had never performed a miracle, and the Bible does not even record that the Lord had ever personally spoken to him before this time!

When Joshua then began to give his first marching orders to the Israelites later in this chapter, they gave him their obedience with two “only” requirements. The first was, “Only the Lord your God be with you,” in verse 17; and, “Only be strong and of good courage,” in verse 18. Not only was Joshua nervous about his new leadership, the people were also. Probably the only one who wasn't nervous or uncertain was the Lord! God was not unprepared when He retired Moses, He already had everything planned out. The only thing was that He had not told all the details to Joshua and the people.

When the Lord brings us into any new position of leadership, the first thing we must do is believe that God will give us the strength and ability to fulfill His calling. If a leader will boldly lead, and the Lord proves to be with him, then that leader can inspire his followers to great loyalty and bravery. One of the key reasons why the modern Israeli army is by far the most successful army in the world for its size, is that the army commanders stay in the front lines and lead the attacks. Do you want to have loyal, brave followers? Then don't ask them to do anything difficult unless you are willing to lead the way! I have had to apply this principle in many unusual ways on the mission field; from leading a cobra hunt, to traveling into territory held by Muslim extremists to encourage the pastors there who were being intimidated by the rebel troops.

As the Lord encouraged Joshua at the beginning of his leadership, He gave promises of victory and success. However, the Lord also gave Joshua three conditions he must fulfill to obtain these promises. We have already looked at the requirement that Joshua was to “be strong and of good courage.” A second condition was that the Lord listed the boundaries of the area in which He would give victory to the Israelites. It is important for every leader to know where and what God has assigned Him to. Joshua was given the promise of victory wherever he placed his feet, but this was clearly limited to the land of Canaan. If he had tried to conquer some place that God had not called Israel to inherit, then they could have suffered miserable defeat. We must know specifically where and what God has called us to accomplish so that we are safe in the center of His will. I have lived in and traveled through some very dangerous areas of the world, but have always been totally secure as long as I knew that God was leading me. In fact, I would rather live in the middle of a foreign war *in* God's will, than to live in a comfortable American community *outside* His perfect will!

A third requirement that the Lord gave Joshua was that he was to constantly meditate upon and practice the “Book of the Law.” Joshua had to study and follow his Bible, which was the five books of the Law that Moses had already written. As long as Joshua did this he had continual success. However, we will later see that in the few instances where Joshua encountered defeat, it was because he had not followed some of the Bible's instructions that had been given for his guidance.

This is also a requirement that every Christian leader today must fulfill to abide in victory. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 we are told, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The Word of God will always keep us on the right path as long as it saturates our mind and is applied in our life.

Chapter 2: Joshua Spies Out the Land

The second chapter is the story of the two spies that Joshua sent out. They were to investigate what was happening in Canaan, especially in the city of Jericho. Jericho was just across the Jordan River and was the first military objective they would have to attack in the Promised Land.

“Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, ‘Go, view the land, especially Jericho.’ So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there” (Joshua 2:1).

Since the spies wanted to unobtrusively observe Jericho, a prostitute's house was a natural choice for the strangers to find refuge. It would be a secretive location where they could ask questions but would not be expected to answer any. Yet when Jericho's soldiers came to search for them, the harlot Rahab took quick action. She hid the spies on the rooftop and deceived the soldiers into searching the countryside instead of her house. When she returned to talk with the spies, she told them in verse nine, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.” Rahab went on to tell them in verse 11, “the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath,” and then asked protection from the Israelites for her daring act of protecting the spies. The two spies told her that if she remained faithful to them, and if she put a scarlet cord out of the window of her house, then the Israelites would protect everyone in her house when they attacked.

The Israelites kept their promise when they attacked Jericho, as recorded in Joshua 6:22-25. Yet we can see that God also honored Rahab's faith. Her house was built on the city wall, and the wall came tumbling down when the Israelites attacked- except for Rahab's house, which was left intact. The scarlet cord hanging out her window was a sign of her new allegiance to God and His people. It became as effective for her household as the scarlet colored blood of the lamb had been for the Israelite households back in Egypt. That scarlet cord, a symbol of the blood of Christ, also figuratively reached down to unite her with the people of God and with Christ Himself. Joshua 6:25 later records, “And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.” Rahab settled down among the people of God and according to Matthew 1:5 married an Israelite named Salmon. The Gospel of Matthew then continues on to show that she became part of the genealogy of Jesus Christ! Rahab is also commended in the New Testament for both her faith and her good works (Heb.11:31, Jam.2:25). The scarlet cord that Rahab hung out of her window still figuratively reaches down to us today, showing that even the worst of sinners can be brought to God and changed through the power of the blood of Christ.

When the two spies returned, they brought a good report just as Joshua himself had done some forty years before. “And they said to Joshua, ‘Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us’ ” (Josh.2:24). After this good news, Joshua and the army were ready to face the Canaanites.

As we have already noted, the story of Joshua's conquest has spiritual parallels for the Christian today. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Our battle today is with the angelic forces of Satan that seek to control and rule over families, local areas, cities, and even nations. It is when we bind these “strong men,” as our Lord Jesus taught us in Matthew 12:25-29, that we can then plunder their dominions and rescue the souls they have enslaved.

The good news for us is that we are again living in a special time when the Lord is leading the army of God into great conquest. In these last days the Church will display the full victory of the cross not only to the nations, but also to the army of Satan that seeks to keep the nations in darkness and bondage. The Apostle Paul spoke about this ministry of the Church in Ephesians 3:10 where he said, “To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.” Just as Joshua's army broke the power of the Canaanite kings, the Church in these last days will break the covering of these satanic principalities and powers from over nations, so that revival and great harvests of souls will take place.

When Jesus Christ walked upon the earth, the demons trembled before Him. In Matthew 8:29 they cried out to the Lord, “Have you come to torment us before the time?” They know that their time is limited. As we will soon study in detail, we are now that “Joshua Generation” who will see these things fulfilled. Just as the Canaanite armies were fainthearted because they could sense that their hour of doom had arrived, it is now the principalities and powers of Satan that are trembling! We may be hesitant at the coming battles of these last days, just like Joshua's troops who faced great armies. Yet while we may be hesitant, let us remember that our enemy is terrified! “Greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world” (1 Jn.4:4 NASB).

Chapter 3: Crossing the Jordan

The third chapter of the Book of Joshua starts in verse one by telling us, “Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over.”

As you read through this chapter, you will see that it records the Israelites crossing the Jordan River. This was the last geographical boundary that separated them from the Promised Land. While the Lord had prepared that generation for 40 years (and had been preparing the Israelite people for over 400 years), the last obstacle they needed to overcome was the Jordan River.

Two times the Israelites had to cross through water; once at the Red Sea and then again at the Jordan River. Crossing the Red Sea spiritually speaks of water baptism, as the Apostle Paul wrote when he said that the Israelites “were baptized into Moses... in the sea” (1 Cor.10:2). When a Christian is baptized in water, *by faith* we are identifying with the death and burial of Christ (Rom.6:3). Just as the Israelite left Egypt and the dominion of Pharaoh when he crossed the Red Sea, the Christian leaves the world and the dominion of Satan behind when he follows the Lord and is water baptized.

We know, however, that leaving Egypt and crossing the Red Sea was only the beginning of the journey for the Israelites. Likewise, when we are saved and water baptized, that is only the beginning of our spiritual journey towards entering into the inheritance that God has prepared for each Christian. While crossing the Red Sea got the Israelites out of Egypt, what brought them into the Promised Land was when they crossed the Jordan.

The Jordan River speaks of when we *by experience* enter into what water baptism symbolizes, which is being *crucified with Christ*. The Apostle Paul wrote about his own experience of this when he said, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal.2:20).

When a Christian is water baptized, they are declaring by faith that they are identifying with the death and resurrection of Christ. Does that mean that their life is instantly transformed to be

just like Jesus? No, it is only the first step of faith that will begin to lead them into the outworking of that experience. It is only later, as the grace of God does a work of sanctification in their life, that they will experience the fulfillment of being crucified with Christ. This is what crossing the Jordan River symbolizes.

The actual crossing of the Jordan is recorded in verses 14 to 17. We read, “So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.”

This miraculous crossing of the Jordan is very important for us to understand in its application to our Christian experience. Here we see that when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, the waters were cut off upstream at a place called Adam. The way that we can cross over into our “promised land,” or our inheritance in Christ, is when the nature that flows to us from Adam is cut off. Just as the Jordan River flowed from Adam down to the Dead Sea, we have inherited a sinful human nature that has flowed down from our first forefather, Adam, which leads to death (Rom.5:12). We must have our sinful adamic nature crucified with Christ to be replaced by the spiritual nature of Christ. Then we can arise to conquer our spiritual inheritance and reign with Christ, just as the Israelites conquered their foes to rule Canaan under the leadership of Joshua.

Christian groups all recognize the Jordan River as symbolizing death. Even the name of the river speaks of this truth. The Jordan River means “The Descender” because it rapidly descends into the Dead Sea, which is the lowest place on earth at 1290 feet below sea level. When “The Descender” rushes downwards from Adam to the lowest place on earth, the Dead Sea, it symbolizes the end of man which is death.

While different Christian groups all agree on this symbolism, they do not all agree on how to apply it. Some groups suggest that “crossing the Jordan” means that we have to die and go to heaven. However, that does not accurately fit the symbolism of the Book of Joshua. Once the Israelites crossed the Jordan they had to fight their enemies to gain their inheritance. Yet when we get to heaven we will certainly no longer be fighting the world or the devil! It is here on earth that we need to be good soldiers of Christ to defeat the powers of Satan and establish the kingdom of God. It is not by physical death but by spiritually being crucified with Christ that we can “cross the Jordan” and begin to conquer the world, the flesh, and the devil to obtain our inheritance here on earth. Through this we will also be preparing a fruitful eternal inheritance for ourselves in heaven and in the ages to come.

Joshua 3:2-4 tells us more facts about the miraculous crossing of the Jordan that are of great significance to us. We read, “So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp; and they commanded the people, saying, ‘When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before.’”

Before Joshua and the Israelites marched over the Jordan, the priests carried the ark of the covenant ahead of them. This ark which Moses had constructed was a symbol of our Lord Jesus

Christ. It is Christ Himself who has gone before His people, who through His death has cut off the “river of death” that flows from Adam.

The ark went “about 2000 cubits” before the people, to show them the way that they were to go. This is very important to understand because the number 2000 has a prophetic significance for us. About 2000 years after Christ died to take away the sins of the world, the people of God will follow behind Him. We will enter the crucified life and be ready to conquer the principalities and powers. About 2000 years after Jesus led the way, the people of God shall follow Him into the crucified life, into revival; and then into the promised land of the Kingdom of God in the Millennial Age.

The number 2000 also speaks of the approximate length of the Church Age in several other Old Testament types. For example, we have the dimensions of the three sections of Moses' Tabernacle. The linear dimensions of the outer court were 1500 square cubits of linen wall. This spoke of the 1500 years of the Age of the Law, from Moses to Christ. The cubic dimensions of the Holy Place were 2000 cubic cubits. This speaks of the approximate 2000 years of the Church Age. Then the cubic dimensions of the Holy of Holies, 1000 cubic cubits, speak of the 1000 years of the coming Millennial Age. The numerical dimensions of these three sections of Moses' tabernacle prophetically speak of the number of years contained in the next three ages or dispensations, just as the furniture and activities in these three sections also speak of the spiritual experiences that are available during these three periods of time.

Solomon's Temple also offers us another prophetic type of the Church. In its courtyard stood a large bronze laver according to 1 Kings 7:23-26. This huge bowl was filled with water that the priests used to cleanse themselves for their service in the temple. In the New Testament we are told that every born-again Christian is a priest that is to serve God in the temple which is His Church. Moreover, Ephesians 5:26 tells us that it is not a natural water that is to cleanse us now, but the “washing of the water of the Word.” It is the Word of God that can now sanctify us.

In First Kings 7:25 we see that Solomon made 12 bronze oxen that carried the bronze laver for the temple in Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul tells us that the ox is a type of the minister (1 Tim.5:17-18 & 1 Cor.9:9-10). It is the ministers of the Gospel that will carry the Word of God to the four corners of the world, to help prepare the victorious, glorious worldwide Church. It was also 12 apostles that Christ first sent out from Jerusalem, just as Solomon had 12 oxen in his temple in Jerusalem that faced out to the world.

The four directions (north, west, south, and east) that the oxen faced are also prophetic. They show us the order in which our Lord has caused the water of the Word of God to be carried from Jerusalem to the four corners of the earth. The gospel first was greatly multiplied to the north of Jerusalem, as Europe became Christianized. The next major area of the world to receive the gospel was the American Continents, which are west of Jerusalem. In more recent missions history, it has been Africa (the continent south of Jerusalem) which has had explosive conversions to Christianity. And now as the word of God is beginning to fill the world, it is the continent east of Jerusalem, Asia, that is finally becoming evangelized. Revivals are sweeping through Asia as the Lord is preparing a glorious worldwide Church that will be much more marvelous than Solomon's Temple!

First Kings 7:26 also mentioned that the bronze bowl was filled with 2000 baths (or barrels) of water. This is prophetic of how the water of the Word of God will fill the world to sanctify a priesthood from every tribe, nation, and tongue. The 2000 baths speak of the 2000 years that will be the approximate length of the Church Age, during which the Word of God is spreading around the world.

We mention these prophetic events in some detail to show that there are powerful truths hidden in the Old Testament types. The number 2000 consistently points towards the approximate length of the Church Age.

The New Testament also gives us a clear prophetic sign of the length of the Church Age. Our Lord Jesus had prophesied that when the foreign Gentile nations no longer ruled over Jerusalem, that generation would see the Second Coming. Christ declared, "And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.... Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things are fulfilled" (Lk.21:24 & 32).

After almost 1900 years of foreign dominion, the Jews again gained complete rule over Jerusalem in 1967 during the Six Day War. Israel has controlled a section of Jerusalem since 1948, but during the Six Day War they captured the major part of Jerusalem from the nation of Jordan. Ever since 1967 we are clearly living in the generation that will see the end of the Church Age, which will complete "the times of the Gentiles."

As the time of the Second Coming of Christ is drawing nearer, there have been many "date setters" who have prematurely and unwisely set an exact time when they felt that Christ would return. One popular Bible teacher in the 1970's taught that because the Jews gained partial control of Jerusalem in 1948 (while assuming that a biblical generation must be 40 years) it would be 1988 when the Lord would return. Other Bible teachers have taken the 2000 year prophetic length of the Church to mean that exactly 2000 years after Christ's birth (which they assumed was in 4 B.C.) the Lord would return again in 1996. As the time of His return draws nearer and the signs of the times become clearer, there will undoubtedly be more date setters who will come up with more "exact" dates. However, our Lord warned against this in Matthew 24:36 when He said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

One factor we must closely examine is when the 2000 year period of the Church Age began. It started when Christ died on the cross and the Church began on Pentecost, not when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. While the date for the beginning of the Church Age is usually accepted as being about 29 A.D., even this should not be taken to assume that we have until exactly 2029 A.D. until the Second Coming of Christ.

Joshua 3:4 tells us that the people of God would follow *about* 2000 cubits behind. However, our Lord suggested that the end will be shortened when He said in Matthew 24:22, "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." Because of these variables, it would be foolish for us to fix any exact date for the return of the Lord. What is very clear, however, is the general time and season that we live in. We are part of the last generation that has seen Jerusalem repossessed by the Israelites. We are part of the "Joshua Generation" that is following about 2000 years behind Christ when He cut off the sin of Adam by His death on the cross. We are invited to be among the consecrated, mighty soldiers of God that shall preach the gospel and demonstrate the power of the kingdom of God in these last days. As Christ declared, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Mt.24:14). Just as Joshua 3:15 tells us that the Israelites crossed over the Jordan during the "days of harvest," in a similar way we can participate in the great harvest of souls that will precede the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Moses' generation saw the waters of the Red Sea parted so that they could escape from their enemies. However, Joshua's generation saw the waters of the Jordan River parted so that they could enter and attack! From that time on, Joshua and the Israelites had one consuming goal: to destroy their enemies and possess the land. The Israelites had been waiting over 400 years to accomplish this, and this privileged "Joshua Generation" had been prepared to complete the task.

