

***Joshua:
Victory Through Faith***

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JOSHUA

**THE
CHRISTADELPHIAN
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A VERSE-BY-VERSE EXPOSITION
OF THE SCRIPTURES

by

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JOSHUA:

**VICTORY
THROUGH
FAITH**

THE LESSON OF THE BOOK

Joshua's Divinely appointed mission was not to completely annihilate the Canaanites, but to so weaken them as to make it possible for the Israelites to successfully overcome them. He did this effectively, but the Israelites failed to capitalise upon his success. Instead of following his example and exhortation to engage in warfare on their own account, and completely destroy the inhabitants of the land, they came to terms with them because it was materially profitable for them to do so (see Jud. 1:27-36), and so the fruits of victory were lost by succeeding generations. In successfully completing his labours, Joshua provided an outstanding type of the Lord. Christ's victory over sin made it possible for every individual saint to personally succeed (Heb. 2:13-15), but sadly, the lessons of the Books of Joshua and Judges have been repeated in the history of the Ecclesia. Succeeding generations have come to terms with the antitypical "Canaanites", and soon, themselves, have again been taken into captivity to the law of sin and death. Therefore, whilst a mere historian, considering the work of Joshua, may well imagine that he failed to thoroughly complete his conquests, a Biblical historian will realise that it was not intended for him to do so. Biblical history is not limited to recording past events, but also foreshadowing those to come. Yahweh did not intend Joshua to do everything for the people of Israel any more than Christ will do everything for his followers if they fail to give themselves to the fight of faith as instructed in the Word (2 Cor. 10:3-6; 1 Tim. 6:11-12; 2 Tim. 2:3-4). If they fail to carry out the commands as laid down in the Word, they, like Israel of old, will fail to enjoy the fruits of the Lord's victory over sin and death. The people had to be given the opportunity to personally demonstrate their undivided fidelity to God, and therefore the work of Joshua had to fall short of the absolute destruction of the Canaanites, even as, in Christ, sin in the flesh remains to be personally overcome. And so, when Joshua's work was completed as required by Yahweh, he was removed from the scene, as was also his greater antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Meanwhile his followers must engage vigorously in the fight of faith to which they have been called (Matt. 11:12). The call of the Gospel is a call to heroes. The obtaining of the Kingdom demands much in the way of determination, courage and faith; and only those possessed of the zeal and eagerness to grasp hold of it, and successfully combat the forces that would destroy their hope of obtaining it can expect to celebrate the victory that awaits them in the Age to come.

TYPICAL FORESHADOWING OF THE FIGHT OF FAITH

There is a remarkable parallel between the Book of Joshua and the Epistle to the Ephesians. The former introduces Israel to a new phase of their national existence in the Land of Promise. Typically, this represented the bringing in of a heavenly people into their inheritance, in preparation for the establishment of the Kingdom in its glory under David and Solomon. The death of Moses and the leadership invested in Joshua typed the new relationship of the believer in Christ who has become dead to the law and its curse, and alive to the newness of life in his Saviour.

The nation was introduced to a higher status in the purpose of God, as baptism into Christ introduces the believers into a higher status in the Lord. That higher status is described in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. As we have pointed out elsewhere (see *Guide Book to the New Testament* on Ephesians — pp. 168-171) there are powerful reasons to conclude that the Epistle was not written directly to the Ephesian Ecclesia but was a general, circular epistle for all Ecclesias, setting out the ideal in Christ. Much that is in *Ephesians* is repeated in *Colossians* and *Philippians* but in a different manner. In those Epistles the principles set out in *Ephesians* are found under test: they are imperfectly manifested by the members of those Ecclesias. The *Epistle to the Ephesians*, therefore, sets out the ideal for Ecclesias in every age; it is a timeless epistle in the present dispensation.

The Epistle describes the new relationship of baptised believers; and in stages similar to Joshua's conquest of the Land. Believers are described as being "in the heavenlies" in Christ Jesus, a term that defines the sphere of a higher life in Christ. Those who have embraced the Truth are described as "risen with Christ" (Col. 3:1). They are elevated from the merely natural to a spiritual state in the Lord. They occupy positions of privilege in him. And because the world hated Christ and continues to hate the truth, its adherents are described as being in conflict with the heavenlies in the Gentile realm. Unlike warfare under Joshua, this is a conflict of doctrine and standards, though ultimately, at the Lord's coming it will become physical. Meantime there is a fight of faith to be engaged in by all true believers. They are called upon to vigorously set forth the truth against the machinations and teaching of the rulers of the present age (Eph. 3:9-11). So Paul wrote: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ch. 6:12). The term "high places" is the same as *heavenlies* elsewhere in the Epistle. So the Epistle depicts the form of warfare engaged in by those in Christ (in Joshua or Jesus) against the world without. The former are in *the heavenlies* in Christ, and battle against those in places of authority in *the heavenlies* of the

Gentiles. To successfully wage that warfare, they need the equipment described in Eph. 6:13-18.

Five times does Paul make reference to *the heavenlies* in his Epistle: 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12. And these answer to five stages in the work of Joshua as he laboured to establish the nation in the land at the expense of *the heavenlies* or rulership then in possession of it.

A Five-fold Progression.

The first place (Eph. 1:3-4) reveals how acceptance of the Gospel in Christ brings one into a relationship to the “spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ”. It answers to the work of Joshua in leading the people across the Jordan to their new status in the land.

The second place (Eph. 1:18-22) epitomises the victory of Christ over death and his elevation to the right Hand of Power. This answers to the work of Joshua who conquered the Canaanites, making it possible for Israel to obtain their inheritance by the personal exercise of faith in action. Joshua was told: “Thou shalt cause them to inherit the land” (Deut. 31:7). The victory of Christ over sin and death ensured the successful conquest of all those in him if they follow his lead.

The third place (Eph. 2:5-8) reveals that the Grace brought to light by Christ’s victory has not only elevated those exercised by it but guarantees their future inheritance if faith continues to motivate them. The fulfilment in Joshua is found in his exhortation to go in and “possess the land which Yahweh Elohim of your fathers hath given you” (Josh. 18:3). Paul wrote: “Even when we were dead (through the law — compare the death of Moses) in sins, (He) hath quickened us (by baptism) together with Christ; by grace ye are saved; and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in *the heavenlies* in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”. All this was dramatised by the early work of Joshua in preparing the people.

The Fourth place (Eph. 3:8-10) calls upon those who are in the heavenlies in Christ to witness against those Gentiles in occupation of the heavenlies of the world by setting before them the “unsearchable riches of Christ” so as “to make all men see” what is the fellowship of the secret in him. This illustrates the fourth principle manifested in the work of Joshua. Almost the same expression is used: “All the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Yahweh; and they shall be afraid of thee” (Deut. 28:10). The work of Joshua was to the end that “all the peoples of the earth might know the hand of Yahweh, that it is mighty” (Josh. 4:24).

The Fifth and final use of the term by Paul shows the heavenlies as a present scene of conflict: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies” (Gr — Eph. 6:12). Paul concludes by urging his readers to “therefore

take unto you the whole armour of God” that they might be successful in the war. Joshua did the same, because after he had battled and won, and made it possible for every tribe and family to attain unto their individual inheritance, he concluded, by urging them to fight. “How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which Yahweh God of your fathers hath given you?” (Josh. 18:3), he asked.

The record in Joshua, therefore, has this in common with the Epistle to the Ephesians:

1. Each sets before the Israel of God (the one taken out of Egypt; the other taken out of the Gentiles) the prospects of a predestined inheritance reserved for a chosen people (Deut. 6:23; Eph. 1:3-5).

2. Each was opened up by a Divinely appointed Leader (Josh. 1:1-9; Eph. 1:20-23).

3. Each was the result of a gift of Divine grace to the people received through faith. In the case of Joshua he was elevated after the death of Moses (foreshadowing the death of the Law) and led them into the Land through Divine grace; in the case of the Lord’s followers they are elevated into the heavenlies with Christ through them becoming related to death and a quickening to life in their new Leader (Joshua 1:1-3; Eph. 2:5-6).

4. Those with Joshua witnessed against the Gentile heavenlies by proclaiming the wisdom of God, and His eternal purpose designed from the beginning, as Rahab testified (Josh. 2:9-11). Paul exhorted: “in Christ we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” to do likewise (see Eph. 3:10-12).

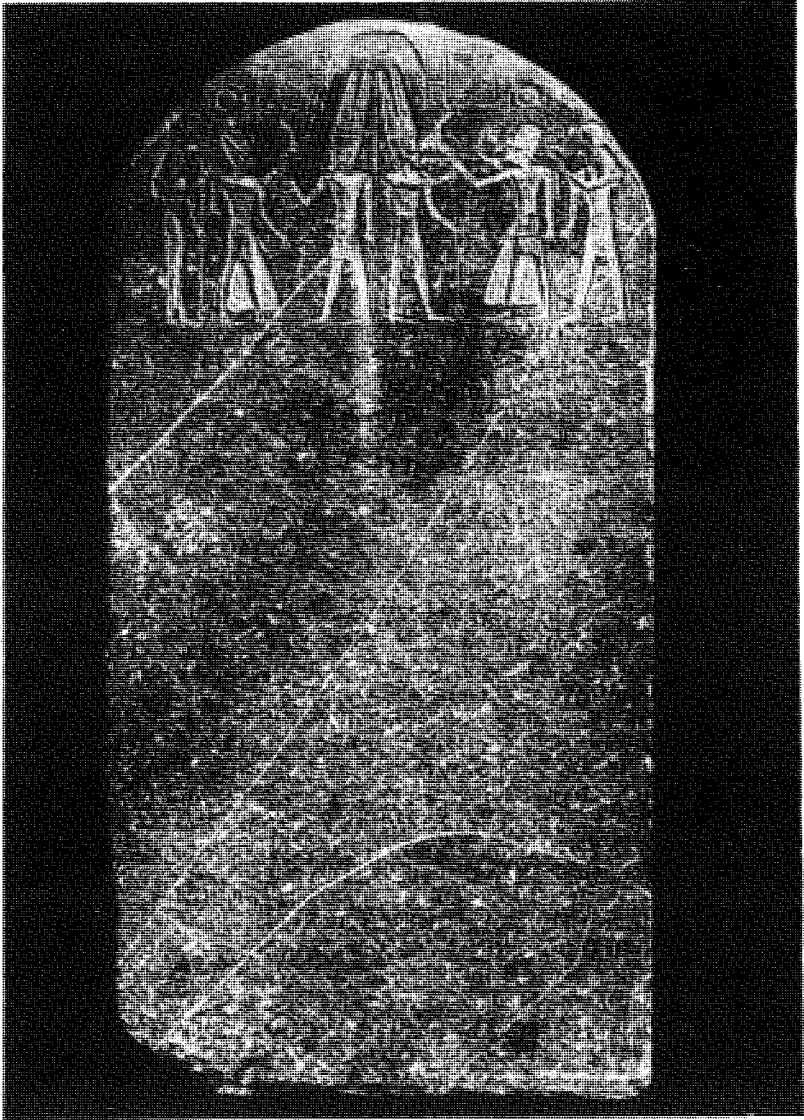
5. Both Joshua and Jesus introduced their followers to a scene of conflict in which faith has already triumphed and will do so again (Josh. 12:1-24; 18:3; Eph. 6:10-18). In view of this remarkable parallel between the *Book of Joshua* and the *Epistle to the Ephesians* it is no wonder that the exhortations of both books are similar:

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh” (Josh. 24:15).

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Eph. 6:13).

Therefore, in the book before us, hidden in the records of conquest and war, there are important spiritual lessons that Paul takes hold of in his vital *Epistle to the Ephesians*. The occupation of the land under Joshua foreshadowed and typed the occupation of the inheritance in the Land with the greater than Joshua in the Age to come.

A further point, important to recognise as a contrast between type and antitype, is that the land dimensions occupied by the Israelites under Joshua were comparatively small, and therefore comprised but a token of that set before Israel in the future. They are to receive “a goodly land and large” (Exod. 3:8), extending from the Euphrates to the Nile (Gen. 15:18; Exod. 23:31; Josh. 1:4). They never received all that extent of territory then: they will do so in the future.



This stele of Pharaoh Merneptah, contained in the Cairo Museum, is the only reference to Israel found on the ancient Egyptian monuments. Therein he states that “*Israel is desolated, her seed is not*”. It is thought that perhaps he proclaimed this to explain what had happened to the flower of his army at the Red Sea. Though Egypt had suffered loss of life, Israel had been completely destroyed. So he claimed a victory, though he had suffered a disastrous defeat. But forty years later, the next generation of Israelites waited on the east of the Jordan to enter its inheritance.

Introduction

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

VICTORY THROUGH FAITH

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

In some way, every book of the Bible centres attention upon the person and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen, from our consideration of the five books of Moses, that he is the centre and fulfilment of all that is there laid down and foreshadowed. The commandments of the Law, and the righteousness of Yahweh thereby displayed, are manifested in their perfection in him; and in his offering and future reign, the festivals and sacrifices reach their full significance.

We have discerned how that the experiences of the patriarchs and their households, wandering as strangers and pilgrims in the land promised them, or developing in numbers in the rich sophistication of Egypt, typify the state of saints in the world during the ages. The calling of Israel out of Egypt; the baptism of the people in the Red Sea; the binding of them to God through the Covenant of Law at Sinai; the failure of the first generation; the trials and frustrations of the wilderness wanderings, typify the experiences of saints as they wearily tread the wilderness of life with eyes centred upon the future.

The last dramatic and typical incident in this first section of Holy Writ is the death of Moses, and his burial in the lonely valley of Beth-peor. As representing the Law, he could not bring the people into their inheritance, for the Law was “weak through the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). Grace was needed to do so. Moses was reminded of this through his own failure; and he died and was buried in the Valley which is noted in Scripture as the site of the most disastrous failure on the part of the people. In very sight of the land they committed fornication with the women of Moab, and some twenty-four thousand died in a Divine judgment (Num. 25:9). On the basis of that and other incidents, Paul warned the Ecclesia: “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

The death of Moses, the greatest man of his generation (Deut. 34:10-12), typed the need for the curse of the Law to be removed before the people could enter upon a new relationship with Yahweh. Not that there was any defect in the Law of God; but because human infirmity and sin are so powerful as to make complete obedience im-

possible. Paul was conscious of a "law of sin and death" in his members that inexorably held him in captivity (Rom. 7:23; 8:2). To conquer this, and rise victorious over the frustrations of failure were beyond him. "O wretched man that I am!" he exclaimed, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (RV). The answer came: "through Jesus Christ our Lord". And for this release he thanked God. In Christ, the Law figuratively died. Those in him no longer remained bound by its curse. They became as a widow released from the domination of her husband through death (Rom. 7:1-2). In Christ, grace covers over defects; mercy in forgiveness triumphs over sin, and a believer rises from the waters of baptism, a new man in Christ.

In type this was dramatised to Israel as the nation waited on the eastern side of the Jordan to enter the land. With the death of Moses, they became one in Joshua or Jesus. In crossing the Jordan they would be figuratively baptised into him, and as part of his corporate body would engage upon the conquest of the Land of Promise.

The Key Message Of The Book

Joshua's name signifies *Yahweh will save*. He was the Son of Nun, which name is said to mean *fish* or *prolific*, or by some as *perpetuity*. The significance of this in regard to the antitypical Joshua will be apparent at the Judgment Seat when it will be seen that through one individual (the second Adam, the true Joshua or Jesus), the company of immortals saved is as "a great multitude, which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Rev. 7:9).

Joshua's name is given as *Jesus* in Heb. 4:8. His ministry and labours are there shown to be typical of those of the Lord, though his accomplishments fell far short of those of Christ. This is necessary in a type as a contrast to the antitype. Nevertheless, what Joshua did for the nation, the Lord Jesus did for those "in him". Joshua's victories over the powerful Canaanites made it possible for every Israelite through personal faith and courage to obtain his individual inheritance. Joshua did not do this for them; but he did conquer and so weaken the inhabitants of the land sufficiently for each tribe and every individual to obtain that which Yahweh marked out for it and for him. However, personal effort had to be exerted by each one to obtain it. So Joshua exhorted certain of the tribes that lacked the initiative or energy to do so: "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which Yahweh God of your fathers hath given you?" (Josh. 18:3).

This, in type, epitomises the work of the Lord in his sacrificial death and resurrection. Paul taught:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).

Christ's victory weakened the hold of the enemy over his followers. By the provision made for the forgiveness of sins and his resurrection to life eternal, he made it possible for every saint to conquer the flesh and enter into his inheritance. But, as in the days of Joshua, individual

effort, initiative and faith are required to succeed. There must be no slackness in personally conquering the enemy, and so "laying hold" of the promised inheritance (1 Tim. 6:12). In this fight of faith, the help of our "leader and commander" (Isa. 55:4) is always available. But he will not perform a miracle to bring about that which Yahweh has equipped every believer to accomplish. He has recruited his followers as "good soldiers" (2 Tim. 2:3), and this demands of them that they "endure hardness", and seek to "please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier". And though the "weapons of our warfare are not carnal", they are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Cor. 10:4) — the most difficult strong hold being the flesh where the "motions of sins" are entrenched. By the power of the Word, it is possible to so motivate the mind of believers as to enable them to control their members so that instead of their members being "weapons of unrighteousness" they become "weapons of righteousness" to the glory of God (Rom. 6:13 mg.). So Paul exhorts Christ's followers to "put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:12-18).

The victory over sin's flesh (personified by the Canaanites), and the obtaining of the promised inheritance, is the key message of the Book of Joshua. The means of victory are clearly typed in the incidents recorded. First there is *Preparation*. The nation is instructed in what is required of it. Next there is *Application*. It is baptised by passing through the Jordan; the covenant rite of circumcision is again revived; and the Feast of Passover is celebrated once more. Next the people are taught the need of *Faith*; for it was "by faith" that Rahab was saved, and the walls of Jericho fell down (Heb. 11:30).

That lesson learned, the next one soon follows. Failure at Ai taught that *Obedience* in addition to faith is required in order to please Yahweh. So Achan died, and the nation prepares for further victories. But before they are enjoyed the people learn the need for constant *Communion* with Yahweh. The nation is assailed by a new and subtle temptation. Its leaders are approached by Gibeonites pleading for a pact of agreement. Disguised so as to appear to have come from a far distant land, they mouth "good words and fair speeches to deceive" (Rom. 16:17-19), playing upon the pride of the Israelites, and using the Name of their God.

Joshua and the leaders were taken in! Why? Because they "asked not counsel at the mouth of Yahweh" (Josh. 9:14). That was, and is, the fifth lesson to be learned. Constant recourse must be had to the Word of Yahweh. Preparation, faith, obedience must be supplemented by hearkening to the counsel of Yahweh, and by study and meditation of the Word. That is a constant necessity. But even that did not complete the education of the Israelites. Personal *Courage* and *Determination* were needed to effectively take hold of the inheritance. Slackness in that regard would spell failure to the whole venture. The fight was difficult and long. It had to be continued with unremitting hostility to the Canaanites, for otherwise they would become "pricks in the eyes and thorns in the sides" of the Israelites. At that point, with the exhortation of Joshua ringing in the ears of the Israelites, the *Book*

of *Joshua* concludes. The means whereby Victory through Faith may be secured is progressively revealed in this dramatic and most interesting Book.

Historically the *Book of Joshua* is a record of graphic movement, of campaigns, conquests and subjugation. It is divisible into three parts:

1. Entering the Land — Chapters 1-5.
2. Conquering the Land — Chapters 6-12.
3. Occupying the Land — Chapters 13-24.

In the successful occupation of the land there was revealed Victory through Faith. The previous generation, Paul declares, "could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19). The word "unbelief" does not mean lack of knowledge, but *lack of faith*. That generation perished in the wilderness because it lacked the faith to conquer. That lack of faith is recorded in Numbers 14. "Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" the people asked (v. 3). This was in response to the faithless report of ten of the spies who instilled fear in the hearts of the people, by their description of the difficulties facing them in the conquest of the land. Yahweh punished their lack of faith by condemning them to wander in the wilderness until "your carcasses shall fall . . . and ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun" (vv. 29-30). The sight of the eyes destroyed the faith of the Israelites. "We saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which came of the giants; and we were in *our own sight* as grasshoppers, and so we were in *their sight*" (Num. 13:33).

Seeking God's Rest

But even the generation that entered the land failed to discover the complete rest. When the people crossed over the Jordan, the new generation was baptised, this time into Joshua. But even so, they did not attain unto the final rest, as Paul makes abundantly clear in Hebrews 4:8-11. He wrote that "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (v. 9), and he exhorts those "in Christ", that is, in the true Joshua of which the historic figure was but a type, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (v. 11).

The *Book of Joshua*, therefore, must be studied both as history and typography. The events are true; they happened, and they present their lessons of faith. But also they type the experiences of believers in their antitypical Canaan. That antitypical Canaan represents the world against which believers strive today in their preaching and their walk (see 2 Cor. 10:3-6; Eph. 3:10-11; 6:11-12). In Christ they find rest and peace (John 14:27; Phil. 4:6-7; Heb. 4:10-11). In the benefits received they are able to "rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. 4:4); acknowledging the "riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18), in their new relationship in the "heavenly places" in him (Eph. 1:3). The aridness of the wilderness wanderings, the tired hands and blistering feet find refreshment and relief in Christ. And the ultimate inheritance is there for them to grasp (1 Tim. 6:12).

But there are dangers. There are enemies to overcome; and those enemies can hold them in captivity to the flesh. The original inhabitants of the land are still there, sin in the flesh is still in evidence, and must be overthrown if they are to succeed in gaining the Kingdom. Those Canaanites (typically the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life) are powerful, and unless challenged and overcome in faith will remain as "snares and traps, scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes, until they perish" (Josh. 23:13). The Canaanites were not so powerful that they could not be destroyed; but they were beyond the ability of flesh itself to destroy. Israel needed help to conquer, and that help was promised: "Yahweh thy God shall . . . cast out many nations before thee . . . seven nations greater and mightier than thou" (Deut. 7:1). He promised supernatural help to that end: "five of them would chase a hundred, and none of their enemies would be able to stand before them" if Israel remained faithful.

Char- In the type, therefore, the Canaanites represent the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" which is the basis of "all that is in the world" in which believers live (1 John 2:16). The "motions of sin" as Paul describes them (Rom. 7:5), constitute cogent reasons why any governed by the flesh please themselves. But true pleasure is found in denying the flesh, not in gratifying it. The philosophy of the world which is governed by its lusts is that inhibitions are harmful; hence flesh-urges should be satisfied; and permissiveness is exploited. So reason modern Canaanites, and live accordingly. However, such will find no place in the "house of Yahweh of hosts" (Zech. 14:21).

A
People
also Joshua conquered the Canaanites, as Christ conquered the devil, or the lusts of the flesh. And as Joshua's wars weakened the enemy to the extent that every Israelite could complete the conquest and enter his inheritance, so Christ has guaranteed success to those who follow him in the warfare he so successfully waged (Josh. 24:14-15; Heb. 2:14-15). The Israelites in the land saw the benefits of Joshua's success: "I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat" (Josh. 24:13). Benefits and blessings were granted the Israelites as gifts from on high (James 1:17). Is not that the same with those "in Christ"? Are there not great benefits that they experience even now, to say nothing of the future (see Luke 18:30; 1 Tim. 4:8)? Particularly when the eye of faith is centred upon the "riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:17-18). Are not those in Christ relieved of many of the pressures and evils experienced by the world today? (see Luke 21:28). Have they not access to God in prayer? Do they not enjoy a peace "that passeth the understanding of man"?

They do if they continue to battle in faith against the Canaanites: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But if they lack the courage to do so: if their faith wanes, and they are slack to engage the enemy (Josh. 18:3); they will repeat the history of the past. They will come to terms with the enemy, and compromise the commandments of the Lord. That is the record of the *Book of Judges*, so

that the history of Israel, like that of the Ecclesia, is one of waxing and waning righteousness. Not all Israel, during the period of the Judges, succumbed to these pressures, of course: for there remained centres of resistance, such as the household of Boaz and others, who manifested sufficient faith and courage to rise above the wickedness that surrounded them in the Ecclesia of their days, and render to Yahweh that which is due unto His name.

So it is both interesting and helpful to recognise the typical setting of *The Book of Joshua* in relation to the other books of the Bible, and the purpose of God; and we set it out here:

1. **Genesis:** newness of life (believers become a new creation in Christ).
2. **Exodus:** separation and redemption through a mediator (next development in Christ).
3. **Leviticus:** sanctification and fellowship through sacrifice.
4. **Numbers:** faith tried throughout the wilderness journey towards the promised rest.
5. **Deuteronomy:** Divine faithfulness in disciplining and delivering.
6. **Joshua:** a new relationship; the provision of a Saviour allowing for Victory Through Faith.
7. **Judges:** suffering through sin: how the Ecclesia compromised.
8. **Ruth:** faithfulness in an environment of apostasy and wickedness.
9. **1 Samuel:** preparation for the Kingdom.
10. **2 Samuel:** the Kingdom established by conquest.

This panoramic view of the early Books of the Bible reveal that the typology of Scripture takes heed of the very placing of the Books in Scripture. No Book of the Bible is an island; each one contributes with its fellows to re-emphasise, or give added detail to the purpose of Yahweh, for the information of those called to His purpose. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples (types); and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

In our study of the *Book of Joshua*, therefore, it is important to discern the typical lessons of the times and circumstances. This will give richer meaning to the Book, which, in any case, is vibrant with action and significance.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND JOSHUA'S CHARACTERISTICS

The Author

Jewish tradition claims that Joshua wrote the whole of the book that bears his name, except for the last five verses; which were added by another hand, and which record the death and burial of Joshua. There is no reason to doubt this conclusion. The book was certainly written before the time of David, for it speaks of the Jebusites ruling in Jerusalem currently with the time of writing (Josh. 15:63). Moreover, it alleges that Rahab was living at the time the record was made (Josh. 6:25). This takes the authorship back to the very days of Joshua.

His Character

Joshua is described as the "son of Nun". This is a significant name. The word is from a root signifying to *propagate*, and so continue the

name. Joshua son of Nun, therefore, signifies *Yahweh shall save for a continuance*. Joshua is the Hebrew form of Jesus or Yahshua, (a contraction of Yehoshua) *Yah's salvation, or He will be a Saviour*. Paul wrote: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19) which expresses the meaning of his name.

Nothing is known of Joshua's mother. However, the character of Joshua is such as to suggest that he came from a God-fearing home, which played a part in his subsequent character.

From a humble beginning as a slave in Egypt, Joshua was elevated to a position of outstanding influence and honour. He knew the humiliation of bondage in Egypt. He would have heard the "groaning of the prisoner", the weary complaints of a people humiliated by proud Pharaoh, and set almost impossible tasks to perform. He would have experienced the increase of labour that was imposed upon the people, when Moses began to make demands on Pharaoh. He would have witnessed the moral and social degradation of his fellow Israelites brought about by the debasing forms of idolatry into which they sank whilst in the land of sin and death.

He was about forty years of age when the Exodus took place, and therefore his birth in the land of Goshen would synchronise with Moses' flight into Midian, when the treatment of the Israelites was most harsh and their condition grew daily more difficult.

Though the projection of Joshua into prominence was sudden and unexpected in the narrative, he obviously must have come under the notice of Moses early in the deliverance from Egypt. So, at the appropriate moment, the call suddenly came, and Joshua was selected to organise the fighting forces of Israel and engage the Amalekites in battle when the nation was unexpectedly attacked at Rephidim: "And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek" (Exod. 17:9). Moses promoted Joshua to Commander in Chief of the Israelitish army, whilst he with Aaron and Hur, on the hill above the fighting, besought the aid of heaven in overcoming the enemy. Nothing is recorded of Joshua before this; but obviously his ability to organise, and his faith and courage in stimulating others in a crisis must have been known to Moses.

In this he again anticipated his greater antitype. For the Lord appeared unexpectedly among men, and engaged in a battle with a most powerful enemy against which the people of God were unable to cope. So in *The Book of Joshua*, which is a book of campaign and conquest, there is foreshadowed the hard warfare and glorious victory of the Son of God; and in Joshua himself, a wonderful type of the more wonderful Saviour who, since then, appeared among men. We await his return to consummate the victory won 1900 years ago.

Joshua's Characteristics

Joshua displayed outstanding skill as a warrior. As "Commander of the people" (Isa. 55:4), he knew how to plan campaigns, discipline his troops, utilise spies, develop strategy, and, above all, exercise faith. He was a man of thought, prayer and action. He recognised problems

for what they were, did what he could by carefully planning to meet every exigency; and sought the co-operation of God in his conquests.

Joshua was a slave to Pharaoh in Egypt, but became a servant to Moses in the wilderness. The prominence into which he was brought by the attack by the Amalekites, commenced a long association of usefulness and responsibility in conjunction with his leader. He became known as "the servant of Moses" (Num. 11:28; Josh. 1:1) and "his minister" (Exod. 24:13). He accompanied that great Lawgiver when he ascended Sinai to receive instructions from Yahweh, remaining on the lower slopes of the Mountain, as Moses scaled its heights to speak with the Angel upon whom had been conferred the Name of Yahweh. And when this conference was interrupted by information of the folly committed by the people who meanwhile had built the golden calf, Moses returned with Joshua to exact a terrible but deserved punishment upon them.

The characters of the two leaders are epitomised by their comments as they returned to the people. As the noise of the festival was heard by them, Joshua the warrior and man of faith could explain it by one cause only: "There is a noise of war in the camp!" he exclaimed. But Moses the mediator, who already had experienced the fickleness of his people, sadly replied: "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery; neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear" (Exod. 32:15-18). A terrible, but deserved punishment was exacted upon the people of Israel.

At Kadesh Joshua was sent as one of the spies to travel throughout the Land of Promise (Num. 13:1-16). It was at this time that Moses changed his name from Oshea or Hoshea, meaning *Help or Salvation* to Joshua meaning *Yah's Salvation or He will be a Saviour*. The changed name indicated the desire of Moses to elevate the thoughts of the people Godward, to cause them to place their reliance upon Yahweh rather than upon their leaders. Along with Caleb, Joshua brought back a faithful report of the land, assuring the people that with the help of God it could be conquered, and defying the other spies in so doing. However, the people rejected their exhortation, and that generation was condemned to wander without hope for thirty-eight years in the wilderness.

As a man of type, Joshua, as leading the people across Jordan and into the Land, represented the Covenant of Grace, in contrast with the Covenant of the Law represented by Moses. Moses brought the people to the border of the land, but there died because of sin. Through moral weakness of the flesh he could not take them into the Land itself. But Joshua did, and gave new meaning to his name by so doing: *Yah's Salvation*. His conquests made it possible for every Israelite who exercised faith and courage to obtain his inheritance.

Joshua was not a young man when he did this. He was probably about eighty years of age when he assumed command at Shittim. His first work was to convey the people across Jordan, circumcise the males, and keep the Passover: thus rolling away the reproach of Israel. Filled with the spirit of God (Deut. 34:9); enjoying the fellowship of

Yahweh (Josh. 1:5; 6:27), and motivated by His Word (Josh. 1:8), he was ever obedient to the will of God (Num. 32:12; Josh. 5:14). He blended faith with courage; manifested an attitude and conduct that were exemplary, provided an example for all Israel to emulate; so gave added power to his exhortation: "As for me and my house we will serve Yahweh" (Josh. 24:15). Strong in the governing of the nation whilst he lived, and carefully instructing those whom he appointed, to positions of authority, Israel remained constant with its God (Josh. 24:31).

His name became a caption for his conduct. It is a title: *Yah the Saviour*. It was a great name, the greatest of all names, a fit prelude to notable deeds, a name that demanded of its possessor an attitude and a character worthy of so great an appellation. He was a member of the tribe of Ephraim, in descent from the Patriarch Joseph whose bones were carried throughout the wilderness, and buried by Joshua in the place appointed (Josh. 24:32).

To summarise: the incidents recorded of Joshua prior to the death of Moses are associated with important events in Israel's history. When Israel's army was in need of a Commander, Joshua was commissioned to that position (Exod. 17:8-9); when Moses ascended the Mount to receive the instructions of Yahweh, Joshua accompanied him there (Exod. 24:13; 32:17); when idolatry among the people caused Moses to remove the temporary Tabernacle from the people and camp of Israel, Joshua was placed in charge of it (Exod. 33:11); when he thought that the leadership of Moses was under challenge, he showed his loyalty by a vigorous protest (Num. 11:24-29); at Kadesh-barnea, he was chosen to represent the tribe of Ephraim as one of the twelve spies (Num. 13:8,16); and was publicly commended by Yahweh before the people (Num. 14:29-32).

Though perhaps dwarfed by the greatness of Moses (Deut. 34:10), Joshua emerges as an outstanding leader of faith, courage and determination, to take his place among the great men of history. Known first as Hoshea (*Salvation*), his name was changed to Yehoshua (*Yah's Salvation*), then contracted to Joshua, or Jesus (Num. 13:16). At the end of forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, and by Divine appointment, Moses presented Joshua before the High Priest and the congregation in Shittim and proclaimed him as his successor (Num. 27:18-23; Deut. 1:38). He then, just prior to his death, presented him at the Tabernacle to receive public, Divine endorsement before the new generation and to give to him the charge from Yahweh (Deut. 31:14-23). With the death of Moses his greatest work commenced as recorded in the book that bears his name.

Learning By Experience

Joshua was an outstanding military commander manifesting both courage and skill. His strategy and methods of warfare are studied and emulated by military commanders to this day. Of course, he had the help of God without which success would have eluded him; but Yahweh will not help those who will not help themselves. Thought and planning, as well as faith and courage, must be applied to any cam-

paign. Joshua did so. In the book *Battles of the Bible*, the authors, both military men of modern Israel, view the wars of the past in the terms of the present. They conclude: "Besides offering the military background and interpretation of the events that shaped Biblical history, the critical examination of wars and matters military in the Bible affords many lessons that hold good up to the present day" (p. 10). Concerning Joshua, they write:

"As a great soldier, Joshua was fully aware of the limitations imposed on him by the Israelites' inferiority in armament and training for set battle. Consequently, he based his tactics in battles such as that of Merom on the Israelites' qualities of speed, stealth and knowledge of the terrain, and so crushed the otherwise unbeatable enemy. It was this approach which therefore became the model for subsequent Israelite commanders" (p. 45).

As type and not antitype, Joshua made mistakes. He blundered in permitting a treaty to be made with the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:13-14). He has been criticised for failing to garrison Jebus after taking it (Josh. 10:23; 15:63; Jud. 1:8), but that was a responsibility resting upon the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who jointly shared the site of Jerusalem. They failed to capitalise upon their initial success, as did the other tribes.

He was prepared for his great work of conquest by lessons of experience, example and exhortation. Experience is necessary. A person may be coached in the various techniques of a sport (such as swimming or boxing), and he may have studied every book on the subject, but if he has not practised he will remain a most imperfect performer. Joshua learned by experience when placed in the most difficult situations to have faith in Yahweh. The battle with Amalek (Exod. 17:8-10); the problem at Sinai (Exod. 24:13-18; 32:15-18); the opposition of his fellow spies in reporting on the land (Num. 14:6-10); the campaign against Jericho, and so on, taught him lessons no book could reveal. Joshua learned the value of leaning upon the goodness and help of the "Captain of Yahweh's host" (Josh. 5:13-15), the angel of heaven.

He learned through the example of Moses. He had the unique opportunity of serving him as his minister (Exod. 24:13; Josh. 1:1). He saw Moses in triumph (Exod. 14,15), and in tribulation (Num. 12:1-2; 14:2-3; 16:3). He saw the measure of his dependence on Yahweh, his recourse to prayer, his reliance on faith. He saw him in meekness (Num. 12:3), and in anger (Num. 16:15). Whereas, as a warrior, he misinterpreted the noise of the people in their pagan worship, as "a noise of war in the camp" (Exod. 32:17), his leader knew the people better, and recognised their noise of mirth for what it was. So he witnessed Moses smash the tables of stone in wrath (v. 19). But also, at other times, he observed him bearing patiently with them in their murmurings and complainings, pleading their cause in the wilderness, interceding with their God for them. From Moses, Joshua learned the lessons of faith and obedience, and the need of Divine grace and forgiveness; for he saw him prohibited from entering the Promised Land.

Joshua was the recipient of special exhortation, outstanding revelations from Yahweh (Josh. 1:5-9), as well as special instruction from Moses (Deut. 31:23; 34:9). All these experiences helped to equip him to successfully perform the work set him by his God.

Analysis

SUMMARY

The Parable

Moses brought the people through the Red Sea to Sinai. Then burdened with the curse of the Law, because of their failure to keep it, he led them through the wilderness to within sight of the Promised Land. Joshua baptised them in living water, and in grace gave them temporary rest (Josh. 21:44). For the antitype see John 14:27; Heb. 4:8-11. The conquests of Joshua made it possible for each tribe and each family to obtain their inheritance, but determination, courage and faith were needed to secure it. Christ did likewise (Heb. 2:14). But determination, courage and faith are needed to be manifested by his followers in order for them to share the fruits of the victory won (1 John 5:4).

Key Verses

For key statements of the Book compare the Promise (Josh. 1:6-9) with the Fulfilment (Josh. 21:44); and the Exhortation (Josh. 23:6-13), with the Example (Josh. 24:15).

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA *Victory Through Faith*

The Book is a record of graphic movement, of campaign, conquest, and subjugation through faith. It is set out in four main, clearly defined divisions: 1. Entering the Land; 2. Conquering the Land; 3. Occupying the Land; 4. Exhortation for the Future.

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He reminds the Eastern Tribes of their Obligations	vv. 12-15
The People's Hearty Response	vv. 16-18
2. Surveying the Problem — The Confidence of Faith — Ch. 2:1-24	
A Secret Excursion Into Enemy Territory	Ch. 2:1
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An Unexpected Friend	vv. 4-7
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The People Pass Over	vv. 14-17
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A Witness taken out of Jordan	Ch. 4:1-5
The Meaning of the Stones	vv. 6-9
The Witness of the Crossing	vv. 10-13
Joshua Magnified	v. 14
The Waters Flow Again	vv. 15-18
The Witness of the Stones	vv. 19-24
4. Restoring True Worship — The Worship of Faith — Ch. 5:1-15	
Fear Among the Enemy	Ch. 5:1
Circumcision Reinstated	vv. 2-9
The Passover Restored	vv. 10-11
The Food Changed	v. 12
The Divine Presence Manifested	vv. 13-15

**SECTION TWO: CONQUERING THE LAND —
THE WORKS OF FAITH — Chs. 6-12**

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Days of Impending Doom for Jericho	vv. 6-14
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JOSHUA:

VICTORY THROUGH FAITH

Section One:

***ENTERING
THE LAND***

***First Principles
of Faith
Chapters 1 to 5***

Preparation, application, realisation. These are the three great developments revealed in the early chapters of The Book of Joshua. It is a book of graphic movement, of campaign, conquest, and subjugation. It records how Joshua led the people over Jordan, defeated the enemy in three major campaigns, established their right to the land. It is pre-eminently a book of faith, for "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down" (Heb. 11:30). The victories of Joshua, therefore, were victories of faith. So it must be with those in Christ in the battle of life: "For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). In The Book of Joshua there is great contrast with the actions recorded in The Book of Numbers, for therein is displayed the failure of unbelief or lack of faith (Heb. 3:19). The Israel of the Exodus failed to enter the land (Num. 14:22-23); to victoriously campaign against its enemies (Num. 14:43-44); to overcome sin (Num. 14:44-45). The spies who went forth from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, quailed before the powerful inhabitants, and the mighty cities. They "saw" giants in the land; and mighty ramparts so strong and high as to reach up to heaven; but the spies sent out by Joshua, moved by a courage borne of faith, fearlessly penetrated the fortress crowded with warriors such as had deterred their predecessors. Boldly making their way therein they found the powerful enemy crouching in fear behind their defences and walls which soon afterward came crashing to the ground.

But though the victory was one of faith, careful preparation was necessary. Israel had to make itself right with God before it was equipped to successfully engage in war. So a form of baptism took place, the painful operation of circumcision endured; and the Passover was reinstated. By these means the people were made ready, the land was spied out, the problems were assessed so that adequate preparations might be made (for with the river again flooding its course there could be no turning back), the armour of faith was put on, and assurances were given. All was ready to attack. "Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, that I have given you" (Josh. 1:3), they were told. All this spake of the energy of faith. There were enemies, but they could and would be subdued in faith: "No man shall be able to stand before thee" (Josh. 1:5). Joshua was their leader, the Cap-

tain of their Salvation; and he had been given words of encouragement: "Only be thou strong and very courageous" (Josh. 1:7).

Having been thus instructed and encouraged, Joshua sends forth spies to ascertain exactly what is required. They receive unexpected assistance in Rahab who is discerning enough to recognise the Hand of God in all that has taken place, and wise enough to seek the Strength of Israel. The spies find the city crowded with soldiers from all parts of the land, but warriors made weak through fear of the outcome of the impending battle. When fear instils cowardice, a warrior loses his skill and will to fight and conquer, and is already half defeated. That was the condition within the city. But the spies only escape with the aid of Rahab who is guaranteed safety when the attack does take place. Encouraged by the report of the spies, Joshua leads his people across the River Jordan. To do this an outstanding miracle, teaching a remarkable type, takes place. The water of Jordan defies nature and flows in reverse. This confirms the assurances received already by Joshua; it makes it clear to any man of faith that Yahweh is with the army and success is assured. Once the people cross over the water returns showing that there is no way of retreat. Memorials are set up to commemorate the miracle; Covenant obligations are renewed in the rite of circumcision and the keeping of the Passover. And now all is ready. In anticipation, to assess for himself the cause of the enemy's lack of initiative, and the strength of the fortress, Joshua secretly makes his way to Jericho. He is met by a man with a drawn sword in his hand. This angelic man introduces himself as the Captain of Yahweh's heavenly army, demonstrating that Joshua and Israel do not have to fight in their own strength, for the angels of heaven would assist them in conquering the land. Faith was strengthened in the assurances given.

Joshua Commissioned

*“Arise My faithful Joshua,
Go in possess the land,
And like My servant Moses,
Unite this holy band.*

*“Observe My Law that thou may’st live,
Successful thou wilt be,
For as I was with Moses,
So I’ll be with thee.*

*“Arise, Go o’er the Jordan,
Your faith will carry through,
Be not afraid, be not dismayed,
I’ll surely be with you . . .”*

Joshua’s Reply

*“The voice of God came through to me
As music to my ears
He knew the loss of Moses
Had strengthened all our fears*

*“His words of strength, of comfort,
Lifted up my heart
I gathered all the people,
Ready to depart —*

*“Move on across the Jordan
Now, come and follow me’
The people stood, their cry rang out
‘We’ll hearken unto thee’.”* G.M.

CHAPTER ONE

PREPARING THE PEOPLE: THE TEACHING OF FAITH

The shock of Moses' death at the height of his powers brings a sense of great loss to the people. They are plunged into deep mourning which is broken by instructions given to his successor by Yahweh. For God buries His workmen, but the work must proceed. Joshua is given encouragement and is exhorted concerning the secret of success (vv. 1-9); the spies are sent out (though their adventures are recorded in the next chapter), and Joshua calls upon the leaders of the people to organise for removal (vv. 10-15). The response is one of enthusiastic and faithful acceptance of instructions and endorsement by the people of Joshua's appointment.

Joshua Is Divinely Commissioned

— vv. 1-9

Joshua is commanded to lead the people over Jordan. The work before him is not to be accomplished in his own strength, or in that of the army, but through co-operation with Yahweh. Assurances are given of victory, and Joshua is called upon to provide an example of faith and courage. As his appointment is from God, he can be assured that Yahweh will be with him in his leadership and labours.

VERSE 1

"Now after the death of Moses the servant of Yahweh" — These words connect the *Book of Joshua* with the Pentateuch as in the antitype, the Lord Jesus takes over when the death of the Law is brought home to his people. For *The Book of Joshua* is not only an historical account of the conquest of the Land, but has been selected by Yahweh, and recorded in such a way as to foreshadow the Divine purpose. This opening phrase commences it. The death of Moses foreshadowed the termination of the Mosaic epoch in the political death of the nation in A. D. 70. A new epoch then opens up under Joshua or Jesus. And the type is clearly enunciated by Paul. "Moses verily was faithful in all His house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ (the antitypical Joshua, or Jesus) as a son over His house, Whose

house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:5-6).

"It came to pass, that Yahweh spake unto Joshua the son of Nun" — Joshua's name signifies *Yah shall save*. The word Nun signifies *to perpetuate, to resprout or to propagate by shoots, to be continued*. It implies an extension, which is seen, of course, in the multitudinous Christ developed out of him as compared with Christ personally.

"Moses' minister, saying" — Joshua ministered to Moses, as Christ also ministered. Of the Lord it is recorded: "Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He "was a minister of the circumcision (Moses) for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law", wrote Paul, "being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). The "servant of Yahweh" is the official title of Moses. The word *'ebed* denotes a slave, and, of course, the Law brought Israel into bondage to its command. Moses' official title indicated his high status. He was the channel through whom Yahweh performed His service towards His chosen people. He foreshadowed that great suffering Servant to come of whom Isaiah so clearly speaks (Isa. 52:13). The title given to Moses is frequently alluded to. See vv. 2,7,13,15

etc. It expresses the great intimacy that existed between Yahweh and His servant (Deut. 34:10; Num. 12:7-8).

VERSE 2

“Moses My servant is dead” — Foreshadowing the time when the way would be opened for Yahweh’s people to “become dead to the Law” (Rom. 7:4) by passing through the waters of baptism into Christ.

“Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan” — At that time of the year, Spring, the Jordan would have been in flood, and as such would form a formidable barrier of perhaps a mile wide. Its fresh water, in contrast with the salt water of the Red Sea, suggests the Spirit-Word representative of the teaching of Christ (John 4:14) in contrast with that of the Law with its curse. The Jordan was a life-giving stream of fresh water, over which Joshua had to lead the way. The Lord Jesus did likewise, when he presented himself at the River Jordan to be baptised of John. When Jesus told John he had no sins to confess, John protested that their positions should be reversed. But the Lord replied: “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15). The baptism of Jesus foreshadowed his death upon the cross (Luke 12:50). It represented the denial of the flesh in a figurative death, burial and resurrection, that dramatised his life’s service.

“Thou, and all this people” — Joshua led the rest of Israel, as the Lord did his followers.

“Unto the land which I do give to them” — The people of Israel entered an inheritance, that foreshadowed the new relationship of believers in Christ. For they are elevated into the “heavenlies in Christ” (Eph. 1:3), also described as “an inheritance” (Eph. 1:11) which is, however, but “the earnest” of that to be fully revealed in the future (Eph. 1:14). The Hebrew *’anoki noten* literally signifies “about to give them”, and is so rendered in *NIV*. Immediate help was to be extended to the people. They were about to learn that “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8).

“Even to the children of Israel” — The promise of God is exclusive to such, and Gentiles must identify themselves with Israel to partake of the benefits thereof. See Eph. 2:11-14.

VERSE 3

“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon” — This was the promise made to Moses (Deut. 11:24), and comprised a partial fulfilment of that made to Abraham (Gen. 13:14-17; 15:18; 17:8. See Exod. 23:31; Num. 34:2). The expression denotes the act of taking possession of the land so trodden. Hence when the redeemer of Ruth refused to carry out his duty, and left it to Boaz to do so, Ruth’s kinsman by marriage invited Boaz, “Redeem thou my right to thyself”. The gesture of repudiation was for a man to “pluck off his shoes, and give it to his neighbour” (Ruth 4:7-8). In contrast, to tread upon land is figuratively to take possession of it.

“That have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses” — Such an expression as this, denoting actual possession before entrance into the land, expresses the Divine finality. What Yahweh purposes shall be accomplished without doubt. With Him is “yea and amen” to His glory (2 Cor. 1:19-20), and therefore, because He has the power to perform, He “callethe those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17). He told Abraham, “I have made thee a father of many nations”, before his son was born; and now Joshua is told that the land has already been given to the people. Such is the assurance of faith.

VERSE 4

“From the wilderness and this Lebanon” — The wilderness of Zin constituted the southern border (Num. 34:3-12), and Lebanon (Mt. Hermon which could be seen on a clear day from Nebo — Deut. 3:9) was the northern border. However, the land promised Abraham extended far beyond this area both south and north (Gen. 15:18). Lebanon signifies *White*, and describes both a mountain and a mountain range in the north, Hermon being one of its peaks.

“Even unto the great river, the river Euphrates” — The Lebanese range of mountains constituted the intermediate northern border, which, however, extended further north to the Euphrates. The land was promised the Israelites, but had to be possessed by their personal effort. Under Joshua they occupied the land as far north as the Lebanese range, and under David extended further north to the Euphrates (2 Sam. 8:3).

“All the land of the Hittites” — Refer-

ences to the Hittites are found throughout Scripture. Apparently sections of the people occupied various parts of the land. For example, Abraham purchased the Cave of Machpelah from a Hittite family (Gen. 23:10). Little was known of the Hittites until comparatively recent times, but today archaeology has established that they constituted a very powerful nation located in Asia Minor, whose king treated with those of Egypt, Babylon and Assyria on equal terms. They possessed a high standard of civilisation and conduct based upon a clearly defined moral code of laws. The ruins of cities and fortresses that remain indicate that they were highly skilled in architecture and powerful in war. Their name is derived from the Hebrew Heth (or *Cheth* — see Gen. 23:10), and signifies *Terror*. They were descendants of Heth, a son of Canaan (Gen. 10:15; 27:46; 49:32). They were a powerful, civilised nation that held sway in Syria and Asia Minor from 1800-900 B.C. Despite their military prowess, their land was taken by Joshua (Exod. 3:8; Josh. 9:1). Some Hittites served as officers in David's army — Uriah, the former husband of Bathsheba being one such (2 Sam. 11:3; 23:39). Hittites also served Solomon (1 Kings 9:20-21), but retained their own king in the north of Syria and other parts (1 Kings 10:29; 2 Kings 7:6; 2 Chron. 1:17). However, their power was completely broken by the time of Nebuchadnezzar; and since then all trace of them was so completely destroyed that critics of the Bible claimed that they never existed, that they were a figment of the imagination, a mythological invention. The archaeologist's spade, however has forever silenced such criticism. Today the existence of them has been proved beyond all doubt, and in such detail, that we even know that they were a short, stocky race, with thick lips, large noses, and retreating foreheads! The Hittite monuments show them as wearing heavy clothes and shoes with turned up toes! (See *The Hittites* by O.R. Gurney).

“And unto the great sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast” — The “Great Sea” was the Mediterranean.

VERSE 5

“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life” — This assurance is given because of the promise to Moses, that Yahweh would go forth to fight those nations. Though invis-

ble to human eyes, His presence through His appointed angel (Exod. 23:20-23) was most effective (See Deut. 20:4; 2 Chron. 32:8; and note Paul's comments — Rom. 8:31; 9:29; Heb. 13:6).

“As I was with Moses” — For the extent of Yahweh's support of Moses, see Exod. 3:12; Deut. 31:8,23; 1 Cor. 16:13.

“So I will be with thee” — See Josh. 3:7. See the assurance — Deut. 31:8,23.

“I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” — Yahweh's assurance to Joshua is matched by David's encouragement in similar words to Solomon (1 Chron. 28:20); and Paul's citation of this promise to all those who put their trust in God (Heb. 13:5).



A Hittite soldier armed with an axe.

VERSE 6

“Be strong and of a good courage” — Yahweh’s assurance had to find a response in Joshua or in anybody else so encouraged. A responsibility rests upon all, in their individual circumstances of life, to manifest determination and courage, motivated by faith. Again Paul cites these words to encourage saints (1 Cor. 16:13). Indeed, they comprise a rallying call to the faithful throughout the ages; for faith is weakened unless problems are met with determination and courage. See Josh. 10:25; 1 Chron. 22:18; 28:10,20; 2 Chron. 32:7; Psa. 27:14; Isa. 43:1-5; Zech. 8:13; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 2:1.

“For unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land” — An alternative rendition in the margin is significant: “Thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land”. Joshua did just that. He won the victory over the enemy, and made it possible for every individual family and tribe to win their personal war of conquest and obtain their individual inheritance. But the initiative to do so rested with those concerned. So it is with Christ. He won the victory over the devil (Heb. 2:14), and there is no doubt that the reward will be shared among his people in the age to come; but whether any individual saint will participate therein depends upon his or her initiative; whether he or she has possessed sufficient faith, determination and courage to grasp with fearless hands the nettles that must be cleared from the path that leads to the Kingdom. Joshua’s labours, therefore, typed those of the Lord Jesus Christ who will establish his followers in their inheritance (Heb. 4:8-9).

“Which I swear unto their fathers to give them” — The promise made to the fathers would be fulfilled by those who manifested faith and courage to conquer.

VERSE 7

“Only be thou strong and very courageous” — A recipe for success is given in these verses, requiring the mixing of faith with courage, obedience, and constant revival of the mind by communion with Yahweh through His Word. See also 1 Chron. 22:19.

“That thou mayest observe to do according to all the law” — There would be occasions when to do according to the law would present **great difficulties**; when it would be easier to avoid or evade its re-

quirements; when it would appear that to maintain strict adherence to it would cause personal embarrassment or loss; and it is in such moments when determination, courage and unswerving adherence to Yahweh’s requirements are necessary. All will be put under test; and that is the challenge of obedience.

“Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left” — Unswerving fidelity and obedience under all circumstances are required. Sometimes the temptation to evade the requirements of the Commandments appear to be desirable; for to do otherwise seems to court embarrassment or trouble. Such moments test faith. See these words included in the requirements of the Law as summed up in Deut. 5:31-33.

“That thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest” — The Hebrew *sakal* signifies to act with wisdom; the R.V. renders it *have good success*. These instructions, therefore, provide a recipe for success in life. They require a servant of Yahweh to match up to life’s challenges; and to be fearless and frank in facing issues. Faith (the conviction of things hoped for) reveals that this is the only successful way. See David’s example (1 Sam. 18:5,14,15,30).

VERSE 8

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth” — How is faith developed? “Faith cometh by hearing the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Therefore the Book is necessary to develop faith, and without faith “it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). Faith is absolutely necessary for victory in the Lord’s battles (1 John 5:4). To develop faith it was necessary for Joshua to absorb the contents of the Book supplied him; but, in addition, he was instructed that it must not depart out of his mouth. That means, his advice, instructions and commands had to be in conformity with its teaching. In being handed the Book, Joshua was treated as a king (see Deut. 17:18-20). Therein could be found all that was necessary for his leadership of God’s people. And in that he had an advantage over merely human guidance. The five books of Moses have been summarised in *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* in the following terms:

“The utmost that can be said of all laws, merely *human*, is, that they *restrain vices* through the terror of punishment. God’s

law not only restrains *vice*, but it infuses *virtue*. It alone brings man to the footstool of his Maker; and keeps him dependent on the Strong for strength, on the Wise for wisdom, and on the Merciful for grace. It abounds with promises of support, and salvation for the *present life*, which no false system dared ever to propose; everywhere, Moses, in the most confident manner, pledges his God for the fulfilment of all the exceeding great and precious promises, with which his laws are so plentifully interspersed; and while they were obedient Israel could say, 'Not one word hath failed us, of all the good things which Yahweh our God spake concerning us' (Josh. 21:45). Who that dispassionately reads the Pentateuch, that considers it in itself and in its reference to that glorious Gospel which it was intended to introduce, can for a moment deny it the palm of infinite superiority over all the systems ever framed or imagined by man? Well might the Israelitish people triumphantly exclaim, 'There is none like the God of Jeshurun!' (Deut. 33:26) and with what striking propriety does the glorious legislator add, 'Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto Thee? O people, saved of Yahweh!' (Deut. 33:29).

"Finally, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which are amassed in these five books, have enriched the whole civilised earth, and, indeed, greatly promoted its very civilisation. They have been a kind of text-book to almost every writer on geology, geography, chronology, astronomy, natural history, ethics, jurisprudence, political economy, theology, poetry, and criticism, from the time of Moses to the present day — books to which the choicest writers and philosophers in Pagan authority, have been deeply indebted; and which were the text-books to all the prophets — books written in all the energy, and purity, of the incomparable language in which they are composed; and lastly, books, which for importance of matter, variety of information, dignity of sentiment, accuracy of facts, impartiality, simplicity, and sublimity of narration, tending to improve and ennoble the intellect and ameliorate the physical and moral condition of man, have never been equalled, and can only be paralleled by the Gospel of the Son of God Fountain of endless mercy, justice, truth, and beneficence! How much are Thy gifts and bounties neglected by those who do not read this law; and by those who having read it, are not morally improved by it, and made wise unto salvation!"

This was the book placed into the hands of Joshua for his guidance and instruction. The same book was placed into the hands of the greater antitype of Joshua, and of him it is recorded, that he came not to destroy but to fulfil it (Matt. 5:17). In doing so, "he magnified the Law and made it honourable" (Isa. 42:21).

"But thou shalt meditate therein day and night" — This also is imperative if the greatest good is to be derived from the reading of the Word. Meditation and thought upon that which is read will firm it in the mind, and so develop the mind of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5-8). It is a characteristic of those who seek to please Yahweh that "in His law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:2). Yahweh has promised that those who do this, and who speak of their meditations to others shall be His "in that day when I make up My jewels" (Mal. 3:16-17). How vitally important were the instructions given unto Joshua. The future of both Joshua and "those with him" depended upon him faithfully carrying out the instructions then given him. The same applies to God's people in every age (1 Tim. 4:15-16).

"That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein" — The purpose of study and meditation is to observe and do, without which it is incomplete.

"For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" — This will result from an application of the exhortation given. Joshua had been directed to the need of faith, courage, strict adherence to Yahweh's requirements and the study of the Word as the recipe of success. That still remains true today.

VERSE 9

"Have not I commanded thee?" — Joshua's charge came from Yahweh, and therefore was to be respected by the people. He was invested with an authority that none of his people could refute. In that regard, he faithfully foreshadowed the Commander-in-Chief of saints (Isa. 55:4).

"Be strong and of a good courage" — The Septuagint renders this: "Be strong, therefore, and play the man to the uttermost". These words are cited by Paul in a similar exhortation (1 Cor. 16:13). His rendition of the Hebrew is similar to that of the Septuagint.

“Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for Yahweh thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” — The exhortation to “Fear not!” is constant throughout the Book recently given Joshua. See Deut. 1:29; 7:21; 20:3; 31:6 etc. As Yahweh had promised to lead the people, dismay was out of the question. See Deut. 31:8. A similar exhortation is given those in Christ (Heb. 13:6). There is need for warriors of faith to place absolute reliance upon God; to recognise Him as their Leader, and manifest trust in Him. Of course, such warriors must implicitly obey the commands and directions given them. See 2 Tim. 2:3-5.

Joshua Orders The Army To Make Ready — vv. 10-11

With Yahweh's words of assurance and command for action ringing in his ears, Joshua orders the army to make ready. As a point of Chronology, it seems the spies had already been sent out. See Ch. 2:1 mg.; 2:16; 3:1.

VERSE 10

“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying” — The Hebrew word for these officials is *shoterah*, signifying to write. They were scribes, and their work at this time was to record the number and personnel of the Israelitish army. See Deut. 16:18; 20:5,9; 31:28.

VERSE 11

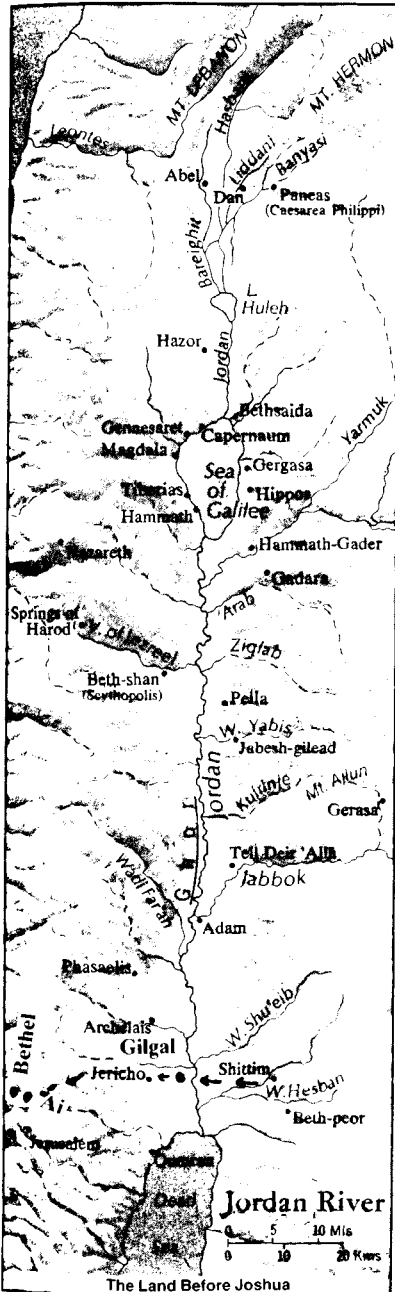
“Pass through the host” — The word “host” signifies army. The people of Israel not only constituted an Ecclesia (Acts 7:35), but also an army. That, too, illustrates the status of an Ecclesia; for “there is a battle to be fought and a victory to be won” (2 Cor. 10:3-6; Eph. 6:10-17; 2 Tim. 2:2-4).

“And command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals” — This indicated the great change the people of Israel were about to experience. Until now, and throughout their wilderness wanderings, they had been fed with the Divinely provided manna (Exod. 16:35); but now that was to cease (Josh. 5:12), and, in measure, they had to provide for themselves. This change typed that which occurred following the resurrection of Christ. Prior to then, when the Apostles were sent out preaching they went “without purse, and scrip, and shoes” and yet they lacked nothing (Luke 22:35). But from thence onwards, warned Christ, they, in measure,

had to learn to fend for themselves (see v. 36). He warned them that they were about to experience greater hostility from the world, and would have to battle against it in faith. For the moment, they failed to understand the import of his teaching and imagined that the “weapons of their warfare” were to be carnal ones. They drew his attention to two swords which they thought would be sufficient for resistance (v. 38). Only later did they learn of the nature of the battle upon which they were to engage, and the effectiveness of the weapons they were to use (2 Cor. 10:3-6; Eph. 6:10-17; 1 John 5:4). Faith is necessary for that battle, and it comes by “hearing the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Therefore, there is need to “prepare victuals” by which faith can be built up. The word translated *victuals* in this place is from a Hebrew root signifying meat rather than meal. So there was to be a change of diet for the Israelites; they were no longer to remain on a vegetarian diet. Neither should those who are about to engage in the battle for Christ. Paul comments: “Strong meat belongeth to them that are of a full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). Israel, as a nation, had come to “full age” and now experienced, in type, a change of food.

“For within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan” — All the periods of time were “thoroughly adjusted to God's command” (Heb. 11:3 *Diaglott*), even as they are in Christ, providing for an exact chronological sequence. As the computation on page 34 shows.

“To go in to possess the land, which Yahweh your God giveth you to possess it” — There was plan and purpose, in passing over the Jordan. It was to “possess the land”. The Israelites were carefully and clearly instructed in the methods and object of their activities. So, similar clear objectivity should be manifested by those in Christ. They are exhorted to “cleave to the Lord” with “purpose of heart” (Acts 11:23). They need to set themselves the target of attaining the Kingdom; and life should be disciplined to that end. A person should not embrace Christ merely to join an Ecclesia as a social club, but in order to grasp the inheritance that God has held out to him (1 Tim. 6:12). Paul prayed on the behalf of believers that they may “know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his in-



heritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18). In similar strain Joshua now reminded the people of the promises made unto the fathers as an incentive to faith and motivation to action.

The Eastern Tribes Reminded of Their Obligations — vv. 12-18

The tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh having been given inheritances by Moses on the eastern side of Jordan (Num. 32; Deut. 3:12-20) are reminded of their obligation to assist in the subjugation of the land on the western side. Joshua's leadership is revealed in that he does not try to force the people to keep their promise; but appeals to them to remember the word which Moses left with them. They respond loyally and enthusiastically.

VERSE 12

"And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying" — These tribes had been granted inheritance on the eastern side of Jordan by Moses (Deut. 3:12-20).

VERSE 13

"Remember the word which Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded you, saying, Yahweh your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land" — The appeal of Joshua was to the Word; that also was the appeal of the Lord Jesus (see Luke 11:28). The Word should motivate the actions of those "in him" (Isa. 8:20).

VERSE 14

"Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all in the mighty men of valour, and help them" — The warriors of these tribes were to lead the others as shock troops. They were to do so "armed". The word does not signify armed with munitions of war but rather with faith. The Hebrew *chamushim*, signifies to march in fives (see margin). Israel entered the land, a disciplined, orderly army, marching five abreast and in rank to the terror of their enemies. This answers to the marching orders of Israel even in the wilderness for they moved forward in five groups: the four divisions of the tribes, and the Levites in the centre with the Ark of the Covenant. Five is the number of grace, and Israel relied upon the Divine grace to win the victory over the forces of the Gentiles in the land. See 2

Cor. 12:9. It could have been that the order of march on the part of the Israelites was not only five in rank, but a five-fold division of the whole army: Vanguard, Rearguard, Wings and Centre. Be that as it may, the principle enunciated was that victory was a matter of faith and grace.

VERSE 15

“Until Yahweh have given your brethren rest, as He hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which Yahweh your God giveth them” — It was on the assurance that the warriors of those tribes would assist in the war in the land, that Moses had granted their request to obtain their inheritance east of the Jordan (Num. 32:20-28).

“Then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses Yahweh’s servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrise” — The men of the eastern tribes faithfully fulfilled this. See Josh. 22:4.

VERSE 16

“And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go” — This willing and enthusiastic agreement of the eastern tribes was a welcome contrast to the murmurings in the wilderness of the earlier generation. Obedience is easy when all goes well, in the full flush of victory and success, and when the future seems assured. The generation that came out of Egypt likewise agreed to do all that Yahweh through Moses requested (Exod. 19:8), but failed to carry out their promise. It is not what

one *agrees* to, but what one *does* that counts. See the Parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-31). The warriors of the eastern tribes however, did fulfil their promise. Unfortunately the warm unity of fellowship expressed at this point of time, did not continue during the epoch of the Judges.

VERSE 17

“According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only Yahweh thy God be with thee, as He was with Moses” — In these words they acknowledged the status and authority of Joshua as Moses’ successor according to Divine appointment.

VERSE 18

“Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him” — They recognised the need for strict military discipline, and endorsed such action.

“He shall be put to death” — This was strict martial law. There was to be no rebellion under Joshua as there had been under Moses. These words coming from their lips comprised their full endorsement of Joshua’s position. Thus Achan fully deserved the punishment he received. He well knew his fate if his action were discovered, as it was. See the warning of Christ. Luke 19:27; Heb. 10:28-29; 12:25.

“Only be thou strong and of a good courage” — This comprised the people’s endorsement of Yahweh’s encouragement to Joshua. See vv. 6,7,9.

CHRONOLOGY TO THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN

40 years were occupied from the 1st Passover in Egypt, to the 1st Passover in the Land: a period of 38 years after being turned back at Kadesh.

- 1st Passover — 15th day 1st month 2513 A.C.
- Moses addressed the people on 1st day 11th month
2552 = 39 yrs 9½ mths.
- Approx. 1 month for final ministrations
= 2552 — 39 yrs 10½ mths.
- Mourning for Moses of 30 days 2552 — 39 yrs 11½ mths.
- Crossing of Jordan and Passover on 15th day of 40th year 2553 A.C.

Exactly forty years of wanderings since leaving Egypt (Num. 14:34; 32:13; Josh. 5:6).

CHAPTER TWO

SURVEYING THE LAND — THE CONFIDENCE OF FAITH

This chapter expresses the Confidence of Faith, for despite the seeming insuperable problems facing Joshua in the conquest of the land neither he nor the people lose heart. The two most difficult obstacles are the swiftly flowing, deep waters of the Jordan then in flood; and the mighty fortress of Jericho guarding the way into the interior. The defences of the city are formidable. Towering, massive walls over twenty feet (6 m) thick stand defiantly in the path of any invader. They have huge towers some 60 feet (about 18 m) or more high. To ascertain exactly what is required to gain access, spies are secretly sent into the city. They make their way to the house of Rahab but are discovered. They are obviously led by God to this woman's house, for they discover in her an unexpected ally. Rahab confesses her faith in the future of Israel, dares the wrath of the king of Jericho by concealing the spies, and extracts from them a promise that she and her house will be delivered when the Divine judgment falls upon the guilty city. In the story of Rahab there is set forth, very plainly, the testimony of salvation and the outworking of faith (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25). The Gospel is two-fold, expressive of the goodness and severity of God. Whilst predicting the doom of Gentile civilisation, it also proclaims a Gospel of salvation for individuals who disassociate themselves from the political, religious and social ways of life about them.

A Secret Excursion Into The Land of the Enemy — vv. 1-3

Spies are secretly sent into Jericho to seek certain information. Their presence is discovered therein, and officers sent to apprehend them.

VERSE 1

“And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly” — As the preparations recorded in the previous chapter were being implemented, the events of this chapter were either fulfilled, or were in the course of being fulfilled. The Israelites were encamped at Abel-

Shittim, *the Meadow of Acacias* (Num. 33:49), on the eastern flats of the Jordan on the plains of Moab below Mt. Nebo. It has been identified as Tell el-Hamman, opposite Jericho. Acacias still fringe the upper terraces of the Jordan. It had been from here that some of the Israelites had been lured into the licentious rites of Baal worship by the Moabitess women (Num. 25:1; Mic. 6:5), with the sad result that some 24,000 died by plague. Today the Wadi es-Suweib breaks from the steep hill country that reaches upwards into Gilead, and the road proceeds over the Allenby Bridge.

CHAPTER TWO

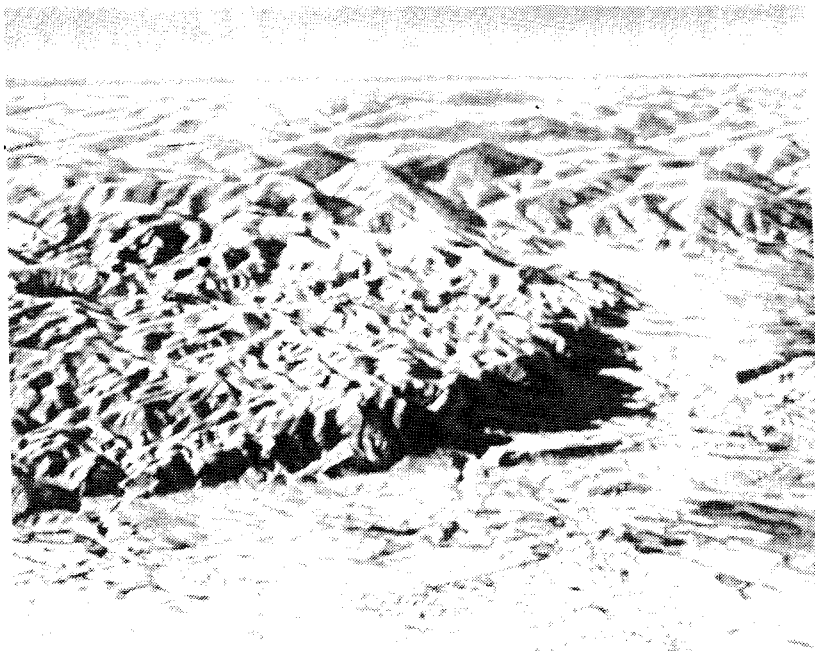
Joshua sent two spies in contrast to the twelve sent by Moses. This may have recalled the two faithful spies (Caleb and Joshua) who, on their return, gave a true assessment of the land and the ability of Israel to conquer it. Evidently Joshua sent the spies secretly, without the people of Israel knowing; a precaution against a repetition of the previous disastrous use of spies from Kadesh. The word used *cheresh* is susceptible of various meanings. The word is from a root which denotes earthenware craft, and therefore suggests that they were disguised as potters or sellers of earthenware. But it also means to be shrewd and silent. So evidently they were men with ability to act skilfully on their own account, and keep their mouths closed. The Jews paraphrase this statement, rendering it, "*disguised as potters or sellers of earthenware*". The spies were young in years (Josh. 6:23) but mature in conduct, and therefore just the type required for the purpose Joshua had in mind.

"Saying, Go view the land, even Jericho" — Jericho signifies Place of

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

Fragrance. It is also known as the "City of Palms" (Deut. 34:3; Jud. 1:16). It lies 825 feet (247 m) below sea level in a very fertile part, watered by a copious spring of water, and commanding the pass to the uplands of Palestine. The fortress itself was only a few acres in extent, but was doubtless the citadel around which many people dwelt. Because of its depth below sea level, the area enjoys a warm, almost tropical, climate and is prolific in growth of trees and crops. In 1931, John Garstang excavated the ruins of ancient Jericho, and claimed to have established the date of its capture as approximately 1400 B.C. This conforms to Bible chronology, but his conclusions have been challenged by subsequent excavations by A. Albright and K. Kenyon. They provide a different dating basing it on Egyptian chronology, which, however, is also in dispute. In spite of the challenges to his conclusions, Garstang maintained his belief until his death. Previously he had doubted the veracity of the Bible, but his excavations at Jericho convinced him of its truth.

"And they went, and came into an har-



The Wilderness of Judah and Jordan Valley as seen from Mount Nebo.

lot's house"—No doubt they were guided in the steps that they took, and this brought them to the establishment of Rahab who, though a harlot, ultimately professed and manifested her faith (Heb. 11:31; James 2:25), witnessing to the truth of the Lord's observation (Matt. 21:31-32). Evidently Rahab advertised her profession, and the men were able to recognise her house as a harlot's establishment. In view of their quest, this was an appropriate place to use as their headquarters, for the presence of strange men in such a place would more likely go unnoticed.

"Named Rahab"—Her name signifies *Enlargement*, and doubtless indicates her love of life, which later she directed to the Truth. It also illustrates the principle described in Psa. 18:19; 118:5; See Matt. 21:31-32. Rahab's salvation implies that even doomed Canaanites could escape by genuine and fullhearted repentance, in accordance with the principle later expressed by Jeremiah (Jer. 18:7-8). But they could only do so by renouncing their Canaanitish affiliations and embracing the hope and status of Israel. God is always ready to provide exceptions; though it must be recognised that Rahab, like Ruth, was not accepted as a Canaanite, but as an Israelite adopted into the nation (1 Tim. 2:4).

"And lodged there"—The two spies did not enter Rahab's house for immoral purposes but for rest. See v. 8.

VERSE 2

"And it was told the king of Jericho"—The presence of the massed Israelites on the opposite bank of the River Jordan, and the report that had preceded their presence there of remarkable victories won against redoubtable foes (v. 11), caused the city to be on the alert for any signs of espionage. The presence of two strange men, possibly spies was reported to the King, for Jericho was a royal city, as excavations of J. Garstang established.

"Saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country"—This report indicates the vigilance exercised by the watchmen of Jericho.

VERSE 3

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

King indicates that he held no suspicions regarding Rahab.

Unexpected Help — vv. 4-7

The two intrepid spies lodge in the one house in Jericho where the presence of strangers would probably go unnoticed. Rahab is the only person in Jericho who would have detected the identity of the men and still spared their lives. She with the rest of Jericho had heard of the victory over the Amorites, and recognised this as the hand of God for Israel fought in the name of Yahweh. Rahab was discerning enough to believe that the God of Israel would have mercy on any who helped His people. Thus the steps of the spies were ordered by Yahweh (Psa. 37:23), and when messengers came seeking them, Rahab protected them.

VERSE 4

"And the woman took the two men, and hid them"—The Hebrew is in the singular number: "hid him", suggesting that she took each one by turn and hid him in a separate place. Most likely they met her outside, for it was the custom of harlots to solicit trade in that fashion (Gen. 38:14). Her keen eyes recognised them as Israelites. Having pondered the cause of their success in war, and realising their danger she hid them in her house before the messengers from the King arrived.

"And said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were"—When the messengers from the King came, she had her story ready. She realised that it would be folly to deny knowledge of the men, for the approach of the men to her was done publicly; so she acknowledged the fact that they had accosted her, but claimed that she did not recognise them as strangers.

VERSE 5

"And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whether the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly for ye shall overtake them"—Her story sounded plausible, and as the matter was urgent, and they knew where to find Rahab if her story proved false, they accepted it and acted upon it.

VERSE 6

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

upon the roof? — Flax would provide a satisfactory hiding place. It grows about 3 feet (1m) tall, and is about as thick as cane. It is quite a significant plant. It has a five petalled, beautiful blue flower, with violet markings at the base. Flax was pulled up by the roots and exposed to the sun and air for considerable time before it was manufactured. After treatment it was woven into linen to form garments for priests, as well as other purposes. In symbol, such garments represent the righteous deeds of saints (Rev. 19:8). Rahab had spread her stalks of flax over the flat roof of her house. In a way, they were a figure of the woman herself. She had the potential for righteousness but had to await the heat of the sun and the process of development or maturity. As a harlot she represented those whose friendship is with the world (James 4:4), but she was intelligent enough to recognise true Providence in her life, and to risk her future with her associates by manifesting her faith in God. She is an object lesson to all called to a knowledge of the Truth.

VERSE 7

“And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate” — The knowledge that the Israelites had sent spies into Jericho increased the perturbation of the people, so that extra precautions were taken. The “door of entrance” was shut against the Truth.

Faith Among the Infidels — vv. 8-11

As the messengers of the King of Jericho continue their vain search, Rahab confesses to the two spies the conviction of faith she has developed in pondering the success of the Israelitish campaign. The record of the signal defeat of the Egyptians, forty years earlier, is still retained in memory, and together with the more recent defeats of the Amorite chieftains is proof positive to her that the presence of supernatural power with Israel can alone account for it. This becomes the basis of her motivating faith.

VERSE 8

“And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof” — With the pursuers of the Israelites safely out of the way, Rahab ascends to the flat-topped roof of her home to confer with the two spies before they give themselves over to sleep.

VERSE 9

“And she said unto the men, I know that Yahweh hath given you the land” — It was faith that motivated Rahab in her words to the Israelitish spies (Heb. 11:31). Faith is conviction (Heb. 11:1), born of an intellectual appreciation of facts (Rom. 10:17). In her address to the spies, Rahab revealed herself to have been a woman of great intelligence. Whilst the rest of the city was paralysed with fear, she worked out in her mind the significance of the amazing events she had heard, and which had set many tongues wagging in Jericho. She had evidently sought out as much as she could about the Israelites, even to the name of their God, and she clearly saw that the history of this remarkable people witnessed to His overshadowing hand. This, in turn, taught her, that the God of Israel is mighty and able to redeem. Unconsciously she gave expression to the purpose Yahweh had in mind in performing so miraculously on behalf of His people, for it was designed to bring to the attention of others His power and His purpose in the earth (See Exod. 9:16). The manifestation of Divine power at the Red Sea had greatly impressed Israel (Exod. 15:6), and Jethro (Exod. 18:11), and now Rahab. Significantly, all three then impressed, will find a place in the Kingdom of the future. Israel will be there, of course; but so also will the Rechabite descendants of Jethro (Jer. 35:18-19), whilst through Rahab came the birth of the Lord (Matt. 1:5). As Jethro was induced by Yahweh's manifestation of power in Israel to accept its hope, so also now was Rahab. “Yahweh hath given you the land”, she told the spies. This is the language of faith (Rom. 4:17). Rahab thus accepted the hope of Israel. Her use of the Divine name and titles under the circumstances is not strange (cp. v. 11-12), for they not only be the topic of conversation among the threatened Canaanites, but she would also have heard of them from the spies. Her faith was developed through a careful assessment of facts ascertained by investigation, for that is how faith develops (Rom. 10:17). As representative of the Gentile Ecclesia in Jericho she pleaded for her household.

“And that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you” — The fear that swept Jericho was such as to undermine any confidence the Canaanites may have had in successfully defeating Joshua. This

is a repetition of the fear that previously had enervated Egypt (Exod. 12:33; 15:16; 23:27), and a precursor of fear that will weaken the hands of Gentiles at the second coming of the Lord. As today, it was a time of perplexity for the leaders of Jericho (Luke 21:26).

VERSE 10

“For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og whom ye utterly destroyed” — Rahab stated that she had “heard” what Yahweh did. That is how faith comes (Rom. 10:17) and she was motivated by faith (Heb. 11:31). Yahweh’s purpose in hardening the heart of Pharaoh was that the wonder of the deliverance He effected for Israel would be clearly obvious to all the world, and that His name “may be declared throughout all the earth” (Exod. 9:16). Rahab’s words revealed how completely that had been done (See also Exod. 15:2-6). A similar reaction will follow Armageddon and the deliverance and restoration of Israel (Jer. 32:20).

VERSE 11

“And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you” — The effect of unreasoning fear and cowardice is to weaken previously strong hands and provide for the seeds of defeat. See Deut. 1:28. Not only Jericho, but all Canaan were deeply concerned at the approach of the Israelites, and had heard reports of the marvellous victories that had attended their arms. See Josh. 5:1; 7:5. In like manner, the remarkable circumstances that have attended the revival of Israel in modern times have brought the attention of the world to the hand of God therein manifested. They are “His witnesses” to His power and purpose (Isa. 43:10). In Jericho the very report that stimulated the faith of Rahab had paralysed the capacity of its warriors to effectively resist. A similar reaction is about to take place in the modern world. Christ predicted that fear will weaken the hands of the Gentiles, and at the same time give encouragement to his followers: “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

“For Yahweh your God, He is God in

heaven above, and in earth beneath” — His power is not limited to the remoteness of heaven above, but takes hold of the practical issues of life. Rahab’s statement is a remarkable one. She recognised the angelic ministrations by which victory had come to Israel, and acknowledged that above the angels of heaven is the supreme Deity, Yahweh (see Deut. 4:35-38; Psa. 83:18). Moreover, in using the Divine Name she must have done so with understanding; perhaps through the explanatory exposition of the spies. The Name of Yahweh guarantees the continuance of the nation of Israel; it is exclusive to it (see Exod. 3:15,18). Therefore, by her use of this Name, Rahab conceded that the exclusive channel of true worship is through Israel (Eph. 2:11-12). Her action was the exact counterpart of Pharaoh’s action, for when he was apprised of the identity and purpose of Yahweh he arrogantly and blasphemously retorted: “Who is Yahweh, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not Yahweh” (Exod. 5:2). Moses had instructed Israel: “I will publish the name of Yahweh; ascribe ye greatness unto our Elohim” (Deut. 32:3). This the spies had done to Rahab in the fear-stricken and doomed city of Jericho, and so assisted in her redemption and that of her family. “Yahweh your God” signifies *He will become Mighty Ones for Israel*. It witnesses to the purpose of Yahweh to reveal Himself in those of Israel, and of no other race. To participate in His benefits, Gentiles have to become Israelites. Rahab had to change her allegiance from Jericho to Yahweh (Gal. 6:16). To acknowledge that Yahweh is “Elohim (Mighty Ones) in heaven above, and in earth beneath” is to acknowledge His power in the heavenly ministration of angels (see Psa. 103:19-21), as well as in those on earth, such as Joshua and his associates, who are Mighty Ones because of the presence and manifestation of Yahweh in and through them. In her confession of faith Rahab revealed herself to be a most thoughtful and intelligently discriminating woman.

