

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God (Acts 17: 11)

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

VOLUME 53

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EDITORIAL

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Prior to **his appearance as the great leader of his people in the book that bears his name**, Joshua lived largely **in the shadow, or perhaps we should say in the brilliant light, of the life of Moses**. Rather like **the early days of the life of the Lord Jesus**, little **is said about this period in Joshua's life and we have to glean what we can from scattered verses**. As with **the life of the Lord Jesus**, however, **these are rich gleanings**. Some splendid **things are said of the servant of Moses**. "Joshua prostrated Amalek" (**Ex. 17: 13 RVM**). "Joshua... departed not out of **the Tent**" (**Ex. 33: 11**). "Joshua... **a man in whom is the Spirit**" (**Num. 27: 18**). "Joshua... wholly followed **the Lord**" (**Num. 32: 12**). All **these things or their spiritual counterparts are not only desirable but also essential features in the private life of the believer if he is to know prosperity of soul**.

Just as importantly, Joshua was a man who, from his earliest days in the Scriptures, was intimately associated with the word of God. Thus the divine intention as regards the destruction of Amalek, in which Joshua on his "debut" played such a prominent part, was not only to be written down but also to be rehearsed in his ear (Ex. 17: 14). He accompanied Moses up the Mount of God when the Law was given (Ex. 24: 13) and returned with him when he was carrying the very tablets of stone themselves (Ex. 32: 15-17). Then, when assuming the leadership, he was solemnly commanded to meditate in the book of the Law, both day and night (Josh. 1: 8). It goes without saying to readers of Bible Studies that intimacy with the word of God needs to be both life-long, continuous and intense if the believer is to succeed in the things of God. And more is required, for the believer, too, must "observe to do according to all that is written therein" (Josh. 1: 8).

Apart from such straight-forward matters of principle, it is instructive to see the outworking of recurring patterns of divine principle in

Joshua's life. For example, Joshua's years of preparation exemplify the sequence of events outlined in Romans 15: 1-4. Thus he showed himself strong and a true champion of the weak in vanquishing their enemy, Amalek, at great personal risk (Rom. 15: 1, Ex. 17: 8-16, Deut. 25: 17-19). He showed the same resolution, lack of self regard and desire to provide the best for his people not only in spying out the land but also in seeking to persuade them where they would best be fed and filled (Rom. 15: 2, Num 14: 8-9). Again Joshua so easily could have gone along with the majority, and taken the way of least personal trouble. He did not do so and for his pains he was threatened with death. He and his word were rejected, but in so doing the people rejected the Lord (Rom. 15: 3, Num. 14: 10-11). What did he then? He did not depart in high dudgeon. Nor did he forsake the house of God or the people of God, even though he knew he was in the right and they were almost to a man in the wrong. Instead he waited patiently for forty years having received a word from the Lord about his future (Rom. 15: 4, Num. 14: 38).

Here is a pattern of self-denial and devotion to others meeting with rejection and reproach but continuing with patience and reliance on the word of God, looking forward to the day when all would be put right. It is a pattern so clearly seen in the life of the Lord that His disciples can hardly complain of the same treatment as they seek to bring the good tidings of salvation to sinners, or of the kingdom of God to believers, or of the rest of God to saints in churches of God (Heb. 4: 2). Like Joshua, however, they can be certain of their Lord's approbation. What matters any other?

/ . E. P.

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA: **THE NEW LEADER**
(Josh. 1: 1-9; Ex. 33: 11; Num. 27: 18-23; 32: 12; Deut. 1: 38)

From Ajegunle: *The New Leader*. Scripture does not show that Moses chose Joshua the son of Nun as his minister with a view to develop him for future leadership. We support the view that Joshua lent himself to Moses as he followed to seek the God of Israel (Num 32: 12). Barely three months from leaving Egypt Moses and Joshua were identified closely in the purposes of God at Mount Sinai (Ex. 24). The leader who should succeed Moses was not revealed until Joshua was fitted by God and announced as His choice with specific instructions to Moses at the appropriate time.

Character Formation. It was habitual for Joshua to be at the Tent of Meeting (Ex. 33: 11). There was the centre of divine revelation for his time, and there were available the writings of Moses for reading

and study [Possibly, but Scripture does not say so - Eds.].

God who searches the hearts saw in Joshua "a man who had the Spirit" (Num. 27: 18). The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant (Ps. 25: 14). This principle was true in Joshua's experience and it is set forth as the requirement for every age (See 1 Tim. 4: 13, 15; 2 Tim 2: 15). Character adorning is the work of the Spirit. It took well over 40 years to fit Joshua to be a leader who in many ways was different from Moses. What a lesson about the ways of God!

Proving the Man of God. The battle against the Amalekites put Joshua to test (Ex. 17: 8-16). He fought for God and for Israel in the strength of the Lord. Joshua obeyed Moses^f instructions despite the short notice as it were, and that at the risk of his life. The word of the Lord Jesus in Mk. 8: 34 upholds the principle which underscored Joshua's obedience. At the spying of the promised land Joshua proved himself a man with another spirit (Num. 13: 1 - 14: 10).

Divine Choice. Moses received instructions about Joshua as the new leader while he prayed for a man of God's choice (Num. 27: 15-23). Joshua was presented before Eleazar the priest, and before the congregation of Israel by the hand of Moses. We see in the appointment of Joshua as a new leader a principle which is noteworthy. It is God who fits a man of His choice for specific role in His service. The recognition of the man is the function of God's appointed leaders.