As we become aware of the time and season that we are living in, may we gain a holy consecration to accomplish God's will for our generation. We are the Joshua Generation; yet God's privileges to us also become our responsibility to God. The Church has been waiting almost 2000 years to accomplish its Great Commission, and this unique privilege and responsibility has been given to us. What was written in Hebrews 11:39-40 can be applied to our Joshua Generation: "And all these [former believers], having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect [or, complete]."

Chapter 4: The Memorial of the Crossing

After they crossed the Jordan River, the Lord told Joshua to make a memorial so that the Israelites would always be reminded of their miraculous crossing. Twelve stones were taken, one for each tribe, to be set up in the midst of the river as well as on the dry ground where they camped at Gilgal. In Joshua 4:9 we read, "Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day." There are also times when we may be led by the Lord to make a memorial; perhaps a plaque, a monument, a document, a photograph, or even a song, to remember what the Lord has done in our lives and to teach it to the next generation. Our Lord Jesus made a memorial when He instituted the Lord's Supper. This was to remind us of His work on the cross of Calvary, where He fulfilled the true meaning of "crossing the Jordan."

Almost 1500 years after Joshua, another servant of God stood at this same place in the Jordan to remind the Israelites of the mighty works of the Lord. In John 1:28 we read that John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing at Bathabara just on the other side of the Jordan River. *Bathabara* means "House of Passage," and was a place to ford the river. This site has traditionally been recognized as near Jericho, just where Joshua and the Israelites had passed over the Jordan. John preached there, "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones" (Mt.3:8-9). As John preached about the stones at the Jordan, his listeners may have thought of the stones that Joshua's men had taken as a memorial of the miraculous crossing of the river. And perhaps just at the place where the Ark of God had stood to part the waters, John the Baptist proclaimed to all Israel the coming fulfillment of that event when he declared about Jesus, "Behold! The Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn.1:29).

In Joshua 4:14 we read, "On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel." It is significant that the Lord chose to publicly exalt Joshua when the Ark stood in the midst of the Jordan. Joshua was a type of Christ, Who was first publicly exalted when He stood at this same place in the Jordan River at His baptism. This was where the voice of the Father said "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and where John the Baptist began to proclaim Him as the awaited Messiah.

As this place signified the work that the Lamb of God would accomplish on the cross, it is also prophetic of how Christ would be exalted through His crucifixion. It was because Christ humbled Himself to die upon the cross that Philippians 2:8-11 tells us, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." It is as we humble ourselves and embrace the work of the cross that we will also be exalted by God the Father.

In Joshua 4:14 we further read, “On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.” After the Lord had miraculously helped Joshua to lead the Israelites through the Jordan River, the people respected him just as they had respected Moses. Before this time Joshua had not worked any miracle, or had any other supernatural confirmations that God was with him. Yet when Joshua miraculously parted the water, just as Moses had before, the people quickly responded to his ministry.

When I was young in the ministry I worked under a wise leader who told me a story about the first church that he had pastored. This minister had been very young when he became the new pastor of a church of about eight families. As the members of his congregation were much older than him, they did not respect his ministry at first. Rather than reprove them, he prayed that the Lord would in some way bless each of those families and prove to them that the Lord had placed him there as their pastor. For one family the Lord gave him a word of wisdom when they needed wise counsel. For another, he prayed for a sick person who was then miraculously healed. Within a few weeks the Lord had confirmed to each family in the church that their new pastor was a young man sent from God, and they wholeheartedly began to respect his ministry.

I remembered that story, and when I soon afterwards became an assistant pastor I found an older couple in the church who looked down on my young age. So I followed the above example, and prayed for the Lord to do something special that would bless them. What the Lord did was give me a prophecy for that couple, which showed them the answer for a difficult problem they had with their son. From then on, that elderly couple not only showed their respect for my ministry in that church, but they also later supported my family on the mission field for many years afterwards.

Are you trying to serve the Lord without having the respect of some of the people around you? Seek the Lord that He will bless the people, and confirm to them that His hand is upon your life. Just one miracle, or healing, or word from the Lord may permanently establish your ministry to them, as it did for Joshua at the Jordan River.

Chapter 5: Preparations to Conquer the Land

As the Israelites camped by the Jordan, the next event that occurred was that all the men of Israel were circumcised. We read in Joshua 5:2-5, “At that time the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time....’ And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised.”

Just after the Israelites crossed the Jordan, the Lord told Joshua that they needed to be circumcised. This event signifies a further consecration for the Israelites, and is another sign for the Christian. When we have crossed the Jordan (which signifies our being crucified with Christ) we need to be circumcised before we conquer our enemies and possess our inheritance in Christ. Yet what does this mean for us?

In the natural, circumcision is a cutting away of the flesh. It was the sign of the covenant that God had made with Abraham to give his descendants the land of Canaan. We read in Genesis 17:7-14 that the Lord said to Abraham, “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant.... Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession.... This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall

be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.... And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.” As a result of this covenant, the most important natural preparation for the Israelites to enter and conquer the land was circumcision.

However, the Israelites were also aware that circumcision had a deeper spiritual significance. As Moses was preparing the Israelites to cross over into the Promised Land, he told them in Deuteronomy 10:16, “Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.” The spiritual significance of circumcision is that our heart must be separated from the works of the flesh and consecrated unto God. The Apostle Paul repeats this truth for us in Philippians 3:3 where he said, “For we are the circumcision, who... have no confidence in the flesh.”

I can share an example of how this spiritual circumcision can work from an experience I had when I was a young Christian. I was in Bible school, weeping before the Lord in the prayer room, when I saw a vision of a sword swinging down and cutting something off my heart. Just as the sword struck, the Lord sharply spoke the scripture to me, “Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.” At the time I had some money in a bank account, and in anguish of heart I told the Lord in return, “I will take all my money and give it away.” I was in agony; my heart was cut open concerning the great evil of loving and trusting in money. Yet then the Lord replied that He did not want me to give the money away, but instead that I should dedicate it to Him and learn to be a good steward of His possessions. The Lord did a work of circumcision in my heart that day. It has guarded me through my years of ministry so that I will not love money and abuse the finances that pass through my hands.

Just as Joshua circumcised the Israelites before the conquest of Canaan, we Christians today need a circumcised heart to be able to enter and possess our inheritance in Christ. If we try to enter into our ministries and inheritance before we are prepared, the battles and temptations may be too difficult for us to handle. Then we could backslide and become a reproach to the gospel.

This is why the Apostle Paul warned Timothy not to ordain a young convert to be a minister in 1 Timothy 3:6. When God blesses and multiplies a person's ministry, it is easy for pride and every work of the flesh to rise up unless the root of those iniquities has already been cut out or circumcised from their heart. This has happened repeatedly to even the greatest and most powerful of ministers. Little roots of iniquity that had not been dealt with in their earlier Christian experience began to grow and blossom into sin, until their ministries and families were ruined.

As Proverbs 20:21 warns us, “An inheritance gained hastily at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.” This is why it is so important for us to concentrate on having correct preparations for our Christian life and ministry. We do not want to rocket upwards into a famous ministry only to suddenly descend with a deadly crash!

When Joshua had finished circumcising the Israelites we further read, “Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.’ Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day” (Josh.5:9). Their camp near the Jordan was named *Gilgal*, which means “rolling,” because of what was accomplished there. The Lord said that their circumcision had “rolled away the reproach of Egypt.” This shows us a very important truth.

When the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea to leave Egypt, we know that Pharaoh and his army were destroyed there. Yet while the Israelites were freed from slavery and could march to the Promised Land, there was still a lingering love for Egypt in their hearts. When they encountered trials in the wilderness, they usually complained and wished they were back in

Egypt! It was only when they crossed the Jordan River and were circumcised that the love for Egypt was removed from their hearts. This “reproach of Egypt,” which was the love of the world and the things in the world, was not removed at the Red Sea. As we mentioned before, it is not when we are water baptized that all sin is removed from our hearts. It is when we cross the Jordan- when we are crucified with Christ and gain a circumcised heart- that the ax is laid to the root of our sinful nature and it is rolled away.

The Israelites no longer remembered the garlic and onions of Egypt once they crossed the Jordan and began to eat the good wheat, grapes, oil, and honey of Canaan. They no longer wanted the security of being slaves in Egypt once they were free men living upon their own land. In a similar way, we will no longer enjoy the sins and bondage of the world once we are crucified with Christ and are entering into the blessings, ministries, and eternal rewards that God has prepared for His people. What God offers us is so much more glorious, joyful, and permanent, that we will not want to trade our inheritance for Esau's bowl of stew!

We can see through the Israelites' journey from Egypt to Canaan how we also need to go through a process of preparation. Before we are ready for the work and inheritance that God has called us to, we must first be born again and water baptized. These experiences were symbolized by the Passover in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea. We need to also be filled with the Spirit, which was symbolized by Mount Sinai in the journey of Israel. We must go on through trials such as the Israelites experienced in the wilderness, so that we can learn to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ. Only then, after we cross the Jordan and become circumcised in heart, are we ready to conquer our inheritance.

The camp that Joshua made at Gilgal remained their base of operations all throughout the conquest of Canaan. After going out to their battles they would return to Gilgal (Josh.5:10, 6:11, 9:6, 10:6, 10:43, & 14:6). This emphasizes the truth to us that if we want to inherit all of God's promises for our lives and ministries, we must not only *gain* but also *keep* a circumcised heart.

After the Israelites were circumcised at Gilgal, the next event was that the Lord appeared to Joshua. We read from Joshua 5:13-15, “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, ‘Are You for us or for our adversaries?’ So He said, ‘No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped, and said to Him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant?’ Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so.”

When the Israelite army was circumcised at Gilgal they became fully ready to begin the conquest. To accomplish this the Commander came at this time to direct His troops. The Lord appeared in human form to Joshua, just as He had revealed Himself to Abraham and others in the Old Testament. Joshua was told to take off his sandals upon that holy ground, just as Moses had at the burning bush. As the Lord had met with Moses and instructed him how to deliver Israel, the Lord now met with Joshua and instructed him how Israel was to begin conquering Canaan. The preparations were complete, and the Commander of the army of the Lord had come to reveal the day of His power.

Chapter 4

CONQUERING THE LAND

(Joshua Chapters 6-12)

Chapter 6: Victory at Jericho

“And the Lord said to Joshua: ‘See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him’” (Joshua 6:2-5).

As the Lord came to take charge as the Commander of the army, He revealed to Joshua the battle plans for the conquest of Jericho. Yet what strange plans they were! The army was to march around the city for seven days while the priests blew trumpets. Then the army was to shout, and the city wall would fall down flat.

These battle plans were utter foolishness to the natural mind. Yet as the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:25, “The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” The Lord gave these unusual battle plans to teach Joshua this truth. The army of Israel needed to learn how to trust the wisdom and power of God, not their own abilities. Moreover, when the Lord gave them this miraculous victory, it declared to all the kings of Canaan that their destruction was at hand.

The armies of Canaan were numerically much larger than the Israelite army. They also had well-fortified cities and many chariots with which to oppose Israel. The Hittites, for example, had the third most powerful empire in the Middle East during that period. For many centuries they ruled over much of Canaan, Syria, and Asia Minor; and had already defeated or fought to a standstill the best armies of Babylon and Egypt. The Hittites and the other Canaanite armies were far superior to the army of Israel from a natural military standpoint. However, the one thing they knew they were no match for was the power of the living God! After the miracles of the parting of the Jordan River and the walls of Jericho falling down, the fear of God made the Canaanite armies weak-hearted while Joshua's soldiers became bold as lions. They knew that the spiritual side of the battle was more powerful than the natural military side.

The New Testament Christian knows that to establish God's kingdom we do not fight natural battles, but need to fight the principalities and powers of Satan in the heavenlies. Just as there are various levels of authority in natural governments, from the town mayors to the governors to the national leaders, there are also various levels of spiritual government ruling over families, towns, cities, states, and the nations. We must see these rulers of Satan's domain bound and cast down before we will see revival bring the cities and nations to Christ. Just as the Lord said to Joshua, “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men,” we need to have the

Lord give the spiritual kings and demonic powers into our hands so that our towns and cities can be turned to Christ.

An example of this occurred a few years ago when I was leading a pastor's seminar in the Philippines. At the end of the seminar we prayed for the delegates, and the Lord gave me a prophecy for one of them. The Lord said that He was binding and removing the evil prince of Satan from over his town and that this man would return to see revival.

We knew nothing about this man except that he was attending a pastors' seminar. Later we were told that this brother was a very discouraged pastor from a small town. After three years of pioneering, he still only had a handful of people in his church. He felt so ashamed of his little congregation that he was embarrassed to walk out of his home. When he had to go report to his denominational leaders in the city, he even prayed on the bus for a bus accident to kill him so that he would not have to report "zero church growth" again.

While that pastor felt despised and insignificant, the person in his town who had been the respected spiritual "man of power" for many years was an *abalario*, a spiritist faith healer. He had very unusual healings accomplished by the strong powers of Satan that controlled him. People came from all over the central and northern part of the nation to be healed by this man. The born again pastor, however, never saw any healings or other clear results through his prayers. Yet in spite of all his discouragement, he remained faithful to his ministry and he prayed. After the Lord spoke to him during the seminar that He was binding and removing the evil prince of Satan from over his town, the pastor returned home, excited to see what the Lord might do. His Sunday preaching had a new effectiveness, and for the first time visitors started to come and get saved in the services. When he and the believers started to pray for the sick, they also saw the power of God released through unusual healings. Within three months the church was packed out and he had water baptized over 80 new converts in the small town that had strongly opposed him for years.

However, the key to this local revival was revealed when the pastor heard a story about the famous spiritist healer in his town. The faith healer had closed down his business, and refused to heal anyone. When people came from afar with money, asking for healing, he told them to go away. The healer told them that he had closed down his business because three months before that time- exactly when the Lord spoke that He was removing the evil prince from over that town- he had lost all his powers of healing! The spiritual power to heal was removed from him when his satanic counterpart was cast down from the heavenlies. At the same time, it was the Christians who obtained the spiritual authority in the town to bring healings, salvation, and revival when the local "king of Jericho" was given into their hands.

Joshua's victory at Jericho was won in the spiritual realm because he obeyed the instructions of God. If we are faithful and prepare for the day of His power, God will also give us the keys to victory and revival. Joshua and his army first began to march around Jericho. The Lord had already told Joshua that "every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you" (Josh.1:3). The Lord may give you the same promise, in which case the victory might come through your going to "spy out the land," taking prayer walks, or conducting a "Jericho March."

Joshua and his army continued their marching for seven days. Seven is the number signifying completion in the Scriptures. It was only after Elijah prayed for the seventh time that the cloud of rain began to come, and it was only after Namaan had dipped in the Jordan for seven times that he was healed. This shows that we have to not only walk in the Spirit and do what the Lord tells us to do for victory, we also have to persevere until the work is complete. Perseverance is a very important key for victory- don't give up after the fifth or sixth time!

Joshua had also commanded the troops that they observe strict silence during their days of marching (Josh.6:10). When we are in the middle of a spiritual battle, one of most subtle ways that we can lose the victory is if we begin to talk too much. Criticism and gossip can quickly weaken the faith and wholeheartedness of any church if the saints are not careful with their words.

The victory came on the seventh day when the priests blew the trumpets and all the soldiers shouted. These things also have spiritual significance. In Numbers 10:9 we are told that when the Israelites were in battle, the priests should blow the trumpets so that the Lord would remember them and deliver them. In a similar manner, the ministers of the Lord still have a responsibility to call out to the Lord and lift their voices like a trumpet to intercede for the people in times of battle (1 Sam.7:7-10).

When all these preparations were ready, Joshua 6:20 tells us, “So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. 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. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.” After the marching and the trumpets, all the soldiers gave a great shout of victory. This victory shout can also be an important part of our spiritual warfare today.

The Hebrew words used here for this victory shout were *teruwah* and its root word, *ruwa*. They refer to a loud shout, whether used in warfare or in celebration. This shout can release faith and cause the hand of God to work. We see another account of this in 2 Chronicles 13:15 where it says, “Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.”