Rahab Pleads For Salvation With Israel — vv. 12-14

Recognising the supernatural witness presented by the remarkable victories of Israel, and acknowledging Yahweh as the exclusive God of this nation, Rahab realises that her only hope of salvation is to throw in her lot with them. She therefore pleads for her life and the lives of her family, and because she is prepared to manifest

her faith by her works the spies agree to her request.

VERSE 12

“Now therefore, I pray you swear unto me by Yahweh” — The word “swear” is from the Hebrew *shaba’* derived from *sheba*, “seven”. And because seven is the number of an oath which confirms a covenant, it literally signifies to *seven oneself*, as if by reciting a promise seven times. Such a promise confirmed by an oath becomes irrevocably binding, and therefore is a guarantee of its fulfilment (see Josh. 9:15,18-20). Rahab asked the spies to do this in the name of Yahweh, for she recognised them as His representatives.

“Since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father’s house” — The Hebrew word rendered “kindness” is *chesed*. It is a word that Hebrews find difficult to exactly express. A cognate word is rendered in the text of Ps. 86:2 as “holy”, and in the margin as “*one whom Thou favourest*”. It expresses that invisible but powerful link of affection that binds parents to their children and vice versa. There is inbuilt into our natures a preference for those of our own, such as Yahweh as Father shows towards His children. He singles them out for particular marks of favour and consideration, such as Rahab now requests of the spies. As the word expresses that kindness and consideration that in normal relationships is reserved for one’s immediate family, Rahab, in effect, pleaded with the spies to be joined with the family of Israel. She asks this favour not only on her own behalf, but for all who are related to her. Yahweh understands such feelings, and will grant them conditionally upon the relatives of those of His family performing their part to justify them.

“And give me a true token” — This is better rendered “a token of truth”. This is a sign of sincerity based upon the Truth that salvation would be granted her and those with her when the city fell. The token given is the scarlet cord referred to later.

VERSE 13

“And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death” — This is the natural prayer of anybody drawn by the power of the Truth. There is an inbuilt desire for the salvation of those for whom they have par-

ticular love, and Yahweh is prepared, on conditions, to respond to that affection. Therefore, the angels, in saving Lot from the threatened holocaust of Sodom gave opportunity for those of his family to escape also from the doomed city. Moses, on making request to leave Egypt to worship demanded that the women and children of Israel leave as well (Exod. 10:9). So, when one embraces the Truth, earnest prayer should be made for the salvation of those members of the family with whom there are established links of love. Yahweh obviously respects such requests, and will grant them if those who are the subjects of them carry out the conditions by which alone it can be done. If Rahab’s family refused to shelter in the house they would not have been saved.

It is significant that, in listing her family, Rahab made no mention of a husband! Later, she married Salmon, a prominent member of the tribe of Judah, and so became the honoured predecessor of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5). It is conjectured that Salmon was one of the spies sent into Jericho. It satisfies the type if this were so, for she, as representative of the Gentile bride of Christ, finally married the one to whom she owed her life and that of her family.

VERSE 14

“And the men answered her, Our life for your’s, if ye utter not this our business” — The word for “life” is *nepshesh* or soul. The words of the spies are similar to those of Christ: “He that findeth his life (soul) shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matt. 10:39). Rahab had placed her life in jeopardy by her action of grace towards the spies, but would receive a greater life, together with hope of eternal life, in Israel. She saw that it had “promise of the life that then was, and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. 4:8).

“And it shall be, when Yahweh hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee” — That which the spies offered Rahab is that which is offered Gentiles through the Gospel: an inheritance in the Kingdom of God when it is established upon the earth. Note the Lord’s comment, and its application to Rahab (Matt. 21:31-32). The word “kindly” is *chesed*; so that the spies promised to extend to Rahab such grace or favour as is normally reserved for members of a family; and to do so “truly”, that is, in accordance with the Truth which she had espoused.

The Spies Escape — vv. 15-22

Secretly Rahab lets the spies down by a cord through the window, instructs them how to evade their pursuers, and makes arrangements for her own salvation and that of her family when the city falls to the Israelites. This is in accordance with the conditions of salvation given her by the spies as to the conduct of both her and her family if they are to avoid the Divine judgment about to be poured out upon the doomed city.

VERSE 15

“Then she let them down by a cord through the window” — The escape route of the spies was similar to that of David when about to be taken by Saul’s thugs sent to kill him (1 Sam. 19:12), and that of Paul when faced with the murderous opposition of the Jews of Damascus (Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33). It illustrates the assurance given by Paul that if one performs the will of Yahweh and is brought into danger thereby “a way of escape” will be provided (1 Cor. 10:13). Sometimes that “way of escape” has been through death unto a more glorious awakening in the Age to come (Heb. 11:35). The word for “cord” is *chebel*, rendered *company* in 1 Sam. 10:5,10. It denotes a rope made strong by the various strands twisted together. When related to a company, the term expresses the strength of that community by the mutual co-operation of each member, each representing a strand. It was the word used by Samuel for the “company of prophets” he gathered together to resist the apostasy evident in Israel in his day. Here the rope is figuratively representative of the link between the community in Rahab’s house and Israel as represented by the spies. The Hebrew word is different from that rendered “thread” in v. 18.

“For her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall” — Young renders “upon” as *in*, that is it formed part of the wall. Garstang claimed to have found evidence of such houses built on the walls of the fortress city. He wrote: “A further source of weakness arose from the building of houses against or actually upon the walls. They crowded thickly against the inner face of the main wall, and on the north and west were built high above the normal town level, upon foundations provided by narrow cross-walls that bounded the ramparts together, and timbers that bridged the intervening space (i.e. between the double walls of the city —

HPM). The need for building-room within the cramped limits of the new city had evidently become acute with the increased numbers and prosperity of the community under Egyptian protection, and in this age of apparent security over-powered military considerations; for these dwellings would be a serious hindrance to the defenders in a siege, besides tending to put an undue stress from within upon the overloaded and untrustworthy foundations” (*The Story of Jericho*, p. 111).

Again: “. . . its flat-roofed houses . . . had even been allowed to encroach upon the walls and the space between, which in parts was bridged by timbers or crossed by narrow bonding-walls that served as a foundation. As this space was some fifteen feet at most, these dwellings must have been small and slight, perched precariously over a sort of tunnel running round the city, and reached presumably by walking along the walls from certain points that were accessible, or over the neighbours’ roofs as is not uncommon in hill-side villages of the Near East today. The military drawbacks of such a cumbering of the fortifications were obvious, but apparently disregarded . . .” (pp. 168-169).

This description of the cluttered city is interesting, even significant. It is obvious from the fact that Rahab’s house was on the city wall, that Jericho, typical of Babylon the Great today, had a population problem due to peoples converging upon the cities. That is a modern problem also, in all parts of the world in this pre-adventual era. The crowded megacities of today are creating problems beyond the ability of man to solve, not only those of living space, but of moral, social and political issues as well.

So it was in ancient Jericho as its people awaited the threatened invasion.

It is necessary to repeat what has already been stated, that John Garstang’s conclusions have been challenged by subsequent archaeologists who dispute particularly the chronological periods claimed by him. They do this, mainly, on the relationship of Israelite to Egyptian chronology, claiming, for example, that the dating of the city excavated by Garstang was about 1400 B.C. whereas, Rameses II reigned about 1200 B.C. The former date, however, agrees with Biblical chronology, whilst there is so much discrepancy among Egyptologists as to the correct dating of the various Pharaohs that it could well be that they are wrong, and not Garstang. Of one thing we are sure:

the Bible is true. The ruins of Jericho testify to that as do also many other even more compelling facts.

VERSE 16

“And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way” — Jericho is situated upon a background of steep mountains that rise precipitously from the Jordan Plain. One of these mountains is called the Mount of Temptation. Deep valleys cut into these harsh, rugged mountains affording good hiding places for the spies.

VERSE 17

“And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear” — A responsibility rested upon Rahab to which the spies now give expression. She would not be saved unless she carried out what they demanded. They proceeded, therefore, to tell her the “whole counsel of God”, leaving it with her to fulfil their instructions. It is needful for those who preach the Gospel to follow their example. Paul did so, and stated: “I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27). See the warning of Ezekiel to appointed watchmen (Ezek. 33:1-9).

The Sign In The Window — vv. 18-21

Rahab is requested to identify her house when the Israelitish attack is made, so that those therein may be saved. Any who absent themselves from the house will suffer the fate that awaits the whole city; for only those strictly obedient to Joshua's word are to be saved. A sign is to be displayed in the window identifying the house as that of Rahab and her family. She, on behalf of her family, has shown spiritual insight (vv. 10-11), a desire for salvation (vv. 12-13), an active faith manifested by works (vv. 14-21). The scarlet thread therefore becomes a symbol of the Gospel actively embraced; in other words, faith manifested by works.

VERSE 18

“Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window” — Every word of these instructions is significant. For example, the word “line” is from the Hebrew *tiqvah*. This word is from a root to bind together

and is figuratively expressive of expectancy. In other places, *tiqvah* is rendered “hope”. See Psa. 71:5; Prov. 19:18; 26:12 Jer. 17:13 etc. The modern Israeli city of Petah Tiqvah (*Door of Hope*) is taken from Hos. 2:15. Recognising the meaning of the word *tiqvah*, Rahab was instructed to prominently display the symbol of her hope in the window for all to see. This was the thread of scarlet. That thread was not the rope that let down the men, but an inconspicuous thread that would be seen only by those looking for it. How like the Gospel message! Such a thread (Heb. *chwi*, a string), though not easy to see, would wave in the breeze and so attract any on the lookout for it. Again, what an appropriate type of the Gospel message! It is unknown to the majority of people, inconspicuous among the Gentiles, but there to be seen by those on the look out for it.

There is a great similarity between what Rahab is instructed to do, and what was required of the Israelites, and, indeed, what they celebrated immediately after passing over the Jordan: the Passover. They had to put blood upon the doorposts and lintels of their home, she a scarlet thread at the window; they had to gather within their individual houses, she had to draw all the members of her household together. They were not to leave the appointed house on pain of death, the same restriction involved those who desired to share Rahab's hope.

“Which thou didst let us down by” —

This statement relates to the window, not to the rope. The NIV renders: “the window through which you let us down”. A thick stout rope would have been necessary to let the spies down; a scarlet thread was all that was required to attract the attention of people to the hope of Rahab.

The thread was scarlet in colour. This is obtained from the blood of an insect. See note on scarlet (Exod. 25:4). Reference to the insect, or worm, from whence was derived the scarlet or crimson dye is found in Psa. 22:6 in relation to the sacrificial offering of the Lord.

As noted above, and in contrast to the thread, the word for rope is *chebel*. In 1 Sam. 10:5,10 it is rendered “company” in the phrase “company of prophets”. Samuel organised this “company (rope) of prophets”, to provide a lifeline for those of Israel who desired help. The word denotes a rope, as strands twisted together; a company, as tied together, or a chain, as

linked together. It is from a word to wind tightly, as rope, to bind together, especially by a pledge. This was the case with Rahab and the spies. The *chebel*, or company of prophets in Samuel's day constituted an Ecclesia within the Ecclesia of Israel. Unity among its members provided it with strength to perform.

“And thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee” —

Whilst there was time Rahab was expected to preach the Gospel to those who would listen. The invitation is expressive of the care and lovingkindness of Yahweh. Those close to Rahab, for whom she had a particular love, were her first concern to share the goodness Yahweh extended to her. Such consideration was also shown towards Abraham, Lot, Israel and others. The benefits of the Gospel extend to those who are near and dear to believers, even though to share in the ultimate benefits of eternal life, requires their personal endorsement and identification therewith.

VERSE 19

“And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless; and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him” — These terms of instruction and restraint are similar to those given concerning the keeping of the Passover (Exod. 12:13,23), the safety of the Cities of Refuge (Num. 35:26-28); and those who were placed on conditional probation like Joab (1 Kings 2:36-42). Similar principles apply to those who embrace Christ. They are warned to “abide” with him if they desire to enjoy ultimate salvation (John 14:2; 15:4-7). To do otherwise, to drift from the house (Ecclesia) will result in sharing the fate awaiting the Gentiles.

VERSE 20

“And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear” — The hope of the Gospel also brings believers into relation with the oath of Yahweh (Gen. 22:16; Psa. 89:34-37; Luke 1:73), but the benefits are conditional upon obedience.

VERSE 21

“And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away,

and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window” — Rahab's actions reveal that she was not only intelligent in recognising the hand of God in the world events, but truthful and prepared to act accordingly. She gave up sin, and sought the salvation of her house. She proclaimed to others the message of salvation by the display of the scarlet thread in her window. The word “line” is from the Hebrew *tiqvah*, signifying hope, so she prominently displayed her hope, a hope based upon sacrifice.

The Encouraging Report of The Spies — vv. 22-24

Using discretion, the spies lay hidden for three days. They then return to Joshua with a report of encouragement and joy — so unlike the faithless report tendered the nation by the ten cowardly spies 38 years earlier!

VERSE 22

“And they sent, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days until the pursuers were returned” — The number three in the Bible has the figurative significance of completeness or of resurrection. The scarlet prefigured Christ's death (Psa. 22:6), and the three days of hiding, his burial. The return to the camp of Israel foreshadowed his resurrection (Rom. 4:25). The joy of the Israelites at the report of the spies was matched by the joy among the friends of Christ at his words of comfort foreshadowed his resurrection.

“And the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not” — As the pursuers carefully searched for the spies, so the soldiers guarded the tomb of the Lord for an equal length of time, but in vain (Matt. 27:64).

VERSE 23

“So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them” — In the words of the spies, Joshua received confirmation of the promise of Yahweh through Moses (Deut. 31:7-8).

VERSE 24

“And they said unto Joshua, Truly Yahweh hath delivered into our hands all the land” — Their experiences confirmed the promise made to Joshua (Josh. 1:8), and that made with Moses before Sinai

(Exod. 23:31). See the constant assertion of this in the Book of Joshua: 6:2; 8:1; 21:44. Note also the expression of faith: "Yahweh hath delivered into our hands all the land . . ." He *hath* done it. This is the vernacular of God Himself who "quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they are" (Rom. 4:17). Faith looks to the future with the eyes of God, and sees His promises fulfilled (2 Cor. 4:18). How different were these encouraging words from the discouraging, faith-destroying report of the spies sent out by Moses (Num. 13)! Moses' song of victory (Exod. 15:1-18) predicted the fear of the inhabitants of the Land of Promise, which the spies now reported to Joshua.

Yahweh had promised to send such a fear before Israel (Exod. 23:37).

"For even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us" — These words echo those of Exod. 15:15. It was not only Jericho that was affected (see Josh. 5:1). The hearts of the normally warlike Canaanites "melted," and so destroyed the urge and initiative to act vigorously and successfully. Fear and cowardice can undermine initiative, and destroy determination and courage. An army dominated by defeatism is already half-ready to turn and flee. The expressions "fear" (v. 9) and "faint" are from the same Hebrew word and signify to "faint with fear".



A cutting through the ancient walls of Jericho looking towards what is today known as the Mount of The Temptation.

CHAPTER THREE

CROSSING THE JORDAN THE ACTION OF FAITH

The report of the spies strengthens the faith of the Israelites. In confidence they prepare to cross the Jordan, even though this means they will no longer enjoy the protection afforded by its waters. Already the host of Israel has removed from the Plain of Acacias to the bank of the River Jordan. The people see a river in flood. A miracle is needed to cross its fast flowing waters and that is exactly what Yahweh provides. The chapter is divisible into four sections: Instructions for Crossing — vv. 1-5; The Ark Leads the Way — vv. 6-8; The Assurance of Victory — vv. 9-13; The People Pass Over — vv. 14-17. In the amazing miracle of the crossing of the Jordan, the Israelites have an answer to the question: "Is anything too hard for Yahweh?" They learn that He is all-sufficient for their needs. Key verse of the chapter is v.6; and with it can be linked vv. 5,17. The amazing miracle is matched by the remarkable type that it sets forth; for the passage of the Jordan foreshadows the believer's figurative death and resurrection with Christ, and the new relationship established in him.

Instructions For Crossing Jordan — vv. 1-5

After receiving the report from the spies, Joshua orders the camp at Shittim to be broken up; the first change of location since the death of Moses. Three days of preparation and instruction are thus occupied; and then the order is given for the Ark to move forward separating it by a distance of 2,000 cubits from the army which afterwards should follow. The Israelites are ordered to make preparations of personal sanctification because of the significance of the occasion.

VERSE 1

"And Joshua rose early in the morning" — To rise early in the morning seemed to be habitual with Joshua (see Josh. 6:12,15; 7:16; 8:10). It was the custom also of his great antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ (see Mark 1:35). The Lord knew the value of the morning hours. He rose while the world was still. He saw when the light spread abroad from the east with fresh to-

kens of his Father's presence, and he joined with all Creation in praising the everywhere presence of God. Later the personal activities of the day with its accumulating problems would dominate the mind; but in those early hours, alone with his God, he could seek and receive the encouraging communion, and enjoy the fellowship of sharing his undivided attention with Yahweh. Let us, too, think of God before the world demands our attention. References to early rising are found about 35 times in Scripture; and from certain passages it implies the early dawn. See Josh. 6:15; 2 Kings 3:22; Mark 1:35.

"And they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel" — This is a distance of about 7 miles or 10 kms. The probable order of events is as follows: 30 days mourning for Moses (Deut. 34:8); on 3rd Abib the spies were sent out (Josh. 2:1) on 6th Abib they returned (Josh. 2:23); on 7th Abib the camp removed from Shittim to the banks of the Jordan (Ch. 3:1), and the command

of Ch. 1:11 was issued. On the 10th Abib (the day the Passover Lamb had been selected in Egypt — see Exod. 12:3) the river was crossed (Ch. 4:19). This was followed by the preparation of the Passover on 14th Abib.

“And lodged there before they passed over” — It was while they lodged here, and after the spies returned, that the instructions of Josh. 1:11 were given.

VERSE 2

“And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host” — This period of time brought the Israelites to 10th Abib, exactly forty years from the time that the previous generation made preparation to leave Egypt by selecting the Passover Lamb. For the appointed “officers” see the note at Ch. 1:10.

VERSE 3

“And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it” — The reference is to Levites who were priests (Deut. 31:9; Josh. 8:33). All priests were Levites, but all Levites were not priests; only those of the family of Aaron. The command to the priests to bear the Ark was a change in the normal procedure up to that time, for previously the Ark, covered from sight was borne on its staves by the Kohathite Levites (Num. 4:5-20). Now the priests themselves are to do so. This surely foreshadows the change of ministry following the manifestation of Christ to Israel and the world, for it then became the duty of the Apostles and their associates to minister as priests in such service, particularly in displaying Christ as the Mercy Seat and Ark and in leading believers to baptism (Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5).

“Then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it” — When the Children of Israel left Sinai, the Ark temporarily went in advance (Num. 10:33); but its normal position was in the midst of Israel (Num. 10:21). Now, however, it takes the lead. Christ did likewise, acting the part of the Good Shepherd (Matt. 8:19; John 10:11; Rev. 14:4). He was the antitypical Ark of the Covenant (Heb. 9:1-12). As his particular representatives, the Apostles also took the lead, setting an example for others to follow (1 Cor. 4:9; 12:28; 11:1). They were as priests bearing the Ark, for they presented Christ to all who would heed.

VERSE 4

“Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure” — The distance measured is a little more than half a mile, or nearly a kilometre. The separation of distance emphasised the holiness of the Ark teaching a powerful lesson. Borne by the priests, it set forth the lesson of Christ, publicly uplifted before all by the Apostles.

“Come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go” — The Ark (the Lord Jesus Christ — Heb. 9:11) previously was concealed in the midst of Israel (Num. 10:21), as the coming of Messiah was concealed in the teaching of the Law and the Prophets; but it is now openly made manifest before all called upon to follow it. So it was when the Lord appeared in Israel 1900 years ago. As the Ark was borne by the priests, so the priests of the New Testament proclaimed the Gospel before all men. It passed over the Jordan about two thousand cubits before Israel did, as Christ ministered to the people about two thousand years before the last of those to be saved will be brought in. It thus “showed the way ye must go”. By the proclamation of Christ, the descending waters of the Jordan were turned back to provide a way for his followers to go.

“For ye have not passed this way heretofore” — This was literally true, but hidden behind the statement is a powerful spiritual truth. Jesus Christ proclaimed that he was “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). He set before men “a way” of which they previously were ignorant. It was a way predicted in the Old Testament, but not until then practically revealed. It is the Way of Grace; and Israel, under the Law, had not passed that way heretofore. The Hebrew, however, literally expresses this as “since the third day”. The number three is prominent in the *Book of Joshua* (See Ch. 1:11; 2:16,22; 3:2; 9:16); and in Biblical numerology it represents *completeness* and *resurrection*. It was on the third day that the earth emerged from its burial under the water, and life first appeared upon it (Gen. 1:9-13). The Lord was in the tomb for three days, and his resurrection to eternal life confirmed the covenants of promise (Rom. 1:4; 15:8-9).

VERSE 5

“And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow

Yahweh will do wonders among you — The word “Sanctify” denotes to *separate* oneself. This involved a ceremonial cleansing by washing. Such a washing points to the Laver at which the priests had to wash before attending the altar, or entering the Holy Place. Israel, as a Kingdom of Priests, was about to enter the Holy Land, and as such it was appropriate that the people go through the motions of priesthood. The normal priestly washing in the Laver, as with this ceremonial cleansing by the people, typed the “washing of water by the Word” (Eph. 5:26). A person is “washed” when he is “cleansed by the Word” (John 15:3). The word teaches him to distinguish between right and wrong, and therefore brings him into a responsible position before his God. He knows what is required of him, and is now motivated by knowledge to do it.

Joshua declared that Yahweh would “do wonders”. This, indeed, is a Divine characteristic. See Psa. 86:10 cp. Psa. 114:1-8. Wonders are performed by Yahweh in the lives of His servants, for by the power of the Word He changes their characters, and will ultimately bestow upon them eternal life.

The Ark Moves Forward — vv. 6-8

At the command of Joshua, and before the eyes of the stationary people, the Ark of the Covenant is borne in state from their midst in the Tabernacle towards the eastern bank of the River Jordan.

VERSE 6

“And Joshua spake unto the priests saying, Take up the ark of the Covenant, and pass over before the people” — Previously it was the Levites who bore the Ark. See note v. 3. See how completely the type is fulfilled in the antitype. Until the first advent of the Lord, the “revelation of the mystery” was hidden in the “oracles of God” “committed into their care” (Rom. 3:2). It was not then known as it has been since revealed to the people (Rom. 16:26; Eph. 3:3-5). But with the death and resurrection of the Lord, the fulness of the revelation made known. It was publicly manifested, taught and “borne aloft” by the “priests” of 1 Pet. 2:9. By their testimony the descending waters of the figurative Jordan, pouring into the sea of death, and representative of humanity, have been arrested and turned back.

“And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people” — In

silent wonder the people watched the priests with the Ark move towards the swiftly running, wide waters of the Jordan.

VERSE 7

“And Yahweh said unto Joshua” — He also openly spake to the antitypical Joshua, or Jesus, as he made his way to the Jordan. See Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22.

“This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel” — See the fulfilment of this promise in Ch. 4:14. Similar expressions are made in regard to Solomon (1 Chron. 29:25; 2 Chron. 1:1); Christ (Psa. 18:35; John 17:1); and Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles (Phil. 1:20). At his first advent the Lord “began to be magnified in the sight of all Israel as he made his way to the Jordan to be baptised. In the Age to come, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Joshua of the New Testament, will be magnified above all, having been given the Name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9-11).

“That they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee” — This is the purpose of such magnification in any age. The resurrection of Christ magnified him above all others, testifying that He is the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:3-4).

VERSE 8

“And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan” — The purpose of their entrance into Jordan was to open a way that would permit all who were called to pass over (v. 17). See Luke 9:30-31. The word “decease” in this place literally signifies *exodus*, or a way of escape.

The Assurance of Victory — vv. 9-13

Joshua encourages the people with assurances of victory against the forces ranged against them in Canaan. Their baptism in faith in the Jordan will ensure their final triumph if they obey.

VERSE 9

“And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of Yahweh your God” — In the words that follow, Joshua basically preached the Gospel unto the people, encouraging them with the assurance that the victory of the crossing would be followed by victory over the enemies of the land. The Jordan,

at that time, would have been in flood, and the possibilities of crossing through it without some visible means of help such as a bridge, would have been impossible. So it is with the fruits of baptism. Forgiveness of sins is beyond the ability of flesh to grant or obtain, but the miracle of baptism accomplishes it. Similarly under Joshua, the people were shown the problem and were instructed by Joshua how they could overcome it before they "passed through the waters". In the antitype, it is necessary to instruct people for baptism. When a contact hearkens to sound words of instruction, he hears the voice of the antitypical Joshua (Rom. 10:17).

VERSE 10

"And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you" — By the miracle the people were about to experience they would recognise that God is a living reality. And does not recognition of the resurrection of Christ, and the impact of Christ on the life of a believer, witness that God lives (Num. 14:21)? Is it not a miracle when previously fleshly-minded people are converted and proceed to sacrifice personal desire to conform to the requirements of Yahweh (see 1 Cor. 6:9-11)? Does not every properly motivated convert witness that Yahweh is a "living power" in his life? And note that the word "God" in Joshua's statement is *El*. Power. A motivating faith requires that we recognise this, for "he that cometh unto God must believe that He *is* and that He *becomes* a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

The greatest privilege granted Israel was to hear the voice of the living God and continue to live. So declares Moses in Deut. 5:26, where this title first occurs. It is always used in contrast with idols latent or expressed. See Acts 14:15; 1 Thess. 1:9. The Jews of Christ's day were actually idolaters though imagining that they worshipped the true God. However, they went through the motions of worship in a legalistic fashion but did not allow Him any power in their lives. To them He was not a living Reality, and so they earned His rebuke. In Deut. 5:26, the title is *Chayim Elohim*; here it is *Chayim El*: living Power. *Chayim* is plural, implying that the lives of humanity are in the hands of the great *El* or Power of the heavens. See the use of the title in 1 Sam. 17:26; 2 Kings 19:4; Psa. 115:2-9; Jer. 10:10; Hos. 1:10; Heb. 10:31.

"And that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites and the Amorites, and the Jebusites" — These words echo those of Joshua the spy, some thirty-eight years earlier (Num. 14:6-10). They convey the promise of Yahweh as expressed in Deut. 7:1; and were fulfilled as far as Joshua's participation in the conquest was concerned (Josh. 21:45), because he faithfully carried out the requirements of Yahweh. But Israel failed to do so, and with disastrous subsequent consequences as recorded in *The Book of Judges*, came to terms with those who had been placed in their power.

VERSE 11

"Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan" — The word "Lord" is *Adon*, and signifies Lord or Ruler. This is the first time the title *Ruler of all the Earth* is used. The power and significance of the title was revealed in that the Ark of the Covenant (pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ) turned back the river in flood from flowing into the Sea of Death, to flow back towards the Sea of Life. This was an amazing miracle, as well as presenting a most remarkable type. The antitype is revealed in the resurrected and glorified Christ, who manifested power to turn back the inevitable flow to death in a believer's life, so as to cause it to move life-wards (1 John 3:14; Rom. 6:16,23). He declared: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18), and this thrilling declaration is repeated by Peter, who adds that he is today on the right hand of God "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22).

Israel recognised the significance of the title and its relationship to the Ark of the Covenant, for when facing defeat, they took the Ark to battle against the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:4-5). But because they lacked the authority of Yahweh to do this, it was captured and for a time remained with the Gentiles until returned to Israel. So also with the Lord Jesus Christ, who after his resurrection was made "Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36), and before whom all mankind will ultimately prostrate themselves (Phil. 2:11; Cp. Psa. 22:27-29; Jer. 10:7; Zeph. 2:11; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14;

6:5). Meanwhile, in fulfilment of the type in relation to the Philistines, the Ark is found among the Gentiles wherever Ecclesias are formed. As was the case with the Ark when with the Philistines, the Truth has moved from place to place, as Ecclesias wax in one place and wane in another. However, ultimately, it will return to Israel and find its final glory in the Temple in Jerusalem, through the personal appearance of the Lord in the earth.

The basic thought behind the use of the title *Adon* is that of *authority and rulership*. Yahweh would have flesh know that He rules in the kingdom of men (Dan. 4:17). The title in full, therefore, is used firstly of Yahweh as King (Psa. 97:1-5), and then of Christ the manifestation of Yahweh (Mic. 4:13; Zech. 4:14).

Yahweh is set forth as Adon or Ruler in Neh. 3:5; 8:10; 10:29 (as such he can adequately overthrow the Gentiles who troubled Nehemiah). He is Adon of Lords (Deut. 10:17), the Lords being the angelic and human extensions of His authority. Elsewhere Yahweh is described as King over Israel (Judg. 8: 23; Psa. 84:3; 89:18; 95:3; 98:6), that is, the invisible Ruler or Adon of the nation. In view of His majesty, the earth is called to tremble before His mighty power (Psa. 114:7); His power and authority are manifested in restoring Israel, healing the meek, and controlling the heavens (Psa. 147:1-5); as, in the past, as *Adon*, He punished Israel (Isa. 3:1), and rebuked Assyria (Isa. 10:16,33). See also Isa. 51:22; Hos. 12:14, where the title *Adon* is also used.

As *Adon* of Lords (Deut. 10:17; Psa. 136:3) He is *Adon* (or Ruler) above all Elohim (Psa. 135:5), so that angels wait upon Him to obey His commands (Psa. 103:19-22). As His manifestation, they assume the title under Him, and are known as *Adon* or *Adonim* (Dan. 10:16,17,19; Zech. 1:9; 4:4,5,13; 6:4).

In Isa. 1:24, the title is combined with other titles to express the channels through which His almighty authority is manifested.

It is used of Christ as the manifestation of Yahweh in Psa. 8:1,9; 45:11; 110:1; Isa. 19:4; Mal. 3:1. In the N.T. Christ is set forth as the head (ruler) of the Ecclesia (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 2:19; Heb. 3:6), Lord of lords (Rev. 17:14; 19:11-16), Ruler over delegated rulers (Eph. 1:19,21; Phil. 2:10). See also Matt. 19:28; Rev. 3:21; 5:9-10; 20:4.

Therefore, the title, as used by Joshua when the Ark moved forward towards the

swollen waters of the Jordan was most significant.

VERSE 12

“Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man” — The duty appointed these twelve men to perform is described in Ch. 4:2-4. Typically, they represented the twelve apostles who will govern the twelve tribes in the Age to come (Matt. 19:28), and therefore will be identified with the tribes.

VERSE 13

“And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of Yahweh, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan” — In this statement the title is given a future application: *He who shall be ruler of all the earth*. This, of course, will be Yahweh (Zech. 14:9) manifested in Christ and the saints. In applying this title to Himself, Yahweh would have flesh understand that He rules in the Kingdom of men, and ultimately will set up over it him that is set at nought of men (Dan. 4:17 — Hebrew).

“That the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap” — This exceeded what happened in the Red Sea (see Exod. 15:8; Psa. 78:13), and demonstrated the control exercised by Yahweh as *Adon* of the Universe. The Jordan is a swiftly flowing stream when in flood, and therefore, as the priests stepped down into it, the water would bank up as its flow was held back. The literal Hebrew expresses it as “one heap”. In fact, the Jordan was driven back (Psa. 114:3-5). Underneath the water continued to flow down, then at the spot where the priests stood, it banked up, and then commenced to flow backwards towards the Sea of Galilee.

The Jordan Flows In Reverse — vv. 14-17

The amazing miracle of the Jordan is greater than that of the Red Sea crossing. At the latter site, Yahweh used the forces of nature to assist what He required. An “east wind” drove a wedge between the water of the Red Sea forming a path to allow Israel to pass through; but in the crossing of the Jordan, no such natural aid is used. The waters defy the laws of gravity by reversing to flow back north uphill through Adam to the Sea of Life. In this miracle, there is no

reflux of the tide upon which doubters might fix to deprecate its wonder. It seems, therefore, specifically designed to challenge any cavil respecting Yahweh's ability to perform what He requires should be done. This miracle is not performed at night; but in the noon-day, in the light of the brightly shining sun, and in the presence of Canaan's hostile inhabitants. It strikes terror in their hearts, so that they do not contest the passage of the River as an army on the defensive normally would do. The type is even more remarkable than the miracle; and its veracity has been endorsed by events that have since taken place in the death and resurrection of the Lord. For humanity, typed by the waters of the Jordan (the Descender), that normally flows out of life through Adam to Death (the Dead Sea), can be turned back to flow through the second Adam to life. Is not the alternative offered man: either to descend from birth through Adam to death; or in faith accept the mediation of the Lord, the second Adam, who can turn back the natural descent by providing life? The amazing miracle under Joshua foreshadowed the even more amazing miracle of redemption through Jesus.

VERSE 14

“And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people” — The word “Jordan” is derived from *Yarad, to Descend*; and “Dan” *Judgment*. Therefore, *to descend from judgment*. It types humanity, for the Jordan is fed from the snows of Hermon (as life came originally from God), and passing through the Sea of Galilee (an inland lake swarming with life) it moves south in a tortuous, winding, constant descent, through the town of Adam (Josh. 3:16) to empty itself in the Dead Sea. At its source, at the foot of Hermon, four streams combined to form the river: Baregnit, Hashbany, Leddan (the Dan) and Baniyas. The river pours its water into the Huleh (Merom), and from thence to the Sea of Galilee (some 12 miles long, and of varying depths). From the southern point of the Sea of Galilee it moves down through a broad valley some 2 to 15 miles wide, which continues to deepen until it is some 1292 feet below sea level. The river enters the Dead Sea which is about 53 miles long, and up to 1300 feet deep. From the Huleh to just before the water reaches the Sea of Galilee, it drops 680 ft in less than 9 miles. Between the Sea of Galilee

and the Dead Sea, the valley extends for 65 miles south and through this wide depression the river follows such a tortuous course that it covers over 200 miles in its wanderings. The Jordan rift is more than 160 miles, 258 km long from below Lake Huleh to the Arabah south of the Dead Sea where it rises again to sea level. Geologists claim that this deep valley is due to volcanic action forcing up two long folds of limestone running north and south with a diagonal ridge shutting off the Dead Sea from the Red Sea, and enclosing part of the old ocean bed (Unger). Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* claims that a vast fresh water lake was formed some 200 miles long from the Sea of Galilee to some 50 miles south the Dead Sea. How it passed from that condition to the present state is not clear. The eruption of Sodom and Gomorrah, however, altered the southern part, so that instead of being as “the garden of Yahweh” as previously (Gen. 13:10), it was given over to the curse of death.

The Jordan itself is rapid and muddy and is from between 90 to 100 feet broad. Its depth varies from 3 feet to 12 feet. In the 65 miles between the two seas its descent is 610 feet, (200 metres) or an average of 14 feet (4.25 metres) per mile. It overflows its banks in March and April, at the time of the year when Joshua led the people across. Hence it formed a formidable barrier against entrance into the land.

The Jordan presents a parable of life. Life came originally from God; so the waters of the Jordan are developed from the snow of Hermon (*white*, suggesting righteousness). But sin brought the Fall according to the judgment of God; and so the word “Jordan” denotes *descent through judgment*, as mankind has inherited the consequence of the Edenic judgment. It enters the Lake of Life (Sea of Galilee) but emerges therefrom to flow its tortuous and winding way in the byways of the wide Jordan Valley to empty itself through the town of Adam into the Sea of Death. It types the majority of the countless millions of earth's inhabitants who are born, live and die under the curse, without hope. Few have been able to turn back the waters, and through the second Adam look forward to life in the Age to come. Yet the miracle of the crossing of the Jordan demonstrated the possibility of so doing. Fundamental to doing this, however, is to follow “the Ark of the Covenant” which has been “displayed before the people”, in the principles of redemption in

Christ Jesus. This is set forth in the preaching of the Gospel. Typically, as the Israelites moved down to the brink of the river, and observed the miracle that had taken place, and took heed to its cause — the presence of the Ark — they had the Gospel preached to them. The waters of the Jordan that normally would inexorably flow down to the sea of death, there to remain for ever, were driven back by the influence of the Ark. The Ark, of course, represents the true Ark, the Lord Jesus Christ and those associated with him.

VERSE 15

“And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water” — The same Hebrew word rendered “brink” in v. 8 is here rendered *brim*. The people watched carefully, as the priests made their way to where the swollen waters of the Jordan were hastening towards their end. They observed them come to the brink of the river, then plunges their feet into its swirling waters.

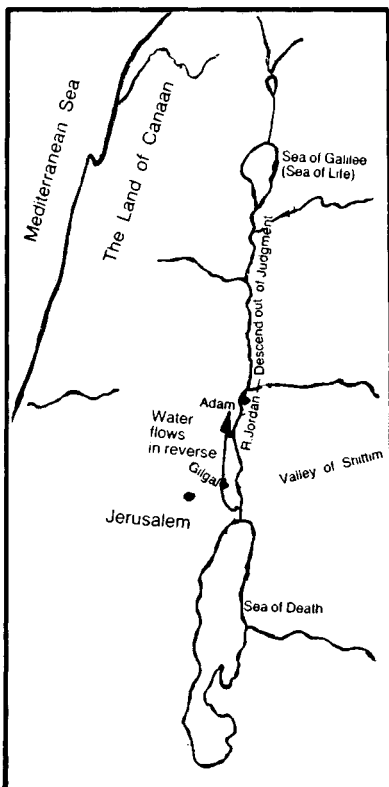
“For Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest” — The River was wider and deeper than normal. The harvest commenced with the barley and flax which ripen together under normal circumstances (Exod. 9:31-33); whereas the wheat is about 6 or 7 weeks later at the time of Pentecost. Hence this statement agrees with the action of Rahab in drying the green flax at the same time as the barley was about to be harvested. In the semi-tropical Jordan Valley, this ripened first. As early spring it was the time of Passover. See Ruth 1:22.

VERSE 16

“That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap” — Some invisible power drove the water back. However, the force of the water as it continued to flow downwards, caused a barrier to form, for the waters rose up at the point of impact as they began to be driven back (Psa. 114:3). The passage of this deep, rapid and (at that time of the year) wide river was manifestly more miraculous than that of the passage of the Red Sea.

“Very far from the city Adam” — The Septuagint renders this: “far, far away”. The NIV has: “a great distance away, at a

town called Adam”. The town called Adam was approximately 12 miles (20km) north of the point of crossing. It is today a military outpost manned by the Israelis, and was approximately the place where Jacob moved across into the land after his encounter with the angel. The waters of the Jordan normally flowed out of the Sea of Life (Galilee) through Adam to death (the Dead Sea), a remarkable parable of humanity in Adam! It needs the presence of the Ark of the Covenant, and faith on the part of those recognising its significance, to turn back the water so that those “in the second Adam” can move into their new relationship in Christ and so cross over from death unto life. The town of Adam, or Adamah has been identified with the Tell ed-Damiyah, and is close to a ford or bridge that spans the river.



The water that flowed from the Sea of Life through Adam to death is reversed at the presence of the Ark of the Covenant.

“That is beside Zaretan” — The word Zaretan signifies *to pierce, puncture, or distress*. It is identified as near the confluence of the Jabbok and Jordan. It is about twelve miles from Adamah. This would suggest that when the priests placed their feet in the river, the water began to block up at the city Adamah, and flow back to Zaretan. The Jordan flows swiftly about seven kilometres per hour, so at the point where the miracle turned the waters back there must have arisen a tremendous bubbling and agitation as they flowed back against the descending waters in opposition to all the laws of nature. Is not the Gospel of salvation against the laws of nature? Does it not cause concern and agitation when its claims are brought to the attention of those being swept along towards death? Is not the miracle of resurrection (even from the waters of baptism), miraculous in its effect?

“And those that came down towards the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho” — The Dead Sea is here styled the Sea of the Arabah, and the Salt Sea. The waters

failed to flow south, so that the bed of the river was revealed. The people passed over on dry land as described in the next chapter. The term “cut off” is from the Hebrew *karath*, the word used for cutting a sacrificial animal to confirm a covenant!

VERSE 17

“And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Yahweh stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan” — The water was held back until all had passed over, but, as the next chapter reveals, it was urgent for the people to move across quickly (Ch. 4:10). So, in the antitype, Yahweh has made provision for the salvation of all those He requires (2 Pet. 3:11-12,15). When that portion of His purpose is complete, the opportunity of crossing the Jordan will cease. It is significant that the word used for “people” here and in Ch. 4:1 is *gowy*, a word normally reserved for Gentiles. It is from a root signifying *to mass*, and therefore denoting a nation. The word is rendered “nation” in the R.V.



An artist's impression of Jericho based upon archaeological findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

ERECTING MEMORIALS: THE WITNESS OF FAITH

To commemorate the amazing miracle and to illustrate the significant type, Joshua is instructed to set up stones for Memorials: one set in the River and the other set on its western Bank. Then, led by the warriors of the eastern tribes, the people of Israel are to make their way across the Jordan. The miracle displayed by its waters witnesses that Yahweh is with Joshua as He had been with Moses, and by this means endorses his status as Commander in chief. After the last of the people have passed over, the priests with the Ark make their way to the western bank, and the waters begin to flow once more. The significance of the Memorials is then taught the people of Israel. Key verses of the Chapter are vv. 7,23,24. The Chapter is divisible into six parts: The Witness out of Jordan — vv. 1-5; The Meaning of the Memorial — vv. 6-9; The Witness of the Crossing — vv. 10-13; Joshua Magnified — v. 14; The Waters Flow Again — vv. 15-18; The Witness of the Stones — vv. 19-24.

The Witness Out of Jordan — vv. 1-5

Joshua is told to set up visible and hidden witnesses to the crossing of Jordan. The instruction that Memorials are to be set up shows that Yahweh desires Israel to constantly recall the One to whom they are dedicated, and the wonders He is performing on their behalf (Ch. 3:15). The Memorials are set up by twelve specially selected men; and constitute both washed stones taken out of the Jordan, and unwashed stones placed in it.

VERSE 1

“And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan” — The word “people” is *gowy* in Hebrew. See note Ch. 3:17.

“That Yahweh spake unto Joshua, saying” — Instructions had been given to the elders of Israel to gather twelve stones to take to Shechem to recapitulate the blessings and cursings of the Law in an appropriate ceremony (Deut. 27:2). Additional instructions are now given relating to two other sets of stones.

VERSE 2

“Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man” — This is a repetition of the command of Ch. 3:12. These twelve men anticipate the selection of the twelve Apostles who are identified with the twelve tribes (Matt. 19:28), and who were set forth before all as “a spectacle unto the world” (1 Cor. 4:9). By educating the Ecclesias, they prominently displayed the Memorials before the Israel of God (1 Cor. 11:23-32).

VERSE 3

“And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan” — In the type, the Jordan, the *Descender* whose waters flow into the Sea of Death represents mortal humanity. Twelve outstanding men were selected for the purpose of selecting twelve washed stones from its midst. Those stones represented the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:11-14; Rev. 7:1-8).

“Out of the place where the priests’ feet stood firm twelve stones” — See Ch. 3:13,

15,17. The reference to the priests' feet standing firm testifies to the sound witness of those whom the priests represent: the saints.

"And ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night" — They were to lodge that night in Gilgal, which word commemorates the rolling away of the reproach of Egypt (v. 19). The stones were to be set up as a witness. They were washed stones from out of the Jordan, symbolic of the state of a person cleansed through the waters of baptism. They were conveyed to their "lodging place" where they were to stay throughout the ensuing night. So also with the Ecclesia. It comprises a "lodging place" in which shelter and safety can be obtained (Prov. 18:10). During the Gentile "night" saints are called upon to lodge there (John 9:4). It is significant that at this very spot, called Bethabara or "*The House of the Crossing*" (see John 1:28), and possibly at this very spot, the Lord was baptised (Matt. 3:17). In his appeal and exhortation, John Baptist warned that "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:9). His reference could have been to the very stones that were placed there as a Memorial. The water of the Jordan, unlike that of the Red Sea, was "living water" a symbol of the Spirit Word (John 4:10,14; 7:37-39), foreshadowing a birth of water into a covenant of grace (John 3:3,5) and anticipating the birth of the spirit yet to come (John 3:5; 1 Cor. 15:44). In typing this Israel passed over Jordan; set up its Memorial; endured the rite of circumcision; celebrated the Passover; and then attacked Jericho. In these events, both advents of the Lord are kept in view by the type. Christ's first advent was followed by the education of the Spirit word; the true circumcision (Rom. 2:28-29); the celebration of deliverance in the Passover of the Lord; and then a declaration of war in the battle of faith (Eph. 6:10-18). At the second advent, there will be the outpouring of the Spirit in abundance; the physical resurrection; the cutting off of flesh in the bestowal of life eternal, the celebration of deliverance at the marriage of the Lamb; and the manifestation of Christ and the saints as a multitudinous Man of war.

VERSE 4

"Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of

Israel, out of every tribe a man" — The Hebrew is in the present tense, not the past. It should be rendered prepared, not "had prepared". The Hebrew is *kuwn*, and signifies "to elevate", or figuratively "to appoint". The statement relates to men elevated to the honourable position of bearing the Memorial in the sight of others. They prefigured the Apostles who were appointed to preach the Memorials unto mankind (Mark 3:14-19).

VERSE 5

"And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of Yahweh your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel" — The carrying of the stones was a public act, even as the twelve Apostles, in a special way, were to be witnesses of Christ (1 Cor. 4:9).

The Meaning of the Stones — vv. 6-9

There are two structures of stones erected, and they are designed as Memorials. One is placed in the midst of the Jordan; and the other on the bank at the site of the camp. The two heaps of stones represent Israel in two relationships: before and after baptism; in the wilderness and in the land. They therefore comprised Memorials to be recalled.

VERSE 6

"That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?" — Israel was given a number of signs, each of which was expressive of its relationship to God. Among them were the phylacteries (Exod. 13:9), the sabbaths (Exod. 31:13), and the brazen censers (Num. 16:38). In the millennium the transformed land of the Kingdom will constitute a sign or memorial of Yahweh's ability to change the hearts of men (Isa. 55:13). In each case these signs were to be talking pieces for parents in the instruction of their children. Israelites were expected to know and discuss the significance of these objects, so as to bring the wonder of the privileged position they enjoyed with God prominently to the attention of their young (See Exod. 12:26; Psa. 44:1; 78:3-8; Isa. 38:19; Eph. 6:24). Unfortunately, the significance of these Memorials as signs became lost, causing Hezekiah to smash the serpent of brass (2 Kings 18:4), and the Lord to con-

demn the abuse of phylacteries (Matt. 23:5). Such signs, however, if soundly based and properly used to instruct are not to be despised.

VERSE 7

“Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off” — The first lesson the sign was intended to convey was that the waters of the Jordan were cut off from flowing into the sea of death. The Jordan represented humanity, flowing out of the sea of life, but futilely emptying itself in the sea of death. The Ark of the Covenant turned some of the waters back so that now they flowed towards the sea of life again. The miracle illustrated the miracle of salvation: the promise that those who please God will be turned back to life. It taught the lesson that there was power in the Ark of the Covenant, that Christ as such is able to accomplish this miracle in the destinies of those who heed the call! That miracle is still witnessed today when Gentiles embrace the hope of Israel and are turned back through Christ from a way of death to one that leads to life (1 John 3:14).

“And these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever” — The stones were yet another memorial, added to those many given Israel to assist to keep in mind the goodness of Yahweh. See Exod. 12:14; Num. 16:40. See these memorials listed in our comment upon Exodus 12:14. The term *Memorial* signifies an awakening of the mind to the spiritual significance of the object so designated, and not merely a recalling of events that it memorialises. Hence the Memorials of bread and wine are not designed merely to recall that the Lord lived, died and rose again 1900 years ago, but to reawaken the mind to the significance of such an event as an aid to the spiritual development of those celebrating the facts. So with the stones erected in and by the River Jordan. Twelve stones were taken from the eastern side and buried in the water; and twelve water-washed stones were taken out of the bed of the river and erected at Gilgal on the western side. One set was taken into the water to be baptised: the other was taken out of it after baptism. The ones on the bank were taken in their rough and grubby state from the land into the water, the others smooth and clean from its washing were set up on

the western bank. What does the Memorial proclaim? Does it not in type, point forward to what is accomplished in the antitypical Joshua. He died unto sin once (Rom. 6:10), and so do those truly in him, and who constitute the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). In Christ, the believer moves into a new relationship: “reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11). Alive in Christ before God, the baptised believer can look back upon what he was, whilst figuratively putting the flesh to death by denying its wants. In Christ he is a new creation, enjoying a new relationship. The “flesh” is still with him; he is still “stone”, or human nature, for “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves” (1 John 1:8). But in Christ those sins can be acknowledged and forgiven. The Israel that passed over the River, also had moved into a new relationship with Yahweh. The new nation in Joshua was represented by the smooth, washed stones set up at Gilgal with sins forgiven. The old nation had been left in the bed of the river, and when the Ark was removed therefrom, had been drowned in its waters. It represented the “old man” figuratively put to death in the waters of baptism. The new standing of Israel in the land under Joshua, was a state that the people need keep permanently in mind. It was a memorial “for ever”.

VERSE 8

“And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as Yahweh spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there” — The name of the lodging place is significant. See v. 19.

VERSE 9

“And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood” — The Septuagint has “other twelve”. See v. 20. Twelve stones were put in the River, and twelve were taken out of it.

“And they are there unto this day” — Perhaps with the fall of the river in the dry season some of the stones could be seen. This could provide a memorial of the constant need of washing. Only for the people of God is the bed of the Jordan dried, or its waters halted; and when they have passed

through, it returns to its strength, and flows over its banks as before!

The Witness of the Crossing — vv. 10-13

The stones provide a memorial or witness; as also do the actions of the people in crossing the river. There is an urgency in them doing so which the narrative expresses. The Ark is seen held aloft by the priests, seen above; the army and people pass before, hastening across. The priests remain motionless, their feet sunk in the deep mud of the channel (v. 18), until the last of the people cross. Leading the way, contrary to the usual order, go the tribes of the east, as though as to demonstrate their willingness to fulfil their vow.

VERSE 10

“For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan, until everything was finished that Yahweh commanded Joshua to speak unto the people” — The “for” of this verse is better rendered *and*, or *now* (NIV). It is not linked with the previous verse as though giving the reason for what is there stated, but describes the work of the priests during the period occupied by the transfer of the people from one side to the other. It must have been very tiring for the priests to stand holding the Ark aloft for so long, particularly with the descending waters of the Jordan banking up in a bubbling turmoil behind them. There would have been induced a certain anxiety, particularly as tiredness came over them through weakness of the flesh. In thus displaying the Ark of the Covenant, they were typically proclaiming the Gospel, which work can be wearying (2 Cor. 11:27). If they relaxed through weakness and lowered the Ark, the waters would return and sweep them away; so there was a “necessity” in them maintaining their work (1 Cor. 9:16). The motionless priests bearing the Ark on the background of the turbulent water demonstrated how tiring is the work of proclaiming the Gospel “in season and out of season”. Meanwhile the heaped up waters threatened to sweep all away, unless the Ark was faithfully displayed. When that was done they were held in check by the invisible Hand of Yahweh.

“According to all that Moses commanded Joshua” — See Num. 27:23.

“And the people hastened and passed over” — The people, moved by awe and fear, rushed across the river bed; awed at the miracle, fearing lest the water sweep

down upon them. The antitype of their urgency is expressed in the words of Peter and Paul: “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40); “Beloved! Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

VERSE 11

“And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of Yahweh passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people” — History and type continue to be blended in the narrative. First, the Ark preceded the people “about two thousand cubits” in entering the Jordan (Josh. 3:4). Then, after the last of the people had hastened across, they viewed the Ark as in triumph it was borne across to the western bank. In this, the two advents of the Lord were typed. He was prominently displayed before the people “about 2000 years ago” when through his victory over sin, he conquered death by his resurrection, and was able to open the way to life for those “in him”. Shortly he will appear again before the “Israel of God”, “in the presence of the people” after all those required of Yahweh will have “passed over”. Meanwhile, he awaits as it were, in the Baptismal waters, guide and protector of his people.

VERSE 12

“And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them” — The men of the eastern tribes occupied the vanguard as an example to the rest of the tribes, thus demonstrating their willingness to fulfil the commandment of Moses to assist their brethren west of the Jordan (Num. 32:27-28). For the use of the word *chamushim*, here rendered “armed” see note on Ch. 1:14.

VERSE 13

“About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before Yahweh unto battle, to the plains of Jericho” — Yahweh was represented in the priestly-borne Ark of the Covenant before which the warriors passed over in ranks of five (see note Ch. 1:14). They were “prepared for war” or “ready armed” as the mg. renders it, as every true saint should be (see Eph. 6:11). However, some men of the eastern tribes remained behind in Transjordan in order to care for the families that had occupied

the cities in that land (see Num. 32:16). In fact, from the computation recorded in Numbers 26, only a little more than a third of the warriors of the eastern tribes passed over. Doubtless they were the best of the warriors and represented all those of that area.

Joshua Magnified — v. 14

The remarkable miracle demonstrated that Yahweh is with Joshua without doubt, so that he is magnified before the people, as Christ was also by the miracle of his resurrection.

VERSE 14

“On that day Yahweh magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel” — The miracle of the Jordan clearly revealed that Yahweh was with Joshua, as the miracle of Christ’s resurrection did likewise as far as the Lord was concerned. He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). No one witnessing the risen Christ would doubt his credentials. And no Israelite, observing the miracle of the crossing could doubt those of Joshua. The miracle was completed when the Ark was conveyed over the river and the waters flowed again. So with the second coming of the Lord: his authority and status will be elevated in the sight of all people (Rev. 1:7).

The Waters Flow Again — vv. 15-18

As the Ark of the Covenant comes to the brink of Jordan, the waters are turned back, and the bed of the river is revealed for the people of God to pass over. After the purpose of the miracle is fulfilled, the Ark of the Covenant is conveyed to the west side of Jordan, and the waters resume their flow. Previously the river presented an obstacle to the possession of Canaan; now it forms a barrier against any retreat.

VERSE 15

“And Yahweh spake unto Joshua, saying” — All that Joshua did was under the direct supervision and command of Yahweh. So it was with the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSE 16

“Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony that they come up out of Jordan” — A change is given to the title of the Ark at this point. It was the *Ark of the Covenant* when it turned the waters back

to permit the passage of Israelites: even as, at his first advent, the Lord, the antitypical Ark, “confirmed the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8). Now it is described as the *Ark of the Testimony* because it contained the tables of the Law, the almond branch that budded, and the golden pot of Manna, all of which testify to the requirements and purpose of Yahweh unto resurrection to newness of life (Exod. 25:10,22). But the true or full witness awaits the future when the significance of these things will be brought to light (e.g. Rev. 2:17). It is therefore significant that this title of the Ark is given to it in Rev. 11:19 when the completed antitypical Tabernacle (see Heb. 9:11) will be made manifest in the sight of all. This will be through the resurrection of those who will comprise the antitypical Ark and Cherubim of the Age to come. Therefore, the wording of the verse before us is significant. Joshua had to “command” that those who “bore the ark of the testimony” “come up out of Jordan”. Surely this points to the resurrection of that “cloud of witnesses” who, through the ages, have set forth the truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ before men, and who will be raised from out of the dead to then receive their reward. Joshua “commanded” the priests to come forth, as Jesus commanded Lazarus to do so. He shall return “with the voice of the archangel” and the dead in him shall rise (1 Thess. 4:16).

VERSE 17

“Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan” — A specific command is given.

VERSE 18

“And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Yahweh were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up unto the dry land” — The expression “lifted up”, or “plucked up” as the margin has it, implies that the feet of the priests had been buried in the soft mud of the Jordan. See comment on v. 10. As the feet of the priests were plucked up, so also at the command of the antitypical Joshua the resurrection of those who have been buried, or who sleep in Jesus, will take place.

“That the waters of the Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before” — Previously the river had been an obstacle to the occu-

pation of Canaan; now it became a barrier to any who would desire to return. In other words, the truth demands irrevocable decisions. Any who "turn back" are not fit for the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). Nor, at that time, could any more get over Jordan, for the flowing river prevented it. When the Lord returns, the door of entrance will be closed, and the opportunity of salvation for that generation will have ceased (see Rev. 22:11-12). The amazing miracle, therefore, illustrated a remarkable type. Attempts have been made to rationalise the miracle, and to explain it as the effect of earthquake damming the river, causing the waters to build up, and so giving passage to the Israelites. But such an explanation demands two earthquakes: one to dam up the water, and the other to free it. Nor does it explain how the upper layer of water was forced to flow in reverse (Psa. 114:5). Whilst it is true that Yahweh can use natural means in a miraculous way to accomplish His purpose (for example, the use of an east wind to contribute to the formation of an escape route through the Red Sea) such a miracle as a double earthquake does not satisfactorily explain all that took place at the Jordan. Divine power was required to force the water back upstream; as it was for the resurrection of Christ; and will be for the raising of the dead at the Lord's return. Miracle is indispensable to the Bible; it cannot be properly understood apart from the fact of miracle.

The Witness of the Stones — vv. 19-24

On the tenth of Abib Israel encamps at Gilgal and the Jordan stones are set up as a Memorial. They, like the testimony of the twelve Apostles in setting forth Christ to people, are to provide a witness, firstly to Israel, but also to all the world (v. 24). So the type continues. The Apostles were commissioned to set forth to "the Jews first, and afterwards to the Gentiles" the Gospel of salvation (Acts 13:46), whilst ultimately their words were to go forth into all the world (Rom. 10:17-18; Col. 1:23). Thus the worldwide preaching of the Gospel was foreshadowed in the events relating to Joshua.

VERSE 19

"And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month" — Forty years earlier on this very day, the people of Israel had been instructed to select their lambs in preparation for keep-

ing the Passover, and leaving Egypt (Exod. 12:3). They had left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month, the month Abib (Exod. 13:4) after celebrating the Passover; so they passed over Jordan exactly forty years after preparing to leave Egypt.

"And encamped in Gilgal in the east border of Jericho" — Gilgal signifies *Rolling*, and was given this name for the reason supplied in Ch. 5:9. Its site is adjacent to the Allenby Bridge today.

VERSE 20

"And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal" — See v. 3.

VERSE 21

"And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?" — It was obligatory upon Israelitish parents to carefully educate their children in the things of Yahweh. See v. 6; Deut. 6:6-9; cp. Psa. 105:1-5; 145:4-7.

VERSE 22

"Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land" — The spirit of enquiry is common to children, and should be used by parents to direct them into the ways of Yahweh. By carefully answering their questions, and, indeed, encouraging them to make enquiry, children will see that their parents are earnest in their worship and that the Truth is elevated in the home as a matter of supreme importance. Children should be encouraged to read the Bible, and attend meetings. The significance of baptism; the partaking of bread and wine should be explained to them. Their questions and comments should be considered seriously and with pleasure. The greatest patience should be shown towards them — as Yahweh patiently bears with His children.

VERSE 23

"For Yahweh your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over" — Imagine a child gazing at the Jordan in flood, and learning again of the amazing miracle and the remarkable type that it presented. Most impressive it would be to the mind of such.

"As Yahweh your God did to the Red sea, which He dried up from before us,

until we were gone over" — See Exod. 14:21-22; Josh. 2:10; Isa. 43:16; 63:12-14. The stones at Gilgal were a token of the changed relationship of Israel consequent upon the crossing. Note the change of personal pronouns in this statement: "before you", "before us". Very few of those who left Egypt remained to pass over Jordan.

VERSE 24

"That all the people of the earth might know the hand of Yahweh, that it is mighty" — The word "people" is in the plural *amim*, and relates to the nations. The purpose of Yahweh was to establish Israel in their inheritance, and then extend the knowledge of His might and purpose to all mankind. So in the preaching of the Gospel: it was to the Jews first, and afterwards to the Gentiles. So also in the Age to come: it will be first to Israel spiritual and national, and then to all the world. Yahweh's ultimate purpose is that His glory shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea (Num. 14:21), and that requires that all mankind be brought within the scope of His influence (Isa. 2:2-4). See Psa. 83:13-18; Hab. 2:13-14; Dan. 2:44; Zech. 14:9; Rev. 11:15). The might of Yahweh was shown at the Red Sea, at the

River Jordan, at the overthrow of the Canaanites, at the resurrection of the Lord; and will yet be revealed at the return of Christ and the vast changes to be inaugurated in the world at that time. Political events are leading to that consummation. Figuratively, the political river Euphrates is being dried up that Israel may enter their inheritance (Rev. 16:12). The amazing events that have resulted in the modern revival of Israel and other developments in recent times will be surpassed by those yet to occur. Through them all mankind will learn of the might of Yahweh in relation to His people (See Ezek. 39:23) as in the past (Cp. Exod. 9:16; Deut. 28:10; 1 Sam. 17:46; 2 Kings 19:19; Psa. 106:8).

"That ye might fear Yahweh your God for ever" — Reverential fear on the part of Yahweh's people is His right. It can be developed by a consideration of His majesty and might in His position as King of heaven and His means of redeeming individuals and nations. The term "for ever" is from the Hebrew *kole yomim*, "all your days". The expression signifies that they should continue to fear Yahweh as long as they continued in being. See Psa. 76:6-9; 89:6-7; Prov. 1:7; Jer. 5:22; 10:6-7.

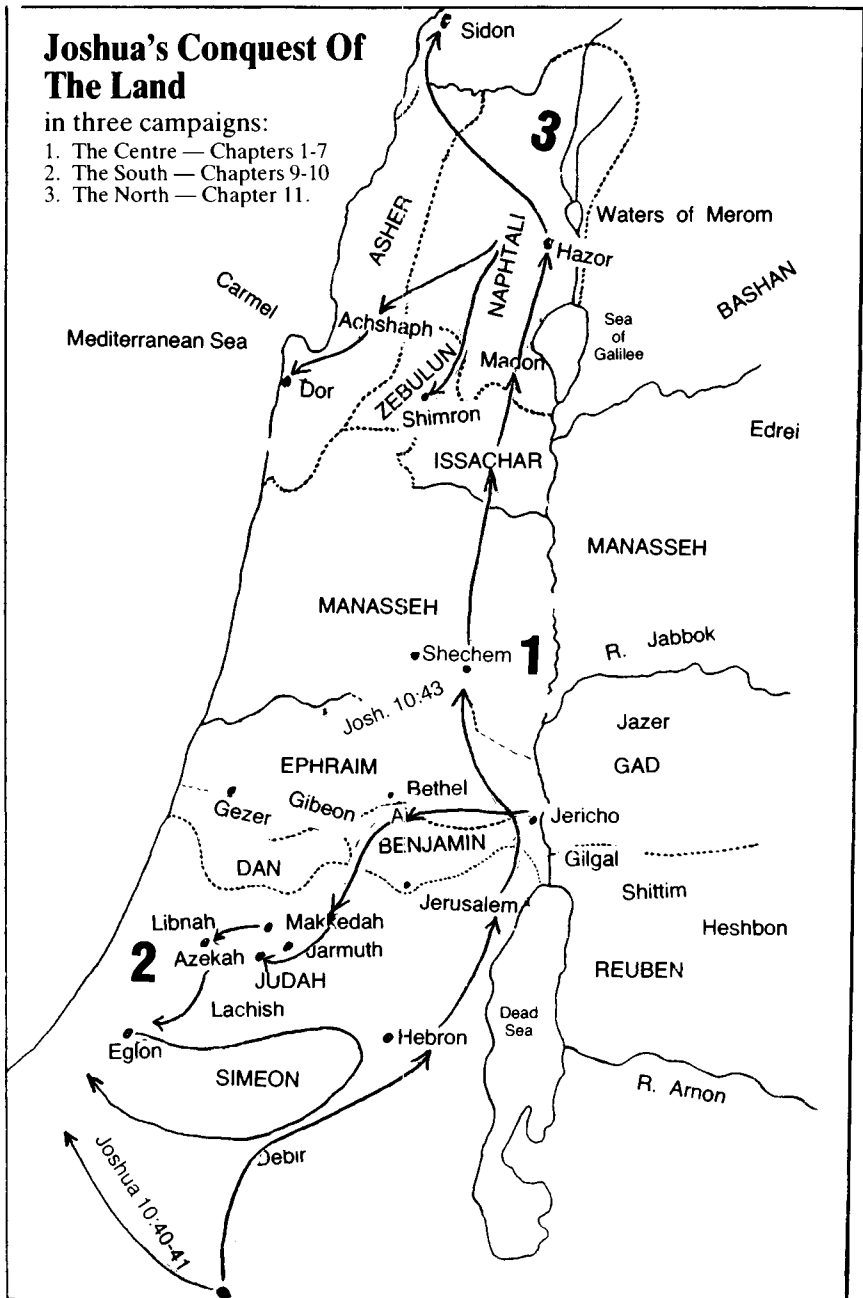


Airview of Old Testament Jericho.

Joshua's Conquest Of The Land

in three campaigns:

1. The Centre — Chapters 1-7
2. The South — Chapters 9-10
3. The North — Chapter 11.



CHAPTER FIVE

RESTORING THE TRUE WORSHIP — THE WORSHIP OF FAITH

Since the time of unbelief and rebellion at Kadesh, circumcision, the token-sign of the Covenant has been inappropriate and abandoned. In accordance with the law that only circumcised Israelites should keep the Passover, the celebration of that festival, also, has been ignored. In fact, there has been a general decline in religious observance. But now, in preparation for entering the inheritance designed for the nation, a restoration of all these necessary things is insisted upon. The new generation has demonstrated its belief in Yahweh, and to date has obeyed what has been required. Divine power has been demonstrated in the overthrow of Sihon and Og, and in the miraculous and meaningful miracle of the Jordan. Therefore, success in the impending attack upon the Canaanites will not depend upon military strategy and skill, but upon faith. Accordingly, there must be a restoration of the true religion in all its particulars. First, as the Covenant nation, all the males have to undergo the pain of circumcision; then the Passover must be re-initiated, and finally the diet changed. These requirements are matters of essential preliminaries to the conquest of the land. They typify what is required of saints today. The Chapter describes Jericho as paralysed by Fear — v. 1; Circumcision re-instituted — vv. 2-9; The Passover Restored — vv. 10-11; The Diet changed — v. 12; The Divine Presence Revealed — vv. 13-15. By these means Israel is equipped to undertake the conquest of the land.

Fear In The Land — v. 1

The miracle of the Jordan has far-reaching consequences. For the Israelites it provides a safe passage over the flooded river. For the Canaanites it creates a state of paralysing fear. They cannot account for it, and realise that some supernatural power is with Israel which they cannot match. In consequence they make no effort to resist, but retire to the protection of their strong walls.

VERSE 1

“And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward” — The Amorites were the mountaineers of the land, and so are referred to independently of the Canaanites who mainly dwelt in the lowlands. The Amorites had a reputation of being fierce fighters. The description, therefore, is equivalent to saying: All the kings of the highlands .

“And all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea” — These were the kings of the lowlands. See the description in Num. 13:29.

“Heard that Yahweh had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel” — Evidently the Canaanites had their spies watching what took place, and reported it to various nations throughout the land. This partially fulfilled the prophetic words of Moses (Exod. 15:14).

“Until we were passed over” — The pronoun is used nationally of the Israelites as a whole, and strongly implies that Joshua was the writer of the book. See Exod. 15:16.

“That their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel” — A negative spirit of depression and defeatism settled upon them, destroying their will to fight. See Ch. 2:11. This fulfilled the promise of Exod. 23:27.

Circumcision Re-instituted — vv. 2-9

Since the time of unbelief and rebellion at Kadesh-barnea the sign of the covenant had been deemed inappropriate (Num. 14:1-25), and so the rite of circumcision ignored. But now it has to be re-instituted. The people have demonstrated their belief in Yahweh, and He is prepared to enter into Covenant with them. Indeed, it is imperative that they do so, for the Abrahamic Covenant decreed that excommunication must be the lot of those ignoring this rite (see Gen. 17:9-14).

VERSE 2

“At that time Yahweh said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives” — The Hebrew *charboth tsurim* denotes “knives of stone, rock or flint”. The use of such knives is not indicative that Israel was in the “stone age” of its history, as is sometimes ignorantly affirmed, but for ceremonial purposes. Metallurgy was well known to Israel, but iron was considered defiling (Exod. 20:25; Deut. 27:5); the rust of iron being tantamount to the decay of flesh (Josh. 8:31). Stone is figurative of human nature, but unhewn stones, by which altars were made, represented human nature shaped by God. Christ was in all points like his brethren as far as his nature was concerned; but he never gave way to sin: his character was Divine, shaped by His Father, like the unhewn stones of the altar. The knives of flint were similar for they were sharpened according to Divine direction, and therefore represented the

Word of God, which “is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twowedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit (that which is fleshly in contrast to the spiritual), and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor (or critic) of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Christ is the Word made flesh, and hence the antitype of these knives of flint or stone. When a believer moulds his life according to the pattern of Christ, he will become circumcised of heart (Rom. 2:28-29; Col. 2:11), for he will see the need to deny, or cut off, all practices that do not conform thereto.

“And circumcise again the children of Israel” — This reads as though the Israelites were circumcised the second time, but that is not so. The word “again” is from the Hebrew *shuwb*, signifying “to turn”, and not necessarily the second time. It can signify a return into a former state, as well as “again”. The word “circumcise” is from the Hebrew *muwl*, signifying to “cut short, curtail or destroy”. The rite of circumcision required the cutting off of flesh, the curtailment of its gratification, the repudiation of its lusts. The Abrahamic covenant demanded that all be circumcised (Gen. 17:7-10). The mark in the flesh, normally hidden from human eyes, denoted the “circumcision of the heart” or the repudiation of the lusts of the flesh (Deut. 30:6; Jer. 4:4). Such a circumcision is still obligatory upon Christ’s followers (Rom. 2:28-29; Col. 2:11). It is a process that commences with baptism and culminates with the bestowal of Divine nature at the coming of the Lord. Apparently all those who came out of Egypt were circumcised (Josh. 5:4), but the rite was discontinued by the generation condemned to wander in the wilderness.

“The second time” — Evidently there had been a general national circumcision of all those who were not circumcised when the people left Egypt. In this Zipporah was compelled to subject her children (Exod. 4:24-26).

VERSE 3

“And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins” — This site, of course, is unknown. The title given it implies the hill where the foreskins (the emblem of all worldly and carnal affections) were cut off and buried away. See Col. 2:11-13; 3:1-6. The operation is a painful one, particularly for adults. It

taught Israel that obedience to Yahweh demands some sacrifice even to the extent of bloodshedding and pain. It would have absolutely incapacitated the warriors for engaging in war, so that the nation would have been at the mercy of the enemy, excepting that the enemy was completely immobilised by fear. From a strategic point of view, it was folly to circumcise the men after crossing the Jordan; for it could have been done on the other side, with the flowing river providing a protective shelter. But this rite, performed at this place, taught Israel that if they obey Yahweh, even at cost and danger to themselves, they need not fear the enemy: Yahweh would provide protection. And so it proved to be.

VERSE 4

“And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt” — See Num. 14:29; 26:64-65; Deut. 2:16. The sentence of Num. 14:28-35 abrogated the national Covenant as far as that generation was concerned; and the discontinuance of the rite of circumcision, and of the celebration of the Passover were tokens of that. However, at the same time, the purpose of Yahweh to restore it on a national basis was made known (Num. 14:31). Now with evidence of Yahweh’s grace extended to them manifested in the defeat of Sihon and Og, and the conquest of the eastern lands, the new generation is called upon to renew the Covenant. The people do so having been given wonderful proof of Yahweh’s readiness to establish them in the Land by submitting to circumcision. In doing so, the Covenant is restored; and in keeping the Passover it is confirmed. Circumcision signified the cutting off or repudiation of flesh; and Passover represented Divine deliverance and fellowship. Both, of course, anticipate the consummation of the Divine purpose in the Age to come (Luke 22:18). To submit to circumcision on the western side of Jordan, as the males of Israel did, was a supreme act of faith for, as noted above, it would have completely incapacitated them for war, and put them at risk of enemy action. It showed that they trusted Yahweh. They had dared something for God, and in doing so, had placed themselves in a seemingly vulnerable condition in view of the hostility of the Canaanites (cp. Gen.

34:24-26). It was an act of great faith. Their confidence was in God.

VERSE 5

“Now all the people that came out were circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised” — For the 38 years of wandering since Kadesh, the old generation wandered without hope. Nevertheless Yahweh continued to communicate with them through Moses for the benefit of the new generation (Num. 15:1,17,35). He gave the manna, supplied water, and maintained their raiment (Deut. 8:2-6; 29:5-6). But the rite of circumcision was discontinued, the celebration of the Passover was ignored, as the old generation felt that it was cut off from full communion with Yahweh and “did that which was right in its own eyes” (Deut. 12:8-9). The record in Ezek. 20:10-26; Amos 5:25-26 reveals that the Law was ignored, the sabbaths profaned, and idolatrous practices followed. Stephen quoted from Psa. 81:12 to show that “God gave them up . . .” (Acts 7:42) and the people gave themselves to apostasy. However, the new generation was educated by trials during the same period (Deut. 8:2-3). Of necessity, many of the daily and yearly offerings set down in the law were omitted during the whole of the desert sojourn from Sinai. Offerings of firstfruits (Num. 28:26), the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39) and other requirements of the Law were governed by the harvests and so were inappropriate in the desert. Therefore, there was a need for re-instruction as a preparation for entering the land. The instruction of Moses as recorded in Numbers and Deuteronomy performed that service (Deut. 12:8-9), and this was now completed by Joshua in introducing the rite of circumcision and the Festival of Passover.

VERSE 6

“For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness” — See note at v. 19. Exactly forty years were occupied since leaving Egypt.

“Till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed” — The word “people” in Hebrew is *gowy*, a word normally reserved for Gentiles and invariable so in its plural form. It is applied to Israelites in Ch. 3:17; 4:11; and is rendered “nation” in Isa. 1:4; 9:2. Generally the term is used to indicate the apostate condition of the people. They

were as Gentiles until incorporated into the Covenant by circumcision. The use of the term in such places illustrates that "the flesh profits nothing". Israelities as such were not acceptable to Yahweh; but only Israelites who, recognising the true nature of flesh, submitted to the terms and conditions of the Covenant. The last of the old generation had died south of the brook Zered (Deut. 2:13-14).

"Because they obeyed not the voice of Yahweh: unto whom Yahweh sware that He would not shew them the land, which Yahweh sware unto their fathers that He would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey" — See Num. 14:21; Psa. 95:11; Heb. 3:11. The last phrase of the verse before us describes a land that is ideal for pasturage and produce, that is rich in grass for cattle, and of flowers for bees (Deut. 11:10-12).

VERSE 7

"And their children, whom He raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised" — There seems in this statement an echo of the excuse of the people in refusing to enter the land when they heard the spies' lament. They had excused their refusal on the grounds that their "children" would become a prey to the inhabitants of the land (Num. 14:3); and Yahweh's response had been that "your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised" (Num. 14:31). Now, in remarkable circumstances, His promise was about to be vindicated.

"For they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way" — The uncircumcised state of the children of the generation that perished illustrates the measure of their fathers' apostasy. It is also illuminating to recall that the circumcised Israelites perished in the wilderness, whilst their uncircumcised children were miraculously preserved and brought over Jordan. What is the record telling us? That it is not physical circumcision that counts, but that of the heart, that manifested in action (Rom. 2:25; 1 Cor. 7:19; Col. 2:11-13). This uncircumcised generation passed over the Jordan whereas the previous circumcised Israelites were denied entrance. Is not the type clear? So Israelites and Gentiles will go into the Kingdom of God because they "do by nature the things of the Law" (Rom. 2:13-15). Their circumcision is of the heart, repudiating the flesh in order to

serve God. Therefore, this act of circumcision on the western banks of the Jordan, taught that Gentiles could be saved, equally with Israelites, if they embraced the hope of Israel and submitted to the requirements of the Law. Rahab and her household were cases in point for they accepted those conditions.

VERSE 8

"And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people" — The word "people" is *gowy*, the word normally used for Gentiles. They were Gentiles until circumcised, for, "he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29). These Israelites passed over Jordan as Gentiles; they were circumcised and became the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

"That they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole" — The word "whole" is *chayah*, and signifies to *live* or *revive* (see Luke 5:31; 8:48). Spiritual circumcision is the way to full eternal health and wellbeing. Those circumcised had been figuratively put to death, but now revived, as do Gentiles who are baptised, and figuratively circumcised today. How long would it take a circumcised warrior to be ready to engage in battle? The operation is a very painful one, and physicians suggest that at least three weeks would be required before they were properly healed. During whatever period of time it was, an uneasy quiet lay over the land. The inhabitants of Jericho doubtless wondered what the next move would be, but dominated by a fear and foreboding they could not explain or understand, they stayed behind the walls of their fortress whilst the camp of Israel remained apparently defenceless (Gen. 34:25). In that way Yahweh protected it. So He will all those who are prepared to obey His will at their own inconvenience and hurt; even though by so doing they disadvantage themselves.

VERSE 9

"And Yahweh said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you" — The reproach of Egypt is slavery to sin and death. Those circumcised in Egypt were not freed from it (Gal. 5:3); for only the true circumcision, that which is of the heart and not

merely that of the flesh, liberates from the domination of sin. The first act of such a circumcision is baptism, but that must be followed by consistent repudiation of fleshly motivation (Rom. 6:18-22; Gal. 5:1; John 8:32-36). Yahweh was pleased with the action of Joshua and the people, for their circumcision at such a time was a very great act of faith. Apparently without the least fear that the Canaanites might muster their forces and fall suddenly upon them — but, on the contrary, with a deep feeling that his first consideration must be to set himself and the people right in heart and true to every precept of their God, Joshua suspended all military movement; gave his enemies time to recover from their panic; halted his army for some days to heal from the pain of circumcision and also to celebrate the Feast of Passover, seven days; all as if the matter of religion, his standing and that of the nation before Yahweh, was infinitely of greater consequence than military strategy — as indeed it was.

“Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day” — The word Gilgal signifies *Rolling*, and was given because, said Yahweh, “This day have I rolled away (*galal*) the reproach of Egypt”. The word “wheel” (Ezek. 10:2,6 *galgal*) (the word “wheels” in Ezek. 1 is a different word) is from the same root, and is related to Gilgal to this extent, that before one can become part of the cherubic chariot of Yahweh, to move by its wheels to destroy that which is obnoxious to Him, the “reproach of Egypt” (the Gentile world) must be rolled away. This is done through spiritual circumcision in Christ. However, this Gilgal by the Place of Crossing was not the only site named Gilgal; for there were several such, including one close to Shechem mentioned in Deut. 11:29-30 where the Israelites later assembled (see Josh. 9:6).

The Passover Restored — vv. 10-11

Circumcision brings the people into full Covenant relationship with Yahweh. This is now supplemented by the celebration of the Passover, the Festival of Deliverance. The former is necessary for the proper observance of the latter (see Exod. 12:43-48). The Passover, however, had been neglected during the thirty-eight years of wandering, for it would be incongruous for a doomed generation to celebrate it.

VERSE 10

“And the children of Israel encamped

in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho” — This is the third time in the history of Israel it is recorded that the Passover was celebrated (cp. Exod. 12:3; Num. 9:1-2). Events culminating in their redemption had begun in Egypt where they were delivered from the wrath of Pharaoh, and subsequently the Red Sea had put a barrier between them and the land of sin and death. Now a second crisis had brought them safely through the wilderness, and behind them was the flooded Jordan. Deliverance had been experienced from the attacks of Sihon and Og, and protection afforded from the army in Jericho. The Passover, however, was not “kept” on the fourteenth day, but on the fifteenth day that commenced “at even” of the fourteenth. The “fourteenth” day was the “Day of Preparation” (John 19:14). The Hebrew rendered “kept” is *’asah*, to do or make. It is rendered “prepare” in Num. 15:5,6,12; Josh. 22:26, and elsewhere. The Passover was “prepared” on the fourteenth day when the Lamb was slain, and all leaven removed from the homes, and it was celebrated on the fifteenth day.

VERSE 11

“And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover” — This statement does not clearly reveal what was done. The word “old” is from the Hebrew *abur*, from a root signifying *to pass over*. They ate of the produce of the land then ready for harvesting which had passed over from the control of the Canaanites to that of the Israelites. The NIV renders: “The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain”. The Law required that on the sabbath after the Passover, a sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest should be “waved before Yahweh” (Lev. 23:10-11). The time had now come for this to be done. Moses had declared: “When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest” (Lev. 23:10). They “came into the land” at the time of barley harvest, and it was this of which they ate, after presenting the first sheaf unto Yahweh in the way appointed. The harvest was that of the Canaanites, but Yahweh had placed such fear and dread in their hearts, that although the Israelites were incapacitated by circumcision, and

freely took of their harvest then standing in the fields, they were not attacked. Under those circumstances the Passover was kept, and the need of Yahweh's help in deliverance was very real to the Israelites in view of the circumstances. The Egypt threat had been replaced by the Canaanites and success depended entirely on Yahweh's help.

"Unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day" — Leaven or yeast was excluded from the homes of the Israelites for seven days at Passover time, and it was the time of unleavened bread (Matt. 26:17). The "parched corn" comprised roasted grains as described in Lev. 2:14. It is probable that there would have been no leaven in their homes anyway (they had no use of it in the wilderness). But the lesson is — all leaven "excluded" in our eating of the Passover Lamb with the "unleavened" bread of "sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

A Change of Diet

A further change takes place inasmuch as the manna ceases, and the Israelites partake of the fruit of the land. There was a change of spiritual diet at the first advent of the Lord inasmuch as the doctrine of grace replaced that of Law.

VERSE 12

"And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land" — The provision of manna is described in Exod. 16:14-36; Num. 11:7-9; Deut. 8:3,16. It demonstrated that Yahweh is prepared to help those of His people who are unable to help themselves. Accordingly it ceased when Israel could take care of this need. It came at the right time and it ceased when the need was at an end. See Nehemiah's comment (Neh. 9:20-21). The manna having been withdrawn, Israelites had to learn to fend for themselves, planting the grain and reaping the harvest blessed by the sunshine and rain of heaven. So it is in Christ. The manna (of which he is the antitype) was withdrawn when he ascended into heaven. Whilst he was with men, he provided for all their spiritual needs; but he warned the Apostles that when he was withdrawn from them, they would have to fend in large measure for themselves (Luke 22:35-37). So it is today. In Christ we must labour for our daily provisions as well as for that spiritual bread which will sustain unto eternal life in the Age to come. We must apply ourselves to the study of the

Word, whilst seeking the blessing of Yahweh on that which we do. If we do not work we shall not eat (2 Thess. 3:10).

"Neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" — The manna was the visible manifestation of God's Spirit among men. When it ceased, Israel partook of food for which others had laboured. "Other men (the prophets until John the Baptist) laboured, and ye are entered into their labours" the Lord told the Apostles (John 4:38), and therefore they "reaped that whereon they had bestowed no labour". Those words apply with greater meaning since the days of the Apostles. The fruits of their labours are found in the New Testament Scriptures, and since that time, those in Christ, figuratively in the land of Canaan, have partaken of the fruits thus provided. So, in a remarkable manner, Israel's entrance into the land typed the new relationship of each believer in this acceptance of the Lord. See notes on Ephesians, p. 5.

The Divine Presence Manifested

— vv. 13-15

Whilst his warriors continue to rest awaiting the healing of their operation, Joshua makes a reconnaissance of Jericho. Why do not its warriors attack the Israelites whilst they are incapacitated? He receives answer. He is confronted by a warrior with a drawn sword. Fearlessly Joshua approaches him and challenges his identity. The answer reveals that the "man" is actually the Angel placed in charge of Israel's affairs. His protective care defends the camp of Israel. Recognising his authority, Joshua makes obeisance to him. Commander in chief on earth, he is willing to submit to the Commander in chief of heaven.

VERSE 13

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho" — Joshua evidently left the camp in order to study the defences of Jericho.

"That he lifted up his eyes and looked" — Intent upon the city, he was startled by the sudden appearance of this "man", and imagined him to be an enemy.

"And, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand" — The word "man" is *ish*. Whereas when "man" is a translation of the word *Adam* it emphasises his human nature; *ish* relates to his mental capacity and ability: This distinguishes man above the animals,

for being made "in the image and likeness of the Elohim" (Gen. 1:26), he possesses the mental ability to receive and respond to Divine principles. Accordingly the use of *ish* in regard to this man was appropriate, because, in fact, he was an angel. His appearance with drawn sword in hand suggests the belligerent nature of his mission. See similar instances of this: Num. 22:23; 1 Chron. 21:16; Rev. 14:6. The sudden appearance of this man was for the purpose of revealing to Joshua the source of true comfort and confidence, and the real cause of Israel's immunity from attack. In spite of the massive walls of Jericho, and the warlike prowess of its warriors, there were greater and more effective forces on the side of Joshua and the Israelites (2 Chron. 32:7-8). Already the over-shadowing care of the host of heaven had been experienced, for whilst the men of Israel were defenceless (v. 8), the Divine protection had covered the camp, as it had the houses of Israel in Goshen when death marched through the land of Egypt.

"And Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" — In spite of the belligerent appearance of the Angel, there must have been something in his demeanour that encouraged Joshua. Nevertheless, in so approaching the Angel, Joshua manifested true courage and true leadership. He drew near to the Angel with the drawn sword, as Moses had drawn near to the burning bush when the encouraging theophany had been revealed to him. There was a similarity in their experiences, and both were encouraged and sustained by what they saw and heard. Joshua's question was a pertinent one in view of the circumstances.

VERSE 14

"And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of Yahweh am I now come" — This was the "angel of Yahweh's presence" (Isa. 63:9), the one promised Moses who would overshadow the conquest of the land and bring success to the arms of Israel (Exod. 23:20-23). The word "captain" is *Prince* in Hebrew, and therefore is aligned with Michael of Daniel 10:13,21. In that place he is shown acting in conjunction with Gabriel, supervising the affairs of nations to bring about the return of Israel to their land. His name is given as Michael,

One like unto God. In Daniel 12:1, that same name is vested in the Lord Jesus Christ, who, in Isa. 55:4 is described as the Commander of the people. In other words, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all power in heaven and earth has been granted, and to whom, in the guidance of world affairs, the angels are subject (Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22), has, since his elevation taken over the work and administration of Michael on behalf of his people, both national and spiritual. He now is captain of the host or army of Yahweh and labours on behalf of his people, both national and spiritual. Yahweh's angelic army has acted effectively and continuously on behalf of Israel throughout the ages (see Gen. 32:2; Exod. 23:21; Deut. 20:1-4; Josh. 10:14; 2 Sam. 5:22-25; 2 Kings 6:17; 2 Chron. 13:12; 32:7-8; Dan. 4:35; Matt. 26:53). Today, under the direction of Christ as Michael, it guides the destiny of nations (Dan. 4:17), and has opened the way for the revival of Israel. The call of the Gospel is to separate people from out of the nations as recruits for the Divine army of tomorrow (see Acts 15:14; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; Heb. 2:5; Rev. 19:14-16). Meanwhile, Joshua knew of the exploits of the angelic army whose captain or Prince, he saw, and reacted accordingly.

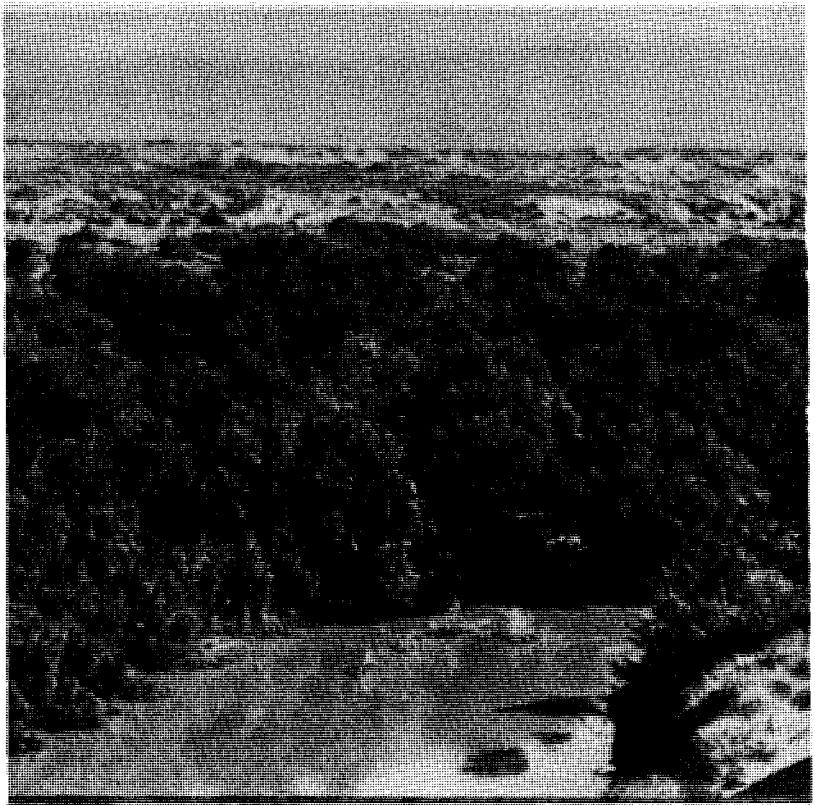
"And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship" — Humbled by the Divine theophany, Joshua prostrated himself to the ground. The form of "worship" was to pay the angel obeisance, as to a superior. The Hebrew *shachah*, worship, is defined by Strong as to "prostrate in homage to royalty or God". The angel was not God, for nobody has seen God at any time (1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12). Similar obeisance is paid to mortals who occupy positions of authority (see Dan. 2:46; Rev. 3:9). The same word is elsewhere rendered "bow", "obeisance", "fall down", "humbly beseech". (See Gen. 37:7,9; Exod. 11:8; 18:7; 2 Sam. 1:2; 14:4; 1 Kings 1:16 etc.).

"And said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant" — Joshua thus acknowledged his subordinate position, and sought instructions and commands from the angel as from a superior officer. In doing so, he acknowledged that the army of Israel was also the army of Yahweh, and was under the direction of its Commander. He was ready to "please him who had chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

VERSE 15

“And the captain of Yahweh’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoes from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so” — Similar instruction was given to Moses (Exod. 3:5), and possibly by the same angel. The words are important. They constitute the first command given by Joshua’s superior Officer to his “servant”. What do they mean? They signify that wherever a servant of God approaches Yahweh, that place is holy, and due reverence must be paid to the One into Whose presence His servants have come. There was to be no easy familiarity in Joshua’s approach to Yahweh’s representative. He was to treat the cir-

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR cumstances with the greatest care in deportment. Recognising his low estate in comparison with the one addressed, he acknowledged that due reverence should be paid; and implicit, unquestioning obedience given to whatever instructions were issued. Similar words are directed to those who have been recruited by Christ for his army (see 2 Tim. 2:2-4). The attitude of reverence and strict obedience to the commands of the Word need ever to be borne in mind. This preparatory instruction on the part of the angel bearing the name of Yahweh revealed that humble submission, complete obedience, and the conviction of faith were needful. In submitting to the request of the angel, Joshua indicated his readiness to do this.



The River Jordan and the surrounding valley near Jericho, most of which is wilderness. When Joshua entered the land the River was in flood.

JOSHUA:

VICTORY THROUGH FAITH

Section Two:

***CONQUERING
THE LAND***

***The Works
of Faith
Chapters 6 to 12***

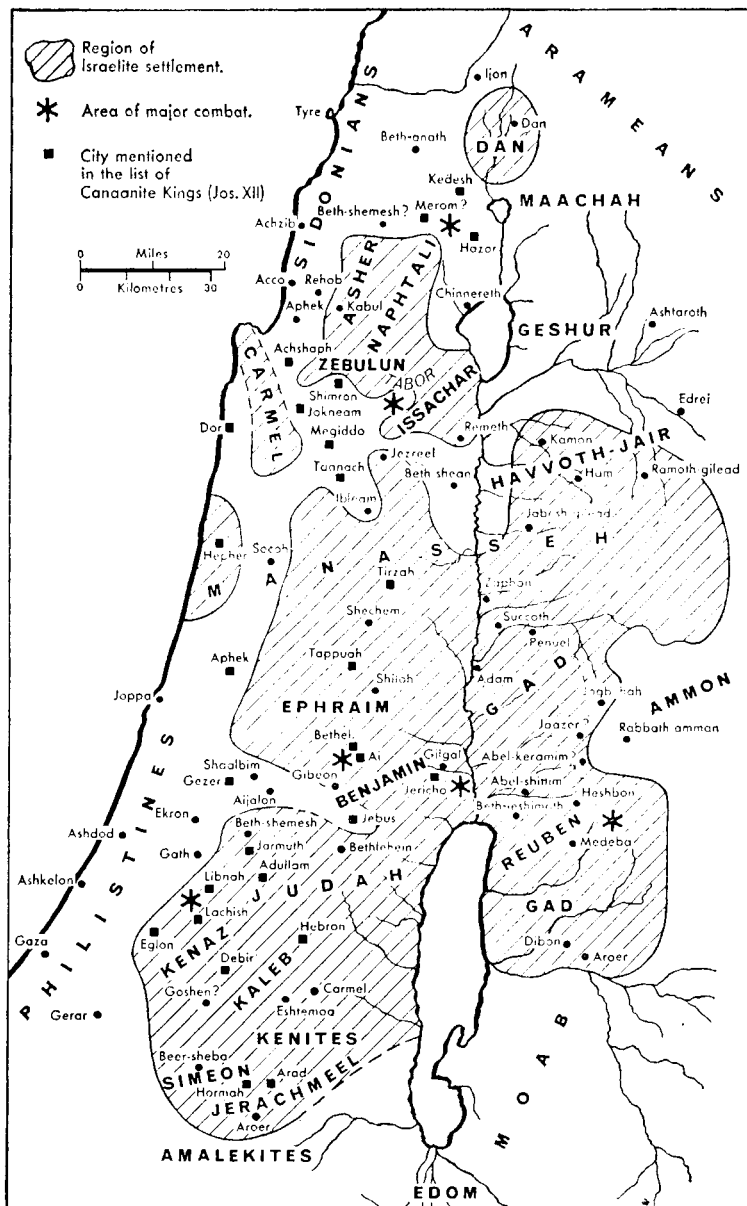
The conquest of the land commences with the Sixth chapter. The campaign is divided into three parts: the Central Campaign (Chapts 6-8); the Southern Campaign (Chapts 9-10); the Northern Campaign (Chapt. 11). Important lessons are impressed during this warfare of faith, illustrating the qualities that likewise need to be observed by those in covenant relationship with Christ. Firstly, there is the need of faith. The Apostle states: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). Given sufficient faith, much that appears impossible can be accomplished (Phil. 4:13): and so "by faith the walls of Jericho fell" (Heb. 11:30). Secondly, there is need of strict obedience. Faith is not presumption; it is made manifest by works (James 2:24). Accordingly, when Joshua sends a comparatively small army to take the smaller town of Ai, unaccountable failure at first marks the attempt. Why? Because secret sin has been committed. The sin is removed and success follows. Thirdly, there is constant need to seek the counsel of Yahweh. When Joshua fails to do this at the request of the Gibeonites, a covenant is entered into that God does not approve. "They asked not counsel at the mouth of Yahweh" (Josh. 9:14). There is need to do this always so that proper direction may be obtained. Yahweh has revealed His will through His Word; the study of the Word supplemented by prayer can govern action. Finally, there is need of energy and courage, such as are manifested by Joshua in his sudden attack on Jabin in the north, and the planned strategy by which he disperses and destroys the enemy's forces. These are some of the spiritual lessons impressed through the conquests of Joshua. They provide the framework on which is suspended the tapestry of his successes.

(1) THE CENTRAL CAMPAIGN — Chapters 6-9

The fortress of Jericho guards the approach to the central highlands. It presents a formidable barrier, and Joshua is ordered to destroy it. However, he is to do so not with fleshly weapons of war, nor by a frontal attack, and the launching of battering rams against its mighty walls, high towers, and powerful fortifications; but by marching around the city in faith, with priestly trumpets sounding, the Ark, the regal throne of Yahweh carried into battle, and the walls will come tumbling down.

That is the amazing orders given Joshua by his Commander in Chief.

And when the impossible happens, faith is vindicated, and the people are stimulated. Now nothing is impossible. Every fortress will be overthrown, every difficulty levelled to the ground. What is Ai, at the top of the pass dominating the central highlands, in comparison to Jericho! Send only a few soldiers declare the over-confident Israelites. For a moment they think their faith has conquered Jericho's walls; and forget that it is faith in Yahweh that has done so. He destroyed the walls: not Israel's spiritual might. First defeat and then victory at Ai impresses the lesson that faith to be effective must be exhibited by works. Obedience is required. Israel is brought to acknowledge this by the painful process of condemning an important member of its community, and administering the punishment decreed by Yahweh. Then, after a careful revision of strategy, that humbles the over-confidence of the Israelites, Ai falls, and the central highlands are in the possession of Israel. They now are strategically poised in the strategic centre of the land, ready to extend their conquests throughout its territory.



The Conquest Narratives and the Regions of Early Israelite Settlement. From The Land of the Bible.

CHAPTER SIX

FAITH CONQUERS THE WALLS OF JERICHO

From Gilgal by the Jordan, the Israelites look towards what is to be the first prize of conquest. Before them is a vast forest of majestic palms. In the open spaces amid the forest are waving fields of ripe corn, for it is "the time of barley harvest" and they have already partaken of its fruits. Above the trees can be seen the high walls and massive towers of the doomed city. But for the moment all is quiet. Dominated by fear, Jericho awaits the attack. But when it comes it excites the contempt of its inmates. They cannot understand it. It seems like a religious procession. So it continues for six days, but on the seventh day there is a change. The city is encircled again, but now seven times instead of the previous once. Then, with a mighty shout of the people, plus the harsh, strident notes of shofar trumpets, the ground begins to shake, and the walls fall down to provide entrance for the Israelitish troops. Jericho is destroyed, but Rahab is saved; and in both events, faith is vindicated. But it is vindicated through means that must have appeared foolish and inadequate to human wisdom. Walls do not normally fall down as the result of marching warriors, or shouting people. But if faith is manifested by obedience to Yahweh's precepts, He will certainly confound the mighty with the weak things of His choice (1 Cor. 1:25-31). By the "foolishness of preaching", fitly compared with the sounding of the ram's horns, the fortresses of the flesh can be thrown down, and success attend the weapons of our warfare. Those weapons, though not carnal, are "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4-5). So it proves at Jericho as recorded in this Chapter. Key verses are vv. 5,16,27. It is divisible into the following sections: Fear sweeps Jericho — vv. 1-2; The Strategy of the Campaign — vv. 3-5; Days of Impending doom for Jericho — vv. 6-14; The Day of Yahweh's Vindication — vv. 15-21; Rahab saved — vv. 22-25; Jericho's curse — vv. 26-27.

Fear Immobilises Jericho — vv. 1-2

The unusual circumstances attending the approach of the Israelites: their victories over Sihon and Og, and the amazing miracle of Jordan, causes such fear to sweep Jericho as to weaken the resolve of its warriors for the impending war.

VERSE 1

“Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel” — The initial victories against Sihon and Og, and the amazing miracle of the Jordan caused consternation within Jericho, so that the people, in fear, withdrew within the shelter of its walls prepared to resist.

“None went out, and none came in” — Silent and forbidding the fortress stood in the path of the Israelites. The escape of the spies, and the passage of the Jordan by Israel made it obvious to the people of Jericho that an attack was impending. The fortress was comparatively small in size. According to the book *Jericho's Judgment* it occupied only about 12 acres, this being the fortress proper: the homes of the people spread outside the city. Those people who normally lived outside its walls now abandoned their homes, and moved inside to its shelter. Therein, at this time, were representatives of all the nations of Canaan (Josh. 24:11). Probably they had gathered there by invitation to plan joint resistance to the common threat that Israel presented. The fall of Jericho, therefore, was a token of the impending conquest of the whole of the Land of Canaan. It typed the overthrow of Babylon the Great, at which time “the cities of the nations” shall fall (Rev. 16:19).

VERSE 2

“And Yahweh said unto Joshua” — This communication would have been conveyed to Joshua by Yahweh's representative, the Captain of His army (Ch. 5:14). Therefore v. 1 should be in parenthesis, so that the verse before us continues on from Ch. 5:15, and comprises the continued conversation of the Angel. As Joshua and the angel sized up the fortress they could sense the fear felt therein. Whilst they remained there, the Angel explained what Joshua and the Israelites had to do.

“See” — Fear had caused the warriors of Jericho to take the defensive by withdrawing into the city. This always is the precursor of defeat.

“I have given into thine hand Jericho” — The defeatism manifested by the men of Jericho was a token of its ultimate fall.

“And the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour” — Garstang's excavations, recorded in *Jericho's Judgment*, confirms that Jericho was a royal city (see Deut. 7:24). He claims that the ruler of Jericho was a vassal of the Egyptian Pharaoh. If so it shows why Rahab knew of the overthrow of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea.

Strategy Of The Campaign — vv. 3-5

Jericho is the key to the Land of Canaan. It stands in proud defiance of its assailants in spite of the fear-ridden condition of its inhabitants. Its mighty walls, and high towers appear too powerfully fortified for the Israelites to overthrow, with their primitive weapons of war. The Israelites were not a martial people. Their prowess stemmed from faith and not from military skill. Their confidence was in Yahweh and not in weapons of war, of which they were largely deficient. They had no siege engines, battering rams and the like to reduce the mighty walls of the fortress. Their main weapon is faith, so before engaging in any battle, they are called upon to make victory a matter of prayer, to conduct the strange and unmilitary procedure described in Deut. 20:1-10.

VERSE 3

“And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days” — The command is not that they lay siege to Jericho and take it by force, but that the city should be encircled as the warriors await a miracle! This tested the faith of Joshua, but he was equal to it. Thirty-eight years earlier he had boldly asserted: “Neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and Yahweh is with us: fear them not” (Num. 14:9). The same principle remains today: Yahweh has selected things that appear to flesh as foolish, weak and base to “bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. 1:26-31). And Paul adds: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war in the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:3-6). For six days (the number of flesh) the city was to be compassed about by the men of war and the priests in the order described in v. 9.

VERSE 4

"And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams horns" — The words *shopheroth hyyovelim* signify Trumpets of Jubilee. The entrance into the Land was a Jubilee to the Israelites, a time of liberty and returning home (see Lev. 25:9-10; Isa. 27:13), when "not by fleshly power but by the Spirit" of God victory was to be won (Zech. 4:6). Though the shophar trumpets were shaped like a ram's horns, the Hebrew word in this place should not be so rendered. In fact, the word *shopheroth* is in the plural feminine gender. The shophar trumpet gave forth a harsh, strident sound of warning to those who heard it. It suggests here the warning voice of the bride throughout the ages, alerting mankind to the impending national doom by Divine judgment; and the urgent need to seek the mercy of Yahweh. See Ezek. 33:11.

"And the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets" — In this place the word trumpets is *shopharim*. Seven is the covenant number, the number of fulfillment. The seventh day points to the millennium when Yahweh's covenants of promise will be fulfilled and all opposition to Christ's rule on earth will be dramatically and completely overthrown. In *The Apocalypse* this is described as taking place during the period of the seventh Trumpet (Rev. 11:15).

VERSE 5

"And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet" — For "rams' horns" see note on v. 4. The word trumpet is *shophar*. The long, drawn-out shophar note expressed urgency and warning.

"All the people shall shout with a great shout; and the walls of the city shall fall down flat" — The Hebrew word for "flat" signifies *under it*, suggestive of a mighty earthquake, but one so discriminating as to leave Rahab's house intact! One so devastating as to destroy mighty walls, and yet not affect the Israelites a short distant way. In short, a unique earthquake foreshadowing that of Rev. 16:18. Concerning his investigations at Jericho, Garstang wrote:

"One conclusion indeed seems certain: the power that could dislodge hundreds of tons of masonry in the way described (by his archaeological findings) must have

been superhuman. Earthquake is the one and only known agent capable of the demonstration of force indicated by the observed facts; and there is reason to believe that in this lies the real answer to our question. Not only does Jericho lie in a volcanic zone which is never wholly free from earthquake shocks, but the evidence of the site itself, as revealed by our excavations, points incontestably to this solution" (p. 135).

The earthquake that destroyed the walls of Jericho foreshadow that greater earthquake which will destroy Rome, when Yahweh "ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19).

"And the people shall ascend up every man straight before him" — Motivated by the realisation that the Divine presence is among them, the people of Israel, the living representation of the Cherubim which would be in their midst (for the Ark was borne into battle) "went every one straight forward" exactly as Ezekiel described the movements of the Cherubim (see Ezek. 1:12).

Days of Doom for Jericho — vv. 6-14

Leaving the Angel, Joshua returns to the people and instructs them in the order of march. For six days they follow the order set forth by the Captain of Yahweh's army. On the seventh day a variation in the order of march is to take place.

VERSE 6

"And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant" — Joshua returned from his interview with the Captain of Yahweh's host, and ordered the priests to make ready for the assault on the city. The Ark of the Covenant represented Yahweh's throne in Israel, and the conveying it to battle brought Him personally into the fray.

"And let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Yahweh" — Seven priests, representing the covenant number, were to precede the Ark as it moved towards Jericho.

VERSE 7

"And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of Yahweh" — All the nation was to be represented in the attack, with armed warriors leading the procession. The Hebrew has the plural pronoun: "They said . . ." the officers of

Israel would convey this message to the priests. Again, the word "armed" is significant. In its Hebrew form it signifies *to pull off*, that is to disencumber oneself. The term relates to warriors who have given up civil occupations in order to devote themselves to the war. Paul describes such in the following terms: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4). Joshua's warriors were fighters of faith.

VERSE 8

"And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before Yahweh, and blew with the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed them" — These trumpet-bearing priests, preceding the Ark as they sounded their instruments, called attention to the foundation of their faith. It was in the Ark of the Covenant, and what it represented. Victory would be their's because Yahweh was with them. The *shophar* trumpet has a loud piercing, strident tone, of limited breadth of notes, wholly unsuited to concert music. It was used to summon people to attention, and for making signals. Here it triumphantly introduced the Ark of the Covenant which followed the priests, their number of seven likewise drawing attention to Yahweh's covenant.

VERSE 9

"And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets" — Note the comment on "armed" above. These were men who had disencumbered themselves with the things of this life, to give themselves wholly to the warfare of faith. They marched in order, and their aspect deeply concerned the men of Jericho, warning them to heed the result of the impending war. But, until the command was given to attack after the walls had collapsed, they marched as conscientious objectors. They merely threatened Jericho, with its ultimate fate. Those marching troops followed by the trumpet-sounding priests and those who carried the Ark of the Covenant foreshadowed the orderly attack of the Apostles and Ecclesias on the citadels of error. See Eph. 3:9-11; 6:11-18.

"And the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the

trumpets" — The term *rereward* literally signifies "the gathering or host", and implies the general assembly. In the type they represent the rank and file of Ecclesias, those described by Paul as "behind" or the general Ecclesia (Col. 1:24). They are Yahweh's Mighty Ones of the future who shall bear His glory (Isa. 52:12; 58:8). The specially selected priests sounded the trumpets, and the rereward followed the sound thereof.

VERSE 10

"And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout" — Apart from the strident wailing of the trumpets, drawing attention to the majesty of Yahweh as depicted in the Ark of the Covenant, all that would be heard would be the steady tramping of feet. For six days the inhabitants of Jericho looked out on this strange sight. They saw the orderly advance of the silent army marching in rank, five abreast (Josh. 1:10), proclaiming grace for those who desired it like Rahab, but with an implied silent threat for those who repudiated it; then followed seven priests blowing on their strange trumpets; preceding the mysterious Ark, borne aloft by other priests; finally the rereward, the great company of silent people. These were those who had survived the many trials and testings of the wilderness journey, and were recipients of Divine grace. They followed the Ark like a cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12:1).

The silent, apprehensive onlookers in Jericho were as ignorant of the meaning of this, as are the people of the Fourth Beast, relating to the judgments that are impending, or of the significance of the six Apocalyptic trumpets that have proclaimed their message and continue to do so (Rev. 8:2; 11:15). There has been no open manifestation of the Divine purpose during the period represented by the sounding of the six trumpets, though the seventh trumpet will reveal it (Rev. 11:15). The "cloud of witnesses" (represented by the rereguard "people" in the procession) will "shout" in the day of triumph (see Num. 23:21; Rev. 19:1).

VERSE 11

"So the ark of Yahweh compassed the city, going about it once" — The Ark, of course, was the throne of Yahweh in

Israel, and represented His majesty. It did not move on its own, but was accompanied by the procession already described. The strange order of march set out from Gilgal some miles distant from Jericho, and was observed by the watchmen on the walls. They would view its approach with fear, that perhaps gave way to contempt when the procession reached the confines of the city and the attack was limited to the sounding of the warning notes of the seven trumpets. The Israelites encircled the city and returned. The people of Jericho were in ignorance of the significance of what took place as are the nations today of the "perplexing" signs of the times (Luke 21:25).

"And they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp" — The procession returned to the camp at Gilgal by the river Jordan.

VERSE 12

"And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of Yahweh" — These verses provide details of that already described in v. 11. Joshua was normally an early riser (see note Ch. 3:1), but now he rose earlier than usual to supervise the march. So, in the early dawn, the trembling people of Jericho heard the harsh, wailing, warning notes of the trumpets. But they saw no weapon. The Israelites were not a martial people. Their prowess developed out of faith, and not from military might. Their confidence had to be in Yahweh, not in weapons of war of which they were largely deficient. They were expected to fight in faith with a prayer on their lips (see Deut. 20:1-10).

VERSE 13

"And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Yahweh went on continually, and blew with the trumpets; and the armed men went before them; but the reward came after the ark of Yahweh, the Priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets" — As the warning notes of the shophar trumpets were heard by the people of Jericho as a prelude to the coming attack, so the noise of the trumpets of *The Apocalypse* are heard today by those "who have ears to hear," in the national calamities that are arising throughout the earth. The Israel of God who understand know the significance of events: "The seventh trumpet sounded and there were great voices in

heaven, saying, The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

VERSE 14

"And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp; so they did six days" — Doubtless the people of Jericho gradually got used to this strange procession. What was first viewed with wonder and fear later became the object of indifference and ridicule. There was an uneasiness in the city as its inhabitants observed things they could not understand, but the demands of everyday living had to be observed, and so gradually they came to ignore them. So with the crisis of today. People have become accustomed to the threat of nuclear destruction, and have learned to live with what they feel they cannot control or correct. So also in Jericho; six days passed; the judgment of Yahweh waited, and with the delay the people became indifferent to the threat.

The Day of Yahweh — vv. 15-21

On the seventh day special instructions are given. The procession makes ready earlier than ever, at the "dawning of the day". The warriors are advised that this is the day of attack, and are given instructions as to how to go about it. The city is accursed; it must be destroyed, and all living creatures are to be put to death except those who have sought the grace of Yahweh. Any spoil, such as gold and silver are to be subjected to the cleansing process of fire, and placed in the treasury of Yahweh. These instructions are carried out by Joshua.

VERSE 15

"And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day" — Young renders this as the "ascending of the dawn", that is, as the sun was rising in the east. On that day, earlier than usual, the wailing notes of the trumpets were heard, announcing the day of decision, the day of Yahweh's judgment. Antotypically that seventh day foreshadowed the Millennium. As Jericho was destroyed by earthquake and conquest, so also will Babylon the Great at the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet (Rev. 11:15-18; 16:17-21). "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven" predicted Malachi (Ch. 4:1). Surely current events in the Middle East indicate the approach of the "ascending of the dawn".

“And compassed the city after the same manner seven times” — This comprised a figurative concision of the city, a cutting off of flesh prior to entering the covenant land. If it took an hour to encircle the city once, most of the day would have been taken up in marching from Gilgal to Jericho and then encircling the fortress seven times, in preparation for its destruction. There is a difference between concision and circumcision. The former is a mutilation by cutting off; the latter is a cutting off as the rite of the Abrahamic covenant. Joel refers to the destruction of Armageddon as “concision” (Joel 3:14). The subsequent subjugation of the nations is treated as national circumcision, for by it they will be incorporated into the Kingdom on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant (see Psa. 118:10 mg. and compare with Rotherham’s rendition).

VERSE 16

“And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for Yahweh hath given you the city” — See note v. 5.

VERSE 17

“And the city shall be accursed, even it and all that are therein to Yahweh” — The Hebrew *cherem* signifies “devoted”. Anything thus devoted had to be given to Yahweh in the manner appointed by Him. A living creature had to be put to death or redeemed (see Lev. 27:26-29). An inanimate object of value, such as gold or silver, had to be subjected to a process of purification by fire, and then given unto Him (see Num. 31:21-23; Josh. 6:19). The fate of a city guilty of setting forth false gods as objects of worship is set forth in Deut. 13:16-18: everything living was to be put to the sword; the city was to be completely broken down, burned with fire, and never rebuilt. Any disobeying these commands would share the fate of the city’s inhabitants.

“Only Rahab the harlot shall live she and all that are with her in the house” — Rahab and those with her would be spared because they had abandoned their previous beliefs and way of life, and now identified themselves with Israel and its hope. This was complete separation from a doomed civilisation (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rev. 18:4).

“Because she hid the messengers that we sent” — Rahab and her household

were not saved because of her kindness, but because her faith (Heb. 11:31) was perfected by works (James 2:25-26). She received the spies as “messengers” of the Gospel, and faith was generated by belief (Rom. 10:17). The Hebrew *mal’ak* signifies “an ambassador”, a “teacher” or an “angel”. She received them, as those of Galatia received Paul as “an angel of God” (Gal. 4:14). As such, she paid reverence to the God of Israel (Matt. 10:41-42; 25:40; Heb. 6:10). Her faith, was manifested by works. She became an example for true Israelites to emulate.

VERSE 18

“And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing” — To take for oneself those things which belong to Yahweh is punishable with death. In general, the people of Israel obeyed this solemn injunction. Evidence of this was found, according to the archaeologist J. Garstang, in the ruins he excavated. He found under the ashes and fallen walls, in the ruins of store rooms, an abundance of foodstuff turned to charcoal by intense heat, untouched and uneaten; evidence that the conquerors had refrained from touching these things, or consigned them to fire as was commanded. The silver and gold, together with other metals, had to be gathered up and purified by fire and water for Divine use. This requirement typed Yahweh’s use of gold and silver (the metals of faith and redemption) throughout the ages. David, in conquering a city or nation claimed such metal and dedicated it unto Yahweh (2 Sam. 8:11). Haggai proclaimed that gold and silver belong to Yahweh and in due time He will demand it (Hag. 2:8); and Paul taught that the gold and silver (the actions of faith and redemption) manifested by believers, will be purified “by fire” at the Judgment Seat of Christ. All impurities of character and nature will then be purged (1 Cor. 3:12-13).

“And make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it” — The army of Israel, like the Ecclesia in the modern world, was treated as a unit. If one member suffered, all the members suffered with it. The analogy is drawn from the human body. A splinter in the finger will be felt throughout the body. If the toe is hurt, the eyes water, if the leg is broken the tongue complains. Joshua warned that if any dare vio-

late the command of Yahweh, the camp as a whole would suffer. Each soldier, every person, had to move forward responsibly and resolutely, realising that if they failed to obey, the entire nation will suffer. Fellowship in a nation or an Ecclesia links one with the other, in circumstances of both triumph and tragedy.

VERSE 19

“But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto Yahweh; they shall come into the treasury of Yahweh” — The word “consecrated” signifies “separated” unto God. The metals described were purified by fire and water, and then placed in the Treasury connected with the Tabernacle. In type they represent the redeemed whom Yahweh purifies by trial and consecrates unto Himself, and who will find their place among His special treasures (cp. Num. 31:54; Mal. 3:17). The fire of the Judgment Seat of Christ will provide a final purification for those who are brought before him, their “reward” being eternal life and places of honour in the Kingdom of God, where they shall “shine forth” as precious metals. The world at large, also, will be purged by the fire of Armageddon, and the nations that survive it will be incorporated into the Kingdom. So type unfolds on type in the narrative of Joshua, Jericho and Rahab.

Jericho's Judgment — vv. 20-24

On the seventh day, after the men march around the city seven times, and then raise their shout of victory, the walls fall down, the soldiers enter, and the city is put to the sword. Rahab and her family are saved and placed temporarily without the camp awaiting induction thereto. The city is fired; the silver, gold, brass and iron that survive the purifying heat being gathered into the Treasury of Yahweh.

VERSE 20

“So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets; and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat” — The word “flat” is rendered *under it* in the Hebrew. The record in Joshua describes what Garstang's excavations confirmed. In a field report, endorsed by other archaeologists at the time, he wrote: “The main defences of Jericho in the Late Bronze Age followed the upper brink of

the city mound, and comprised two parallel walls, the outer six feet and the inner twelve feet thick. Investigations along the west side show continuous signs of destruction and conflagration. The outer wall suffered most, its remains falling down the slope. The inner wall is preserved only where it abuts upon the citadel, or tower, to a height of eighteen feet; elsewhere it is found largely to have fallen, together with the remains of buildings upon it, into the space between the walls, which was filled with ruins and debris. Traces of intense fire are plain to see, including reddened masses of brick, cracked stones, charred timbers and ashes. Houses alongside the wall were found burnt to the ground, their roofs fallen upon the domestic pottery within” (*The Story of Jericho*, p. 133).

The wall of Jericho was a huge cavity double wall, with houses bridging the top. Possibly shaken by earthquake, excavations show that the outer wall fell outwards dragging the inner wall with it. However, not all the wall was destroyed, for Rahab's house was saved. Therefore the earthquake, if earthquake it was, was very discriminating; one that shook only that part of the land to be subject to Yahweh's judgment. It was the faith of the people, and not their shout, that brought the walls of Jericho crashing down (Heb. 11:30). Their faith constituted their main weapon of war, and it was exhibited in the manner of their march and their shout (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

“So that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city” — The warriors of Israel would have surrounded the city so that every part was attacked. They went “straight forward” to their work of execution; which is descriptive of the movement of the Cherubim in judgment (Ezek. 1:12). The perfected Cherubim will move against Babylon the Great in the Age to come in similar manner.

VERSE 21

“And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword” — This wholesale destruction and slaughter is very distasteful to flesh which is most uncomfortable in the presence of Divine judgment. However, the evidence of Scripture, supported by archaeology, witnesses to the depravity of the Canaanites. The immorality

recorded in regard to Sodom and Gomorrah was typical of Canaanite religion. Since the highest gods of the Canaanites went in for immorality, their worshippers did also. Sex orgies were common, and the temples had their male and female prostitutes. And along with these were self-made eunuch priests and a guild of homosexuals. Anath and Astarte (Ashtaroth), their two chief goddesses, were both mother goddesses and divine courtesans; but the emphasis was seldom on the maternal. Most startling of all is the portrayal of a naked prostitute goddess referred to as "the holy one". Child sacrifice to their deities was the final Canaanite blasphemy. No wonder Yahweh ordered the Israelites to wipe out the Canaanite religion, for 'Yahweh our God is Holy'.

The flesh is appalled at the command issued to Joshua to destroy all the inhabitants even to the little children; but, in fact, it was the only means of salvation for Israel. To stand aloof from such slaughter would be to succumb to the enemy for so depraved were the Canaanites that their evil had become a law of their nature, and conversion was impossible.

VERSE 22

"But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country" — The salvation of Rahab and her household (the Gentile Ecclesia in Jericho), was given first priority by Joshua. It is a Divine principle to give first care to the righteous before pouring out judgment upon the wicked. Consider the cases of Noah and Lot.

"Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye swear unto her" — What thoughts must have moved Rahab as each day she viewed the signs of the time: the marching Israelites, preparing to take the city. She had already made her preparation, faithfully displaying in her window the symbol of hope. Perhaps the spies looked for it each day as they circumnavigated the city. This was the symbol of her faith (Heb. 11:31); based upon the promise they made to her (Josh. 2:15). She had confidence in Yahweh, and in His messengers (Ecc. 5:14).

VERSE 23

"And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out

all her kindred" — The word "messengers" in the Hebrew is *angels*, and, therefore, the description of the spies as "young men" is appropriate (see Mark 16:5). On this occasion the "messengers" or "angels" of Joshua acted as will the angels who accompany the Lord on his return; for as they brought out Rahab and all with her so will the Lord's messengers at his coming (Matt. 13:41; Isa. 26:20-21). Those with Rahab not only included her immediate family, but other related families. The Hebrew word rendered "kindred" signifies *families*. They evidently comprised groups other than her own family; so that Rahab's house was crowded with those who had hearkened to the words of warning and appeal she must have offered. Others had rejected her Gospel. This is shown by the statement of Paul that she "perished not with them that believed not", for the word signifies to disbelieve *wilfully and perversely*. Apparently she had spoken to others concerning her hope, and some had accepted her offer of refuge whilst others had rejected it. The prohibition that the spies had imposed upon her as expressed in Josh. 2:14 evidently only related to the time they remained in the city. This verse, and the comment of Heb. 11:31, shows that others could have been saved if they had indicated a willingness to submit to the requirements. But most were depraved and obstinate, and rejected out of hand any thoughts of submission to Yahweh.

"And left them without the camp of Israel" — These converts to the hope of Israel, were temporarily placed "without the camp" awaiting their complete cleansing (Num. 5:2), and official induction 'herein' (Num. 12:14). Believers today, find themselves in the same position, awaiting eternal life, and induction into the Commonwealth of Israel at the Lord's return. As Christ "suffered without the camp" they are exhorted to seek him "without the camp bearing his reproach" (Heb. 13:12-13). Rahab's case revealed that the Canaanites could have obtained salvation if they sought it in the correct manner: complete denial of the flesh, personal and national.

VERSE 24

"And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of Yahweh" — See note v. 18.

The Triumph of Faith — vv. 25-27

The fruits of faith are revealed in the privileges granted Rahab and those with her as they are incorporated into the covenant nation. The chapter concludes with a warning and a blessing. A warning to any who may attempt to rebuild the city accursed, and a blessing upon Joshua ensuring that his greatness is acknowledged by all.

VERSE 25

“And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive” — Joshua’s name signifies *Yah will save*, a title illustrated by this action, for he typed the Lord Jesus. The emphasis upon Rahab’s profession illustrates the depths of depravity from which it is possible to be redeemed (see Matt. 21:31; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). The term “harlot” denotes unfaithfulness, but it was the obedient faith of Rahab that saved her (Heb. 11:31; cp. Acts 2:21).

“And her father’s household, and all that she had” — As Noah saved his family, so also did Rahab. From v. 23, however, it seems that other families identified themselves with her and were saved.

“And she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day” — From this statement it is obvious that the *Book of Joshua* was written at a time contemporary with the lifespan of Rahab, and probably by Joshua. Rahab not only dwelt in Israel, but ultimately married Salmon, a prince of Israel. As further evidence of Yahweh’s marvellous grace, and Rahab’s character, her name appears in the Messianic line (Matt. 1:5). She thus wonderfully redeemed herself, to be elevated to a high position in Yahweh’s purpose; and an object lesson to all Gentiles called to the Truth.

“Because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho” — Rahab’s faith was not a mere academic belief in God, but an earnest conviction that found its outworking in action. Her faith was justified by her works, and she is set forth as an example for others to follow (James 2:25). What she did she did at risk of her life, so complete became her devotion to Yahweh.

VERSE 26

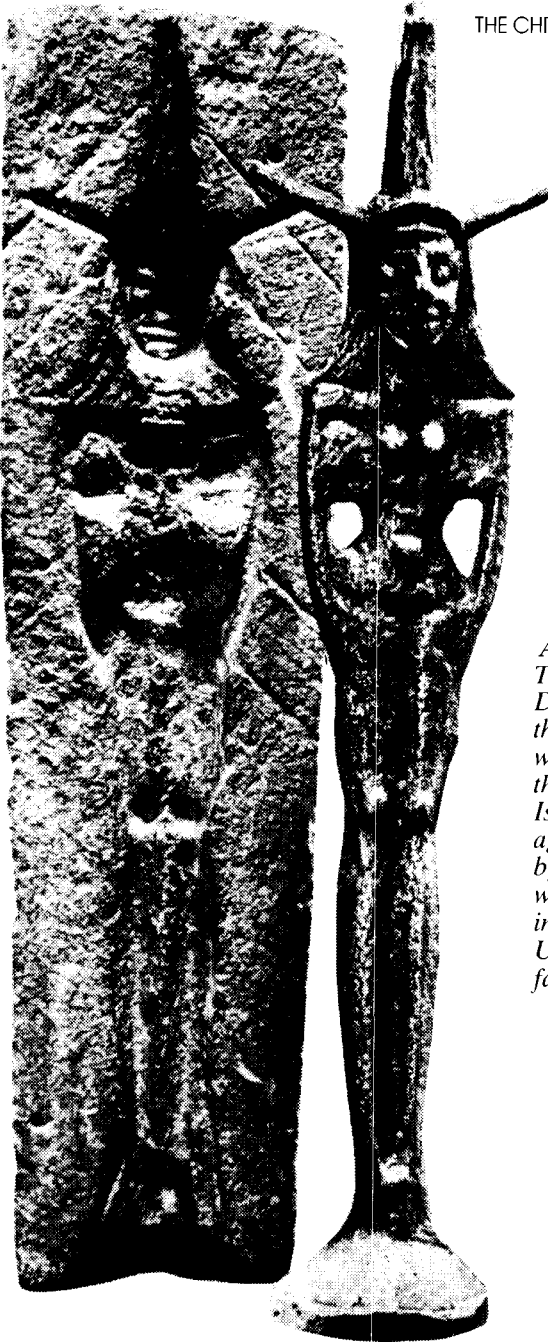
“And Joshua adjured them at that time” — The word “adjured” is from the Hebrew *shaba*, to make complete, to seven oneself, to swear by repeating seven times. The Hebrew word for “oath” and “seven” are similar, a reason why in Bible numerics the number seven relates to an oath that completes a covenant.

“Saying, Cursed be the man before Yahweh, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho” — In this statement the word cursed is different from that used elsewhere in this chapter. It is from the Hebrew *arar*, to execrate, and so to condemn. The word accursed in v. 17 signifies to devote to Yahweh’s pleasure.

“He shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it” — Joshua warned that constant disaster will attend the rebuilding and refortification of Jericho. The words “foundation” and “gates” refer to the establishment of a wall around the city, and not merely its habitation. It is evident from Judges 1:16; 3:13 that the site, described as “the city of palm trees”, was to some degree reinhabited a short while after its destruction. The first attempt to refortify the city is recorded in 1 Kings 16:34. In the days of Ahab, a man by the name of Hiel attempted it, but in so doing he lost two of his sons in fulfilment of the curse pronounced by Joshua. This was some 500 years later. In the days of Elisha, the site was used by a company of the prophets (2 Kings 2:18-22).

VERSE 27

“So Yahweh was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country” — The miraculous, spectacular and decisive victory of the Israelites over Jericho caused the fear that had dominated the inhabitants of that city to spread throughout the land. Most Canaanites failed to comprehend the significance of the victory. The secret of the Israelitish success at Jericho was not due to military genius or capability; but to the faith of Joshua and his army manifested in complete obedience to the revealed will of God.



A Canaanite goddess

This image of a female Deity is indicative of the form of crude worship practiced by the Canaanites.

Israelites were warned against being led aside by the flesh-pleasing worship of the inhabitants.

Unfortunately they failed to do so.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISOBEDIENCE BRINGS DEFEAT AT AI

Faith in the abstract is not sufficient. It is "dead being alone". That is the lesson of the chapter before us. From the triumph of victory recorded in Joshua 6, the nation is plunged into the deepest depression by the tragedy of defeat when Ai is attacked. The events recorded are both unexpected and unprecedented. Because Israel is a theocracy, hidden sin is not covered to the eyes of Yahweh, and the nation learns the meaning of Moses' warning, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). Because the nation is treated by God as a unit each individual shares responsibility for its success. Failure is recorded in the attack on the next city, Ai. It stands at the head of a steep defile that leads to the highlands north of Jerusalem. As it is a much smaller place than Jericho, and only poorly fortified, Joshua's self-confident commanders claim the conquering of it will be a mere formality. Unexpectedly, a dramatic defeat is experienced. Joshua laments the failure before Yahweh, and learns that His specific commands have been violated, and that He will no longer continue to support the nation unless the fault is corrected. The guilty party is revealed by lot. Achan, the troubler of Israel is shown up as responsible, and suffers the supreme penalty for his sin. The lesson of the chapter demonstrates the responsibility resting upon each individual member of an Ecclesia, as well as also resting upon its appointed leaders to overlook the conduct of its members.

Secret Sin — v. 1

Achan's sin is recorded. Though done in secrecy it was known to Yahweh.

VERSE 1

"But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing" — The "children of Israel" are described as committing the trespass, though it was unknown outside of Achan's family. But he was a citizen of the nation, in complete fellowship with its other members, and as part of the "one body", his action affected the others (1 Cor. 12:12,15-26). Con-

sequently Yahweh withdraws His favour until the sin is searched out and destroyed. The lesson is obvious. It is important for every member of an ecclesia to fully endorse God's truth and principles. The word for "trespass" in Hebrew is *ma'al* and signifies to act treacherously. It is a technical term referring to the invasion of the rights of another, including the misappropriation of property which God claims as His own. It is from a root word denoting to *cover up*, that is to act covertly. In regard to Achan, the trespass related to "the accursed thing", that is, those spoils

of Jericho which were to be set aside exclusively for Yahweh. The effects of his sin were disastrous for the nation as a whole; for it, like an Ecclesia, was responsible for the good conduct of its members. This sin had been committed secretly, without the knowledge of the nation, and yet the whole congregation suffered shame and disgrace. Such is inevitable in family, Ecclesial or National relationships. It is the responsibility of those in charge to seek out the trespass and take steps to correct it. A public act of repudiation and punishment was necessary in the case of Achan's sin. As one sin ruined the world in the beginning, so here one sin unjudged brought disgrace and defeat to the nation as a whole.

“For Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerach, of the tribe of Judah” — Achan's name means *Troubler*. Because of his folly, this became his title throughout history, for centuries later he is recalled as “the *troubler* of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed” (1 Chron. 2:7; cp. Josh. 22:20). He was a prominent prince in the tribe of Judah, so that his sin was even graver. Carmi signifies *My vineyard*; Zabdi, *Gift of*; Zerach, *Sprung up as Light*, and Judah means *Praise*. The names of Achan and his ancestors form the statement: *Praise sprung up as the result of Light, and the presentation of a Portion as a Gift in God's vineyard*. But into that happy state, which should have produced wine that “maketh glad the heart of God and man” there was brought *trouble* by the folly of Achan.

“Took of the accursed thing” — In the Septuagint, the word is *enophisanto*, and denotes that they took for themselves. The same word is used of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:2-3. Their money had been vowed unto Yahweh, and no longer remained for them to do as they desired. They were as guilty as was Achan in the “accursed thing”. Those objects and riches of Jericho that survived the destruction of the sword and the purging of fire, were Yahweh's, and should have been treated as sacred to Him. Achan “robbed God” (see Mal. 3:8).

“And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against the children of Israel” — God is not unreasonable. Achan's sin was not the only sin at the time that deserved punishment. There were doubtless others who lusted after the **same** riches that Achan purloined to **himself**, but they lacked the courage to implement their desires. Any-

thing that is sacred unto Yahweh should be considered as such by those who are His servants, and they should harbor no thought of desire to possess for themselves what is His. We must recognise that there are things that He requires of us, and they should be given without thought of sacrifice on our part. They are His, and we are but custodians of that delivered into our hands (see 1 Tim. 6:17-19). Moreover the very attitude of the warriors in their preparations to attack Ai was not as thoughtful as it should have been. They were self-confident. Their expressions denoted that they imagined that Ai would fall by their own efforts, so they, too, needed to learn the facts of life. But Yahweh's anger was roused particularly by the action of Achan in so irreverently purloining to himself that which belonged to God. From this we learn that anger is a Divine characteristic (Exod. 4:14), manifested, on occasions, by the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 3:5). It is an emotion that when properly controlled can produce good; but because it so often tends to get the better of those dominated by it, it must be guarded against (Eph. 4:26; Tit. 1:7). The Hebrew word *'aph* signifies the nostrils, from a root denoting to breathe in passion. Yahweh's anger is represented as being “kindled”, “waxing hot” (Deut. 9:19) “fierce” (Num. 25:4; 32:14; Deut. 13:17), “provoked” (Deut. 4:25; 9:18) etc.

Causes of Yahweh's anger: stubbornness (Exod. 4:14); idolatry (Exod. 32:19-32; Num. 25:3). Murmuring (Num. 11:1,10); Unreasonable lust (Num. 11:33-34); Pride (Num. 12:1-9); Disobedience (Num. 22:22); Rebellion (Num. 32:10-13); Backsliding (Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 11:16-17 etc.); Unprovoked sin (Josh. 7:1; 23:16; 2 Kings 13:1-3 etc.); Hypocrisy (Job 42:7); Wickedness (Psa. 7:11); Unrighteous works (Jer. 32:32).

Things Yahweh hates: Seven things listed (Prov. 6:16-19); A froward mouth, Pride, Arrogance, The evil way (Prov. 8:13); Four evil generations (Prov. 30:11-14); Robbery for burnt offering (Isa. 61:8; cp. Amos 5:21); Rebellion (Jer. 12:8); Idolatry (Jer. 44:3-4); Harboring evil, or False oaths (Zech. 8:17); False worship (Hos. 9:15; Rev. 2:6,15); Divorce (Mal. 2:16).

Those who fear and love Yahweh will take steps to avoid these failings.

Achan's sin was a sin of Israel because he was in full fellowship with the nation, and this requires that such secret sins should be hunted out. Fellowship

demands that. The narrative, therefore, describes Israel as well as Achan, as having committed a trespass. The sin was deliberately doing what Joshua had warned the people against (Josh. 6:26). In a community such as a nation or an Ecclesia, individuals are not islands separated from their fellows. What they do inevitably affects others. Each unit in such organisations must recognise this: it is part of the responsibilities that an individual assumes in identifying himself or herself with such. Achan soon became a sad example of the precept of Moses: "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). When deliberate sin such as that of Achan is committed it is a transgression against that society as well as against Yahweh; and though hidden for a time, it will ultimately be manifested. Yahweh's action in the case of Achan revealed the seriousness of transgression and showed that there was no escaping the consequences of such. Bearing this in mind Ecclesial leaders should overlook those placed in their care with the greatest concern. In this case, one sin affected the nation as did one sin the human race at the beginning (Rom. 5:17-18).

Misplaced Confidence — vv. 2-3

In ignorance of Achan's trespass, Joshua again sends out spies. He is a diligent commanding officer, and recognises that a city so strategically located as Ai, at the head of a long and steep pass leading from the plain below to the highlands above, can offer stiff resistance, and must be conquered. He is advised by his spies to send only comparatively few warriors; for the city is not fortified as was Jericho.

VERSE 2

"And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai" — Ai was strategically placed in the steep highlands above. It was at the beginning of the wild maze of hills and steep valleys that characterise the uplands of Palestine, and commanded the valleys that gave access to the midlands (Josh. 8:11). Lot moved downwards past Ai when he made his disastrous choice. The word means *Ruins* or *Heaps*, and is about 1½m from Bethel. The site today remains in ruins. It is given the title of et-Tell (*the Heap*) by the Arabs. To it Joshua sent men from Jericho and not from Gilgal, an indication that he prosecuted the war with vigour. Ai is about 12 miles from Jerusalem.

"Which is beside Beth-aven" — "Ai

which is besides Beth-aven", literally signifies *Ruin beside the House of Vanity or idolatry*. Archaeological excavations indicate that it had been reduced to ruins, so that evidently a new town had been built at the site and given that title. Beth-Aven was east of Bethel, modern Beitin, and was evidently a place of pagan worship. It was located between Bethel and Michmash (1 Sam. 13:5).

"On the east side of Beth-el" — Beth-el (*House of El or God*) is on a rising above Ai, in close proximity to it. It was there that Jacob received his vision (Gen. 28:19), and now, in partial fulfilment of it, his seed had returned. See note in *Expositor* at Gen. 12:8.

"And spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai" — Ai commanded a height, up which Israel had to toil, and down which they were easily chased in the disastrous defeat. The Pass is a long and steep one. Today, because of its strategic position, it is used by the Israeli Defence Forces to guard any attack on the highlands leading to Jerusalem.

VERSE 3

"And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai" — Joshua's spies returned with an optimistic report. The city did not present anywhere near the formidable obstacle of Jericho, and full of self-confidence, the spies claimed that between two and three thousand warriors would be ample. The information given Joshua was factual. When, later, the city was overthrown, the total slain, including men and women, was only 12,000 inhabitants (Ch. 8:25), indicating an approximate army of about 3000 men.

"And make not all the people to labour thither" — The spies were completely confident in the ability of Israel to conquer this city, taking for granted that Yahweh would be with them. Frequently, a God-granted success elevates the flesh in unwarranted confidence. It is always valuable, after any such experience, to thoroughly examine oneself, and with humility recognise our utter dependence on God.

"For they are but few" — The report of the spies proved correct; but with Yahweh, success or defeat does not depend on many or few. The warning had

been given that if the people proved disobedient they would not enjoy success. Five of their enemies could chase a thousand Israelites, whilst the contrary would be the case to an obedient nation (Deut. 32:29-30).

Defeat — vv. 4-5

To the consternation and humiliation of Joshua and Israel, instead of the easy victory the army expected, it is soundly defeated with loss of life, and has to rapidly retreat down the steep pass up which it so confidently ascended.

VERSE 4

“So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men” — Joshua did not manifest the same extent of confidence that his officers showed. They had suggested two or three thousand men; and he chose the larger number.

“And they fled before the men of Ai” — The defeat of the army indicated that in some way the covenant entered into by Yahweh had been broken (Lev. 26:17; Deut. 28:25). It revealed to Joshua that something was wrong; which he, as a man of faith, had to search out. When trouble disturbs an Ecclesia it is a time for self-inspection. One thing is certain: God’s word and strength will not fail. “Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you” declared James (4:8).

VERSE 5

“And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men” — The loss of life was both unexpected and severe. There had been no loss of life at Jericho; evidence that something was wrong at Ai. But why should any die if the sin was exclusively Achan’s? We are not informed of the reason, but God is righteous in all His ways. It could have been possible that they had been guilty of some disobedience of their own, or even in conjunction with Achan. They perhaps knew what he had done, and in their silence condoned it. We are sure that the Judge of all the world will do right (Gen. 18:25).

“For they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim” — In the wisdom of God, sin invariably leads to defeat (see Lev. 26:14-20; Deut. 32:20; Josh. 23:10). Therefore, when engaged in the fight of faith, it is very important to make perfectly sure that we are one with Yahweh (Deut. 23:9-14). Shebarim signifies *Breaches or Broken Places*. The RV

has “quarries”. Most likely the reference is to the broken ranks of Israel’s army. It retreated from Ai, and continued to do so until, at last, the warriors broke rank and ignominiously turned and fled before those of Ai.

“And smote them in the going down” — The Valley of Achor is a long, deep, winding valley, which at one part drops suddenly into the Jordan plain below.

“Wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water” — It was not the fact of defeat, nor the loss of 36 men that caused this utter despair, but the realisation it gave that Yahweh was no longer with the people. Faith fled in the face of disaster (Gen. 49:4). The people realised that they were without hope in the midst of hostile enemies without the help of Yahweh. The swiftly flowing Jordan was an impassable barrier, over which they could not retreat, and they realised that when knowledge of the defeat inflicted by the comparatively small town of Ai spread throughout the Land of Canaan, there would follow a rallying of fierce warriors before whom Israel would be overthrown. So defeat was followed by terror and dismay. Their “hearts melted”; their confidence and courage fled, and became “as water”, which invariably flows down to find the lowest level! So did their hopes. Israel was thoroughly humiliated before the enemy, and fearful of its future. Without God the nation was helpless. The people now experienced the same feelings as dominated the inhabitants of Jericho pending the Israelite attack (see Josh. 2:11).

Despair — vv. 6-9

The defeat is not only unexpected but is a disaster of the greatest magnitude. It could encourage the remaining Canaanites to coalesce and destroy Israel. Ignorant of the cause of the tragedy, Joshua turns to Yahweh in prayer. But entirely out of character, he gives way to grief and depression rather than recognising that the defeat must be due to some failing on Israel’s part. He questions the cause of the tragedy, implies that the people have let him down, and pleads for Yahweh’s help to overcome the enemy.

VERSE 6

“And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the Ark of Yahweh until the eventide” — To rend one’s clothes was a sign of deep lamenta-

tion. It symbolised that a person's feelings were uncovered or revealed to his innermost being, and that he was defenceless in the face of the sorrow or trouble afflicting him. Joshua recognised that his only hope was with God, and arranged a service of lamentation in which the leaders of the nation participated. This took place at the Tabernacle, and before the Ark of Yahweh.

"He and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads" — They prostrated themselves to the ground, and put dust on their heads, to symbolise that their glory had been brought down to the earth. It would have been a very impressive ceremony, in tune with the mourning, grief-stricken nation as a whole, epitomising the feelings of all the people who evidently were gathered together to witness the humiliation of their elders.

VERSE 7

"And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord Yahweh" — The term *Adonai*, according to Bro. Thomas, is in the plural, and denotes my Lords! and in this context: *My Lords of He Who Will Be*. The term, therefore, relates to the Angelic host of Yahweh, the Captain of whom Joshua had interviewed previously. The term denotes rulership. Yahweh rules in the Kingdom of men, having delegated his power to His angels. They acted as intermediaries between Joshua and Yahweh in the heaven (Psa. 103:20-22). They were His emissaries, performing His will, and through them Joshua addressed His appeal to God Himself.

"Wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us?" — There is an element of peevishness in Joshua's complaint, perhaps expressing the feeling of the community as a whole, which he represented in his prayer. It was like an echo of the former generation (see Exod. 5:22-23; 14:11-12; 17:3; Num. 11:11-15; 14:2-3; 20:3). But, at least, Joshua gave himself to prayer. Under circumstances of bewilderment, there is need for careful assessment of the cause. Note Christ's questions in Mark 8:17-18. When things go wrong in an Ecclesia or in a life, there is need to take careful stock of circumstances and attitudes. The cause could be from within though hidden from view. Joshua's prayer indicates a confusion of mind. He did not know the cause of defeat, and could only express his concern

as to what had and could happen.

"Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan" — The reference to God is not in the Hebrew, and did not form part of Joshua's prayer. It would have been most irreverent if it had done so. Joshua already had made reference in his prayer to the crossing of the Jordan, which had been miraculous. But in view of the defeat experienced, and the threat presented to the whole nation in consequence, he declared that perhaps the Israelites should have been contented to remain on the other side of Jordan. In speaking in that way, he expressed the weakness of flesh, brought on by the tremendous burden of responsibility he bore. How few can bear temporary calamity calmly and patiently. Outstanding faith and courage are ever necessary, even in the boldest of Yahweh's soldiers. In contrast, note his bold declaration of confidence in Num. 14:8. But now he prayed on behalf of the people as a whole, and doubtless gave expression to their own feelings.

VERSE 8

"O Lord, what shall I say" — According to *The Companion Bible*, the word "Lord" in this place, though printed in the lower case, should be Yahweh.

"When Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!" — Yahweh had promised success in fighting conditional on obedience (Exod. 23:27; Lev. 26:3-9). Therefore defeat demonstrated something was wrong, though Joshua did not know the cause of it.

VERSE 9

"For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth" — Israel's annihilation was a very real threat under the circumstances; her enemies would not be slow in seizing the opportunity of revenge; nor could the nation expect any mercy in such an eventuality (See Psa. 83:4; 124:2-3).

"And what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?" — Joshua knew that the future of Israel was guaranteed by the name of Yahweh (Exod. 3:14. See also Deut. 32:26-27; Psa. 106:6-8), and therefore he could not understand the cause for the unexpected defeat that the army had experienced. His prayer was one of bewilderment and despondency; of complaint

and disbelief arising from his failure to understand the circumstances. It arose from human weakness, due to the strain of the campaign and the unexpected disappointment at Ai. Moses reacted similarly (see Num. 11:11-15, 21-22). These men had to endure the strain of the whole campaign — the constant, tiring labour of sustaining a complaining people. There was nothing offensive in their prayers: merely the desire to know the cause of failure. The reference to Yahweh's "great name" is significant. It is identified with Israel (Exod. 3:14-15), so that apart from Israel there would be none to exalt it. See Psa. 106:6,8; Isa. 63:12; Ezek. 36:22-23; Joel 2:17; John 12:28.

The Cause — vv. 10-12

Yahweh's response is illuminating. His people must remember that simply to be an academic bearer of Yahweh's name is not sufficient: the qualities of the Name must be graced by obedience. Therefore it is not a time for self-pity but for action. Israel has sinned: the transgression must be revealed and atoned for. Very revealing is this message to Joshua. Let God's people always realise that when trouble disturbs an Ecclesia it is as the result of sin. Let that sin be revealed and corrected, and the cause of trouble will be removed.

VERSE 10

"And Yahweh said unto Yahweh, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" — The answer of Yahweh was also a rebuke. It was not time for lamentation and complaint; but one of determination and action. With that preamble, a six-fold charge is laid at the door of Israel (v. 11).

VERSE 11

"Israel hath sinned" — That is the first charge. As the nation was a corporate body, the sin of one was a concern to all. It was the responsibility of the community to reveal and repudiate it. Though it was a sin of ignorance as far as Israel was concerned, the Law treated the whole nation as guilty until the sin had been expiated. Achan's sin challenged the omniscience of God. He had taken of the accursed thing and hidden it, overlooking or ignoring that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). Therefore his action was atheistic; it presumed that God did not know. Every premeditated sin of that

character challenges the omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience of Yahweh. For Him to ignore such transgression would be to abdicate in favour of King Sin (Rom. 6:12), so that it would become triumphant in the camp of Israel.

"They have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them" — This is the second charge. The covenant had been transgressed, and the punishment for such is expressed in Lev. 26:14-17. See also Isa. 24:5. To "transgress" is to invade the rights of another as described in the next clause.

"For they have even taken the accursed thing" — Achan had taken of that which was claimed by Yahweh in Whose name he fought. His action was one of base ingratitude: a poor return for all that Yahweh had done for him and the nation.

"And have also stolen" — See Mal. 3:8-9; Matt. 22:21. Achan had purloined that which belonged to God, and had endangered the whole nation by so doing.

"And dissembled also" — Achan and those with him had hypocritically hidden their spoils, and had pretended to have kept the covenant. See 2 Kings 5:25-26; John 12:5-6; Acts 5:1-2. This belittled Yahweh, for Achan, in his blind greed, acted as though Yahweh was "altogether one like unto himself".

"And they have put it even among their own stuff" — This is the final and sixth charge. That which belonged to Yahweh had been stolen and hidden among the goods of Achan and his family. It was the final insult offered to the all-seeing eye of Yahweh. This six-pointed charge revealed that Achan had been motivated by the flesh which had blinded him to the enormity of such action. The use of the plural pronoun "they," suggests that others of his family were with him in his deceptive wickedness. If nothing had been done to pin-point the crime, they later may have boasted how they had enriched themselves with the spoils of Jericho. So Achan's sin became a family sin, and then broadened out into a national sin.

VERSE 12

"Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed" — Having taken to their own use that which Yahweh had claimed for Himself, Israel now became the thing devoted. Any in such condition were given over to death (Lev. 27:28-29).

“Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you” — There must be complete repudiation of the action of Achan on the part of all Israel, on the principle that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:13). It therefore was incumbent upon the people of God to “judge them that are within”; “put away from among themselves that wicked person” (1 Cor. 5:12-13).

The Cure — vv. 13-15

But who is the wicked person? Joshua does not know, but he must find out. The means whereby this can be done is outlined to him. The people are to sanctify themselves, gather in a convocation, told the cause of the failure against Ai, and then, by means of the lot, ascertain the guilty party.

VERSE 13

“Up” — It is not a time for inaction, but of greater activity when Israel turns its back upon its enemy; even as it is more important to be diligent in discovering and removing sin within the Ecclesia than to proclaim the Gospel to those outside.

“Sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow” — To sanctify is to set apart for a special purpose. On this occasion, it was to prepare for a meeting with Yahweh. The means whereby this now was to be done are not revealed. They probably included body washing, changing of clothes, and mental preparation to approach Yahweh (see Exod. 19:10,14,15).

“For thus saith Yahweh God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel” — There was hidden sin, which must be brought into the open in order to be destroyed. The sin was the sin of blasphemy, inasmuch as there had been taken for common fleshly use, that which belonged to Yahweh. Anything given to Him, whether time, strength, money or whatever must be used as He directs. To do otherwise is to rob Him of His due (Mal. 3:8-9).

“Thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you” — The existence of personal, secret sin must be removed before one can effectively battle with the enemy. Christ has provided the means whereby this can be done (Heb. 2:14).

VERSE 14

“In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes” — The delay before the lot was used to ascertain the criminal gave opportunity for Achan to repent and confess. The explanation Joshua gave the representatives of the tribes of the cause of failure should have made Achan realise that “his sin would find him out” (Num. 32:23). As Yahweh is a God of mercy as well as of justice, the best action Achan could have taken under such circumstances was to frankly recognise and confess to his sin, pleading that it be forgiven. He may then have avoided the disgrace and tragedy that he brought upon himself and his family. On the morrow the tribes are called upon to assemble in order that Yahweh may publicly reveal the sinner.

“And it shall be, that the tribe which Yahweh taketh shall come according to the families thereof” — Representatives of the main families of the tribes were to be assembled so that by use of the Lot the sinner might be indicated. The verb “taketh” is from the Hebrew *lakad* signifying to choose by Lot. The Lot was used in conjunction with the Breastplate of the High Priest containing the Urim and Thummim (Num. 26:55; Exod. 28:30). For the use of the Lot, see 1 Sam. 14:42; Prov. 16:33; Jonah 1:7; Acts 1:24-26. The Urim revealed the *light* of revelation, and the Thummim the *completeness* of that made manifest. After the tribe had been “taken”, the main families of it were called upon to assemble, whilst the rest of the tribes withdrew or dispersed.

“And the family which Yahweh shall take shall come by households” — The family division was then to be represented by individual households.

“And the household which Yahweh shall take shall come man by man” — By this narrowing down of suspects the actual transgressor would be revealed. The heart-searchings of Achan and his family that evening must have been acute. Why did he not throw himself on the mercy of Yahweh whilst opportunity afforded? Why do we not do so in time of guilt? Because we, like Achan, do not believe “our sin will find us out”.

VERSE 15

“And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath” — In being so treated after stoning, the guilty parties

suffer the fate of the devoted thing. See Ch. 6:24; Deut. 13:15-16. Why should Achan's family be involved in this punishment? It is a law of life that the disgrace of one member of a family is felt and shared by the other members. It is also obvious that in some way Achan's family had become partakers in his sin, and so condoned it (see Deut. 24:16), thereby sharing his guilt. They had had opportunity of disassociating themselves from him during the course of trial by Lot, but had failed to do so. There is no injustice with God. The fate of Achan's family should be contrasted with the deliverance of the children of Korah under similar conditions. They were saved, evidently because, in some way, they had disassociated themselves from the criminality of their father (Num. 26:11).

"Because he hath transgressed the covenant of Yahweh" — In doing this he jeopardised the success of the whole campaign, and brought the whole nation under threat. Achan, and those with him had been guilty of idolatry, for covetousness is idolatry (Col. 3:5). See Deut. 17:2-7 for the punishment pronounced upon those guilty of such.

"And because he hath wrought folly in Israel" — The word folly is derived from *Nebalah*, the feminine of *nabal*. It signifies stupidity, wickedness, impiety. In addition to Achan's folly in purloining for his own use that which belongs to Yahweh, forms of sin designated as "folly" include rape (Gen. 34:7; 2 Sam. 13:12) whoredom (Deut. 22:20-21); homosexuality (Jud. 19:22-23; 20:6); misrepresenting God (Job 42:8); sacrilege (Josh. 7:12-15); hypocrisy and evil-doing (Isa. 9:17). Nabal's churlish repudiation of David's claims is described as an act of folly (1 Sam. 20:25). His thoughtless selfishness and sudden death gave rise to the Lord's parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:15-21). Adjudged guilty of folly, Achan's sin was accounted a most serious one.

VERSE 16

"So Joshua rose up early in the morning" — See note Ch. 3:1. Joshua was a man of activity (cp. Psa. 119:60). He was anxious to set at right the breach that had been formed between the nation and Yahweh.

"And brought Israel by their tribes" — Representatives of the tribes were assembled for this purpose, and with the assistance of the High Priest and the Urim and

Thummim, the Lots were taken.

"And the tribe of Judah was taken" — This expression denotes that the tribe was selected by Lot. See notes Num. 26:55; also Prov. 16:33; Josh. 18:10.

VERSE 17

"And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zārhtes" — The Zārhtes were one of the two main divisions of the descendants of Judah (Gen. 38:30; Num. 26:20). How anxious and troubled must have been Achan and his family with this selection. There would have been a hush over the whole congregation as the Lot inexorably narrowed down the suspects. Those concerned would have experienced "tribulation and anguish" as will some at Christ's Judgment Seat (Rom. 2:9).

"And he brought the family of the Zārhtes man by man" — The Hebrew *Geberim* signifies the main or chief men of the families.

"And Zabdi was taken" — Now, indeed, few remained, and it was obvious towards whom the Lot was pointing.

VERSE 18

"And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah was taken" — Now the accusing eyes of all Israel would be turned towards Achan. His name means *Trouble*, and he had brought trouble and death to many in Israel. The Lot revealed that though man might hide his sin, Yahweh knows the "thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12-13). The Judgment of Christ will be as infallible and penetrating as was the disclosure of Achan's sin. It will bring to light "the hidden things of darkness" (1 Cor. 4:5).

VERSE 19

"And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to Yahweh God of Israel" — Joshua was moved by sorrow at the sin of Achan, and the inevitability and severity of the punishment. The circumstances were traumatic: the accusing silence of the assembled tribal representatives; the nervous fear of the army as its warriors realised the defenceless state of the nation in the face of powerful enemies

now encouraged by victory; the sorrowful mourning of those families whose loved ones had been slain at Ai. Joshua and the family of Achan had drawn apart from the rest of Israel, who witnessed the drama and heard the interrogation described in the subsequent verses from afar. Joshua appealed to Achan to give "glory to Yahweh Elohim of Israel", the One whose power and omniscience is manifested through the angelic host, the Captain of which, he had already interviewed. Glory would be given to Yahweh by a frank confession on the part of Achan. It would reveal to all other Israelites the need of strict adherence to Divine commands, as well as making obvious the penetrating knowledge of Him with Whom the people of Israel had to deal. A true and full confession would justify the action of Yahweh in withdrawing His protection at Ai, and though it could not save Achan from the punishment about to be administered, it could help him at the future Judgment Seat (see James 5:16; 1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13).

"And make confession unto Him" — The confession was to be made to Yahweh Who already had demonstrated His ability to know the facts of the transgression. Useless hiding anything from such a God as that! If free and full confession had been made by Achan earlier, he may even have avoided the punishment now to be imposed. See Num. 5:6-7; Dan. 9:4-5,16. But it was now too late for such action; and a lesson had to be taught all Israel.

"And tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me" — It was necessary that all Israel learn of the iniquity of Achan so as to understand the cause of failure at Ai. The seriousness of Achan's sin is revealed in the six-fold charge of v. 11. The full enormity of it is described in similar terms as later the apostasy of Israel is described (Compare v. 15 with Isa. 24:5). The children of Israel had been warned that their sin would find them out (Num. 32:23). Now, in the case of Achan, the people had a demonstration of that fact. To have ignored it would have been to place the whole campaign in jeopardy, and weaken the point of Yahweh's commandments. Achan should have openly confessed his sin as soon as the cause of defeat had been known, and pleaded the mercy of God before the need to institute the investigation that had disclosed his guilt. Unfortunately for him, he did not do this.

VERSE 20

"And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against Yahweh God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done" — The Scriptures reveal many occasions when dire punishment, or the immediate threat of it, has extorted confession of sin (Gen. 42:21; Exod. 10:16; Num. 22:34; 1 Sam. 15:24,30; Matt. 27:4); but those confessions are usually too late to divert the punishment. Moses warned the people that if they failed to carry out what they had promised to do "be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). Achan's confession came too late to avert the punishment already decreed; though it may assist him at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

VERSE 21

"When I saw among the spoils" — Desire so possessed Achan that he could not take his eyes off the spoil. In that, he was like Eve viewing the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen. 3:6), the Sons of God eyeing the daughters of Men (Gen. 6:2), or the spies in the Promised Land whose eyes took in the problems facing Israel (Num. 13:28,32). Note the prayer of the Psalmist (Psa. 119:37), and the warning of the Proverbs (Prov. 28:22). The "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" set in motion all sin (1 John 2:16; Mark 7:14-23).

"A goodly Babylonish garment" — This describes a costly mantle of Shinar. The Hebrew *adderoth Shinar* suggests a female's garment, implying that Achan's family were in the sin even though he was the principal sinner. The word *Shinar*, here rendered Babylonish, is derived from the Hebrew denoting *Enemy's tooth* (see *Eureka* Vol. 1 pg. 73). Shinar is the site of ancient Babylon. See Gen. 11:2; Zech. 5:11).

"And two hundred shekels of silver" — In weight this would be about 5 lbs or 2.3 kilograms.

"And a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight" — Fifty shekels is about 1 1/4 lb or 0.6 kilogram.

"Then I coveted them, and took them" — In doing this he broke the Law as well as the express commands of Yahweh in claiming all such items for Himself. See Exod. 20:17; Deut. 7:25. Paul likens covetousness to idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5), for it is prepared to sacrifice principle to satisfy the flesh. Achan's confession

expresses a progression towards sin: I saw, coveted, took, I sinned. Eye, heart and hand were all in the transgression. See James 1:14-15.

“And, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it” — Sin is always hidden in the earthy recesses of the flesh, for human nature is “of the earth, earthy” (1 Cor. 15:48). Sin needs to be opened up before God in order to be forgiven (Psa. 32:1,5). If Achan had done that before his confession was extorted from him, he might have escaped the frightful punishment he was about to suffer, and the tragedy he was about to bring upon his family. As the Israelites were commanded to seek for and exclude leaven from their homes before Passover, so saints should look inwards for hidden sins, that they may open them up to Yahweh, and seek His forgiveness and work towards their reformation. To do so will enable one to escape a disaster more frightful than that experienced by Achan and his family.

Expiation — vv. 22-26

Achan now receives the wages of sin. Previously he had enjoyed the excitement of acquiring something nobody else possessed; but his pleasure is short-lived. He imagined he had hidden his sin, and covered his tracks; but all things are open to the all-seeing eyes of Yahweh. Achan has involved others of his family in his sin; and now they must share his sorrow. With him perishes all that is legitimately his. He has been unfaithful in taking that which is of comparatively little value, and is about to lose his honor and life. He dies a criminal's death, and all associated with him are treated as defiled. For as one man can inspire a community to good works, another can lead it into evil. Achan's bad example must be purged.

VERSE 22

“So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it” — Hidden sins must be brought to light before redemption can be sought; in any case, they will also be revealed to justify the punishment administered at the Judgment Seat (1 Cor. 4:5).

VERSE 23

“And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua,

and unto all the children of Israel” — Evidence of the crime was displayed before all, so that all could understand the cause of Israel's defeat, and the reason for Achan's punishment. It foreshadowed that which Christ's Judgment Seat will reveal. “For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known” (Luke 12:2). How necessary, therefore, for one who would please God and Christ, to search inwardly now and apply what reforms are necessary.

“And laid them out before Yahweh” — They gave them back to Him to Whom they belonged. In purloining them, Achan had robbed God. Now the devoted things were solemnly laid out one by one.

VERSE 24

“And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah” — Achan was the great-grandson of Zerah (vv. 1,18), but the Hebrew does not discriminate between such relationships. The mention of the family name shows that Achan brought disgrace upon his relations, as well as his immediate family.

“And the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and his daughters” — See note v. 15. The Law decreed punishment upon both the principal and those who condone his action (Exod. 20:5; Num. 16:27,31-33), but it exempted those children of sinners who turned away from the wickedness (Num. 26:11; Ezek. 18:14-17). It is obvious that members of Achan's family endorsed or condoned his action, and therefore exhibited extensions of the wickedness initiated by him.

“And his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had” — The effect of pollution was to ceremonially defile all that was associated with the sinner. Instead of enriching himself by his crime, Achan brought tragedy upon his whole house, and lost all that he had. See Mark 4:24-25.

“And they brought them unto the valley of Achor” — What a sad, sorrowful procession that would have been! How different from the excitement enjoyed when Achan hid his ill-gotten gains in his tent, imagining that he had made himself rich! The Valley of Achor later became a border of the tribe of Judah and a reminder to the tribe of this tragedy (Josh. 15:7). In the Millennium, however, it will be trans-

formed into a Valley of Hope (Isa. 65:10; Hos. 2:15).

VERSE 25

“And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us?” — Achan’s sin troubled all Israel, and the evil of his action was revealed, and himself “cut off”, if the nation was to be saved from further trouble (Gal. 5:12; 2 Thess. 1:6; Heb. 12:15). Joshua indulged in a play on words when he addressed Achan indicating that by his action he had illustrated his name. Achan had ignored the instructions of Yahweh, and lustfully looked, coveted and took that which was forbidden. David did likewise in his great sin, and involved others in trouble (2 Sam. 11:2-4; 12:9-12). The terms of fellowship and communion are all-embracing. No person is an island in the Truth, “none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself” (Rom. 14:7). An individual can affect a community for either good or ill. Paul warned of this when writing to the Corinthians he declared: “Evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). By that he meant, as other renditions express it, and the NIV renders it: “Do not be misled, bad company corrupts good character”. He concluded: “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). Secret sin, when it becomes known, must be rooted out. Its hidden presence is often externally revealed by trouble disturbing a Movement or an Ecclesia. When such circumstances develop, those affected should give careful heed to themselves. Somewhere there is sin and it should be rooted out. Christ who “walks in the midst of the Ecclesias” is still active today disciplining a meeting, by trouble, or delivering it from it. A troubled meeting reveals the symptoms of hidden sin.

“Yahweh shall trouble thee this day” — The trouble would be from Yahweh because He had appointed the punishment. See Deut. 13:6-11.

“And all Israel stoned him with stones” — See Lev. 20:2. By “all Israel” is meant representatives of all the tribes. Death was the penalty illustrating that those who “sow to the flesh reap corruption”. It was administered by stoning, for this separated the executioners from contact with the condemned criminal. Under the Law

contact with death was defiling (Hag. 2:13).