King David also knew the power of the victory shout, not only for the day of battle, but also when seeking the Lord in church. In Psalm 27 he spoke about enemy armies that had risen against him in verse three: “Though an army should encamp against me ... though war should rise against me...” Yet then in verse six David went on to show how he got the victory by faith while meeting the Lord in the tabernacle, before he went out to fight the enemy: “And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle.” These *sacrifices of joy* from the original Hebrew are “sacrifices of *teruwah*,” or victory shouts of joy!

Joshua, Abijah, and David all shouted the victory shout and released faith *before* the Lord began to defeat the enemy. Moreover, David gave the victory shout while seeking the Lord in the tabernacle, not just on the battle field.

The Lord wants to teach us the proper times to conduct spiritual warfare through shouting the victory by faith. This could be during our praise and worship. Many times I have been in services where everyone was praising the Lord, when someone might enthusiastically shout “Hallelujah!” or, “Praise the Lord!” and release a fresh anointing and victory. At other times we might shout the victory at a prayer meeting or an altar call. These victory shouts of joy can release faith and the anointing so that the Lord will begin to move among us. As the triumphant Psalm 47 also declares in verse five, “God is gone up with a shout.”

Just as Joshua won the battle of Jericho when he obeyed the seemingly foolish instructions of God, may we also learn to follow the battle tactics of heaven. Second Corinthians 10:4 tells us, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God,” and as we learn to fight the battles of the Lord we will see mighty victories for our families, churches, towns, cities, and even the nations.

Chapter 7: Defeat at Ai

After this stunning victory, Joshua and his army next fought against the little city of Ai. We read, “Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, ‘Go up and spy out the country.’ So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, ‘Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few.’ So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water” (Joshua 7:2-5).

After their great victory at Jericho, the Israelites had become proud. In their new self-confidence they were quite unprepared for this shocking defeat at the small city of Ai. Even Joshua became discouraged and said in verse seven, “Alas, Lord God, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all; to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!”

Then the Lord told Joshua in verse 11 that sin in the camp was the real reason why they were defeated: “Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies.” One of the Israelite soldiers had disobeyed God's instructions to utterly destroy Jericho and had stolen some of the spoil. Because of this sin, the Lord did not help Israel to defeat the soldiers of Ai.

In this incident we see the importance of dealing with seemingly little or hidden sins. The sin of one soldier caused the entire army to lose the battle. This principle sometimes can be applied to a family, ministry, church, or denomination. One person hiding sin may be important enough for the Lord to allow the entire group to suffer defeat! Sin is likened to leaven, and the warning is repeated twice in the Bible that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (1 Cor.5:6 & Gal.5:9). We must be very careful to deal with sin because it seeks to silently multiply and corrupt the people of God.

To deal with the problem, the Lord told Joshua in verse 14, “In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the Lord takes shall come according to families; and the family which the Lord takes shall come by households; and the household which the Lord takes shall come man by man.” At this roll call, The Lord said He would pinpoint first the tribe, then the family, next the household, and finally the man who had committed this sin. While we are not told in this story the exact method by which Joshua was able to single the man out, there were two methods in the Old Testament that were used for such occasions: casting a lot, or the High Priest using the Urim and Thummin.

If the method involved was to use lots, then a stone was picked at random or dice were thrown. The one chosen by the stone or dice was accepted as being chosen by God (Prov.16:33). This method was used throughout the Old Testament, and even by the early disciples in Acts chapter one. However, this external guidance was never scripturally used again after the Day of Pentecost. This is because the Holy Spirit was then given to the saints to lead and guide us into the truth. Today we are to be led by the Spirit, not by throwing dice or casting lots.

The other form of guidance was to have the High Priest consult the Urim and Thummin. The Lord had specifically given Joshua this form of guidance when he was ordained by Moses to become the new leader of Israel. We read from Numbers 27:18-21, “And the Lord said to Moses: ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;

set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight.... He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim.’ ”

While the exact use of the Urim and Thummin are no longer known, the Scriptures do tell us that they were placed inside the High Priest's breastplate to be over his heart when he went in before the Lord (Ex.28:30). They may have been two stones or lots, and depending upon which one was pulled out of the breastplate, it signified “yes” or “no” to reveal God's choice. What is clear from the account in Joshua chapter seven was that the High Priest clearly was led by the Spirit in gaining the proper guidance.

As in Joshua's day, there are still times today when hidden sin among God's people needs to be exposed and removed. We are now to be the priests of God who can receive the guidance and revelation needed to pinpoint the problem. Just as the High Priest reached into the breastplate over his heart to choose God's answer, we need to be able to reach into our heart today and gain the witness of the Spirit to know God's guidance.

An elderly man of God who had been part of what was called the “Latter Rain” revival of the 1950's once told me a story that illustrates this truth well. He was one of the pastors of a church that grew to have several thousand members in that revival. In one service, a prophecy came forth that a minister was sitting in the congregation who had hidden sin in his life. This pastor then prayed while he was sitting behind the pulpit, and began to sweep his eyes from the right side of the large congregation to the left. As his vision arrived at the center-left area, he felt a witness in his heart that became less as he continued to look more to the left. So he swept his vision back towards the right, then to the left, then to the right, in smaller and smaller sweeps, just like a pendulum that swings less and less as it comes into balance. Finally he felt the witness of the Spirit center his field of vision on one straight line of the congregation. As he looked at that straight line, he then used the same method of starting to look at the front row of the congregation and going backwards. Before his vision had reached the back, he felt he was looking the wrong way, so he again started to look more towards the front. As he followed the witness of the Spirit in his heart, he slowly settled on one place near the middle of the congregation- and there he saw a man sitting, whom he felt was the person that Lord had just spoken about. When he left the platform and went down to speak to him, the man confessed that he was a minister who had fallen into sin. The visitor wept and repented of his sin because this pastor, like Joshua, had been able to pinpoint the “sin in the camp.”

I saw another illustration of how the Lord can pinpoint sin years ago when I was one of the directors of a fellowship of 50 churches. One of the young pastors had left his church in defeat. Several other leaders and I counseled with him, trying to find out what was the problem. The discouraged young pastor made some excuses, but in my spirit I knew we had not yet discovered the real problem. After a while I said in my heart, “this brother is blind,” because this young man had clearly lost his spiritual vision. Yet as soon as I said to myself that he was blind, the Holy Spirit in my heart quickened the thought, “Blind like Samson.” As I silently prayed about this for several minutes, I became convinced that the real problem of this young pastor was the same problem that Samson had, which was immorality. At that point I interrupted the counseling session to tell the young man, “Brother, the real reason for your problem is that you have committed immorality.” In surprise he looked up and said, “Who told you that?” I replied that God had told me, because God loved him and wanted to set him free from this sin. At that point the young man broke, confessed his sin, and began to repent. That day he met the Lord in a life changing way, and after a season of restoration has gone on to have many years of fruitful ministry.

Through God's guidance Joshua singled out a soldier named Achan. After he had gathered Achan's confession and the things he had stolen, we read, "Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, 'Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.' So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day" (Josh.7:24-26).

Through this judgment the Lord removed the sin from Israel. It also certainly put the fear of God into their hearts to keep them from sinning again! The valley where Achan was stoned became named the Valley of Achor, which means, the "Valley of Trouble." It signified the valley experience of suffering that all Israel passed through to purge out sin.

Many centuries later the Prophet Hosea spoke of how God was going to cleanse sinful Israel by again bringing them into the Valley of Achor. In Hosea 2:14-15 we read, "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt."

In this scripture we see the Lord again bringing His people into a wilderness experience where they enter the Valley of Trouble. Many years ago the Lord gave this scripture to my wife and me when we were going through a season of humbling and purging. Yet these verses told us that this valley of trouble was designed by God to become a door of hope! It is from these experiences that the Lord can give us our vineyards, which speak of fruitful ministry. Our hearts can be changed so that we will sing for joy, just as when we were first born again (or, came up out of the land of Egypt). Our relationship with the Lord can become more intimate, as we read in the next verse of Hosea 2:16. "'And it shall be, in that day,' says the Lord, 'that you will call Me "My Husband," and no longer call Me "My Master."'" This valley experience changes us so that we no longer serve the Lord from a legalistic obedience to Him as our Master. Instead, our relationship with Him will be based on love as He becomes our Husband. Yes, the Lord often uses valley experiences to help us to move along in our walk with God. In fact, the quickest way up a mountain is often to travel up through a valley!

Chapter 8: Victory at Ai

In this next chapter we see that the Lord used the Valley of Achor for this very purpose. It became a door of hope that again brought the people of God back into victory and joy.

In verse one we read, "Now the Lord said to Joshua: 'Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.'"

The rest of the chapter tells us the story of how the city of Ai was defeated. Joshua sent some of the troops to attack from the front, while other troops waited in ambush behind the city. When Joshua had his first group of soldiers retreat, the men of Ai left the city to chase after them. At that moment Joshua's hidden group of troops rose up to enter the undefended city and set it on fire. Then they came out of the city to help surround the men of Ai and utterly defeat them.

The story of Israel's victory at Ai is concluded by the words, "And the king of Ai he [Joshua] hanged on a tree until evening" (Josh.8:29). This was the end of many of the kings that Joshua defeated, Josh.10:26. However, this was not a hanging like we are familiar with from modern history, where the offender has a rope put around his neck which he is hung from. This was

actually crucifixion, where the King of Ai was nailed to a tree. Joshua crucified many of the kings because it was as a sign of great humiliation reserved for those who were cursed (Dt.21:22-23, Est.7:10, & Ezra 6:11).

This act of Joshua has great spiritual significance. God turned the tables on this wicked king who thought that he was going to defeat Joshua again. It was a prophetic foreshadowing of the One who is greater than Joshua, Who would take the defeat of the cross and make it His greatest victory. We read from Colossians 2:14-15, "...And He [Christ] has taken it [the Law] out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." This tells us that the cross where Jesus was crucified was actually where the princes of Satan were humiliated and defeated! Just as Joshua took the kings of Canaan and crucified them in shame, Christ has taken the fallen angelic principalities and powers and has put them to defeat and shame upon the cross of Calvary.

It is at the cross where we proclaim that the enemy is defeated. It is as we lift up the cross and magnify the blood of Christ, "the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Eph.3:10). This is how we can conquer our foes and possess the inheritance of the Lord.

I once saw an example of this when I was asked to preach for a certain church. Years before it had been a good strong church with several hundred members. A number of problems had multiplied in the church, however, until it only had about six elderly members left. The members were very discouraged, as the Israelites had been after their defeat at Ai. Yet several local ministers felt that God wanted to yet bring that church into a much further inheritance, so I agreed to preach there.

The night before I was to speak, I spent a time in prayer at the church property. Suddenly God opened my spiritual vision and I saw a fallen angel that sat upon a throne above the church. I knew he was the prince that had brought that church into defeat. As I saw him, I felt to start declaring the victory of the cross and the blood of Christ. As I sang songs about the blood of Christ, I then also saw in the Spirit that a fountain started to spring up within the church. As Zechariah 13:1 declares, it was a "fountain for sin and uncleanness." The more I magnified the blood of Christ, the higher the fountain sprang up, washing away the sin, gossip, and corruption that had formerly been in the church. As the fountain sprang higher and higher, it finally approached the throne where the fallen prince was sitting in rulership over the church. He nervously watched as the cleansing fountain rose nearer and nearer until he vacated his throne and fled.

The next morning I anticipated that the victory won in prayer would be revealed. God was faithful to move by his Spirit in an unusual way that helped the church come to a turning point. Within about a year they had a new pastor and a victorious congregation of about 100 members.

Have you found yourself at an Ai where the enemy has left you in defeat and despair? Look to the Lord again, for He is able to turn the situation completely around! Look to the Lord until He declares victory for you as He said to Joshua, "See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land."

After the victory at Ai, the rest of chapter nine recounts how the Israelites reconfirmed their covenant with the Lord. As Moses had previously commanded in Deuteronomy 27, when they entered the land they were to build an altar and have a ceremony. After reading the law, half the tribes stood on Mount Gerizim to proclaim the blessings of the law. Across the valley, the other six tribes on Mount Ebal repeated the curses of the law. This impressive ceremony would have been particularly striking because of the curse and blessing that they had just experienced at Ai.

This account reminds us that the Lord wants His people to always be aware of His will, and be consecrated to do it. There is a reward for obedience, and a judgment awaiting those who

disobey. This ceremony that the millions of Israelites enacted is prophetic of a much greater event that will unfold at the Second Coming, when the Lord will separate the nations on His left and right hand to bless or curse them (Mt.25:31-46).

Chapter 9: Failure with the Gibeonites

The next account about the conquest of Canaan concerns the failure that the Israelites had with the city of Gibeon. We read, “But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, ‘We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us....’ Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord. So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them. And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them” (Joshua 9:3-6, 14-16).

The Gibeonites saw that they were doomed to be destroyed by the invading Israelites. They therefore devised a crafty plan by which to escape this destruction. The logic of the plan is as old as the proverb, “If you can't beat them, join them!” Yet the Gibeonites knew that the Israelites were set on conquest, not alliances. Therefore the success of their plan hinged upon deceiving the Israelites into believing that they lived far away from the Promised Land.

When the Gibeonites came to Joshua, they wore old clothes and carried moldy food. They deceived Joshua and the leaders of Israel into believing that they were making an alliance with a far distant nation.

Many times our enemies do not come in a direct frontal attack. Like the Gibeonites, they pretend to be our allies or friends. They may want to join with us in some good project, as when the enemies of Judah said that they wanted to help rebuild the temple in Ezra chapter 4. They may even want to join with our group, such as the demon possessed woman who followed Paul's team around the city of Philippi. She seemed to have a very good message when she kept exhorting the people that “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation” in Acts 16:17. The Apostle Paul warned us in 2 Corinthians 11:14 that even Satan sometimes transforms himself to appear to be an angel of light!

Sometimes people volunteer to “help” a church with their talents or money, yet their true motives are very corrupt. There have also been ungodly young men have acted like Christians until they had married the young Christian woman they desired. I have even seen people try to join good ministries, who prophesied and appeared to be very “spiritual.” However, they had an evil spirit that was trying to infiltrate and control the work of God! We need to be very careful of the alliances we make, because these influences can help us to either hit the mark or miss God's plan for our life and ministry.

The reason for this failure of Joshua and the leaders of Israel is recorded in verse 14: “they did not ask counsel of the Lord.” They did not seek the Lord to gain His guidance about the alliance the Gibeonites proposed. As a result, they made a covenant in the name of the Lord, only to find out soon afterwards that they had been deceived!

It is crucially important that we learn to hear from the Lord about the alliances, contracts, and vows that we consider making. Our knowledge of the true facts and motives involved is often so very limited. The only way that we can avoid making disastrous mistakes is to hear what the

Lord wants to tell us about these situations. Once we make these commitments we cannot simply say “it was a mistake,” break our contract, and walk away free (Eccles.5:4-6, Ps.15:4). Most alliances and contracts have commitments that must be followed. For example, the vow in the case of a marriage covenant is binding until death.

When Israel found out they had been tricked into their alliance with the Gibeonites, the people wanted to kill them. Joshua and the leaders, however, recognized that they could not break the covenant which they had made with them in the name of the Lord. God held the Israelites to their vow, even when King Saul tried to eradicate the Gibeonites about 400 years later. We read in 2 Samuel 21:1-2, “Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, ‘It is because of Saul and his bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites.’ So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.”

The covenant that Joshua and the Israelite leaders made with the Gibeonites was not wise. In fact, it was directly against the commandment of Exodus 23:32. Moses had warned the Israelites not to make any covenants with the inhabitants of the land. Once it was made, however, it was still binding. When King Saul tried to break it about 400 years later, it brought judgment upon the nation during the reign of David. This also shows us that a covenant broken by one leader can bring trouble upon future leadership. A pastor can have a problem arise in the church because of the disobedience of a former pastor.

So Joshua and the leaders kept their covenant with the Gibeonites and let them live. They became Israel's slaves, and from one perspective the covenant was beneficial to Israel. However, we will soon see that this compromise opened the door to many other similar compromises that later brought disaster upon the nation.

Chapter 10: Conquest of Southern Canaan

With Jericho and Ai conquered and the Gibeonites as slaves, the Israelites had effectively cut across the central part of Canaan to divide the land. This was good military tactics, but it greatly alarmed the rest of the Canaanites. We read, “Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, ‘Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel’ ” (Joshua 10:3-4).