“And burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones” — This penalty was in accordance with the Law (Lev. 20:14; 21:9). Those referred to were first executed and then consigned to the flames. This treatment foreshadowed the complete destruction of Gehenna concerning which the Lord warned the Pharisees (Matt. 23:33). It is a shocking fact, that it had been the intention of the Sanhedrin, in its mad hostility to the Lord, to consign his body to the flames of Gehenna, as the Hebrew of Isa. 53:9 predicted; but Joseph and Nicodemus, rejected the counsel of their fellows and prevented it (Luke 23:51). They forestalled the intention of the Lord’s enemies, by taking his body from the cross and giving it honourable burial. Whether the family of Achan were destroyed is left in doubt by the narrative. It states “Israel stoned *him* with stones, and burned *them* with fire. The latter could relate to the possessions that Achan unlawfully acquired. Death was by stoning, not burning, though it sometimes followed the execution of criminals (See Deut. 17:5). Children were not to be put to death for the sins of their fathers unless they were identified with the sin (compare Deut. 24:16 with Num. 26:11). The children of Korah did not suffer the fate of their father, evidently having disassociated themselves from his folly.

VERSE 26

“And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day” — By this Memorial, sinful flesh was hidden from view. See Josh. 8:29; 10:27; 2 Sam. 18:17; Lam. 3:53. This was the only inheritance that Achan obtained in the land after years of wandering through the wilderness, and successfully participating in the victory of faith over Jericho. It is sad, very sad! The mute heap of stones remained as a warning to the people of Israel, presenting a contrast to the Altar formed out of those stones taken from the river bed.

“So Yahweh turned from the fierceness of His anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The Valley of Achor, unto this day” — The word “Achor” signifies *Trouble*. The name of the valley is still retained “unto this day”! However, that will not always be the case. Hosea predicts a change. Concerning regenerated Israel, he wrote: “I will give her her

CHAPTER SEVEN

vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (Hos. 2:15). The expression "door of hope" is *Petah Tiqvah* in Hebrew. It is the name of a town east of Tel Aviv, the oldest Jewish agricultural settlement in Israel, founded in 1878 by Jews from Jerusalem who believed that tending the soil would help redeem Israel. The name was chosen in accordance with the prophecy of Hosea, and the settlers' first intention was to build their colony within the boundaries of the Achor Valley close to Jericho. However, Arab opposition did not permit this. They were driven from the valley and eventually settled in the Jaffa area, but retained this name. As to the Valley of Achor, the future will witness dramatic changes by which it will be converted into a Door of Hope. Evidently, in the Millennium, pilgrims will move north along the eastern side of the

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Arabah, and turn west at the place of crossing to ascend the Valley of Achor, then renamed the *Door of Hope*, to move south to the Temple in Jerusalem (Psa. 48:2). Isaiah predicts that the Valley of Achor shall be "a place for the herds to lie down in, for My people that have sought Me" (Isa. 65:10). Those herds, doubtless, will provide animals for the sacrifices that will be offered at the northern entrance of the Jerusalem Temple (Isa. 56:7). At last the sin of Achan will be completely hidden away and his punishment blotted out.

Achan's Punishment

He was stoned, but the narrative is vague as to the fate of his family. Perhaps, as party to the deception they were brought out to witness the execution (v. 24). The "them" of v. 25 could apply to his possessions demonstrating the extent of his loss. Otherwise why were they not buried with him?



The Valley of Achor in which Achan was stoned to death.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONFIDENCE RESTORED AT AI

The purging of Achan's sin is the prelude to victory over Ai. The strategy to be adopted is explained to Joshua, and is designed to remove all confidence in the flesh whilst destroying the enemy. Some significant types emerge from this chapter:

- *Israel is taught not to minimise the effect of sin, nor to place undue confidence in the flesh, by being ordered to use overwhelming numbers in the conquest of despised Ai.*

- *The army having experienced a temporary set back in the initial attack on Ai, now on the second occasion overwhelms the enemy. This foreshadows the work of Christ in his conquest of sin: a temporary setback (death), was followed by complete victory (resurrection to eternal life).*

- *The King of Ai, personifying the devil, or sin in the flesh, is hanged on a tree and then buried out of sight as a memorial, foreshadowing Christ's conquest of the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13).*

The chapter can be sectionised into seven parts: A Second Attack Ordered vv. 1-2; The Strategy Explained — vv. 3-8; The Forces Deployed — vv. 9-13; The Battle Joined — vv. 14-18; The Victory Won — vv. 19-24; the City Destroyed — vv. 25-29; The Covenant Renewed — vv. 30-35.

A Second Attack Ordered — vv. 1-2

The sin of Achan having been atoned, Yahweh commands that a second attack be launched on Ai. On this occasion, however, no confidence is to be placed in the flesh, and therefore all tribes are to participate.

VERSE 1

“And Yahweh said unto Joshua” —

These instructions were doubtless conveyed to Joshua through the Commander of Yahweh's angelic army upon whom the Divine name had been conferred (Exod. 23:20-23; Josh. 5:14).

“Fear not, neither be thou dismayed”

— Such encouraging exhortations were frequently given to Joshua (Deut. 31:8; Josh. 1:9; 10:8; 11:6; See Psa. 27:1-3). Such encouragement was particularly

appropriate at this time after the recent defeat.

“Take all the people of war with thee”

— No doubt the men of war would be assembled under their officers, and a ceremony such as is described in Deut. 20:1-10 would take place. The fact that the whole army was to be marshalled for the battle was a contrast to the self-confidence expressed at the outset of the previous attempt (see Josh. 7:3-4). There is to be no confidence placed in the flesh. Those fearful and afraid would be excluded from the ranks of those assembled.

“And arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land” — On this occasion, Divine assurance of success was given. How important it is, when waging war on behalf of the Truth, that we

take Yahweh into our confidence. See similar words of assurance in Ch. 6:2 and compare with Psa. 44:3.

VERSE 2

“And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king” — See Josh. 6:21.

“Only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves” — This is a variation of the instructions given with regard to Jericho. The latter city, with all its contents, was accursed or dedicated to Yahweh (Josh. 6:17). If Achan had exercised patience he would have participated in the spoil of this city.

“Lay thee an ambush for the city behind it” — Careful planning was to go into the preparations for war.

The Strategy Explained — vv. 3-8

In contrast to the first attack, all the troops are to be used against Ai. They are divided into three parts. The main army with Joshua is to make a frontal attack on the city, and when resisted is to pretend to flee. Another smaller force is to be deployed in the valley to occupy the city when the time is opportune and burn it at a given signal from Joshua. A third, smaller section of the army is to take up a hidden position between Bethel and Ai to resist any support that may be offered by the former city to its neighbour.

VERSE 3

“So Joshua arose, and all the people of war to go up against Ai” — The whole army is marshalled on this occasion. Contrast the care taken to prepare the warriors and plan the battle with the casual methods previously used (Josh. 7:3). An attack on the citadels of error by Ecclesias today by the public proclamation of the Word should also be treated with equal care. All the army is necessary, for when sin is manifested the forces needed to conquer it must be increased.

“And Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night” — This sector of the army made its way to a hidden place of ambush outside Ai.

VERSE 4

“And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city; go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready” — These

30,000 warriors were ordered to make their way to the west of the city of Ai, and carefully hide themselves awaiting further instructions.

VERSE 5

“And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city;” — The rest of the army under Joshua were required to pretend to make a frontal attack on the city.

“And it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them” — Joshua planned to move towards the city in so hesitant a manner as to give the impression to its defenders that the Israelites were fearful, and the men of Ai could repeat their previous success. On the army emerging from the city against the Israelites, the latter were to again retreat as having suffered another defeat. This feint was designed to draw the self-confident men of Ai from the shelter of their city, allowing those in ambush to rise up and take it without loss of life.

VERSE 6

“(For they will come after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them” — Joshua based his strategy upon the confidence of the men of Ai in their ability to defeat the Israelitish army despite the superiority of its numbers. His plan was based upon the confidence of flesh in itself.

VERSE 7

“Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for Yahweh your God will deliver it into your hand” — The 30,000 men in ambush, at a given signal, were required to occupy the city in the assurance that Yahweh will give them the victory. Despite their numbers, their reliance had to be upon their God.

VERSE 8

“And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of Yahweh shall ye do. See, I have commanded you” — The assurance is given that this time Yahweh will give the victory. Nevertheless the Israelites must not manifest the sin of presumption in their claims on God. He expects His servants to

use their initiative and the ability He has granted them in the execution of His work or warfare (see the example of Nehemiah who both prayed and laboured for success — Neh. 4:9). Once Ai had fallen, it had to be set on fire and destroyed.

The Forces Deployed — vv. 9-13.

Under cover of night the various segments of the Israeli forces take up their positions as ordered by the Captain of Yahweh's army, and as relayed to them by Joshua.

VERSE 9

“Joshua therefore sent them forth; and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai” —

Under cover of night, another segment of the army, comprising 5000 men were deployed between Bethel and Ai which are about 3m. distant from each other. Joshua went with them to see that they were properly placed, and explained the signal he would give by which they would know when to act. He then returned to the main body of troops (v. 9) which he led early next morning in a frontal attack on Ai. The site of the battle between Bethel and Ai is interesting, for that was where Abraham built his altar (Gen. 12:8) and Lot made his fatal decision to leave him (Gen. 13:3,11).

“But Joshua lodged that night among the people” — Having supervised the placing of the ambush so as to direct it during the battle on the morrow, Joshua returned to the main body of his troops.

VERSE 10

“And Joshua rose up early in the morning” — Joshua appears to have been ever an early riser. See Ch. 3:1; 7:16.

“And numbered the people” — The Hebrew *vaiyiphkod eth haam* signifies that he visited the people, that is, he inspected the ranks of his army to make sure that everything was in readiness.

“And went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people of Ai” — He led the people into battle. Despite his age, Joshua was full of vigour and courage, and took his place at the head of his troops.

VERSE 11

“And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai” — The

men of Ai observed a large force of Israelites advancing towards them, but noticed that instead of boldly marching to its confines it hesitated at the site of a valley. This indicated to them a state of uncertainty and fear, which emboldened them.

“Now there was a valley between them and Ai” — Joshua led his army to a rising on the north side of the city, where existed a shallow depression between it and Ai. The men of Ai would interpret this as indicative of inefficiency, for it destroyed the benefit of a surprise attack. Their confidence rose in spite of the size of Joshua's force. The manner in which Joshua so prominently displayed himself and his forces would surprise them, but unknown to them it also permitted Joshua's men in ambush to clearly see him, and observe the signal for attack, he had instructed them he would give.

VERSE 12

“And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city” —

The men of the ambush had already been sent out (v. 9). The verse is better understood if read in the past tense: *“had taken about five thousand men”*. Instead of “the city” some readings have Ai, as the Hebrew for city and Ai are similar.

VERSE 13

“And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley” —

The main forces of the Israelites encamped among the hills and risings to the north of the city, and were probably hidden from the men of Ai; but Joshua, and doubtless a contingent of his army went into the valley or depression where they would be in full view of the enemy next morning.

The Battle Joined — vv. 14-18

The king of Ai views the deployment of Joshua's troops with astonishment. They indicate to him a state of hesitancy and inefficiency on the part of the Israelites which increased his confidence in being able to defeat them as he did previously. He has his plans all ready for such an attack, and with complete confidence leads his forces against those of Joshua. At first success seems to attend his arms, as the Israelites pretend to flee before his troops. But his success is shortlived.

VERSE 14

“And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people” — Confident in their ability to repeat the former victory, fortified by the presence of reinforcements from the neighbouring city of Bethel (v. 17), the king sallied forth at the head of his army to do battle. For the moment all seemed to go well for him.

“At a time appointed before the plain” — The statement is better rendered “at the place appointed overlooking the Arabah” (See *The Interlinear Hebrew English Bible, NIV* and others). The King’s plans had already been made, and his objective was to gain the heights overlooking the deep valley of Achor that led to Jericho and the Arabah, the deep depression that runs south of the Sea of Galilee through to the Gulf of Aqaba.

“But he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city” — Joshua’s strategy was working out according to plan.

VERSE 15

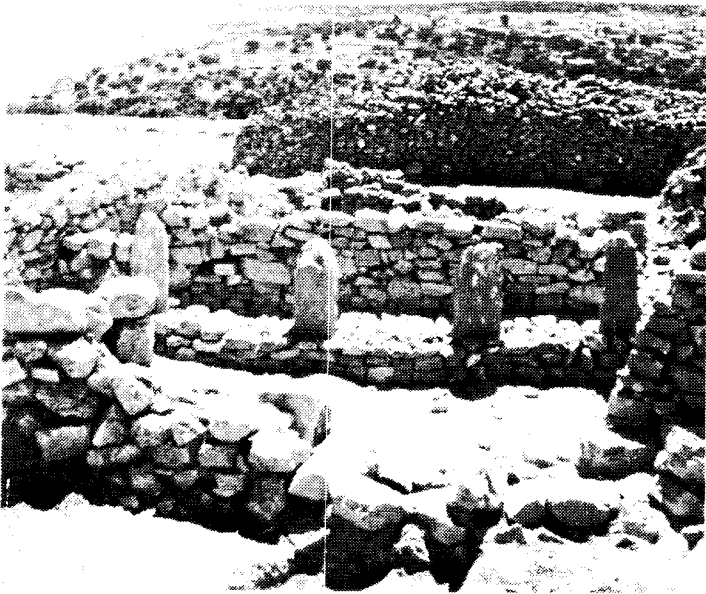
“And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness” — The main Israelitish army gave every appearance of being beaten.

VERSE 16

“And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city” — Confident of victory, every man followed the trained forces of Ai in pursuit of the Israelites. The Vulgate renders the clause, the people of Ai “raised a cry” — an exultant shout of impending victory, as they followed the army in its pursuit. Such a victory would be the subject of rejoicing, for it would elevate Ai in prominence and importance before other Canaanites if it were able to defeat the army that had conquered mighty Jericho!

VERSE 17

“And there was not a man left in Ai or



Ruins at Ai, the city set on fire by Joshua and his men.

Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel” — This statement implies that the men of Bethel had made their way to Ai in order to assist in its defence, and now joined their ally in pursuit of the Israelites.

VERSE 18

“And Yahweh said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai” — In the confusion of battle and retreat, the defenders of Ai did not see Joshua ascend the rising on the other side of the valley where he could be seen by the ambushade (v. 11). He stood there a prominent but isolated figure with spear outstretched toward Ai. In doing so he represented the Standard Bearer or Ensign of Israel (cp. Moses at Rephidim — Exod. 17:8-16), the representative of the Captain of Yahweh’s host holding a drawn sword, whom Joshua had met outside Jericho (Josh. 5:13). Joshua remained in this position until victory was complete (v. 26). In this stance, in the conquest of Ai, he represented the Lord Jesus in overcoming sin. Joshua had experienced a temporary setback in his former defeat at Ai due to sin, but it was now followed by total victory. Once again the great conquest of sin was foreshadowed by events (see Heb. 2:14; Josh. 8:29). As in the case of Moses’ victory over Amalek, the stretched-out spear showed that the victory was Yahweh’s (See Exod. 8:5; 14:21; 17:11. See Josh. 8:7,26).

“And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city” — This was the sign for which the men in ambush were waiting. Like the Apostles after the resurrection of the Lord, they went to their task with greater vigour.

Victory For Israel — vv. 19-24

The Israelites in ambush enter the defenceless city and set it on fire. The warriors of Ai pursuing the main body of Israeli troops are astonished to see a cloud of smoke arising from the burning city and stop their pursuit. Now the pursuers become the pursued. The main forces of Israel suddenly turn in their flight, as the men of Ai hasten back to defend Ai. But they are too late! The Israelites in occupation stream out of the doomed city, and the army of Ai is caught in a pincer movement, a trap that destroys it. The king is taken alive, and all prisoners are put to death.

VERSE 19

“And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hastened and set the city on fire” — The ambush of some 30,000 men (vv. 3-4), carefully schooled in what was expected of them occupied the city abandoned of its defenders, and set it alight.

VERSE 20

“And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven” — The expressions, “looked behind,” “saw,” “behold” are expressive of greatest surprise. The warriors of Ai were attracted by the cloud of black smoke in the sky, and paused to consider its significance.

“And they had no power to flee this way or that way” — Now they realised they had been trapped. In fear and bewilderment they knew not what to do. They had “no power” left to pursue the fight. The word “power” in the Hebrew is *hand*, for the hand is the organ of power by which things are done.

“And the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers” — The word “wilderness” signifies open country or pasture lands. As the men of Ai observed the smoke of their city ascending, they realised that they were caught in a trap that had drawn them from the shelter of their walls. Turning back to regain this advantage, they were helplessly caught between the pincers of Joshua’s army. Their hesitation enabled the Israelite army to turn and attack the men of Ai who stood bewildered at the turn of events.

VERSE 21

“And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai” — The fleeing Israelites had waited for the sign of Joshua standing upright with spear outdrawn in his hand; they now re-formed and turned on their pursuers. How remarkably this chapter foreshadows the events at Christ’s death and resurrection. The death of the Lord resulted in the bewilderment and retreat of the disciples; but his resurrection saw them regroup their forces and turn on

their previous attackers with confidence and success, as *The Acts of the Apostles* records.

VERSE 22

“And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape” — Completely surrounded by the Israelites, and now in a panic because of their predicament, the men of Ai were destroyed, as were the other Canaanites conquered by Joshua (see Josh. 6:21; 10:28; 11:11-12), as commanded by Yahweh (Deut. 7:1-2). In these battles, the Canaanites represent the sins of the flesh, that must be violently put to death in order to render unto Yahweh that which is due to His holy Name (Rom. 6:6; Col. 3:5).

VERSE 23

“And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua” — The King of Ai, in the figurative foreshadowing of *The Book of Joshua*, represents sin's flesh, that is described by Paul as a King “reigning” therein (Rom. 6:12).

VERSE 24

“And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword” — The command to do this, and the purpose of it are given in Deut. 20:17-18.

Destruction of Ai — vv. 25-29

Ai lives up to its name and becomes a ruin. It is “turned into a heap”. All its inhabitants are destroyed, and the king publicly executed. The self-confidence and pride of its army in its initial victory precedes its fall. However, Bethel remains to be occupied by Israel. Its Canaanitish inhabitants, or what remains of them, are subsequently slain by Ephraim's soldiers (Jud. 1:22), for it stands on the border between Ephraim and Benjamin (Josh. 16:2; 18:12). The fate of these two cities fulfils the type: the House of God remains; but the habitation of flesh is overthrown.

VERSE 25

“And so it was, that all that fell that day.

both of men and women, were twelve thousand even all the men of Ai” — Utter destruction without exception is decreed for men, women and children: a most unpleasant task to perform, but one necessary to the future success of the Israelitish occupation of the land. It is also unpleasant to turn from friends and relations to serve Christ: but the sacrifice must be made to successfully walk in the way of righteousness.

VERSE 26

“For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai” — Ai signifies *Ruin*, and to do otherwise than to destroy all associated therewith would mean ruin to the people of Israel. The ruthless action of the Israelites had been made necessary by the wickedness into which the land had fallen. The Canaanites knew of the judgments that had devastated Sodom, Egypt, Sihon, Og and Jericho, but chose to ignore them and continue in the way of wickedness that had become indigenous to them. The whole land was given over to immorality and evil of an extent that has shocked those archaeologists who have unearthed the evidence. Prostitutes and Sodomites were associated with Canaanitish religious worship, infant sacrifice was common; the whole land was a veritable Sodom and Gomorrah on a huge scale, and was condemned to destruction: aged and youth alike. They constituted the seed of the serpent; and in destroying a nest of serpents the young would not be exempted. See Lev. 18:25; Deut. 9:5; 18:12. Such sweeping judgments appear to flesh to be harsh and cruel, ruthless and unnecessary; but it is better that the wicked be destroyed than that they should tempt and pollute by their company and influence those who are as yet innocent of such evils. Even so, and in spite of the wholesale destruction ordered by God and executed by Joshua's forces, the remnant of Canaanites that remained succeeded in polluting the people to such an extent as to cause them to turn from the pure worship of Yahweh. Flesh being what it is, if the occupation of the land had been conducted on more peaceable lines, the Israelites would soon have lost their distinctive character, would have been absorbed by the Canaanites, and the precious heritage that has come through them to those who accept Christ, would have been irreparably lost. Therefore, in their

bitter and ruthless war of annihilation against the Canaanites the Israelites fought for future generations. The sword of Joshua wrought a work of mercy for those of mankind who desire a higher way of life in service to Yahweh leading to Eternal Life in the age to come (Rom. 2:7). There can be no truce in that warfare. The seed of the woman must crush the serpent power under foot to be delivered from its influence. The warfare of Joshua, therefore, foreshadowed the bitterness of the warfare between the seeds, representing truth and error throughout the centuries. In this warfare, saints have been cruelly tortured and mercilessly put to death for worshipping God according to their beliefs and conscience. In writing of the conflict between Paganism and Christianity, Brother Thomas states: "The history of this period is a striking illustration of the 'enmity' (Gen. 3:15) God has put between the seed of the Serpent and the seed of the woman. In the war between them the heel of her seed was bruised by the Serpent power, as it had bruised that of their great Captain; but thanks be to God who gives them the victory, the time is at the door, when they will raise the dead, and with him bruise the Old Serpent's head upon the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 39:4). There can be no friendship between these parties. Death or victory is the only alternative. There can be no peace in the world till one or other be suppressed. The 'enmity' is the essential hostility betwixt sin and God's law, which is the truth. Either truth must conquer sin, or sin must abolish the truth; but compromise there can be none. I have great faith in the power of truth, because I have faith in God. He is pledged to give it the victory; and though deceivers in church and state may triumph for the time, and tyrants 'deceive the earth', their end is certain and their destruction sure" (*Elpis Israel* p. 102).

VERSE 27

"Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of Yahweh which He commanded Joshua" — A difference was made between the disposal of the spoils of Jericho and Ai. The former was entirely devoted unto Yahweh, so that no spoil was to be taken by the Israelites; but with Ai, the army was given the spoil of the city. Why? It would appear that the army, in this case, had conquered by fighting, and had avenged the disgrace suffered

by Yahweh's name in the previous defeat. A precedence is given in Num. 31:22-26 where the metals of a captured city are purified and given to Yahweh, and the animals are shared among the warriors; therefore, on this occasion, the warriors shared the spoil as invited to do by Yahweh (v. 2).

VERSE 28

"And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day" — The word "heap" is from the Hebrew *tel*, the name given to the artificial mounds of the Middle East that cover the sites of one-time cities. This "tel" of desolation became a memorial to Israelites reminding them of the ruin that follows sin. Ai as a memorial foreshadowed the city, or mausoleum, of the dead, called Hamonah which is to be erected as a memorial to the destruction of Gog in the age to come (see Ezek. 39:16).

VERSE 29

"And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide" — The king represented sin's flesh in active control and in contrast to the authority of Yahweh (Deut. 9:5-6). His dead body was suspended on a tree as an execration to Israel (Deut. 7:1-6). The exhibition represented a public condemnation and repudiation of sin's flesh (Num. 25:4; Deut. 21:23), from whence all active transgression comes (Mark 7:21-23). The law that decreed this display foreshadowed the death of Christ, for he, too, came in sin's flesh (Rom. 8:3). Of him it is declared that he "became a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). The crucifixion of the Lord witnessed that his righteous character came not from the lusts of the flesh, but from crucifying, or denying them (Gal. 5:24). The perfection of his sinless character ensured his resurrection from the grave to life eternal (Heb. 13:20) whilst the nature of the flesh he bore, which was that common to all humanity, showed why his crucifixion was necessary. His death teaches that righteousness can only be manifested by denying the flesh. His resurrection shows that mankind does not lose but gains by so doing. It was important that Joshua clearly set this before all Israel because the previous failure at Ai had resulted from allowing "sin to reign" (Rom. 6:12). The public execution and display of the dead body of the king dramatised the teaching

of Scripture: "let not sin reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12). Instead, the lusts of the flesh that make demands contrary to the law of God, need to be crucified (Gal. 5:24), "mortified", or put to death (Col. 3:5). Christ's death illustrates that need. It ensured his resurrection to life eternal (Phil. 2:8-9; Heb. 13:20), and provided the way for those truly "in him" to rise to life eternal also. Meanwhile, the execution of the king of Ai, and the displaying of his dead body upon the tree, was not only a public condemnation of sin in the flesh, warning the people to be on their guard against such, but was also a demonstration of the destiny of flesh unless redeemed.

"And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones that remaineth unto this day" — In similar manner, and for the same reason, the Lord was taken from the cross for burial. But there the likeness ceased. The king of Ai was buried under a heap of stones. This sepulchre of stones hid from view the body of the dead king; the symbol of flesh in complete opposition to Yahweh. However, though the Lord was crucified upon a tree, and taken down at nightfall to be placed in a sepulchre, after three days he rose therefrom: his resurrection witnessing to the righteousness of his life. In contrast, the king of Ai was given a perma-

nent place under his heap of stones: the destiny of those who follow in his way.

The Covenant Confirmed At Shechem — vv. 30-35

The overthrow of Ai and execution of its king as well as the sentence passed on Achan illustrate the goodness and severity of God as well as the blessing and cursing of the Law. These incidents, therefore, provide a remarkably appropriate prelude to the reconfirming of the covenant at Shechem. Joshua is commanded to lead Israel there, to build an altar and inscribe thereon the blessings and cursings of the Law. Sacrifices are offered, and a recital of the blessings and cursings of the Law are pronounced to which are appended the word Amen!

VERSE 30

"Then Joshua built an altar unto Yahweh God of Israel in mount Ebal" —

This was in obedience to the command of Yahweh as recorded in Deut. 27:4-5. Mount Ebal is a twin peak to that of Mount Gerizim, between which is the site of Shechem. Its name signifies that which is *Bare* or *Bald*. Ebal is a barren mountain, largely devoid of growth, and overshadowing its twin, Gerizim. This is appropriate because through the weakness of the flesh, Israel experienced more of the cursings of the Law than of its blessings. The altar was built on Mount Ebal rather than Gerizim because the prevalence of cursings called for a greater need



In obedience to the command of Moses, after the Israelites had crossed Jordan Joshua divided them for a solemn ceremony. He placed "half of them over against Mt. Gerizim and half of them over against Mt. Ebal" (Josh. 8:33). On the left is Mt. Ebal and the right Mt. Gerizim. In the valley between them the outskirts of Shechem can be found.

for forgiveness. An altar has been discovered on Ebal which some archaeologists identify as that of Joshua.

VERSE 31

“As Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded the children of Israel” — The commandment was given twice by Moses to emphasise its importance (Deut. 11:29; 27:9-26).

“As it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron” — See Exod. 20:25. The altar foreshadowed Yahweh in sacrificial manifestation in Christ. It was built of stone, symbolising human nature; and of unhewn stone, because such represents a shaping by God not by man. The fulfilment is seen in Christ. Though his nature was identical with that of all humanity, his character was unique; it was Divine, stemming from his Divine begetting (John 1:14). Therefore, the altar of unhewn stones represented the flesh Divinely shaped, as a basis for acceptable sacrifice. This altar was built on Mount Ebal, the Mount of Cursing, adjacent to Shechem, which signifies *Burden-Bearer*, and which was appointed as a city of Refuge. It was at Shechem that Abram first received confirmation of the Promise in the land (Gen. 12:6-7). All of this is very significant, as pointing forward to Christ. He confirmed the Promises (Rom. 15:8), is a Burden-bearer, and a City of Refuge (Heb. 6:18-19). The significance of this site was increased by the conversation between the Samaritan woman and Christ in the very shadow of the Mount (John 4:5-26).

“And they offered thereon burnt offerings unto Yahweh” — Leviticus 1 outlines the method of such offerings. The best animals of the herd were selected for the purpose. They were then put to death, dismembered and opened for careful inspection and then washed inside and out. This figuratively reminded offerers that they had to aim to be “all glorious within” (Psa. 45:13). The parts were placed in order on the altar so as to epitomise the fundamental requirement of the Law: “Thou shalt love Yahweh thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut. 6:4-5). The fire on the altar was Divine fire (Lev. 9:24), representing the Spirit Word (1 Thess. 5:19). The fire slowly consumed the flesh, teaching that what is normally the source of sin (Mark

7:21-22) by humility and obedience can be transmitted into a “sweet savour” unto Yahweh. The burnt offering represented the true Israelite. He is called upon to figuratively put to death the flesh, and to seek an inward and external cleanness by the Word (John 15:3). Having accomplished that by knowledge and baptism, he must be stimulated by the zeal or fire of the Word, to render unto Yahweh a mind and labour pleasing unto Him. The burnt offerings, on the Mount of Cursing, brought home to Israelites the dedication of worship they must attempt to render unto Yahweh, in spite of the weakness of the flesh to avoid by the cursings associated with the Mount.

“And sacrificed peace offerings” — Peace offerings united worshippers in fellowship with Yahweh through the medium of the priest. The word “peace” is from the Hebrew *Shalom*, which signifies *to be at one*. Therefore the offerer, through this offering, was made one with his God. The details are outlined in Lev. 3. There were a number of forms peace offerings could take. Those most likely offered on this occasion would have been peace-offerings of thanksgiving in gratitude for Divine favour received (Lev. 7:12). The breast and right thigh of each (Lev. 7:30-32) were given to the priests, this being a token acknowledgement of the offerers’ dependence upon them for their ministry of mediation. Leavened bread was also offered (Lev. 7:13), this acknowledging the offerers imperfections and need of the shed blood of the animal for atonement. In such peace offerings that which was not offered on the altar (see Lev. 3:3-5), or given to the priests, was eaten as a sacrificial meal (Lev. 7:15), bringing the offerer into fellowship with Yahweh through the priests (Deut. 12:7). On this occasion, all Israel exulted before Yahweh, recognising His goodness as manifested in their recent victories.

VERSE 32

“And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses” — Upon the rough, unhewn stones, Joshua wrote, or painted (not engraved as upon the stones containing the Ten Commandments — cp. Deut. 27:2) a summary of the Law. The words *mishneh torah* signify a repetition of the Law, i.e. a summary. This was a list of the blessings and cursings (Deut. 28:3,16).

“Which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel” — The Israelites saw

clearly inscribed upon the altar of offering their responsibility towards Yahweh, together with the blessings and cursings attached thereto. Christ "our altar" (Heb. 13:10) is likewise a savour of life unto life, and of death unto death (2 Cor. 2:15-16). His life illustrates what is necessary to obtain the blessings as well as what is to be avoided to escape the cursings. To acceptably draw near unto that altar flesh has to learn to obey. Life and death, blessing (Matt. 5:1-12) and cursing (Matt. 23:13-33) are the alternatives for obedience or otherwise.

VERSE 33

"And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of Yahweh" — Ever since the command given on the eastern side of Jordan for the priests to carry the Ark of the Covenant instead of the Levites, they had continued to do so. See note Josh. 4:10.

"As well the stranger, as he that was born among them" — This would include those of Rahab's house, now brought within the company of born Israelites.

"Half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal" — Gerizim signifies *Divisions*, that is *separations*, from *Gara* 'to cut off'. It is situated opposite mount Ebal overshadowing the narrow valley of Shechem, which extends about three miles in length, and slopes upwards about 2849 ft in height. Ebal, a barren, rocky mountain (it signifies *Bare* or *Bald*) extends some 200 feet higher than Gerizim.

"As Moses the servant of Yahweh had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel" — According to the instructions of Moses, representatives of the twelve tribes were divided into two groups, and took their places before the two mountains. By Gerizim were assem-

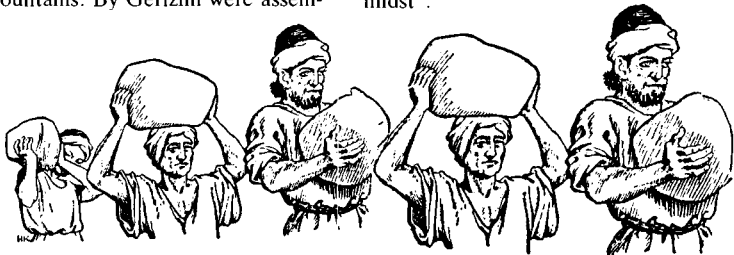
bled Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin; and by Ebal were to stand Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali. The names of the tribes spell out what is required of God in the true Israel. The names of the tribes assembled by Gerizim proclaim the sentence: *Hear, Join and Praise him. You will receive Reward among the Increase that shall accrue to the Son of My right hand.* Those of Ebal proclaimed: *See a son with a Company of Blessed ones who shall Dwell with him following the Judgment after the Wrestling.*

VERSE 34

"And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the Law" — See the instructions given in Deut. 31:10-13. During the course of the ceremonial reading of the Law, the Levites in the centre adjacent to the Ark recited in order the cursings and the blessings of the Law. As this was done the people on the sides of the twin Mountains responded with resounding *Amens*. Those on Gerizim responded to the blessings, and those on Ebal to the cursings (Deut. 27:11-26). As in the teaching of Paul, "all the counsel of God" was thus proclaimed (Acts 20:21).

VERSE 35

"There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them" — All had to listen, both children and adults. It was important that each individual for himself should hear and take heed to the things said and done. The last clause, "strangers that were *conversant* among them" is better rendered "strangers that *walked*". The term describes Gentiles who had embraced the hope of Israel, and so "walked in its midst".



CHAPTER NINE

THE WILES OF THE ADVERSARY

Important lessons continue to be brought home to the Israelites in their conquest of the land, or their warfare of faith. Whilst in the south a confederacy of kings organise to resist Joshua, the Gibeonites use subtilty and cunning. They deceive Joshua into making a covenant with them. The covenant is binding, so that when Israel continues the war in the centre of the land they are met by those who have deceived them, and are mortified to learn that they have entered into an irrevocable pact of peace with Canaanites. By this means the Gibeonites avoid the sentence of death imposed by the Law on all Canaanites. But on what terms? Their recognition of Yahweh as supreme, and all-powerful, their repudiation of pagan deities; their acceptance of His purpose in Israel; their acknowledgement that apart from the hope of Israel they are doomed; in short, they make use of the best means to obtain mercy that their unregenerated minds can devise; and, finally give the complete unconditional surrender of themselves (v. 25). On the other hand, Israel is deceived because the people "do not ask counsel of Yahweh" (v. 14). Nevertheless, the mistake having been made must, in righteousness, be honoured. This is done by recognising the validity of the covenant, but placing the Gibeonites under restrictions within Israel. The chapter is subdivided: A confederacy against Israel — vv. 1-2; The wiles of the Gibeonites — vv. 3-6; Israel enters into covenant with them — vv. 7-15; The deception discovered — vv. 16-18; The covenant honoured — vv. 19-21; The Gibeonites disciplined — vv. 22-27.

A Hostile Confederacy In The South — vv. 1-2

Joshua's success at Ai creates widespread fear. The enemies of God's people are ready to sink their personal differences and unite to resist the advancing Israelites. To date only individual cities have fallen: Jericho, Ai and Bethel; but the Canaanites believe that united they may succeed. A new threat is presented to the Israelites that they must face in faith.

VERSE 1

"And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon" — The whole of the land is now alerted to the danger of the Israelite invasion, and preparations for war are made by all nations.

"The Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and

the Jebusite, heard thereof — These were among the nations listed by Moses to be overthrown (see Deut. 7:1).

VERSE 2

“That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel with one accord” — In view of the defeat of single fortress cities, the various nations of Canaan decided to confederate their armies, hoping that their combined might would be successful against Joshua. The representatives of the nations met that they might “rage against Yahweh’s anointed”, foreshadowing the opposition which shall be manifested against the Lord at his coming (Psa. 2:1-2). The word “accord” is literally *mouth*. Those gathered together mouthed their problems, and agreed upon a policy of mutual assistance to resist the conquest of the land by Joshua.

The Wiles of the Gibeonites — vv. 3-6

In the hill country in the centre of the Promised Land dwell the Gibeonites. They are closest to Ai and have no confidence in the ability of their fellow Canaanites to successfully resist Joshua. Without consulting their allies they decide to use cunning instead of warfare, recognising that the latter has not proved successful to date. They despatch emissaries to the Israelitish camp disguised as travellers from a far country, with a request for an alliance.

VERSE 3

“And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai” — The town of Gibeon was not far distant from Ai. It is identified with El-Jib about six miles northwest of Jerusalem and about six miles southwest of Ai, in the hill-country in the centre of the land. Gibeon signifies *High Place*. The Gibeonites are identified with the Hivites (Josh. 11:19) and Amorites (2 Sam. 21:2). As such they were among those nations condemned by the Law (Deut. 7:1-2; 20:16-18), and covenants with them on a national basis were prohibited (Exod. 23:32; 34:12-14; Num. 35:51-56). They were leaders of an alliance formed with the men of three neighbouring Gibeon cities (v. 17). Having heard of the amazing overthrow of Jericho, Ai, and Bethel they feared for their lives. Lacking confidence in their ability to match the Israelites in war, and recognising that they were placed next in order of conquest, they

decided to use the cunning of diplomacy instead of the danger of warfare. The Hebrew adds the word *gam*: “They did also work wilyly”. It seems to contrast their strategem with that employed by the Israelites before Ai. They resolved to meet cunning with cunning.

“And went and made as if they had been ambassadors” — The Hebrew *tzir* properly denotes “a hinge”, because an ambassador is one upon whom the business of a city or state turns.

“And took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up” — The word “bottles” should be rendered *wine-skins*, for wine was kept in animal skins prepared for such. As the wine fermented and matured the skins stretched. Those carried by the Gibeonites were roughly repaired by tying up the edge of rents instead of inserting a patch. Once a wine-skin had been used in that way, it was useless for storing new wine, for as it fermented, the skin would tear until beyond repair.

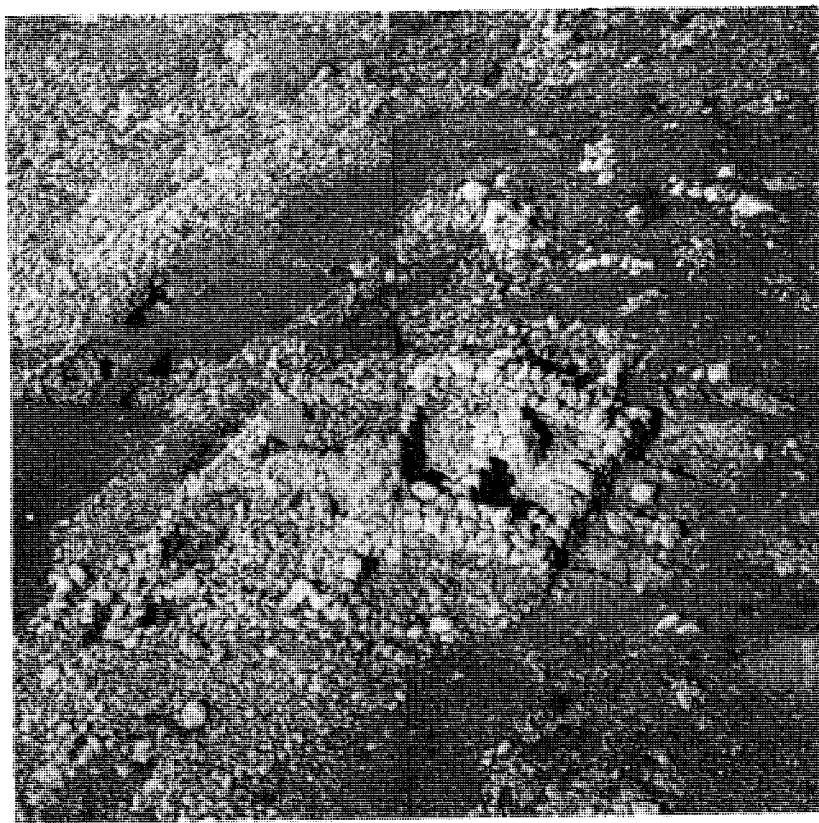
VERSE 5

“And old shoes and clouted upon their feet” — The word “clouted” is Anglo-saxon for *patched*.

“And old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy” — The word “mouldy” is from the Hebrew *niqqudim*, and signifies *crumbs, spotted, or brittle*. The Vulgate renders it as *crumbly*.

VERSE 6

“And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal” — There are several Gilgals referred to in Scripture. Was it the place near Jericho which had recently been named Gilgal because of the renewal of the rite of circumcision and the rolling away of the reproach of Egypt (Josh. 5:8-9)? Or was it the place near Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (see Deut. 11:30; 1 Sam. 7:16; 10:8; 11:14; 12:23; 15:33)? Joshua had only recently removed the whole camp from the site near Jericho to that adjacent to Shechem in order to renew the Covenant, and there is no indication of him returning to the plain after having brought “all Israel” (Josh. 8:33) to the area of Shechem. The occupation of this strategic location in the centre of the land probably reassured the Israelites that they were there to stay, and certainly would demonstrate to the Canaanites that they were not going to peacefully with-



THE ALTAR AT SHECHEM

Following the victory of Ai, the nation (v. 35) makes its way north to Shechem where Abraham had received verbal confirmation that his seed would possess the land (Gen. 12:7). The purpose is to reconfirm the covenant of law. As commanded, an altar is built, inscribed with the Commandments of the law, and the assembled nation hears recited the blessings and cursings it pronounces conditional upon whether it is obeyed or ignored. It accepts these terms by responding Amen to each of the clauses. By this means the reproach of Egypt is finally rolled away, and the people encamp at an adjacent spot that is called Gilgal. Not the Gilgal near Jericho, but another near Shechem (Ch. 8:35; 9:6). This bold venture into hostile enemy territory by Israel demonstrates that faith has cast out fear. These excavated remains on Mt. Ebal are identified by archaeologist A.Zertal with the altar built by Joshua when he led the tribes to Shechem. See *Biblical Archaeology Review* Jan. 1986.

draw. The emissaries of Gibeon made their way to this camp to obtain by cunning that which they could not secure by war. The Israelites were about to learn the lesson that sometimes the eyes do not reveal all truth; and that sometimes words and appearances may be deceptive.

“And said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country; now therefore make a league with us” — The Hebrew *kirthoo lanoo berith*, signifies more than a verbal agreement; it denotes the cutting of a covenant. The confirming of a covenant in such a manner made its conditions irrevocable.

VERSE 7

“And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites” — The Gibeonites are here designated as “Hivites”. The word signifies *Villagers*, perhaps implying that they dwelt in unprotected towns difficult to defend. They are severally named as Gibeonites, Hivites and Amorites (2 Sam. 21:2). As such they were condemned (Deut. 7:1-2; 20:16), and national covenants with them were prohibited (Exod. 23:32; 34:12-14; Num. 33:51-56). Nevertheless, the example of Rahab would suggest that whilst no covenants were to be made with the Canaanites nationally, individuals could be saved by personally seeking God and embracing the hope of Israel as did Rahab (Josh. 11:19).

“Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?” — Again, the expression denotes the cutting, or dividing of a covenant victim.

VERSE 8

“And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants” — This was an evasive answer. Though it suggested humility, it was an expression of courtesy, rather than one to be taken literally (See Gen. 32:4,18; 2 Kings 10:5; 16:7).

“And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye?” — Joshua required something more explicit than a courteous reply.

VERSE 9

“And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of Yahweh thy God” — The Law had laid it down that whilst no covenants were to be entered into with the nations of Canaan, the same prohibition

did not apply to nations outside the Land of Promise (see Deut. 20:10,11,20). Evidently the Gibeonites learned of this, perhaps by spies speaking with guileless Israelites. If so it is an indication of the extreme care the Gibeonites had gone to in order to ascertain what was required in their project. This knowledge governed their form of address. The suave speech of their ambassadors in their approach to Joshua was designed to disarm him. It was humble and submissive; they spake reverently of Yahweh, and of His mighty deeds; they manifested every appearance of having travelled from a far-distant land. They were successful in deceiving the Israelites, who believed that they had no quarrel with these people from a distant land. After all, they had been prepared to acknowledge the right of the Moabites and Edomites to their land inheritance, and why not these people from a much more distant land?

Jude warned against “certain men crept in unawares” who, if not resisted, would break down the separateness enjoined upon God’s people (see Jude 4). The Gibeonites foreshadowed these, though Joshua’s subsequent demands prevented them adversely influencing the Israelites.

“For we have heard the fame of Him, and all that He did in Egypt” — This was true (see Josh. 2:9-11), so that subtlety was blended with truth. The Gibeonites claimed a knowledge of Yahweh’s doings, His miraculous actions, and purpose with Israel. Some people seek Ecclesial membership on similar grounds; but unless they are drawn to Christ for more powerful reasons than that, or unless they grow by the motivation of the Word they frequently become an embarrassment to the Ecclesia of which they became members. They do not want to conform to the discipline that is so necessary.

VERSE 10

“And all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth” — See Num. 21:13-35. It is perhaps significant that these ambassadors made no mention of the crossing of the Jordan and the destruction of Jericho and Ai. They were too shrewd to do so. It would imply that they were resident in lands closer than their disguise suggested. There is need to carefully analyse the words of those who claim an interest in the Truth. It is possible

that "the fair speeches (of certain, may) deceive the hearts of the simple" or guileless (Rom. 16:18). Therefore, the Lord warned the Apostles that there is need to be "wise as serpents" whilst also being "harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16).

VERSE 11

"Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants; therefore now make ye a league with us" — The respectful, courteous, and seemingly Godly manner of speech of the shrewd Gibeonites took the Israelites off their guard. Whilst Joshua and his associates hesitated, the ambassadors pressed their claims.

VERSE 12

"This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy" — See the notes on v. 5. The Gibeonites pressed one argument upon another, giving the Israelites no time to properly assess their claims.

VERSE 13

"And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent; and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey" — Little suspecting that such courteous, well-spoken ambassadors who wanted to enter into covenant relationship with them and with their God, could be liars, the Israelites were taken off guard.

VERSE 14

"And the men took of their victuals" — This was an act of friendship and of acceptance of the proposition (Deut. 23:4). In the context given it denotes a fellowship meal. By accepting their victuals the Israelites accepted their persons, and joined with them in covenant. This was confirmed by a covenant victim (v. 15).

"And asked not counsel at the mouth of Yahweh" — They could have done this through the Urim and Thummim (Exod. 28:30; Num. 27:21. See Prov. 3:5-6). Today it can be done by heeding the instruction of the Word. Joshua and the Israelites were learning that more than

faith, courage and obedience are necessary; even constant study of the Word of God, so as to distinguish between right and wrong. Pretence of being spiritual on the part of some tends to take true believers off their guard. That is what happened on this occasion.

VERSE 15

"And Joshua made peace with them" — The word "peace" signifies to be joined as one. In this context it implies fellowship.

"And made a league with them, to let them live" — See note v. 6. They "cut a covenant", that is established a covenant between them over a slain covenant-victim. Such a league or covenant was irrevocably binding.

"And the princes of the congregation swore unto them" — Having done this there was no turning back. See 2 Sam. 21:2-9.

The Deception Discovered — vv. 16-18

Trickery and deceit are short-lived. The ambassadors leave the Israelites who imagine that they have a far distance to travel. Meanwhile, Joshua's warriors leave Gilgal to recommence their conquest of the land, and turn towards the cities of the Hivites in the central highlands. A three days' march brings them to these cities, and they begin preparations to attack them. To their amazement they are met by the very emissaries with whom they so recently had entered into covenant. This experience teaches them to place no trust in the flesh.

VERSE 16

"And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them" — See Prov. 12:19. The circumstances are revealed in the following verse.

VERSE 17

"And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day" — The Israelites had travelled from Gilgal close to Shechem, about 20 miles (33 km). Their intent was conquest (v. 18).

"Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim" — The Gibeonites represented a confederacy of four cities in the highlands

of central Palestine. Gibeon signifies *High Place*. It was evidently the main town of the four. Chephirah signifies *The Village*. It was about 8 m. south-west of Gibeon and north of Kirjath-jearim. Beeroth signifies *Wells*. It lay between Gibeon and Bethel. Kirjath-jearim signifies *City of Forests*. It dominated a well-wooded height from whence, in the distance, could be seen Jerusalem. The names of the Gibeonitish, or Hivite towns, suggest a pretty part of the land of hills and valleys and springs of water among which were set these four cities (Josh. 15:9,60).

VERSE 18

“And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by Yahweh God of Israel” — In spite of the fact that the covenant entered into by the Israelites with the Hivites was contrary to the will of Yahweh, the Israelites had to keep faith to their agreement. The word of a true Israelite is his bond, and he will not deviate therefrom (see Psa. 15:4; Ecc. 5:2-6). Such a covenant having been made, was binding. When, later, Saul violated a covenant, seven of his sons were executed as a reprisal (2 Sam. 21:1-9). When the land was allocated, these Gibeonite cities were within the borders of Benjamin (Josh. 18:25), and Gibeon was given to the Aaronites (Josh. 21:17). Saul’s ancestors dwelt there (1 Chron. 8:29-31; 9:35-39); and there Solomon sacrificed and received the promise of wisdom (1 Kings 3:4-15). A Gibeonite became prominent in David’s army (1 Chron. 12:4); and among those who returned from exile after the Babylonian captivity were Gibeonites, some of whom helped repair the wall of Jerusalem (Neh. 3:7; 7:25).

The trickery by which the Hivites of Gibeon beguiled Joshua in measure repaid the treachery of Jacob’s sons against the Hivites of Shechem. For Hamor who defiled Dinah was a Hivite (Gen. 34:2), and by subterfuge Simeon and Levi induced the men of Shechem to enter into a covenant and submit to the rite of circumcision. Then with base treachery they put them to the sword. Now the tables were turned. Joshua was compelled to fulfil the terms of the covenant made with these Hivites who had deluded him. The name of the god they worshipped was Baal-Berith, the *Lord of the Covenant* or *League* which confirms the impression of their unwarlike character.

They were used to gaining by diplomacy what they could not obtain by war. Their form of administration seems to have been highly democratic. From the reference to the “elders and the people” (Josh. 9:11) the latter seemed to have exercised considerable voice in the national affairs. See Gen. 34:20-24.

“And all the congregation murmured against the princes” — The news that their princes had been tricked into making covenant with such unwarlike people as the Hivites irritated the people of Israel who criticised their leaders for so doing.

VERSE 19

“But all the princes said unto the congregation, We have sworn unto them by Yahweh God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them” — This was an honourable attitude to take. They had “sworn to their own hurt”, but would keep their word (see Psa. 15:4; Ecc. 5:4). They had “cut a covenant” and must keep it. Such a covenant is a very solemn and binding undertaking, demanding strict compliance to its terms. As Yahweh keeps His Covenant even when His people are sometimes disobedient, so also must His children if they are to manifest His characteristics (Psa. 24:4). Israel, having entered into a solemn, unconditional covenant confirmed by the sacrifice of a covenant-victim had to keep it. This is what Yahweh does (see Ezek. 36:21-22).

VERSE 20

“This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us” — As Yahweh honours His word, so must His sons honour their’s. Indeed, all the promises He has made are based on His integrity to fulfil, for nothing man has done or can do will compensate for what he hopes to receive from God. When he has done all, he still remains an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:10) utterly dependent upon the grace and mercy of Yahweh. Yahweh confirmed His promises to Abraham and David with oaths guaranteeing their fulfilment, and though it may be said that through the weakness of human nature man is not worthy of the goodness of God. He has “sworn to His own hurt and will change not” (Gen. 22:16; Psa. 15:4; Ezek. 36:22-23; Heb. 6:17-18). He expects His children to do likewise. Therefore, as the elders of Israel correctly told the people, if they failed to keep their word they would suffer for it.

“Because of the oath which we swore unto them” — To break their oath would bring the name of God into contempt among the Canaanites. Yahweh requires inflexible respect for the Truth.

VERSE 21

“And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation” — This was considered a menial task (Deut. 29:11) usually left to women and children. The Gibeonites were therefore made humble servants. Their lives were saved, but not with the honoured conditions such as Rahab enjoyed, for they had tricked Joshua with deceit and lying.

“As the princes had promised them” — The promise had been made in the name of Israel, and though the people were inclined to reject the Gibeonites, to do so would bring God’s people into disrepute. This decision was conveyed to the people, with the proviso, however, that the Gibeonites would be reduced in status.

The Gibeonites Reduced to Slavery

— vv. 22-27

Though reduced in status, mercy is extended to the Gibeonites who were condemned to death by the Law. This is granted them because they acknowledge the supremacy of Yahweh, recognise that they are doomed unless they submit to the requirements laid upon them, and unconditionally surrender themselves to the requirements of Joshua. The case of Rahab suggests they could have received honoured treatment by a proper individual approach, but using trickery they are reduced to servitude. However, they possibly reason that “a day in Yahweh’s courts is better than a thousand” elsewhere (Psa. 84:10), and accept the conditions.

VERSE 22

“And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us?” — From Joshua 11:19 it is implied that peace could have been made with Israel on proper terms; but obviously the Gibeonites did not realise that and had resorted to trickery.

VERSE 23

“Now therefore ye are cursed” — The curse of Canaan was still to rest upon them

even though in covenant relationship with Israel (see Gen. 9:25). Gentile converts, in embracing the Truth are brought into a state of servitude to Christ (Rom. 6:18). They are required to stand aside from their Gentile associations and give practical application to their state as strangers and pilgrims in the land, having now no continuing city, but seeking one to come (Heb. 11:13-16). They eat of the “crumbs that fall from their masters’ table” (Matt. 15:27), humbly recognising the privileges afforded them in association with the “hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20; Rom. 15:8-9). Could the treatment now to be given the Gibeonites be described as a “curse”? Yes, for they were to completely give up their former way of life, were denied any opportunity of advance within Israel, and were placed in a position of continual servitude and restriction. The Gibeonites, in their manner of approach to Joshua, had done “evil that good might come” (Rom. 3:8). It had to be brought home to them and to all Israel, that such conduct does not prosper. They had to give their lives entirely, in a state of servitude, to the work of the Tabernacle. Through that means, by publicly replacing evil with good, they would provide an example for all Israel to emulate, and deliver themselves from the effect of the curse resting on them. But though thus “cursed” they became *nathan* or “given” as are true believers today (see v. 26).

“And there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God” — They had claimed that they had sought agreement with Joshua “because of the name of Yahweh thy God” (v. 9). Therefore they had accepted the covenant based on His name, and now were to give their lives entirely to the humble service of providing for the necessities of the Tabernacle worship.

VERSE 24

“And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that Yahweh thy God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you” — This amazing statement shows that the Gibeonites had heard and carefully analysed the truth in regard to Israel. Where did they learn this? Was it from Rahab? Those in the city of Jericho at the time it was under attack included Canaanites from all parts of the

land (Josh. 2:9; 5:1). Did the Gibeonites there hearken to Rahab, and hasten back to their cities to advise the leaders of what they heard? It seems obvious from their statement in this verse that they had investigated the circumstances of Israel's presence very carefully and in the light of their knowledge had recognised the significance of the crossing of the Jordan, the fall of Jericho, and the overthrow of Ai. The basis of their approach was recognition of Yahweh as God, of Moses as His servant, and of a thorough belief in the promise to give the land unto Israel.

"Therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing" — The "fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom". The Gibeonites recognised that they were doomed unless they threw in their lot with Israel. Apparently their careful investigation of the facts relating to Israel had been followed by seeking out what Yahweh required as expressed in His Law. They would learn with concern the explicit commands of the Law regarding the manner in which the Land should be conquered. See Exod. 23:31-33; Num. 33:51-56; Deut. 7:1-2,23,24; 20:15-17.

VERSE 25

"And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do" — The Gibeonites manifested admirable submissiveness to the requirements of Israel, confident that they would be governed by the mercy of Yahweh. Whose authority they recognised. They offered unconditional surrender of themselves.

VERSE 26

"And so did he unto them, and deliv-

ered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not" — Joshua recognised that the covenant based upon his oath was binding.

VERSE 27

"And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of Yahweh, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose" — Joshua delivered the Gibeonites out of death, but at the cost of serving Yahweh. They were not delivered over to private slavery, but were appointed a humble though important public service in connection with the Tabernacle, and later, the Temple. Several places were selected by Yahweh as centres for His worship, beginning at Shiloh and ending in Jerusalem. See Deut. 12:17-18; 16:2,6,16; Josh. 18:1; 2 Chron. 6:6; Psa. 78:67-69; 132:13-14. In Joshua's treatment of the Gibeonites there is foreshadowed the conversion of Gentiles to the Hope of Israel, and the offer of grace through the service of Jesus, the Joshua of the New Testament. Throughout Israel's history there were always Gentiles in the midst of the nation who had embraced its hope, anticipating the call to such during the present dispensation.

The lessons that a disciple of Christ can draw from this chapter are obvious. First, he needs to recognise that the flesh is cunning and deceitful; second, he should learn to consult with Yahweh in all the issues of life; third, he must realise that promises and vows are irrevocable; finally, he must always bear in mind that Yahweh is trustworthy, true and faithful. Whatever He promises He will perform.



The capital of the Gibeonite league north west of Jerusalem, in the territory of Benjamin. It was later appointed as a Levitical city.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL

The defection of the Gibeonites is viewed with concern by the rest of the nations of southern Palestine. It has given Joshua access to the central hill country of the Land, a strategic position of strength. To counter this, a confederacy of the south is formed to overthrow the Gibeonite cities, and take back the initiative from out of the hands of Joshua and the Israelites. Faced with the threat of war, the peace-loving Gibeonites send an urgent message for help to Joshua at Gilgal adjacent to Shechem. In fulfilment of his agreement, Joshua leads his forces throughout the night to the relief of Gibeon and her sister-cities. At the summit of the Pass of Bethhoron the two armies meet. Despite the tiredness of Joshua's forces, victory attends their arms. But time does not give sufficient opportunity to completely destroy the enemy, and in order to do this, Joshua prays for an extension of daylight to ensure complete victory. His prayer is granted; a unique day is given Joshua during which his forces complete the rout of the enemy. The victory of Bethhoron is followed by the conquest of the fortresses of the south. The Centre and southern sectors are now in the hands of Joshua. The battle of Beth-horon is considered one of the world's decisive battles. Joshua's success against the confederacy which attacks Gibeon lays open the whole land to Israel, ensuring the success of the complete campaign. On the basis of that success Israelis today claim the right to that land. In the victory thus won, "Yahweh brings the counsel of the heathen to nought" (Psa. 33:10). The remarkable manner in which this is done provides a foreshadowing of greater victories in the future under Christ, when again, the Sun and the Moon will jointly shine in the political heavens, to give sufficient light to decisively defeat the enemy. The chapter is divided into the following: 1. The Gibeonites appeal to Joshua for Aid — vv. 1-7; 2. Joshua's surprise dawn attack — vv. 8-11; 3. The day extended at Joshua's request — vv. 12-15; 4. Final defeat of the enemy — vv. 16-21; 5. Execution of the Canaanitish Kings — vv. 22-27; 6. Overthrow of Makkedah and Libnah — vv. 28-30; 7. Con-

quest of Lachish and the Fortresses of The South — vv. 31-39; 8. Summary of Joshua's victories in the south — vv. 40-43. Key thought of the chapter is "Yahweh delivered . . ." See vv. 8, 14, 25, 30, 32.

A Confederacy Formed To Attack Gibeon — vv. 1-3

The surrender of the Gibeonites gives the central highlands into the control of Joshua. This immediately imposes a threat to the south. To effectively meet the challenge Adoni-zedec of Jerusalem organises a coalition of powers to conquer Gibeon and its associate cities, with the aim of controlling the central highlands.

VERSE 1

"Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem" — Adoni-zedec signifies *Lord of Righteousness*. The name, or title can be aligned with Melchizedec, *King of Righteousness*. The original title was amended evidently because apostasy prevailed in the city that once was the City of Peace, and whose king was then "priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14:18). Jerusalem signifies *Foundation* or *Vision of Peace*. Originally it was called Salem (Gen. 14:18), and will be again given that name (Psa. 76:2) when the antitypical Melchizedec shall reign therein as King-priest (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:6; 7:17). This is the first mention of Jerusalem as such in the Bible. It is significant that this first occurrence of the name is associated with war. It illustrates the meaning of the name as *The Vision of Peace*.

"Had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king" — The unexpected fall of Jericho, followed by the defeat and destruction of Ai, had been reported to Adoni-zedec. It made obvious to him that the Israelites were intent upon conquering the whole country.

"And how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them" — The capitulation of Gibeon and its sister towns meant that Joshua controlled the central highlands. Gibeon is only about seven miles (11 kms) north of Jerusalem, so that now Adoni-zedec was directly in the line of attack. Something had to be done to prevent Joshua continuing his successful war. Strategically it was necessary to take Gib-

eon in order to contain the enemy. Occupation of these cities would provide a barrier protecting the south towards Jerusalem, or west down the Pass of Beth-horon towards the Valley of Ajalon, from whence other roads lead to Jerusalem and the south. At all costs, Joshua must be held at bay at Gibeon. This meant war with the Gibeonites. They were "among" Israel only in the sense of being now joined to them.

VERSE 2

"That they feared greatly" — See the promise of this in Exod. 15:14.

"Because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty" — In the Hebrew, the term "royal cities" is "*cities of the kingdom*". Gibeon was the head of the independent group of four cities in the central highlands. It was a place of importance; and not an insignificant town such as Ai. Its capitulation threatened the independence of the whole country. Though its men are described as "mighty", they were also wise enough to carefully assess the results of war with the Israelites who, obviously, were given Divine help. Therefore, they were not only skilful in war but also in wisdom.

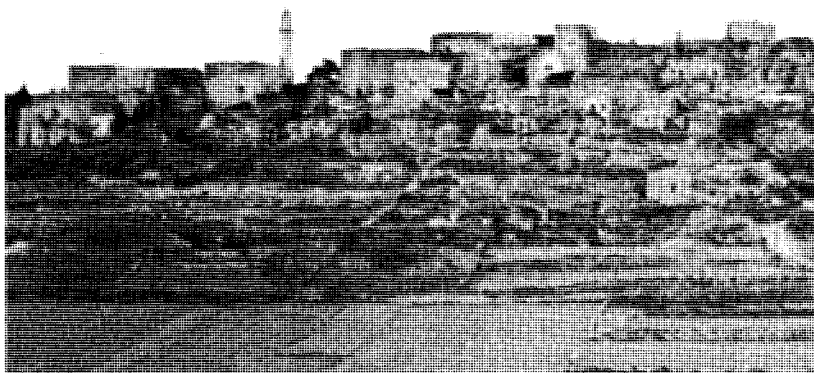
VERSE 3

"Wherefore Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron" — Hoham signifies *Dismay*, such as *alas, he is crushed!!* Hebron signifies *Union or Fellowship*, and is situated about 19m (32kms) south of Jerusalem.

"And unto Piram king of Jarmuth" — Piram signifies *swift*, as a wild ass. Jarmuth signifies a *Height*. It also was situated south of Jerusalem.

"And unto Japhia king of Lachish" — Japhia signifies *Gleaming* or *Beautiful*. Lachish signifies *Tenacious*. It was a powerful fortress about 16 miles (26kms) south-west of Jerusalem.

"And unto Debir king of Eglon" — Debir signifies *Oracle*, and Eglon, *Circle*. It was situated south of Lachish.



THE GIBEONITES

The city of Gibeon was in the territory of Benjamin (Josh. 18:25), and was given to the Aaronites (Josh. 21:27) which was convenient for the work appointed its inhabitants. Saul's ancestors dwelt in Gibeon (1 Chron. 8:29-33; 9:35-39); and Gibeonites were found in David's army (1 Chron. 12:4).

The Gibeonites seemed to have provided faithful service in the duties appointed them. After the Exile, a number returned under Zerubbabel and later in the time of Nehemiah, helped repair the wall of Jerusalem (Neh. 3:7; 7:25). The work appointed them implies that they had been granted the office of the *Nethinim* (signifying *Devoted* — 1 Chron. 9:2; Ezra 2:43-54, 58, 70; 8:20), a title given to "those whom David appointed for the service of the Levites" (Ezra 8:20). The term *Nethinim* is derived from *nathan* "appointed" or "given" as used for the Gibeonites in v. 26. They are also described as "the servants of Solomon" (Ezra 2:55-58), and are referred to 17 times in Ezra and Nehemiah. Therefore it would appear that they were descendants of the Canaanites whom he used in the building of the Temple, for their labour was similar to that appointed the Gibeonites (2 Chron. 2:17-18). Some lived on Ophel, a southern extension of the Temple hill close to the water gate (Neh. 3:26, 31; 11:3, 21); others in villages by Jerusalem (Ezra 7:7; Neh. 7:73). Holding an official, though menial, position at the Temple, they were exempt from imperial taxation (Ezra 7:24). They adopted with enthusiasm the covenant of Nehemiah to worship Yahweh (Neh. 10:28-29). From this it would appear that the Gibeonites continued as a group of converted Gentiles in the midst of Israel throughout its history, participating in the return under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, assisting in the restoration of the Temple, and the re-establishment of its worship. As such they type Gentiles who embrace the hope of Israel in Christ. They evidently redeemed the mistakes they made when their forefathers first approached Joshua.

“Saying” — The invitation was sent to all these cities to the south of Jerusalem to join in a concerted attack upon the Gibeonites.

VERSE 4

“Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel” — The kings were invited to converge at Jerusalem to join forces in an attack upon the cities of the Gibeonites. However, the words spoken by Isaiah in regard to the latter-day confederacy of nations also applied to this confederacy: “Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us” (because of *Immanuel* — Isa. 8:10), the latter day Joshua.

VERSE 5

“Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it” — It was this threat from the south, as well as fear of Joshua’s forces that had caused the wily Gibeonites to seek the help of Joshua (See Ch. 9:1-2). It would have taken time for Adoni-zedec to send his emissaries forth, and for the armies to be marshalled together. This delay gave the Gibeonites opportunity to make their appeal to Joshua.

Appeal to Joshua For Help — vv. 6-7

Recognising their peril, the Gibeonites seek help of Joshua. Lacking confidence in their own ability to resist Adoni-zedec’s attack, they urge Joshua to move quickly to their aid.

VERSE 6

“And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants” — This Gilgal was the one close to Shechem, and had been set up as the headquarters of the Israelites (see note Ch. 9:6). The Gibeonites recognised their case as being urgent, and appealed to Joshua to move quickly.

“Come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us” — The

Gibeonites unashamedly confessed their need for help. They were isolated from their previous allies, but had sufficient faith to place their confidence in Yahweh through Joshua as being of greater power than “all the kings of the Amorites that dwelt in the mountains”.

VERSE 7

“So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour” — Instantly Joshua responded in fulfilment of his vow. His army was divided into two sections: “all the men of war” and “the mighty men of valour”. The latter were picked troops, a special contingent of veterans. From Gilgal in the north by Shechem, he moved “up to Gibeon”, for Gibeon is higher than Shechem and the area thereabouts.

Joshua’s Unexpected Dawn Attack**— vv. 8-11**

Given assurance that success will attend his arms, Joshua marshals his forces and during the evening marches them to Gibeon, a distance of about 25 miles. They appear suddenly and unexpectedly before their enemies.

VERSE 8

“And Yahweh said unto Joshua, Fear them not; for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee” — Before engaging in battle, Israelitish commanders were ordered to seek the Divine blessing upon the venture (see Deut. 20:1-9 for the ceremony that must precede the attack). For this purpose, Joshua would have drawn his ranks together; the High Priest would have approached with Urim and Thummim, prayer would have been made for Divine help, and in this instance an answer of assurance was given: the attack will be successful.

VERSE 9

“Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly” — By a forced march, Joshua’s warriors covered the 25 miles, and appeared suddenly and unexpectedly before Gibeon, to find the enemy in battle array prepared to attack.

“And went up from Gilgal all night” — The elevation of Gibeon is higher than that of Shechem, adding to the tiring conditions of the march.

VERSE 10

“And Yahweh discomforted them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon” — In the initial attack success attended the arms of Joshua. The kings of the south were surprised by the suddenness of his appearance and attack, and were at a disadvantage inasmuch as they had taken their stand by the Pass of Beth-horon to the west of the city. Therefore, in the early dawn, they had the rising sun in their eyes which provided a further advantage to Joshua’s forces. In addition, there was by now a general fear of the Israelites which weakened the resolve of the Canaanites. In the initial Israelitish attack the enemy suffered greatly and began to retreat in panic.

“And chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon” — The “way”, or Pass of Beth-horon is about 5 miles long. It “goeth up” from the west leading to the summit of Gibeon. It is a long, rocky ascent sinking and rising more than once, and at its summit, by Gibeon, commanding a wide view over the valley of Ajalon which runs east from the Plain of Sharon on the western coastline of the land. The panic-stricken forces of the southern confederacy fled down this long and rocky descent with the Israelites in hot pursuit after them. However, Joshua’s troops, having marched all night, and having engaged in a pitched battle at dawn, now began to tire.

Beth-horon signifies *House of Hollowness* evidently referring to the Pass that sinks and rises again. There were two towns of the same name (Josh. 16:3,5) a little under two miles apart, but some 600 ft difference in altitude. There is a steep descent which then rises, and a second descent down a terraced slope strewn with boulders, loose stones, and sheets of smooth rock, making a treacherous and dangerous descent for panic-stricken, fleeing men.

“And smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah” — Azekah signifies *A field newly dug and fenced, set out with vines*. It was the site of a powerful fortress overshadowing the Valley of Elah where later, David was to battle with Goliath. It is situated about 15 miles from Beth-horon, a few miles south-west of Jerusalem, indicating the distance to which the fugitives had fled being driven out of their way (see 1 Sam. 17:1). Makkedah signifies the *Place of Shepherds*. Its site has not been

established with certainty, though George Smith identifies the place with el-Mughar, *The Caves* to the southwest of Ekron.

VERSE 11

“And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon” — The “going down” to Beth-horon is the steep slope that descends before ascending again and finally moving down into the valley of Ajalon. It is not only steep, but exceedingly stony with great boulders projecting from the hill-sides. An army in flight would find such a descent most difficult to negotiate.

“That Yahweh cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died” — As they fled down the steep decline of Beth-horon, and endeavoured to escape the Israelites, who would have been tired by a forced march, Yahweh intervened with a storm of hailstones of such magnitude as to destroy numbers of fleeing troops. The hailstorm beat upon the Canaanites, but not the Israelites. It preceded the latter like the covering barrage of explosives from cannons under the shelter of which infantry advance. Whilst it delayed the rapid advance of the Israelites, it devastated and destroyed many of the enemy. This filled the Canaanites with dismay and fear whilst encouraging the Israelites who recognised that Yahweh was with them in the battle. Azekah is a distance of about 15 miles (24kms). As the frightening, death-dealing hail held the Canaanites back, the advancing Israelites continued their attack.

“They were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword” — Yahweh will also intervene with storm and hail at Armageddon (Ezek. 38:22). Symbolically, the hail of Rev. 16:21, in size of a talent, and by which Babylon the Great will be destroyed, represents the immortalised saints (see notes on Exodus in *Christadelphian Expositor*). By the spirit of God, they will devastate the assembled hosts at Jerusalem under Joshua, at Beth-horon the Israelites, following the storm of hail, completed the defeat of the enemy, foreshadowing events yet to take place at Jerusalem. After the initial blow is struck by the saints at Armageddon, “Judah also will fight at Jerusalem” (Zech. 14:14), and the rout of the enemy will be complete.

Joshua's Command To The Sun and Moon — vv. 12-14

Time is needed to complete the victory. An extension of light is required. The devastating storm of hail, descending at the time of the year when such storms are not usual, and therefore obviously evidence of Divine intervention, emboldens Joshua to seek a miracle of such proportion as to exceed anything previously experienced. He orders the sun to remain steady upon Gibeon in the east, and the moon to remain poised over the Valley of Ajalon in the west. This extension of light will give opportunity to complete the victory already won. The command is obeyed, and the wondering Israelites experience an amazing extension of "daylight saving" unknown to history, although, typing that which will one day be figuratively repeated (Hab. 3:11). No miracle of the Bible has been ridiculed as much as this one. Some who are prepared to accept the veracity of greater miracles, such as the conception and resurrection of the Lord, try to rationalise the sun standing still. There is no need to do so, nor is there need to explain it in terms according to what astronomy has discovered or claims. Some have pointed out that it is the earth that moves, and not the sun. But the terms employed to record the miracle agree with the accustomed manner of describing the motions of the earth in relation to the sun. In this scientific age we still speak of the sun rising and setting. Many vain enquiries have been made concerning the way the miracle of Joshua was wrought, and many difficulties and objections have been urged against it. But the FACT is authenticated by the Divine record; the TYPE is beyond all doubt because subsequent Scriptures use it to describe the future; and the MANNER in which it was accomplished lies entirely out of our province, and beyond our comprehension. But so are many other miracles in the Word. Accept one, and we are compelled to agree with all. One of the greatest miracles is the preservation and revival of Israel. That political development, provide a "witness" that is also beyond comprehension when all the facts are brought into view (Jer. 30:11).

VERSE 12

"Then spake Joshua to Yahweh in the day when Yahweh delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel" — The preposition *le*, here rendered "to", is also frequently rendered "of" as in "a Psalm of David". Sometimes it is rendered

because of, having the sense of "on account of" (Gen. 4:23; Josh. 9:9). Using the same meaning in the verse before us, the statement can be rendered that Joshua spake of or by Yahweh that is, he was moved by Divine inspiration to pray as he did. He recognised the hand of Yahweh in the occurrences and was moved to make this further request. Or, if the preposition is understood as "because of" it likewise indicates that Joshua was moved to make this request because of the obvious intervention of God in the storm already described.

"And he said in the sight of Israel" —

The scene was dramatic. The Israelites were on the heights of Beth-horon, and could see the Canaanites fleeing below, vainly trying to protect themselves from the prodigious hailstones that rained down upon their heads and bodies. The Israelites could see the storm in all its fury moving westward towards the sea, driving the enemy before it, panic-stricken and in wild confusion. They observed the sun bursting forth behind the storm-clouds that drifted westwards. And whilst they contemplated the scene before them and recognised the heavenly army fighting on their behalf, Joshua stood before them and uttered his commanding decree.

"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon" —

Joshua's decree demonstrated that Yahweh in whose name the command was given, is greater than the sun and moon which were worshipped by many Canaanites. This miracle therefore, like those in Egypt, constituted a form of judgment against the local gods (Exod. 12:12), and illustrated that Yahweh controlled all creation. There was a similar miracle performed in the days of Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:11). Joshua used the expression *damam*, or "be dumb". It denotes one who is immobilised through amazement (Exod. 15:16; Lam. 2:10). Joshua did not ask that the course of the sun be arrested, but that it did not set; that its light should continue to shine. See v. 13.

"And thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon" — The Valley of Ajalon stretches westward of Gibeon. It signifies *Place of Gazelles*. The extension of daylight for which Joshua pleaded would enable the Israelites to complete the victory over their enemies.

VERSE 13

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged

themselves upon their enemies” — The sun continued to shed its light upon Gibeon. The terms employed to record this miracle agree with the accustomed manner of describing the motions of the sun and earth. Many vain enquiries have been made concerning the way this miracle was wrought, and many difficulties and objections have been urged against it. But the *fact* is authenticated by the Divine record, and the *manner* in which it was accomplished lies entirely out of our province, because it is beyond our comprehension. He Who created nature can certainly re-adjust or modify its laws*.

“Is not this written in the book of Jasher?” — The Book of Jasher signifies the *Book of the Upright*. See 2 Sam. 1:18. This, perhaps, is identical with *The Book of the Wars of Yahweh* (Num. 21:14). This was probably a book recording notable incidents, directions and Divine interventions of benefit to the work of Joshua. See Exod. 17:14-16. The statement before us endorsed and authenticated the record made of this significant and unique incident.

“So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day” — Here the word used is *amad*, “to stand still”. The midst of heaven suggests midday. The word “whole” is from the Hebrew *tamiym* signifying perfect or complete, to the fullest limits, and evidently relates to the time covered by day and night, which constituted a complete day in Genesis 1.

VERSE 14

“And there was no day like that before it or after it, that Yahweh hearkened unto the voice of a man” — There was no day like that before the time of Hezekiah, when a similar miracle was performed (2 Kings 20:11; Isa. 38:8). It foreshadowed the future Day of Yahweh, when, again, figuratively, the Sun and the Moon will be seen in conjunction in the heavens (Isa. 30:25-26; Hab. 3:11). That antitypical Sun and Moon, however, will be political and

ecclesiastical, and shall shine continuously throughout the Millennial Day of Yahweh for one thousand years (2 Pet. 3:8). During that period of time the antitypical Joshua (the Lord Jesus Christ) will restrain and control the urge of sin, keeping mankind in subjection to his will (Rev. 20:3), until finally “the last enemy shall be destroyed, even death” (1 Cor. 15:26). Concerning that period of time, Isaiah the contemporary of Hezekiah declared: “The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Yahweh bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound” (Isa. 30:26). He describes a day during which the sun and moon jointly shine out of the heavens with such intensity of light as would utterly destroy Creation if it were done literally. The Sun, however, represents the Government, and the Moon, the Ecclesiastical order. There will be a complete shining forth of Divine authority and glory in the government of the future, whilst the Moon, the Ecclesiastical system, the form of worship supervised by the saints in that day, will shine forth with light as the sun. The Lord declared: “The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43), an expression based upon the prophecy of Isaiah. Habakkuk, likewise, predicting the conquests of Christ and the saints, and their establishment in the political heavens of the future, declared in language similar to that of Joshua, “The sun and the moon stood still in their habitations” (Hab. 3:11). So whilst there has been no literal day like that described in the verses before us, there will be a typical “day” when figuratively, the same miracle will be witnessed though on a greater scale.

“For Yahweh fought for Israel” — These words are cited in the prophets and applied to Christ’s work of the future. Isaiah predicted: “For Yahweh shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to

* It is alleged that in May 1970, the USA Space Programming team ran a computerised count back through history, and found one day missing in space orbital time. The Computer nominated 23 hours 20 minutes as missing in the times of Joshua (note ‘about’ in v. 13). They found the other 40 minutes in 2 Kings 20:8-10 (10 degrees is said to equal 40 minutes). Even earlier, Prof. Totten (USA) and E.W. Moulder (Royal Observatory, Greenwich, had noticed the same phenomenon of a missing day in World History, and had found the same conclusion. Scientists have speculated v. 11 to be possibly a Meteorite shower, which slowed down the sun’s action on the earth, causing it to “stand”, as in v. 12 — E.B.W.

pass His act, His strange act" (Isa. 28:21). His work is to subject all nations to His rule (Psa. 110:2).

Speaking of the time, when the Lord with his immortalised saints will be manifested in belligerent might, Zechariah declares: "Then shall Yahweh go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zech. 14:3). The victory of Joshua, therefore, is a type of a greater battle and victory of the future. Psalm 44, referring to this amazing victory of the past (vv. 1-3), declares: "Through Thee will we push down our enemies; through Thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us" (v. 5). In the judgment of Armageddon, Christ will first destroy the confederacy of nations at Jerusalem, and then launch an attack into the territory of the north. This was foreshadowed in the victory of Joshua.

VERSE 15

"And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal" — Joshua did not return to Gilgal until the end of the campaign (see v. 43). Most likely this verse was portion of the citation from *The Book of Jasher*. Details of the final overthrow of the southern confederacy continue (vv. 16-43).

Destruction of the

Canaanitish Confederacy — vv. 16-21

With full confidence the five kings of the confederacy had assembled a large army to launch their attack on the Gibeonites. However, before the end of the day they are completely humbled, their armies dispersed, and are discovered crouching in fear of their lives in a cave. Joshua closes up the cave and orders that the pursuit of the armies continue. The victory won is complete; and deep concern sweeps the rest of the Canaanites as the army of Israel reassembles at Makkedah.

VERSE 16

"But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah" — Makkedah signifies *A Place of Shepherds*. The kings shelter in the cave doubtless normally used by shepherds. Isaiah prophesies that the victory of the latter-day Joshua will cause many to flee the cities, and seek refuge in the caves of the earth in fear and dread (Isa. 2:19-22; 24:21-22). "They shall be afraid of Yahweh our Elohim, and shall fear

because of Thee," declares Micah (Ch. 7:17). In agreement to the type and antitype is the fact that following the victory of Armageddon, the remnants of those forces that remain will regroup under the auspices of the false shepherd of Shinar (Zech. 11:15-17) only to be destroyed (Rev. 17:13-14).

VERSE 17

"And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah" — The Hebrew has the definite article here: *the* cave, indicating that it was a cave of outstanding importance. It may have been fortified in some manner, so that the capture of the kings would have delayed the army in taking them.

VERSE 18

"And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them" — Joshua sealed the cave, and set a guard over it. Perhaps, Joshua felt that if the army saw that the kings were in their power they would have relaxed their efforts in pursuing the remnants of the enemy.

VERSE 19

"And stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for Yahweh your God hath delivered them into your hand" — It was urgent that the Israelites destroy the remnants of the enemy's army before they obtained refuge in their fortified cities. Though Yahweh fought for Israel, every soldier had to fully grasp the opportunity presented. Yahweh will make it possible for us to gain the victory in life, but personal application and energy are necessary (1 John 5:4).

VERSE 20

"And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities" — In spite of every effort to complete the victory some escaped, like sin in the flesh in the personal battle of life. Those who did so later renewed their resistance of Israel, and in some cases with considerable success. They regained the fenced or fortified cities.

VERSE 21

"And all the people returned to the

camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace" — Joshua evidently had set up temporary headquarters at Makkedah. See v. 18.

"None moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel" — The Hebrew word used here, *charat*, signifies *to do so sharply*. Great fear fell on all the surrounding country, similar to that experienced in Egypt when the Israelites left that country. See Exod. 11:7.

Execution Of The Kings — vv. 22-27

The five kings are taken from their hiding place and publicly executed. In the type they represent the seed of the serpent to be crushed under the heel of the seed of the woman. They are slain and their bodies hanged on trees as an execration.

VERSE 22

"Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave" — The incident that now takes place foreshadows the conquest of King Sin (Rom. 5:21).

VERSE 23

"And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon" — See v. 3.

VERSE 24

"And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them" — This ceremony took place before the general army of Israel. The chief captains were called forth to place their feet upon the necks of the doomed kings as a symbolic act of victory. Those kings represented the seed of the serpent, sin in the flesh, and upon that power a warrior has placed his feet as an act of victory and triumph. See Psa. 18:40; 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25. It typically fulfilled Gen. 3:15 (See Rom. 16:20), and the victory to be celebrated by the saints in the age to come (Rom. 16:20; Mal. 4:3; Rev. 2:26). As the execution of those kings was performed publicly so Christ's victory over sin was openly placarded before all mankind (Gal. 3:1).

VERSE 25

"And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage; for thus shall Yahweh do to all your enemies against whom ye fight" — Evidently the captains were awe-struck as they saw their enemies prostrate before them, and recalled the stupendous events of that most remarkable of days: a natural reaction from the exciting and unusual incidents: clearly indicating the divine presence. Joshua encouraged them with a similar exhortation as had previously been given him (Deut. 31:7-8; Josh. 1:7,9). Note the spiritual application of the exhortation to the present fight of faith (Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:17; Eph. 6:10).

VERSE 26

"And afterwards Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening" — See note at Josh. 8:29. The dead bodies of the kings were left hanging all day as a witness to the fate of unredeemed flesh, through the curse that rests upon it. See Num. 25:4; Deut. 21:22-23; 2 Sam. 21:6,9; Esther 7:9-10; Matt. 27:5; Gal. 3:13. The crucifixion he suffered brought the Lord under the curse by the Law (Gal. 3:13); a curse, however, resting not on his character or personality, but upon the nature he possessed: a nature that is mortal because of sin.

VERSE 27

"And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day" — This fulfilled the requirements of the Law (Deut. 21:23; Josh. 8:29). The curse continues to rest heavily upon the flesh "until this very day", and will continue to do so until "the time of the going down of the sun" that commences a new day. That new day prefigures the Millennial future when the curse will not rest so heavily upon flesh, in that life will be greatly extended (Isa. 65:20).

Other Victories In The South — vv. 28-43

Joshua takes the initiative, and storms the fortresses of the kings, and other centres of Canaanitish power adjacent thereto. Makkedah, Libnah, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir are brought under Joshua's control.

VERSE 28

“And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho” — Makkedah, the site of the execution of the five kings, was probably as far as the army went that night in its further conquests. The forced march during the previous evening, the fighting and pursuing during the course of the unnaturally longer day; the vigorous pursuit of the enemy; doubtless tired the Israelites. Nevertheless, they could well be satisfied with the results of that dramatic day.

VERSE 29

“Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah” — Libnah signifies *Whiteness*. It was situated between Makkedah and Lachish. Without waiting for the Canaanites of southern Palestine to recover, Joshua took the initiative and pressed home his advantage by attacking cities which were not in the confederacy; thus reducing the whole of the south to his control.

VERSE 30

“And Yahweh delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho” — Joshua utterly destroyed the power of this King.

VERSE 31

“And Joshua passed from Libnah” — No time is indicated. Though Makkedah had fallen to Joshua “that day” (v. 28), some weeks would have been occupied in the conquests listed in this chapter.

“And all Israel with him, unto Lachish” — Lachish was an extremely strong fortress about 16 miles (26kms) south west of Jerusalem. Archaeological research has established that it was overthrown about the time of Joshua. Lachish governed the pass through the highlands of Judah leading to Jerusalem. It was a key fortress of the country.

“And encamped against it, and fought against it” — The massive walls and strong fortifications of this fortress have been

uncovered by archaeologists. A fortress of such magnitude would require a siege, such as is implied in this verse.

VERSE 32

“And Yahweh delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day” — This implies that the other cities fell on the day of attack. Lachish was one of the strongest fortresses of the land, and its conquest took an additional day!

“And smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah” — The depravity of the Canaanites was such that only extermination could save the Israelites from moral and doctrinal pollution.

VERSE 33

“Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish” — Gezer was an extremely strong fortress city north west of Lachish. Archaeologists have unearthed its ruins and found evidence of massive fortifications, with walls some 14 feet thick; a large tunnel which ran back under the city 94 feet below the rock surface to a spring; and a reservoir capable of holding 2,000,000 gallons of water. Confident in his strength, Horam the king of Gezer advanced with an army to the help of Lachish. His name signifies *Elevation*, suggesting his arrogance and pride; and Gezer signifies *A place cut off*. The unwise intervention of Horam only showed how true was the name of his city!

“And Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining” — This statement relates to the army of Horam, not to the inhabitants of his city. For some reason, Joshua did not occupy the city at that time, leaving it to the Israelites to do so (Josh. 6:10). Though a powerful fortress, with its army destroyed, the Israelites could have taken it.

VERSE 34

“And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it” — The king of Eglon, unlike the king of Gezer, was one of the five of the southern confederacy (v. 3). Whilst he languished in the sealed-off cave at Makkedah, Joshua marched against his city, about 2 miles east of Lachish, and had no difficulty in overthrowing it. The name of the city signifies *Calflike*. It became a sacrifice under the hand of Joshua.

VERSE 35

“And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done in Lachish” — Ruthlessly the inhabitants were put to death; to do otherwise would have been to leave that which could develop into a spiritual menace to Israel.

VERSE 36

“And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it” — Hebron (Union or Fellowship) is in the high country to the south east of Eglon, and so Joshua's advance is described as the “going up” to Hebron. Hebron is about 15 miles east of Lachish and about 20 miles south of Jerusalem. Its king who formed part of the confederacy (v. 3), meanwhile languished in the cave at Makkedah.

VERSE 37

“And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof” — Evidently the Hebronites had hastily re-elected a king on the capture of the former one (v. 23).

“And all the cities thereof, and all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that were therein” — Other versions give the word *cities* in the singular. The NIV reads: “They took the city and put it to the sword”.

VERSE 38

“And Joshua returned” — The verb is better rendered “turned”. Debir was not on the way back, but was some miles south of Hebron.

“And all Israel with him, to Debir, and fought against it” — Debir signifies *Oracle*. It was later named Kirjath Sepher or *Book Town* (Josh. 15:15; Jud. 1:11), Kirjath Sannah or *Precept Town* (Josh. 15:49). It was later assigned to the priests (Josh. 21:13). Archaeology has established that the city was sacked, a lower strata of the city revealing Canaanitish civilisation, and a higher one, Israelitish occupation.

VERSE 39

“And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote

them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king” — There was a thorough extermination of the Canaanites by Joshua. His labours foreshadowed those of the Lord Jesus, who obtained the victory over king Sin and his subjects. See Heb. 2:14; Rom. 6:12-13.

Summary of Joshua's Campaign In The South — vv. 40-43

This summary provides an outline of all the area in the south taken by Joshua at that time. The other areas, not mentioned, were not so completely destroyed. These included the Anakim in Gaza (Josh. 11:22; 13:2-3), the Jebusites of Jerusalem (Josh. 15:63), as well as “the rest which remained” (Josh. 10:20). This explains why Joshua warned the people against the remaining remnant (Josh. 23:12).

VERSE 40

“So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as Yahweh God of Israel commanded” — In his war of extermination, Joshua fulfilled the commandment of Yahweh, cited in Deut. 20:16-17. Therefore, the sword of Joshua was an act of Divine judgment. Yahweh's description of the Canaanites was that “the land is defiled . . . it vomiteth out her inhabitants” (Lev. 18:25; cf. 6-24). “Because of these abominations Yahweh thy God doth drive them out from before thee” (Deut. 18:12). “For the wickedness of these nations Yahweh thy God doth drive them out from before thee, that He may perform the word which Yahweh sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Deut. 9:5). Evil Canaanitish practices, too vile to be mentioned, formed part of their normal religious and social life. The occupants of the land made themselves odious before God.

Mercy had been long extended. The Canaanites had known of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; had heard of the destruction of Sihon and Og, but had not repented. They knew that judgment was about to fall upon them (Josh. 9:24), but only Rahab and the Gibeonites had sought mercy; the others had schemed against God and Joshua (9:1-2; 10:1).

It was impossible that a nation called to

holiness could exist side by side with such a vile people. To exterminate them was an act of love on God's part, a means of preservation. It demonstrated that Yahweh is Lord of all the earth; it showed quite clearly what he requires from His people; it gave protection to the nation from which and through which, other nations might be brought unto God (Deut. 10:12-15; 28:9-10).

VERSE 41

“And Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza” — Gaza is on the Mediterranean. The name signifies *Strong*. Some Anakim still remained in Gaza (Josh. 11:22; 13:2-3).

“And all the country of Goshen” — Goshen signifies *Approaching*. This district is not the one mentioned in Egypt, of course, but a town found in Judah (see Josh. 11:16; 15:51). It probably was so named because it resembled the land in Egypt.

“Even unto Gibeon” — This is where the campaign in the south commenced.

VERSE 42

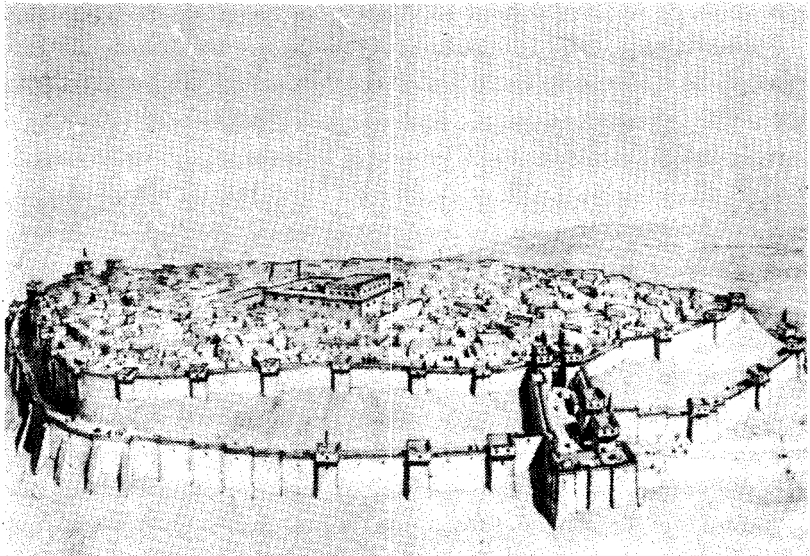
“And all these kings and their land did

Joshua take at one time” — That is, in one campaign.

“Because Yahweh God of Israel fought for Israel” — Yahweh Elohim of Israel is the name of God as manifested through the Angels or Elohim. Victory was obtained through their aid, as it can be even today (Matt. 18:10). The angels are the hidden allies of life whose aid in overcoming can be most effective. Evidence of their miraculous help had been evident in the conquest of the south, revealing that Yahweh fought for Israel. He will do so also through the angels of His power at Armageddon (Zech. 14:3). His glorious and mighty power will be revealed through Yahweh Elohim of Israel: the saints then made “equal unto the angels” and constituted “the angels of his power” (Luke 20:36; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

VERSE 43

“And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal” — The expression “all Israel” implies that there were no casualties in Israel in the fighting (See Lev. 26:8; Deut. 32:30).



Horam, king of Gezer came to help the inhabitants of Lachish but to no avail for Joshua's southern campaign conquered this Canaanitish stronghold — (Josh. 10:31-33).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGN

In the north, the most powerful monarch of all remained unconquered. Jabin king of Hazor. Undeterred by the success of Joshua in the highlands of central Palestine and in the south, he gathers the greatest army of all. From the maritime plain of Philistia, from the heights above Sharon, and from those areas further south that still remain unconquered, the cohorts are assembled to Jabin. It is the greatest army assembled to do battle with the invaders, and from a fleshly point of view they have every advantage. They are numerous, united, well trained, well armed, and desperate. But Joshua proves more than a match for them. By a forced march he suddenly appears at the scene of conflict, and the destruction of the enemy is as decisive as the southern campaign. Victory brings peace to the land for Israel, enabling the tribes to consolidate their possessions. The chapter is divisible into the following sub-headings: Jabin Masses his Forces — vv. 1-5; Joshua's Surprise Attack — vv. 6-9; The Northern Cities Conquered — vv. 10-14; The Country Subdued — vv. 15-20; The Anakim Destroyed — vv. 21-23.

Jabin Masses His Forces — vv. 1-5

The forces massed at Merom by Jabin comprise the final organised effort of resistance on the part of a desperate and defeated people. Alarmed and roused by the disasters of the south, and the rapid progress of Joshua throughout Canaan, Jabin, the most powerful of Canaanitish kings (v. 10) marshals all his forces, chariots as well as infantry, and calls upon all available allies to repel the invader. The combined forces assemble at the waters of Merom.

VERSE 1

“And it came to pass” — News of Joshua's victories reached the ears of Jabin in the north. The continued successes of the Israelites deeply perturbed him. The forms of warfare engaged in by Joshua were to reach a climax. Jericho had been unresisting; Ai had been a sortie; Gibeon had capitulated; the confederacy of the south had planned an organised attack in vain. Now the powerful and

aggressive Jabin was determined to bring the latest weapons into the fray.

“When Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things” — Jabin's name signifies the *Wise*. It seems to have been a title used by the kings of Hazor, for in the days of Barak and Deborah, the king of Hazor had the same name or title (Jud. 4:2). As was the case with the King who ruled in the days of the Judges, Jabin of the *Book of Joshua* exercised lordship over other Canaanitish chieftains (Josh. 11:10). Hazor, the site of the royal residence, was a most powerful fortress, in a strategic portion of the land. Archaeological excavations reveal it to be extremely strong, and well supplied with the means to resist a siege. It is the largest of such sites in Israel today, exceeding Megiddo in its dimensions. It is situated in a plain that extends from the Huleh in the north, and which is admirable for chariot warfare. The Huleh area is overshadowed by the very steep mountains of Naphtali that rise precipitously from the plain. Hazor was

CHAPTER ELEVEN

powerfully fortified, and more easily defended than was Lachish in the south, particularly in view of the chariots that Jabin commanded. The fortress city is situated about 2 miles south-west of the Huleh.

“That he sent to Jobab king of Madon” — Jobab signifies *Trumpet call*, and his city signifies *Contention*. The names of both the king and his city are therefore appropriate to the circumstances, for the trumpet call for war and contention was sounded by Jabin. Madon is about 5 miles west of Tiberius, and about 15 miles from Hazor.

“And to the king of Shimron” — Shimron signifies *A Guard*. The site of the city is currently unknown.

“And to the king of Achshaph” — This name signifies *Bewitched*. It is situated about 25 miles west of Hazor, and about 7 miles from the coast.

VERSE 2

“And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains” — This is rendered in the NIV as “the northern kings in the mountains”.

“And of the plains south of Chinneroth” — The word “plains” is from the Hebrew *Arabah*, and denotes the deep depression south of the Sea of Galilee, here called *Chinneroth*. The name signifies *lute* or *harp*, and the Sea is so named because of its shape.

“And in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west” — Dor signifies *Habitation*. It was situated on the coast (which *west* signifies in the Hebrew), about 20 miles south of Haifa.

VERSE 3

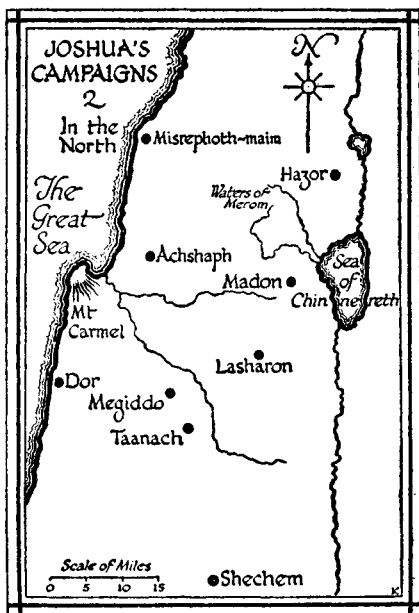
“And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh” — A general summons was issued to the nations over whom Jabin was lord in the northern parts of the land. The purpose was to combine their forces and plan a campaign designed to eject the Israelites. The word Mizpeh signifies *Watchtower*. It was not the site given that name by Jacob and Laban (Gen. 31:48-49), but probably described a *watchtower* standing guard over a valley at the foot of Hermon (see v. 8). The Jebusites, though located close to

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

Jerusalem (Josh. 15:63), were also scattered throughout the land. For an explanation of the titles given to the nations here mentioned, see notes on Deut. 3:9; 7:1.

VERSE 4

“And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many” — Dominated by fear of the Israelites, the Canaanites readily agreed to Jabin’s plans, and sent their armies to confederate under his control. The general summons issued by Jabin brought a vast stream of recruits from all parts of the land to the assembly point at Hazor in the north. It represented the greatest accumulation of manpower and weaponry Joshua had yet faced. Moreover, for the first time the Israelites had to contend with chariots. Josephus declares that the allied forces comprised 300,000 foot, 109,000 cavalry and 20,000 chariots. It is claimed that the chariots were made of iron armed with sharpened scythes fastened to the wheels.



Joshua's Campaigns in the north.

Reviewing the troops under his command, Jabin naturally believed that with such formidable forces he was sufficiently equipped to successfully oppose Israel in battle.

VERSE 5

“And when all these kings were met together” — The word actually signifies assembled by appointment.

“They came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel” — Merom signifies *High Places*. It is usually identified with the upper reaches of the Jordan, that is, the Huleh. This lake was about 5 miles in extent but today it no longer exists, having been drained into the Jordan. The countryside bordering it is flat territory ideal for chariot warfare, affording the greatest advantage to Jabin’s cavalry and chariots. However, some have identified the “waters of Merom” with a small pool close to the village of Merom in the mountain of that name. This location, however, seems improbable, as the terrain is completely unsuited for chariot warfare, and Jabin would have lost the advantage he had been at such pains to build up by drawing his forces there. The plain of the Huleh, close to Hazor, was admirable for his purpose.

Angelic Encouragement for Joshua

— v. 6.

Such a formidable force might well give concern to the most courageous of warriors. Particularly as Israel has not as yet fought a pitched battle against chariots and cavalry. However Divine assurance is sufficient to fortify faith, and this Joshua receives through the Captain of Yahweh’s host.

VERSE 6

“And Yahweh said unto Joshua” — Yahweh’s message was doubtless conveyed to Joshua through the angel of His presence (Isa. 63:9), the “Captain of Yahweh’s host” (Josh. 5:14).

“Be not afraid because of them” — Such reassurance may have been in response to a national prayer such as Israel was called upon to offer in time of war. See Deut. 20:1-9 for the pre-battle ceremony of faith to be conducted at such times according to the Law.

“For tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel” — Joshua went into battle with an assurance

of victory from Yahweh that the disgrace of Ai would not be repeated.

“Thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire” — In ancient times the horse was exclusively used for war in which it delighted. Figuratively it represented fleshly strength, pride, ferocity and fearlessness (Job 39:19-25), and was identified with Egypt, the land of sin and death (Deut. 17:16). It was also identified with some forms of pagan worship (2 Kings 23:11). In the animal world, the high-stepping, proud and attractive horse contrasts with the humble self-effacing ass or donkey with which Israel is so frequently associated. The Law prohibited kings accumulating horses (Deut. 17:16), and now Joshua is commanded to maim or destroy them. On the other hand, the firstling of the ass could be redeemed by the sacrifice of a lamb instead of being put to death as was required of other firstling animals (Exod. 13:12). Accordingly, Joshua is commanded to “hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire”. Later, David followed these instructions (2 Sam. 8:4; 1 Chron. 18:4), and the antitypical Joshua figuratively will do likewise (Zech. 10:5).

But what, in fact, did Joshua do? To “hough” is to hamstring a horse, and so cripple it rendering it useless for war. The word in the Hebrew is *akar* from a root signifying to *wound, cut or lop off*. This could relate to mutilation, so maiming the horses, or it could denote “cutting down” or destroying them. The word is rendered “dugged down” in Gen. 49:6, and there relates to the destruction of a wall. Some render this as “cut down an ox” signifying to *kill* it, for the Hebrew consonants for “wall” (*shuwr*) and “ox” (*showr*) are identical. It is possible that Joshua destroyed the horses, teaching Israel not to rely upon the flesh in contending with the enemy. The burning of chariots anticipated the destruction of Gentile weapons of war to take place at Christ’s coming (Psa. 46:8-10; Ezek. 39:9).

Joshua’s Surprise Attack — vv. 7-8

Though Divinely assured of success, Joshua realises that he cannot presume upon Yahweh’s goodness, and therefore must make his own contribution to victory. Gilgal near Shechem is some 60 miles from Hazor, and recognising the value of a surprise attack, Joshua leads his army in a forced march to a place that overlooks the plain where Jabin’s troops have gathered.

Then, suddenly and unexpectedly he attacks them with outstanding success. The Canaanites' fear of Joshua is justified by events, and the overwhelming victory of the Israelites brings the whole of the north under Joshua's control.

VERSE 7

"So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly" — There are valley passes that open the way from Shechem to the mountains of Naphtali overlooking the Huleh valley; one of which is called by the Arabs *the Valley of Joshua* to this day. It could well be the line of approach that he took. The mountains of Naphtali fall sharply, almost precipitously to the plain beneath, and provide birdseye views of the whole sweep of the plain. One can imagine Joshua with his commanders viewing from above the scene below where the huge forces of Jabin were drawn up in battle array. Believing Joshua to be at Gilgal by Shechem the Canaanite king little suspected the presence of the enemy in force, in the mountains above. This is implied by the use of the word *suddenly*.

"And they fell upon them" — The expression suggests a sudden and unexpected flash of lightning. Like a bolt from the blue, Joshua led his lightly armed troops swiftly down the mountain side and fiercely attacked the Canaanites before Jabin could properly re-arrange his troops into defensive positions.

VERSE 8

"And Yahweh delivered them into the hand of Israel" — The sudden, unexpected attack took Jabin by surprise, and with the blessing of Yahweh it was completely successful.

"Who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon" — Jabin's composite troops dispersed in all directions, some making their way north-east to Great Zidon. Tsidon-Rabba, *Great Zidon*, or *Zidon the Metropolis*, is about 25 miles north of Tyre, and therefore a considerable distance from Hazor and Lake Huleh. It is situated on a small promontory that widens the narrow plain between the Lebanese mountains and the Mediterranean. This area was assigned to the tribe of Asher, but never conquered by that tribe (Jud. 1:31). It had a commodious harbour, and claimed to be the mother city of which Tyre was a colony; though the "daughter" soon outstripped her

"mother" (Isa. 23:2). Jeremiah (27:3), Ezekiel (28:20-23) and Joel (3:4) prophesied against Zidon, and the terms of their prophesies have been completely fulfilled. Zidon signifies *Fishery*, fishing being a local prominent industry; but the idea behind the word is the ensnaring or catching of fish. The Kingdom lived up to its name as far as Israel was concerned, and ensnared the people; for from this city came Jezebel who ensnared Israel, and whose figurative progeny later proved a problem and a snare to Ecclesias (Rev. 2:20).

"And unto Misrephoth-maim" — This name signifies *Salt Pits* or *Burning Waters* (see margin), and doubtless relates to hot springs such as are found in the area. Misrephoth-maim has been located about ten miles north of Acre which is about 30 miles south of Zidon. These distances indicate how scattered were the fleeing remnants of Jabin's numerous army.

"And unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward" — For the location of this Mizpeh see v. 3.

"And they smote them, until they left them none remaining" — Joshua refused to take prisoners, putting to death all Canaanites that his warriors found.

VERSE 9

"And Joshua did unto them as Yahweh bade him: he houghed their horses and burnt their chariots with fire" — see v. 6.

Cities Destroyed — vv. 10-14

Having defeated the combined army of the Kings of the north, Joshua completes the victory by successfully besieging and destroying the royal cities.

VERSE 10

"And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword, for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms" — Jabin's status over the confederated kings of the north is implied in v. 1. Hazor was the capital of the northern sector of the Land.

VERSE 11

"And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them" — As chief of the nations, the king of Hazor were responsible for the religious and social pollutions of the area. These were extremely evil and

would have destroyed Israel morally if not ruthlessly eliminated.

“There was not any left to breathe; and he burnt Hazor with fire” — Joshua refused to take captives, putting all to the sword. However, the expression does not mean that there was not a Canaanite left alive. See note on Ch. 10:41. Hazor, itself, was purged with fire.

VERSE 12

“And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them” — See Ch. 10:28,30,32,35,39,40. Joshua performed the work of extermination ruthlessly and thoroughly. His action typed the requirements of the Word in the saints' conquest of fleshly characteristics. See Col. 3:5. Paul taught that because of such things, “the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience” (Col. 3:6).

“As Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded” — See Num. 33:52; Deut 7:2; 20:16; Josh. 8:8; 9:24; 10:40; 11:15. Joshua fulfilled all the requirements of the Law as commanded, and so defeated the enemy thus making it possible for every individual Israelite to personally obtain his inheritance. He foreshadowed the successful ministry of the Lord Jesus by so doing (Heb. 2:14-15).

VERSE 13

“But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn” — The literal Hebrew expresses this as cities “standing on their heap”, that is, elevated cities on hills lifted up above the plains. These were saved and reserved for occupation by Israel because they could be more easily defended whilst the army was still engaged in subduing the country.

VERSE 14

“And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves” — This was allowed them by Law, except for places devoted unto Yahweh, as was Jericho. See Num. 31:10-12; Deut. 6:10-11; 20:14.

“But every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe” — This action was taken because Yahweh had devoted the cities and their contents to Himself. The lives of individuals were taken as the Law required (Lev. 27:28-29), and inanimate objects were purged by fire (Num. 31:22-24). This ruthless action as far as human life was concerned demonstrated that such is of no value unless given to God. Originally man was made “in the image and likeness of the Elohim”, designed to reflect the divine



A view of what remains of the ancient city of Hazor.

glory. There is no future for those who fail to use their God-given talents in such a direction.

The Country Subdued — vv. 15-20

The work of conquest continues as Joshua moves through the Land of Promise bringing it into subjection to his control.

VERSE 15

“As Yahweh commanded Moses His servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua” — See Deut. 7:2; 31:7; Josh. 1:7.

“He left nothing undone of all that Yahweh commanded Moses” — Joshua completely fulfilled the requirements of the Law as did the Lord Jesus Christ. See Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Matt. 23:23; Acts 20:20,27; Rev. 22:19. Christ did not come to destroy the Law, but “to fulfil it” (Matt. 5:17). He “magnified the Law and made it honourable” (Isa. 42:21). In doing so he rendered perfect obedience unto the Father, in consequence of which he was raised from the dead, and was able to open up the way of salvation for those “in him” to likewise conquer. Joshua’s labour foreshadowed that of the Lord.

VERSE 16

“So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen” — This Goshen was not that of “the land of Goshen” in Egypt, but a district in Judah. See Josh. 10:41.

“And the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same” — The word rendered “valley” is *Arabah* in Hebrew, and is generally identified with the depression south of the Sea of Galilee. The term “the mountain of Israel” divides the northern part of the land from the southern section described as “the mountains of Judah” in v. 21. The use of these terms in these verses has been used to support the claim that *The Book of Joshua* was written after the division in the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam; but this is not the case. The occupation of the land was in stages: Judah entering into its inheritance first (Josh. 15:1), whilst the other tribes remained at Gilgal. Then followed the occupation of Ephraim and Manasseh (Josh. 16:1). Subsequently, representatives of the remaining tribes assembled at Shiloh (Josh. 18:1) where instructions for the allotment of the rest of the tribes were given. Therefore, an in-

complete division took place at this time, with preference given to Judah.

VERSE 17

“Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir” — Halak signifies *Bald Hills*. The place described was obviously situated south of Judah, marking the southern extremity of Joshua’s conquests. Its specific site is unknown today, but perhaps it can be identified with the bald, treeless hills surrounding the Ascent of Akabbim (Num. 34:3-4; Josh. 15:2-3) a little south of the Dead Sea, near Edom or Seir.

“Even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under Mount Hermon” — Baal-gad signifies *Lord of Fortune*, or of *Good Luck*. Evidently there was a temple established at this place at which the god of Fortune or Good Luck was worshipped. Elsewhere the site is called Baal-hermon (Jud. 3:3; 1 Chron. 5:23. See also Josh. 12:7; 13:5). The god of Good Luck was called Gad (*Fortune*), and reference to its false worship is recorded in Isa. 65:11 (see mg). Baal-gad has been identified with modern Banias so named because it was a centre of pagan worship, particularly that of the god Pan. From the lips of Arabs who find it difficult to pronounce “B”, Pan became Ban.

“And all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them” — He despatched all these kings, for each one, in his own way, represented King Sin, which Christ overcame (Rom. 5:21; 6:12,16). Joshua’s conquests extended throughout the land from south to north.

VERSE 18

“Joshua made war a long time with all those kings” — The statement, “a long time” can be rendered *many days*. In fact it was about seven years. Caleb was 85 when the war finished. He was 40 years of age when sent with Joshua to spy out the land, was 38 years in the wilderness, and was 85 when Joshua’s work was completed (Josh. 14:10). Seven days of a thousand years each will be occupied in dealing with King Sin, at the conclusion of which the War will be completed and the last enemy, Death, will be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:25-28).

VERSE 19

“There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the

Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle” — From this statement it is evident that the Canaanites could have made peace with Israel by submitting to certain conditions: endorsing the hope of Israel, and entering into covenant relationship with Yahweh through the rite of circumcision. They were not prepared to do so. Either they considered that the conditions were too stringent, they could successfully resist, or they were ignorant of the opportunity to do so.

VERSE 20

“For it was of Yahweh to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that He might destroy them, as Yahweh commanded Moses” — Yahweh hardened their hearts, not by directly influencing them to do what they did not want to do, but by permitting circumstances to develop their self-confidence and make them obstinate. The hard-heartedness of the Canaanites can be compared with that of Pharaoh, for the cause was the same (see Exod. 9:34-35; 1 Sam. 6:6; Rom. 9:18,22,23). There are many similar cases of hard-heartedness manifested towards Yahweh’s purpose (see Deut. 2:30; Jud. 14:4; 1 Sam. 2:25; 1 Kings 12:15; 2 Chron. 10:15; 22:7; 25:20). The Canaanites were subdued only gradually, this giving Israel time to become used to the new settled way of life in the land. By this means, agriculture was sustained, the increase of wild beasts were restrained, and the land maintained by the heathen for ultimate occupation by Israel (see Exod. 23:29-30).

The Anakim Destroyed — vv. 21-23

The Anakim were men of great stature and physical strength. The sight of them

had discouraged the spies sent throughout the land by Moses, and resulted in them issuing faithless reports to the people. In contrast Joshua and Caleb had boldly declared that with the help of God the Anakim could be overcome, and so special mention is made to their subjugation at this time.

VERSE 21

“And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities” — The Anakim were giants, and of great physical strength. See Num. 13:22; Deut. 9:2. Their headquarters were adjacent to Hebron. The word “Eshcol” signifies a *Bunch of Grapes*; and it will be recalled that it was from this area, that the spies took back a bunch of grapes to Moses when they completed their searching of the land. See the notes on Num. 13:23.

VERSE 22

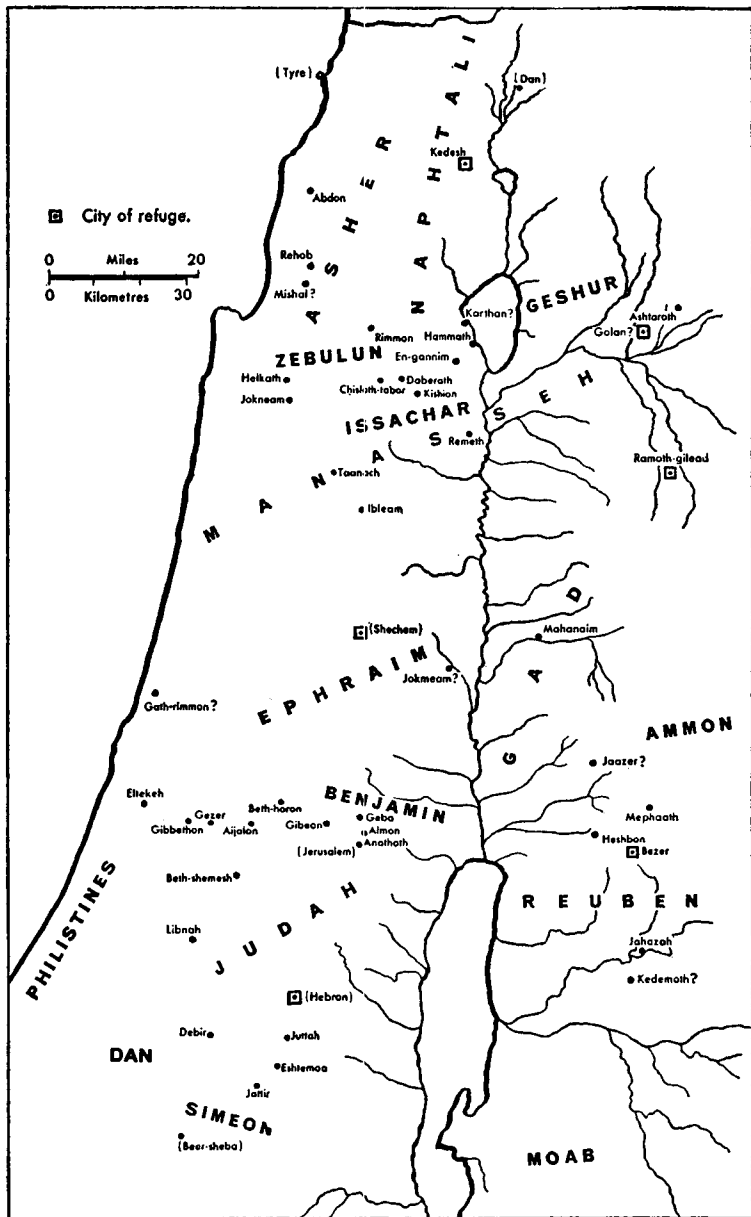
“There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained” — The area mentioned was that of the Philistines. Goliath came from Gath (1 Sam. 17:4).

VERSE 23

“So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that Yahweh said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes” — This anticipated the work of distribution as described later. See Num. 34:2; Josh. 18:3-7.

“And the land rested from war” — This was a Sabbatical year, when rest was appropriate. See Josh. 14:15.





The Levitical Cities. The Cities of Refuge are marked with a square □

CHAPTER TWELVE

SUMMARY OF JOSHUA'S CONQUESTS

Joshua's work of conquest is complete. He has subdued the nations of Canaan sufficiently for every Israelite to obtain his inheritance. Personal determination, courage, effort and faith are now needed by both men and tribes to secure each his individual allotment. In this, Joshua's work foreshadows that of the Lord whose victory made it possible for every individual saint, through faith, and courage, to ensure his inheritance (1 John 5:4). Meanwhile, each king conquered by Joshua represented in some particular King Sin reigning unto death (Rom. 5:21; 6:12-18). The chapter is sectionised into two parts: Moses' conquests east of the Jordan (vv. 1-6); The Kings Conquered by Joshua (vv. 7-24).

The Conquests of Moses East of the Jordan — vv. 1-6

The occupation of the land east of the Jordan is summarised.

VERSE 1

“Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun” — See Josh. 1:15; 22:4.

“From the river Arnon” The Arnon comprised the northern border of Moab at the time of Moses, the Moabites having been driven south of their former territory by the Amorites. The Arnon is known today as the Wadi Musib, and comprises a most formidable border. In places, and certainly adjacent to the Kings' Highway along which road Moses would have ascended to attack the Amorites, it is a precipitous canyon in places upwards of 1700 feet (520m) deep, and two miles (3 kms) wide. So difficult is the ascent, so easy the defence for an enemy dominating its heights, and so formidable were the forces of Sihon then in control of them, that the victory of Moses at this place is compared with the overthrow of Pharaoh at the Red Sea (Num. 21:13-14).

“Unto mount Hermon” — Because of the continued resistance of the Amorites it was necessary for Moses to extend his con-

quests far to the north adjacent to Mount Hermon. See Deut. 3:8-11.

“And all the plain on the east” — The word “plain” is *Arabah* in the Hebrew, and denotes the deep depression south of the Sea of Galilee. The country east of that line is a high plateau, occupied by Sihon, and extending north to the mountainous region of Gilead, Bashan etc.

VERSE 2

“Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer which is on the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river” — For the conquest of Sihon see Num. 21:21-31. The territory to the Arnon that had been taken from the Moabites by the Amorites was conquered and occupied by the Israelites. The Arnon then became the southern border of Israel on the eastern side of the Jordan. Aroer was on the bank by the Arnon (Deut. 2:36), so that the border was in the centre of the Wadi.

“And from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok which is the border of the children of Ammon” — Gilead is a mountainous area on the east of Jordan which was subsequently occupied by Gad (Josh. 13:24-25). The half tribe of Manasseh as well as Reuben are described as possessing portion of Gilead (Deut. 3:12; Josh. 13:30-31). It seems that the half tribe of

Manasseh had the section north of the Jabbok, and that the territory was divided between Jair and Machir. The Reubenites and Gadites occupied the section between the Jabbok and the Arnon. The whole territory of Gilead perhaps comprised the area east of the Jordan from the Arnon northwards. The name recalls the meeting of Jacob and Laban recorded in Gen. 31:47-48, the derivation of which signifies *A Heap of Witness*. However, a later Gilead was the son of Machir, and from 1 Chron. 7:14 it appears Machir's wife was a stranger from the district of Aram, the country of Laban. This, perhaps, was why she called her son Gilead, for it was the border established by agreement between Laban and Jacob. This probably explains the allotment of the territory to the Machirites (Num. 32:40). See the reference to Gilead's family and Jephthah in Judges 11:2.

“Even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon” — Sihon's territory extended north to the Jabbok which flows into the Arabah of the River Jordan. At the Jabbok Jacob wrestled with the angel and received his blessing (Gen. 32:24-32).

VERSE 3

“And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east” — The “plain” is the Arabah, or the deep depression down which the Jordan flows. The word “Chinneroth” signifies *Harp* or *Lute*. The Sea of Galilee is given that name because of its shape which roughly matches that of a huge harp or lute.

“And unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea on the east” — This is what is called the Dead Sea.

“The way to Beth-jeshimoth” — Beth-jeshimoth signifies *House of the Wastes*. Israel encamped at this place (Num. 33:49).

“And from the south, under Ashdod-pisgah” — Ashdod-pisgah signifies *The Springs of Pisgah*. Pisgah was the northernmost point of the Abarim range, of which Nebo was the chief peak. “South” is *Teman* which denotes the right (or south) when facing east. See the margin.

VERSE 4

“And the coast of Og king of Bashan” — Og's kingdom was further north than that of Sihon's (see Num. 21:33-35). The

word “Bashan” signifies *Fertile*, or *Soft Soil*. This area is one of the most fertile districts of the Holy Land. The scenery is extremely beautiful: its plateaus are covered with fertile soil; its hills are clothed with forests; and each turn reveals varied and beautiful landscapes.

“Which was of the remnant of the giants” — The Hebrew word is *rephaim* which signifies *stretched out*, and therefore denotes men of large stature. Archaeology has witnessed to the presence of such a race in ancient times. In *The Giant Cities of Bashan*, Dr. J. Porter writes: “The houses of Kerioth and other towns of Bashan appear to be just such dwellings as a race of giants would build. The walls, the roofs, but especially the ponderous gates, doors and bars are in every way characteristic of a period when architecture was in its infancy, when giants were masons, and when strength and security were the grand requisites. I measured a door in Kerioth; it was 9 feet (3m) high, 4½ ft wide and 10 inches thick — one solid slab of stone. I saw the folding gates of another town still larger and heavier. Time produces little effect on such buildings as these. . . there can scarcely be a doubt, therefore, that these are the very cities erected and inhabited by the Nepholim, the aboriginal occupants of Bashan.”

“That dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei” — (See Gen. 14:5; Num. 21:33; Deut. 1:4). See notes at those places.

VERSE 5

“And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon” — Og reigned from Hermon in the north-east to the border of Sihon at the Jabbok. For descriptions of the places mentioned, see notes at Deut. 3:9, 10, 14.

VERSE 6

“Them did Moses the servant of Yahweh and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of Yahweh gave it for a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh” — See notes at Num. 21:24; 32:39; Deut. 3:11; Josh. 13:8-12.

The Kings Conquered by Joshua

— vv. 7-14

So many kings in such a confined territory as is listed in this chapter shows how

small are their kingdoms. They are divided into seven divided nations, each of which is better equipped for warfare than is Israel. Each king is representative of King Sin in some way.

VERSE 7

“And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west” — The verb in the Hebrew can signify defeated as well as killed. All the kings were defeated, but not necessarily killed. See the record of warfare in Chapters 6-10.

“From Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the Mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir” — See note Josh. 11:17.

“Which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions” — See note Josh. 11:23.

VERSE 8

“In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country: the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites” — See note Josh. 9:1. The Hebrew word rendered “south” in this verse is *negeb*. It signifies the *Dry* country.

VERSE 9

“The king of Jericho, one” — See Josh. 6:2.

“The king of Ai, which is beside Beth-el, one” — See Josh. 8:29.

VERSE 10

“The king of Jerusalem, one” — See Josh. 10:3,23.

“The king of Hebron, one” — See Josh. 10:3,23.

VERSE 11

“The king of Jarmuth, one” — See Josh. 10:3,23.

“The king of Lachish, one” — See Josh. 10:3,23.

VERSE 12

“The king of Eglon, one” — See Josh. 10:3,23.

“The king of Gezer, one” — See Josh. 10:33.

VERSE 13

“The king of Debir, one” — See Josh. 10:38.

“The king of Geder, one” — See 1 Chron. 27:28. The details are not recorded in the Book of Joshua.

VERSE 14

“The king of Hormah, one” — See Num. 21:3. The details are not recorded in *The Book of Joshua*.

“The king of Arad, one” — See Num. 21:1. The details are not recorded in *The Book of Joshua*.

VERSE 15

“The king of Libnah, one” — See Josh. 10:29.

“The king of Adullam, one” — The details are not recorded in *The Book of Joshua*.

VERSE 16

“The king of Makkedah, one” — See Josh. 10:28.

“The king of Beth-el, one” — See Josh. 8:17.

VERSE 17

“The king of Tappuah, one” — Tappuah was about 8m (13kms) ssw, of Nablus. Details are not recorded.

“The king of Hopher, one” — The details are not recorded.

VERSE 18

“The king of Aphek, one” — The details are not given. Aphek was an important strategic centre, on the *Via Maris* marking a cross-road to the centre of the land.

“The king of Lasharon, one” — Lasharon denotes the plain of Sharon, north of the river Yarkon close to modern Tel Aviv. The details are not recorded in *The Book of Joshua*.

VERSE 19

“The king of Madon, one” — See Josh. 11:1.

“The king of Hazor, one” — See Josh. 11:1.

VERSE 20

“The king of Shimronmeron, one” — Shimronmeron signifies *Guard of Arrogance*. No details are given.

VERSE 21

“The king of Taanach, one” — The details are not given.

“The king of Megiddo, one” — The details are not given.

VERSE 22

“The king of Kedesh, one” — The details are not given.

“The king of Jokneam of Carmel, one” — The details are not given.

VERSE 23

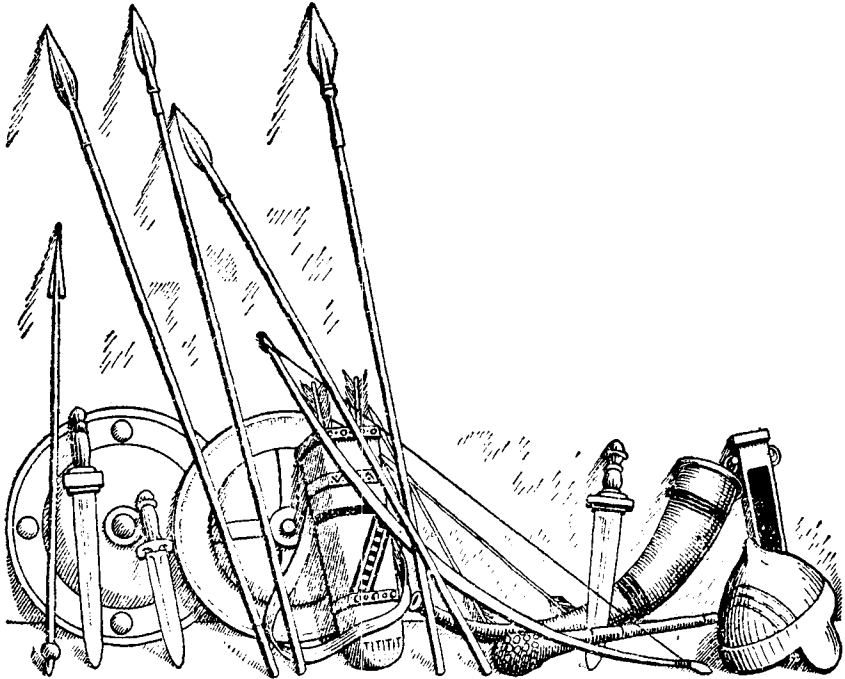
“The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one” — See Josh. 11:2.

“The king of the nations of Gilgal, one” — See Gen. 14:1. Evidently this king was overlord of other petty rulers adjacent to Gilgal.

VERSE 24

“The king of Tirzah, one” — The details are not given.

“All the kings thirty and one” — Joshua’s war was brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Conquests in every part reveal that a very complete subjugation of the land has been won. The allocation of territory to the tribes could now follow.



JOSHUA:

VICTORY THROUGH FAITH

Section Three:

***APPORTIONING
THE INHERITANCE***

Chapters 13 to 22

The conquest of the Canaanitish Kings brings to an end all organised opposition. The national army of Israel can now be disbanded, and though pockets of resistance remain they are small enough for individual tribes to successfully attack. Accordingly, each tribe and family are required to “go in and obtain” the inheritance reserved for them: in a spiritual sense, to “work out their own salvation”. Joshua, like the Lord Jesus Christ, has performed his work in weakening the power of the enemy, and making individual success possible. The command is issued to complete the work initiated by Joshua, and so occupy the land remaining which is described as being “very much” (Josh. 13:1). In like manner, the Lord described the work to be accomplished by the apostles as being greater, in a sense, than that done by himself, (John 14:12). He weakened the enemy on our behalf (Heb. 2:14), but positive and determined efforts are required by all those who desire salvation. So Joshua now allocates the territory throughout the land. First the Eastern, and then the Western tribes are given their general borders. Then those of Judah are outlined, followed by those of the children of Joseph.

A survey of the rest of the territory is then made, and allocation among the remaining seven and a half tribes set out. Then follows the appointment of cities of Refuge, Levitical and priestly cities, until, finally, all is ready. Meanwhile, now that the general war is completed the warriors from the two and a half eastern tribes who assisted in the conquest of the land may return home. They are dismissed by Joshua, but on their return they erect an altar of witness at the Jordan. Their action is misunderstood, and leads to a crisis that threatens division. However, the manifestation of good sense averts this, and results in the consolidation of the tribes which leads to greater unity.

This section of the Book, therefore, can be divided as follows:

- * The Division of the Land (Faith’s Promise) — Ch. 13:1-19:51)*
- * Cities of Refuge Selected (Faith’s Protection) — Ch. 20*
- * Levitical Cities appointed (Faith Preserved) — Ch. 21*
- * The Altar of Witness (Faith as a Unifier) — Ch. 22*

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE POSSESSION OF THE EASTERN TRIBES CONFIRMED

An assessment of land yet to be apportioned is made, and confirmation is given of the land already granted the eastern tribes by Moses.

Land Unconquered in the South

— vv. 1-3

The aged Joshua is reminded that much remains to be done and is urged to complete the establishing of the southern borders of land yet to be possessed.

VERSE 1

“Now Joshua was old and stricken in years” — Joshua died at the age of 110 years (Josh. 24:29), and as the remaining duties would have occupied a few years, he evidently was about 100 years of age at this time.

“And Yahweh said unto him, thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed” — The Israelites had been promised that the inhabitants of Canaan would be driven out “little by little” until the whole of the Promised Land was occupied (see Exod. 23:29-31). The borders set down extended to the Euphrates in the north (Deut. 11:24-25), but as yet much of that territory had not been occupied by the Israelites.

VERSE 2

“This is the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines” — The Philistine area remained to be taken, and this would involve war. That was a further reason why the land was only gradually occupied: “That the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at least such as before knew nothing thereof” (Jud. 3:2). The pressure of war provides practical experience in the art of discipline, restraint, training and faith. So the Philistines remained along the coastal plains of the land, a constant menace to Israel, making it needful for the people to keep alert.

The term “Philistine” signifies *Strangers* or *Sojourners*. *The land occupied by them was allocated to Judah, but they were never*

*properly expelled, and remained a thorn in the side of Israel throughout its ancient history. In Gen. 10:13-14 they are tabulated with Egypt (Mizraim), and are described as going forth out of the “Casluhim”. Elsewhere they are described as having originated from Caphtor (Jer. 47:4; Amos 9:7), identified by many as Crete. However, as there was a Caphtor in Egypt, the Philistines could have travelled from Crete to Palestine via Caphtor in Egypt. According to Kitto, the word “Philistine” in the Egyptian language is *Shepherd*, so that Palestine denotes *Shepherd’s Lands*. He identifies the Philistines with the Shepherd Kings of Egypt. The Philistines were a warlike people, and were a constant thorn in the side of Israel.*

“And all Geshuri” — The name is given to signify *Bridge*, or by *The Dictionary of Bible Names* as *Proud Beholders*. The Geshuri was an Aramaean tribe, located near the east of Bashan, and north towards Syria (Deut. 3:14; Josh. 12:5; 2 Sam. 15:8; 1 Chron. 2:23). There was also a branch of the tribe in the south of Judah (1 Sam. 27:8). Perhaps both branches of the tribe are referred to here as remaining unconquered. David married Maacah the daughter of Talmi, who ruled over the Geshuri, and from her had a son, Absalom (2 Sam. 3:3). The kingdom was in the part of the land allotted to Manasseh, but because its original inhabitants were not expelled they did not occupy it (Josh. 13:13). It was to the Kingdom of the Geshuri that Absalom fled after murdering Amnon (2 Sam. 13:37-38).

VERSE 3

“From Sihor which is before Egypt” — Sihor is said to signify the *Black River*. It is identified with the Wadi-el-Arish often described as “the River of Egypt”.

“Even unto the border of Ekron northward, which is counted to the Canaanite”

— Ekron signifies *Uprooting*. It was one of the five main cities of the Philistines.

“Five lords of the Philistines” — The five lords of the five main Philistine cities reigned jointly over the nation. See Jud. 3:3; 1 Sam. 5:8. The word “lords” as used here is from the Hebrew *cerenyi*, and literally signifies *axles*. As the axle of a vehicle bears the weight of its load, and turns the wheel to take it from point to point, so the rulers of the Philistine Federation bore the weight of the affairs of state, and directed its policy. The title is only applied to the Philistines. The same word here rendered “lords” is translated *plates* (i.e. axles) in 1 Kings 7:30.

“The Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites” — These were the five main centres of the Philistines.

“Also the Avites” — The word is derived from a root denoting *Wickedness*. The Avites were among the original inhabitants of the land occupying the south-west corner of the seacoast. They were driven out by the invading Philistines leaving a remnant of them to the north of the land (see Deut. 2:23). The names of the Philistine centres were indicative of the nation. Ashdod signifies *Spoiler*; Askelon, *Fire of Infamy*; Gath, *Winepress*; Ekron, *Rooting out*; Gaza, *Strong*; *Fortified*; Avite, *Perverters or Overturers*. As the Avites were not Philistines, the text adds the word also.

Land Unconquered In The North

— vv. 4-7

The survey now takes in more northly areas.

VERSE 4

“From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians” — The margin renders Mearah as *the Cave* near Sidon. The *Inter-linear Hebrew English Bible* renders “beside” as *balongeth*; whilst Young gives the word as “forest” or “meadow”. In regard to the tribal allocations, the lot determined forest land adjacent to Zidon.

“Unto Aphek” — Aphek signifies *Strength* or *Fearless*. This Aphek was north of Zidon and is commonly identified with Afga, ancient Aphaca, some 23 miles north of Beirut. See Unger. It was assigned to Asher (Josh. 19:30-31).

“To the borders of the Amorites” — This was the border of Bashan by Mt. Hermon.

VERSE 5

“And the land of the Gibletes, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising” — This describes the inhabitants of Gebal or modern Byblos. The original word signifies *Stonesquarers*. See 1 Kings 5:18 mg. Gebel was the centre of the worship of Tammuz or Adonis.

“From Baal-gad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath” — For Baal-gad see Josh. 11:7. Hamath was between Damascus and the Euphrates. It evidently was a district as well as a city, extending to the River. It was the capital of Upper Syria in the valley of the Orontes. Israel's border never reached that far except perhaps in the days of Solomon and Jeroboam II (2 Chron. 8:4; 2 Kings 14:28). The “entrance of Hamath” is identified with the Pass through which the Orontes breaks out of its upper valley between the Lebanese and Anti Lebanese mountain ranges some sixty miles north of Damascus.

VERSE 6

“All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians” — See note Josh. 11:8.

“Them will I drive out before the children of Israel” — Yahweh promised to drive them out but this was conditional upon Israel doing their part in expelling them. In that they failed.

“Only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee” — The land was to be divided as an inheritance to the Israelites before they actually occupied it, as an incentive for them to exert themselves in doing so. In that regard, it was similar to the inheritance of hope that is offered believers today. There was nothing of chance or caprice in the Lot as used by Israel. It was governed by Yahweh, and therefore, revealed His will: being a revelation of Divine purpose. The Lot apparently determined the position in the area in which the land was to be found which each tribe was to occupy, though it did not determine the extent of the area or cantonment. This was governed by the size of the tribe (see Num. 26:54). However, this appointment differed from that of family inheritance, which was also established by Lot (Josh. 17:4-5; 19:51), but which was more specific. “The division by lot”, comments Young, “seems to have respect only to the quarter, or situation which each

tribe was to possess, and not to the extent of the land, which was to be proportioned to the members of each tribe according to the register established. Thus, for instance, it was determined by lot which of the 12 tribes was to inherit in the south, which in the north etc., then, in that quarter where the lot fell, a larger or smaller portion of the land was assigned the particular tribes, according to the goodness of the soil, and in proportion as they were more or less numerous. This equal division of property was under God, the great bulwark and strength of the Hebrew commonwealth. According to calculations, Canaan contained 14,976,000 acres which divided among 600,000 families to allow of about 21½ acres each, leaving 1,976,000 acres for the princes of the tribes, Levitical cities etc., so there was an ample provision to enable each person with all the advantages of that fertile soil and fine climate to live in comfortable circumstances, and even more land when the 2½ tribes settled on the eastern side of the Jordan are taken into account".

The Lot was supervised by the priest acting in conjunction with the Urim and Thummim (Exod. 28:30; Num. 27:21). Note the expression "came forth", as used in Josh. 18:11; 19:1,17. The "bag" was evidently the breastplate of judgment (Prov. 16:33; 18:18). Therefore the Lot expressed the will of God in the granting of inheritances, or the disposing of things. Its use showed that no Israelite had exclusive right to any part of the land, for his inheritance (the word "lot" is from a cognate or related word) was determined by Yahweh, as the Divine Disposer. The use of such expressions as "this is the *lot* of them that rob us" (Isa. 17:14) or "thou hast neither part nor *lot* in this matter" (Acts 8:21) means in the first reference, that God has made provision for punishment, or, in the second, that no provision of inheritance has been reserved for those referred to. The granting of an inheritance in the Promised Land typed the eternal inheritance reserved for the faithful in the Age to come. So Paul taught: "All these things happened unto them for ensamples (types), and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11). And Christ told the ambitious Apostles, James and John who desired positions of eminence on his right and left sides in the Kingdom: "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my

Father" (Matt. 10:23). The Greek words translated "inheritance" and "lot" in the N.T. are closely related or are identical (see Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:14,18; Col. 1:12).

VERSE 7

"Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half of Manasseh" — The 2½ tribes having already been granted their portion.

Gentiles in the East Tolerated

— vv. 8-14

The borders of the Transjordanian tribes are set down, but the statement is included that the Gentiles are allowed to remain.

VERSE 8

"With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance which Moses gave them beyond Jordan eastward, even as Moses the servant of Yahweh gave them" — See Num. 32:33. In this verse and in v. 33, the writer appends to the command of God (vv. 1-7) a statement that the other 2½ tribes had already received their inheritance as marked out for them by Moses. The boundaries of this territory as a whole are first set forth (vv. 8-14), and afterwards the positions assigned within it to the 2½ tribes are severally described (vv. 15-33).

VERSE 9

"From Aroer, that is upon the bank of the river Arnon" — Aroer signifies *Destitute*. See note Deut. 2:36.

"And the city that is in the midst of the river" — The word "city" is *Ar* in Hebrew. This was evidently the name of the city which was located in the wide valley of the Arnon. See Deut. 2:36; Isa. 15:1.

"And all the plain of Medeba and Dibon" — Battles were fought with Sihon at these places. See notes Num. 21:30.

VERSE 10

"And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon" — See Num. 21:24. Prior to the coming of Moses, the Amorites under Sihon had invaded Moab, and occupied its northern territory to the Arnon, which then became their common border. The eastern border of the Amorites was joined to the western border of the Ammonites. The conquests of Moses took all this territory as well as that of Og in Bashan, and incorporated it into the possession of Israel.

VERSE 11

“And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon and all Bashan unto Salcah” — For notes on the places here mentioned see Josh. 12:5. The Maachathites comprised a small kingdom east of Argob in Bashan (Deut. 3:4) bordering the territory of Og. They were probably descended from Maachah, a relative of Abraham (Gen. 22:24).

VERSE 12

“All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for these did Moses smite, and cast them out” — See Num. 21:21-25; Josh. 12:4.

VERSE 13

“Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites; but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day” — The Israelites failed to drive out these inhabitants through weakness, and so neglected to consolidate their occupation of the land.

VERSE 14

“Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance:” — See Num. 18:20. The Levites as a tribe were given no land inheritance, though cities were allocated to them throughout the various tribes. This fulfilled the prophecy and indictment of Jacob (Gen. 49:5-7) pronounced upon the tribe because of the treachery of its progenitor towards the men of Shechem. However, the action of the tribe in loyally and faithfully answering the appeal of Moses to vindicate God's honour by executing punishment upon the men of Israel because of their sin in regard to the golden calf was rewarded with the privilege of being appointed the priestly tribe in the place of the natural firstborn (Num. 3:6-13). By this appointment Yahweh showed that the sins of the fathers do not fall on the children unless they condone or endorse them. The Levites, however, were to remain separate within Israel (Num. 18:20), and were to give themselves to the study and exposition of the Law (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 24:8). Their status within Israel, therefore, was that of strangers and pilgrims in the nation, awaiting their tribal inheritance in the Age to come (Ezek. 48:22).

“The sacrifices of Yahweh God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as He said unto them” — The term “made by fire” is applied to anything devoted to the purpose of sacrifice. Accordingly it was used of the shewbread (Lev. 24:7,9). The tithes were also given to the Levites, they being sacrificial in their concept (Num. 18:21-24). In exchange, the Levites were expected to study and expound the Law (Mal. 2:7). It was a sad time for Israel and the Levites when it lacked a “teaching priest” (2 Chron. 15:3), for then the Divine blessing was lacking on the increase. It was materially advantageous for the priests and Levites as well as for the nation when the people remained faithful, for then they prospered, and tithes were greater.

The Inheritance of Reuben — vv. 15-23

Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have already been allocated their inheritance in a general way on the east of Jordan. It remains now for Joshua to assign exact borders to the three portions. The men of these tribes preferring the tending of flocks and herds to the tillage of the soil, and possessing large numbers of cattle, find the lands of Gilead and Bashan, with their rich pasturage and ample water, districts splendidly suited to their occupation. The first to have its inheritance accurately defined is the tribe of Reuben. Representing the firstborn son of Jacob, this tribe, was once powerful, but as predicted by Jacob (Gen. 49:3-4), has steadily declined in numbers, and now numerically is among the weakest. But it has retained its love for pastoral pursuits, and is now granted the most southern district of the eastern region, bounded on the north by Heshbon and extending a line westward to a little above the upper end of the Dead Sea, just touching the ford of Jordan. On the south, the Arnon marks its border which it shares with Moab. On the west its border follows the Dead Sea, on the east it merges into the wilderness that stretches to the Euphrates. The district thus assigned is styled the Misor, or plain country (Josh. 13:9) in contrast to the wooded heights and valleys of Gilead, or the more rocky terrain of the west. For pastoral and agricultural purposes, the tribe of Reuben was granted the most favoured region in the Holy Land.

VERSE 15

“And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben inheritance according

to their families" — In doing so, Joshua endorsed the allotment of Moses.

VERSE 16

"And their coast was from Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba" — See note on v. 9. This was the southern border, and joined with Moab.

VERSE 17

"Heshbon, and all her cities that are in the plain: Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon" — Heshbon was previously a prominent city occupied by Sihon, Dibon was later occupied by Moab, and the Moabite Stone inscribed by Mesha (1 Kings 3:4) was found there. The Moabite Stone (dated about 900 B.C.) indicates that the Hebrew language was commonly known throughout these countries, and that the Divine Name was well known in foreign lands and was identified with Israel. Bamoth-Baal signifies *The High Places of Baal*, and Beth-baal-meon, *House of the Baal (Lord) of the Dwelling*. The Baal ceremony worshipped throughout Moab was the god Chemosh. This cruel deity was worshipped with the most horrible rites including child-sacrifice similar to that of Molech with which it is identified. The Moabite Stone claims that it was the anger of Chemosh that was responsible for the subjugation of Moab by Israel. So infatuated were the Moabites with the worship of this vile god that they are described as his children (Num. 21:29).

VERSE 18

"And Jahaza, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath" — Jahaza signifies *Open Space Trodden Underfoot*. Sihon there suffered defeat (Num. 21:23-24). Kedemoth signifies *Ancient Places or Beginnings* (see Deut. 2:26). Mephaath signifies *Beauty or Shining forth*. See Josh. 21:37.

VERSE 19

"And Kirjathaim" — It signifies *Double City*.

"And Sibmah" — It signifies *Coolness*. It was close to Heshbon, and on the border of Reuben and Gad (Isa. 16:8).

"And Zareth-shahar in the mount of the valley" — It signifies *Splendour of the Dawn*. It was on the east of the Dead Sea.

VERSE 20

"And Beth-peor" — *House of the Opening*. A notorious place of ill-fame and sad memories for Israel. See note Num. 25:1-3.

"And Ashdod-pisgah" — Or *Springs of Pisgah* (i.e. the hill).

"And Beth-jeshimoth" — Or *House of the Wilderness*.

VERSE 21

"And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, which were dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country" — See notes on Num. 31:7 for reference to these princes. The word "dukes" is from the Hebrew *najak*, from a root signifying *to pour out* or *anoint*. It is a different word from that rendered "dukes" elsewhere, and probably relates to vassals appointed or dedicated to their position and authority by Sihon, and endorsed with a libation.

VERSE 22

"Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them" — See the historical account in Num. 31:8. The title *soothsayer* given to Balaam shows that his profession was obnoxious to Yahweh (see Deut. 18:9-12).

VERSE 23

"And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border thereof. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof" — The top western border of Reuben just reached the Jordan at the north of the Dead Sea.

The Inheritance of Gad — vv. 24-28

The inheritance of Gad is located immediately to the north of Reuben. Commencing from Heshbon it extends northwards towards the Sea of Galilee to the river Jarmuk, which falls into the Jordan about 4 miles below the Lake. Accordingly, its west is bounded by the Jordan Valley. Its east is determined by a line drawn "unto Aroer that faces Rabath" which is near the southern source of the Jabbok. The territory of Gad, therefore,

generally occupies the centre of Israel's possessions east of the Jordan, comprising a great portion of the land of Gilead properly so called, and that portion of Ammonite territory recently taken from that people by Sihon, since the Israelites had been debarred from attacking the Ammonites and Moabites on the claims of kindred (Deut.2:19). The inheritance of Gad was one of the fairest parts of this beautiful region. The land rises steeply from the Jordan valley, and is intersected by deep valleys and ravines, clothed with trees, flowering shrubs and verdure. The summit is a high table-land extending for miles towards the desert of the east. According to L. Oliphant: "Here are undulating downs and picturesque glens, clothed with the richest grass; here are grand forests abounding in magnificent trees, sycamore, beech, terebinth, and fig, with dark pines on the heights. The healthiness of this district is proverbial; it was called by the Romans 'Palaestina Salutaris' . . . These downs are divided by three deep defiles which drain them into the Jordan. The most northerly is the Jarmuk . . . The centre of the district is formed by the river Jabbok, or Zerka, which exhibits a curious course, making three-fourths of a circle. Rising in the south-east of Gilead, it sweeps far away towards the sunrise and the desert, makes a bold bend to the north, then doubles back upon itself, forcing its way through the mountains, and after a course of some seventy miles enters the Jordan about half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee . . . The fields and woods of this area are never parched and withered; the streams which meander through every valley are perennial, though, as in all limestone countries, are wont sometimes to disappear underground for a time; and the whole vegetation has a look of health and vigour which proves the strength of the soil and the favourable nature of the climate. The average level of the province of Gad is about 2,000 feet (610m) above the sea; it is rich in both flowers and birds".

VERSE 24

"And Moses gave inheritance unto the tribe of Gad, even unto the children of Gad according to their families" — See Num. 32:34-36.

VERSE 25

"And their coast was Jazer" — The name signifies *Helpful*. See Num. 21:32.

"And all the cities of Gilead" — See Note Ch. 12:2.

"And half the land of the children of Ammon" — This land had been conquered by Sihon and taken from him by the Israelites who were not permitted to attack Ammon. See Num. 21:26,28,29 and cp. with Deut. 2:19; Jud. 11:13-27.

"Unto Aroer that is before Rabbah" — Aroer signifies *Naked*. It was a different city to that mentioned in vv. 9,16, for it was situated before Rabbah. Rabbah signifies *Great* or *Populous*, and is identified with modern Amman. See Deut. 3:11; 2 Sam. 12:26-31.

VERSE 26

"And from Heshbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim" — Heshbon marked the northern border of Reuben. Ramath-mizpeh signifies *Heights of the Watchtower*; and Betonim, *Cavities*.

"And from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir" — Mahanaim is just north of Jabbok. It was given this name because of the vision seen by Jacob when returning to the land, and it signifies *Two camps* (see Gen. 32:1-2). Debir signifies *Oracle*. However, this Debir is to be distinguished from the fortress city overthrown by Joshua on the Western side of the land (Josh. 10:3,5,16,26). The town mentioned in the verse before us was in Gad, not far from Mahanaim. It is identified with Lodebar of 2 Sam. 9:4; 17:27, and was one of the towns from where provisions were sent to David when he was in exile from Absalom.

VERSE 27

"And in the valley, Beth-aram and Beth-nimrah" — The former signifies *House of the Exalted*. It was situated near Mt. Peor, not far from the entrance of the Jordan into the Dead Sea. The latter signifies *House of the Leopardess*, for those animals once roamed the Middle East. See Song 4:8.

"And Succoth" — Succoth signifies *Booths*. It was situated about half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee, close to the Jordan. It was the place where Jacob crossed the river on returning to the land (Gen. 33:17).

"And Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon" — Zaphon signifies *The North*. Perhaps the statement should be rendered: "and the north" and so joined to the rest of the verse, "and the

north, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon”.

“Jordan and his border, even unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward” — The eastern border of Gad extended along the valley of the Jordan reaching the Sea of Chinnereth, or Galilee.

VERSE 28

“This is the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages” — The Gadites were more sheltered from the seductive influences of Gentilism than were Reuben and Manasseh, and this may have had some affect upon their character. Jephthah came from this tribe.

The Inheritance of Half Manasseh — vv. 29-32

The largest portion of the Transjordanic territory, estimated roughly at 2,500 square miles (4,023kms) is occupied by the half-tribe of Manasseh. The tribe greatly increased in numbers and reputation during the last period of the wandering. At the first census in Sinai its numbers were 32,000; at the end of the forty years it had grown to 52,700. The foremost part taken by Manasseh in the subjection of Gilead, and the prowess displayed in that campaign, designates the tribe as the fittest tenant of the difficult region which it is chiefly instrumental in subduing (Num. 32:39; Deut. 3:13). The Manassites have developed into hardy warriors, who enjoy the turmoil of battle, and the excitement of military expeditions, and are prepared to hold by the sword that which they have won by wielding it. The Trans-Jordanic Manassites are described as being children of Machir, and as being led to victory under the command of Jair and Nobah. The inheritance granted them is described generally as the kingdom of Og; that is the northern part of Gilead and all Bashan. Its southern border is Mahanaim. Its northern limit is Mount Hermon, Damascus being at that time too powerful to be attacked with any hope of success; its western border is bounded by the Sea of Galilee and the Upper Jordan; while on the east it extends into the desert of Arabia. It includes a vast extent of elevated plain and pasture-land, well watered, partially strewn with basaltic rocks, but capable of supporting vast flocks and herds. To the south the plain stretches away unbroken till cleft by the gorge of the Jarmuk, beyond which the

country becomes more undulated and woody, terminating in the lofty range of the mountains of Gilead. South-west the plain is more or less interrupted with rocks, and terminates abruptly in the precipitous slopes of high hills as they drop suddenly into the Sea of Galilee. The physical characteristics of the region are almost as various as its names. The extreme north is formed by the lower slopes of Hermon, an inaccessible mountainous region, which, however, helps to fertilise the rich country at its foot by sending into it numerous streams from its precipitous slopes. Below this, lying on the east, next to the Huleh and Sea of Galilee, and rising to a plateau some 3,000 feet (914metres) above that sea, are the province today called the Golan from its ancient capital, Golan: an area capable of supporting a large population. Towards the Huleh which lies deep below it the land falls sharply. Ancient Bashan, therefore, was an elevated area of fine pasturage and forests. Here grew the oaks, here fed the bulls and cattle that made the area famous. And here, also, are found the giant cities that have since been discovered and are the amazement and admiration of archaeologists. Houses and fortresses made of thick slabs of rock designed to resist any attack.

VERSE 29

“And Moses gave inheritance unto the half tribe of Manasseh; and this was the possession of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families” — Manasseh signifies *Forgetting*.

VERSE 30

“And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan” — See Deut. 3:1-11.

“And all the towns of Jair, which are in Bashan, threescore cities” — Jair (*He Enlightens*) exerted himself, and by a notable exploit took the “small town” of the area which he called Havoth-Jair, or The Villages of Jair (Num. 32:41).

VERSE 31

“And half Gilead” — Some of Gilead extended south into the area granted to Gad, hence the description “half Gilead”.

“And Ashtaroth, and Edrei cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan” — These cities were the headquarters of King Og (Deut. 1:4), and were extremely powerful cities. Og was defeated at Edrei, which city is the

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

wonder of archaeologists who have examined its ruins. They are amazed at the thickness and strength of its walls.

“Were pertaining unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh” — Machir means *Sold*. He was the only son of Manasseh (Gen. 50:23), and from him developed the various families that ultimately made up the numerous tribe (Num. 26:29; Num. 32:40-41). It could have been that Machir was a traditional family name passed on to firstborns as the various families developed.

“Even to one half of the children of Machir by their families” — Machir represented the tribe of Manasseh which was

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

divided into two parts: east and west of Jordan (Josh. 17:5-6).

VERSE 32

“These are the countries which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho eastward” — The “plains of Moab” includes the territory that Sihon had conquered, but which, in turn, was taken by Moses from the Amorites, and distributed to the two and a half tribes.

VERSE 33

“But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: Yahweh God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them” — See note v. 14.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ALLOTMENT OF THE WESTERN TRIBES

The second great task to be undertaken is the allotment of the land to the nine and a half tribes. This is entrusted to a commission of ten chiefs under the joint superintendence of Joshua and Eleazar the high priest. The latter, as representative of the theocracy assumes the paramount authority; the former gives to it the sanction of the military and civil authority. The distribution of the various portions is to be by Lot, in order that it might be recognised as entirely a matter of Divine disposal. The Lot, however, determines merely the relative position of each portion and the tribe to which it falls; the extent and limits of each inheritance are settled by the commissioners on due consideration of the requirements of each case. The solemn casting of lots takes place in the camp at Gilgal, and the tribe of Judah is treated first. This is appropriate as it excelled the others in population and military capacity, and led in the order of march in the wilderness. But before commencement of the proceedings a claim for a specific inheritance, supported by the elders of the tribe, is made by Caleb. This is in accordance with the appointment of Moses, and he is granted Hebron as requested by him.

The Inheritance of the Western Tribes To Be Determined by Lot — vv. 1-5

The Lot is doubtless drawn in conjunction with the Urim and Thummim, and perhaps taken from the bag formed by the Breastplate of Judgment (Exod. 28:30).

VERSE 1

“And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them” — As high priest, Eleazar (*Helped of God — El*) represented Yahweh in the transaction. The appointment of Eleazar and the ten tribal heads for the purpose of supervising the dividing of the land had been made by Moses (Num. 34:17-18).

VERSE 2

“By lot was their inheritance, as Yahweh commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe” — The Lot was doubtless conducted in conjunction with the Urim and Thummim associated with the breastplate, and perhaps drawn from the bag formed by it (Exod. 28:30; Prov. 16:33). In any case it revealed God's direction and revelation, so that the allocated territory was a Divine inheritance. It was for that reason that Naboth refused to sell his lot to Ahab, even though it would have been to his material advantage to do so. He viewed such an action as being tantamount to selling for material gain the Divine inheritance of the Kingdom of the future (1 Kings 21:3). For Moses' instructions regarding the lot see notes on Num. 26:55.

VERSE 3

“For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan” — See Num. 32:29-42; Deut 3:12-17.

“But unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them” — The scattering of the Levites throughout the tribes of Israel is reiterated several times in these chapters (Ch. 13:14,33; 14:3-4), emphasising the importance of their status, and the lessons it was intended to impress. The Levites were urged to study and expound the Law, and were scattered throughout the nation so as to be in a position to witness to the Truth to the members of the other tribes. As a witnessing community throughout the Land, without any defined tribal inheritance, they enacted the parable of strangers and pilgrims in the nation without a “continuing city”. They were there as the saints should be in the world: in it but maintaining a separateness from it.

VERSE 4

“For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim” — Joseph was given the birthright as far as inheritance was concerned (1 Chron. 5:1-2) and therefore received a double portion of inheritance (Deut. 21:15-17). He was represented by two tribes instead of one in contrast to all the other sons.

“Therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell in, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance” — The granting of inheritances to the two tribes of Joseph made one of the other twelve tribes redundant, for thirteen tribes would be one too many. Levi, therefore, was scattered among the other tribes as a priestly tribe, ministering to the spiritual needs of the people. See Num. 35:2-8. They blended this with rural labours. The Hebrew word rendered “suburbs” is *migrashah* and denotes *open pasture country*, from a root signifying to *draw out or separate*.

VERSE 5

“As Yahweh commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land” — Joshua separated the land according to the Divine specifications.

Caleb Obtains His Inheritance — vv. 6-15

As an outstanding man of faith and courage Caleb has “wholly followed Yahweh

Elohim of Israel” (Josh. 14:14). As Joshua’s companion he opposed the ten faithless spies manifesting confidence in Yahweh, and independence of outlook. Since then, he has assisted and supported Joshua throughout the difficult days of conquest. He was promised an inheritance in the land by Moses at the time when the first generation had been condemned to wander without hope in the wilderness (Deut. 1:36,37). Now he heads a deputation of principal men of Judah to claim his lot. He makes request for the land adjacent to Hebron, and despite his age claims he has both the ability and readiness to wrest it from the enemy.

VERSE 6

“Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the Son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him”

— This is the first mention of Caleb since the death of Moses. He seems to have had the gift of knowing when to keep silent, and when to speak. When he spoke he was always on Yahweh’s side (Num. 13:30; 14:8). He had been promised “the land he had trodden upon” (Deut. 1:36), so now he registers his claim. He had been preserved alive (v. 10) to vindicate the Divine promise before all Israel. His character is described in vv. 8,9,14. Because he “wholly followed Yahweh” he can be described as a “complete man” (Ecc. 12:13). It is significant that in the allocation of the land Caleb is brought to attention first, witnessing to his faith and courage. The circumstances, too, are remarkable. His name signifies *Dog* the term used to describe a Gentile (Phil. 3:2), whilst Jephunneh, according to Gesenius, signifies *For Whom A Way is Prepared*. From the details of the chapter before us, the character of Caleb becomes clearly defined. We learn from it:

* That Caleb treasured the promise in his heart. So completely did he do so that he is able to quote the date and place he received it from Moses, some 45 years after it was given (Josh. 14:7,10,12).

* He expected to fight for his inheritance, and so recognised that life under Yahweh is a life of action, of endeavour (see Matt. 11:12).

* He expected hardship, and was prepared to endure it. He knew that the Anakim infested the country, but had faith to believe that Yahweh had spared him for something greater than retirement; and he realised that he had been

granted the strength to accomplish it (Josh. 14:11).

* He manifested both a dependence and confidence. He made no boast of his own ability or power, but rested on Yahweh (Josh. 14:12; cp. Rom. 8:37).

* He radiated loyalty and faith without waiting to receive promotion. In company with Joshua he obviously inspired faith in the younger generation during the years of wandering, preparing them to enter the land.

* Caleb had to ask for that which had been promised him. He made request believing he would receive. He conquered through faith (Mark 11:24).

* He was strong in memory of God's Word. He reminded Joshua: "Thou knowest the thing that Yahweh said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea" — It must have been touching to Joshua to hear his old friend reminding him of the joint actions of faith they had manifested some 45 years earlier. See Num. 14:30; Deut. 1:38-39.

"Thou knowest the thing that Yahweh said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea" — See Num. 32:10-12.

VERSE 7

"Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Yahweh sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land" — This means that Caleb had lived through the period of persecution in Egypt during Moses' forty years in the wilderness of Midian. He therefore was in a position to fully appreciate the privilege of deliverance from the land of Egypt.

"And I brought him word again as it was in mine heart" — Before all the leaders of Israel, Caleb with Joshua had fearlessly declared that with Yahweh's help they could surmount every difficulty, destroy the Canaanites and occupy the land. He proclaimed his belief openly, honestly, boldly according to his heartfelt faith (see Num. 13:26-33; 14:6-10). Yahweh finds pleasure in such open expressions of confidence revealing what is hidden in the heart. Caleb had both the faith and courage to conquer with God's help, and openly proclaimed it.

VERSE 8

"Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed Yahweh my God" — Both Caleb and Joshua had

resisted the pressure to which the people subjected them, and had loyally proclaimed their belief in the ability of God to give Israel the victory.

VERSE 9

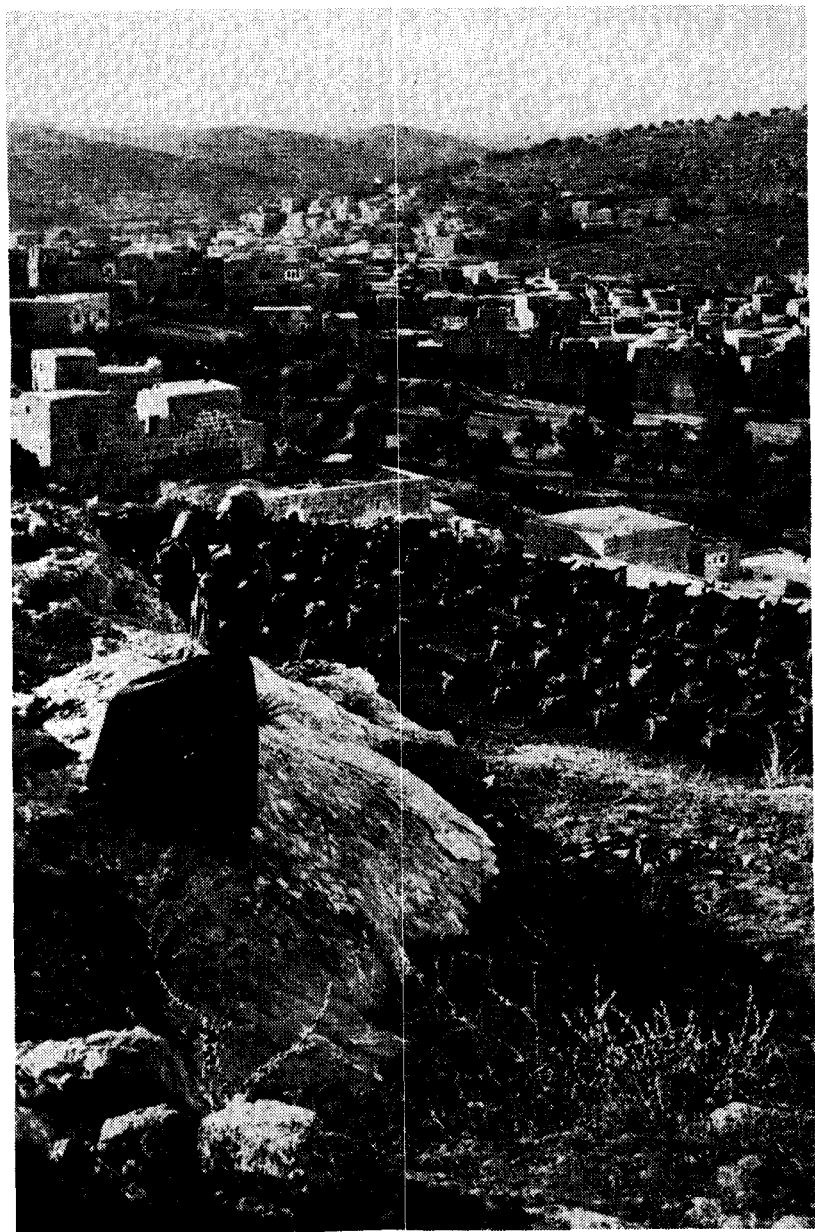
"And Moses swear on that day, saying" — Caleb reminded Joshua what Yahweh had promised through Moses forty-five years earlier.

"Saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Yahweh my God" — The Hebrew expression denotes a heart filled with the desire to serve God. Caleb followed Yahweh faithfully, refusing to deviate therefrom, to lower his standards, or to swerve from his determination. Giants did not perturb him, the faithless multitude that threatened to stone him did not weaken his resolve. He fearlessly faced up to the challenge of such opposition. His name signifies *Dog*, but he, as a dog, faithfully followed the Shepherd of Israel (Psa. 80:1; cp. Num. 14:24). Though no specific reference is recorded that Hebron would be granted him as a possession, it was at least implied (Deut. 1:36). The reference to him and his seed possessing it *forever* is significant, for it reaches forward to the Millennium when evidently Caleb and some of his descendants will inherit the site permanently. For notes relating to the Divine commendation of Caleb, see Num. 14:24.