When these kings attacked Gibeon, Joshua was asked to come and rescue them. We then read, “Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the Lord routed them before Israel.... And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword. Then Joshua spoke to the Lord... ‘Sun, stand still over Gibeon; and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.’ So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal” (Josh.10:9-15).

Here we read how the Lord fought for Israel to give them a stunning victory. As the enemy armies retreated, a great hailstorm killed many. Then God honored the prophetic declaration of Joshua for the day to be prolonged so that the fleeing enemy could not escape. Here we see

Joshua standing tall in the strength of the Lord. He was no longer the servant of Moses or a new and timid leader. Here we see Joshua as a great man of faith, as a prophet who commanded even the sun and moon!

At the beginning and end of this account we see an important key that helps us to understand how the Israelites were able to obtain such great victories. They marched from Gilgal and returned there after their battles. In this chapter we actually find five times when Gilgal is mentioned.

While Gilgal was their base of operations, the spiritual truth this place emphasizes is important for us to remember. Gilgal was where the Israelites were circumcised. This spoke of the work of sanctification that was completed when they passed through the Jordan and entered the Promised Land. It was as the Israelites stayed close to Gilgal that they were able to go forth and gain such mighty victories over their enemies. In a similar way, it is when we have experienced and also continue to abide in the sanctifying grace of God that we will see our enemies fall before us.

After Israel defeated this coalition, we read in verse 21, “No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.” The fear of God had fallen upon the entire countryside, and no one would fight or even criticize the Israelites. We also need to see these victories as we seek to conquer our own inheritance: “‘No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,’ says the Lord” (Is.54:17). While there were still more places in the south that needed to be dispossessed, Joshua had broken the enemy's strength during this decisive battle.

Joshua completed his defeat of the enemy kings with the following ceremonies: “Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, ‘Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.’ And they drew near and put their feet on their necks. Then Joshua said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.’ And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees” (Josh.10:24-26).

The first victory ceremony recorded here was that Joshua had his army commanders place their feet upon the necks of the five kings that they defeated. This was to teach his leaders how they shared in the authority and victory over the enemy. It is also prophetic of what we can experience in a much greater way in the New Testament era.

Joshua is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who as the Commander of the army of the Lord has defeated Satan. At the cross He bruised the serpent's head to fulfill the messianic prophecy recorded in Genesis 3:15. Moreover, the Lord Jesus has determined that we will share in that victory. In Romans 16:20 we read, “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.” Just as Joshua had all his army commanders place their feet upon the defeated kings, the Lord will cause us to crush the principalities and powers of Satan under our feet.

An example of this occurred one time when I was preaching in a Hindu nation. I had a dream that a cow came to attack me. The cow is honored as one of the great Hindu gods and represents a strong principality over that nation. In the dream this cow came to attack me and then bit my foot. He was trying to pull off my shoe and chew it up. This may sound foolish until we remember that Ephesians 6:15 tells us that part of our spiritual armor is to have our feet shod (or fitted with) the preparation of the gospel of peace. This cow was trying to take away my preparation to be a messenger of the gospel in that Hindu nation. I woke up from this spiritual attack and prayed for about an hour until I felt victory in my spirit. As I then slipped back to sleep, immediately the cow was there waiting to attack me and bite my shoes again. Yet with the

strength I had gained through prayer, as he came up again to bite my foot, I raised my foot and crushed his head!

A few days later I saw the outward evidence of this battle. The powers of darkness were very strong in this area and it was illegal there to convert anyone to Christianity. We were having a pastor's seminar with about 400 pastors in a very large city there. The local coordinator of the seminar had unfortunately made a large banner for the seminar and posted it on the main street of the city. During the seminar the chief of police came to visit us. He was very angry and demanded, "What are you doing here in my city? You can't do this! I can revoke the visa in your passport! I am coming back this afternoon!" This was the attack of the "cow" god who wanted to remove me from that Hindu nation. The battle was very real, much more than a mere dream! Yet as we prayed and took authority over that satanic power, the result was that the police chief never came back to trouble us. We went on to have many more victories at the seminar and during our travels, but it was because our Greater than Joshua had given us authority to trample this "cow" king underfoot.

The second victory ceremony that we read about was that Joshua hung (or, nailed) the enemy kings on trees after he had killed them. This was again another symbol of the victory of the cross, where the dominions of these evil kings were broken over their cities. Yes, the Lord Jesus is going to defeat all the enemies and cause His servants to share in His victory. Yet even more, the mighty victory of the cross is going to be proclaimed again and again throughout the cities and nations of this world, until the day when Christ returns to establish His kingdom reign over all the earth!

Joshua followed up on this decisive victory by marching his troops on a campaign through the south of the Promised Land. At Makedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir the Israelites quickly subdued the main armies and cities of the land. At the end of the chapter we read in verses 40-43, "So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded. And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal."

Chapter 11: Conquest of Northern Canaan

Through these victories the Israelites had conquered the southern portion of Canaan. Yet this galvanized the Canaanites in the northern half of the country to quickly combine their forces into one huge army with which they hoped to defeat the Israelites. We read, "And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard these things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, and to the kings who were from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west, to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah. So they went out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel" (Joshua 11:1-5).

Realizing their danger, the king of Hazor took action against the Israelites. Hazor was the largest city in the north with a population of about 40,000 people at the time. The city also was at the crossroads of two major highways, which gave it further economic and military influence.

The king of Hazor was able to gather an immense army with many chariots to seek to overwhelm the smaller army of Israel. Yet with God's promised help, Joshua's army boldly attacked them and defeated this second coalition. We read, "So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them. And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining" (Josh.11:7-8). Joshua again followed up this victory by then destroying the major cities of the north.

"And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim.... None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod" (Josh.11:21-22). As the Israelites conquered the land, we also read that they killed all the giants (the Anakim) that were in Canaan. These giants represented demonic powers that had ruled in the land. As our Lord Jesus said about this subject in Matthew 12:29, "How can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?" The giants and the kings had to all come down before the Israelites could take the land and live in peace.

The giants that still remained in the three Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod later became a problem for the Israelites. About four centuries later, one of the giants from Gath led the army of the Philistines when they opposed Saul and his kingdom. It was David who killed this giant, Goliath, and again brought the Israelites into victory. Several other soldiers in David's army also killed the last giants mentioned in the Bible (1 Chron.20:4-8).

In summarizing all the battles through which Israel obtained control of the Promised Land, we read, "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the Lord had commanded Moses" (Josh.11:18-20).

It was God's will for all the former inhabitants of the Promised Land to be completely destroyed. While some people may think this was a harsh thing for a loving God to do, we must also remember that He is a Holy God who is a consuming fire (Heb.12:29). The people who had inhabited Canaan had corrupted themselves into every form of idolatry, evil, and sexual perversion. The heathen temples were filled with prostitution. It was common for each family to offer up their firstborn son as a human sacrifice to their idols. The only way the Israelites could be kept from these pollutions was for the former inhabitants to be utterly destroyed.

About 500 years before this time, when Abraham sojourned in Canaan, there was still a knowledge of God that had remained with the descendants of Noah. Melchizedek, the priest of God, ruled in Jerusalem (Gen.14:18). Job and his friends lived in nearby areas. The Lord had spoken to Abraham that He would give the land to Abraham's descendants, but only after they had spent four hundred years in Egypt (Gen.15:13). God told Abraham the reason for the delay was, "for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete" (Gen.15:16). The inhabitants of Canaan did not yet fully deserve the judgment that would come upon them when Joshua and his army marched in to conquer the land. We see from this that we serve a patient and longsuffering God, yet He will also be the righteous Judge. He will correct all wrongs. However, it is very important that we have balanced spirits so that we do not rush in and try to correct a wrong situation before it is God's time. We are admonished, "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes," in 1 Corinthians 4:5. Yet when it became God's time, nothing could stand in the way of Joshua and His army as they marched through the land.

In the last verse of this chapter we are told, "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their

divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war” (Josh.11:23). By the end of chapter eleven, Israel had conquered the land. This took about seven years to accomplish. There were still many pockets of Canaanites who lived scattered throughout the land, but all their military resistance had crumbled. The Israelites were ready to enter into rest.

On the other side of the Jordan the Israelites had been told by Moses, “for as yet you have not come to the rest and the inheritance which the Lord your God is giving you” (Deut.12:9). In many Old Testament scriptures they were told that dwelling in peace in the Promised Land would cause them to enter into rest and obtain their inheritance (Deut.12:10, Deut.25:19, Joshua 1:15).

The Apostle Paul enlarges upon this theme in the Book of Hebrews. He reminds us that the disobedient generation that left Egypt under Moses failed to enter into this rest: “For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb.3:16-19).

The next chapter of Hebrews then tells us that the New Testament Christian has also been given a similar promise of entering into rest: “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest.... There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His” (Heb.4:1-3, 9-10). The Lord has offered each of us our own inheritance in Christ where we have ceased from our own dead works. Instead, it is the life and ministry of Christ that is to be expressed through our lives! This is the fulfillment of what we read in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Living this “exchanged life” causes us to rest from our own struggles and strife, to live Christ's abundant life in the “promised land” of the kingdom of God.

Chapter 12: The List of Conquered Kings

“These are the kings of the land whom the children of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed” (Joshua 12:1). In concluding this section about the conquering of Canaan, we are given a list of the kings that had been defeated. Moses led the Israelites to victory over two kings on the east side of the Jordan, while Joshua then defeated 31 kings in the Promised Land.

As we have mentioned, the kings that Joshua defeated were a prophetic foreshadow. They represent the principalities and powers in the heavenlies that will be cast down to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. As the Lord anoints us to become “Joshuas” for our generation, we will dethrone the satanic powers ruling over cities and nations to see mighty revivals in the last days.

The trials that the Israelites faced in the wilderness were all aimed at exposing and dealing with the sin within their hearts. The generation that Moses had led represented the old adamic nature of man that is kept obedient through the law. However, this generation had to die before the new generation led by Joshua could enter in to possess the Promised Land. This “Joshua Generation” had to first cross the Jordan (a type of being crucified with Christ) and experience circumcision (or sanctification). Then they were ready to face and conquer the enemies in Canaan.

This remains the pattern for the soldiers of Christ to follow today. We need to conquer the enemies *within* our life (our carnal nature) before we are ready to conquer the enemies *outside* our life (the powers of Satan). In John 14:30 our Lord Jesus said, “the ruler of this world [Satan] is coming, and he has nothing in Me.” When the powers of Satan cannot find any corruption within us that they can control, then we will live victoriously in this world, even as our Lord was victorious.

By studying more about the kings that Joshua defeated we can gain insights for the spiritual warfare that we will face. The names of the places that these kings ruled over often reveal the nature of these principalities. As 1 Samuel 25:25 tells us, “as his name is, so is he.” While the meanings of a few of these names are no longer understood from their original language, most can be interpreted into English. Many can even be interpreted in several ways, just as modern words can often have several different meanings. We will now consider some of the interpretations that can have a clear spiritual significance for us today.

The names of the places that these kings ruled often revealed their evil nature. One king ruled over Achshaph. When interpreted into English, he was the “king of Enchantment” or “king of Witchcraft.” The powers of witchcraft and evil curses often rule over areas, and that “king” or satanic power must be broken before the kingdom of God can be firmly established there.

The king of Madon by interpretation was actually the “king of Contention.” This is another evil spirit that often has authority to oppress families, churches, cities, and even nations. As Proverbs 18:19 says, “contentions are like the bars of a castle.” Who rules over this castle? The king of Contention! Yet if our adamic nature is crucified, we will not be controlled by contention and strife. Then we can cast down this prince of darkness and establish Christ's kingdom where he had ruled.

The king of Hopher by interpretation was the “king of Shame.” The first result of Adam and Eve's sin was that they were ashamed (Gen.3:7). Shame can be a very powerful force. The motivation of seeking to “save face” because of shame can lead people to suicide and nations to war. Nevertheless, a believer who knows there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ can fully overcome this “king of Shame.”

The city of Gezer means “cut off,” and can refer to the condition of someone who feels that they have been rejected by God. Jeremiah was one of many who have experienced this when he declared in Lamentations 3:54, “I said, ‘I am cut off!’” Yet while studying this same Hebrew word, we find out that our Lord Jesus was “cut off” in Isaiah 53:8. He took our judgment upon Himself so that we can now proclaim that nothing can separate us from the love of God, Rom.8:38-39.

The city of Debir also was given the name Kirjath Sannah in Joshua 15:49, which means “the city of Destruction.” Another of the kings conquered by Joshua ruled over the city of Hormah, which means “devoted to destruction.” These two cities can remind us of the warning of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 7:13 that says, “wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.”

The above mentioned cities all spiritually speak of things that are intrinsically evil, which need to be conquered and destroyed. However, there are also many situations that do not need to be destroyed, but redeemed. Often a place or a situation has been given a good inheritance by God that has been perverted or corrupted by the satanic principalities which rule over them. In these circumstances, these places in our “promised land” should not be destroyed, but restored.

We see this principle at work when we study many of the cities that Joshua conquered. One of the major cities was Hebron, which means “alliance.” Hebron's history shows us that it was a city of alliances, both good and bad. Under the Amorites it was part of the evil alliance against Joshua in Joshua 10:3-5. Yet when under the control of the righteous, it was the center of two

good alliances when David was anointed in Hebron as king (2 Sam.2:3-4 & 5:1-4). Then it later became the center of the rebel alliance of Absalom (2 Sam.15:10). The unique inheritance of the city of Hebron as a place of alliances was used for good or evil depending on who was in control.

The city of Jericho means “place of fragrance,” probably because of the balsams and henna that were grown there. In the New Testament we are given a spiritual interpretation of what fragrance can signify in 2 Corinthians 3:15-16. There we read, “For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.”

When we study the history of the city of Jericho we see that it is indeed a place that leads to both death and life. In Joshua's day it was a place of death, except for the family of Rahab who gained the fragrance and life of Christ. In 2 Kings 2:19-22 we can read how the prophet Elisha took the waters of death at Jericho and healed them to make it a place of life. We also can read in Luke 19 where our Lord spoke a parable about the man who was left for dead on the road to Jericho, who was compassionately restored to life.

Another city that Joshua conquered was Jerusalem, which means “foundations of peace” or “possession of peace.” Genesis 14:18 first mentions this city where it is named Salem, or “peace.” It was originally a place of peace under the righteous reign of Melchizedek. It was later a city where the Jebusites enjoyed a false peace when they were so confident of their safety just before David defeated them (2 Sam.5:6-7). Over the next centuries the city often shifted back and forth between being a place of true and false peace. When righteous kings and the worship of God were in Jerusalem, it was divinely protected and blessed of God with peace (Ps.122:6-7). However, ungodly rulers and false prophets often declared a false peace for Jerusalem although war soon descended (Jer.6:6,13-14, Ezek.13:16). Only in the coming millennium will it fully enter into the prophetic fulfillment of its name when the Prince of Peace will rule the world from Jerusalem (Is.2:1-4).

This principle of a spiritual inheritance being used for both good and evil can also be seen in the New Testament city of Ephesus. As the capitol city of Asia Minor, it held a high position of leadership. This leadership was also seen in the spiritual realm, as the city was the great international center of the worship of Diana, the mother goddess (Acts 19:23-34). The fallen angelic principality that ruled over Ephesus used the city's position of leadership to help corrupt the entire Roman Empire with the worship of the mother goddess.

During the New Testament times of revival, the “leadership mantle” of the city was redeemed to be used in a godly way. When the Apostle Paul established a strong church there, it became a mother church for many churches throughout the province (Acts 19:10 & Rev.1:11). The powers of false religion and the worship of the mother goddess were largely cast down (Acts 19:17-20, 24-27). The church received the Epistle to the Ephesians, titled “the Queen of the Epistles” by the worldwide Church. For a season the church at Ephesus was a leader or a spiritual mother for the New Testament churches.