VERSE 10

"And now, behold, Yahweh hath kept me alive, as He said, these forty and five years, even since Yahweh spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness" — Israel wandered in the wilderness for 38 years, so that the conquest of the land must have occupied 7 years (cp. v. 15; Deut. 2:14).

"And now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old" — Caleb had lived through the period when Israel was enslaved in Egypt, and Moses had fled to Midian. He had witnessed many wonders performed by Yahweh on behalf of His people. He recognised the hand of God in keeping him alive to that point of time so that he could enter into his inheritance. His experiences illustrate the words of Paul: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31; See also Phil. 4:13; Heb. 11:32-33).



Hebron — Set in a valley surrounded by hills.

VERSE 11

“As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in” — Caleb, like Moses, had retained full vigour of health and strength (Deut. 34:7), and believed that these God-given benefits had been granted him for the purpose of fulfilling the Divine will in the conquest of that portion of the land to which he laid claim. He believed that he had been given the strength and ability to wage war successfully, and saw the need of providing an example for others, younger men, to do likewise. In that regard he acted as a shepherd leading the way out and in.

VERSE 12

“Now therefore give me this mountain” — At eighty-five years of age he had the confidence to ask for and to conquer a mountain, and to lay hold of a territory infested with the Anakim (Jud. 1:20). It was typical of him that he ever sought the heights, and was never content with the average or commonplace. He always aimed high. His inheritance was fittingly called Kirjath-Arba (*The City of the Four* — see Rev. 21:16), or Hebron (*Union* — or *Fellowship*). Close to Hebron was found that piece of territory that Israel might fairly call its own: the field containing the Cave of Machpelah. Adjacent to Hebron came the notable bunch of grapes brought back by the spies (Num. 13:22-24). The winding valley, whose terraced slopes were covered with rich verdure and vines was a great contrast to the naked hills of Judah, and so represented to the rest of the tribes, the choice prize of the fight of faith. It was appropriate that the place named Hebron, *Union* or *Fellowship* be granted to Caleb who was of Gentile extraction, for he enjoyed full fellowship with Israel. His name signifies not only *Dog*, but by another basic root is said to denote *Wholehearted*. He certainly characterised that quality.

“Whereof Yahweh spake in that day” — The statement to which Caleb referred is nowhere recorded. However, it must have been given, for Caleb reminds Joshua that he had heard of it. Caleb must have described Hebron to Moses, who then received permission of Yahweh to grant it to the courageous and faithful Caleb.

“For thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced” — Indeed it was the sight of the Anakim and of the strong, fortified cities in which they dwelt that had deterred the faithless spies; but not Caleb. See Num. 13:22,28,33.

“If so be Yahweh will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out as Yahweh said” — Caleb did not presume on Yahweh by making demands as to what He should do. He exercised both faith and patience, and appended “if God wills” to all his proposals. See the same expression used by the three faithful friends in Babylon (Dan. 3:17). Without doubting the extent of God’s power, men of faith recognise its reality without presuming upon it. Caleb had no doubt that granted the help of God, he would succeed in conquering the area to which he made claim.

VERSE 13

“And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance” — In blessing Caleb, Joshua wished him well in his impending contest with the Anakim (Josh. 15:13; 21:11-12; Jud. 1:20). It is true that the king of Hebron had been defeated in the battle of Beth-horon (Josh. 10:36-37), the Anakim driven out from the precincts of the city (Josh. 11:21-22), and the king of the neighbouring city of Debir also defeated in battle (Josh. 10:38; 12:13), but evidently the Anakim had filtered back into their cities, and had to be again expelled therefrom. This was partly done by Othniel, Caleb’s brother who married Caleb’s daughter, and in consequence became his son-in-law (Josh. 15:16-17).

VERSE 14

“Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite unto this day, because that he wholly followed Yahweh God of Israel” — See reference above to Hebron, and note the exhortation of 1 Cor. 15:58.

VERSE 15

“And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba, which Arba was a great man among the Anakims” — As noted above, Kirjath-arba signifies *City of the Four*, probably because of four Hittite chieftains who once dwelt there, but typically it pointed forward to the New Jerusalem which is described as a “City of the four” (Rev. 21:16), and association with which

ensures union or fellowship (*Hebron*) with God. The Anakim (the *im* denotes the plural, and there is no need of the "s") were a race of physically strong and tall men whose appearance implanted fear in the hearts of the ten faithless spies. "We saw the children of Anak there" they moaned to Moses (Num. 13:28). Caleb, therefore, must have derived particular satisfaction in successfully battling with them and by so doing, not only established

his right to the site, but demonstrated the truth of his claim made in the face of the doubting and faithless spies: "We are well able to overcome them" (Num. 13:10).

"And the land had rest from war" — See note Ch. 11:23. This was the seventh year, and therefore a sabbatical year (Lev. 25:4). The enemy had been overthrown on a national basis, and the way was made open for each tribe and family to lay hold on their individual inheritances.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE BORDERS OF JUDAH'S INHERITANCE

Judah is granted the largest inheritance west of Jordan. It is assessed to occupy some 2,300 square miles (3,701 kms), being nearly one-third of the whole country in the west. Commencing from the lower end of the Dead Sea, with its treeless waste of salt-marsh, the southern boundary passes westward along the south side of Maaleh-acrabbim "the ascent of scorpions", and then follows the mountainous area above the wilderness of Zin, turning south to encompass Kadesh-Barnea, whence it turns abruptly to the westward till it reaches the "river of Egypt", the Wady el-Arish. This continues to be its border unto the Mediterranean, which forms its western boundary. The eastern border is the Dead Sea from north to south. The northern border, commencing at the lower part of Jordan, traverses the town of Beth-hogla, two miles from the river; then passing south of Jericho, it turns up the valley of Achor, by a famous stone erected to commemorate some achievement of a Reubenite named Bohan in the late wars, and then follows the usual road from the Jordan valley to Jerusalem which is given the name of Adummim, or Red. About two miles from Jerusalem the line reaches the waters of Enshemesh, just below Bethany: then skirting the hill Ophel south of the Temple Mount by Enrogel, the boundary follows the valley of Hinnom, on the south and south-west of the city, mounting from the ravine to the ridge above the valley of Rephaim, with portion of Jerusalem seeming to be within its boundary. Skirting the ridge on the north-west of Jerusalem, the border is drawn to the "water of Nephtoah", some 2½ miles north-west of Jerusalem, passing to Kirjath-jearim, then moving south to Bethshemesh and Timnah, three miles to the west. Then bending towards the Philistine city of Ekron, it ends at the Mediterranean Sea about 11 miles (17 kms) south of Joppa. The territory thus defined being about 65 miles (104 kms) long and 50 miles (80 kms) broad, is of varied character of great natural strength. It comprises a

number of distinct regions. First there is the Negeb, the south, or dry land which lies between the central hills and the desert: today a series of rolling hills clothed with scanty herbage, bare of trees and shrubs, with a look of barrenness about it which hardly suggests the fine pasturage that it then afforded. Next there is the Lowland, the Shephelah, the strip of country between the central hills and the sandy shore of the Mediterranean. This is rich in corn lands and orchards, and comprises the garden and granary of Judah: a region of soft white limestone hills undulating in low waves towards the hill country of the east, and rising in fertile slopes to some 500 feet above sea level. The third and most important division of the territory of Judah is the "hill country". Beginning in the Negev below Hebron, it extends on the north to Jerusalem, being bounded on the east by the wilderness of the Dead Sea, and on the west by the Shephelah. The highest point is in the neighbourhood of Hebron, and reaches nearly 3,500 feet above sea level. These original possessions of Judah were later curtailed.

Judah's Eastern and Southern Borders
— vv. 1-4

Judah's eastern border follows the western coast of the Dead Sea, and the southern border is marked out as it travels west through the Negev to the Mediterranean.

VERSE 1

"This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families" — Judah signifies *Praise*. In this statement, Dr. Young renders "by" as *for*, which is more appropriate.

"Even to the border of Edom, the wilderness of Zin southward was the uttermost part of the south coast" — The tract of country known as the wilderness of Zin forms the southern barrier of the Land of Promise. It presents an appearance of shifting sands with a surface broken by innumerable undulations and low hills. A few stunted trees grow among the hills, but generally it is of sparse vegetation. See notes at Num. 13:21; 33:36.

VERSE 2

"And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the bay that looketh southward" — See Num. 34:3. Instead of "bay" read *tongue*, according to

the Hebrew. The southern portion of the Dead Sea pokes out like a tongue, hence the expression used. This portion of the Sea is far shallower than the northern part. Today, because of incessant use by Israel and Jordan in extracting bromides, potash and other products, the water has been exhausted and must be replenished.

VERSE 3

"And it went out to the south side to Maaleh-acrabbim" — This name signifies *The Ascent of the Scorpions*. It describes a very steep and winding ascent that leads out of the stark white barren wastes south of Sodom and extends westward toward the Negev.

"And passed along to Zin" — Zin signifies a *Thorn-bush*. It is an extensive wilderness in the north of the Negev.

"And ascended up on the south side unto Kadesh-barnea" — It was at Kadesh-barnea that the tribes camped, and the spies were sent out to search the land. The name signifies *The Sanctuary of the Wandering Son*. See notes on Num. 14.

"And passed along to Hezron" — Hezron denotes *Shut In*. It was to the west of Kadesh barnea.

"And went up to Adar" — In Num.

34:4 this is given as Hazar-addar, signifying *Village of Plenty*. The site is unknown.

“And fetched a compass to Karkaa” — To “fetch a compass” is to make a turn. So the border turned around to include Karkaa which signifies *Ground or Floor*.

VERSE 4

“From thence it passed toward Azmon” — Azmon signifies *Bonelike*. The site today is unknown.

“And went out unto the river of Egypt” — The river of Egypt as here described denotes the Wadi El-Arish, and not the River Nile. The word “River” is *Nahal* and denotes a winter torrent, or a valley through which runs a brook. It is to be distinguished from the word *Nahar* which describes a large, permanently flowing river, and is used to denote either the Euphrates or the Nile. This is the word used in Gen. 15:18, and which, in that place, relates to the Nile.

“And the goings out of that coast were at the sea; this shall be your south coast” — The rest of the southern border of Judah followed the Wadi El Arish to the Mediterranean.

The Eastern and Northern Borders

— vv. 5-12

Judah's northern border abuts on the territory of Benjamin. Touching Jerusalem it extends in an uneven line to the Mediterranean.

VERSE 5

“And the east border was the salt sea, even unto the end of Jordan” — The Eastern border reached to where the Jordan empties itself into the Dead Sea.

“And their border in the north quarter was from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan” — The northern border of Jordan commenced from the point that the Jordan entered the Dead Sea and moved in an irregular line south and west.

VERSE 6

“And the border went up to Beth-hogla, and passed along by the north of Beth-arabah” — Beth-hogla signifies *The Home of the Partridge*. It was situated on the border of Judah and Benjamin about 4 miles south of Jericho (Ch. 18:19,21). Beth-arabah, or the *House of the Arabah* was adjacent to it (Josh. 18:19,21).

“And the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben” — The word

Bohan signifies *Thumb*. Evidently this stone, perhaps shaped like a thumb, was given this name to commemorate some act of heroism on the part of this Reubenite during the period of the wars with the Canaanites, when the warriors of the eastern tribes co-operated with their western brethren in conquering the enemy.

VERSE 7

“And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward looking toward Gilgal” — The border followed the winding valley of Achor which ascends to the hill country north of Jerusalem towards Debir, or *Oracle*, taking in the view of Gilgal or Goliloth of Ch. 18:17.

“That is before the going up to Adummim, which is on the south side of the river” — Adummim signifies *The Red Places*, or *Places of Blood* and is identified by some with a huge mass of purplish rock on the ascent to Jerusalem. Others identify it with the bloodshed of which the place was notorious from ancient times. The ascent to Jerusalem passes the inn of the Good Samaritan, the traditional site of the Lord's parable. The place was noted for the waylaying of travellers, and the blood that was shed in consequence. The word rendered “river” is *nahal*, and signifies a summer torrent.

“And En-shemesh” — The word signifies *The Fountain of the Sun*, and is identified with a spring just below Bethany. Hence the border followed the road that today leads to Jerusalem.

“And the goings out thereof were at En-rogel” — This signifies *The Fullers Spring*. It is found in the Valley of the Kidron south-east of Jerusalem. It was the place where the two young men hid during the revolt of Absalom. They had been selected to take news to David of the decision of Absalom's conference which was attended by Hushai and Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:6,17).

VERSE 8

“And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom” — The *Dictionary of Bible Names* gives Hinnom to mean *Drowsy*. Others give it as signifying *Groaning*. Nothing is known of the man who gave the valley its name, but the notorious uses to which it was put are recorded in the frequent references to it throughout Scripture. In the N.T. the Val-

ley of Hinnom became *Gehenna*, frequently rendered as *Hell*. It is a valley that encompasses the south and west of the city of Jerusalem.

“Unto the south side of the Jebusite” — The Valley of Hinnom is south of the City of David, the south-eastern portion of Jerusalem, in Joshua’s time occupied by the Jebusites.

“The same is Jerusalem” — The border of Judah dipped to the south so that Jerusalem was on its northern border, and yet within the tribe of Benjamin (see Neh. 11:4).

“And the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward” — The mountain that is east of, or before, Hinnom and therefore lies to the westward of it, is Mount Moriah. This is the Temple mount. The Valley of the Giants is the Emek Rephaim (2 Sam. 5:18), or the Valley of Rephaim. It runs in a south-westerly direction extending as far south as Bethlehem. At Jerusalem it terminates in a slight rocky ridge, forming the brow to the Valley of Hinnom. The Valley of Rephaim is a broad, fertile valley (Isa. 17:5), and became, on more than one occasion, the camping ground of hostile armies. (See 2 Sam. 5:18,22; 23:13).

VERSE 9

“And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah” — Nephtoah signifies *An Opening*. It is today identified with a spring above the village of that name about 2½ miles north-west of Jerusalem. See *Unger’s Dictionary*.

“And went out to the cities of mount Ephron” — Ephron signifies *Fawnlike*. Nothing is known of “cities” that are related to a mount of such a name, and the suggestion is that the word is wrong. The *Septuagint* eliminates the term *cities*, suggesting that it was not in the Hebrew text when that translation was made. Yohanan Aharoni in *The Land of the Bible* suggests that the name “probably describes hilltops in the forested regions between Jerusalem and Beth-shemesh which were still virtually void of settlements.

“And the border was drawn to Baalah, which is Kirjath-jearim” — Baalah signifies *Mistress* and possibly relates to some goddess worshipped in the vicinity. Kir-

jath-jearim signifies *City of Forests* and has been identified north of Jerusalem.

VERSE 10

“And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto Mount Seir” — This is a different location to that which became the capital of the Edomites. The word Seir signifies *Rough* or *Hairy*, denoting the nature of the country. It is identified with a high rocky ridge between Kirjath-jearim and Beth-shemesh composed of rugged peaks of a wild and desolate appearance. See *Unger’s Dictionary*.

“And passed along unto the side of mount Jearim” — Jearim signifies *Forests*. There is no mountain of that name; the expression no doubt signifying the tree-covered nature of the country.

“Which is Chesalon on the north side” — This name signifies *Fertile*, or *Foolish Confidence*. The site is identified with modern Kesla, about 10 miles (16 kms) west of Jerusalem.

“And went down to Beth-shemesh, and passed on to Timnah” — Beth-shemesh signifies *House of the Sun*. The ruins are identified today about 15 miles (24 kms) north-east of Gath on the main road from Askelon and Ashdod to Jerusalem. Timnah signifies *An Allotted Portion*. It was situated about 2 miles west of Beth-shemesh. The border therefore followed the Valley of Sorek to the sea.

VERSE 11

“And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel: and the goings out of the border were at the sea” — Ekron (*Extermination*) was located in the Valley of Sorek; mount Baalah (cp. v. 9) is unidentified, and Jabneel (*God Builds*) is identified with modern Jebuah about 2 miles from the Sea and about 7 miles south of Joppa.

VERSE 12

“And the west border was to the great sea, and the coast thereof. This is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families” — Though the border of Judah extended to the Mediterranean, the coastline continued to be dominated by the Philistines, whom Judah failed to dislodge.

Caleb’s Portion — vv. 13-20

Caleb’s portion is included within the

territory of Judah with which tribe he is identified. With vigour the old warrior clears it of the Anakim, and with the assistance of Othniel who becomes his son-in-law, he extends his possessions. In his zeal and energy the aged Caleb provides an example of faith and works for others to emulate. He is ably assisted by Othniel his kinsman, who is granted Achsah in marriage. Achsah, as ambitious as her father, urges her husband to demand an increase in the inheritance offered him. In doing so, and being granted her request, she also provides a wonderful example in type for the Bride of Christ to follow.

VERSE 13

“And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh, he gave a part among the children of Judah” — Caleb was a Kenite, and so from Gentile descent (see note Josh. 14:6), but because of his faith he was granted a place within the royal tribe of Judah.

“According to the commandment of Yahweh to Joshua” — Caleb’s inheritance within the tribe of Judah was directly endorsed by Divine grant.

“Even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron” — Hebron (*Union*) was originally styled Kirjath-arba, *The City of the Four*. It derived this name from Arba, the founder or conqueror of it. Anak signifies *Long-neck*, a title that evidently was given him because of his stature. His strong physique was passed on to his descendants who therefore are described as the Anakim, or *Long-necked Ones*. It was the strong physique and tall statue of the Anakim in particular that discouraged the Israelites who searched out the land. Ten of the spies experienced such an inferiority complex when they saw these “giants” as to turn them from attempting to conquer the land (Num. 13:22-28). The sight of their eyes caused them to lose the vision of faith and with it their inheritance. See Num. 13:33.

VERSE 14

“And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak” — 45 years earlier Caleb had boldly declared that with the help of God the Israelites could take the land, by defeating the Anakim (Num. 13:30). Now, as an old man of 85 he is anxious to prove his ability to do so.

“Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak” — Their names signify

Whitish, Brother of a Gift or Bribe, and To Heap Up or Accumulate. It will be noted that these three “sons” are described as occupying Hebron 45 years earlier when the spies visited the area (Num. 13:22). Evidently the names do not denote individuals as such, but families, the descendants of which were still in occupation of the place. As Hebron was originally called Kirjath-arba, or *City of The Four*, its inhabitants evidently were divided into four family groups, one of which, probably the firstborn, retained the name of the father.

VERSE 15

“And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher” — Kirjath-sepher signifies *Book-town*, whereas Debir means *Oracle or Revelation*. The place was also called Kirjath-sanner or *Precept-town* (Josh. 15:49). Evidently the place was noted for learning. As such, faith was required to conquer the false teaching of the Apostasy.

VERSE 16

“And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife” — Debir was about 12 miles (19 kms) from Hebron. Not content with taking the city of his possession, the vigorous old warrior determined to take the neighbouring city as well, possibly to free Hebron from the pollution of its false teaching. Kirjath-sepher or Debir was situated on a hill above a deep valley, rich in verdure, being fed from a copious riverlet which rising at the top of the glen, falls to its lowest depths. With an eye to protecting and extending his own inheritance, Caleb offered as prize the hand in marriage of his daughter Achsah (signifying *Leg-band* or *Ornament* — possibly indicative of her beauty). This would effectively tie the two cities together, giving added protection to each.

VERSE 17

“And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb took it” — Othniel signifies *Lion of El (God)* and *Kenaz Hunter*. Othniel later became renowned for delivering Israel from the tyranny of Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia (Jud. 3:8-11). Othniel was an outstanding character. As Judge he was filled with the Spirit of God; as magistrate, he acted

firmly and justly in the decisions he made; as warrior he effectively led his forces with boldness and skill; as a wise administrator he brought peace to the people (Jud. 3:10). Here he is described as the "brother" of Caleb, but elsewhere as his "younger brother" (Jud. 1:13; 3:9), but as he was the son of Kenaz whilst Caleb was the son of Jephunneh (Josh. 15:13; 1 Chron. 4:15), it is obvious that the term does not signify the close relationship that would be indicated by its use today. The Hebrew *'arch* states Strong, is "used in the widest sense of literal relationship and metaphoric affinity or resemblance". It is applied to those who are children of one father by different mothers, that is, to half-brothers (Gen. 42:15), or to brothers by the same mother but different fathers (Jud. 8:19). It is also applied to a kinsman, a man of the same tribe (Num. 8:26; 2 Sam. 19:12-13), to one of the same nation (Acts 2:29). Therefore, Othniel could have been a younger half-brother to Caleb, or merely a relative of the tribe of Kennizzites.

VERSE 18

"And it came to pass, as she came unto him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field" — The Hebrew has the definite article: *the* field, evidently a wellknown and desirable acquisition. But when did she request this? Evidently when Othniel came to claim his bride. It was the custom in ancient times, for the Bridegroom to go to the home of the bride and conduct her to her new abode. Othniel, having won the hand of Achsah, went with his friends to the home of Caleb to claim his Bride. As she was now under his jurisdiction, and as was proper, she requested of her husband that he ask of her father further privileges beyond those already granted. Like many other strong men, Othniel showed shyness in the presence of his father-in-law, and was reluctant to do so.

"And she lighted off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou?" — Her action was a gesture of respect to her father (See Gen. 24:64; 1 Sam. 25:23). Caleb recognised this as preliminary to a request, and enquired as to what she wanted.

VERSE 19

"Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land" — The word *Negev*, "south land"; signifies

dry land. Debir was about 12 miles (19 kms) south-west of Hebron and in a much dryer area.

"Give me also springs of water" — Here and in Jud. 1:15 are the only places the Hebrew is so rendered. *Gulloth* or "plains" is taken by some as a proper name describing a place with higher and lower levels. As noted above Debir was on a rising with a sharp slope before it.

"And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs" — See note on Debir above. When one spring failed the other might well retain its flow providing for continuous water.

VERSE 20

"This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families" — The borders having been established, each of the families were required to imitate the action of Caleb and Othniel to obtain their inheritances.

The Southern District of Judah

— vv. 21-32

Many of the towns listed in this chapter become famous in the history of Israel, for events which immortalised them. Others fade into insignificance, so that today their actual locations are no longer known. Meanwhile, the area of Judah is divided into twelve districts, and though the reading of some of this may appear monotonous it should be remembered that this is as much Scripture as other parts of the Word. The first district listed is the Negev. The best known towns of this area are Kadesh, Beersheba, Hormah and Ziklag. Portion of it is also allocated to Simeon — Ch. 19:1-9.

The Twelve Districts of Judah

— vv. 21-63

The territory allocated to Judah is divided into twelve districts each being summarised by the number of cities contained therein. In the Age to come the whole land will be divided into twelve parts by the Apostles (Matt. 19:28).

VERSE 21

"And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward" — The southern border of Judah abutted on Edom. The word "southward" signifies the *Negev*. The first district listed is the *Negev*.

"Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur" — The names of these towns signify: *God Gathered, Flock and Lodging.*

158 Jer. 2:23 Luc. 13:32
 Jer. 31:3 Jer. 13:17
 Eph. 1:10

VERSE 22

“And Kinah, and Dimonah, and Adadah” — These towns signify: *Lamentation, She pineth, Festival.*

VERSE 23

“And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan” — These towns signify: *Sanctuary, Enclosure and Extensive.* The Hazor of this verse must not be confused with that of Joshua 11:1 which is situated in the far north.

VERSE 24

“Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth” — Ziph signifies *Flowing*, and is identified with modern Ez-zeifeh. Telem and Bealoth signify: *To Treat Violently, and Mistress.*

VERSE 25

“And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, and Hezron which is Hazor” — Two towns only are named in this verse: New Hazor and Kerioth Hezron which is Hazor (i.e. the old Hazor). “Kerioth, prefixed to a name, bespeaks military occupation, whilst Hazor (*Enclosure*) suggests pastoral pursuits. The place described, therefore, would seem to have been an ancient pastoral settlement which had been fortified by the Anakim, and, accordingly renamed Kerioth; to which name the men of Judah, after they had captured it, added

that of Hezron in honour of one of their ancestors (Gen. 46:12; Ruth 4:18). See *The Land of the Bible* by Y. Aharoni. In the latter statement of this verse, Hadattah (or *New*) should be connected to Hazor, to form the name of New Hazor, identified today with el-Hudeira situated towards the Dead Sea. See *Unger’s Dictionary*. This “New Hazor” is identified with Kerioth-hezron. Kerioth denotes *cities* whilst Hezron (see v. 2) denotes *Shut In*. Once conquered this place was renamed. The name Judas Iscariot is derived from Kerioth, or *City in Judah*. Judas Iscariot was a man of the cities, in contrast to the fishermen of Galilee.

VERSE 26

“Amam, and Shema, and Moladah” — These names means: *Gathering Spot, Fame* (identified with Sheba — Josh. 19:2) and *Origin or Birth*. Moladah was later assigned to Simeon (see Josh. 19:1-2). The site is approximately 20 miles south of Hebron.

VERSE 27

“And Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and Beth-palet” — Or *Valley of Fortune, Oppulent, and House of Escape*. The names suggest a pagan influence.

VERSE 28

“And Hazar-shual, and Beersheba, and

Othniel’s Inheritance — Type and Antitype

The incident provided both type and example. Othniel, the Lion of Judah, the Deliverer of Israel, obtained by conquest a Bride whose name signifies *Ornament*. Their prize is termed the Oracle or Book-Town. They obtained fertile fields fertilised by living water to refresh their inheritance, which otherwise would have been in a dry place! They receive that refreshment by both seeking and asking for it. As a type it set before the Bride of the Lord that refreshment in the wilderness of life is available by seeking and praying for it.

The action of Othniel also provided an outstanding example. It demonstrated to Israel that whilst the Lot determined the inheritance of the particular tribe of which he was a member, each must “work out his salvation” by personally working for it. Thus Othniel obtained more than he was promised through his act of faith. Others, lacking his faith and vigour, hesitated, and lost their inheritance. His example showed that both faith and works are necessary.

Bizthojah — These names give *The Village of Jackals; Well of Oath* (or Seven); and *Contempt of Yahweh*.

VERSE 29

“Baalah, and Iim, and Azem” — These names signify: *Mistress, Heaps or ruins, and Bone*. The last place has been identified about 11 miles south of Beersheba.

VERSE 30

“And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah” — The names signify *God is a Generator; A Measure of Opposition, Devoted to Destruction*. It was from the latter place that Israel was turned back under Moses (Num. 21:3).

VERSE 31

“And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah” — These names signify *Enclosed in Grief, Dunghill and Palm branch*. The Philistines occupied Ziklag, but Achish gave possession of it to David. It was spoiled by the Amalekites during his absence, but the spoil recovered by him (see 1 Sam. 27:6; 30:1-19).

VERSE 32

“And Lebaath, and Shilhim, and Ain and Rimmon” — These names mean: *Lionesses* (see Josh. 19:6); *Missiles* (Ch. 19:6); *Eye or Spring* (Ch. 19:7); *Pomegranate* (Ch. 19:7).

“All the cities are twenty and nine, with their villages” — The A.V. provides more than 29 names. The confusion is due either to a copyist confusing letters similar in form which were used as numerals; or to the separation of names that originally were one, as in v. 25. This statement completes division 1 of Judah.

THE TWELVE DISTRICTS OF JUDAH — vv. 21-63

The territory allocated to Judah is divided into twelve distinct Districts; each district being summarised by the number of cities contained therein. See v. 32, 36, 41, 47, 51, 54, 57, 59, 60, 62.

District 1: The Negev — vv. 21-32

The dry area in the south.

District 2: The Shephelah — vv. 33-36

This defined the area east and west of the north-south depression from Zerah and nearby Eshtaol (Jud. 13:25), and just north

of the Valley of Sorek to Azekah which dominates the valley of Elah just west of the great depression (the Arabah), and the heights north (Jarmuch) and south of the Wadi es-Sant, overshadowed by the heights of Socoh and Adullam. The best known places are Zorah, Jarmuch, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah. The total is given as 14 cities (Josh. 15:36), but 15 are listed. The LXX omits Adithaim, perhaps in order to harmonise the record. However, it could have been that the Hebrew took no heed of Zorah as relating to Dan, for it was on the border. The Shephelah, therefore, is bounded on the south by the Negev, on the west by the Mediterranean, on the north by the Plain of Sharon, and on the east by the mountainous region of central Palestine (v. 48). It is a well-defined district, of an undulating character, highly fertile, and today thickly populated. The towns of the Shephelah are divided into four groups: First group: towns belonging to the north-eastern portion (vv. 33-36); Second group: those of the Middle portion (vv. 37-41); Third group: those of the southern portion (vv. 42-44); Fourth group: those of the Philistine sea-coast (vv. 45-47). In the description of Judah's tribal inheritance, these are treated as different districts.

VERSE 33

“And in the valley” — The Hebrew is *Shephelah* or the *Lowlands*. They spread along the coast. The Shephelah constituted the fertile, rich plain of Judah. It is an area of low hills, but in comparison with the mountainous central portion of the tribe's inheritance it is called the *Shephelah* or *Lowlands*.

“Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah” — Eshtaol signifies *Entreaty*. It is in the northern part of the shephelah, on the border of Dan (Josh. 19:41). Zoreah, or Zorah signifies *Scourge, or Hornet*. It is also classed as a town of Dan (Josh. 19:41). It was the birthplace and burial place of Samson, and overlooked the Valley of Sorek. Ashnah signifies *Old*.

VERSE 34

“And Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah, and Enam” — Zanoah (*Rejected*) is identified with modern Zanut about 10 miles west of Jerusalem. En-gannim signifies *Fountain of Gardens*, but its site is unknown. Tappuah denotes *Fruit* (Apple or Apricot). Enam signifies *Double Fountain*.

VERSE 35

“Jarmuth and Adullam, Socoh and Azekah” — Jarmuth (modern *Yarmuth*) signifies *Height* or *Elevation*. Adullam (*Enclosure*) is memorialised as the site of the cave in which David took refuge (1 Sam. 22:1). Socoh (*Entwined* or *Shut In*), is associated with the victory of David over Goliath (1 Sam. 17:1). Azekah (*Hedge*) was a fortress that overshadowed the same valley. It was here that Joshua gained his notable victory over the kings of the south (See Josh. 10:10).

VERSE 36

“And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim” — Sharaim (*Place of the Two Gates*) was situated in the lowlands of Judah, close to the Philistine area, and was the site of the Philistine defeat after the slaying of Goliath (1 Sam. 17:52). Adithaim (*Double Prey*) is today unknown. Gederah (*Sheepcote*) is today identified with Jedirah, about 4 miles N.W. of Eshtaol. Gederothaim (*Double Wall*) is unknown.

“Fourteen cities with their villages” — The word “villages” is *Chater* (Enclosed) and denotes farm buildings, hamlets or land used by the citizens of a town as farms or similar purposes. The cities enumerated occupied the second of the twelve divisions, or districts, of Judah’s inheritance.

District 3: Second Division Of The Shephelah — vv. 37-41

This District was mainly in the south-west, and probably centred around the fortress of Lachish.

VERSE 37

“Zenah, and Hadashar, and Migdal-gad” — Zenah signifies *Place of Flocks*, Hadashah, *the New*, and Migdal-gad *Tower of Fortune*.

VERSE 38

“And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel” — Dilean is of uncertain derivation; Mizpeh denotes *Watchtower*, and Joktheel *Veneration of God*.

VERSE 39

“Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon” — Lachish was a celebrated fortress that guarded the lowland approach to Jerusalem. The name signifies *Tenacious* or *Difficult*, and indicated the strength of

the fortress. Its king joined the southern confederacy against Gibeon (Josh. 10:3), and Joshua found additional difficulty in taking it (Josh. 10:32-33). Its extensive ruins today reveal the strength of its fortifications then. Bozkath (*Elevated*) was the birth place of Josiah’s mother (2 Kings 22:1), and Eglon (*Calflike*) was represented by its King and army in the southern confederacy defeated by Joshua (Josh. 10:3).

VERSE 40

“And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish” — Cabbon signifies *Hilly*; Lahmam *Floodlike*, and Kithlish, *Wall of a man*.

VERSE 41

“And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah” — Gederoth signifies *Fortresses*; Beth-dagon, (modern Kirbet Dagon) signifies *House of Dagon*, the Philistine fish-god. Naamah, *Sweetness* or *Pleasantness*, and Makkedah, *Place of Shepherds*. Makkedah was the place where Joshua executed the five principal kings of the southern confederacy (Ch. 10:10,17,21).

“Sixteen cities with their villages” — The cities in this third division of the land of Judah are found particularly in the south-west.

District 4: The Central Shephelah

— vv. 42-44

The next district listed is between the Wadi es-Sant and the Wad’ el-Afranj. Notable places in O.T. history located in this area are Libnah, Keilah, Mareshah, the home of Micah the prophet (Mic. 1:1).

VERSE 42

“Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan” — These names signify: *Whiteness*, *Abundance*, and *Smoke*. Libnah was a fortress situated between Makkedah and Lachish that was conquered by Joshua (Josh. 10:28). It was later allocated to the priests (Josh. 21:13). Ether and Asham were occupied by Simeonites (Josh. 19:7).

VERSE 43

“And Jiptah, and Ashnah, and Nezeb” — These names signify: *He will open*; *Old*; and *Station*.

VERSE 44

“And Keilah, and Achzib, and

Mareshah — These names signify: *Ciadel: Deceitful*; and *Possession*. The city of Keilah figured prominently in the adventures of David (1 Sam. 23:1-2). Mareshah was the birthplace of Micah the prophet (Mic. 1:1), who indulges in a play on the meaning of the name in his warning prophecy, declaring that the city would become a "possession" of the Assyrians (Mic. 1:15).

"Nine cities with their villages" — This statement rules off the fourth Division of the Tribal inheritance.

District 5: The Philistine Plains

— vv. 45-47

Evidently the power of the Philistines had not developed to the extent that it did in the time of the Judges.

VERSE 45

"Ekron with her towns and her villages" — Ekron signifies *Extermination*. It became a prominent Philistine centre during the period of the Judges. The word "towns" is *Bathos* in Hebrew, and literally denotes *Daughters*. It describes the outgrowth of the city: what would today be called its suburbs. The term Villages, as noted above, is from the Hebrew *Chaster*, "Enclosed", and denotes an enclosed area such as a farm yard. These fenced off properties would extend from the city centre outwards.

VERSE 46

"From Ekron even unto the sea, all that lay near Ashdod with their villages" — Ekron was situated in the Valley of Sorek, whereas Ashdod (*Fortified Places*) was on the seacoast. Today a modern city has developed near ancient Ashdod with the same name. It was to Ashdod that the Philistines first took the Ark of God when they captured it in the war with Israel, in the days of Eli (1 Sam. 5:1).

VERSE 47

"Ashdod with her towns and her villages" — See note on v. 45.

"Gaza with her towns and her villages" — Gaza is south of Ashdod. The name signifies *Strong*. It became both prominent and notorious in the subsequent history of Israel. Joshua had "smitten" all this area (Josh. 10:41).

"Unto the river of Egypt, and the Great Sea and the border thereof" — See note v. 4. The western border of Judah extended

along the coast of the Mediterranean to the Wadi el-Arish.

District 6: The Hill Country — vv. 48-51

The beginning of the hilly territory south of Hebron and north of Beersheba is next described. It is termed "the land of Goshen" (Josh. 11:16). The Israelite town of Goshen probably was the capital of the district.

VERSE 48

"And in the mountains" — This statement introduces the 6th Division of Judah's territory, which related to the hill country.

"Shamir, and Jettir, and Socoh" —

These places signify: *A Flint or Thorn; Excellence*; and *Entwined or Shut in*. Shamir was identified with modern Somerah, about 13 miles (21kms) s.w. of Hebron. Jettir was subsequently allocated to the Priests (Josh. 21:13-14). This Socoh is distinct from Socoh in the Valley of Elah, and is identified with modern Shuweikeh, 10 miles (16kms) s.w. of Hebron. See *Ungers Dictionary*.

VERSE 49

"And Dannah, and Kirjath-sannah, which is Debir" — Dannah signifies *Murmuring*, and is identified about 8 miles (13 kms) from Hebron. For Kirjath-sannah see note on v. 15.

VERSE 50

"And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim" —

Anab signifies *Grapes*. Joshua expelled the Anakim therefrom (see Josh. 11:21). Eshtemoh signifies *Obedience*. It was later given to the priests (Josh. 21:13-14). Anim signifies *Fountains*. According to Unger it was situated 10 miles (16kms) south of Hebron.

VERSE 51

"And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh" —

Goshen signifies *Approaching*. As distinct from Goshen in Egypt, it was situated in the area of Southern Judah in the Negev. Holon signifies *Sandy*, and was allocated to the priests (Josh. 21:13,15). Giloh signifies *Circle*. It was the city of Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:12).

"Eleven cities with their villages" — See notes above. This marked off the sixth division of Judah.

District 7: The Hill Country — vv. 52-54

The seventh district of Judah is likewise

in the hill country, a little north of the previous one. It includes the city of Hebron.

VERSE 52

“Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean” — Arab signifies *The Place of Wild Asses*, and is identified with modern 'er Rabijah, east of Dumah. Dumah (*Silence*) is situated about 10 miles south of Hebron. Eshean signifies *support*.

VERSE 53

“And Janum, and Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah” — These names give the meanings of *Asleep, House of Fruit, and Fortress*.

VERSE 54

“And Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, and Zior” — Humtah signifies *Low*. For Hebron see notes on v. 13. Zior signifies *Smallness*, and is identified with modern Sa'ir, 5 miles (8 kms) n.n.e. of Hebron.

“Nine cities with their villages” — This statement marks off the seventh district of Judah.

Division 8: The Hill Country — vv. 55-57

East of the central watershed, and south-east of Hebron is allocated the eighth division. It is the area where David maintained himself as an outlaw from Saul. Maon, Carmel, Ziph and Jezreel are among the settlements that come into prominence in the subsequent records.

VERSE 55

“Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah” — Maon signifies *Abode or Dwelling*. It was there that David was nearly captured by Saul (1 Sam. 23:24-25). Carmel signifies *Fruitful Field*. It is not to be confused with the mountain of the same name in the north, but denotes a village about 10 miles (16kms) east of Hebron, the residence of Nabal (1 Sam. 25:2). Ziph (*flowing*) also figured in the life of David as he fled from Saul (1 Sam. 23:14). It was a town in the wilderness of Ziph, which was built or restored by Mesha, son of Caleb (1 Chron. 2:42). It is identified with Tell Ziph, 4 miles (6kms) south of Hebron. Juttah signifies *Inclined*, and is 5 miles (8kms) south of Hebron.

VERSE 56

“And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah” — These towns give the mean-

ings of *God Sows, Burning of the People and Rejected*.

VERSE 57

“Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah” — Cain signifies *Gain or Spear*. It is identified with modern Khirbet Yaqin, 3 miles (5kms) s.w. of Hebron. Gibeah means *Hill*, and is unidentified. Timnah signifies *An Allotted Portion*. It figured in the life of Judah (Gen. 38:12-14).

“Ten cities with their villages” — This statement marks off the 8th Division of Judah.

District 9: The Hill Country — vv. 58-59

The hill country north of Hebron is next described. Beth-zur is its main city.

VERSE 58

“Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor” — Halhul signifies *Comforted*. It is identified about 4 miles N. of Hebron. Beth-zur (*House of Rock*) is also identified 4 miles north of Hebron. Gedor signifies *A Wall*. See 1 Chron. 4:39.

VERSE 59

“And Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon” — Maarath provides the meaning of *Desolation*; Beth-anoth is *House of Anoth*, a pagan goddess. Eltekon signifies *God is Straight*.

“Six cities with their villages” — This statement marks off the 9th division of Judah.

District 10: The Hill Country — v.60

The hill country north of Jerusalem is now listed.

VERSE 60

“Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-Jearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages” — The *Village of Baal* is changed to the *Village of Forests*. Here the Ark remained for some time until removed by David to Jerusalem. Rabbah signifies *Great*.

District 11: The Hill Country

The Septuagint adds an addition which includes the hill country around Bethlehem, and Tekoah. It describes “Ephrata, this is Bethlehem, and Phagor and Aetan, and Culon and Talam and Eobes, Thobes, and Carem and Galem and Thether and Manocho: Eleven cities and their villages”. This statement describes the area around Bethlehem, and is required to

divide Judah into its twelve partitions.

District 12: The Wilderness of Judah
— vv. 61-62

The steep country south-east of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and the lower Jordan Valley reaching south to Engedi is also portion of Judah.

VERSE 61

“In the wilderness” — This is the title given to this division of Judah’s territory. It is frequently referred to as the wilderness of Judea.

“Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah” — Beth-arabah signifies the *House of the Arabah* (the Jordan depression). It is identified N.W. of the Dead Sea on the border of Benjamin. Middin signifies *Contest*, and is unknown. Secacah signifies *Enclosure*.

VERSE 62

“And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi” — Nibshan signifies *Soft Soil*. The City of Salt is not mentioned elsewhere, but there is a Valley of Salt at the south of the Dead Sea, dominated by Jebel Usdum, a hill consisting almost entirely of pure crystallised salt (2 Sam. 8:13).

“Six cities with their villages” — This statement rules off the 12th and final division of Judah’s territory.

VERSE 63

“As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of

Jerusalem — The term Jebusite signifies *A Treader Down*. The Jebusites continued to hold portion of Jerusalem in spite of the defeat and death of their king at the hands of Joshua (Josh. 12:10).

“The children of Judah could not drive them out” — Apparently the Jebusites retained their hold on the Citadel whilst Judah and Benjamin jointly occupied different parts of the city. Each of the two tribes in turn attempted to eject the Jebusites (Jud. 1:8,21), but they remained a thorn in the sides of Judah and Israel until their fortress was taken by Joab in the time of David (2 Sam. 5:7).

“But the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem” — In Josh. 18:28, Jerusalem is attributed to Benjamin; but evidently portion of it was also given to Judah. The border was drawn along the Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) which runs along the southern and western sides of the city. But apparently the border also continued to the top of the mountain on the western side of the Valley. This would separate Mt. Moriah and the Jebusite Citadel from the rest of the city, and these two portions were evidently allocated to Judah. However, the description of the border is rather vague.

“Unto this day” — This incidental statement shows that the Book of Joshua was written before the time that David occupied the Jebusite fortress, and therefore not at a later period of Israelitish history, as is alleged by some Higher Critics.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE INHERITANCE OF JOSEPH

Having arranged the borders of the royal tribe of Judah, Joshua and his commissioners proceed to define those of the great house of Joseph. Joseph's family developed into the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, so that a double portion of inheritance is granted his descendants as befitting the appointed firstborn (Deut. 21:15-18). And as is also appropriate to brother tribes of the appointed firstborn son of Jacob, their territories are united, and a single lot defines their joint lands. The boundaries as described occupy the narrative of Joshua 16:1-17:18. The southern boundary extends from the water of Jericho into the hills around Bethel, thence to the Lower Beth-horon to the city of Gezer, and then westerly to the Mediterranean Sea at Joppa. The eastern border follows the Jordan to a spot opposite Bethshan. Then it turns westward to the Mediterranean, stretching from Bethshan to Carmel. The eastern border follows the Mediterranean from Carmel to Joppa. The area apportioned is approximately 55 miles east and west, and seventy miles north and south. It is a good land, in a secure and central position protected by other tribes both north and south. The territory is mountainous indeed, but also contains wide plains in the heart of its highlands, with delightful valleys and streams of running water. The beauty of the land, and the fertile "fat valleys" for which it is noted are referred to by Isaiah (Isa. 28:1). This inheritance is divided between the two brother-tribes: Ephraim being given the southern and smaller portion. Not being satisfied with the extent of land allocated them, the tribal leaders make demand for a wider area, but are told by Joshua to fully conquer and develop that already granted them. Accordingly this chapter is divisible into the following parts: The General Borders (vv. 1-4); Ephraim's Borders (vv. 5-9); Ephraim's Failure (v. 10).

General Borders — vv. 1-4

Though the family of Joseph is separated into two tribes, namely Ephraim and Manasseh, a single lot is all that falls to them, to

be divided into two parts. The half-tribe of Manasseh is thereby closely allied to Ephraim: the other half-tribe having already been granted its inheritance on the east of

Jordan. With this arrangement Manasseh has two parts granted it; as is appropriate to the national firstborn (Deut. 21:15-17). However, the status of spiritual firstborn is granted to Ephraim (see Gen. 48:18-22; Jer. 31:19), Manasseh's portion west of Jordan is merged with that of its brother tribe.

VERSE 1

"And the lot of the children of Joseph" — The children of Joseph were Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 48:1). The birthright was granted to Joseph being taken from Reuben because of his unrighteous conduct (1 Chron. 5:1).

"Fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east" — The "water of Jericho" is the spring today known as Elisha's Spring, adjacent to Jericho.

"To the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout Mount Beth-el" — The border continued up one of the ravines of which there are many in the steep, precipitous mountains that form the western background of Jericho, and wound around to a point close to Bethel. In this statement it is called "Mount Beth-el".

VERSE 2

"And goeth out from Beth-el to Luz" — Beth-el signifies *House of God*, and was so named by Jacob. Luz signifies *Almond*, being its original name (Gen. 28:19). In this statement Luz is distinguished from Beth-el because the reference is not to the town of Beth-el, but to the southern range of mountains belonging to it, and from which the boundary ran out. This town, which stood upon the border, actually belonged to Benjamin (Josh. 18:13).

"And passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth" — The word Archi signifies *Length*, and Ataroth, *Crowns*. The Septuagint unites both names, and makes it one place: Adar-Ataroth. This is identified by some with Khurbet Dariah, to the south-west of Beth-horon the Lower.

VERSE 3

"And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti" — The name signifies: *He will deliver*.

"Unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether" — Beth-horon signifies *House of the Hollow*. There is an Upper and Lower Beth-horon. Upper Beth-horon is close to

Gibeon, and it was down the Pass that moves towards the west that Joshua chased the warriors of the southern confederacy after it had suffered defeat in its attack on the Gibeonites. Beth-horon the nether merges into the Valley of Ajalon (Josh. 10:12).

"And to Gezer" — Gezer signifies *A Place Cut Off*. It was situated on the Shephelah, some 18 miles (29 kms) N.W. of Jerusalem, and 17 miles (27kms) S.E. of Joppa. It guarded a strategic point, controlling one of the few roads of access from Joppa to Jerusalem. It is today identified with Khirbet Yerdeh.

"And the goings out thereof are at the sea" — The border extended to the Mediterranean.

VERSE 4

"So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance" — They took a double portion of inheritance which was the privilege of the firstborn (Deut. 21:15-17). This was decided by the use of one lot, for their territory was joined as befitted such close brethren. The area comprised the central and choicest parts of the Land as the right of the firstborn. The territory, however, was divided into two tribal sections.

Ephraim's Border — vv. 5-9

The southern portion is given to Ephraim, Joshua's own tribe.

VERSE 5

"And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was thus: even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth-addar" — The name Ataroth-addar signifies: *Crowns of the very Great*.

"Unto Beth-horon the Upper" — This is close to Gibeon. It was the site of the God-given storm that devastated the army of the southern confederacy. See Josh. 10:11.

VERSE 6

"And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side" — The word means *Hidden* or *Concealment*. It is identified with modern Khirbet Julijil west of Shechem (Nablus).

"And the border went about eastward unto Taanath-Shiloh" — The name means *The Approach to Shiloh*. It is identified with modern Khirbet Ta'na where heaps

of ruins and large cisterns are found, the remains of the ancient city.

“And passed by it on the east to Janohah” — The name means *Quiet*. It is identified with modern Yamin, about 10 miles (16kms) S.E. of Nablus.

VERSE 7

“And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath” — Ataroth (*Crowns*) was east of Shiloh. Naarath (*A Girl*) is located in the Jordan Valley.

“And came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan” — The border continued east past Jericho to Jordan.

VERSE 8

“The border went out from Tappuah” — Tappuah signifies *Fruit* or *Fragrance*. See Josh. 15:34.

“Westward unto the river Kanah, and the goings out thereof were at the sea” — Kanah signifies *The Place of Reeds*. It is still called the Wadi Qana, and it drains the area to form the River Yarkon which flows into the Mediterranean just north of Tel Aviv.

“This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families” — The area occupied by the tribe is already set out; but cities within the borders of Manasseh are also given to the children of Ephraim, and these are now listed.

VERSE 9

“And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages” — Instead of “the separate cities”, the R.V. renders “the cities which were separated . . .” A number of cities in the territory of Manasseh were allocated to the children of Ephraim. An example was Tappuah which was in Manasseh, but was given to Ephraim (Josh. 17:8). In this way, Ephraim, the appointed firstborn (see Gen. 48:17-22; Jer. 31:9) spread over into the area of Manasseh in fulfilment of the blessing of Jacob: “the younger son will be greater than he” (Gen. 48:19).

Ephraim's Failure — v. 10

Despite the arrogant claim of Ephraim to be a great people (Ch. 17:14), its warriors fail to eject the Canaanites.

VERSE 10

“And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer” — In Josh. 10:33 it is recorded that Joshua destroyed the army

of the king of Gezer. However, it is evident that the remnant of his people returned to the city and occupied it during the period Joshua spent completing his campaigns elsewhere. Having been weakened by war, it should have been well within the ability of the Ephraimites (as well as the other tribes) to completely eject the Canaanites. To do so required that each tribe extend itself to consolidate the territory granted it, although the land as a whole had been won by Joshua. As has been noted previously, this typed the work of Christ. He conquered sin and death and opened the way to life eternal for whosoever cares to avail himself of the means provided, and by faith and courage win a personal victory against the flesh (1 John 5:4). This fight of faith is one to the death, and cannot be evaded. Paul exhorts: “Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col. 3:5-6).

The Ephraimites failed to eject the Canaanites, and they remained to “be snares and traps unto them, and scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes” (Josh. 23:13). In fact, the Canaanites remained in occupation of Gezer until the time of Solomon (1 Kings 9:15-17). David, previously, had numbered some of them for war, including, most probably, those of Gezer (2 Sam. 24:7). But in Solomon's time the Canaanites of Gezer were destroyed by Pharaoh, and the city given to his daughter who had married Solomon (1 Kings 9:15-17).

“But the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute” — Instead of carrying out the specific instructions of God, the Ephraimites adopted a policy of compromise. They saw no purpose in destroying the Canaanites, whereas they could gain material advantage by bringing them under tribute. So they adopted a policy of appeasement, and the disastrous effects soon developed as recorded in the Book of Judges (Jud. 1:28; 2:2). The flesh is always ready to compromise the Truth for material advantage, reasoning, as doubtless did the Israelites, that it can be more effectively supported financially with the fruits of such labour. This does not mean that every disciple of the Lord who is rich in this world's goods has obtained such

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resources by compromising his standing with Christ, for such men as Abraham, Job and Joseph of Arimathea were wealthy being blessed in that way by Yahweh. But the Ephraimites ignored the demands laid upon them to make no covenant with the Canaanites. The prohibition to do so did not necessarily mean that they had to put them to death; for the Canaanites could have avoided such a fate by accepting the Mosaic Covenant through circumcision as did those saved out of Jericho, as

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well as the Gibeonites (Josh. 9). But that would have meant accepting the converted Canaanites as Israelites, not as servants. And under those conditions they would not have had to pay tribute. It was to the material loss of the Ephraimites to convert, and to their disadvantage to destroy. So they accepted the inhabitants of the cities as Canaanites, subjecting them to paying tribute. This ultimately, had calamitous consequences.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE INHERITANCE OF MANASSEH

Though the inheritance granted to the children of Joseph is united, the separate portions allocated to each of the tribes are clearly defined by Lot. By this means Manasseh's inheritance is established immediately to the north of Ephraim's. The Mediterranean on the west, the Jordan on the east, and the valley of Jezreel on the north constitute the basic borders of the tribe. However dissatisfaction is voiced by the brother tribes. A joint demand by the two tribes for increased territory is treated sarcastically by Joshua who urges them to justify their claim to be a great people by personal action in developing the tract of country already given them. Manasseh manifests the same materialistic attitude as does Ephraim by putting the Canaanites in their territory to tribute instead of either converting or eradicating them. This policy of appeasement has disastrous effects in the years that follow. The chapter is divisible into four parts: Manasseh's Lot (vv. 1-2); The Inheritance of the Daughters of Zelophehad (vv. 3-6); Manasseh's Borders (vv. 7-11); Manasseh's Failure (vv. 12-13); The Request of the Tribes (vv. 14-18).

Manasseh's Lot — vv. 1-2

The families of Manasseh are listed.

VERSE 1

"There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh" — The lot was used to separate the territory of Manasseh from that of Ephraim. The borders it provided had Ephraim to the south, Trans-Jordanian Manasseh to the east, Asher to the northwest, Zebulun and Issachar to the north, and the Mediterranean to the west.

"For he was the firstborn of Joseph" — As firstborn he was provided a double portion of inheritance (see Deut. 21:15-17);, two separate divisions on both sides of the Jordan.

"To wit, for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead" — See note Josh. 13:31. Machir signifies *Sold* or *Salesman*. He was the only son of Manasseh, and therefore represents his descendants. As the posterity of this tribe

increased, new families were set apart from the main line, and the family of Machir became but one among the families of Manasseh (Num. 26:29). This family became known for its warlike ability by which it subdued Gilead and took possession of it (Num. 32:39-40). It was therefore a fit tribe to guard the frontier. Reference to Machir as the firstborn, shows the importance which Yahweh places on that position (See Col. 1:15-18).

"Because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan" — Gilead and Bashan were on the east of Jordan. See notes Josh. 13:29-31.

VERSE 2

"There was also a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families" — See Num. 26:29-32.

"For the children of Abiezer" — His name signifies *A Father of Help*. See his genealogy in 1 Chron. 7:18. In Num. 26:30, he is named Jeezer. *Where is hope;*

this was evidently changed to Abiezer as here.

"And for the children of Helek" — His name signifies *A Portion*. And that is what he received.

"And for the children of Asriel" — His name means *Vow of God* or *Prince of God*. See Num. 26:31.

"And for the children of Shechem" — Shechem signifies *Between the Shoulders*, and therefore *Burden-bearer* (See Num. 26:31).

"And for the children of Hephher" — His name signifies *A Pit* or *Shame*. See Num. 26:33.

"And for the children of Shemida" — His name signifies *Fame of Knowledge*.

"These were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families" — All the sons enumerated had descended from Machir, the only son of Manasseh. Reference to "male children" is emphasised to introduce the daughters of Zelophehad.

The Inheritance of The Daughters of Zelophehad — vv. 3-6

The special circumstances of these daughters are considered and the line of inheritance decided for such cases.

VERSE 3

"But Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters" — The deceased Zelophehad, leaving only daughters, presented a test case to establish the line of inheritance in such circumstances. Moses had legislated in their favour to receive an inheritance (see Num. 27:2-11).

"And these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah" — These names, in order, signify: *Sickness, Wavering, Calling, Queen, and Pleasantness*. The names of these daughters, and the absence of sons would suggest that the family of Zelophehad was not noted for the health and vigour of its members.

VERSE 4

"And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, Yahweh commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore, according to the commandment of

Yahweh he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father" —

The inheritance was granted subject to the restrictions imposed by Moses, and recorded in Num. 27:6-11; 36:2-9. Namely, on condition of them marrying within the limits of their tribe: a condition which was fulfilled by these daughters. Thus the name of Zelophehad and the portion of the land belonging to him by Divine grant was not blotted out from the memory of his descendants. These women showed faith and gained an inheritance with their brethren (see Gal. 3:28).

VERSE 5

"And there fell ten portions of Manasseh beside the land of Gilead and Bashan which were on the other side Jordan" —

These ten portions apparently were divided between the five male and five female groups which then made up the tribe of Manasseh. There were six families, but that of Zelophehad, he having no male issue was divided among his five daughters. The territory of Manasseh to the west of Jordan was marked out into ten sections, and with the two portions east of Jordan made twelve altogether matching the divisions of Judah.

VERSE 6

"Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead" — All portions were based on the size of the families, so that the portions allotted to the daughters may have been less than those granted to the sons.

Manasseh's Borders — vv. 7-11

These are now traced in detail.

VERSE 7

"And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah that lieth before Shechem" — The tribe of Asher was on the N.W. border of Manasseh and Michmethah was to the S.E. on the border of Ephraim (See Josh. 16:6).

"And the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah" — The "right hand" defines the south border, for east was always front to Israelites. En-tappuah signifies *Fountain of Tappuah* (see Josh. 15:34).

VERSE 8

"Now Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Man-

asseh belonged to the children of Ephraim — See Josh. 15:34; 16:9.

VERSE 9

“And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river” — The Wadi Qana commences near Shechem and forms the valley along which flows the River Yarkon (the Kanah — see note Josh. 16:8) that empties itself into the sea north of Tel Aviv.

“These cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh” — See note Josh. 16:9.

“The coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea” — The reference to “the river” is what is known today as the Yarkon.

VERSE 10

“Southward it was Ephraim’s and northward it was Manasseh’s, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east” — See introduction above.

VERSE 11

“And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher” — Manasseh was given cities in Asher and Issachar, perhaps to compensate for those given to Ephraim in its territory, and as a reminder that the status of firstborn was with Joseph and his sons.

“Bethshean, and her towns” — The name signifies *House of Security*. In the N.T. also called Scythopolis, or *City of the Scythians*. The Scythians invaded the land during the period of Assyria’s decline, and left their name on this city. Bethshean is strategically important occupying a dominating position in the eastern Valley of Esdraelon. The bodies of Saul and his sons were displayed on its walls (1 Sam. 31:8-12). For the reference to “her towns” see the note on Josh. 15:45.

“And the inhabitants of Dor and Ibleam and her towns” — Dor signifies *Dwelling*. It was situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, and is identified with Tantura, about 8 miles (13kms) north of Caesarea.

“And the inhabitants of En-dor and her towns” — En-dor signifies *Fountain of Dwelling*. It is 4 miles from Mt. Tabor, and is notorious as the place where Saul sought the help of the witch — a quest that led finally to his condemnation and death.

“And the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns” — Taanach signifies *Sandy Soil*. It is 5 miles S.E. of Megiddo. Close to it flows the river Kishon, and adjacent to it the chariots of Siserah became bogged leading to the destruction of his army (Judg. 5:19).

“And the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns” — Megiddo signifies *Place of Troops*. Its position is well known. It strategically overlooks the significant and important Valley of Esdraelon, and also the Megiddo Pass that opens the way from the Valley to the Sharon and Shephelah along what was known as the *Via Maris* or Way of the Sea to Egypt in the far south. The *Via Maris* was one of the great highways of the ancient world.

“Even three countries” — R.V. renders this as “three heights” suggesting the dominance of the places mentioned. They overlooked vital lines of communications: En-dor to the north-east, Megiddo towards the south-west, and Taanach governing a Pass that leads to Samaria, Shechem, Shiloh and Jerusalem.

Manasseh’s Failure — vv. 12-13

Despite the boasts of Ephraim and Manasseh that they constituted “a great people” they failed to carry out the command of Yahweh to exterminate the Canaanites in their territory.

VERSE 12

“Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land” — The Manassites could not do so because they lacked faith and courage; the Canaanites remained because they were determined to do so. Rotherham renders the phrase in that way: they were “determined to remain” therein. The faith of the men of Manasseh was superficial, and in the face of determined resistance it failed.

VERSE 13

“Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out” — See notes Josh. 16:10; Jud. 1:28.

Additional Territory Requested — vv. 14-18

Apparently dissatisfied with the extent of territory granted them, or moved by arrogance and pride at the status of firstborn



A Canaanite soldier armed with an ax and sword.

conferred upon the descendants of Joseph, or because of their relationship to Joshua, a complaint is made to him that only one lot has been granted their two tribes, though it has been divided into two parts. Accordingly, they request additional territory. Their attitude is rebuked by Joshua who exhorts them that if they be a really great people as they claim, they should demonstrate the fact by seizing the vast central forests of the territory granted them, clearing them and settling there. They reply that there is not room enough in the mountains, and that they cannot successfully cope with the war chariots of the Canaanites on the plain. Such an excuse finds no favour with the brave and faithful Joshua. He again replies that if they are the people they claim to be let them justify it by winning further ground by their own exertions. Let them manifest their faith in Yahweh undismayed by the chariots of iron, that seemed so formidable, but had proved to be no hindrance to complete victory in previous wars.

VERSE 14

“And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people” — Though the territory granted the two tribes that descended from Joseph is divided into two parts, it came under one original lot: that of Ephraim’s (Josh. 16:1). This was Joshua’s own tribe, and perhaps the leaders of Ephraim and Manasseh imagined that they would receive preferential treatment on that account. Certainly the combined armies of Ephraim and Manasseh were more populous than any other. At the first census they outnumbered every tribe but Judah; at the second numbering on the plains of Moab, while Judah’s warriors amount to 76500 those of Manasseh and Ephraim together were 85,200. But in those 40 years, Ephraim had decreased from 40,500 to 32,500, and Manasseh had risen from 32,300 to 52,700 justifying the settlement of half the tribe east of the Jordan; but it was quite unreasonable to demand more territory from Joshua in the present distribution, as its inheritance was quite in proportion to its numbers.

“Forasmuch as Yahweh hath blessed me hitherto?” — The leaders of these tribes based their claim on the basis of the blessing received of Yahweh as recorded in Gen. 48:20; 49:22-26.

VERSE 15

“And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people” — Joshua invited the leaders of the two tribes to demonstrate their claims of greatness by appropriate acts of faith. In other words, “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:20,26).

“Then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there” — There was ample forested country in the area, such as the vast stretches of Gilboa, and by energy and labour these could be cleared and occupied. See the exhortation of Haggai 1:7-9. All Christ’s disciples must learn to labour in order to obtain that which the promise of Yahweh makes possible. It is necessary to “occupy till he come”. A believer must labour before the blessing of Yahweh will be granted.

“In the land of the Perizzites and of the giants” — The word “Perizzite” signifies a *Village-dweller*, and so one who occupied the cities of the plains. The “giants” or *Rephaim* were men of great stature as the word signifies, and therefore constituted formidable opponents. See note Josh. 12:8.

“If mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee” — Joshua suggested that the Ephraimites demonstrate their claims of greatness by developing the country already granted them. It is by doing little things well that individuals attain unto greatness. To that end there is need of individual initiative and personal effort in order to succeed in the battle of faith.

VERSE 16

“And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us” — In rebuttal of Joshua’s suggestion, the men of Ephraim and Manasseh claim that the hill country is too restricted.

“And all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron” — They claim that the formidable opposition presented by the Canaanites made the task of conquest impossible. This may have been true without the help of God, but is answered by Moses in the Law (Deut. 20:1-4). Moreover, the Josephites had evidence of the truth of Moses’s words. In the war with Jabin, Joshua had demonstrated that granted faith, courage and initiative, the chariots would prove to be no real obstacle to complete victory; but these men, lacking faith, justified the sarcasm of their leader.

“Both they who are of Bethshean and

her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel" — The Valley of Esdraelon, stretching east of Bethshean, is the most fertile area of the Land of Promise. It is also an area most suited to chariot warfare. But in view of Joshua's great victory over Jabin, his own tribe had evidence that in conjunction with the warriors of Manasseh it could have evicted the Canaanites granted the necessary faith and courage.

VERSE 17

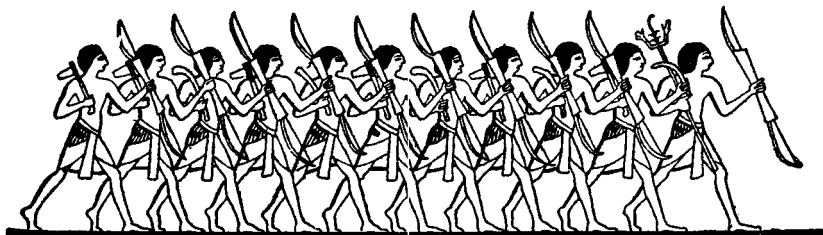
"And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only" — The two words rendered "great" in the A.V. are different in the Hebrew. The first is *rab*, and signifies in this context, a numerous people; the second is *gadol* and means great in war. Joshua's statement appears to be ironic. If you are a numerous people, courageous and powerful in war, you will not only conquer, but will develop the potential of the land granted you. If you are as numerous and as powerful as you claim, demonstrate it by making clearings of the vast central forests, and settle there, and then no complaint will be heard of that which the Lot has granted you.

The tendency of flesh is to despise the divine inheritance and complain of the restrictions imposed upon them, but men and women of faith will not so act, but will give themselves in faith to the tasks set before them. They will endeavour to improve the talents with which they have

been naturally endowed, as the Parable of the Talents teaches they should do (Matt. 25:15-18). It was the man with the "one talent" (like Ephraim and Manasseh with their "one lot") who complained, and failed to use what had been given him to the glory of the Lord, and to his own advantage (Matt. 25:18).

VERSE 18

"But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down; and the outgoings of it shall be thine; for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots: and though they be strong" — If they were the people they claimed to be, urged Joshua, they must win further territory by their own exertions, trusting in Yahweh, and undismayed by the chariots of iron that seemed so formidable, but had proved no hindrance to complete victory in former wars. Hard work, faith and courage were necessary then as now. The mountains could be scaled and cleared, and the places conquered and occupied if they were motivated by faith. See Deut. 20:1; Josh. 11:6. The rebuke of Joshua comprised a powerful exhortation against slothfulness. He had weakened the enemy sufficiently for the people to conquer; Yahweh had promised His blessing and strength, and now it remained for the Israelites to use the means available. Ephraim and Manasseh wanted the blessing promised, without using the effort needful to obtain it. Paul exhorts: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" or lack of faith (Heb. 4:11).



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE ALLOTMENTS OF THE REMAINING TRIBES

The inheritance of the seven remaining tribes now engages the attention of Joshua and his associates. But first the central place of worship has to be confirmed. Shiloh is selected for this purpose, and the Tent of Meeting, the monument of the weary pilgrimage in the wilderness, is granted a fixed abode on the level ground and in the pleasant environs of Shiloh symbolising the change in Israel, from a nomadic to a settled life. To this central and easily accessible centre representatives of the people make their way for worship. The remaining areas of land are then surveyed, and the lots are cast. This chapter describes the territory granted to Benjamin; the next chapter that allocated to the rest of the tribes.

Convention at Shiloh — vv. 1-7

Representatives of the tribes are summoned to Shiloh, now selected as the centre of worship. A commission is appointed to assess the land remaining, and to divide it into seven parts for the tribes yet to be granted their portions. The Levites, however, are excluded from this allocation of tribal inheritance.

VERSE 1

“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh” — Previously the camp had assembled at Gilgal (Josh. 14:6). Now, however, Shiloh is selected as headquarters. It is to remain the political and religious centre of the nation for some hundreds of years. The word “congregation” is *edah* in the feminine gender, and signifies *Witness*. As the Bride of Yahweh, Israel is expected to witness by her submission to His authority (Isa. 54:15; Eph. 5:22).

“And set up the tabernacle of the congregation there” — In this instance the word “congregation” is *moade*, and signifies “a set time for meeting”. Accordingly, the R.V. renders “tabernacle of congregations” as *tent of meeting*. Shiloh was in the allotment of Ephraim. Joshua’s own tribe, conveniently placed in approx-

imately the centre of the land, in a delightful valley, about 15 miles (24 kms) north of Jerusalem plentifully watered by springs. The word meaning *Peace* or *Tranquil*, is appropriate to the peaceful environment of the area. The Tabernacle and Ark remained there until the latter was taken into war by the godless sons of Eli, and was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:10-11). After the Ark was taken, the Tabernacle was removed to other places including Nob and Gibeah; and Shiloh was abandoned as a place of worship (Psa. 78:60; Jer. 7:12,14; 26:6,9).

“And the land was subdued before them” — This describes the settled conditions that followed the wars of Joshua.

VERSE 2

“And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not received their inheritance” — In antitypical fulfilment of the type, the restoration of the tribes will be gradual at the return of the Lord, to be allotted their portions according to the cantonnments outlined in Ezekiel 48. In this restoration, Judah will be “saved first”, as it was first allotted its portion in the land under Joshua (Zech. 12:7).

VERSE 3

“And Joshua said unto the children of

Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which Yahweh God of your fathers hath given you?" — Having rested so long on the help of Yahweh and the leadership of Joshua, the tribes had lost the initiative to act vigorously on their own account. From this state of apathy Joshua tried to arouse them. There is no place for sloth in the work of Yahweh. Believers are required to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). See also Matt. 11:12; Rom. 12:11; Phil. 3:13-14; 2 Pet. 1:10-11.

VERSE 4

"Give out from among you three men for each tribe: and I will send them and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them: and they shall come again to me" — This commission of 21 or 36 men (according as to whether the three men to a tribe were from the seven remaining tribes, or the twelve tribes) was to make a general survey of the whole territory. In the final analysis, it was found that whilst Ephraim complained of lack of territory Judah had too much, so that Simeon was incorporated into its area. The whole proceedings illustrate the exhortation of Prov. 13:4, and the urging of Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).

VERSE 5

"And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north" — These comprise the general directions given by Joshua to the men appointed to do the survey. Basically they are told: "In your survey do not take into consideration the territories of Judah nor that of the sons of Joseph which are found south and north of Shiloh, but carefully survey and describe the territory remaining."

VERSE 6

"Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts, and bring the description hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before Yahweh our God" — The allocation was to be according to Divine revelation and appointment. See notes Num. 26:52-56; Psa. 105:11; Prov. 18:18). This inheritance of the land was thus divided into two parts of 5 and 7 tribes, as it will be in the Age to come. Ezekiel, in setting out the Tribal cantonments of the

future, separates them into 7 northern tribes, and 5 southern tribes divided by the Holy Oblation, the area set aside for worship and exclusive use of the Prince (Ezek. 48). Five is the number of grace, and seven is that of the covenant; combined they add up to twelve, which is the number of perfect government. The allocation of the 12 tribes having been established by Divine revelation through Ezekiel, the lot will again be used to determine the individual family holdings (Ezek. 47:22; 48:29). All shall be done according to Divine appointment and revelation.

VERSE 7

"But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of Yahweh is their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of Yahweh gave them" — For appointments relating to the Levites, see notes at Josh. 13:33; Num. 18:20; and for the 2½ eastern tribes, see notes at Josh. 13:8.

The Land Surveyed and Divided — vv. 8-10

The appointed Commissioners travel through the land, and return to Joshua with their survey. The results are recorded in a book which must have included charts, geographical divisions, and data of immense importance. It is obvious by the way that the countries of the ancient world were charted, and the journeyings of Israel are minutely recorded, that the principles of geology and mathematics were well known in those times.

VERSE 8

"And the men arose, and went away; and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before Yahweh in Shiloh" — Like Abraham, the commissioners were invited to walk through the land in preparation to inheriting it. See Gen. 13:17.

VERSE 9

"And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh" — The surveyors described it by cities because they represented pockets of resistance for the Israelites to conquer, and afterwards in

which they could dwell; for they were about to change from a nomadic to a settled, rural existence (cp. Deut. 6:10-11). A similar change will occur in the Age to come when the "strangers and pilgrims" of today will overthrow the cities of the Gentiles, and establish life upon a more rural basis (Micah 4:4).

VERSE 10

"And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before Yahweh: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions" — A most exciting and intensely interesting ceremony must have taken place at Shiloh in order to determine by lot the inheritance of the remaining seven tribes.

The Lot For Benjamin — vv. 11-28

The lot reveals that Benjamin's inheritance shall lay between those of Judah and Ephraim, though it does not reach to the Mediterranean Sea. It has Ephraim to its north, with Manasseh to the north of Ephraim. By this arrangement, the unity established during the wanderings in the wilderness when these tribes marched together is preserved in the Land. The land granted Benjamin is about 28 miles (45kms) from east to west and 12 miles (19 kms) north and south. Though it is a small and hilly territory, it is very fertile, and is studded with towns, the chief being Jerusalem, Bethel, Gibeon, Mizpeh and Jericho. On the east it reaches to the Arabah, or deep depression of the Jordan. In the west it extends past Beth-horon as far as the Canaanite city of Gezer where, turning south, it meets the southern boundary at Kirjath-Jearim. Jerusalem lies on the border of Benjamin and Judah.

VERSE 11

"And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph" — For these allocations see note on Josh. 15:1-8; 16:1-10.

VERSE 12

"And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Beth-aven" — Beth-aven signifies *House of Evil*. It was close to Bethel on the west.

VERSE 13

"And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which is Bethel, southward; and the border descended to Ataroth-adar, near the hill that lieth on the south side of the nether Beth-horon" — Luz signifies *Almond*, or *Perverse* (See *Dictionary of Bible Names*). Luz, the original name of Bethel (see Gen. 28:19) was evidently still maintained by the Canaanites (Jud. 1:22-26). Ataroth-adar signifies *Crowns of Glory*; and "nether Beth-horon" denotes the Lower Beth-horon. See notes on Josh. 10:11; 16:3; 21:22.

VERSE 14

"And the border was drawn thence, and compassed the corner of the sea southward from the hill that lieth before Beth-horon southward" — The territory of Benjamin did not reach the Mediterranean, so that this verse should be rendered as it is in the *American Standard Bible*: "The border extended from there and turned round on the west side southward". At the lower Beth-horon the northern border of Benjamin curved around and ran southward, the lower Beth-horon being its tribe's most westerly point.

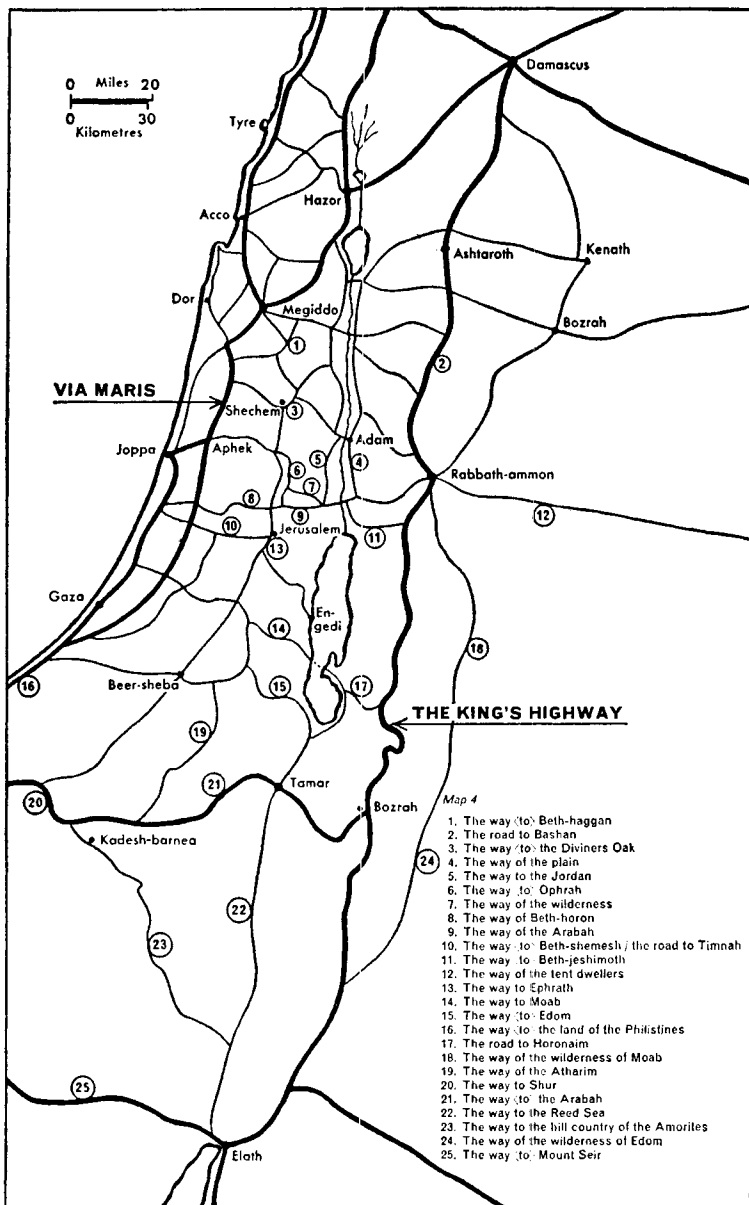
"And the goings out thereof were at Kirjath-Baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, a city of the children of Judah: this was the west quarter" — Kirjath-jearim signifies *City of Forests*. It was to this place that the Ark was sent by the men of Beth-shemesh when it was returned to them by the Philistines.

VERSE 15

"And the south quarter was from the end of Kirjath-jearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah" — Nephtoah signifies *An Opening*, that is *A Spring*. See note Josh. 15:9.

VERSE 16

"And the border came down to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom" — The *Dictionary of Bible Names* claims that Hinnom signifies *To Make Oneself Drowsy*. The valley is a deep, narrow ravine with steep, rocky sides. It runs along the west and south of Jerusalem, separating Mount Zion to the north and the Hill of Evil Counsel, and the Valley of Rephaim to the south (see Jer. 7:31; 1 Kings 11:7).



The Main Roads of Palestine in ancient times. A study of these routes will help better to trace the strategy of Joshua. From The Land of the Bible by Y. Aharoni, a valuable work on the Historical Geography of the Land.

“And which is in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom” — The valley of the giants is also known as the Valley of Rephaim or Giants. It is a deep, fertile valley that extends for about 3 miles (5kms) s.w. of Jerusalem, and extending half way to Bethlehem.

“To the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to En-rogel” — Jebusi was the ancient name of Jerusalem. It later became known as the City of David, and called Zion. The name signifies *A Place Trodden Underfoot* such as a threshing-floor (see Notes Josh. 15:63; Jud. 1:8,21; 19:10). Jebusi, as identified with the city of David (2 Sam. 5:6-7) was situated at the south-east portion of the present old city of Jerusalem. The description of this verse, however, appears to exclude Jebusi from the main city. The border continued south to En-rogel or *The Fountain of the Sun*. It is in the valley of the Kidron as it moves towards Jericho. Some define the name to read *Fountain of the Spies*, or *Fountain of the Treaders*.

VERSE 17

“And was drawn from the north, and went forth to En-shemesh” — This name signifies *Spring of the Sun*. The border joined with the northern border of Judah (see Josh. 15:7). This place is identified by some as being close to Bethany.

“And went forth toward Geliloth” — This is identified with the Gilgal of Josh. 15:7. This was not the Gilgal close to Jericho, nor that in the north close to Shechem. It was on the northern border of Judah. Geliloth signifies *Circles*.

“Which is over against the going up of Adummim” — Adummim signifies *Red* or *Bloody*. It is identified by some with the area close to what is called the Inn of the Good Samaritan. The term signifies *The Ascent of Blood*, and formed part of the road to Jerusalem from Jericho.

“And descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben” — See note Josh. 15:6.

VERSE 18

“And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah” — The term Arabah is frequently rendered *Plain*, and relates to the great depression that forms the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea, and continues to the Gulf of Eilat.

VERSE 19

“And the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah northward” — See note Josh. 15:6.

“And the outgoings of the border went at the north bay of the salt sea at the south end of Jordan: this was the south coast” — The southern border of Benjamin reached to where the Jordan commences to flow into the Dead Sea.

VERSE 20

“And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about according to their families” — About 5 miles of the lower Jordan formed the east border of Benjamin. The territory that was granted the tribe in its totality was small and mountainous. The general level of the district is very high, ranging from 2000 feet (610m) above sea level, and over 3000 feet (914m) above the level of the Arabah and Jordan. It was remarkable for the number of isolated eminences upon which strong cities were built, such as Gibeah (*Hill*), Mizpeh (*Watchtower*), Ramah (*Height*) and so forth. These were of considerable strategic importance.

However, in spite of the mountainous nature of the area, there were numerous spots of great fertility, so that it was self-supporting. Both the self-sufficiency of the country, and the ease with which it could be defended, fostered a spirit of independence in the Benjamites which manifested itself on several occasions during the history of the nation. More easily defended because of its numerous passes and heights, and with warriors of courage and outstanding ability, the tribe of Benjamin successfully resisted for a time the weight of all the other tribes ranged against it (Judg. 20,21). The land allocated to Benjamin being next to Ephraim and Manasseh, the unity established during the wandering in the wilderness when these tribes marched together was preserved in the land. On the west of Benjamin was Dan. Therefore in the inheritance in the land, Benjamin, the son of Rachel, and Dan, the son of Rachel's maid, dwelt next to Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph, their positions in the land illustrating the exhortation: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psa. 133:1).

VERSE 21

“Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Beth-hoglah, and the valley of Keziz” — Jericho (*Place of Fragrance*) on the west of Jordan is well known. Beth-hoglah (*House of the Partridge*) is about 4 m S.E. of Jericho. The Valley of Keziz (*Abrupt, Cut off*) is identified with the Wadi el Kazoz on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem.

VERSE 22

“And Beth-arabah, and Zemaraim, and Beth-el” — For Beth-arabah see note on Josh. 15:6; Zemaraim signifies *Double Fleece*, and probably was a place on the road to Jerusalem. For Beth-el see note on Josh. 16:2.

VERSE 23

“And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah” — Avim (*Overthrowers*) is unidentified; Parah (*Heifer*) is identified with Farah, 5 miles (8kms) N.E. of Jerusalem; Ophrah (*Fawn or Hind*) is believed to be situated on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. It is to be distinguished both here and in 1 Sam. 13:17 from the Ophrah of Gideon (Jud. 6:11), and is probably the Ephraim of 2 Chron. 13:19 and John 11:54.

VERSE 24

“And Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba” — Chephar-haammonai signifies *Village of Ammonites*, and probably denotes a centre where they held out some time after the occupation of the land. Ophni signifies *Mouldy*. Gaba probably should be Geba or *Hill* as in Josh. 21:17; 1 Sam. 13:3. It should not be confused with Geba or Gibeath of Saul.

“Twelve cities with their villages” — Because of restricted territory Benjamin is divided into only two divisions.

VERSE 25

“Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth” — These names signify *Hill City, Heights* and *Wells*. Ramah stood on a prominent hill commanding the road to the Pass of Michmash, and therefore was the key to the centre of the land. It was at this frontier town of the tribe of Benjamin that the Babylonians, after taking Jerusalem assembled their prisoners before marching them off into captivity (Jer. 40:1). In predicting the captivity, Jeremiah depicts

Rachel the mother of the tribe as weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted (Jer. 31:15). Beeroth (*Wells*) was on the border about 6 miles N. of Jerusalem. The murderer of Ishbosheth came from there (2 Sam. 4:2-3).

VERSE 26

“And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah” — Mizpeh is identified by some with Nebi Samwell, a high and steep mountain prominently overshadowing Jerusalem a few miles to its north. Here the tribes sent their representatives to confer on special occasions (Judg. 20:1-3; 1 Sam. 7:5-16). Chephirah signifies *Villages* (see Josh. 9:15), and Mozah, *Drained*.

VERSE 27

“And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah” — These names in order signify *Variiegation, God Heals, and Reeling*.

VERSE 28

“And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath, and Kirjath” — Zelah signifies *Slope*. It was the burying place of Kish the father of Saul (2 Sam. 21:4). Eleph signifies *Ox* or *Chief*. Jebusi, the former name of Jerusalem means *Trodden Down*. Jerusalem was on the border between Judah and Benjamin and appears to have been divided between those two tribes. Gibeath (*the Hill*) was Saul's birthplace (1 Sam. 6:26). In the time of the Judges, the tribe was almost exterminated defending itself at this place (Jud. 20:20). Kirjath, *Village* is thought to be an abbreviation of Kirjath-Jearim.

“Fourteen cities with their villages” — The enumeration of these towns completes the more prominent cities and villages of the tribe of Benjamin.

“This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families”

— A smaller area of territory was given this tribe on the basis of Num. 26:54; 33:54. The spiritual principles observed in the dividing of the land is that expressed in Luke 12:48: “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more”. Each tribe was expected to conquer the Canaanites remaining within its territory, and then to settle in the land according to the will of God.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE INHERITANCE OF THE SIX REMAINING TRIBES

The six remaining tribes are each allocated their territory, and last of all Joshua is given his inheritance.

The Lot of Simeon — vv. 1-9

In positioning the tribes around the Tabernacle, Simeon is given a position on the south. That also is the lot of his inheritance in the Land. Simeon is given no independent territory, but, as stated in the "last words of Jacob" (Gen. 49:5-7) it was "scattered" within the territory of Judah. This judgment resulted from the cruel treachery of Levi towards the Shechemites (Gen. 34:17-31). Simeon had joined with his brother Levi in this evil action, but Levi had partially redeemed itself by the loyalty it had shown towards Yahweh and Moses in avenging their honour in relation to the false worship of the Golden Calf, at the foot of Horeb (Exod. 32:25-29). However, though the words of Jacob were fulfilled in relation to Levi in that it was scattered among the other tribes, it was elevated by being selected for priestly duties. Not so Simeon. That tribe had dramatically declined numerically during the wilderness wanderings. At the first census, its warriors had numbered 59,300, but in the second battle-roll at the end of the 40 years wandering, they amounted to only 22,200. In accordance with the prophecy of Jacob, Simeon is not granted any independent tribal inheritance but is given certain cities in the southern portion of Judah. Those cities, found deep in the south, provided an additional buffer of defence for Judah, whose territory extended deep in the Negev. At that time, instead of being a barren, parched upland without vegetation as today, the Negev contained cities whose inhabitants found that the fruits of their labour sufficient for all their needs and comfort. Archaeologists have found evidence of such habitations throughout the Negev, and experiments at Avdat today have revealed that vineyards can be established by harvesting the scanty rain and heavy dew that falls in the area.

VERSE 1

"And the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children

of Simeon according to their families" — Simeon signifies *Hearing*.

"And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah" — Because of the curse imposed by Jacob (Gen. 49:7), no independent tribal inheritance was given to Simeon, and therefore no boundaries are set down. Their inheritance was limited to cities in the extreme south of Judah, so that they made common cause with that tribe against the Canaanites (Jud. 1:1,3,17).

VERSE 2

"And they had in their inheritance Beersheba, and Sheba, and Moladah" — For these cities see notes at Josh. 15:18,26.

VERSE 3

"And Hazar-shual, and Balah, and Azem" — See notes on Josh. 15:26. Balah signifies *Decay*. See notes Josh. 15:29.

VERSE 4

"And Etlolad, and Bethul, and Hormah" — See notes Josh. 15:28,30. Bethul is also called Bethuel (1 Chron. 4:30), and Bethel (Josh. 12:16). The word means *House of God*.

VERSE 5

"And Ziklag, and Bethmarcaboth, and Hazarsusah" — For notes on Ziklag see Josh. 15:31. Bethmarcaboth signifies *House of Chariots*. Some of the descendants of Shimei dwelt there (1 Chron. 4:31). Hazarsusah signifies *Villages of Horses*.

VERSE 6

"And Bethlebaoth, and Sharuhem" — For Bethlebaoth see notes on Josh. 15:32. Sharuhem signifies *Abode of Pleasure*. It is also called Shilhim (Josh. 15:32) and Shaaraim (1 Chron. 4:31). Young defines it as meaning *Beginning of Grace*.

"Thirteen cities and their villages" —

These places apparently were in the more northerly sector of the Negev.

VERSE 7

“Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan; four cities and their villages” — See notes on Josh. 15:32.

VERSE 8

“And all the villages that were round about these cities” — This statement relates to the enclosed lands extending out from the cities.

“To Baalath-beer, Ramath of the south” — Baalath signifies *Mistress of the Well*. See Josh. 15:24. Ramath (*Heights*) of the south, relates to the Negev.

“This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families” — This completes the listing of the towns given to Simeon.

VERSE 9

“Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon; for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them; therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them” — See note v. 1. The scattering of Simeon throughout Judah was of help to the latter tribe, as the area granted it was too large for it to control properly.

The Inheritance of Zebulun — vv. 10-16

The inheritance granted Zebulun is not large, but it is fertile. Its southern boundary abuts on to Manasseh; its western side touches the Kishon and the town of Jokneam at the foot of the eastern slopes of Mount Carmel, and abuts on to Asher that extends from its western border to the sea. Its northern border joins with the southern border of Naphtali, but turns south to come close to Mt. Tabor, and moves along about 2 miles south of Nazareth to Gath-hepher NNE of Nazareth on the road to Tiberius, bounding Issachar on the east. It included the NW corner of the Plain of Esdraelon.

VERSE 10

“And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families; and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid” — Zebulun signifies *Dwelling*. He was the youngest of Leah's sons, but is here mentioned before his older brother Issachar, a sequence that is followed by Moses in his blessing of the

tribes (Deut. 33:18). Sarid signifies *Survivor*. It is identified with modern Tel Shadua, SW of Nazareth and North of the Plain of Esdraelon.

VERSE 11

“And their border went up toward the sea” — The Hebrew word *Yam*, from a root signifying *to roar*, does service alike for “sea” and for the “west”. Accordingly the R.V. renders: “went up *westward* even to Maralah” Zebulun's territory did not extend to the sea, but was cut off by Asher. However, it will do so in the age to come in fulfillment of Moses' blessing (Deut. 33:18-19).

“And Maralah” — This name means *Trembling* or *Earthquake*. It is identified some 4 miles from Nazareth on the southern border of Zebulun.

“And reached to Dabbasheth” — This name according to Young, means a *Hump* like a Beehive. It is not mentioned elsewhere, and is unidentified.

“And reached to the river” — The river Kishon flows through the Valley of Esdraelon to empty itself into the Mediterranean. The eastern border of Zebulun moved down to the Kishon by the Carmel range.

“That is before Jokneam” — The King of Jokneam of Carmel had been killed in the fighting with Joshua (Josh. 12:22). The name is said to signify *Lamentation for the People*. It is identified today at the foot of Carmel 12 miles (20 kms) S.W. of Nazareth.

VERSE 12

“And turned from Sarid eastward toward the sunrise unto the border of Chislothabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia” — Chislothabor signifies *Flanks of Tabor*; so the border of the tribe reached a spot adjacent to the lower slopes of Tabor. It is perhaps identified with Chesulloth (v. 18). Daberath (*Pasture*) was on the border of Issachar (Josh. 21:28; 1 Chron. 6:72). Japhia (*Gleaming*) is identified with modern Yufa, about 2 kms from Nazareth.

VERSE 13

“And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittah-hepher, to Ittah-kazin, and goeth out to Remmon-methoar to Neah” — Gittah-hepher (*Winepress of Digging*) is identified with Gath-hepher, Jonah's birthplace. It is found about 3

miles from Nazareth (2 Kings 14:25). Ittah-kazin (*Time of a Judge*) is unidentified. The balance of this verse is given in the R.V. as "it went out at Rimmon (*Pomegranate*) which stretcheth out to Neah. Young gives the meaning of Neah as *Moving* or *Shaking*. The town is unidentified.

VERSE 14

"And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon; and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthah-el" — Both Hannathon (*Favoured*) and Jiphthah-el (*God will open*) are unidentified.

VERSE 15

"And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Bethlehem" — Kattath signifies *Littleness*, Nahallal (*Pasture*), Shimron (*Guardianship*), Idalah (*that which God hath shown*) are all unidentified. The Bethlehem (*House of Bread*) of this verse is not the birthplace of the Lord which is south of Jerusalem, but is another town of that name situated about 7 miles N.E. of Nazareth. Today it is known as Beit Lahm.

"Twelve cities with their villages" — Only five cities are named, though some of the boundary points were also cities. So the *New American Standard Bible* commences the verse with the statement: "*Included also were Kattath . . .*" the words in italics being added to the text.

VERSE 16

"This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages" — See note above.

The Lot for Issachar — vv. 17-23

The inheritance granted Issachar bound it on the south by Manasseh, on the north by Naphtali, on the north-west by Zebulun, and on the east by the Jordan. The base of its territory abuts on the Arabah (the Jordan valley) and is about 15 miles (24 kms) from Jenin in the south to Tabor in the north. The territory includes the greater part of the extremely fertile valley of Esdraelon. It is about 14 miles east and west, and 8 miles north and south. The Valley of Esdraelon is a most significant portion of the Land of Promise, being frequently the scene of invading or defending armies. It is triangular in shape, rising from the Jordan Valley in a north-westerly direc-

tion to the border of Asher. The northern side is formed by the steep, precipitous mountains of Nazareth, the south is marked off by the hills of Samaria, and the long stretch of the Carmel range. Its western outlet is a narrow pass dominated by Harosheth the home-town of Sisera, through which the Kishon makes its way to the Bay of Acre. The Plain, therefore, forms a large triangle, with its base on the east. The base is divided into three branches that descend eastward to the Jordan Valley, separated by three ranges of mountains: Gilboa in the south; Moreh, or Little Hermon in the centre, and Tabor in the north. The middle branch of these three is known by the name of Jezreel, and there Ahab and Jezebel built a palace. The towns of Jezreel and Shunen were on either side of the western extremity, and Bethshean on the eastern side.

VERSE 17

"And the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families" — Issachar signifies *Reward*. The tribe certainly was rewarded with a most fertile section of the land; the wide and beautiful Plain of Esdraelon.

VERSE 18

"And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem" — Jezreel signifies *God Sows*. It later became the site of one of Ahab's royal palaces, and the centre of Baal worship as established by Jezebel. Chesulloth is said to mean *Raised Ways*. By others it is claimed to be a variation of Chisloth Tabor of v. 12. Shunem means *Two Resting Places*. In Shunem dwelt the woman who provided a resting place for Elisha (2 Kings 4:8,10,25,36).

VERSE 19

"And Haphraim and Shihon, and Anaharath" — Haphraim signifies *Double Pit*. Shihon *Overturning* or *Waste*, and Anaharath, *Gorges*. The latter is identified with a village by name of 'Enna 'Urah.

VERSE 20

"And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez" — Rabbith signifies *A Multitude*. It is thought to be close to Gilboa, and was later appointed as a Levitical city. Kishion signifies *Hard Ground*, and was appointed a Levitical town (Josh. 21:28,29). Abez signifies *Tin*, and is unknown.

VERSE 21

“And Remeth, and En-gannim, and Enhaddah, and Beth-pazzez.” — Remeth signifies *Height*. It is called Ramoth in 1 Chron. 6:73. En-gannim signifies *Fountain of Gardens*. It was later given to the Levites (Josh. 19:21). It is known today as Jenin, and is situated some 15 miles (24kms) south of Tabor, at the southern end of the eastern base of the Valley of Esdraelon. It was the scene of Ahaziah's attempted escape from Jehu (2 Kings 9:27), and is identified with the important city in the West Bank called Jenin. Enhaddah signifies *Fountain of Spring*. Beth-pazzez, House of *Dispersion*.

VERSE 22

“And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Beth-shemesh; and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan; sixteen cities with their villages” — Tabor (*Broken*) doubtless relates to the region rather than the mountain itself. Shahazimah (*Toward the Heights*) was situated between the Mount and the Jordan and is identified by some with Tel el Mekarkash in the Tabor-Jordan region. Beth-shemesh signifies *House of the Sun* and is not to be confused with the place of the same name in the south. The extremities of the eastern border of Issachar reached to the Jordan, and extended north until just below the Sea of Galilee.

VERSE 23

“This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages” — See note v. 16.

The Lot for Asher — vv. 24-31

Asher's lot is bordered by Zebulun and Naphtali on the east Manasseh on the south, and the Mediterranean on the west. The tribe is granted a stretch of territory about 60 miles (97 kms) north and south and about 10 miles (16kms) east and west. Its terrain includes both mountains and plains and extends to Zidon on the north, and to Shihor Libnath, or the Muddy-white river, called the Crocodile River, which rises in the Carmel Range and draining the marshy ground at the foot of the hills, flows into the sea between Caesarea and Dor. However, Asher never occupied all the territory allocated to it either to the north or the south. Such strongholds as Tyre and Zidon were never conquered by

the tribe. It failed to eject the Canaanites dwelling on the plain lacking sufficient faith to match the superior weapons of war possessed by their enemies (Jud. 1:31-32). Accordingly Asher was limited to the hill country of the territory.

VERSE 24

“And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families” — Asher signifies *Blessed* or *Happy*.

VERSE 25

“And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph” — Helkath (*Smoothness* or *Slippery*) was later appointed as a Levitical city (Josh. 21:31). It is identified by some with the Druse village of Yerka about 8 miles (13 kms) north-east of Acre. Hali (*Jewel*), Beten (*Belly*) and Achshaph (*Fascination* or *Place of Magic*) were apparently in the vicinity of Acre.

VERSE 26

“And Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal” — Alammelech (*Oak of the King*), Amad (*Lasting People*), and Misheal (*Request*) continue the cities of Asher. Misheal was located at the northern extremity of the Plain of Sharon.

“And reacheth to Carmel westward” — Carmel signifies either *Fruitful Field* (the word is rendered such in Isa. 10:18 and elsewhere) or from *Kerem-el*, “Vineyard of God”. It is a prominent headland on the south of the Bay of Acre extending in a SSE direction for about 12 miles (20 kms) terminating suddenly in an eastern cliff, and possessing an average height of 1500 feet. It is prolific in its growth of trees, illustrating the significance of its name.

“And to Shihor-libnath” — The title signifies *Muddy Stream of Whiteness*. Its modern name is *Nahr Zerka*, or Crocodile River. This rises in the Carmel range, drains the marshy grounds at the foot of the hills, and after a tortuous course, empties itself into the Mediterranean Sea between Caesarea and Dor. No crocodiles infest the area today, but a century ago an occasional one was found there. The western border of the territory allocated Asher extended from this river to Zidon in Phoenicia.

VERSE 27

“And turneth toward the sunrising” — This expression denotes the east.

“To Beth-dagon, and reacheth to Zebulun” — Beth-dagon signifies *House of Dagon*, the fish god of the Philistines. The name given to this place in the far north shows how widespread was the worship of Dagon. The eastern border abuted on the western border of Zebulun.

“And to the valley of Jiphthah-el toward the north side of Bethemek and Neiel” — The valley of Shihor-libnath was on the border of Zebulun (see v. 14). Bethemek (*House of the Valley*) and Neiel (*Moved of God*) were evidently close by.

“And goeth out to Cabul on the left hand” — This name signifies *Dirty or Paltry land*. It probably can be identified with Kabul which today is about 11 kms NE of Acre. The “left hand” signifies the north.

VERSE 28

“And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah even unto great Zidon” — Instead of “Hebron” the R.V. has Ebron (*Servile*). The Hebrew word is different from that used for Hebron in the south, justifying the change by the R.V. Rehob (*Open Space*) was evidently on the coast by Tyre. Hammon (*Glowing, Warm*) is located by some 8 kms north of Achzib on the coast. According to archaeological research it was a centre of Phoenician worship. Kanah (*Place of Reeds*) moved the border towards Great Zidon. Great Zidon or *Tsidon-Rabba* in the Hebrew denotes Zidon the Metropolis. It is situated in Lebanon on a small promontory in the Mediterranean north of Tyre. It had a commodious harbour, and claimed to be the mother city of which Tyre was a colony, though ultimately it was outstripped by its daughter (Isa. 23:30). Assigned to Asher, it was never conquered by that tribe (Jud. 1:31). The prophecies of Isaiah (Ch. 23), Jeremiah (Ch. 27:3), Ezekiel (26:21) and Joel (2:4) proclaimed judgments on Zidon. It is significant that whereas Ezekiel predicted that Tyre would be completely destroyed (Ezek. 28:19), Zidon would remain as a city though being continually devastated by war (Ezek. 28:20-23). History to the present has wonderfully vindicated the prophecy. Zidon signifies *Fishery*, expressing the idea of ensnaring or catching fish.

VERSE 29

“And then the coast turneth to Ramah” — Ramah (*Height*) is unidentified, but obviously was situated in the area of mod-

ern Lebanon adjacent to Zidon and Tyre, a mountainous section of the country.

“And to the strong city Tyre” — The *New American Standard Bible* renders this as “the fortified city of Tyre”. The word Tyre signifies *Rock*, an emblem of strength. It would appear that Tyre rose to great prominence in later times, and became more dominant than the mother-city Zidon exceeding it in influence and power. However, the expressions used suggest that in the time of Joshua, “great Zidon” was more powerful than Tyre.

“And the coast turneth to Hosah” — The word signifies *Hopeful or Refuge*.

“And the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to Achzib” — This is more clearly rendered: “And it ended at the sea by the region of Achzib”. The RV mg renders: “from Hebel to Achzib”, providing a proper noun. Hebel is rendered Holbah (Jud. 1:31), and is identified by *Nelsons Atlas of the Bible* some miles to the north of Tyre. Achzib (*Falsehood, Deceit*) is about 10 miles (16kms) north of Acre.

VERSE 30

“Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages” — Ummah (*Association*) is identified by *Nelsons Atlas of the Bible* with Accho or Acre (Jud. 1:31). Aphek (*Fortress*) is identified 6 miles (10kms) SE of Accho; there were other sites of the same name. Rehob signifies *Broad*. Though the text mentions twenty-two cities, there are more than twenty-two names given; but some may not have fitted the category of cities.

VERSE 31

“This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages” — Asher was a large tribe, blessed with a numerous posterity. The Asherites exceeded in number Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin, amounting to 41,500 warriors at the first census, and increasing to 53,400 before entering Canaan. This raised them to fifth place in point of population. But Asher made little use of their advantages; they dwelt on sufferance among the Canaanites, preferring ease and idleness to the rigours and dangers of a soldier's life, and the constant discipline and action required in a war of conquest. The Asherites did not dislodge the Canaanites, and thereby failed to use their inheritance to fullest advantage.

The Lot of Naphtali — vv. 32-39

Naphtali's inheritance has Issachar on the south, Zebulun on the south-west, Asher on the west, and the Sea of Galilee and upper reaches of the Jordan on the east. The north extends into lower Syria with a length of territory about 50 miles (80 kms) north and south, and 10 to 15m east and west. It is a mountainous but fertile area. Being in the extreme north, Naphtali was more susceptible to attack than the tribes further south. Therefore, to guard its inheritance, it is granted a larger number of powerful fortified cities, veritable fortresses, archaeological traces of which still remain. Hazor, for example, is the largest tell in modern Israel being more extensive than even Megiddo. It displays evidence of tremendous strength.

VERSE 32

"The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, even for the children of Naphtali according to their families" — Naphtali signifies *Wrestling*. Its territory became famous as the area that saw much of the wrestling of the Lord in his preaching of the Gospel (Isa. 9:1; Matt. 4:15).

VERSE 33

"And their coast was from Heleph" — Heleph (*Exchange*) was evidently in the far north. Josephus claims that the north-eastern border of Naphtali extended to Damascus (*Ant. 5:1:20*), but no evidence of that is given in Scripture.

"From Allon to Zaanannim" — The RV gives this as "from the oak (*allon*) in Zaanannim (*Removals*)". The oak forest of Zaanannim was located above Lake Meron, the small lake north of the Sea of Galilee shown in Bible Atlases but which, today, no longer exists, as it has been drained in what is known as the Huleh Project.

"And Adami" — Adami (*Pertaining to Earth*) appears to have been the south-eastern extremity of the tribal inheritance. It is today known as Damiyeh, a little south of the Sea of Galilee.

"Nekeb" — The word signifies *Narrow Passage*. Nelson's Bible Atlas joins it with Adami, and names the place Adami-Nekeb.

"And Jabneel unto Lakum" — These names mean *God Builds and Obstruction*. They have been located just south of the Sea of Galilee approaching the Jordan.

"And the outpourings thereof were at

Jordan" — The Jordan, just below the Sea of Galilee, formed the south-eastern border.

VERSE 34

"And the coast turneth westward to Aznothtabor" — See also vv. 12,22. The word signifies *Heights of Tabor*, and took the border close to the Mount of that name.

"And goeth out from thence to Hukkok" — The border turned north, and moved towards Hukkok (*Appointed*).

"And reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side" — Close to Hukkok, the border turned towards the west so as to have Zebulun on the south, and reached as far as the border of Asher.

"And to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising" — The border of the tribe was quite separated from Judah which was located far to the south. The statement has caused quite a problem to students, and is omitted by the *Septuagint* whose translators evidently could make nothing of it. One commentator, Houbegant, suggests that "and to Judah" should read *Ubigdoth*, "by the banks of Jordan". Perhaps it refers to Havoth-Jair which was on the eastern side of Jordan, opposite the tribal inheritance of Naphtali. Jair was a descendant of Judah on his paternal side through Hezron (1 Chron. 2:21-23), and therefore could be considered as an offshoot of Judah. The reference to the "sunrising" denotes the east. Others identify it with a place 2½ miles or 4kms south of Banias which bears the name of *Seiyid Huda Ibn Yakub*, or Lord Judah son of Jacob.

VERSE 35

"And the fenced cities" — The reference is to fortified cities in contrast to "unwalled villages" or rural centres. As Naphtali was to the northern extremity of the Land, the threat of invasion was greater there than to those places south of it, and therefore it could feel the greater need for fortifications.

"Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath" — These names signify *Side, Rock and Warm Springs*. Ziddim is identified by some with Hattin, some 5½ miles or 9kms NW of Tiberius. Hammath is located at the side of hot springs on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee south of Tiberius.

"Rakkath, and Chinnereth" — Rakkath (*Shore*) is placed close to the site of

Tiberius on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and Chinnereth (*Harp-shaped*) is a little further north, and has given its name to the Sea of Galilee which resembles a harp in shape and is sometimes called the Sea of Chinneroth (Josh. 12:3). Accordingly, the eastern border of Naphtali moved up the western side of the Sea of Galilee.

VERSE 36

“And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor” — These names signify *Earth, Height and Enclosure*. Hazor is well known, and was the capital of Jabin (see Josh. 11:1). So the border moved north from the Sea of Galilee, and was protected by fortified cities strategically placed along it.

VERSE 37

“And Kedesh, and Edrei, and Enhazor” — These three places provide the meanings of *Sanctuary, Mighty or Strong, and Fountain of the Enclosure*. Kedesh is north-west of Lake Huleh in the mountains of Naphtali. It was the hometown of Barak who, with Deborah, defeated the Canaanites under Sisera.

VERSE 38

“And Iron, and Migdal-el, Harem and Beth-anath and Beth-shemesh; nineteen cities with their villages” — The names in order provide the following meanings: *Fearfulness, Tower of God, Devoted, House of the Goddess, and House of the Sun*. See also v. 22; Jud. 1:33.

VERSE 39

“This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages” — Naphtali enjoyed spectacular scenery. The mountains of Naphtali are spectacular, rising high and precipitously from the rich, fertile Huleh Plain, the productive soil of which is noted for pasturage or cultivation. In the north the snows of Hermon add beauty to the scenery, and the southern portions, adjacent to the Sea of Galilee, are also justly famed for their beauty. Because of its very position, however, Naphtali had to bear the brunt of attack, and in subsequent times was overrun by invaders, so that the title of “Galilee of the Gentiles” was given to it. This portion of its territory was close to Zebulun (Isa. 9:1).

The Lot For Dan — vv. 40-48

The seventh allocation is to Dan. The territory granted this tribe comprises a stretch of land about 15 miles north and south and 25 miles (40 kms) east and west, squeezed in between Ephraim and Judah, with Benjamin on the east, and the Mediterranean on the west. On the Shephelah or Lowlands are powerful Philistine fortresses, and these the Danites fail to conquer, so that they are confined to the mountainous area of their possessions. This ultimately forces them to seek further territory which they discover and conquer in the far north. Thereafter the expression “from Dan to Beersheba” became a proverbial saying expressing from north to south. The boundaries of Dan are not given specifically, for, of course, they abut on the neighbouring tribal territories. In general, the allocation of this tribe incorporated the lower portions by which the highlands of the central area slope to the Shephelah and onwards to the sea, embracing the coast from Joppa in the north to Ekron in the south: a distance of about 15 miles or 24kms. It included the lower part of the valley of Sorek in the south, and the Sharon plain north of Tel Aviv.

VERSE 40

“And the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families” — The word Dan signifies *Judge*.

VERSE 41

“And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh” — These cities were on the border of Dan and Judah. See Josh. 15:33. Ir-shemesh signifies *City of the Sun*, and is identified by most with Beth-shemesh, *House of the Sun* (see v. 38; Josh. 15:10).

VERSE 42

“And Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah” — Shaalabbin signifies *Fox holes or Jackals*; Ajalon signifies *Place of Harts or Gazelles*. This town was in the Valley of Ajalon which figured so prominently in Joshua's victory over the southern confederacy (Josh. 10:12). Jethlah signifies *A Hanging or Lofty Place*. These names are indicative of the wild life of the area some of which Samson used in his adventures (Jud. 15:4).

VERSE 43

“And Elon, and Thimnathah, and

Ekron — Elon signifies *Oak*; Thimnath signifies *An Allotted Portion*, and is identified with Timnah (Josh. 15:10); Ekron signifies *Extermination*, and was located in the Valley of Sorek. It was a border city of Judah (Josh. 15:11).

VERSE 44

“And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath” — Eltekeh (*Meeting Place*), and Gibbethon (*Mound or Height*) were appointed as Levitical cities (Josh. 21:23). Baalath signifies *Mistress*.

VERSE 45

“And Jehud, and Beneberak, and Gath-rimmon” — Jehud (*Praise*) is identified with Yazur, 5 miles S.E. of Joppa. Beneberak (*Sons of Lightning*) is identified 4 miles (6 kms) E. Joppa. Gath-rimmon (*Winepress of the Pomegranate*) was appointed a Levitical city (Josh. 21:24).

VERSE 46

“And Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Joppa” — Me-jarkon (*Waters of Yellowness*) is identified with the Yarkon, 5 miles north Joppa. Rakkan (*Shore*) was evidently on the coast. The final statement of the verse, takes the border of Dan adjacent to Joppa on the coast near Tel Aviv.

VERSE 47

“And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father” — [r population, Dan was second only to Judah, numbering 62,700 at the first census, and increasing to 64,400 at the second. Yet the territory assigned to it was smallest of all. But though small in size, the territory was extremely fertile, and could have accommodated the numerical larger tribe if it had energetically given itself to conquering the original inhabitants. It did not do this. The area was held by the Amorites who maintained their position in spite of all efforts to dislodge them (Jud. 1:34; 1 Sam. 7:14). The Philistines, also, occupied territory adjacent to Dan, and remained unsubdued. Forced by their heathen opponents from the rich plains to the more barren highlands, and confined in limits too narrow for their population, the Danites determined to

seek an extension of territory elsewhere. They despatched five spies to search for some favourable spot they could conquer as yet unoccupied by Israelites and in which they could settle. The messengers made their way to the north, to the source of the Jordan, and there found what they wanted. At the edge of the wide plain, at the base of Mount Hermon, they came upon a flat-topped hill about 100 ft (30 metres) high on which stood the city of Leshem or Laish, inhabited by Sidonians, but separated from Lebanon, and dwelling “quiet and secure”. It remains to this day, a most beautiful and fertile spot. From its height can be seen the glorious Huleh Valley down which flows the River Jordan, and surrounding it a girdle of majestic mountains overshadowed by the Hermon whose rugged slopes, and snow-capped summit complete a scene of majesty, fertility and tranquility. The Danites attacked the unguarded city, and slaughtered its inhabitants (Jud. 18). In doing so they partially fulfilled the prophetic words of Moses: “Dan is a lion’s whelp; he shall leap from Bashan” (Deut. 33:22). From Laish (*Lion*), Dan extended its influence into Bashan, and occupied the extreme north. From thenceforth the boundaries of the Israelites are described as being “from Dan to Beersheba” thus linking the two main cities in the extreme north and south. Dan was now a divided tribe — portion below Ephraim, and portion way to the North, to the East of Naphtali.

VERSE 48

“This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages” — These words confirm the northern sector as belonging to Dan, though not necessarily by Divine appointment.

The Inheritance Of Joshua — vv. 49-51

When all others have received their inheritance, and some like Ephraim and Manasseh have expressed disappointment, the modest wants of Joshua are supplied. His main concern has been the tribal occupation of the land, and retiring and unselfish as always, he has put his own requirements behind those of the nation. He is granted a portion in the secluded tribal area of Ephraim, doubtless providing a quiet resting place for the old warrior. It is all he needs for the time, for his great desire is a more glorious nation, inheritance and kingdom than that then established.

VERSE 49

“When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them” — *Though leader, he did not make demands or grasp at the best for himself; his portion was allocated only after all others had been granted theirs. In this he typed the Lord, the Joshua of the N.T. (see Phil. 2:6-9). The statement of this verse in The Book of Joshua, like that of Phil. 2:6-9, is worthy of emulation. Joshua’s attitude with regard to his inheritance provides a very important index to his character.*

VERSE 50

“According to the work of Yahweh they gave him the city which he asked” — Joshua, like Caleb (Josh. 14:6-14) requested the city, and this was endorsed by Yahweh. The Divine confirmation of his choice is not recorded, but evidently, Joshua, like Caleb had been promised a specific inheritance in the land. Now the time had come for him to claim it.

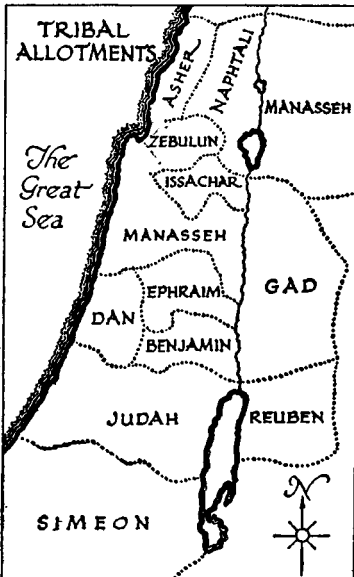
“Even Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim” — Timnath-serah signifies *Extra Portion*. It is about 12 miles (20 kms) S. W. of Shiloh. It is said to be a barren spot in a barren part of the area granted Joshua’s own tribe. Perhaps he endeavoured to

show his contempt for present possessions in comparison with the greater reward of the future, by accepting such a humble temporary possession.

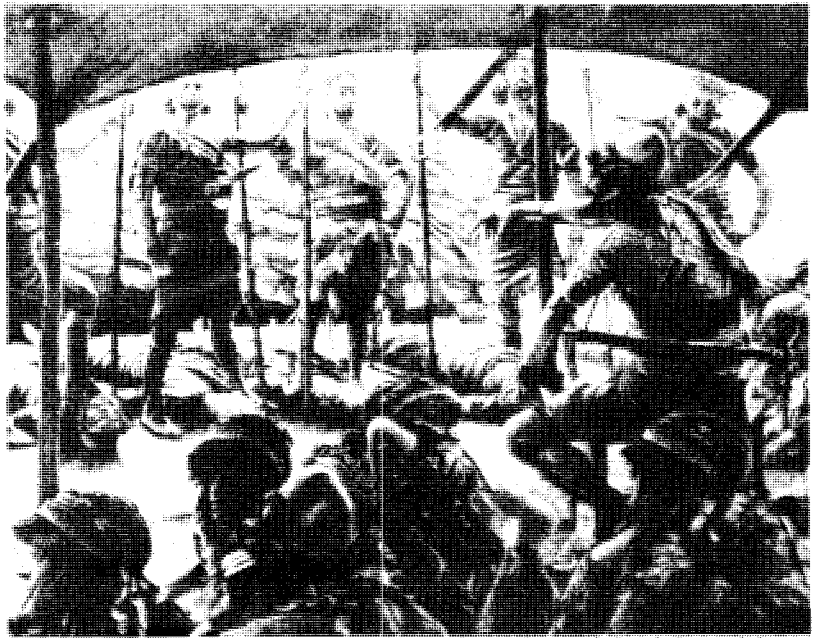
“And he built the city, and dwelt therein” — Joshua evidently rebuilt the city. It was situated on the north of the hill Gaash (Josh. 24:30) which signifies *Quaking*. The name may commemorate an earthquake which destroyed the original city requiring its restoration. What he did then, Christ will do at his second coming, to the city of his inheritance, the “city of the great King”, the present Jerusalem, after it has been overwhelmed by earthquake (Zech. 14:4-5).

VERSE 51

“These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before Yahweh, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country” — The division was by lot at the site of the Tabernacle, and therefore according to Divine revelation. This will be the case with the allocation of territory to the twelve tribes in the Age to come (Ezekiel 48). The future division of the land will be completely different from that of the past. See Ezekiel 48.



Though the tribal borders are outlined in The Book of Joshua not all the territory was occupied by the Israelites. The Philistines and the Canaanites occupied important fortified cities, and strategic passes. Israel compromised with these inhabitants, failed to eject them. Instead they came to terms with them (Judges 1:28-36), and so failed in the victory they could have won. Joshua made it possible for them to conquer, but through lack of faith on their part, they failed to do so.



Two Decisive Victories: the taking of Jericho and the defeat of the southern confederacy.

CHAPTER TWENTY

CITIES OF REFUGE APPOINTED AND CONFIRMED

Though the land has been divided into its tribal portions, there is still work to be done before the assembled representatives can disperse from Shiloh. Joshua, always scrupulously obedient to the requirements of Yahweh as given through Moses, now proceeds to carry out the law respecting the Cities of Refuge which have been appointed already during the last days of his predecessor (Num. 35 — see notes). In the case of deliberate murder, the Law permitted the Avenger of Blood to exact punishment, a life for a life; but to guard against a miscarriage of justice, Cities of Refuge are appointed where the accused can flee that his case may be properly considered free from the emotionalism that death invariably excites. These Cities are designed to provide Divine protection for the manslayer (Num. 35:9-24; Deut. 4:41; 19:1-13). The Law makes clear distinction between premeditated murder and unintentional manslaughter (Num. 35:11-16). In the light of man's relationship to Yahweh, and the fact that those in covenant relationship with Him have offered up their lives to Him, makes the taking of such a life by anybody else a serious crime (cp. Gen. 9:6; Rev. 21:12,14). Therefore if accidental death occurs it is the responsibility of the nearest kinsman or Avenger of Blood (Goel hadam) to punish the guilty party (Deut. 19:12). The unintentional killer is to be provided immunity by the provision of Cities of Refuge where his case could be tried free of bias. Accordingly, in the event of causing accidental death he must present himself at the gate of one such city seeking permission to enter (Deut. 21:19; 22:15). He will later be brought to trial and his guilt or otherwise determined. Six Cities are appointed: three in the West and three in the East. These Cities of Refuge type the Lord Jesus Christ as such (see Heb. 6:18-20).

The Purpose Of The Cities — vv. 1-6

Joshua is commanded to confirm the appointment of Cities of Refuge which have already been selected by Moses, in order that the unwilling killer may find refuge and be afforded protection whilst his case is properly adjudicated.

VERSE 1

“Yahweh also spake unto Joshua, saying” — Before the Israelitish representatives dispersed, Joshua was commanded to confirm the appointment of Cities of Refuge already laid down by the Law. In this he typed the Lord Jesus Christ who “confirmed the promises made unto the fathers” and enabled “Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy” (Rom. 15:8-9).

VERSE 2

“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, wherof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses” — The appointment of these Cities was an act of grace and mercy foreshadowing those characteristics manifested by the Lord (John 1:14)*. The Hebrew has the definite article: “*The* cities of refuge”. The selection of the cities had already been made (Exod. 21:13; Num. 35:6,11,14; Deut. 19:2-6). Now the appointment is to be endorsed and confirmed by the people. The term Refuge is from a Hebrew root *falal* signifying “to contract, to draw, to take in, to receive”. All Cities of Refuge being cities of the priests appointed for that purpose, they had to bear the sins of the manslayer (sin’s flesh — see Heb. 2:14). What the priests did, they did as representing the High Priest. On his death (foreshadowing that of Christ) those who had sought the shelter of the Cities of Refuge were automatically freed therefrom (Josh. 20:6; See Luke 18:6-7; Heb. 6:17-18).

VERSE 3

“That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither” — The term “unawares” signifies in error, not intending it (Num. 35:16-17; Deut. 19:5), and “unwittingly” signifies inadvertently as in Lev. 4:12,22 etc.

“And they shall be your refuge from the

avenger of blood” — The Hebrew for “avenger” is *goel* and denotes the next of kin. The Septuagint renders it as such. For the duties of the Next of Kin as *Goel* see our notes on Ruth 3 and 4. Because a believer’s life belongs to God, the taking of such even inadvertently is treated as a crime punishable by death (Gen. 9:6; Exod. 21:12-14; Lev. 24:17-21). It robs Yahweh of a worshipper.

VERSE 4

“And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them” — Five steps of grace to safety are described. 1. The killer approached the gate seeking admission, as one may apply to an Ecclesia for baptism. 2. He was interrogated as to his case, (like an examination for baptism) and after having expressed his urgency (recognising that the Avenger of Blood was on his trail), 3. he was taken within the city 4. and was appointed a place, 5. where he could dwell among them. In the parable, the City of Refuge represented the Ecclesia of Christ, and the one seeking admission represented those who recognise their mortality and its cause, and seek redemption therefrom (Heb. 6:16).

VERSE 5

“And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime” — The avenger of blood was held at bay by those who recognised their danger, seeking refuge in one of the cities provided. The “avenger of blood” types sin’s flesh, or the “devil which has the power of death” over any subject to it, and from which a believer needs immunity. It is significant that the one seeking refuge is conscious of his state and the threat to which he is subject, but he is able to plead that what he has done has been done unwittingly. He is like Paul who was a grievous sinner, but received forgiveness when he sought refuge in Christ, because,

* It is interesting and significant to notice the different words to define the appointment of these Cities of Refuge in the various places where they are described. They are as follows: *Suwm* — to ordain, establish, put aside (Exod. 21:13); *Nathan* — to give up (Num. 35:6,11; Josh. 20:2,8); *Qadash* — consecrate (Josh. 20:7); *Muwadah* — appointed place, asylum — E.B. Wilson.

as he explained: "I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13). Paul's ignorance of the Truth caused him to believe that he did "God's service" in persecuting unto death the followers of Christ he pursued so vigorously (see John 16:2; Phil. 3:5-6). Otherwise he would have been treated as a deliberate murderer, and if found in that state at the Judgment Seat would have been rejected to suffer eternal death for his crime at the hands of the Next of Kin, even Christ (Luke 21:34; Rom. 5:10; 9:1).

VERSE 6

"And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment" — The case of the killer was properly and justly adjudicated by representatives of the city. The word "congregation" is *edah* or Witness. Representatives of this congregation of witness carefully examined the circumstances of death, and if the killer be found innocent of deliberate murder he was exonerated. Then he entered the City of the Priests (1 Pet. 2:9) awaiting the time when full freedom shall be granted. Therefore the initial examination of v. 4 was an interim one only. A final Judgment took place as explained in v. 6.

"And until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days" — The 5 steps of grace accomplished, two more (to make 7) remain: 1. The death of the High Priest; and 2. Freedom. On being adjudged innocent of murder, the killer still had to remain in the city until the death of the High Priest. This, of course, pointed forward to the death of Christ, the antitypical High Priest. Those baptised "into his death" (Rom. 6:3) are liberated from servitude to sin (i.e. sin's flesh) through the forgiveness available through his death. Until the Redeemer appeared "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself", sin still remained dominant. However, the efficacy of his offering stretched back to the beginning as well as forward to the end (Heb. 9:15); for sin continued to reign until deposed by his offering. These facts were dramatised in a remarkable manner in the provision of the Cities of Refuge.

"Then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled" — His own house and city comprised a Divine inheritance, allocated to him by lot. In Christ, a believer attains unto "heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3), described as "his

inheritance in the saints" (v. 18). The death of the High Priest delivered him from the sin and death that threatened him (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 5:1).

The Cities Selected — vv. 7-9

Six cities are selected on this occasion, though others were allocated subsequently. These cities are conveniently located throughout the Land so as to be easily accessible in time of need. Three are situated on the West and three on the East. Their names are significant, and spell out the principles of salvation in Christ. They proclaim that the antitypical City of Refuge (the Lord Jesus Christ) will consecrate, sustain, unite in fellowship, protect, cheer and ultimately deliver all faithful believers causing them to rejoice. Conveniently spaced throughout the Land they also are to be made easy of access by the construction of well-kept roads (Deut. 19:3). The application to the Gospel as leading to the believer's City of Refuge is obvious.

VERSE 7

"And they appointed" — The Hebrew word "appointed" signifies *to sanctify or set apart*. The Cities of Refuge were places set apart for the sanctification of those who sought their protection. As such they typified the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sanctifier of those who approach Yahweh through him (John 17:19; Heb. 2:11).

"Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali" — Kedesh signifies *to Sanctify, Set apart, Consecrate*, and therefore to *make holy*. Galilee comes from a root signifying a *Circuit*, suggesting eternity. Naphtali means *Wrestling*. To consecrate unto Eternal Life through Westling is suggested by this name. Kedesh was the birthplace of Barak. It was situated in the high mountains of Naphtali which overlook the Huleh Valley. The ruins of the ancient city are to be seen today. Mount Naphtali relates to the hill country of the tribal inheritances. See also the reference to "Mount Ephraim".

"And Shechem in Mount Ephraim" — Shechem signifies *Between the Shoulders, or Burden-Bearer*, and Ephraim denotes *Double Fruit*. These two names are equally analogous to each other in relation to the saving work of Christ. Situated in the tribal cantonment of Ephraim, Shechem was in the centre of the land.

"And Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah" — Kirjath-arba signifies *City of the Four* which typically

points to the Holy City of the Age to come, concerning which it is stated that it "lieth foursquare" (Rev. 21:16). The name was changed to Hebron which signifies *Joining* or *Fellowship*, and being linked with Judah, it is given to *Praise*. Through Christ, a believer is inducted into the Foursquare City of the future, and enjoying Fellowship with the Father and the Son, is drawn to Praise them. The three cities enumerated in these verses were situated in the western division of the Land.

VERSE 8

"And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben" — Bezer signifies *A Fortified Place*; and Reuben is an exclamation: *See a Son!* Protection is afforded those who clearly see and understand the relationship of the Father and Son in its bearing upon those called to be saved (John 17:20-21).

"And Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad" — The word Ramoth is derived from *raam* signifying *to be high, raised up, exalted*. Gilead is derived from the word signifying, *The Heap of Witness* (see Gen. 31:47, mg); and Gad is *Company*. In this name there is the promise of Elevation with the Company of Witnesses to the Truth.

"And Golan in Basban out of the tribe

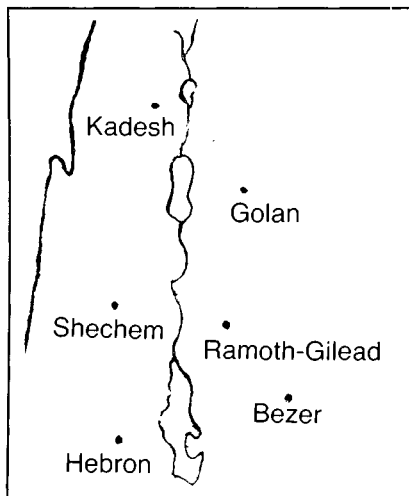
of Manasseh" — Golan is said to be derived from *Galah, to Remove, Deliver or Pass away*. It could also be derived from *gai* signifying *To rejoice*. Combining these two roots, the word can denote: *Deliverance causing Rejoicing*. Bashan signifies *Soft soil, in the sense of fertility*; and Manasseh denotes *Forgetting*. This final City of Refuge, therefore, denotes the Rejoicing through Deliverance, and a Fertile Inheritance causing one to forget the past.

Typically, the six Cities of Refuge, brought home the six-sided conquest of the flesh through Christ. He, as the believer's City of Refuge will Consecrate them; Sustain them; Unite them in Fellowship; Protect them; Exalt them; and Deliver them out unto eternal life.

VERSE 9

"These were the cities appointed" — Here the Hebrew word signifies to appoint or assemble, unlike that of v. 7. See note.

"For all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation" — Unfortunately, in its antitypical application of the Cities of Refuge, comparatively few take heed of the offer of grace in Christ Jesus, and so are irremediably destroyed by the Avenger of blood, sin in the flesh.



*The Cities of Refuge
appointed as a shelter*

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

CITIES FOR THE LEVITES

Jacob's curse on Levi denied the tribe an individual inheritance in the land (Gen. 49:5-7). However, because of its loyalty to Yahweh and to Moses at the foot of Horeb, a higher status was granted the tribe: the priestly ministrations were taken from the family firstborns in whom they were previously vested, and given unto the Levites (Num. 3:45; 8:16). They were appointed to teach the principles of the Law to the rest of the tribes and lead them in their worship of Yahweh. In order that this might be effectively performed the Levites are now divided among the other tribes, through specific cities being allocated them. Accordingly, the status now granted Levi shows that the "sins of the fathers are not to be laid upon their children" if the latter obey Yahweh; instead: "Every man is to suffer death for his own sin". Whereas Simeon is swallowed up in Judah, Levi has honoured positions throughout the land. The inhabitants of the cities given them, however, are not limited to Levites, for Saul dwelt in Gibeah and David at Hebron though both places were appointed as Levitical cities. Moreover, the homes of Levites could be sold, though they would revert back to their original owner in the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:32-34). On the other hand, it appears that Levites could dwell in cities other than Levitical ones (Deut. 18:6; 1 Sam. 21:1). Jewish commentators claim that all cities appointed as Levitical are to be treated as centres where any desiring a case to be tried could go for a decision. However the special privilege of immunity and protection whilst awaiting trial in the case of a killing, did not apply to those cities: only to the Cities of Refuge. The Levites in Israel typed believers during Gentile times scattered throughout the world (see 1 Pet. 1:1).

Appointment of Levitical Cities Is By Lot — vv. 1-3

The appointment of Levitical cities is not to be by human choice, but by Divine election through the revelation of the Lot.

VERSE 1

"Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the

tribes of the children of Israel” — Those referred to in this verse constituted the commission appointed for the task of selecting by lot those cities to be designated as Levitical. See note, Num. 26:55.

VERSE 2

“And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying” — The Tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, and thus constituted the religious centre of the land. See note Ch. 18:1.

“Yahweh commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle” — The word “suburbs” is from a Hebrew root signifying *To drive out, To separate, To expel*. The term denotes open country separated from the city where cattle could be driven out to graze.

VERSE 3

“And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of Yahweh, these cities and their suburbs” — In giving cities to the Levites the tribes approved their status in their midst. It was a kind of tithe of the national inheritance given up for the work of Yahweh. The appointment of these cities meant that the Levites were scattered throughout the Land, and therefore at hand for whoever might require their assistance in interpreting the Law.

Thirteen Aaronite Cities Out of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin — v. 4

Significantly, the priests are allocated cities that later prove to be conveniently adjacent to the Temple.

VERSE 4

“And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites; and the children of Aaron the priest, which were of the Levites” — During the wilderness wanderings the Kohathites carried the most intimate objects of worship: the Ark, Table of Shewbread, Lampstand, Altar of Incense etc. (Num. 4:4-15). From this family of Levi came the priests, for Aaron was of the family of Kohath (Exod. 6:18-20). Young renders the statement as “*even the children of Aaron....*”

“Had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities” — In the appointment of cities for the Aaronites, or priests, Yahweh had in mind His future intentions. Though the Tabernacle

and Ark were then at Shiloh, the Temple was to be built in Jerusalem. This was not then openly revealed to Israel though the intention had been implied from the beginning (Deut. 12:14; 33:19). In the time of David, Yahweh’s choice of a site was made known, so that the appointment of these cities anticipated the revelation later made known to him (Psa. 132:13-14). The territory granted Judah, Simeon and Benjamin was all close to the Temple. In fact, Jerusalem was on the border of Judah and Benjamin, and Simeon formed part of the inheritance of Judah. The three names reveal meanings appropriate to their honoured position. Judah signifies *Praise*, Simeon *Hearing*, and Benjamin, *the Son of his right hand*. So the names together proclaim: *Praise will ascend from those who Hear the Son of His right hand*. The Levitical cities appointed in these tribes were Aaronic cities: that is, cities of the Priests. It should be recalled that whereas all priests were Levites, all Levites were not priests. Priests were exclusive to the house of Aaron, a division of the Kohathites, of the tribe of Levi.

The Kohathite Cities For Ephraim, Dan and Manasseh — v. 5

A further ten cities are allocated the Kohathite Levites.

VERSE 5

“And the rest of the children of Kohath had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities” — The reference to “the rest” relates to the rest of the Kohathites after the Aaronites are provided for. The tribes designated provided a greater number of habitations to the Levites than any of the other tribes because their possessions were more extensive (Num. 35:8). Kohath signifies *Assembly*. Their numbers were diminished by the judgment consequent upon the rebellion of Korah and his company (Num. 16). With the priests separated therefrom the ten additional cities were adequate. The cities allocated were out of the tribes of Ephraim (*Double Fruit*), Dan (*Judgment*) and Manasseh (*Forgetting*).

13 Gershonite Cities From Issachar, Asher and Naphtali — v. 6

During the wilderness wanderings, the Gershonites had charge of the Tabernacle coverings, hangings of the court etc. (Num. 4:24-26).

VERSE 6

“And the children of Gershon had by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities” — Gershon signifies *Expulsion*. He appears to have been the firstborn, but was superceded by Kohath (Gen. 46:11), given first place in this chapter. This action against him provides the meaning of his name. He had been expelled from the status of firstborn. The family ministered in Issachar (*Reward*), Asher (*Blessing*), Naphtali (*Wrestling*) and the western half of Manasseh (*Forgetting*). Geographically this took in a northern sector of the land.

12 Merarite Cities from Reuben, Gad and Zebulun — v. 7

In the wilderness wandering the Merarites had charge of the boards, bars, pillars, sockets etc. (Num. 4:29-33).

VERSE 7

“The children of Merari by their families had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities” — Merari signifies *Bitter, Unhappy*. The family ministered to Reuben (*See a Son*), Gad (*Company*), and Zebulun (*Dwelling*). The inheritances of these tribes took in part of the area east of the Jordan valley in Reuben and Gad, and the central north in Zebulun.

VERSE 8

“And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites those cities with their suburbs, as Yahweh commanded by the hand of Moses” — The selection was by Divine appointment.

Cities Selected For The Aaronites — vv. 9-19

For the Aaronites, nine cities are selected from the tribal inheritance of Judah and Simeon, and four from Benjamin. The priests are thus appropriately given residences adjacent to the place where centuries later the Temple was built. This illustrates that Divine selection is combined with Divine purpose. Most of the cities are from Judah, that tribe given more for the reason stated in Num. 35:8.

VERSE 9

“And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are here mentioned by name” — In contrast to Benjamin (see v. 17), Simeon (*Hearing*) is linked with Judah (*Praise*) because the families of Simeon were “scattered in Judah”. The verb “mentioned” signifies *to call* (see mg). The cities enumerated were treated as are saints who are “called to be priests”. The cities allocated were called (named) and separated.

VERSE 10

“Which the children of Aaron, being of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi, had: for their’s was the first lot” — The Aaronites exclusively were priests as well as being Levites. See note above. They are described as “the first lot,” not because Kohath was the natural firstborn, for this Gershon appears to have been, but because to Aaron and his sons was the priesthood reserved.

VERSE 11

“And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it” — Hebron (*fellowship*) was a most important centre in the south. There David was first anointed king. The significance of the names given to it is outlined in Josh. 14:15; 15:33,54. The word “suburbs” denotes the open, pastoral country separated from the city where flocks or herds could be driven out to graze (see v. 2).

VERSE 12

“But the fields of the city” — In the Hebrew, the word is in the singular number: “the field”. This relates to the adjacent land beyond the suburbs (see Num. 35:5). The inheritance of the Aaronites was limited to the city and its “suburbs”.

“And the villages thereof” — The word is from the Hebrew *chatsar*, and denotes an *Enclosure*, such as farm buildings or small clusters of buildings, forming a small village. Evidently, the Aaronites only had homes in the city proper. They shared this with Caleb who possessed the country beyond, which was dotted with isolated buildings and small villages.

“Gave they to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh for a possession” — See Josh. 15:13. Caleb occupied the city in conjunction with the priests who also had use of the pasture land beyond, whereas the remainder belonged to Caleb.

VERSE 13

“Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest, Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer”

— The designation of the Aaronites as a separate family of Levites, divided the tribe into four sections, answering to the four horns of the Altar around which they ministered, or the four camps or sections of Israel into which the nation was divided, and to which the Levitical tribe ministered. It is significant that Arba, the original name of Hebron, signifies *Four*. Hebron signifies *Union* or *Fellowship*, which is appropriate to a Priestly City for their ministrations in Israel brought the people into unity or fellowship with Yahweh. For the reference to Hebron as a City of Refuge, see notes on Ch. 20:7.

“And Libnah with her suburbs” — Libnah signifies *Whiteness*. It is located about 5 miles (8kms) west of Beth-Shemesh, and is identified with modern Tell es Saft. See Josh. 15:42.

VERSE 14

“And Jattir with her suburbs” — See Josh. 15:48. Jattir signifies *Excellent*. It is identified with Khirbet-Attir about 15 miles (24 kms) S.W. of Hebron.

“And Eshtemoa with her suburbs” — The word signifies *I will make myself heard, or Obedience*. It is identified with Semua about 10 miles (16kms) south of Hebron in the hill country. See Josh. 15:48.

VERSE 15

“And Holon with her suburbs” — Holon (*Anguished* or *Sandy*) is unidentified. See Ch. 15:51.

“And Debir with her suburbs” — Debir signifies *Oracle*. It is 12 miles (20kms) south of Hebron identified with Tell Beit Mirsim. See Josh. 15:15.

VERSE 16

“And Ain with her suburbs” — Ain signifies *Eye* or *Spring*. See note Josh. 15:32. This city was given to Simeon (Josh. 19:7). In the list of *priestly towns* recorded in 1 Chron. 6:59, the name is given as Ashan (*Smoke*).

“And Juttah with her suburbs” — This place is 5 miles (8 kms) south of Hebron. It signifies: *He will be turned aside*. See Note Josh. 15:55.

“And Beth-shemesh with her suburbs” — Beth-shemesh (*House of the Sun*) was on the northern border of Judah due west from Jerusalem. See Josh. 15:10.

“Nine cities out of those two tribes” — Simeon was within the territory allocated to Judah. See Gen. 49:5-7.

VERSE 17

“And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs” — Gibeon (*High Place*) was the main centre of the Hittites who tricked Joshua (Josh. 9:3). It is situated a few miles north of Jerusalem. It subsequently became the site where the Tabernacle was pitched (2 Chron. 1:3).

“Bega with her suburbs” — Geba (*Hill*) is modern Jeba near Michmash. See Josh. 18:24.

VERSE 18

“Anathoth with her suburbs” — Anathoth (*Answers* i.e. to prayer) was the birthplace of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1; 11:21-23). It is modern Anata 3 miles N.E. of Jerusalem.

“And Almon with her suburbs; four cities” — Almon (*Hidden*) is identified with modern Khirbet-Almit between Geba and Anathoth.

VERSE 19

“All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their suburbs” — All the priestly cities were in Judah, Simeon and Benjamin, and so were close to Jerusalem when the Temple was built therein. As noted above, the names of these three tribes are appropriate to their labours. It was the message that the priests proclaimed to the rest of Israel. It is interesting that the number of the Divinely appointed priestly cities that were “called out” and separated for this purpose (see note v. 9) were the same number as the Divinely appointed Apostles; for with Paul there were thirteen such.

Cities Selected For The Kohathites**— vv. 20-26**

The Kohathites had the most onerous task in the wilderness wanderings. They carried the Ark, Table of Shewbread,

Lampstand, Golden Altar etc. (Num. 4:4-15).

VERSE 20

“And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribes of Ephraim” — See note v.5. Their depleted number explains the wording of this verse.

VERSE 21

“For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, to be a city of refuge for the slayer” — Shechem (*Burden Bearer*) is modern Nablus. See note Josh. 20:7.

“And Gezer with her suburbs” — See note Josh. 10:33; 16:3,10.

VERSE 22

“And Kibzaim with her suburbs” — Kibzaim (*Double Heap*) apparently is another name for Jokmeam (*The people will be raised* 1 Chron. 6:68) and Jokneam (*The people will be lamented* 1 Kings 4:12). It is unidentified.

“And Beth-horon with her suburbs four cities” — Beth-horon signifies *House of the Consumer*. It is close to Gibeon at the head of the Pass that leads to Ajjalun, where Joshua routed the confederacy of the south (Josh. 10:10).

VERSE 23

“And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs” — Dan signifies *Judge*. Its original location was west of Judah, but subsequently some of the tribe migrated north to Eltekeh (*God's meeting place* — see Josh. 19:44). It is located 6 miles (10 kms) south of Ekron.

“Gibbethon with her suburbs” — Gibbethon (*Mound or Height*) is about 7 miles (11 kms) north of Eltekeh.

VERSE 24

“Ajjalun with her suburbs” — Ajjalun (*Place of harts or stags*) is in the valley of Ajjalun about 14 miles (22 kms) from Jerusalem.

“Gath-rimmon with her suburbs; four cities” — Gath-rimmon (*Winepress of pomegranates*) was situated on the Plain of the Philistines. See Ch. 19:45.

VERSE 25

“And out of the half tribe of Manasseh” — Manasseh signifies *Forgetting*.

“Tanach with her suburbs” — Tanach (*Sandy soil*) is 5 miles S.E. of Megiddo (Josh. 17:11). It is also spelt Taanach.

“And Gath-rimmon with her suburbs; two cities” — In 1 Chron. 6:70 it is called Bileam which is similar to Balaam (*Waster of the people*). It is identified with Bel'amah, 21 miles (34 kms) NNE of Samaria.

VERSE 26

“All the cities were ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained” — See vv. 4-5.

Further Gershonite Cities Granted**— vv. 27-33**

Additional cities are granted Levites of the House of Gershon. Cp with v. 6.

VERSE 27

“And unto the children of Gershon of the families of the Levites, out of the other half tribe of Manasseh” — This reference is to the half tribe of Manasseh on the eastern side of the Jordan Valley.

“They gave Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer” — See note Ch. 20:8. The Golan Heights of modern Israel is named after this site.

“And Beesh-terah with her suburbs; two cities” — Beesh-terah is a contracted form of Beth-Ashtaroth, or *Temple of Ashtaroth*. It was a centre of the licentious worship of Ashtaroth, and previously the residence of the feared King Og (Josh. 12:4; 1 Chron. 6:71).

VERSE 28

“And out of the tribe of Issachar” — Issachar signifies *Reward*.

“Kishon with her suburbs” — Kishon should be rendered Kishion (see Ch. 19:12). It has not been identified.

“Dabareh with her suburbs” — In Ch. 19:20 this is given as a town of Zebulun, but evidently it was located on the border; it therefore served Issachar as a Levitical town of teaching. It should be spelt Dabareth.

VERSE 29

“Jarmuth with her suburbs” — Jarmuth signifies *Elevation* from the root *ruwn* (high); a common root with Remeth (Josh. 19:21) and Ramoth (1 Chron. 6:73) with which it is identified. See margins at these places.

“Engannim with her suburbs; four cities” — Engannim signifies *Fountain of Gardens*. It is situated about 15 miles (24 kms) south of Mt. Tabor. Today the important city of Jenin in the West Bank is identified with it. See Josh. 19:21.

VERSE 30

“And out of the tribe of Asher” — Asher signifies *Blessed* or *Happy*.

“Mishal with her suburbs” — See Ch. 19:26. The site is unknown.

“Abdon with her suburbs” — This town is given as Hebron in Josh. 19:28; but is not the prominent city of Judah. See note at Josh. 19:28.

VERSE 31

“Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities” — For Helkath see note Josh. 19:25. It is identified by *The Westminster Atlas* with Tell el-Harbarj in the plain overshadowed by the Carmel Range. Rehob (see Josh. 19:28) is placed further north, east of Acre.

VERSE 32

“And out of the tribe of Naphtali” — Naphtali signifies *Wrestling*.

“Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer” — See note Josh. 19:37; 20:7.

“And Hammoth-dor with her suburbs” — The name signifies *Hot Springs of Dor (Dwelling)*, and is probably the same town as Hammath in Josh. 19:35. It is identified close to the hot springs south of Tiberius.

“And Kartan with her suburbs; three cities” — The word signifies *Town* or *City*, and is identified by *Nelson’s Atlas* with Rakkath. See Josh. 19:35.

VERSE 33

“All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their suburbs” — See note v. 2.

Cities Selected for the Merarites**— vv. 34-40**

A further 12 cities are selected for the Merarites: four in Zebulun, four in Reuben; and four in Gad. See also v. 7.

VERSE 34

“And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites” — Merari signifies *Bitter, Unhappy*.

“Out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam

with her suburbs” — See note Josh. 19:11.

“And Kartah with her suburbs” — Kartah signifies *City*. Its site is uncertain. It was probably situated near Jokneam at the foot of the Carmel range.

VERSE 35

“Dimnah with her suburbs” — Dimnah signifies *Dunghill*. In 1 Chron. 6:77, Rimmon is substituted for it (see Josh. 19:13). It is identified about 15 miles east of Tiberius.

“Nahalal with her suburbs, four cities” — See note Josh. 19:15.

VERSE 36

“And out of the tribe of Reuben” — Reuben signifies *See a Son!* It was the most southerly of the Transjordan tribes.

“Bezer with her suburbs” — Bezer signifies a *Fortified Place*. It was appointed as a City of Refuge. See note Josh. 20:8. The *LXX* adds at this place: “A city of Refuge for the slayer”. It is unidentified.

“And Jahazah with her suburbs” — See note Josh. 13:18. The name signifies *“Open space trodden underfoot”*. Sihon was defeated there (Num. 21:23-24).

VERSE 37

“Kedemoth with her suburbs” — Kedemoth signifies *Ancient places* or *Beginnings*. It is unidentified. See Deut. 2:26.

“And Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities” — The word signifies *Shining forth*. It is perhaps Tell Jawa, 6 miles south of Amman.

VERSE 38

“And out of the tribe of Gad” — Gad signifies *Company*. It was situated on the northern border of Reuben, east of the Jordan.

““Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs to be a city of refuge for the slayer” — Ramoth Gilead signifies the *Heights of Gilead (Heap of witness)*. It is identified by Nelson Glueck with Tell Ramith in North Transjordan S.E. of Mahanaim. See note Ch. 20:8.

“Mahanaim with her suburbs” — This place signifies *Two camps*. See Gen. 32:2; Josh. 13:26. It is located on the northern bank of the River Jabbok.

VERSE 39

““Heshbon with her suburbs” —

Heshbon signifies *Reasoning* or *Reckoning*. It is situated 20 miles (32 kms) east of the Jordan, south of Amman.

“Jazer with her suburbs; four cities in all” — Jazer signifies *Helpful*. See note Josh. 13:25.

VERSE 40

“So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites were by their lot twelve cities” — See note v. 7.

General Summary — vv. 41-42

Forty-eight cities are thus allocated to the Priests.

VERSE 41

“All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty and eight cities with their suburbs” — These forty-eight cities include also the Cities of Refuge. At the last census the tribe of Levi numbered 23,000 (Num. 26:62) so that forty-eight cities seem too many. However, the population of these cities was not exclusively Levite, whilst scope had also to be provided for population growth. The cities were scattered throughout Israel, for it was the duty of the Levites to educate the people (Mal. 2:7). Similarly, in the age to come, the Redeemed, being constituted a royal priesthood (Rev. 5:9-10), will be scattered throughout the world teaching the people, and conducting services of worship (see Mal. 1:11; Zeph. 3:19; Isa. 30:20-21). So these cities constituted a parabolic prophecy in Israel.

VERSE 42

“These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus were all these cities” — As noted above, the term suburbs signifies *open spaces* where flocks and herds could be driven to graze. After this verse, the *Septuagint* introduces a passage, in part a repetition of Josh. 19:49-50 recording a grant of special inheritance to Joshua, also stating that he buried at Timnath-serah the flint knives with which the men had been circumcised when they first came over Jordan (Josh. 5:2). This was a Jewish legend of early date.

The Work Completed — vv. 43-45

A few concluding words summarise the completion of the work of occupying the land.

VERSE 43

“And Yahweh gave unto Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein” — The land given to Israel at this time was that which had been promised to Moses (Num. 34; Josh. 11:23), not that promised to Abraham which stretched to the Euphrates (Gen. 15:18-20). There was land still occupied by Canaanites (such as the Jebusites at Jerusalem who still remained in possession of it — Josh. 15:63). See Num. 34:5-8 and compare with 1 Kings 8:65. The land was “given” by lot; but the Israelites still had to go in and conquer it; and in many instances this they failed to do (Josh. 23:4-6, 12-13; Josh. 16:10; 17:12; Jud. 1:27-28).

VERSE 44

“And Yahweh gave them rest round about, according to all that He swore unto their fathers” — The Hebrew word for “rest” is *nuwach*, not *menuchah* as in Deut. 12:9. It is used in the sense of marital rest as in Deut. 12:10 (for which see note), and their continued rest was contingent upon their obedience. Yahweh had reduced their enemies to impotence, and this paved the way for the personal victories of the various tribes. To that end they needed to develop the faith and courage to grasp that which God had placed within their power to obtain. Because they failed to do this they “entered not into their rest” or *menuchah* (Heb. 4:8). The Hebrews used the term to describe the security of a husband’s home (cp. with Isa. 54:5). Similarly, through Christ, Yahweh has made it possible for whosoever will to conquer the enemies of sin and death through the sacrifice of His son. He has failed in nothing that He has promised. But believers must develop faith and courage and exercise initiative in order to claim their individual inheritance. The recipe for success remains that which was set before Joshua at the beginning (Josh. 1:7-8).

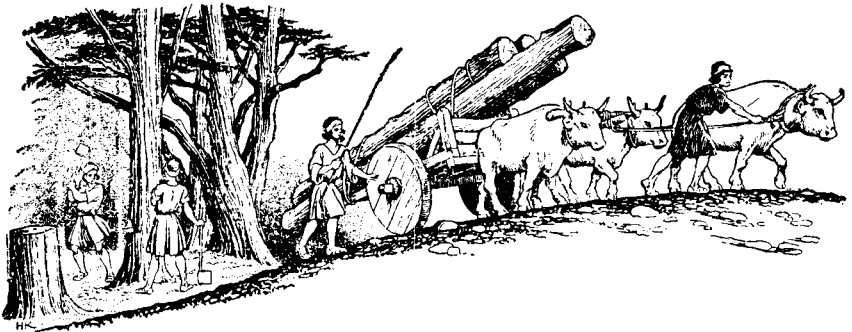
“And there stood not a man of all their enemies before them” — When they engaged their enemies in war in accordance with the Divine instructions they were victorious. When they failed to do so they were defeated (Josh. 16:10).

“Yahweh delivered all their enemies into their hand” — He gave them the power to conquer (Eph. 6:11-18; 1 John 5:4). See note on v. 44.

VERSE 45

“There failed not ought of any good thing which Yahweh had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass” — See Josh. 23:14-15. The whole land was allocated to Israel, but not at that time fully possessed by the tribes. Nor, through lack of faith, was it ever properly conquered by them; nor will it be until the Millennium (Isa. 9:6-7; Ezek. 48; Zech. 14:16-21; Luke 1:32;33). Yahweh promised to give it to an obedient Israel little by little and even that was subject to conditions (Exod. 23:29-33; Num. 33:52-56; Deut. 7:20-24; 28:1-2,7,15). All that had been promised in Egypt had been fulfilled. The sea had been crossed; the desert defeated; the people fed; Bashan subdued; the Jordan traversed; the enemy conquered; the land possessed. Any failure was due to the people. They failed to destroy or dispel the Canaanites, which if they had done so, would have given them the final victory. Last among the tribes to have their inheritance granted them were the Levites. So it will be in the Age to come. The nations will be subdued, the Temple set up, and then the ecclesiastical order of the Kingdom superimposed upon a conquered

world. Individual inheritances will then be allocated “at the end of the days” (Dan. 12:13). Meanwhile, the warfare is now for the Ecclesia to maintain. It, too, has its Red Sea to cross; it too must be fed in the wilderness of life; it too must pass over Jordan. As Yahweh was with Israel after the flesh, He will also be with the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). In this, every individual will be tested as individuals were under Joshua. The clarion call of their Joshua is heard: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matt. 11:28-29). That “rest” is not idleness, nor carnal ease. It is the rest of harmonious activity in fellowship with Yahweh and His Son, who declared: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). The signs of the times reveal that the saints of God are within sight of Canaan; a little more patience, a little more striving against sin, a little more daily effort and warfare — and the waters of the Jordan will roll back, and we shall enter into our inheritance.



CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

THE UNITY OF FAITH

This chapter records a crisis in Israel. Internecine strife threatens when it is discovered that the Transjordan tribes have erected a strange altar on the border of their territory. The intent is misunderstood, and in an excess of zeal the western tribes threaten war. The crisis is avoided by the exercise of practical good sense in a conference, and by an explanation of motive. The circumstances illustrate the value of the exhortation of the Lord: "If thy brother offend thee, tell it to him alone . . ." The tribes are more closely united as a result of the crisis.

Commendation — vv. 1-4

In an inspiring ceremony, the tribes are gathered to Shiloh so that Joshua, on behalf of the western tribes, can publicly thank those of the east for their sacrifice of love in assisting them to conquer their inheritance. They are commended to the care of Yahweh, and farewelled to their possessions on the eastern side of Jordan.

VERSE 1

"Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh" — The warriors of the Transjordan tribes had faithfully supported those of the west in the conquest of the land, so fulfilling their promise, and now the time had come for them to return home to enjoy their own inheritance in the lands allocated them on the east of Jordan. As a number of years had been occupied in warfare, their sacrifice in leaving the comforts of home, and the love of their families, to assist their brethren, was considerable.

VERSE 2

"And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded you" — Moses had granted them an inheritance in the lush lands east of the Jordan conditionally upon them co-operating with the western tribes in the conquest of the land of Canaan. See Num. 32:20-22; Deut. 3:18-20.

"And have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you" — See Josh. 1:12-17.

VERSE 3

"Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of Yahweh your God" — They had faithfully filled out the required period of warfare. This must have imposed great sacrifices upon them and their families. "These many days" actually extended into some six or seven years of conquest by the time those such as Caleb received their inheritance (Josh. 14:10); and further time had been occupied in surveying and allocating the land. Their labours were now finished, however, and the time had come for them to receive their reward. Christ taught that those who give the most modest help to their brethren will not lose their reward (See Matt. 10:41-42). In fact, its fruits will be enjoyed in this life as well as in that to come (Mark 10:30). The practical help that believers render unto their brethren today will be publicly commended then, often to their surprise, but also to their honour; and will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Matt. 25:34-40).

VERSE 4

"And now Yahweh your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as He promised them" — See Ch. 21:44; 23:1. The rest granted them was a contrast to what the previous generation received. See Heb. 4:6; Psa. 95:10-11.

"Therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of

Yahweh gave you on the other side Jordan” — See Ch. 13:8,15; 14:1-5; Num. 32:29-32.

Exhortation — vv. 5-6

In dismissing the Transjordan warriors, Joshua exhorts them to continue their faithful obedience to the will of Yahweh as they return to civil life, and the discipline of a martial life is relaxed. The exhortation is both powerful and practical, and has application today. When Ecclesias set themselves to fight for principle and for purity of doctrine they are strengthened by the exercise; but the ensuing “rest” from warfare without is frequently followed by internal and destructive strife within, in line with the experience of Israel.

VERSE 5

“But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of Yahweh charged you, to love Yahweh your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul” — There is stern warning in the introductory word: *But*. Future blessings are contingent on obedience. Joshua reminds the Transjordanian warriors of their responsibilities towards the Law (Deut. 6:5-7; 10:12; 11:13,22). The adjective “diligent” (Heb. *Me’od*) signifies to do so *vehemently with zeal*. It is from a root signifying to “rake together” suggesting the irresistible action of the rake in gathering together, and drawing into the direction required that which its prongs take up. It also is used to describe the action of a poker for turning or gathering embers or coals, and so starting them into flame. Joshua’s exhortation is similar in intent to that of the Lord who taught that only energetic enthusiastic believers, who are prepared to vigorously hold on to the hope, and refuse to let it go in spite of any opposition, will gain the Kingdom (Matt. 11:12). Such zealous diligence manifested in action (See Deut. 4:1,2,6,9) will be rewarded with Divine blessing (Exod. 15:26). The teachers of the Law should expound it with zeal and enthusiasm (Deut. 6:7-9,17).

In this important exhortation, therefore, Joshua called upon those about to return to normal life, to accept Yahweh as Leader (charged); love Him as a Father (Love Yahweh your God); see in Him an Example (walk in His ways); obey Him as a Master (keep His commandments); sub-

mit to Him as the Head of the house (cleave unto Him — a term used for the marital state — Gen. 2:24) and give wholehearted, undivided service to Him with both mind (heart) and life (soul). For such is due unto His holy name. The principles enumerated called upon Israelites to Believe, Love, Observe, Obey, Cleave unto, and Honour Him with their affection and life. Other relevant exhortations on similar lines are found in Exod. 20:6; Deut. 6:5; 10:12-13; 11:1,18; Matt. 22:37; John 14:15,21-23; Acts 11:23; 2 John 6.

VERSE 6

“So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away; and they went unto their tents” — In blessing them, Joshua bade them God-speed in the enjoyment of their inheritance.

Approbation — vv. 7-8

The departing warriors were now free to return home, and enjoy the reward conferred upon them.

VERSE 7

“Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given possession in Bashan: but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them” — The blessing confirmed that they had fulfilled their obligations according to the will of Yahweh.

VERSE 8

“And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren” — The word “riches” in its Hebrew form signifies to accumulate treasure. The warriors of the eastern tribes took with them their share of the spoil of the Canaanites. In commanding them to “divide” the spoil, Joshua had in mind those also who had remained at home, and in so doing had likewise performed valuable service. Such sharing was a principle set down by God to be observed in distributing the spoils of war (Num. 31:27). It was endorsed by David (1 Sam. 30:24). Notice that they were permitted to take of the spoil of the Land except in the case of Jericho, the contents of which were “devoted” unto Yahweh. If Achan had exer-

cised patience he could have had gold aplenty!

Restoration — v. 9

Bouyed up with the commendation of Joshua, the Israelites from the East commence their return.

VERSE 9

“And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of Yahweh by the hand of Moses” — Shiloh was the religious centre of the land. It signifies *Peace* or *Tranquility*. The Farewell Ceremony had been held at this religious centre, and from there the warriors made their way to Gilead, which signifies *Heap of Witness*. In view of the circumstances, both names are appropriate.

Commemoration — v. 10

Arriving at Jordan, the border between the eastern and western sections of the land, and stimulated with feelings of goodwill and firm resolutions to maintain unity of worship and communion, the returning Israelites suddenly decide to erect an altar of remembrance as a memorial.

VERSE 10

“And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to” — The word “borders” is *geliyloth* and signifies *circuit* or *region*. It is rendered “region” in the R.V. The altar, therefore, was built on the western side of the actual border, for it was in “the land of Canaan,” (see v. 11). However, it was not an altar for sacrifice, but a large altar “to see to”, or as rendered by the R.V. “to look upon”. It was an altar designed to be seen, and not for worship, and so was of a size and in a position to be observed a long way off (see v. 27). Such an altar would be constructed of stones and earth heaped up such as Jacob and Laban had done to seal their covenant (Gen. 31:47-52).

Indignation — vv. 11-14

Believing it to be a schismatic altar in opposition to Yahweh's explicit command

(Lev. 17:8-9), the Israelites west of the Jordan are moved with indignation and anger. They themselves, also filled with zeal for Yahweh in view of the wonderful victories won, and the land successfully inherited, determine to compel obedience by force. However, with commendable restraint they first request an explanation.

VERSE 11

“And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan” — Misunderstanding the motives for the erection of the altar, and recognising the importance of a united worship in the place appointed of Yahweh (Lev. 17:8-9; Deut. 12:5-7; 13:12-14; cp. John 4:21-24) great concern was expressed by the tribes of the West.

“At the passage of the children of Israel” — The R.V. has “on the side that pertaineth to the children of Israel”, that is, on the western bank of the Jordan. See v. 10.

VERSE 12

“And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them” — Their indignation was such that a gathering was called at Shiloh to determine what belligerent actions should be taken to correct what they believed to be a violation of Yahweh's law and will. In hot-headed zeal some called for an immediate declaration of war; but wiser counsel prevailing, it was decided to first demand an explanation of the unlawful action. This is an excellent procedure in any circumstances, particularly any that may lead to Ecclesial friction. The Proverbs (Ch. 18:13) declares: “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him”.

Deputation — vv. 13-14

Wiser counsel prevailing in the conference held, a deputation is appointed to calmly investigate the reason for the action taken by the eastern tribes. This is an excellent procedure for Ecclesial action in the face of controversy.

VERSE 13

“And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the child-

ren of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest — In arranging for such an approach, the conference at Shiloh acted according to the spirit of the Law (see Deut. 13:12-15). Moreover they appointed a man of outstanding reputation to be in charge of the enquiry. Phinehas was well known for faithfulness and zeal towards Yahweh. He had not hesitated to act ruthlessly when the need arose for such action (see Num. 25:7-8). Therefore, the most zealous among the western tribes could put their confidence in him. His vigorous intervention at Bethpeor had earned the commendation of Yahweh (Psa. 106:30-31). Bearing in mind the way in which the whole nation had been involved in the sin of Achan, they sought to avoid of a repetition of such a result on this occasion.

VERSE 14

“And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel” — These ten princes represented the ten western tribes of Israel. The term “chief house” in Hebrew is house of *rosh*, *head* or *chief*, so that the term signifies “house of the chief” or father. The various “fathers” were the sons of Jacob after whom the tribes were named (see Num. 1:4). The expression “thousands of Israel” is from the Hebrew *alephim*, the plural form of the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet: a letter that also serves to do numerical duty for either one or a thousand according to where the vowel points are placed (and there were no vowel points in the original Hebrew). The same word (for each Hebrew letter is described by a normal word expressive of its significance) is elsewhere rendered *family* (e.g. Jud. 6:15). The “thousands” of Israel are the various families of the tribes.

Expostulation — vv. 15-20

The deputation from the West is met by representatives of the eastern tribes. The complaint of the West is clearly stated to their brethren of the East.

VERSE 15

“And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying” — A conference was held in Gilead between the representatives of the Western and Eastern tribes. Significantly,

Gilead was the place where Laban laid his complaint before Jacob; and after the free exchange of views, reconciliation was effected (see Gen. 31:43-53). Jacob called the place *Galeed*, or *The Heap of Witness*, to recall the reconciliation, and a pillar was set up to commemorate it.

VERSE 16

“Thus saith the whole congregation of Yahweh” — The word “congregation” in this place is *Edah*, an appointed meeting. The delegates represented the whole nation.

“What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel” — The word “trespass” is a strong word. It expresses the invasion of the rights of another; in this case those of God. So the accusation is made plainly to the tribes of the East, in view of the warnings of Lev. 17:8-9 and Deut. 12:13-14 that required sacrifice to be offered only in the places appointed of Yahweh for that purpose.

“To turn away this day from following Yahweh, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against Yahweh” — The accusation is plainly stated: the Eastern tribes are charged with schismatic worship in contravention of the expressed will of Yahweh.

VERSE 17

“Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us?” — This was a very appropriate illustration of the seriousness of the sin of turning from the specific requirements of Yahweh: for at Beth-peor 24,000 people had perished because of iniquity (Num. 25:9). Only the action of Phinehas had prevented even a worse result. His presence, therefore, at the head of the deputation from the West constituted a reminder of that sad and disastrous incident in Israel's history.

“From which we are not cleansed until this day” — This claimed that in building the altar, the tribes of the East had committed iniquity comparable to that perpetrated at Beth-peor. It expressed the secret opinion of some of the West that the returning warriors had perhaps intended to enter into alliance with foreigners adjacent to their area.

“Although there was a plague in the congregation of Yahweh” — This plague, or *smiting* as the word literally signifies caused the death of some 24,000 as the result of sin (Num. 25:28).

VERSE 18

“But that ye must turn away this day from following Yahweh?” — This was the viewpoint of those of the West, based upon the evidence of their eyes, and interpreted by some of the hotheads in their midst. It was not the intention of those of the East.