However, as the saints in Ephesus slowly lost their first love, the church became spiritually weak (Rev.2:1-5). Then the ancient evil principality of the mother goddess moved in again to regain spiritual control. The position of respect and leadership that the city had known for centuries was turned again for evil purposes. In the year 431 A.D. the backsliding church of the Roman Empire held a great council in Ephesus. Here the leaders of the Roman Church voted to make it official church doctrine that Mary be titled “The Mother of God” and be counted worthy of worship. At this time the fallen principality that had spread the worship of a pagan mother goddess from Ephesus now regained control through the backsliding church. It again corrupted the nations, only this time with the worship of a “Christian” mother goddess. By studying this we

can see an example of a spiritual inheritance given to a city (Ephesus) that was used by Satan's fallen angels for evil until the church in revival reclaimed the spiritual inheritance for good. We can also see how that blessing can again become corrupted and used for evil if the people of God do not maintain their inheritance.

The city of Antipolo where I live is a modern example of the church reclaiming its spiritual inheritance. It sits in the hills overlooking Manila, the capitol of the Philippines. It is also spiritually a "high place" over Manila, and for centuries has been a pilgrimage center and place of many shrines, retreats, and spiritist religious groups.

In 1992 the Lord gave me a vision of the city while I was praying. I first saw the multitudes of people that for many generations have walked up the road every year for the pilgrimage to Antipolo. Then the Lord began to speak to me from Isaiah 2:2-3 of how the Lord was going to lift His Church above the false religions. I next saw as the vision shifted that the multitudes would no longer be walking up to Antipolo for false religious blessing, but that the multitudes and nations would come to the true Church in Antipolo for teaching and guidance. On the basis of that vision I felt that we should establish our mission headquarters in Antipolo.

Over the last decade I have seen the Lord fulfilling that vision. Multitudes no longer walk up to our city for the yearly pilgrimage. Only a fraction of them now come by the easier method of buses and cars. However, there have been a large concentration of Bible schools, parachurch organizations, and born-again churches that are arising in our area. The parachurch ministry that I direct has been a part of what the Lord is doing in our city, as through our Bible schools, publications, and seminars we have been helping train tens of thousands of Asian Christian leaders from our center in Antipolo. Another victory we obtained about a year ago was when many local churches gathered for a rally in the city square with their pastors and the governor of our province. The governor prayed and dedicated Antipolo and the entire province to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Body of Christ in Antipolo has been reclaiming for the kingdom of God the position of spiritual leadership that has been the inheritance of the city, praise the Lord!

So as we look at these examples, we see a principle of inheritance that can also be applied to not only cities, but also to families, churches, nations, and individuals. Their unique gifts and callings can be used for both good or evil depending on who is in control. These special characteristics or inheritances do not need to be destroyed, but redeemed. We will explore ways to discern, possess, and maintain these various inheritances in most of the remaining pages of this book.

Chapter 5

DIVIDING THE LAND

(Joshua Chapters 13-22:9)

In the first and second quarters of the book of Joshua we observed how the Israelites entered and conquered the Promised Land. In this third section we will see how the land was divided and given to the various tribes.

By the end of Joshua chapter 12 the Israelites had defeated all the enemy armies and had conquered the land. However, conquering the land is not enough. We can all gain something, and never use it! The purpose of an inheritance, calling, or gift is not just to obtain it, but to use it.

An English minister I know recently told me a story that illustrates this truth. His church had an outreach years ago to help the poor people in their community. There was one older lady that the church provided with food and help. While he was trying to get an old age pension for her, he discovered that her father had been one of the richest men in England, and had willed all of his great fortune to her! Upon learning this, my friend encouraged her to use some of the money to provide a decent house and food for herself. She replied, "My father was a good but very stern man. He was very careful about keeping his money. I would never think of touching his money." That lady remained poor and sickly until she died in a government poor house, although she was actually one of the richest people in England! She did not make out a will, and she had no living relatives, so when she died her riches were returned to the ownership of the English government. This is a sobering example of someone who had obtained a great inheritance, but through ignorance rendered it useless.

In a Christian's life, there are many ways in which we can be given a spiritual inheritance. However, it is then our responsibility to use what was entrusted to us and make it a fruitful investment. The following are a few examples of this:

- G An evangelist can "conquer" a city through a great evangelistic crusade- but if he does not gather the converts and form a church, then the results may soon be lost.
- G The Scriptures tell us that Christ has conquered all the powers of sin and Satan. However, we do not always order our lives according to this victory, and we do not always live in it!
- G Parents can have a Christian family, but unless their children are trained in the correct way, they can lose their inheritance through the children's lives if the children do not grow up to follow the Lord.
- G A revival can shake a nation, but unless it goes on to transform the nation's culture and government, the nation will not abide in the blessings that the revival brought.
- G If a pastor builds up a church, yet it falls apart after he moves on to a new place of ministry, then much of the godly reward he could have obtained from that church will be lost.

G When the Lord gives a Christian a gift or talent, he will be held accountable for whether he uses that gift profitably (Mt.25:14-30).

These examples help show us that there can be a great difference between getting something and using it well. This is why Joshua had to do more than just conquer the Promised Land. After conquering it, the land had to be divided and distributed among the tribes of Israel. It was only then, as the Israelites took possession of the entire countryside, that it could be inhabited, cultivated, and built up to become a fruitful inheritance.

Shortly after the Israelites left Egypt, the Lord addressed this situation. God said that He would give them the land little by little so that their inheritance would not turn into wasteland or wilderness through neglect. In Exodus 23:27-30 He said, “I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beast of the field become too numerous for you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.” For this reason it took Joshua seven years to conquer the land, and then for many years afterwards the Israelites were still learning to possess it.

In Proverbs 20:21 we are warned about this danger of obtaining an inheritance too quickly. There we read, “An inheritance gained hastily at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.” The Lord Jesus illustrated this truth in the parable of the prodigal son. The younger son in this story asked for his inheritance before he was mature enough to use it wisely. As a result he soon squandered and lost it.

North America experienced a powerful revival in the late 1940's and early 1950's. This revival, which became known as the “Latter Rain” revival, raised up many young evangelists who shook many nations with the power of God. Some of these evangelists even wrote books about how anyone could quickly enter into the miraculous power of God if they would fast and pray. As the revival was flowing, this method worked for many young converts and ministers. Just fast and pray, get “cleaned out,” and the power would flow! It was a time when it was easy to obtain a powerful ministry, but the following years proved that many had not been prepared to wisely use that inheritance. The story of the prodigal son was repeated many times in different ways. Some of the greatest of these revivalists fell from great heights of fame and power to become alcoholics or to fall into other deep sins. It is not just enough to get something good from God- we must also learn to use it well. This is the basic message we will learn from the third section of the Book of Joshua as we now begin to study it in more detail.

Chapter 13: Unpossessed Areas & the Boundaries East of the Jordan

“Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: ‘You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all that of the Geshurites.... all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth, and all the Sidonians; them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh’ ” (Joshua 13:1-2, 6-7).

After conquering the Promised Land, the Lord spoke to Joshua that the land still needed to be possessed. While all the armies that had opposed the Israelites had been defeated, many of the Canaanites still lived there and would resist moving. The Israelites needed to be organized to

take full possession of the land. The tribes of Israel needed to spread out, drive out the former inhabitants, and dwell throughout the land. Only after the Canaanites were dispossessed and the Israelites were settled would the victory be complete.

At this time the Lord commanded Joshua to divide the land west of the Jordan to nine and one-half of the tribes of Israel. The rest of this chapter then tells about the inheritance that Moses had already promised to the other tribes. The territorial boundaries of Reuben, Gad, and one-half of the tribe of Manasseh are listed in great detail in verses 8 to 32.

These tribes had already made a bargain with Moses that they would occupy the east side of the Jordan. However, this was the wrong side, where the Lord had never invited the Israelites to live! The Lord wanted His people to all cross the Jordan and live on the west side in the Promised Land.

The Book of Numbers tells us the story of how these tribes had earlier asked for their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan. We read from there, "...the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses... 'the country which the Lord defeated before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.' Therefore they said, 'If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan' " (Num.32:2-5). Moses permitted them to settle east of the Jordan if they would first send their soldiers with the rest of Israel to complete the conquest. However, while The Lord permitted it, this was not the perfect will of God.

Many times the Lord permits His children to do things that are not His perfect will if they demand their own way. We can remember how the Lord allowed the Israelites to have Saul when they wanted a king (1 Sam.8:6-9). God permitted the greedy prophet Balaam to go to Moab after He had told him "No," yet God was still angry with Balaam for his disobedience (Num.22:7-33). When the Israelites had complained about their food in the wilderness, the Lord allowed them to have an abundance of quail although He judged them for it (Num.11:4-6 & 31-34, Ps.106:13-15).

The Lord Jesus spoke about this issue when He taught the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. In this parable the father gave to his younger son the requested inheritance, even though the father knew that his son might soon waste it with riotous living. The prodigal's father depicts for us the heart of God the Father. When His stubborn children want to go their own way, our gracious Heavenly Father will often permit it, even though His children may learn a painful and costly lesson through the consequences they reap (Gal.6:7-8).

The tribes that wanted to live on the east side of the Jordan represent for us unconsecrated Christians who settle for less than what the Lord wants to give His people. Their request was, "Do not take us over the Jordan" in Numbers 32:5. As we have seen, crossing the Jordan represents being crucified with Christ. A believer who has "crossed the Jordan" can say to the Lord, "Not my will, but Thine be done." However, a believer who has not "crossed the Jordan" to surrender their sinful adamic nature may often say, "I did it my way!" This is what these two and one-half tribes were in effect saying when they asked to not cross the Jordan. They did not want to go all the way with the Lord. Yes, they had left Egypt and had crossed the wilderness. They already had many wonderful spiritual experiences and had a solid faith in God. However, they thought they had followed the Lord far enough and were ready to settle down. Like Lot, they chose what looked good to them (Gen.13:10-11, 2 Cor.5:7). Therefore they asked for the east side of the Jordan as their inheritance.

Nevertheless, it is our Heavenly Father who knows what is best for His children. He who knows the end from the beginning knew that these two and one-half tribes were settling for something less than what they could have had. The Jordan river not only separated them geographically from the other tribes, but also brought a spiritual separation. This was first

manifested in Joshua chapter 22, where it helped start a misunderstanding that brought Israel to the brink of civil war. While these two and one-half tribes became prosperous for a season, they eventually fell into idolatry and were the first tribes to be conquered and made slaves. We read in 2 Kings 10:32-33, “In those days the Lord began to cut off parts of Israel; and Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead; Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh; from Aroer, which is by the River Arnon, including Gilead and Bashan.” May the example of their failure encourage us to press on and never be content to settle for God's second best!

This same lesson is emphasized for us in a little anecdote recorded in verse 22. After listing the princes who had been killed when Moses attacked Midian, we read: “The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed.”

When studying about Balaam's life, we can see that he was called a prophet in 2 Peter 2:16. He certainly knew the Lord and had a strong prophetic ministry (Num.22-25). However, the scripture in Joshua 13:22 called him a soothsayer, and he also practiced divination and gave powerful curses (Num.24:1 & 22:6). His life and ministry, which was filled with such mixture, brought him fame, wealth, and power. Nevertheless, it did not cause his life to end in godliness and glory. When the anointing had been upon him and he was prophesying about the greatness of Israel, Balaam had declared, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his” (Num.23:10). However, Balaam did not die the death of the righteous- he died with the wicked Midianite princes, when the army of Moses destroyed them! Balaam had been warned by the angel that God was displeased with his disobedience, and that the sword of judgment could fall upon him (Num.22:22-33). After Balaam counseled the king of Midian to seek to destroy Israel through immorality and idolatry, that sword of judgment finally fell (Rev.2:14, Num.25:1-3) While Balaam was probably still enjoying the rewards he was given for his successful counsel against Israel, Moses sent the army to attack the enemy, and Balaam died by the sword.

At times Balaam had been a great prophet of God, but his last testimony recorded here in the book of Joshua was that he died as a soothsayer. His mixed-up life and tragic death tell us again the message that we should never have mixed motives in serving the Lord. If a Christian has an idolatrous lust for power, money, or fame, he can obtain it through demonic help. Christian leaders are often offered these temptations, just as Satan offered them to Christ in the wilderness. However, the final reward of these activities will be judgment, shame, and sorrow.

Chapter 14: Method of Setting Boundaries & the Inheritance of Caleb

At the beginning of this chapter we are told how the remaining tribes had the land distributed among them. We read, “These are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. Their inheritance was by lot, as the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe” (Joshua 14:1-2). Joshua, Eleazar the High Priest, and the elders distributed the sections of land that were surveyed by casting lots. Through this method the Lord gave each tribe their area of the land to possess. As Proverbs 16:33 tells us, “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.” This form of external guidance was used in the Scriptures throughout the Old Testament times and up until Acts 1:26. However, as we mentioned earlier, since the Holy Spirit's descent on the day of Pentecost, the people of God can now be internally guided by the leading of the Spirit. This is the emphasis of the New Testament- “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Rom.8:14).

The rest of the chapter tells us about the specific inheritance of one notable Israelite, the faithful spy, Caleb. “Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him.... ‘I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart.... So Moses swore on that day, saying, “Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God”’” (Josh.14:6-9).

Because of his faithfulness the Lord promised Caleb that he would inherit the land he had seen and walked upon. This reveals a principle that repeatedly guides the destiny of God's people. When a young believer gains a vision or begins to experience something that the Lord is offering His people, that vision or experience can guide him towards obtaining its fulfillment. If we are not faithful, we can of course disqualify ourselves like the 10 spies who were full of unbelief (Num.14:36-37, Heb.3:16-19). However, a good key to use in discerning the call upon someone's life is to examine their experiences with God as a young Christian. As the Lord spoke through Isaiah, He is a God who declares the end from the beginning (Is.46:10). What we see and experience as a young Christian is often what the Lord prepares us to enter into in fullness when we are ready for our inheritance. For a young Christian who experiences the power of God in healing, this may be like a seed planted into their life, which will grow into a consistent healing ministry in the years to come. Someone who is delivered from evil spirits when they are saved may mature in later years to have a deliverance ministry. Our experiences and the spiritual vision we obtain as a young Christian form our direction in life. I can remember one preacher who said that he shed tears for many nations during his prayer times in Bible school, and in the 25 years since then, the Lord brought him to each of those countries to preach the gospel. We should never despise the unusual experiences or the high vision of a young believer. Although many things may first have to take place before they can enter into its fulfillment, modern-day "Calebs" will never be disappointed with their eventual inheritance if they fully follow the Lord.

In verse ten Caleb went on to say, “And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old.” Caleb had to wait 45 years to enter into his promised inheritance. This delay was not caused by his own lack of preparation, which is often the reason the Lord waits to lead us into our inheritance. In Caleb's case, it was because the rest of the people of God around him were not ready! This situation is still repeated in congregations today. The Lord may have given precious promises to the church, but many in the congregation may not be ready or qualified to become a part of it. Before the church can obtain those promises, there will be a sifting process among the members of the congregation. Everyone will be tested to see if they wholeheartedly embrace the vision of what the Lord is going to do. Some members may leave the church. Some might depart by growing old and dying, just like those in Caleb's generation. This sifting process may go on for many years, until the ones who remain are united in vision and preparation. Then the Lord can bring them into the fulfillment of their inheritance.

During those long hard years in the wilderness when the Lord is sifting His people, the saints need to constantly hold before them the vision of what God has promised He will do. As the Lord said to Habakkuk, “the vision is for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab.2:3).

We can also note that Caleb said that he had waited 45 years to enter into his inheritance. From the time that Caleb had spied out the land until the time when the Israelites entered the

Promised Land was 38 years (Deut.2:14). This tells us that it took Joshua and his army seven years to conquer the land, at which time Caleb went up to possess his inheritance.

The account goes on with Caleb next saying, “ ‘Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day....’ And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance” (Josh.14:12-13). Caleb chose an inheritance that was a special place to the Israelites. Their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had all lived in Hebron (Gen.35:27). It was a place where they had met with God, such as the time when the Lord visited Abraham and promised him a son in Genesis chapter 18. Years later, Hebron gained new fame when David was anointed and reigned there as king (2 Sam.2:1-4 & 5:1-5). Caleb received a good inheritance when he asked for Hebron.

Chapter 15: Boundaries of the Tribe of Judah

“So this was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families: The border of Edom at the Wilderness of Zin southward was the extreme southern boundary. And their southern border began at the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward. Then it went out to the southern side of the Ascent of Akkrabbim, passed along to Zin, ascended on the south side of Kadesh Barnea, passed along to Hezron, went up to Adar, and went around to Karkaa. From there it passed toward Azmon and went out to the Brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border. The east border was the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan. And the border on the northern quarter began at the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. The border went up to Beth Hoglah and passed north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. Then the border went up toward Debir from the Valley of Achor, and it turned northward toward Gilgal, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the valley. The border continued toward the waters of En Shemesh and ended at En Rogel” (Joshua 15:1-7).

This chapter of the book of Joshua tells us the inheritance given to the tribe of Judah. Almost every verse is simply a listing of the geographical boundaries of the province that Judah obtained. Like most of the verses in the next six chapters, these lists of cities, towns, hills, and rivers would seem to be of little value to anyone but a surveyor or a map maker. Why have these things been listed in such minute detail in the Bible? Considering all the millions of Bibles that would be printed throughout history, why did God put so much detailed information in these chapters that appears useless to us today? Humanly speaking, only the lengthy genealogies of the Old Testament seem to compete with these geographical lists as the most boring sections of the Bible!

However, to the Israelites, these instructions were crucial towards establishing them in their inheritance. It put definition and organization into all their efforts of possessing the land and making it fruitful. Useless duplication and potential conflicts were eliminated. When everyone was clearly told their place, they could smoothly work together to establish the nation of Israel.

In the New Testament times we have been given a better and more spiritual inheritance. Yet at the same time, to possess and establish it, we still need very detailed organization in the Church. Each member of the body of Christ needs to know his placement and function in the body, just as each Israelite needed to know their placement in the land (1 Cor.12:14-27). We cannot complete the work of God as isolated individuals- we need to be part of the big picture, the master plan being organized by the Lord. This was the message that the Apostle Paul was teaching in Ephesians 4:11-16, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of

the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ; from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

To help us to learn our proper placement and functions in the body of Christ, the New Testament contains many instructions. In modern times there are countless books and manuals being written to help carry on this training. Churches often define detailed job descriptions for their various ministers, while the ministers continually train and mobilize the church members. If your church only has twenty members, you will not need very much organization in your church. However, if it grows to have three hundred members, you will need to set up a much more detailed organization in the church to keep it balanced and growing. Then when we look around the body of Christ today, we see this development and specialization in a vastly multiplied way. As the Lord is mobilizing His people to complete the Great Commission, we find thousands of new ministries and parachurch organizations being developed to reach out and contribute in many unique ways. Just as in Joshua's time, the people of God still need to have well-defined boundaries (both naturally and spiritually) in order to properly function together and complete the plan of God. This is the important lesson that can be emphasized to us by the lengthy lists of boundaries and cities that we find in these chapters.

The Lord taught me an important lesson about these truths through a dream many years ago. In this dream I was planning a banquet for 9000 people and had received a reasonable bid for its cost. As I was walking down a road reading a newspaper, I noticed an ad for a different banquet planner. This ad said they could hold quality banquets for a price far below anyone else. In this dream I noticed the address of this banquet planner, and that it was just ahead on the road. As I walked up to go inside, I saw that the name of the building was "The Watchtower Society." I was wondering what the Jehovah's Witnesses had to do with banquets as I walked inside an office to talk with their cost consultant.

As this consultant began to analyze the price bid that had been quoted to me by the first banquet planners, he began to chop the prices way down. He showed me wise methods of cost cutting that made his final price quote for the banquet less than half of the original bid. As I looked at his final price, really impressed with this new bid, The Lord Jesus Himself walked into the room!

My first reaction was that I was embarrassed to have the Lord find me in a Jehovah's Witnesses building! However, I could tell that the Lord had not come to condemn me, but to teach me something there. The Lord then said, "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (Lk.16:8). I knew that the Jehovah's Witnesses had flooded the world with inexpensive literature, just as they had offered to hold this banquet for such an inexpensive price. I understood that the Lord was not commending their false doctrine, but rather their wisdom through which they were able to spread their false doctrines so inexpensively throughout the world.

The Lord Jesus went on to say to me, "It takes order and efficiency to make a great light that can attract the masses of people." He then went on to teach me areas of wisdom through which I could direct an organization efficiently and graciously.

This dream helped stir my heart up to pray and seek for wisdom over the following years. I eventually felt led to start a new parachurch ministry through which I could channel the vision that the Lord was placing in my heart. Within seven years of when I had that dream, I was

publishing a teaching magazine for 9,000 pastors- and each magazine cost the exact same low price of the banquet meals that had been offered me by that second banquet planner! The ministry has continued to grow well for the last ten years, and has expanded to publish books and magazines as well as conduct pastors' seminars and Bible schools in many Asian countries. Our joy is to offer the Asian nations anointed, doctrinally sound teaching from the Word of God, at a price comparable to, or cheaper, than any other religious organization. We understand our calling and our boundaries, and by God's grace will establish a fruitful inheritance as we possess the land that He has offered to us.

In the middle of the geographical lists in Joshua chapter 15 we find one interesting story about Caleb and his family. There we read, "And Caleb said, 'He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife.' So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. Now it was so, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, 'What do you wish?' She answered, 'Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water.' So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs" (Josh.15:16-19).

When Caleb went up to take his inheritance, he offered a special reward to the soldier who was brave and strong enough to lead the attack. That reward was to marry his daughter, Achsah. The man who rose up to win her was Othniel, Caleb's nephew.

Othniel also received a portion of the land that Caleb had obtained. However, that land was near the southern border of Israel, which becomes very dry as it merges with the Negev desert. Therefore it was a very important request that Achsah made to her father when she asked for their land to include a water supply. Caleb generously responded by giving his daughter and son-in-law two springs.

This story can also have an application for women today. Women are known to have great abilities to persuade and move men, whether those men may be their father, husband, or someone else. Jezebel used her abilities in an evil way to corrupt not only her own husband and family, but even the entire nation. On the other hand, Achsah is a shining example of someone who used those womanly talents in a godly way. Through her intercession she helped obtain refreshing and prosperity for her family. This story can also suggest the spiritual application that a good wife will pray and encourage her husband to obtain the springs of living water that the Lord offers His people. A wise woman can help build her husband up and cause him to obtain the blessing of the Lord. Othniel certainly obtained both natural and spiritual blessings upon his life as he went on to become the first judge of Israel, as recorded in Judges chapter three.

The last verse of chapter 15 mentions one more item among the lists of boundaries and cities. There we find written, "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day" (Josh.15:63). This is the first recorded failure of one of the tribes to completely possess their inheritance in the Promised Land. However, the failure seems to have been needless.

First of all, Joshua and the Israelites had already defeated Jerusalem's king and his army in chapter 10. We also read later in the Book of Judges, "Now the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire" (Jud.1:8). So it is clear that the Lord gave them the victory over Jerusalem, and yet the tribe of Judah did not follow it up and possess the city at the proper time. They allowed the Jebusites to slip back in, rebuild, and control the city. The Jebusites in Jerusalem became a stubborn problem that could have been totally eliminated had Judah been more vigilant in their time of victory.

It is a common weakness of the flesh that we are often the most vulnerable to counterattack just after our greatest victories. For example, Elijah's greatest victory was when the entire nation

turned back to God after he had challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. Yet the next day Elijah ran for his life at the threat of Jezebel! Also, we have seen how it was just after the Israelites had a miraculous victory at Jericho that they stumbled into defeat at the little city of Ai. We also can remember that only a short time after Peter had prophetically declared to the Lord, “You are the Christ,” Jesus had to rebuke him and say “Get behind me, Satan!” We need to always be vigilant against the enemy or he may slip in to counterattack us while we are still celebrating our last great victory.

It ended up taking almost four centuries before the Jebusites were permanently dislodged from Jerusalem. They stubbornly held on to their city because it had great strategic importance. It was only when David became king of all Israel that the city was conquered. David then made the fortress hill of Zion his capitol (2 Sam.5:6-10). From that time on, Jerusalem became the center of what God was doing among His people. However, before that final victory, Jerusalem had been a starting place and a center point of what Satan did to oppose the work of God! A wise indication of an important battle for the kingdom of God is to see how fiercely the enemy tries to fight back. Even in our modern times, we can see how important Jerusalem still is in God's plans when we consider all the wars, conspiracies, bombings, and political maneuverings that are centered upon Jerusalem.

Chapter 16: Boundaries of the Tribe of Ephraim

This next chapter records the geographical boundaries of the tribe of Ephraim. At the end of this list, however, a disturbing trend is introduced into the account of how the Israelites continued to possess the land. We read in verse 10, “And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.”

We see this precedent later became a pattern for the Israelite tribes. In the next chapter we find, “Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out” (Josh.17:12-13). This pattern continues on into the Book of Judges, which records how the triumphant Israelites later backslid to become a compromising, defeated people. As one of many examples, in Judges 1:28 we read, “And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.”

The problem was not that the Israelites were unable to immediately possess all of the land. The Lord had already told them that they would possess the land little by little until they increased and were able to fill it. However, their great failure was how they acted after they had multiplied and become strong. After they grew strong, instead of driving the Canaanites out, they used them for slaves!

The Lord had already warned the Israelites not to compromise with the Canaanites. The command of God to them had been, “When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods” (Deut.7:1-4).

The Lord knew that if the Israelites made compromises with the Canaanites idolatry, immorality, and every pagan pollution would eventually fill Israel. While the Canaanites added to the temporary prosperity of Israel, they helped bring about their eventual destruction. For example, in Solomon's time it was these people who became the slaves that built up his great kingdom (2 Chron.2:17-18). However, it was also his wives from among these same people that later turned Solomon's heart away from the Lord (1 Kn.11:1-8). This brought idolatry, division, and eventual destruction to the kingdom.

Like the Israelites, we have to be careful of the same temptations that compromise will offer us. Instead of destroying our enemies when we are strong, do we allow them to stay, but seek to use them to our benefit? Do we try to use the world, the flesh, or the devil to accomplish our agenda? To our shame, there are many times when Christians will seek to use deceit, lust, anger, or other corruptions as their “tools” to get their own way. These tactics may temporarily bring results, but they will bring about the eventual downfall of anyone who learns to trust in them. Don't learn to use worldly ways, the works of the flesh, or demonic power to your own advantage. Don't use them- conquer them, and drive them completely out of your life, your family, and your ministry!

Chapter 17: Boundaries of the Half-Tribe of Manasseh

This next chapter tells us about the inheritance of the half tribe of Manasseh that settled in the Promised Land. The other half had already chosen to possess the territory of Bashan on the wrong side of the Jordan (Josh.13:29-33). Now, however, the more faithful half of the tribe received their territory in the Promised Land between the tribes of Ephraim, Asher, and Issachar.

One family of the tribe of Manasseh is singled out in this account, the family of Zelophehad. We read, “But Zelophehad the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. And these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. And they came near before Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, ‘The Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers.’ Therefore, according to the commandment of the Lord, he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers” (Josh.17:3-4).

This story began back in the Book of Numbers. When Zelophehad died without having any son to carry on the family inheritance, his daughters approached Moses and asked that it be given to them (Num.27:1-4). Moses sought the Lord about this case and received the following instructions: “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ‘The daughters of Zelophehad speak what is right; you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter....’” And it shall be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment, just as the Lord commanded Moses’ ” (Num.27:6-8, 11).

These principles of the natural laws of inheritance also have an important spiritual application for us today. Most Israelite women shared in the inheritance of the land through the husband they married. In the Body of Christ we can see the same parallel. Many women receive their spiritual inheritance through supporting the work of their husband. While these women have their own unique giftings and abilities, they are mainly active in a supportive role to their husband and family. By helping their husband to fulfill God's call upon his life and ministry, they will share together the eternal rewards that his ministry has gained. This principle can also be seen in the law established by King David in 1 Samuel 30:24-25. David declared there would be an equal sharing of the battle rewards between those at the battlefield and those who support

the troops from behind. A woman who stays at home, raises the family, and supports her husband can receive the same inheritance or reward as her husband who serves the Lord out on the “battle front.”

However, there were also Israelite women (such as the daughters of Zelophehad) who were given their own personal inheritance in the Promised Land. In a similar manner, today there are Christian women who have been called of God to have their own spiritual ministry. They may fulfill their ministry as a single person who never marries, such as Corrie ten Boom, Madame Guyon, and Mary Slessor among many others in church history. Others may work as a partner in the ministry with their husband.

In my own family the Lord has blessed us with two daughters and no sons. While the Lord has enabled my wife and I to impart spiritual gifts and ministries to many spiritual sons, we have also prayed that our ministry calling will be imparted to our daughters. God has spoken gracious promises to them, and we know that our daughters have been given our calling and ministry as a family inheritance.

The account of the inheritance of Zelophehad's daughters has another important lesson for us. In Numbers 36:1-6 we further read, “Now the chief fathers... said: ‘The Lord commanded my lord Moses to give the land as an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel, and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. Now if they are married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then their inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and it will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so it will be taken from the lot of our inheritance...’ Then Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the Lord, saying: ‘What the tribe of the sons of Joseph speaks is right. This is what the Lord commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, “Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only within the family of their father's tribe.”’”

The leaders of Israel saw that the provincial boundaries of the twelve tribes could become intermixed. If the women who owned land would marry men from a different tribe, then these men would cause it to become the property of their own tribe. To protect the tribes' inheritances from confusion and conflict, the Lord told the daughters with an inheritance, “Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only within the family of their father's tribe.”

This command reveals something very important for us today. If a woman has a personal call to the ministry then she must be especially careful about whom she will marry. She must marry someone from the same “tribe,” meaning a man with the same vision and calling from God. If she marries and comes under the covering of a man with a different calling, then she must submit to and support his calling. In those circumstances, her own calling may become forfeited. For example, if a woman with a missionary calling to China marries a Canadian pastor, what will happen? Should the man follow the calling of his wife, to resign from his church and move to China? No, it is the wife who comes under the covering of her husband and follows him. In this case the woman called to China must remain in Canada and lay down her missionary calling. She should support her husband's pastoral ministry, and in so doing she will gain part of the reward or inheritance that his ministry will produce. However, in doing this she will also lose the personal inheritance that the Lord had first offered to her as a missionary. Also, because she was created with a different calling and desires than her husband, she may find it difficult to be a good pastor's wife.

I heard a woman preacher once testify that she was called to be a traveling evangelist when she was young. However, the man she married was called to be a pastor. For many years she felt frustrated because she wanted to travel and preach, but her husband always stayed with the flock

and ministered to them. She became a bitter, rebellious wife who finally drove her husband to an early grave. In her testimony she gave a clear warning: young ladies, don't be like me!

The New Testament commands every Christian woman to only marry a fellow Christian and not be unequally yoked (2 Cor.6:14). However, through the account of the daughters of Zelophehad we see that there is a higher standard for those who are called to the ministry. To retain their own inheritance they should marry someone with the same calling, someone from their own spiritual "tribe." Sisters, if God has graciously given you a ministry calling, value it as a very precious inheritance. Choose a husband that will be your partner, not your hindrance, in fulfilling God's wonderful plan for your life.

Perhaps you are already married and find that your mate does not support what God had called you to do. Do not despair and give up, for God is able to turn situations around far beyond our abilities and hopes. The Bible tells us "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom.8:28). We serve a God who specializes in giving "beauty for ashes." He can take the hurts and unfulfilled dreams in our lives, and cause His grace to accomplish great things in and through us.

There is one more story in this chapter that has a lesson to share with us. After listing the boundaries of the half tribe of Manasseh, verses fourteen through eighteen tell us about the complaint of the children of Joseph. These "children of Joseph" refer to the tribe of Ephraim as well as the half tribe of Manasseh who had both just been given their inheritance.

We read from there, "Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, 'Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people....The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron....' And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph; to Ephraim and Manasseh; saying, 'You are a great people and have great power; you shall not have only one lot, but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong.'"

The basic complaint of these tribes was that Joshua had not given them enough land. They complained that they were a great people who deserved more. However, they did not act like a "great people" when they found fault with both the mountains and the valleys! The mountains were uninhabited and unpleasant because of the deep woods there. On the other hand, the valleys held the opposite difficulties precisely because they were already inhabited! The children of Joseph had some work ahead of them, both to clear out the forested mountains and the inhabited valleys. Joshua assured them that because they were a great people they could possess all their land and find it to be a sufficient inheritance.