“And it shall be, seeing ye rebel to day against Yahweh, that to morrow He will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel” — The Eastern tribes are reminded of the responsibilities resting upon those who enjoy Divine fellowship with their brethren, and who thereby should be united as one. This privilege, whilst productive of great benefits, such as the co-operation the West had received from those of the East in conquering the Land of Canaan, also brought with it great responsibilities, such as would involve the whole congregation in Divine judgment and punishment in the event of unrepented sin (see, for example, Num. 16:22; Josh. 7:11). Later, Joshua reminded all the tribes that there were some among them who still secretly hankered after Baal worship in spite of the terrible punishment experienced at Beth-peor; and unless this was rectified, the whole nation would be involved in trouble (Josh. 24:14-24). Israel as a nation, like the Ecclesia as a community, constituted “one body”, and in accordance with the law of nature, when one part of the body suffers, the other members suffer with it. If the body is invaded by a virus, the whole will be endangered unless steps are taken to counter it. The responsibilities of Divine fellowship demand that the punishment of a sin will be shared by all unless it is openly repudiated and steps of reform are taken.

VERSE 19

“Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of Yahweh, wherein Yahweh’s tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against Yahweh, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of Yahweh our God” — By this Phinehas meant that if they believed that by living on the East of Jordan they were cut off from contact with Yahweh, and obligations towards Him, or that they were separated from the responsibilities of fellowship, room will be made for them within the possessions of the Western tribes. Such a reasonable suggestion and

offer gave opportunity for the reply and explanation that followed. By “unclean” is meant “unholy”, that is, cut off from the Holy Land, and the holy worship. It had seemed to the Western tribes that their brethren in the East had begun to set up a schismatic form of worship, and so were about to sever the unity that is such a pleasant privilege when it exists among brethren (Psa. 133). Phinehas’ forthright approach was therefore expressed in love, and in the spirit of “seeking peace and ensuing it” (Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:11). True peace, however, requires “first purity” to establish it (James 3:17). Phinehas took efforts to obtain this.

VERSE 20

“Did not Achan the son of Zerach commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity” — In these words Phinehas expressed the onerous responsibilities of fellowship. In such a communal body, the action of one individual can adversely affect the whole, because fellowship unites all members into one body. The Creator has incorporated this principle in nature. If any part of the body is injured or diseased, the whole body is affected thereby; and if the trouble is neglected, the health of the entire body will be endangered. If the foot is hurt, the pain is transmitted to the brain and felt throughout the body. If a virus attacks the body, the whole feels the effect thereof. That is why Paul likened the Ecclesia to the human body, and taught that each part is inter-dependent on the others. The sin of Achan brought wrath on the whole nation so that others suffered in the general punishment. It showed that there was a responsibility on the part of Israel and its administrators to carefully supervise the conduct and attitude of each of its members to prevent such problems arising. This may seem unjust to some, but it is necessary under present circumstances of mortality and sin. Pain is beneficial to the human body. It alerts a person to possible danger, enabling him to take remedial action. So also the “pain” that accrued to Israel as the result of sin. It alerted the nation to the need of investigation and elimination of wrong-doing. Consider the consequences if Achan had not been punished! a bad example would have been set others. If he had merely been rebuked, the Divine authority would have been undermined, for Yahweh had clearly laid

down the consequences of such action, as he did. Yahweh is to be both feared and loved: feared because He will carry out all that He warns He will do. But blended with that fear there is love of Yahweh because of what He is, and what He will grant and overlook. He is compassionate, merciful and good; so that implicit trust can be placed in Him. Whether in those things that induce fear or those that draw out love, He is true to His word, in both punishment and promise. Indeed, if He failed in the former, He could well be considered unreliable in the latter.

Explanation — vv. 21-29

The representatives of the Eastern Tribes solemnly assure those of the West that their action is not intended to be divisive, but just the contrary. The purpose of the Altar is not for worship, but as a memorial of its need, and the necessity to join with their brethren at Shiloh, even though it means passing over the Jordan. They assure their Western brethren that they are fully alive to their national obligations as far as Yahweh is concerned, and give assurances that it will be carried out according to the Law.

VERSE 21

“Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasse answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel” — With admirable restraint the representatives of the Eastern tribes patiently and respectfully allowed Phinehas to conclude his accusation without interruption, although his forthright condemnation of their action could well have aroused their antagonism. However, they acted with wisdom, recognizing that “a soft answer turneth away wrath” (Prov. 15:1; 16:1; 1 Pet. 3:15). The word “thousands” is a translation of *Alephim* as in v. 14.

VERSE 22

“Yahweh God of gods” — This is a very poor translation of the Hebrew. Who are the “gods” of whom the Deity is Lord God, if the A. V. is accepted? Is He Lord God of pagan deities? An understanding of the Names and Titles of Deity, as expounded in *Phanerosis* clarifies the title. The Hebrew of the phrase is *Yahweh El Elohim*. The memorial name of Yahweh is prophetic in its meaning, and proclaims that *He will Be*. The word “God” that follows is translated from the

Hebrew *El*, which signifies *Might* or *Power*. Bro. Thomas claims that “whenever the Hebrews read the word *El* the idea of power and might stood out in bold relief. The idea, therefore, is that of Strength. Yahweh *El* signifies *He Who will manifest Himself as Strong*. The word “gods” in the title is *Elohim*. It is identical with the word as used in v. 24, and there rendered God (with a capital “G”, as it is elsewhere in the Bible over two thousand times). It is a word in the plural as is denoted by the *im* added to *Eloah*. In *Elpis Israel* Bro. Thomas states that it is invariably used for angels or men appointed to perform a Divine duty in the service of Yahweh, and therefore it is expressive of God in manifestation. Being in the plural it denotes a plurality of agents in the terms of God manifestation. The title as a whole signifies: *He Who will be the Strength of the Mighty Ones*. Being a prophetic title, it announces that some time in the future Yahweh will manifest Himself in a plurality of agents who will then constitute the angelic host. The Lord Jesus declared that “they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead . . . can die no more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the sons of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:35-36). The strength of these *Elohim* of the future is derived from Yahweh; and in the power then vested in them they will exercise the administration of the Age to come (Heb. 2:5). Yahweh through the channel of the Lord Jesus Christ is their strength even now (2 Cor. 4:7; Phil. 4:13), and will be even more so in the future. But why use the title in this context? The repetition of it title reveals the purpose in so doing.

“Yahweh God of gods, He knoweth” — In the Hebrew this reads “Yahweh *El Elohim* He knoweth”. In using this Name of God, the representatives of the Eastern Tribes invoked Him in support of their statement, because it is His title as Judge. Solomon made request that Yahweh hear-ken to the prayers of the people because “He knoweth” their hearts (1 Kings 8:39. See also Psa. 44:21; Jer. 17:10; John 2:24-25). The invoking of this Name, and the repetition of it, guaranteed the truth of the words of the Eastern tribes, and their claim that they had not departed from the letter or spirit of the worship ordered by God; nor did they intend to do so.

This name, therefore, is Yahweh’s name as Judge. The representatives in

invoking it declared: "He knoweth". The verb *yada* signifies to ascertain by seeing or by personal investigation. Yahweh was in a position to fully know the inner feelings of His people. He acted as Judge through the angelic Elohim (see Exod. 23:20-23) as He will through the saints in the Age to come. The angels "excel in strength, and do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word" (Psa. 103:20). They act as "ministering spirits" on behalf of the saints (Heb. 1:14). A similar name as was invoked by the representatives of the East, is used in Psa. 50:1, and there it is found in a context of judgment (vv. 4-6). A similar title is found in Deut. 10:17, again in a context of judgment. The angelic Elohim will assist the Lord Jesus Christ in the judgment of the future (Matt. 13:41-43; 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 12:8-9).

"And Israel he shall know" — These words can also be rendered: "Let Israel know!" The Eastern representatives claimed that the closest investigation would reveal the truth of the assertion they were about to make (see Psa. 37:6). Israel shall know, because in invoking the name of Yahweh in such a cause, the Eastern tribes expressed their conviction that He would make manifest the Truth.

"If it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against Yahweh (save us not this day)" — The representatives solemnly called upon Yahweh to manifest His anger if they did not speak according to the truth. In effect, they said, Let Him be the Judge, and if they be in fault, let Him prove them so; and in such circumstances, let Him not spare them. To those governed by the Word, such a solemn statement could only be made by those confessing Truth.

VERSE 23

"That we have built us an altar to turn from following Yahweh, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let Yahweh Himself require it" — The Eastern tribes recognised that to build an altar for the purposes stated by those of the West would not be contrary to the requirements of the Law, but would have been divisive and against the national unity that was so desirable. The expression "require it" signifies to call to account, and to punish (see Deut. 18:19; 1 Sam. 20:16; Psa. 10:11-14).

VERSE 24

"And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with Yahweh God of Israel?" — The elders of the Eastern tribes explain the reason for their action. Rather than being divisive they expressed the concern they felt in the possibility that succeeding generations who would lack firsthand knowledge of the circumstances then fresh in their minds may so drift from the national unity as to set up an alternative worship. The erecting of the altar was designed to prevent this by reminding them of their obligations to worship in the place appointed. But though the motives of these elders was proper, history revealed that the methods adopted were futile and ineffective. That altar did not prevent subsequent generations turning from God in the manner they now described. External objects such as an altar, or even a Temple, cannot create true fraternal unity and peace. The knowledge, love, and fear of Yahweh are necessary for that. Unity in Israel, as in Ecclesiastes today, was and is dependent upon mutual knowledge and endorsement of the Word; not on externals or formalism. True unity can not be forced if a sound basis for it is lacking; nor destroyed where there is a genuine love and acceptance of the Word. The Altar of Witness, erected by the elders of the Eastern tribes would not ensure unity if "the Book of the Law", which Yahweh had given them to create and consolidate it, was ignored or neglected (Josh. 1:7-8). The verb "fear" is from the Hebrew *de'agah* and signifies *anxiety*. Better to develop the "fear (*yir'ah*) of Yahweh", and instil it in one's children, for such will create an attitude that will lead to true unity.

VERSE 25

"For Yahweh hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in Yahweh; so shall your children make our children cease from fearing Yahweh" — This verse should follow closely the previous one for it completes the supposititious statements made by the elders as to what they feared one day might agitate the minds of their descendants, causing some to raise a standard of revolt and division against those of the West. In fact, their fears were vindicated; for the phrase "ye have no part in

Yahweh" is a call for revolt as expressed in relation to David in 2 Sam. 20:1. The term "fearing Yahweh" is from the verb *yir'ah*, a different word from that used in the previous verse. It here denotes actions governed by a healthy fear of Yahweh. This believers are called upon to reveal, for such fear is described as the "firstfruits of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). Such a fear recognises the living existence of God, that He will act in accordance with His word, and will pour out judgments upon those who disobey or ignore Him. Such a fear, being the "firstfruits of knowledge", will not be induced by mere externals or socialities in the absence of an understanding and endorsement of Truth.

VERSE 26

"Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice" — The motivation of the human heart may appear sound but it is insufficient to establish Divine principles. The Word must be our guide, particularly in Ecclesial decisions.

VERSE 27

"But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us" — The Hebrew word for "witness" is *Ed*. It was applied to the altar which was large in size to ensure that it would not be overlooked (v. 10).

"That we might do the service of Yahweh before Him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings" — The erection of the altar was designed to witness to the need of future generations of the Eastern tribes to "do the service of Yahweh before Him" that is to cross over the Jordan and make their way to the place He selects for that purpose (Deut. 12:5,6,11,12,17,18,21,27). Where the desire for such service is in the heart of a believer, no such external reminders are necessary.

"That your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in Yahweh" — This was a further reason why they built the altar: to prevent the Western tribes from being divisive, and creating an artificial barrier between themselves and those of the East.

THE ALTAR OF WITNESS

This very human account depicts problems that disturb Ecclesial unity (for Israel constituted the Ecclesia — Acts 7:38). The Trans-Jordanian tribes were wrong in erecting the Altar without first conferring with Joshua in regard to their intentions. The tribes of the West were wrong in harshly prejudging their brethren. But the pleasing feature is that in such an atmosphere of misunderstanding and doubt, admirable restraint was shown by all: by the West in giving opportunity to the East for explanation before taking action; by the East in humbly presenting their motives and reasons when angry passions may well have got the better of them. Thus good sense and brotherly kindness prevailing, the tragedy of division and civil war was averted.

The Altar was unnecessary, and its presence only complicated the issues between East and West. Mere externals cannot maintain true unity in the Truth. That is something that needs no forcing and cannot be destroyed when the circumstances exist for its existence. True unity cannot be established if a mutual knowledge of the Word and respect for it and for Yahweh are lacking (v. 24). But when these necessities for it exist, externals, such as the altar, are superfluous. True unity, whether national or ecclesial, cannot be secured by Governmental regulations, business-meeting motions, or Ecclesial decrees proclaiming it. Unity is a matter of heart and mind, and it is created by the Word. The "wisdom from above" is "first pure, then peaceable" (James 3:17). Christ, like Melchizedek, is "first King of righteousness, and after that, King of peace" (Heb. 7:2).

VERSE 28

“Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of Yahweh, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you” — The statement, “Behold the pattern of the altar of Yahweh” shows that in fact it was built as a facsimile of the Altar before the Tabernacle. This would certainly justify the concern of Phinehas and those with him as to the purpose of such a memorial. There was a danger that in erecting such an altar subsequent generations might use it as a convenient place at which to worship. However, the Eastern tribes did demonstrate by building it upon the territory of the western tribes, rather than that of their own territory, that their intention was the unification of the nation. It proclaimed the fact that they had to cross the Jordan to enjoy full worship with Yahweh and fellowship with their brethren. It was designed as a memorial drawing attention to the need of worship at Shiloh.

VERSE 29

“God forbid that we should rebel against Yahweh, and turn this day from following Yahweh, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of Yahweh our God that is before His tabernacle” — The term “God forbid” is from the Hebrew *chaliylah*, accursed be it! The term is derived from a root *chalal*, to bore, and by implication to wound, dissolve, profane. In the clearest and most unequivocal terms, the representatives of the Eastern tribes repudiated the idea that their intention in building the Altar of Witness was for divisive purposes.

Reconciliation — vv. 30-34

The definite terms in which the Eastern Tribes repudiate the suggestion that they are setting up a rival centre of worship, clears the air and leads to reconciliation.

VERSE 30

“And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them” — The genuineness of the zeal of the Western Tribes for Yahweh is

demonstrated by their readiness to accept the explanation of their brethren of the East. Had they been actuated by jealousy or party spirit, they would have admitted no defence, or would have discovered new grounds for complaint. Instead they were pleased at being given a reasonable explanation, and relieved that no schismatic worship was designed, and that no division need take place (Matt. 18:15; Jas. 1:19). Nevertheless the crisis had shown that the Eastern Tribes were remiss in not taking their brethren into their confidence before building the altar.

VERSE 31

“And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that Yahweh is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against Yahweh” — Phinehas, on behalf of the Western Tribes, acknowledged that those of the East had been motivated by the desire to serve Yahweh; and to that extent Yahweh was among them. The erection of the Altar had been with a desire to preserve the unity of the nation; and not by a rebellious spirit of jealousy or opposition (cp. Lev. 26:11-12).

“Now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of Yahweh” — By this statement Phinehas indicated some of the responsibilities of fellowship. Because the tribes were wielded together as one in fellowship, transgression on the part of some would call forth punishment that could involve all, unless it was repudiated and set aside. The Western tribes had moved against those of the East because of this. The terms of National or Ecclesial fellowship impose a responsibility to the standards of conduct and doctrine as set down by Yahweh. To do otherwise, or to compromise, could involve the “innocent” party in punishment as well as the guilty (2 John 9-11). This had been shown by the sin of Achan, and the punishment inflicted on the whole nation.

VERSE 32

“And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again” — The successful deputation returned much happier than when it left.

VERSE 33

“And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God” — This form of words suggests that they did so through a formal act of worship. See 1 Chron. 29:20; Neh. 8:6; Dan. 2:19. The word “blessed” (Heb. *barak*) signifies to kneel in adoration and thanksgiving; in this case, for the successful completion of the mission of Phinehas and those with him.

“And did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt” — The Hebrew *'amar* rendered “intend” signifies “to speak”. After the explanation given, no one was found to speak in support of the proposal previously advanced to force the compliance of those of the East. Evidently, in the absence of a satisfactory explanation, they had planned to invade the central and southern portions of the land where were found the tribes of Reuben and Gad.

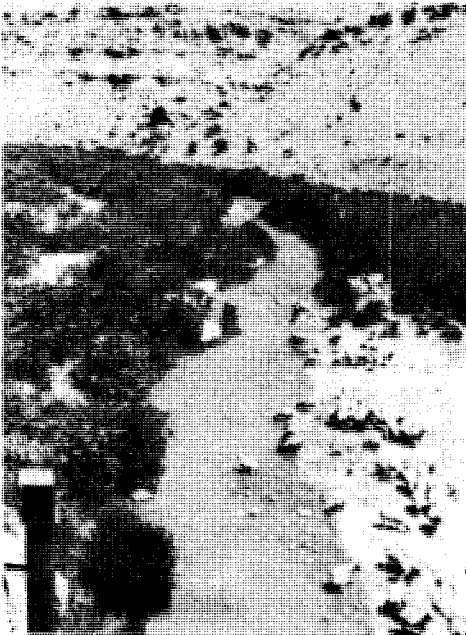
VERSE 34

“And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed” — Evidently Reuben and Gad had been

foremost in the decision to build the altar. The half tribe of Manasseh was more closely aligned with the West inasmuch as half the tribe was on that side of Jordan; and evidently was half-hearted in the whole project. The word *Ed* (Witness) is in italics, indicating that there is no comparable word in Hebrew. Literally the phrase signifies: they “named the altar”.

“For it shall be a witness between us that Yahweh is God” — This phrase has been more clearly rendered: “A witness (*Ed*) it is between us that Yahweh is the God”. It is significant that the Christ-altar (Heb. 13:10) witnesses to that truth. See Matt. 1:23; 5:16; Jhn. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:11. Christ is the Memorial Altar for all who believe in him (see 1 Cor. 11:26).

Thus the awkward situation was brought to an amicable and successful conclusion through the good sense of all concerned. It had been precipitated by the East trying to superimpose a formalism on the West that was unnecessary to the truth; for where the authority of Yahweh is supreme in the hearts of His worshippers the need of external objects to create unity is unnecessary, and rather tend to create misunderstandings.



The Jordan was not a barrier when the tribes lived in amnity and peace.

JOSHUA:

VICTORY THROUGH FAITH

Section Four:

***EXHORTATION FOR
THE FUTURE:***

***FAITH'S APPEAL
Chapters 23 to 24***

Now follows a period of peace, a time for tribal consolidation. Joshua retires to his home at Timnath-serah, and for some eighteen years, nothing is recorded of his activities. No doubt many take the opportunity of consulting him to seek his counsel; but generally this is a time for the people and tribes to settle themselves in their possessions, and attend to their private affairs. It is not intended that Israel is to be a nation of warriors, ever restlessly pressing forward to new conquests over ever-widening circles of influence; but that the people should look after their own concerns, developing the inheritances granted them by Yahweh, and living in faithful conformity to the Law, whilst anticipating the coming of the promised Redeemer who will provide what they lack: Divine grace to ensure forgiveness of sins in anticipation of an eternal inheritance in the Kingdom He will establish.

Meanwhile, the people have their own inheritance as tenants given them by Yahweh, Who is the absolute owner of the land; and this they are called upon to cultivate with watchful care. Possessing only a life interest in the soil, they cannot dispose of their property altogether: if sold, it reverts to its original owner in the Year of Jubilee. Therefore, there can be no accumulation of territory in the hands of a few; and great wealth and great poverty are equally unknown under this system. The national life is rural in character; each little community supplying its own necessities, living on the produce of its fields, its flocks and herds, and paying little attention to industry or manufactures. There is no need of commercial relations with aliens beyond their own borders; no scope for a large and increasing import and export trade. The system of government is patriarchal; each tribe being governed by its own elders and chiefs, subject to a committee of the whole gathered at the religious centre under the presidency of the High Priest.

However, the aged Joshua, the most religious of men, the faithful warrior, and reliable servant of Yahweh, clearly recognises the inviolable connection between national wellbeing and national worship; as a theocracy the first is dependent upon the second. Being now far advanced in years, and knowing the temptations which will beset his countrymen once he and his contemporaries are removed by death;

indeed, having discerned some symptoms of them already in the nation, Joshua delivers two farewell addresses in order to warn his people against declensions, and to encourage them to continue in faithful service to Yahweh.

The venerable leader first summons the elders to his home at Timnath-serah, where for the past few years he has been leading a quiet and retired life, and addresses them as persons of authority, who understand their duty and are in positions to execute it. He calls upon them to continue with courage and faith providing examples of consistent conduct in the precepts of Yahweh, for to do so will ensure continued prosperity. The people must beware of associating with the heathen peoples in their neighbourhood, or of permitting their idolatrous practices to be imitated in Israel. Yahweh has helped His people to that point of time because they have been true to Him; and His future goodwill is dependent upon their continued, unswerving obedience. If they turn from this, the Canaanites whom they have overcome, will be snares and traps to them, scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes, so that they will ultimately perish from off the good land given for their Inheritance. He reminds them that death is drawing close to him, and then greater responsibilities will rest on them.

This appeal of the faithful warrior to the companions of his labours, his comrades in arms, and those who have the direction of affairs to attend to, is followed by a general gathering at Shiloh. Here he addresses the representatives of the people, reminding them of how they have enjoyed the goodness of Yahweh. He vigorously declares that as for him and his house, they will serve Yahweh; and with a discernment that must have been embarrassing to the guilty among them, calls upon them to put away any secret gods in their possession, and to give themselves without reserve to the demanding service of the God of Israel. That alone will ensure their continued successful occupancy of the Land.

His work concluded, the record concludes with the burial of three great men who, each in their way, provide outstanding examples of faith; and in so doing typed the Lord Jesus Christ. On that solemn, yet wonderful, note, the book ends.



These are the type of warriors Joshua had to encounter. The illustration is taken from an Egyptian stone relief, and depicts a victory over Philistine warriors. Ejected from Egypt they settled in the Land of Canaan where they resisted settlement by the Israelites. Here they are shown charging, with helmets secured by chin straps, and brandishing lances and swords.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

JOSHUA'S FINAL EXHORTATION TO THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL

The enemies subdued, the land divided, and inheritances granted Joshua's labours are almost over. One thing remains: to try and impress Israel with the need of wholehearted and single-purposed service to Yahweh in integrity and truth. This is vital for continued future success. He is anxious to pass on to his people the Divine advice given to him when he took over from Moses (Jos^h. 1:7-8). For this purpose, he calls together the elders of Israel and addresses them. His address is divided into two parts which run parallel to each other. It commences with a reference to his age and approaching death (vv. 2,14). This introduces and underlines the urgent terms in which he exhorts them. There is nothing complex in his expressions; they are simple and direct, and are an attempt to summarise for them messages they have already received.

Joshua Summons The Elders of Israel — vv. 1-2

In an impressive ceremony in which the leaders of Israel of various ranks are brought before Joshua, the aged warrior and leader delivers final words of instruction and advice preparatory to the presentation and national acceptance of a Covenant, details of which are outlined in the next chapter. The gathering possibly was at Timnath-serah, Joshua's home town.

VERSE 1

“And it came to pass a long time after that Yahweh had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about” — Some six years were occupied in conquering the enemy, leaving the seventh as a year of rest. This was followed by a further period of time during which the land occupied was divided among the tribes. So a number of years were involved.

“That Joshua waxed old and stricken in age” — Joshua was now 110 years of age (Josh. 24:29; 13:1), so a number of years had passed away since his last recorded activity.

VERSE 2

“And Joshua called for all Israel” — He called for the chief representatives of the tribes to appear before him. The national organisation of Israel was made up of seventy elders as indicated in Num. 11:16, together with subordinate rulers (Deut. 1:13-15). This foreshadowed the organisation of the Kingdom in the Age to come (see Luke 10:1; Matt. 19:27-30).

“And for their elders” — These were the princes of the tribes.

“And for their heads” — These were the heads of the principal families within the tribes.

“And for their judges” — These were the administrators of the Law.

“And for their officers” — These were the recorders or overseers as in Ch. 1:10. The representatives, therefore, comprised the old men, the chief men, the law-judges, and the Recorders.

“And said unto them, I am old and stricken in age” — See also v. 14. As Moses addressed the people with a final message prior to his death, so now does

Joshua. In similar manner, and on the last occasion that he met them, Paul did likewise to the elders of the Ephesian Ecclesia with which he had laboured so long (see Acts 20:17-38). Having made great, personal sacrifices during the long service that each of these leaders rendered the people to whom they ministered, they were anxious that the influence of such should continue after their deaths. Consequently their words are charged with urgency. Peter summarised their purpose: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle even as my Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me" (1 Pet. 1:12-16).

Benefits They Have Received — vv. 3-4

It is always beneficial to recall the benefits and blessings received from Yahweh, and to meditate that He who has helped in the past is capable of helping in the future. Eph. 3:17-20.

VERSE 3

"And ye have seen all that Yahweh your God hath done unto all these nations because of you" — This statement expresses the modesty of the aged commander. He could have reminded Israel of all that he had done, and they, as they looked upon the one who had led them into the land, and to victory over its inhabitants, might well have entered upon an orgy of fleshly praise. Instead of this, all praise is directed to Yahweh (Psa. 44:1-2). As Joshua reminded the people of all that Yahweh had done for them, so did Paul. To the Corinthians he wrote: "All things are for your sakes . . ." (2 Cor. 4:15). This is the great privilege which all true believers in Christ enjoy.

"For Yahweh your God is He that hath fought for you" — The conquest of the Land was a victory of faith. See Exod. 14:14; Deut. 20:4; Josh. 10:14,42; Psa. 44:3; Zech. 14:3).

VERSE 4

"Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward" — The Hebrew

for "westwards" literally signifies *at the sunset*, which, of course, is in the west.

Benefits Still Available — v. 5

Having reminded the elders of benefits they have already received, Joshua outlines to them benefits still to be obtained.

VERSE 5

"And Yahweh your God, He shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight" — Providing the children of Israel faithfully fulfilled Yahweh's will, increasing successes would continue. Contrast the warning of vv. 12-13 should they fail to do this, and note the ominous comment of Josh. 17:12. The words "expel" and "drive out" are from the same Hebrew word (*yarash*), which signifies both to expel as from an inheritance, and to succeed as occupants of that from whence the previous owners have been driven. Literally the statement can read: "I will disinherit them and cause you to inherit the land".

"And ye shall possess their land, as Yahweh your God hath promised unto you" — The promise made at the beginning had been fulfilled (Exod. 23:30-31; 33:2; 34:11; Deut. 11:22-23). This gives assurance that all Divine promises will be fulfilled.

Reaffirming the Recipe For Success — vv. 6-10

As Joshua at the beginning was urged to display faith and courage, so he passes the same exhortation on to the leaders who will succeed him; that they, in turn, may encourage their descendants (see 2 Tim. 2:2).

VERSE 6

"Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses" — There is a difference between "keeping" and "doing" the commands of Yahweh as here exhorted. The first verb signifies to guard and overlook; therefore to be familiar with the requirements of the Law by careful study of it; the "doing" is the application of that studied. In these words, Joshua endeavoured to motivate the elders with the same words as were addressed to him by Yahweh after the death of Moses (Josh. 1:7-9). Now, on the eve of his own death, he exhorts the people in similar terms. It is an appeal valid for all time (see 1 Cor. 16:13; Eph.

6:10-19; Heb. 12:4,12-13). To carry out the commands of Moses required that the people recognise the authority of the Book. That is the first essential to success.

“That ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left” — See Lev. 26:14; Deut. 28:15,16,63. To swerve out of the straight and narrow path, either to the right or the left, is to court disaster.

VERSE 7

“That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you” — Joshua urges upon the elders of Israel the need for the nation to keep separate from the polluting contact with Gentiles, and for the people to consecrate themselves unto Yahweh. They are to have no civil, social or ecclesiastical contact with them; for the first will inevitably lead to the latter. See Psa. 1:1; Prov. 4:19; 2 Cor. 6:14-17.

“Neither make mention of the name of their gods” — See Exod. 23:13; Psa. 16:4. The word “mention” is from the Hebrew *zakar*, to mark, so as to be recognised, to be remembered, and therefore to bring to remembrance in such a way as to imply or treat such as real gods with the ability to help. To give them such honour, when they are worthless, would be to expose the Israelites to great danger. The same observation applies to the Gods of Christendom (see Jer. 16:20-21).

“Nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them” — The verse is suggestive of the manner in which Israelites might gradually be induced to worship these gods. Making mention of them can lead to reverencing them, and then to bowing down in worship to them. It had happened elsewhere, at Beth-peor for example, and could do so again. Originally, the great Apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church developed out of but slight deviations from the Truth, but the further the false doctrines extended, the wider from the first truths did they diverge.

VERSE 8

“But cleave unto Yahweh your God, as ye have done unto this day” — The expression “cleave” is a marriage term (Gen. 2:24) indicating the close alliance that a worshipper is called upon to have with his God. The term is expressive of close fellowship with Yahweh; and comprises an exhortation to continue therein.

Such is possible only by carrying out His will. See also Josh. 22:5; Deut. 10:20; Isa. 54:5; Eph. 5:31-32. Note how the expression is used in Deut. 4:4; 11:22; 13:4; Acts 11:23. It suggests the intimate relationship that should exist between Yahweh and His people.

VERSE 9

“For Yahweh hath driven out from before you great nations and strong” —

The people had witnessed remarkable victories against great odds: the fall of Jericho, the miraculous extension of the day to fully defeat the confederacy of the south; Joshua’s amazing victory over the powerful forces of Jabin of Hazor. The aged warrior reminds them of these things, and appeals to their experience of what God had done for them as a basis for what He will continue to do if they prove obedient. If they continue steadfast, they can be assured of the fulfilment of the promise of v. 10. Their victories had been gained over enemies commanding far greater fleshly resources than they could obtain (see Deut. 7:1). Therefore it was true of them, as it was true of Israel in the days of Hezekiah, and true of God’s people today: that “there be more with us than with them” (2 Chron. 32:7). It was Yahweh Who had worked through them to obtain victory in the land (see Deut. 11:23; Josh. 1:5,8,9; 10:8; 21:44). The alternative rendition in the margin, which indicates what would happen conditional upon their co-operation, is in accordance with the Vulgate translation, but not according to the text of the Massorah (Hebrew), or the Septuagint (Greek). As it appears in the A.V. the verse appeals to past experiences as a basis of future help (see v. 10). In like manner, it is Yahweh Who works through believers, assuring them of victory in the future (Isa. 60:21; John 17:17; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; Phil. 4:13).

“But as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day” — This fulfilled the promise of Josh. 1:5,8,9.

VERSE 10

“One man of you shall chase a thousand” — See the conditional promise of Lev. 26:2,8 and examples of fulfilment in Jud. 3:31; 15:15; 2 Sam. 23:8. Thus Shamgar destroyed 600 Philistines; Samson 1000 and Adino 800. See the promise of Deut. 32:29-30.

“For Yahweh your God, He it is that

fighteth for you, as He hath promised you — The victories of Israel were not won in the strength of flesh, but through the power of the Most High who rules in the Kingdoms of men (Dan. 4:17. See note v. 3).

Misconduct Will Be Fatal To Their Future — vv. 11-13

Joshua encourages the elders to develop a love of Yahweh without which they will fail to serve Him aright. The example they give will have a profound effect upon the nation's conduct which will govern its continued occupancy of the land. He clearly warns them of the consequences of failing to destroy the Canaanites whom Yahweh has placed in their power.

VERSE 11

"Take good heed therefore unto your selves" — Joshua exhorts the leaders to carefully assess their individual relationship with Yahweh. They have a personal responsibility to do so, for the success or failure of the national project in the land rests upon the attitude of the people towards God. He urges that they exercise care in view of the "snares" that abound, using almost identical words as did his great antitype at his advent. See Luke 21:34-35; and compare with Deut. 4:9,15; Josh. 22:5.

"That ye love Yahweh your God" — A person who loves Yahweh will find pleasure in performing His will. This is obvious from natural relationships. If we love a person sufficiently there is joy in sacrificing on his or her behalf: nothing appears too much trouble. Jacob loved Rachel, so that to labour under Laban the hard taskmaster for seven years to obtain her meant nothing to him in comparison. He centred his mind on the object of his love, and everything else faded into comparative insignificance.

VERSE 12

"Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even those that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you" — Contrast the use of the word "cleave" in v. 8. Its use in the verse before us signifies close union or fellowship with the nations. This is to be strictly avoided. **Marriage with them** was a "cleaving unto them", and for soldiers of Yahweh, to do this would constitute

spiritual retreat and defeat (2 Tim. 2:3-4). Intimacy of relationship is suggested by the use of the word *cleave*.

VERSE 13

"Know for a certainty that Yahweh your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you" — The success of the Israelites was dependent upon obedience to the requirements of separation. They were clearly warned that marriage out of the Truth, or any irregularity in relation thereto would surely bring trouble and even disaster (see Jud. 2:3,21; Josh. 13:6).

"But they shall be snares and traps unto you" — See the repeated warning in Exod. 23:33; Num. 33:55; Jud. 2:3; and the failure of Solomon in this regard (1 Kings 11:4). A "snare" is something that lures or seduces the unwary from the pathway of safety; a "trap" closes the way for any return, and places the one caught in imminent danger. Both terms suggest hidden problems that overtake careless Israelites unawares, unless great care is taken.

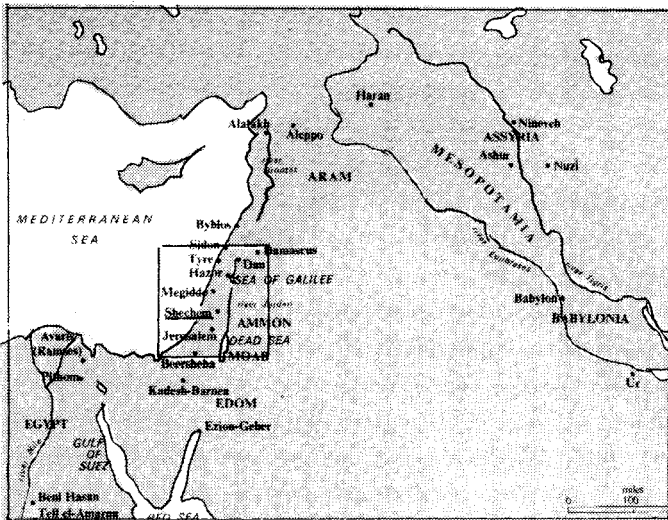
"And scourges in your sides" — Scourging is painful bringing physical agony upon one.

"And thorns in your eyes" — Thorns in the eyes, the most sensitive part of the body, are not only agonisingly painful, but blinds sight. The person so affected cannot see properly. The people were warned that compromising with the remaining submissive Canaanites, and taking their daughters in marriage, would lead true Israelites from out of the way of righteousness, put them in the control of foreigners, and bring upon them much pain and suffering, whilst blinding them to what would be required to extricate themselves therefrom.

"Until ye perish from off this good land, which Yahweh your God hath given you" — The people of Israel occupied the land as tenants at will. When they failed to keep the terms of occupancy, they were evicted therefrom. They embraced the Mosaic Covenant, and were permitted in the land, only as long as they remained obedient thereto (see Lev. 26:27-39; Deut. 4:25-27; 28:63-68). Therefore, Yahweh was within His rights in driving them into captivity, for they had failed to keep the terms of the Covenant they had embraced.



Above: Joshua gathered all the tribes and renewed the Covenant with them at Shechem.
Below: Map depicting Shechem.



You Will Be Abandoned To Your Own Resources — vv. 14-16

Joshua warns the leaders that he is about to die, and they will be left to their own resources.

VERSE 14

“And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth” — This is a common expression denoting that the speaker was about to die (see 1 Kings 2:1-2). The phrase will be better understood if the punctuation is altered to read: “And behold this day, I am going the way of all the earth”. The people could see in the aged warrior that the “time of his departure was at hand”. In fact, Joshua lived several years after addressing the people; but death could not be long delayed.

“And ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which Yahweh your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof” — This is a repetition of Josh. 21:45. Everything promised by Yahweh had been fulfilled. In this there was both hope and warning. Their experiences had revealed that Yahweh is both “a Sun and a Shield”, competent to punish or protect (Psa. 84:11). Paul repeats the warning of the past: “Behold the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (Rom. 11:22). The term “know” in the verse before us is *yada*, to know experimentally, i.e. by experience.

VERSE 15

“Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which Yahweh your God promised you” — Joshua, like Moses before him, warned that as the nation had been blessed so it would experience cursing if it failed to obey; for the God whom they served is a *living* God, and as such takes heed of conduct. If the nation wandered out of the way of righteousness, it would suffer. (See

Deut. 31:16, 18,29). But even in those circumstances Yahweh would carefully discriminate between the righteous and the wicked (cp. Jer. 24:5-8). Compare Joshua’s warning with that of Moses (Lev. 26:14-23; Deut. 4:26; 28:63-68).

“So shall Yahweh bring upon you all evil things” — Link with the similar warning of Deut. 28:15,16,63.

“Until He have destroyed you from off this good land which Yahweh your God hath given you” — Joshua warned the people that as they had experienced good from the hands of Yahweh, so they would not fail to experience punishment if they failed to carry out His will. The good had been clearly manifested; and so also would the evil if the people drifted from God. It is because Yahweh invariably vindicates His word that His worshippers should learn to both love and fear Him.

VERSE 16

“When ye have transgressed the covenant of Yahweh your God, which He commanded you” — This is stated prophetically as though there was no doubt that it would happen. See the warning of Deut. 7:2 and note the accusation of Isaiah that Israel had transgressed the covenant (Isa. 24:5). The word “transgressed” is from the Hebrew *abar*, to “cross over” and implies passing over the limits of conduct that should govern a true Israelite. To do so would be to break the “everlasting covenant”.

“And have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them” — So reverting to the pagan gods of their fathers (Josh. 24:2).

“Then shall the anger of Yahweh be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which He hath given unto you” — This is a citation from Deut. 11:17. Moses had warned the nation that it would transgress the covenant if the people had embraced, and had predicted the punishment that would come upon them (see Deut. 28:15); and now Joshua expresses himself in similar terms (see v. 13).



CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

JOSHUA RENEWS THE COVENANT WITH THE PEOPLE AT SHECHEM

Realising that his life's work is almost at an end, Joshua leaves his home at Timnath-serah, and calls for a gathering of all the tribal representatives at Shechem that he might give them a final message of encouragement and warning. He reviews their national history, which reveals Yahweh's faithfulness in fulfilling all that He had promised, and shows that complete confidence can be placed in Him (vv. 2-14). He then issues a challenge calling upon the people to renew their covenant with Yahweh, and emphasising what this will involve (vv. 14-15). When the people respond by declaring their intention of doing so, he bluntly questions their loyalty, faith and genuineness. He reminds them that Yahweh demands full, single-hearted dedication, and is not prepared to accept a divided loyalty, or a faith that does not manifest itself in works. He warns them that their choice will be used as a witness against them if they fail to carry out the requirements of the covenant (v. 22). As an evidence of genuineness, he commands that all strange gods be put away, and complete loyalty be given to Yahweh. During this ceremony, the people three times declare their acceptance of the terms of the covenant (vv. 18, 21, 24). However, Joshua, suspecting that they harbour disloyal and compromising principles, warns them of the consequence of hidden sins. Before they can truly serve, and so fulfil the terms of the Covenant, they must make unconditional surrender of themselves to Yahweh's requirements. Having agreed to do so, the covenant is confirmed, after which the terms are recorded in the Book of the Law, and a pillar of witness is erected. Having thus exhausted every known appeal by which he might persuade the people to give their undivided allegiance and loyalty to God, Joshua closes the proceedings. His work is at an end. His life is a worthy example of that which he now calls upon the people to perform. He has carried them on his heart, throughout the years of service he has given to his God, as the High Priest was required to bear the gems on the breastplate. And now the Book that bears

his name concludes with the burial of three great leaders in Israel: Joseph, Joshua and Eleazer: the patriarch, the patriot and the priest: a worthy conclusion to a wonderful record of faith, devotion and dedication by Joshua forerunner of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Gathering At Shechem — v. 1

Under the shadow of the Mounts of Blessings and Cursings, in the city of Refuge whose name suggests that Yahweh will provide a Bearer of the burdens of His people, at the place where Abraham heard for the first time in the land, confirmation of the promise that granted its possession to his descendants (Gen. 12:7); under the very oak which had sheltered the patriarch Jacob; under the overshadowing branches of which he had buried from sight the household gods that had been secretly hidden by members of his family (Gen. 35:2-4); and where Joshua had first led the tribes to consecrate themselves to Yahweh (Josh. 8:30-35), the representatives of Israel again assemble in a most impressive ceremony to reconfirm their covenant with Yahweh.

VERSE 1

“And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem”—A general gathering of the tribes to Shechem is called. A more significant place could hardly be chosen. It was an appointed City of Refuge (Josh. 20:7); the place where Abram received confirmation of the promise after entering the land and built his first altar (Gen. 12:6-7); where Jacob cleansed his house of the “strange gods” secreted therein before moving to worship at Bethel (Gen. 35:2-4); the site of the gathering of the Tribes to confirm the covenant and Law in the land (Josh. 8:30-35). The word signifies *Burden Bearer*, and with its significant altars built there by Abram, renewed by Jacob, and set up again by Joshua, it became a fitting type of Christ our Burden Bearer and Altar (Heb. 13:10). At that spot he met the woman of Samaria, and outlined to her the purpose of Yahweh in him (John 4).

“And called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges and for their officers”—All Israel was represented in this gathering as depicted by its leaders assembled together. Previ-

ously, at a preliminary gathering, Joshua had called selected leaders before him to Timnath-Serah (Josh. 23:2)* in order to address them as to the solemn obligations resting upon them in view of the positions they held; now he did so in order to renew the covenant with the people through them. In doing so, he acted as the amanuensis under Yahweh providing a summary of the whole book that bears his name, with additional explanatory notes added, perhaps, by Phinehas.

“And they presented themselves before God”—This would require the presence of the Ark which was most likely brought from Shiloh to Shechem for this solemn gathering and purpose.

Yahweh's Goodness As Revealed In Israel's History — vv. 2-13

Joshua's resume of Israel's experiences, illustrates how the grace of Yahweh has been continually revealed. Time and again He has intervened in events to guide the nation to its present greatness. Circumstances surrounding Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Land, the children of Israel in Egypt; the wanderings of the Tribes in the wilderness; the turning of Balaam's curse into a blessing, and finally their occupation of the Land are cited. Joshua's review of these circumstances highlights Yahweh's goodness. How important for believers to likewise count their blessings. They are called to “remember, that in times past they were Gentiles according to the flesh, but now have been brought nigh” to Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:11-13). There is need to recall Yahweh's goodness as believers appear before Yahweh at the Table of the Lord.

VERSE 2

“And Joshua said unto all the people”—Joshua spoke to all the people through their representatives.

“Thus saith Yahweh Elohim of Israel”—Joshua's speech is inspired: a direct revelation from Yahweh, whose Name

* Note the subtle difference between 23:2 and 24:1: “for all Israel, their elders . . .” (23:2). “He gathered all the tribes and called for the elders” (24:1).

reveals the exclusiveness of true worship; Israel alone of all nations being the sole channel of His manifestation and grace. The name of God literally signifies: *He will become mighty ones of Israel*: it proclaims His intention of revealing His grace and greatness through His people irrespective as to their origin (see Psa. 89:5-6). Therefore, one must be related to Israel in order to enjoy the benefits of His grace (see Eph. 2:11-12).

“Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time” — This expression, which is also found in vv. 2,14,15, relates to Ur of the Chaldees, beyond the barrier of the Euphrates. It is rendered “beyond the Euphrates” in the RV.

“Even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods” — Abraham is set forth as a type of believers in every age, the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:13-25) who are required to “turn from their heathen gods and ways to serve the living and true God” (1 Thess. 1:9). Josephus claims that Abram proclaimed the doctrine of one God in Ur, in contrast to the teaching of many gods set forth in the pagan worship of that city, the ancient centre of the worship of the moon goddess, and her associates. He claims that Abram was ostracised by the religious people of Ur because of his beliefs. He states that he was drawn to the worship of one God by observing the irregular motions of the sun, moon and stars; and yet also observing the regularity of their appearances, he realised that they were subject to laws. From this he concluded that there was a Creator Who subjected His creation to regular laws, and so came to realise that He alone should be worshipped. To such a man as that Yahweh revealed His purpose, and called upon him to separate himself from his pagan associations, dedicating himself unto Himself. Israel must do likewise (see v. 23).

VERSE 3

“And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood” — Yahweh continued to speak through Joshua who accordingly used the first person, singular pronoun “I”.

“And led him throughout all the land of Canaan” — Abram, in the obedience of faith, left Ur and Haran for the Land of Promise. He answered the call of God as sheep do a shepherd (Psa. 80:1). His movements throughout were governed by

God’s directions just as Israel’s were as it followed the cloud during the wilderness wanderings.

“And multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac” — God multiplied Abram’s seed in two ways: by natural generation (Gen. 25:1-4), and adoption (Gen. 14:14; 15:2). But of all who were granted him, Isaac was the seed of Promise (Gen. 15:4; 18:9-14; 22:2; Rom. 4:16-17). Yahweh is revealed as the Giver of every good and perfect gift, allocating territory according to His will (Acts 17:26).

VERSE 4

“And I gave unto Isaac, Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt” — The Providence of God was revealed in the commonplace facts of history. In all circumstances God guided the affairs of nations, and the success of one (like Edom) bore no relationship to His ultimate intention. Yahweh brought Israel into Egypt that the nation might be humbled, learn to depend on Him, experience the miracle of national deliverance and baptism, and so enter into covenant relationship with Him at Sinai.

VERSE 5

“I sent Moses also and Aaron” — The overshadowing care of Yahweh towards His people provided them with leaders qualified to guide them in both civil and religious duties. See Psa. 105:26.

“And I plagued Egypt according to that which I did among them” — See Exod. chaps. 7-12; Psa. 78:43-51; 105:27-36; 135:8-9.

“And afterward I brought you out” — The Israelites left Egypt and made their way to Succoth and on to Elam (Exod. 13:20).

VERSE 6

“And I brought your fathers out of Egypt” — See Exod. 12:37; Mic. 6:4.

“And ye came unto the sea” — The Providence of Yahweh directed their paths in this way so as to avoid warfare with the Philistines, for which they lacked experience (Exod. 13:17).

“And the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red Sea” — See Exod. 14:9; Isa. 63:12-13.

VERSE 7

“And when they cried unto Yahweh” — See Exod. 14:10.

“He put darkness between you and the Egyptians” — See Exod. 14:20.

“And brought the sea upon them, and covered them” — Exod. 14:27-28.

“And your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt” — Those Israelites who were under 20 years of age at the time of the Exodus would have literally seen these events take place. See Deut. 4:34; 29:2.

“And ye have dwelt in the wilderness a long season” — The Israelites occupied some forty years in the wilderness, during which time the daily miracle of manna, and the provision of water, illustrated the Providence of Yahweh.

VERSE 8

“And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you; and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you” — These victories were of Yahweh; without His aid, Israel would have failed. The reference is to the land that Sihon and Og had wrested from the Moabites and Ammonites, and which Moses in turn conquered from the over-confident Amorites when they attacked the Israelites. See Num. 21:21-35; Deut. 2:32-36; 3:1-7; Josh. 12:1-6.

VERSE 9

“Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you” — Balak hired Balaam who became his main artillery in the defensive warfare he conducted in vain against Moses (see Num. 22:5; Deut. 23:4).

VERSE 10

“But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand” — The Hebrew is unusual, for whereas normally “would” is a prefixed letter to a word, here the expression is *lou-abah* indicating an unworthiness to do that to which one is directed. It was the predetermined purpose of Yahweh that Israel should not be cursed, and in consequence, the appeals and efforts of the false prophet of Babylon were ineffective. This wonderful example of Divine mercy and overshadowing care

was recalled hundreds of years later through Micah (Mic. 6:1-5).

VERSE 11

“And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho” — These few simple words express all that happened between the advance from Shittim until the walls of Jericho collapsed.

“And the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Gergashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand” — The word “men” is *ba'ali*, “lords” or rulers. Apparently Moses' victories over Sihon and Og caused a tremor of fear to sweep throughout the land of Canaan (see Rahab's comment: Josh. 2:11), with the result that all the nations of Canaan had sent contingents of warriors to Jericho so as to support its defence. But, as the record shows, this availed nought (see Josh. 9:24-25; Psalms 78:54-55; Acts 13:19).

VERSE 12

“And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites” — This has been interpreted both figuratively and literally. Garstang the archaeologist interpreted the “hornet” as denoting the sacred symbol of the Pharaohs. He argued that Pharaoh Thutmose III sacked Megiddo, from that centre so devastated the Land of Canaan as to weaken the ability of its nations to resist attack (see note on Exod. 23:28). But against that conclusion is the statement of Deut. 7:20 which appears predictive of something then yet to occur. The Hebrew *Tsir'ah* “hornet” comes from a root signifying “to scourge”. It is rendered “leper” elsewhere. There was a town named Zoreah which is another form of *Tsir'ah*, and probably denotes the site where this scourge commenced or occurred in its most virulent form. *Tsir'ah*, therefore, could relate to any scourge, i.e. fear, plague, pestilence; anything that might sting or scourge the enemy and lower his power of resistance (see Josh. 2:11; 9:3; 10:2). On the other hand, the reference could be to hornets. Those of the Middle East are very ferocious and feared. They are large in size measuring over 1½ inches in length with sharp stings, and a greater volume of poison than bees

or wasps. In *Animals of Bible Lands* (C.G. Cansdale) states that "instances have been recorded of hornets becoming so plentiful as to be a dangerous pest, and they are known to have caused such panic among cattle and horses that they have stampeded and been killed". There are records of their presence deciding the outcome of battles. "the 1914/15 Cameroon campaign" is quoted as an example. The "columns advancing along narrow paths were seriously held up when hives were upset by distant trip-wires", it is claimed. If Joshua's reference is to literal hornets, it provides another example of God using natural means to serve His purpose.

VERSE 13

"And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat" — The word "labour" is from a Hebrew root signifying *to gasp*, and so to be exhausted with labour. The Israelites inherited the cities and lands of the Canaanites, and therefore gained great spoil of things for which they did not have to expend exhausting labour to establish. See Deut. 6:10-11.

Exhortation: It Pays To Serve Yahweh — vv. 14-15

In the light of Yahweh's obvious greatness and goodness, His overshadowing care and anxious interest in the welfare of Israel, Joshua exhorts the people to take care and give Him in return such service as will delight him, and which is due to His holy name.

VERSE 14

"Now therefore fear Yahweh" — In view of the obvious evidence of Yahweh's power and His goodness towards Israel there is an obligation on the part of the people to respond. They are exhorted to fear Him (Deut. 10:12; I Sam. 12:24), recognising that He will fulfil both promise and punishment strictly according to His word. People must not presume on Yahweh's goodness, but realise that this will be reserved for them only if they obey His commands. There is a need on the part of all to manifest the deepest respect for God, a fear of offending Him. Fear is the firstfruits of knowledge (Psa. 111:10; Prov. 1:7). The Father in heaven is not like many fathers on earth who warn and threaten but seldom act. They correct their

children according to their "own pleasure" — as they think best, and often in a way that is least likely to cause trouble. On the other hand, Yahweh does it for their "profit" (Heb. 12:9-10). Knowing "the end from the beginning", He has far greater capacity than "fathers of the flesh" to determine what action is for the best. Yahweh's "severity" is more than balanced by His "goodness". What He does He does for the good of His children. Recognising this they are moved to both fear and love Him, developing deep respect, reverence and adoration.

"And serve Him" — Yahweh is not merely a Father to be loved; He is also a Master to be respected and obeyed (Mal. 1:6; Gen. 17:1; John 13:13-15; Rom. 1:1).

"In sincerity" — The Hebrew word signifies completely, in its entirety (uttered by Jesus at Shechem (John 4:23-24) possibly with Josh. 24:14 in mind). Paul cites these words in I Cor. 5:8 in relation to the memorials of Christ.

"And in truth" — Even service rendered in sincerity is not sufficient. It must be conducted faithfully in accordance with the Word.

"And put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt" — Joshua's words must have fallen harshly upon the ears of his listeners. There was no external evidence of the worship of such gods, but evidently it was conducted secretly. As Israel had wandered from place to place, some of the evil influence of those areas visited had rubbed off on them: whether in Egypt, Bethpeor or Canaan (see Acts 7:42-43). Joshua discerned that the secret worship of these gods was still surreptitiously maintained by some of the people, as it later was in the days of Ezekiel, when some worshipped false gods "in the chambers of their imagery" (Ezek. 8:12). The gods of the Chaldees were fire, light, the sun etc; those of the Egyptians were apes, serpents, crocodiles, the Nile etc. Those of the Amorites and Moabites at Bethpeor and elsewhere, were Astarte, Ashtaroth, Molech etc. Now worship, whether false or true, has one thing in common: the worshippers aspire to be at one with whoever they worship. In Egypt, the ideal was the animals or other forms of worship which led to human bestiality; in Canaan it was the lustful, evil gods and goddesses that gratified every unlawful longing of the flesh. In consequence worship in those centres was exceedingly degrading. The

pure ennobling worship of Yahweh was only possible by setting such gods aside.

“And serve ye Yahweh” — Service to Yahweh required separation from the false gods of the land, and consecration of self unto Him. The same is true today (Col. 3:5).

VERSE 15

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve Yahweh” — To serve Yahweh with the exclusiveness that the Truth demands requires the denial of self in worship and practise. Its basis is sacrifice. Many refuse the Truth today because they view the separateness and exclusiveness it demands as unsocial. Some believe it is wrong to decry the false teaching and worship of so-called Christianity; but Christ spoke scathingly of the false teaching of the religious Pharisees.

“Choose you this day whom ye will serve” — Joshua was not setting before the people a choice of worship, but was attempting to extract from them a confession of sound faith. Man has freedom of action, and the liberty of choosing his eternal destiny; whether life or death (see Deut. 30:19; 1 Sam. 15:19,22,23; Prov. 1:29; Isa. 7:15-16; Heb. 1:9). A divided loyalty is useless to Yahweh (see Psa. 95:10; Amos 5:26-27; Acts 7:41-43). But why did Joshua appeal to the people? In view of the authority vested on him, why did he not command and compel them to do Yahweh's bidding? Because a forced worship is of no benefit to God or man. If it is not the expression of love and loyalty Yahweh will repudiate it. Josiah compelled the nation to serve Him according to the Law, but though externally the people responded, their hearts were not with Him they offered only feigned worship (Jer. 3:10; See also Isa. 29:13-14). Such is obnoxious to God. He rejected it with contempt (Zeph. 1:7-8).

“Whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell” — This describes gross idolatry. As noted above, the gods of the Chaldeans were fire, light, the sun etc.; those of the Amorites were evil deities whose worship was lewd and licentious. The gods of the pagans had not been able to save their worshippers from defeat at the hands of the Israelites; on the other hand, Yahweh had protected His people, and had given them outstanding victories

in the Land, a demonstration of the value of His service and the extent of His power.

“But as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh” — Those who heard Joshua could only acknowledge the sincerity and truth of this statement. They knew that he had never swerved from a complete, undivided loyalty to Yahweh. In all his ways he manifested the standards in which God finds pleasure. See Gen. 18:19; Deut. 32:46-47; Psa. 101:2; 119:106,111,112; Acts 11:23.

The People Respond: We Will Serve Yahweh — vv. 16-18

The people sweep aside Joshua's doubts and forebodings, and with one voice declare their intention of wholeheartedly serving Yahweh in truth.

VERSE 16

“And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake Yahweh, to serve other gods” — The people respond by pronouncing a curse upon themselves if they turn from the true worship. The title “God”, though included in the A.V., does not appear in the Hebrew. See a similar expression in Josh. 22:29. The people profess themselves horrified at the suggestion that they should be guilty of forsaking Yahweh for any pagan gods of nations with which they have come in contact during their wanderings. However, it is needful to recall that bowing down to a visible god is not necessary to be guilty of idolatry; for covetousness, the service of self is likened to pagan worship. See 1 Sam. 15:23; Col. 3:5.

VERSE 17

“For Yahweh our God, He it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed” — See Deut. 6:12; Isa. 63:7-14; Amos 2:9-10; Micah 6:3-8. Moved by the earnest appeal of their venerable and venerated leader, the people responded by endorsing the example he presented, and accepting the words he spoke. They acknowledged Yahweh's goodness in His acts of salvation wrought on their behalf.

VERSE 18

“And Yahweh drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which

dwelt in the land; therefore will we also serve Yahweh; for He is our God — Yahweh had become their God by the Covenant which they had accepted, and into which they had entered at Sinai.

What Is Involved In Serving Yahweh
— vv. 19-20

Yahweh demands complete and undivided loyalty; He is not prepared to share His worship with other gods or things.

VERSE 19

“And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Yahweh; for He is a holy God” — The ellipsis should be added: “Ye cannot serve Yahweh *unless you sever all connection with other forms of worship, and completely dedicate yourselves unto His service*”. In making such a statement Joshua implied that the people were secretly worshipping other gods. Under those circumstances, they could not worship Him acceptably. Being omniscient He knew what they were doing, though they attempted to hide it from view. As “Holy” He was separate and remote from the world of flesh, and certainly far removed from the gods of man’s manufacture. This holy God demands that His worshippers, the people of Israel, should manifest the same characteristics of holiness as He does. See Lev. 19:2; Psa. 99:5,9; Isa. 5:16.

“He is a jealous God” — The word “God” is *El* and signifies absolute Might or Power. This signifies that He has both the right and power to judge His people if they disobey. As a “Jealous God” He will not share His worship with another. In using this title, therefore, Joshua drew attention to the Law of Jealousy which revealed what would happen to the people if they proved guilty of a divided worship. See notes at Exod. 34:14.

“He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins” — See Exod. 23:21. The word “transgressions” is from the Hebrew *Pesha*, and signifies to revolt. It therefore describes a breach of contract. See Josh. 7:11. The term implies acts of positive and deliberate rebellion against the authority of Yahweh. The term “sins” is *Chattaim* in the Hebrew, and is derived from a root signifying the act of *Straying* or *Missing the Mark*. It is here in the plural as shown by the addition of *im*, and indicates that straying can be along various avenues, summed up as the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16).

VERSE 20

“If ye forsake Yahweh, and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you hurt, and consume you after that He hath done you good” — By “strange” gods is meant foreign gods: imitation of the worship of the surrounding nations. This is equivalent to current believers imitating the worship of the world among which it moves: whether the idols of sport, pleasure or business. Yahweh warned that the fact that He had “done them good” should not be misinterpreted as evidence that He would not punish them if they proved disobedient. Continued “goodness” is conditional upon continued obedience (see Rom. 11:22). See other warnings of punishment: Josh. 23:12-15; 1 Chron. 28:9; 2 Chron. 15:2. It is not in any spirit of vindictiveness that Yahweh would “consume” the people after doing them good; but in order to discipline them, and so draw them back to ways of righteousness, beneficial to them, their children and the future of the nation.

The People Repeat Their Promise To Obey — v. 21

In rebuttal of Joshua’s rebuke, the people reaffirm their intention to be obedient.

VERSE 21

“And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve Yahweh” — These are familiar words from the lips of flesh. Even though genuinely meant and confidently asserted, flesh has a tendency to forget or overlook its promises. See Exod. 19:8; 24:3,7; Deut. 5:27-29 etc.

The Responsibility of Acceptance

— vv. 22-23

Joshua plainly tells the people what they must do to qualify as Yahweh’s obedient children.

VERSE 22

“And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you Yahweh, to serve Him” — The people, by their protestations, would be self-condemned if they failed to be obedient. Notice the citation of these words by Isaiah (Isa. 43:9-12; 44:8-9). See also Mic. 6:9.

“And they said, We are witnesses” — Confidently they accepted the responsibility resting upon them. See Deut. 26:17; Micah 6:1-9.

VERSE 23

“Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto Yahweh Elohim of Israel” — The people must have listened to these words of Joshua with bewilderment and concern; particularly as he reiterated this need (see vv. 14,19-20). They were not conscious of such false worship; and it required them to search their hearts diligently to discover it. The term “strange gods” is perhaps more clearly rendered: “strangers’ gods”. Jacob, in returning to Bethel, had called upon his family and associates to do exactly as Joshua now urges the people to do (Gen. 35:2). To put away such gods is comparatively easy. But, in addition, Joshua exhorted the people to “incline their hearts” unto Yahweh. This requires great effort. Significantly, the term “heart” in this place is in the singular number; and thereby suggests the united heart of all Israel. The nation should be united in its worship. A co-operative effort would be needed to cause the heart of the nation to beat in unison with that of Yahweh Elohim of Israel. It was towards God as such that Joshua directed the attention of the people. This Divine name sets forth the principle of God manifestation: “*He who shall be the mighty ones of Israel*” — a Prince with God (or Power). By reference to this Name, Joshua drew the attention of the people to the terms of the Covenant.

In doing this he again typified the Lord in his labours.

The People Covenant to Serve Yahweh — vv. 24-25

The people again endorse their acceptance of the Covenant by a ceremony of sacrificial dedication.

VERSE 24

“And the people said unto Joshua, Yahweh our God will we serve” — In so saying, they agreed to put away their strange gods and devote themselves to Yahweh. The example of Abraham in teaching these principles to his children illustrates what is required (Gen. 18:19). See also Psa. 101:2; 119:106,111,112; Acts 11:23. To “serve” in Truth is to manifest its principles as a way of life.

“And his voice will we obey” — Though these words were doubtless made in full sincerity, they had been heard before (see Deut. 5:27-29). Words are not enough; they must be manifested in action.

VERSE 25

“So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day” — This expression literally signifies that he “cut a covenant”. The covenant was confirmed over a covenant victim. The animal was slain and divided into two parts. Between those parts the contracting parties met to acknowledge the terms of the covenant and their agree-

JOSHUA RE-AFFIRMS THE COVENANT MADE AT SINAI

Joshua’s appeal to the people was designed to remind them of the responsibilities related to the covenant entered into by them in Sinai. His appeal emphasises the following principles:

- The *Authority* of the one reaffirming the covenant — Joshua was appointed as successor to Moses, and therefore became a type of Christ.
- The *Liberty* of choice: It was left with the people to accept the Covenant; there was no undue compulsion, no force used.
- Its *Basis*: an acceptance of the Knowledge of God.
- Its *Requirements*: sincerity and obedience.
- Its *Solemnity*: confirmed by sacrifice.
- Its *Demand*: complete dedication.
- Its *Importance*: Israel’s attitude towards it would determine their future for good or ill.

ment and assurances that they will carry them out. In fact, the death of the victim indicated that they would do so unto death. See the action of Abraham (Gen. 15:9-10). Jeremiah described the rite of covenant-making when he described how the princes of Judah and Jerusalem and the people of the land, through their representatives, had "cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof" (Jer. 34:18-19). They not only passed between the parts of the divided covenant victim to proclaim, or endorse the terms of the covenant made, but also ate of the sacrifice to show that they were united as one in their determination to carry it out. This ceremony anticipated the communion of bread and wine through which believers unite with Christ and with Yahweh in their determination to carry out the terms of their covenant (see Heb. 9:15). The action of the covenanters implied that they were deserving of the fate of the covenant-victim should they fail to carry out their part of the contract. Therefore, a parable, the Lord described the destiny of the unworthy servant: "They shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 24:51). This, of course, is to be understood figuratively, not literally.

"And set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem" — A statute (Heb. *choq*) is a ruling or enactment commanding obedience in certain defined terms; and an ordinance (Heb. *mishpat*) defines the sentence if it is broken. See v. 20.

The Witness of the Book and Stone

— vv. 26-28

A solemn ceremony is conducted underneath a celebrated Oak in Shechem. A stone is set up as a pillar of witness; and the people are reminded of the action of Jacob in burying the household gods of his family under this oak, and in this manner figuratively cleansing them of any false worship. Joshua calls upon the people to emulate the action of their great forefather Jacob, after whom, as Israelites, they are called. This is one of the most significant and solemn celebrations recorded in The Book of Joshua.

VERSE 26

"And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the Law of God" — The terms of the covenant now made were evidently added to the Law as an appendix, even as

the words and teaching of the antitypical Joshua, or Jesus, were added to those of Moses; for his teaching of grace and truth is based upon the eternal principles expressed in the Law (Rom. 15:8-9).

"And he took a great stone" — This "great stone" became known as the *Stone* or *Pillar of Witness*. It was set up close to Shechem as a token to the people. To it went Abimelech and his companions, to claim the royal dignity that he falsely believed was his due (Jud. 9:6). The Lord Jesus, that great "shepherd of the sheep", is described as the Stone of Israel (Gen. 49:24). He is the Stone or Pillar of Witness (John 5:31-40; 1 Pet. 2:4-6; Rev. 3:14). A stone, such as Joshua set up as a memorial is representative of the work of the Creator, and witnessed to Israel concerning the exclusive way of spiritual success: God manifest in the flesh. The whole circumstances, therefore, were greatly significant as pointing to the coming of the Lord through whose name alone, Israel can be saved. The site of Shechem was significant as has been indicated previously. Its name, status and history were calculated to remind the people of their privileges and responsibilities. Shechem signifies *Burden-bearer*, and it was appointed a City of Refuge. At Shechem Abram first heard the Promise confirmed, though previously it had been conditionally proclaimed. There he built his first altar, and made his first purchase of land (Acts 7:16). To Shechem Jacob made his way after returning to the land, and redeemed the territory previously purchased by Abram (Gen. 33:19 see notes), and defended his right to it (Gen. 48:22). There, also, as Israel, he cleansed his household of pagan gods before removing to Bethel where the Covenant was reconfirmed to him (Gen. 35:1-2). Significantly, all this points forward to Christ: whose death and resurrection confirmed the Covenant (Rom. 15:8); who is the antitypical Burden-Bearer and City of Refuge (Heb. 6:18); Altar of Witness (Heb. 13:10); and Foundation Stone (1 Pet. 2:6).

"And set it up there under an oak" — The addition of *there* shows that the Oak was in Shechem. This, was a most significant tree, in a most significant place. The site itself was not only hallowed by the Altar of Abraham (Gen. 12:7), and now of Joshua (Josh. 8:30); but it had also been hallowed by Israel (for to Israel Jacob's name had been changed) in a most impressive ceremony that provided an

appropriate memorial for the children of Israel. It was at this very spot where Jacob (Israel) had enacted a similar ceremony before the fathers of the tribes now assembled there by Joshua. There he had called upon the members of his household to cleanse their hearts before the all-seeing eye of God by giving up their "strange gods", their ear-rings or amulets, charms or talismanic superstitions, and bury the symbols of them out of sight "under the oak which was by Shechem" (Gen. 35:4). The word "oak" is from the Hebrew *'allah* and signifies Strength. In the light of these incidents, this tree foreshadowed him "whom Yahweh made strong for Himself" (Psa. 80:17), whose followers are able to "put away sin" through the forgiveness obtained through the strength of his offering (Heb. 2:14).

"That was by the sanctuary of Yahweh" — In this phrase "by" should be rendered as in R.V., R.S.V., Young, etc. All associations of this place, as well as the altars erected there by Abraham, Jacob and Joshua made the site holy. It was so treated by the Lord, who made his way to the well of Jacob by Shechem, and there engaged in marvellous and revealing conversation with the woman of Samaria, a conversation that illustrated the scope of his offering, and the efficacy of his ministry (John 4:1-26).

VERSE 27

"And Joshua said unto the people, Behold this stone shall be a witness unto us" — See Gen. 31:48; Deut. 31:21. The Lord Jesus is "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel" (Isa. 8:14), and as such he became a "witness to the people" (Isa. 55:4). He reveals unto them their sins that he might remove them (Rom. 11:26-27).

"For it hath heard all the words of Yahweh which He spake unto us" — Joshua spoke with poetic licence of the stone as though it had hearing and intelligence. Placed within earshot of the words which had been spoken, it became a forcible memorial of the solemn Covenant proclaimed, and the people's agreement to adhere to it.

"It shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God" — Dr. Young renders "deny" as *lie*; the Hebrew *Kad-rash* signifying to be untrue. To deny God is to reject His living presence, and this can be done through both words and deeds. A person sets himself against God

when he minimises the Divine power and ability to intervene, or when he denies or minimised the deeds of greatness that He has performed. Men do this when they rationalise such miracles as the crossing of the Red Sea, the Fall of Jericho, the sun standing still at the bidding of Joshua, by explaining them in terms that leave out God. See Prov. 30:5; Matt. 10:33; 2 Tim. 2:12-13.

VERSE 28

"So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance" — The scene must have been impressive. The aged warrior, full of years and honour, with an outstanding record of undeviating faith and courage represented an epoch in Israel. The people saw the hoary head, they viewed with respect and reverence the lined face of the leader who had led them to victory against great odds. And what more significant place than at Shechem, to where he had led the people to hearken to the cursings and blessings of the Law, and to renew their Covenant with Yahweh. In the beauty of the surroundings, they saw evidence of a land "flowing with milk and honey", and could rejoice in the reward they already had received. Both the man and the moment were impressive; and the people responded to the appeal. The record states that the influence of Joshua remained to inspire and direct after his death, through the influence of those who had been his associates in life (see v. 31).

The Burial Of Three Great Leaders — vv. 29-33

The Book of Joshua fitly closes by recording the burials of three great men: a warrior, a statesman and a priest. These concluding words in a book of action such as that of Joshua, remind us that all human endeavour and striving ends in a sepulchre! However worthy the fame, or long the conflict, at last the scholar must put away his books, the warrior must sheath his sword, the statesman resign his office, and the priest lay down his censer. The human body as today constituted is not for perpetuity; it must be changed to glorious immortality, as it will at Christ's coming, before it can fully enjoy the fruits of labour in Divine things. Meanwhile, life remains an apprenticeship for eternity. Whatever time is allocated to us in the present, whether long (as men call longevity) or short (as even the longest life is short in comparison with eternity), whatever we do with time now will determine our destiny.

Everything at present is fallible and terminable. Therefore, the people of Israel had to bury, each in his time: the bodies of the patriarch Joseph, their leader Joshua, and their priest, Eleazar. The grave is the epitaph of present striving and human existence; eternity for such awaits the future. Nevertheless, the records of these three men that were doubtless brought to mind when they each were buried, witnessed to the fact that a man can so order his life, that his influence for good can remain after he is gone. So it was with Joseph, with Joshua, and with Eleazar. Though dead they continued to speak, and do so to the present. In those three great men, each in his own office, there were revealed three outstanding types of Christ who is Prophet, Priest and King.

VERSE 29

“And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died” — Joshua began his career as the “minister of Moses” (Josh. 1:1); he concluded his labours as “the servant of Yahweh”. Faithfulness, integrity, courage, forthrightness characterised all his endeavours. Like his great antitype, he never married as far as we know. Though he was the greatest man in Israel during the occupation of the land, he received no reward from his fellowmen. Whereas they obtained houses for which they did not labour to build (v. 13) he had to build his own (Josh. 19:50). In spite of all trials, his main objective was to maintain loyal, consistent, painstaking, sacrificial labour in service to Yahweh and the people. In doing so he manifested true patriotism, and a grand example (Jud. 2:7).

“Being an hundred and ten years old” — Joshua’s span of life was the same as that of Joseph (Gen. 50:36). However, it is not longevity that measures the worth of a lifetime, but how much that life has been filled with profitable labour. What a person does with his God-given span of life counts more than length of days. Time can be squandered or used profitably as a stepping stone to eternity.

VERSE 30

“And they buried him” — This statement is reiterated three times in the last few verses of this book. If Joshua was the writer of it, this must have been added by another hand. It is an epitaph to mortality. They buried him! Such a statement termi-

nates the struggle of life with all its hopes, aspirations, sadness and joy. They buried him! The same words bring to an end the scholar and the ignorant; the rich man and the pauper; the sinner and the saint. Mortality claims each and every alike, and the grave buries them for ever — unless the life has been given to God in the way appointed: and then the future is bright with hope. They buried him! The silent sepulchre takes possession of a man’s mortal remains, but if he belongs to God, his character is recorded in the Book of Remembrance to receive his eternal life, or shame.

“In the border of his inheritance” — There was nothing spectacular in the inheritance of Joshua. In comparison with those of others, it was modest and humble. He was worthy of a greater grant among men (see Josh. 19:50), but as the cortage moved to this spot, and the multitude gathered to give honour, and pay their last respects to this great man, they could see that he had not been adequately rewarded in this life: a token to all that he anticipated and laboured for a greater reward to come, one upon which he placed his hope, and anticipated in faith, whilst labouring for it in love.

“In Timnath-serah” — The name signifies *Extra portion*: but that awaits him in the future, at the resurrection (see Luke 14:14).

“Which is in mount Ephraim” — This name signifies *Double fruit*, the reward of the firstborn. Joshua’s inheritance will be an extra portion with the Firstborn, even the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Age to come (Col. 1:15).

“On the north side of the hill of Gaash” — The word signifies *A Quaking*. Perhaps the word anticipates the shaking of the earth that will take place at the Lord’s return, when the graves will be opened, and “many shall arise, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:3). Joshua’s hope was in a resurrection to life eternal in the Age to come.

VERSE 31

“And Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua” — These words are repeated in Judges 2:7-10, perhaps indicating that the author of Judges completed this Epilogue to Joshua. Israel seems to have produced no other generation which

was equally as faithful to Yahweh as that one. Joshua's influence extended long after his death: a further illustration of how he typed the Lord Jesus Christ, the Joshua of the New Testament.

"Which had and known all the works of Yahweh, that He had done for Israel" — See Deut. 11:2,7. Joshua's post-life influence extended long after his death, comprising the generation that had witnessed the miracle of the entrance into the land, and the subjugation of the Canaanites.

VERSE 32

"And the bones of Joseph which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt" — Joseph was another grand type of the Lord Jesus Christ. His faith enabled him to predict with certainty that "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (Gen. 50:25). This instruction, according to Paul, was perhaps the outstanding incident of faith in his life (Heb. 11:22). The bones of Joseph had been laboriously borne by Israel during the long, arduous wandering through the wilderness, providing a contrast to the bones of the faithless generation that left Egypt, which perished in the wilderness (Num. 14:26-35). Joseph's bones had been carried across the Jordan, and awaited burial during the years of conquest. As Christ's brethren are expected to "remember" the memorial of his death and resurrection, so the people of Israel had to bear the burden of the death of Joseph, as well as his thrilling message of hope, during the long, distressing years of wandering and striving, until now when they are put to rest.

The expression "brought up out of Egypt" characterises the life of Joseph. He maintained a strict separateness from his environment during his sojourn in that land. Though honoured by the Egyptians, he carefully kept himself apart from their influence. He was "in the world but not of it". He exercised great influence in keeping the people away from the evil environment of sin, slavery and death, in which they lived, encouraged them in the liberty and hope of the Covenant that was before them.

"Buried they in Shechem" — This, as we have seen, was a most significant site in the Land of Promise, and therefore a fit place for Joseph (Israel's burden bearer) to be buried.

"In a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of

Shechem" — Stephen declared that Abram first purchased this land (Acts 7:16). However, in Gen. 33:19 it is stated that Jacob, not Abram, "bought" the "parcel" or "portion" of the field. Can these two apparent contradictions be reconciled? They can, for, in fact, they do not contradict but complement each other. The Hebrew word rendered "bought" is the verb *qanah*, and according to Gesenius it signifies to acquire by purchase or redemption. The word is rendered *recover* in Isa. 11:11: "recover the remnant"; and *redeem* in Neh. 5:8, "we have redeemed our brethren". It therefore can describe the repossession of something: in this case, the family inheritance at Shechem, originally purchased by Abram (Acts 7:15-16). Subsequently Jacob had to defend his right to this piece of land (Gen. 48:22), though again, nothing is recorded of the circumstances. The writer believes that these men of faith will be granted these plots of land as their eternal inheritance in the Age to come.

"For a hundred pieces of silver" — The Hebrew word is *Kesitah*. But what does this word signify? Philologists are uncertain. The Septuagint translators render the word as *lamb*s, and the margin of the A.V. does also. Others, however, such as Gesenius, link it with the word *kasat*, "to weigh", and believe that it was a certain weight of silver, the exact value of which is now unknown, and so is rendered "pieces of silver". Some suggest that both ideas should be combined, and that the earliest pieces of money were stamped with a lamb, as an appropriate symbol of wealth to a rural people. This linking together of silver money and lambs is remarkably appropriate, for silver is the metal of redemption, and the lamb is the sacrificial animal of redemption (Gen. 22:7-8; Exod. 12:3 etc.). It is significant that Jacob should redeem this piece of land, which became a symbol of eternal inheritance, with money which points forward to the means of redemption by which he and his seed will obtain their eternal inheritance.

In this secluded field, under the shadow of Gerizim and Ebal (the mounts of Blessing and Cursing), and in sight of Shechem, the Burden-bearer, the patriarch Jacob maintained his separate existence. He arranged matters so that he was completely independent of the Canaanites. Probably, in order to guard against the chance of disputes as had arisen between his father and Abimelech during a time of drought, he dug himself a capa-

acious well deep into the limestone rock. This well exists near Nablous, the ancient Shechem, to the present day (cp. John 4:5-6). The width of the bore is nine feet, and its depth about one hundred feet. For Jacob to sink such a shaft involved an undertaking demanding great skill, much labour, and considerable time. The water of the well is still used to this day; and the writer has had the great privilege of drinking of it. It was at this spot that the true Burden-bearer sought rest and refreshment from the woman of Samaria. The "piece of field", the silver-lamb purchase money, and the well of living water, referred to by Christ as a comparison with the life-giving water of truth, he offered, gives remarkable significance to this stopping-place of Jacob.

"And it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph" — The children of Joseph were Ephraim and Manasseh. Evidently, as an historical inheritance, this piece of ground was treated as sacred by the two tribes; for both could claim an interest in it. But, as the blessing of Moses abundantly shows, those two tribes prophetically represent Israel after the Spirit (*Ephraim — Double Fruit*) and Israel after the flesh (*Manasseh (Forgetting)*) — see our notes on Deut. 33:17. As, in the past, representatives of the two families of Joseph could meet at his sepulchre to revere the memory of their great patriarch, so in the future, Israel — both mortal and immortal, will be united as one through the ministrations of the greater Joseph (*Increase*), even the Lord Jesus Christ. His return will be followed by two resurrections: one personal, the other political, for as the bodies of saints shall be reformed and called forth from their graves, even so will the body of Israel nationally be reformed to likewise emerge from its political tombs.

As Jacob defended his right to that plot of land "by his sword and bow" (Gen. 48:22), so his descendants have had to do likewise; Israel after the flesh doing so by actual combat, and the followers of the Lord by defending the Truth against error, and in the proclamation of the Gospel (2 Cor. 10:3-6).

VERSE 33

"And Eleazar the son of Aaron died" — Eleazar signifies *El hath helped*. At the appointment of Aaron and following the death of Aaron's two rebellious sons, he became High Priest elect. As such he

typed the priesthood of Christ which is designed to replace the Aaronic Priesthood, it having served its course (Heb. 7:12). Eleazar, or *El hath helped*, surely points to the statement of Psa. 80:17: "the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself". It is significant that in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Christ gives the poor man the name of this High Priest elect, for Lazarus is the Greek form of Eleazar. In answer to the rich man who, in the parable, pleaded that Lazarus be instructed to go and teach with his relations, the answer is given: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). This indeed proved true in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ: for the Jewish leaders rejected the evidence of their eyes in repudiating his Messiahship after having seen proof of his resurrection! How bitterly blind flesh can be!

"And they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas his son" — Phinehas signifies the *Mouth of a Serpent*. The Hebrew word for serpent is from a root signifying to *know by observation*. The speech of such, therefore, is speech that follows observation of matters upon which thought has been given. Such speech is wise speech. The Lord recommended that the Apostles be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). Phinehas was the son of the High Priest elect, and therefore, in this context, foreshadows the Ecclesia, described as the children of Christ (Heb. 2:13). Because of his vigorous, if ruthless, action in slaying the apostate Israelitish prince and the pagan Midianitish Princess who defied the specific command of Yahweh, he was given an everlasting Covenant of Peace (Num. 25:11-13). In the Hebrew the statement "the hill that pertaineth to Phinehas" is rendered merely as *Gibeah-Phinehas*, a proper noun defining a town or place, and not a hill.

"Which was given him in Mount Ephraim" — The place so defined, whether it be hill, town or territory was evidently given him as a mark of honour. Normally the priests had no inheritance granted them, but dwelt in cities separated for that purpose. But an exception was shown to Phinehas because of his great act of faith, and he was given a place, which probably he will inherit in the Age to come. It was located in Mount Ephraim, the mountainous territory of Ephraim (for there is no individual mount of that name) which signifies *Double Fruit*.

Concluding Note

And on that note the book ends. In these three deaths there closes an epoch: the warrior leader, the faithful visionary, and the forthright priest. All three typed Christ in various particulars. All three will rise again to their glorious inheritances in the Age to come. Then, clothed upon with immortality, and in company with the Lord for whom they looked, they will take possession of the inheritances granted them. No doubt a special public ceremony will be arranged for this to be done. What a glorious celebration will mark these appointments of honour! Joseph granted a living occupation of land promised him in his lifetime but which he only occupied in death; Joshua likewise dwelling in his portion but then in glory; Eleazar occupying his inheritance in association with his son, Phinehas, as Christ will with his children: a wonderful parable of a rewarded faith. Others, likewise, will be granted personal inheritances in that day: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Jeremiah claiming Anathoth by virtue of his title deeds (Jer. 32:14); Daniel "standing in his lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13); the Apostles occupying the twelve thrones throughout Israel (Matt. 19:28). These outstanding heroes of the past, as well as many others, will be ceremoniously conducted to the various sites which they are to occupy, and with marks of special honour will be honoured and rewarded for their great acts of faith (Luke 12:8). They will enter into their various lots, there to dwell for evermore. It is on this note of hope that the *Book of Joshua* ends.