The complaint of these tribes to Joshua is echoed today by the criticisms of our carnal nature to Christ. Maybe we complain to the Lord about the mountains as well as the valleys in our lives. Perhaps we don't want to be alone, and perhaps we don't like being surrounded by people! If we do not abide in the victory of the Crucified One we will complain about the situations we need to face and conquer in our Christian lives. Overcomers are not created instantly, they are slowly formed through fiery trials upon the anvil of adversity. What will truly commend us to be a "great people" of God is not what we *claim* when the congregation gathers together, but what we *live* when we go out to work and to do battle against the enemy. When we complain that we deserve more, that does not really mean that the Lord has been unkind or miserly to us. What it really exposes is that we have not been diligent to use what God has already given us! If we are faithful in the little things, God will give us more. If we are faithful in our "Jerusalem," then the Lord will lead us to our "Judea and Samaria." When we say that we deserve more and complain about the limitations around us (such as perhaps in our local church), we are really only demonstrating that we have not yet become overcomers in our present situations of life.

To gain the victory and enlargement we need, let us follow the pattern that Joshua gave to the children of Joseph: drive out the enemies, and work! If we will drive out the enemies that still hide within our lives, and work with all our might, then we will find that the inheritance the Lord has given us is indeed more than enough to meet our every need. We will not have to complain about our lot in life, but will say with the Psalmist, “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance” (Ps.16:6).

Chapter 18: Boundaries Prepared for the Last Seven Tribes, Benjamin's Boundaries

“Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them. But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: ‘How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?’ ” -Joshua 18:1-3

After seven years of war the Israelites were more than ready to enjoy the rewards of their efforts. The land had been subdued, and the former inhabitants that still remained were too afraid of the Israelites to rise up against them.

As an act to symbolize that they were taking possession of Canaan, the Israelites set up Moses' Tabernacle in the center of the land, at Shiloh. Here the Lord would dwell in the midst of His people. However, Joshua had to exhort seven of the tribes that they had been slow to take possession of the rest of the land. They were already victorious, yet were still slow to exert the final effort needed to drive out the defeated foes and occupy the entire land. How similar the carnal human nature remains- even today, while the Lord offers that we can live in the full victory of Calvary, we often are content not to drive out the enemies that remain around us as long as they cause us no present trouble! As Chamberlain did with Hitler, our human tendency is often to compromise with the enemy as long as we can boast that we have obtained “peace in our time.”

To counteract this growing apathy, Joshua saw that the Israelites needed a fresh vision of what the Lord had given them. So Joshua commanded, “...You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring the survey here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord our God....So the men went, passed through the land, and wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities; and they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord, and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions,” Josh.18:1-6. Joshua sent out men to survey the land and bring back a detailed report of the remaining areas that had not yet been divided and possessed by the tribes. Then Joshua cast lots for these tribes to each receive a province from amongst the land that had been marked off.

Just as Joshua selected the inheritance the various tribes were to receive, our Lord Jesus Christ has selected the spiritual inheritance that He will offer to each Christian individual, family, church and denomination. These inheritances are offered to God's people not only for our present life on earth, but also for our eternal placement and reward. The very last thing that Daniel was told by an angel at the end of his life was, “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days” (Dan.12:13).

Even in the heavenly New Jerusalem we find that there are twelve gates through which various “tribes” of Christians will find access into different areas of the city (Rev.21:12). The Lord is not interested in making us all to be identical robots. He chose to use the imagery of the human body to show that the body of Christ is to be composed of many varied members.

However, it is very important to know what God has called and equipped us to do so that we can each contribute our abilities and gain our reward.

Chapter 19: Boundaries of Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan

This chapter lists the geographical boundaries of the last six provinces marked off for the tribes of Israel. The inheritance of the tribe of Simeon, the first area mentioned, has a lesson to teach us. We read, “The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people” (Josh.19:9). The tribe of Simeon was given a unique inheritance as they were placed inside the borders of another tribe. This helped protect Simeon within the boundaries of the stronger, larger tribe of Judah. However, it also meant that Simeon was easily dominated by Judah. The tribe of Simeon eventually became assimilated or “swallowed up” by Judah so that when the kingdom split after Solomon's times, the southern kingdom (in which the tribe of Simeon lived) was merely named the Kingdom of Judah.

The reason the tribe of Simeon did not keep their individuality can be traced back to Simeon, their founding father. The Book of Genesis tells us that two of the twelve sons of Israel, Simeon and Levi, had a prophetic judgment placed upon them by their father. Simeon and Levi had killed the men of their town because the local prince had raped their sister. As a result, when their father prophesied over them before his death he said, “Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place....Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel” (Gen.49:5, 7). This curse was largely fulfilled through the inheritance the Lord gave the tribe of Simeon when they were planted inside the boundaries of Judah.

Simeon received this curse because of his sin and how it had dishonored his father (Gen.34:30). We can also remember how a curse was similarly placed upon Ham by his father, Noah. The effects of these judgments can follow on through the generations of our natural as well as our spiritual children.

“Honor your father and mother” is the fifth of Moses' Ten Commandments, but the Apostle Paul also calls it “the first commandment with promise” in Ephesians 6:2. This promise that it contains says, “That your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you” (Ex.20:12). It is natural that those who honor their parents will be invited to remain on the family land and will be given a portion of the family inheritance after their parents die. Conversely, it is also true that a rebel in the family may be thrown out of the house and become disinherited. However, this principle also has a spiritual application. We must honor our fathers and mothers in Christ if we want to abide in the spiritual inheritance that they can impart to us. Every pastor and minister who is truly a spiritual father has an inheritance they can impart to their spiritual children. If we remain faithful spiritual children we will receive the blessings, anointings, and ministries that they can pass on. Yet if we become rebellious children who dishonor our spiritual fathers and mothers, judgment can fall upon us instead of blessings! We might disqualify ourselves from ever gaining our inheritance. What also can happen, like the prodigal son, is that some get their inheritance before they are ready. However, this can result in their inheritance becoming squandered and lost.

The fifth commandment does not say, “honor your father and mother if they are good, wise, and spiritual.” No, we need to honor them simply because they are our parents. We also need to be careful that we honor our fathers and mothers in Christ, even though they may have many

weaknesses or shortcomings! We want by God's grace to honor them with both our words and our actions. Then we can qualify for a good inheritance in the kingdom of God, and not only will we receive it, but we are promised that “our days will be long” upon our inheritance. We will keep the blessings and ministries given to us by our fathers and mothers in Christ, and will not soon lose our inheritance, as the Prodigal Son did.

At the end of the nineteenth chapter of Joshua we read, “When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun. According to the word of the Lord they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it” (Josh.19:49-50).

After Joshua completed giving the various provinces to the 12 tribes, he then requested his own inheritance. It was a place from among the mountains that his tribe, the Ephraimites, had received. The place that Joshua chose was Timnath Serah, which means “Portion of Abundance” or “Double Portion.” This name is a fitting testimony to Joshua's inheritance. Just as Elisha pressed in to receive a double portion, Joshua also was diligent and faithful to obtain all of God's best offered to him. Only Joshua and Caleb had qualified to enter the Promised Land from among the adult men who left Egypt. Joshua was then singled out to replace Moses as the next national leader. And while Joshua made several unwise mistakes during his ministry, he is one of the few major characters in the Bible who was never recorded to have committed any sin. Joshua undoubtedly qualified to receive an abundant reward, both in his natural geographical inheritance of Timnath Serah as well as for his spiritual reward in the eternal kingdom of God.

Chapter 20: Cities of Refuge Appointed

“The Lord also spoke to Joshua, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, saying: “Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the slayer who kills a person accidentally or unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them” ’” (Joshua 20:1-4).

This next chapter of the Book of Joshua tells us about the cities of refuge that the Lord appointed among the tribes of Israel. Six cities were chosen by God to be places of protection for anyone who had accidentally killed someone. If they fled to one of these cities, the fugitive could plead his case to the city elders and the local congregation. If he was found innocent of willful murder, the fugitive was given sanctuary there from revenge by the dead person's family.

This protection offered by the cities of refuge is given a spiritual interpretation in the Book of Hebrews. There we are told, “we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us” (Heb.6:18). The Psalmist further stated that the Lord is our refuge when he declared, “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust.’You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.... Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you” (Ps.91:1-2, 5-7, 8-10).

In Joshua 20:6 we are told that the fugitive must remain in the city of refuge until the death of Israel's high priest. Then he was legally free to return back to his own town and land. In the natural, this was a “cooling off” period of time for the angry relatives of the person who had

died. However, this points us towards a higher fulfillment. In the New Testament we have a greater High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Through His death we have been freed from all the results of sin and death, that we can be restored back to the plan and inheritance of God for our lives.

Chapter 21: Levitical Families Assigned Cities

“Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came near to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the children of Israel. And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, ‘The Lord commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock.’ So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the Lord, these cities.... All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty-eight cities with their common-lands” (Joshua 21:1-3, 41).

The last tribe of Israel to have their inheritance apportioned was the tribe of Levi. They were the only tribe that was not given a section or province of the Promised Land. In this respect it had been planned that they would not be given a natural inheritance. Joshua 13:33 had already declared this, saying, “But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.”

Instead of receiving a province, the clans and families of the Levites were each assigned different cities throughout the land where they were to dwell. Forty-eight cities in all were given to them from among the 12 provinces of the other tribes.

Why was this unique arrangement made for the tribe of Levi? One reason was because of the prophetic curse that we already mentioned had been given to the tribes of Simeon and Levi. Because of their sin of self-righteous murder, their father had declared to them, “Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel” (Gen.49:7). In Simeon's case, this curse was fulfilled when they were eventually assimilated by the larger tribe of Judah. The curse was fulfilled for the Levites when they were scattered in Israel to live among the other tribes.

However, there is also a much higher reason why the Levites were scattered in cities among the other tribes. While Levi had self-righteously used his sword to bring judgment upon his posterity, we can also study how the Levites at a later time used their swords for the righteousness of God. Through that event the Levites received a reward that turned their original curse into a blessing when they were scattered.

We read of this second time when the Levites wielded the sword of judgment in Exodus 32. This occurred when Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments and found that the Israelites had made and were worshipping a golden calf. We read, “Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies), then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, ‘Whoever is on the Lord's side; come to me.’ And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’” So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. Then Moses said, ‘Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother’” (Ex.32:25-29).

The former time when Levi had used his sword in self-righteous judgment, he was given a curse. Yet when the Levites used their swords this second time to execute the judgment of the

Lord, we find that they received a blessing. Moses prophesied this blessing over them at the end of his ministry, just as Jacob had formerly prophesied the curse over Levi at the end of his life.

This blessing is recorded in Deuteronomy 33:8-11 where we read, “And of Levi he said: ‘Let Your Thummin and Your Urim be with Your holy one... who says of his father and mother, “I have not seen them;” nor did he acknowledge his brothers, or know his own children; for they have observed Your word and kept Your covenant. They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, and Israel Your law. They shall put incense before You, and a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar. Bless his substance, Lord, and accept the work of his hands...’”

When Levi and Simeon had killed the men of their town, they had been partial in their judgment because of their sister. Yet later when the Levites executed the judgment of God, they were impartial towards their relatives. The Lord had sent them to walk through the camp swinging their swords to judge Israel's idolatry. They struck their swords at whomever they met, even if it was a relative, friend, or neighbor.

While this story may sound harsh, it has a very important lesson to teach us. One major difference between being self-righteous and executing the righteousness of God is whether we are partial towards our relatives and friends.

Because of this, the tribe of Levi received the priesthood from among the tribes of Israel. Moses prophesied that they would be given the Urim and the Thummin, would place the incense before the Lord, and would offer the sacrifices of God. They were also given the privilege of teaching the law of God to the other tribes. The Levites became the Old Testament ministers who were to lead the people of God in the paths of righteousness.

Who will God choose for this ministry in our days? Who will teach the law of God to the body of Christ? Not those who self-righteously swing the sword of the Word of God with partiality, but those who will be impartial even to their closest friends and relatives. Yes, Levi received a curse when his self-righteousness shamed his father. However, the Levites later received a blessing when they learned to honor God's righteousness above their fathers and mothers. It is very important that we honor our father and mother, but it is of utmost importance that we honor our Heavenly Father above all! Ministers who honor God by being impartial to relatives and friends in the church will in turn have their ministries honored by God (1 Sam.2:29-30).

Part of the blessing the Levites received from Moses was, “They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, and Israel Your law.” Because the Levites were chosen to become the teachers of the nation, Jacob's curse was turned to become a blessing. When the Levites were scattered throughout the land to live in their cities, it gave them the ability to be the “salt” and the “light” of the nation (Mt.5:13-15). Because they did not receive their own province as an inheritance, they were able to live among and teach the entire nation. Their spiritual ministry to God and the people became their inheritance instead of a natural inheritance of land. “But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance” (Josh.13:33).

While the tribe of Levi started off with a curse, we can see that they ended up with a blessing. This is what our Lord delights in doing. “God turned the curse into a blessing” (Deut.23:5, Neh.13:2). Our Lord Jesus taught us, “bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you” (Lk.6:28). We also read that, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:13-14).

The Lord Jesus is able to turn us around from the worst of family backgrounds, bondages, and curses if we will seek to fully honor and follow Him. The worst curse of all history- when the sinless Son of God was crucified- has been turned around by God to release the greatest of

blessings! Through the cross, we are offered forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ (Acts 26:18). We can gain an inheritance among the nations as we serve the Lord (Ps.2:8). We can obtain a position in the millennial kingdom of God when Christ returns to rule the earth (Mt.25:31-35). For eternity to come God offers us the promise, “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son” (Rev.21:7).

The Lord is able to work redemptively to turn every curse into a blessing when our hearts are fully fixed on Him. However, the opposite can also be true. If we forget the Lord, even the greatest of blessings can turn into a curse! This is what happened to the Prodigal Son in Luke chapter 15. He received a good inheritance from his father, yet the sweetest blessings turned into dust in his mouth as he backslid into sin.

The key, then, to whether we receive a blessed or cursed inheritance is the condition of our heart. If our heart is turned toward the Lord we will begin to gain a blessed inheritance. If we are still reaping curses from the earlier years of our lives- or even from former generations- these curses can begin to be turned into blessings if we wholeheartedly seek to do the will of God! As Romans 5:20 declares, “But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”

As Joshua chapter 21 records, the Levites were the last tribe to be settled in their location. After they were given their cities the Book of Joshua concludes the dividing of the land by saying, “So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass” (Josh.21:43-45).

In this conclusion we see that the Lord fulfilled His promises to His people. They possessed the land and entered into rest. This is the central theme of the book as the Lord fulfilled His promises to the descendants of Abraham. As a prophetic picture of our Lord Jesus and His completed work of redemption, Joshua completed his ministry and brought all of his generation into their inheritance and rest. “The Lord gave them rest all around....Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass” (Josh.21:44-45).

However, we have already considered how Joshua's generation entered into only a prophetic shadow of the full inheritance and rest that God is preparing for His people. As such, the Lord has moved along through history, seeking to lead His people into greater fulfillments of these truths. This is why the fourth chapter of Hebrews tells us that God later offered David's generation a further experience of entering His rest. The Book of Hebrews then goes on to say, “For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has also ceased from his works as God did from His” (Heb.4:8-10).

As the Lord leads His people onwards, there are higher and fuller expressions of His purposes that we are to progressively enter into. Joshua led his generation into obtaining their inheritance and rest, although it was not yet the full experience that future generations would further enter into. It is in this sense that the Book of Hebrews tells us that Joshua had not led God's people into His full rest. David further obtained this inheritance and rest as he prepared the way for the peaceful, prosperous, and glorious kingdom of Solomon. Yet even at this time, when the king in Zion ruled over his great empire, it was still only a prophetic shadow of the greater and more glorious kingdom of peace that was to come. When God's people later entered into the New Testament dispensation of grace, the Early Church obtained a further realization of these things. The inheritance they could possess was no longer one nation, they were able to begin establishing the kingdom of God in many nations as they preached the gospel. Moreover, the rest

they could enter into was that the Holy Spirit through them would accomplish God's plans. This releases the Christian from striving by their own fleshly works to accomplish the will of God.

In these last days, the Joshua Generation of the Church is being offered another unique opportunity to enter more fully into God's inheritance and rest. In city after city, through nation after nation, we will attack the principalities and powers of Satan. Through world missions and revival we will see God's kingdom established within every nation and tribe. Yet these great works will not be accomplished by our own heroic strivings. It is as the people of God "cross the Jordan" and experience the crucified life that His resurrection power will be released to bring the Church into its full inheritance and rest.

However, even the glorious events that the Joshua Generation enters into will only be preparation for the greater and fuller works of God. As we complete the Church Age, the millennial reign of Christ will be ushered into world history. When Christ then reigns from Jerusalem, His kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy will rule the entire world. Satan and his host will be imprisoned in the bottomless pit, and war will be abolished from the earth. Peace, prosperity, and the knowledge of God will fill the earth. (Some of the Scriptures about this are Revelation 19:11-20:6, Isaiah 24:21-23, Micah 4:1-4, Isaiah 11:6-10 & 65:19-25, and Habakkuk 2:14.)

What an inheritance and rest will be available to God's people during this world kingdom of 1000 years! Yet even this is only a further preparation for the more glorious eternal kingdom of God in the new heaven and earth. (This is described in the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation.)

As we consider the immense scope of God's plans for his people, what we must concentrate on is that we accomplish the task that God has given to us, just as Joshua accomplished his calling. According to how faithfully we complete God's plan for our own life we will qualify for a good position in the future Kingdom of God (Mt.25:21, Mt.19:27-29). Joshua led his generation into their inheritance and rest. Because of this he received as his inheritance Timnath Serah, or the "Double Portion." While it was undoubtedly a good piece of land that Joshua received, it can prophetically suggest that Joshua has also obtained a gracious position and reward in the eternal kingdom of God.

Chapter 22:1-9 Eastern 2 1/2 Tribes Sent to their Inheritance

"Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, and said to them: 'You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. You have not left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God. And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan'" (Joshua 22:1-4).

After the Canaanite armies had been subdued and the Israelites had received their allotments, Joshua sent the eastern two and one-half tribes back to their land on the other side of the Jordan. Now what remained was for the Israelites to settle down, become fruitful, and express the kingdom of God through their lives and nation.

Chapter 6

KEEPING THE INHERITANCE

(Joshua Chapters 22:10-24)

In this final section we see a change of focus to the Book of Joshua. The Israelites had conquered and settled the land. Now their attention began to shift towards how they could keep their inheritance by passing it down through the future generations.

The Israelites were aware that it took almost 500 years to possess the land from when it had first been promised to Abraham. Many generations worked towards obtaining the Promised Land, and they recognized that it should be very carefully preserved for the future generations. They knew that the enduring reward of what they accomplished would be either confirmed or dissipated by what the future generations did with their inheritance. This is the concern that the final part of the book of Joshua faces.

Chapter 22:10-34 The Altar of Witness

“And when they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan; a great, impressive altar. Now the children of Israel heard someone say, ‘Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan; on the children of Israel’s side.’ And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them” (Joshua 22:10-12).

After Joshua dismissed the soldiers of the tribes that chose to live on the east of the Jordan, they returned to their land and immediately built a large altar. This made the other tribes very angry. They knew it would be a great sin to start a new form of worship other than what the Lord had commanded through Moses. Accordingly, the soldiers from tribes on the west side of the Jordan prepared for war. They gathered together at Shiloh, the place where the Tabernacle of Moses and the true altar of God were located.

Before going out to fight their brethren, they sent a delegation of leaders across the Jordan to reprove the erring tribes. At this meeting the two and one-half eastern tribes explained that they had not built the altar as a place of sacrifice, but as a witness. It was to remind the future generations on both sides of the Jordan that the eastern tribes were to also serve the Lord and have a part in the worship at Moses’ tabernacle. The eastern tribes told the western delegation, “But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, ‘In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, “What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the Lord.” So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the Lord.’ Therefore we said, ‘Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the Lord’ ” (Josh.22:24-27).

This explanation pleased the delegation from the western tribes. They saw that the altar was not built out of rebellion, but as a testimony for the future generations to remember and serve the

Lord. “So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt. The children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar, Witness, ‘For it is a witness between us that the Lord is God’ ” (Josh.22:33-34).

This altar of witness was built to remind the future generations that they should serve the Lord. It is also a good example for us that we need to impress on our descendants the importance of continuing to wholeheartedly follow the Lord.

Repeatedly throughout history there are certain generations who pay a high price to follow the Lord. Through persecution, strife, or war, they obtain a new freedom to serve the Lord that their children inherit. However, the next generations may enjoy the peace and prosperity that their forefathers suffered to obtain, while forgetting the cost, and may settle down to a lukewarm or backslidden spiritual condition. Believers often begin to fight each other instead of standing united to oppose the works of the Devil. This is what the eastern tribes were seeking to counteract by constructing this altar of witness.

We need to also be diligent to impart to our natural and spiritual children both a clear vision and a wholehearted dedication to serve the Lord. Just as these tribes built an altar for their descendants, we should seek to build a “family altar” in our households through regular family activities such as prayer, worship, and Bible study. It is not enough for us to send our children to Sunday school every week, and think that we have done our religious duty to train them up in the ways of the Lord. The average Sunday school session may have a 10 to 15 minute Bible study every week. Then many Christian children spend 20 or 30 hours each week watching worldly TV programs or reading worldly literature! If only 1% of their weekly input is godly and scriptural, what do you think the outcome will be of the Biblical principle that they will grow up to follow what they have been taught? We don't want our children to grow up to lead lives that are 99% worldly and unscriptural! No, we must be diligent to build an “altar” in their minds and hearts, that they were born to serve the Lord.

Parents should be diligent to train their children to begin each day with personal devotions, reading a few chapters of the Bible and praying. Younger children can be taught daily out of a picture Bible. Evenings when the family can be gathered together can include a time of family devotions. Christian videos and cassette tapes can be interesting and edifying. Children can be tucked into bed with a goodnight prayer and perhaps a Bible story. These and many other methods can be used to help plant a solid spiritual foundation within the lives of our children.

A man or woman with spiritual vision will desire to influence more than just their own children, but also many succeeding generations. We are told in Proverbs 13:22, “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children.” The Apostle Paul was looking ahead to three generations of spiritual children when he wrote in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” We even have the testimony in the Scriptures of men who have brought God's blessing to all their future generations because they trained their descendants to follow after righteousness (Gen.18:18-19, Jer.35:18-19). May we all seek for the promise of Isaiah 59:21 upon our natural and spiritual descendants, which says, “‘As for Me,’ says the Lord, ‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants,’ says the Lord, ‘from this time and forevermore.’”

Chapter 23: Joshua Reminds Israel's Leaders

The last two chapters of the Book of Joshua occur about 23 years after the Promised land had been conquered and occupied. These intermediate years are not written about in the book. They were quiet years of peace and prosperity for the Israelites where they were busy with their families, farms, and cities. The Lord had given them rest in the land that flowed with milk and honey. God had given them large and beautiful cities they did not build, houses full of all good things which they did not fill, and vineyards and olive trees which they did not plant. However, when the Lord had earlier told them of this coming prosperity, He followed these promises with the warning, “Then beware, lest you forget the Lord” in Deuteronomy 6:12.

In the midst of these years of peace and prosperity the nation was slowly changing. The valiant soldiers of Joshua's army were becoming elderly, gentle grandfathers. The mighty acts that the Lord had done under Moses and Joshua's leadership were becoming old stories that belonged to another time and generation. The nation's memory of the evil Canaanite armies was being replaced by their present acquaintance with the subdued Canaanites still in the land, who desired peace and trade. Joshua observed all of this as he grew old.

When Joshua had become an elderly man and knew he would soon die, he desired to leave one last godly legacy and warning for his people. First he called together the leaders of the nation and spoke to them the message recorded in chapter 23. After this he called all the people of the nation together to give them his last message, as recorded at the end of the Book of Joshua in chapter 24.

As he began his message to the leaders of Israel, we read: “Now it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: ‘I am old, advanced in age. You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is He who has fought for you. See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. And the Lord your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the Lord your God promised you.... For the Lord has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you’ ” (Joshua 23:1-5,9-10).

Joshua begins by reminding the elders about the faithfulness of God. The Lord had fought for Israel and no one had been able to stand against them. The Lord had driven out great nations from before them, and as they continued to trust the Lord He would complete the job.

As Joshua's message continued on, he spoke more and more about the responsibilities that the Israelites needed to continue to fulfill. We read, “Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them.... Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations; these that remain among you; and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you” (Josh.23:6-7,12-13).

In his complete message, Joshua mentioned the nations of Canaan seven times. He repeatedly referred to them because Joshua knew that they were the one great remaining danger to the Israelites. They had been militarily defeated, but not removed. Compromise and intermarriage with them would bring idolatry and ruin to the nation. Joshua could see the seeds of destruction which in future centuries would grow to split the nation and eventually send them away to captivity. To counteract or at least delay this decline, Joshua made his final appeal to the nation's leaders that they should continue to fully follow the Lord.

This last message to the leaders of Israel also reminds us of the Apostle Paul's last message to the leaders of the Ephesian church. While exhorting them to continue to fully follow the Lord, Paul warned them of the judgments that would come. He warned that savage wolves and erring teachers would ravage the church (Acts 20:29-30). Joshua and Paul were both prophets and good spiritual fathers who did all they could to admonish and help God's people.

Chapter 24: Joshua's Last Sermon, the Covenant Renewed, Burials of Three Leaders

In chapter 24 Joshua then called all the people together to speak to them before his death. From among the first 13 verses we read, “And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac....Also I sent Moses and Aaron....Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt....And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they fought with you. But I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land, and I destroyed them from before you....Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you; also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand....I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.”’”

During all of this part of the message, Joshua was prophesying the word of the Lord to the nation. At the beginning of the book he had been a young and inexperienced new leader, but by the end of his life he had grown to be a strong and mature prophet of the Lord. The word of the Lord rang out, “I took....I gave....I sent....I destroyed....I delivered.” God had watched out over His people and had planted them in the Promised Land. The Lord had overwhelmingly proven His love and His ability to care for the children of Abraham.

At the end of this prophecy, Joshua added his personal exhortation as the punch line of his last sermon. “Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh.24:14-15).

The burden of Joshua's last words was that he wanted them and their future generations to continue to follow the Lord and dwell in the land. His words have imparted strength down through the generations, as multitudes have taken up Joshua's testimony and declared, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” We see the immediate fruit of Joshua's influence from Joshua 24:31, which says: “Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.”

The heart of a true father desires to train his children to properly use the inheritance that he has prepared for them. We need to desire to give a lasting spiritual inheritance to both our natural and spiritual children. King David also had this burden when he was old. He wrote in Psalm 71:18, “Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.”

To help seal their fresh dedication to the Lord, Joshua and all the people made a covenant together. We read, “And the people said to Joshua, ‘The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!’ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.’ So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance” (Josh.24:24-28).

Joshua wrote down the covenant that was made. This kept their commitment very clearly recorded- so clear, that we are studying it nearly 3500 years later! Joshua also raised up a stone as a memorial for all the people to see and remember. It was placed under a large tree next to the sanctuary, a place where countless Israelites would sit and rest whenever they visited the Tabernacle of Moses. By these means many future generations were reminded of their covenant with Joshua that they would serve the Lord.

The last accounts that complete the Book of Joshua concern the burials of three great Israelite leaders. We first read, “Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash” (Josh.24:29-30). Joshua died at a ripe old age, 30 years after he and all Israel had entered the land. After seven years of conquest, Joshua had settled down at Timnath Serah. There he enjoyed his inheritance and rest for about 23 years. The fact that he was buried on his inheritance further indicates that he will keep his full reward and position in the resurrection. Ecclesiastes 11:3 tells us, “In the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.” This verse suggests that our eternal position is established by our condition at the time of death. The inheritance that Joshua earned and kept by his faithful service to God is a “Double Portion” reward according to the name of Timnath Serah, where he was buried.

The next burial recorded at the end of the Book of Joshua was the burial of Joseph. While Joseph had died over 400 years before this, he had requested that his embalmed body be finally buried in the Promised Land when the Lord brought them into their inheritance (Gen.50:24-26). Joseph's dying request became a beacon of hope to the Israelites throughout their long difficult years in Egypt; and though he was dead, his faith continued to shine. His final burial in the Promised Land sealed his powerful testimony of God's faithfulness to His trusting servant.

The final burial recorded in the last verse of the Book of Joshua was the funeral of Eleazar. He had been the high priest of Israel since the time when his father, Aaron, had died. Eleazar had helped Joshua to lead the Israelites through the conquest and the apportioning of the land.

These burials were the final testimony and seal of the work that God had accomplished through Joshua and his generation. This is the last godly testimony that a life lived for God can offer. It can impart a future hope for those who will follow behind, just as Stephen's death helped prepare Saul of Tarsus to become the Apostle Paul.

I can remember how a funeral helped establish my walk with God when I was a new Christian. Although I had been a rock musician, hippie, and rebel for many years, I started attending a church when I was almost 20 years old. One of the ministers was a godly man who I

could see had a deep love for the congregation. Mr. Beale was quite elderly and rarely spoke in the services because he had undergone several heart operations and was in constant pain. Yet service after service I could see how he looked beyond his pain, to reach out and love the people of the church.

After I had been attending the church for several months, I was born again. Shortly after that, this elderly minister died. I was quite surprised to hear that he had asked if I would be one of the pallbearers for his funeral. He had probably made this request even before I had become born again, although I was regularly attending the church and was hungry to know God.

What was most surprising about this request was evident when you compared all the young men who had been asked to be his pallbearers. All the others were the finest young men of this large church. They were clean-cut, wore suits and ties to the services, and were called to the ministry. On the other hand, I looked very out of place among this group. My hair was shoulder length, I wore blue jeans with big holes to all the services, and looked like anything but a promising fine young servant of God!

I knew that my being one of the men who would carry the funeral casket would be embarrassing for some of the relatives. I had not worn a suit or a tie for many years, and did not even own one! My hippie clothes and ways would be very out of place at this solemn event. However, I knew that Mr. Beale had specifically chosen me. His funeral was his last Christian testimony, and my carrying his casket was to indicate that I would be one of the men who would carry on the ministry that he had left behind. This last token of love and trust that Mr. Beale showed to me began to so break my heart- and still breaks it now as I am writing 26 years later- that the call of God gripped me in a life transforming way. The initial result was that I cut my hair and borrowed a suit and tie for the funeral. I gained a newfound desire and hope that I could become a fine young minister. That hope carried me on to Bible school and then out into the ministry. And many years later now, I sometimes consider what may be my own last testimony if I should die before the Lord's return. I hope it may show the same love and wisdom that Mr. Beale displayed when he chose to have my life represent part of the inheritance of his ministry.

With the burials of Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar we come to the end of the Book of Joshua. Not just with their last words, but even with their burials we see that these men of God sealed their testimony and their eternal inheritance. They now await the first resurrection with the same hope that Daniel was told, "...for you shall rest and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days" (Dan.12:13).

SUMMARY

We have seen that the history recorded in the Book of Joshua shows us important spiritual truths for our Christian life and ministry. Just as Joshua and the Israelites achieved the purposes of God for their generation, so can we. How they entered, conquered, divided, and kept the Promised Land teaches us how we can obtain our own inheritance in Christ. We can trust in the faithfulness and power of God. He can make us all to become Joshuas who will "hit the mark" for our lives and ministries.

We have also seen how we are part of the Joshua Generation of the Church Age. As such, the message of the Book of Joshua has a special importance for us. There will be a great "crossing the Jordan" for the Church in these last days. Through experiencing the crucified life and gaining a circumcised heart we will be prepared for the conquest. The gates of hell will not prevail against the Joshua Generation. Great revivals and world evangelism will help prepare the victorious, glorious Church that Christ will return for.

While we should concentrate on fulfilling God's call upon our own life and generation, we also need to see the continuing plans of God. We are called to not only obtain an inheritance in Christ during our present lifetime, but also for the ages to come. How we live now will determine our future position and rewards in the kingdom of God throughout eternity.

Has God opened your spiritual vision to see more of the “promised land” that is offered to you? Has the Book of Joshua become a road map or a battle plan that can help lead you on into all of God's best? By the grace of God, let us each fight the good fight of faith and obtain our full inheritance in Christ.