Continuing in Training. We noted some experiences in Joshua's life which confirmed the fact that the leader must continue in training with God while he serves the counsel of God. Cases were cited which included references to Josh, 5: 13-15; 7: 1-8; 9: 3-27. Spiritual experience is progressive and the timing is of God.

G. Okwena, M. Imoukhuede

From **Birkenhead:** Joshua had been born in Egypt, and from this fact, his experience and background can be partially assessed. He would have known the experience of life in bondage; he would have learned of the appointment by God of Moses as leader, and heard of the miracles. He wrought as proof of the fact to Pharaoh. His primary lesson from this source would have been the uselessness of reliance upon self and the importance of reliance upon God.

The purpose of such experience and training may not have been clear to Joshua as he developed, but the diversity and depth of such experience is clear from Scripture. He was present **when** God spoke

to Moses face to face, and while Scripture indicates that he did not witness the encounter, he could not fail to have been impressed by the effect such an experience would have had on his master.

He was a man who learned to work faithfully and obey another. He bore his responsibilities in a mature manner so that he could have been identified as a potential leader before the time of appointment came. It is entirely suitable that he should have served the leader of the children of Israel for this, too, would equip him for future service. Experience can be gained by living through an event in person or (perhaps less beneficially) by witnessing others deal with a problem. Joshua had much on which to draw.

References in Scripture suggest that Moses was convinced of the necessity of the people of Israel having a leader. Otherwise they would have been like a flock of sheep without a shepherd. He knew that according to the revealed will of God, His people would one day enter into the promised land. He knew also that it would not be he who led them there. He thus besought God in prayer. The clear and positive answer came from God. Joshua was the man to take on the mantle of leadership. While it would have been entirely possible for God to have installed Joshua at any time, it was His will that due preparation and learning should take place, so that he should be suitably equipped for the task before him.

The fulfilment of these purposes came on the death of Moses and the commissioning of Joshua as leader. His primary task of leading the people into the promised land was confirmed when the Lord Himself spoke to Joshua, detailing that area that he was to occupy. He may have felt unequal to the task, but was given the assurance by God and encouragement in the promise of His continued presence. Joshua's part involved strict adherence to the law without deviation. Thus were the objective, the authority and the means to carry out the task, given to Joshua by the Lord.

Joshua, the appointed leader of God's people, Israel, foreshadows in a number of ways the Lord Jesus Christ, the leader of God's present-day people. The Lord Jesus Christ was faithful (Heb. 3: 1, 2). He was One who came as a servant (Mat. 20: 28). His purpose was always to do God's will (John 4: 34), and in times of trial He used the word of God to powerful effect (Mat. 4: 4, 7, 10).

R. C. Halpin, R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: Having studied the epistle to the Ephesians in 1984, it seems to us that the book of Joshua is its counterpart in the Old Testament writings. Ephesians speaks of inheritance, of deep

spiritual experience and gives a full description of the armour needed by the Christian in the highest kind of warfare. We shall see a picture of this as we develop our study.

Moses was unable to bring the children of Israel into the Land of Promise. There is a sense, therefore, in which Moses is an embodiment of the Law which cannot bring us into the full blessings of Christ. Jesus Christ alone can do this and Joshua, in this matter, may be said to be a picture of Christ. His name means, "Jehovah is salvation".

As to the man himself, he had been Moses^T minister from a young man and possessed the following qualities desirable in the spiritually minded Christian today:

- he loved the presence of God and the voice of God (Ex. 33: 11)
- he was sensitive to do the will of God consistently (Josh. 1: 8)
- he was strong and courageous (Ex. 17: 13)
- he would accept and discharge responsibility (Num 27: 18-23)
- he encouraged others by word and example (Deut. 1: 38)

We noted that Joshua's desire to remain in the Tent (Ex. 33: 11) was not evidence of timidity. He was sensitive to God's word. The strength of his courage is evident in the victory over Amalek (Exodus 17). In addition, his meekness and loyalty are displayed in that he supported Moses fully through long years of service without question or impatience, unlike Miriam and Aaron in Numbers 12. Indeed, the strength of his support is seen in the way he acted in the matter of Eldad and Medad (Num. 11).

In Joshua, God had chosen a man who would "cause Israel to inherit the land". Its borders were clearly defined to Joshua. For his part, strength, courage and obedience were prerequisites. In Joshua 1, strength and courage are mentioned three times and observing to do God's law is mentioned twice. God's promise was given as encouragement. How closely these relate to the Christian today.

Joshua was the oldest man alive in Israel [1 Comment 1] but it was not mere seniority that dictated he lead Israel. He was chosen by God to do so and fitted with the qualities of character necessary for the task.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: At the beginning of the book of Joshua we are told almost abruptly that Moses was dead and Joshua must carry on the leadership.

He was the son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim. As his great forefather, Joseph, trusted in God in whatever state he was, so we see the same quality in Joshua. He wholly followed the Lord, whether he was

the commander **in chief** of God's army leading it to victory against the Amalekites or at the Tent of **Meeting as the servant** of Moses. **Are we as willing for whatever is in the way for us?**

These events played a **big part in the** preparation of Joshua. **In that Tent he heard** Moses speaking to the **great** God of heaven and God speaking to Moses. Moses **had been** told that he was not going any further. He **had a great heart**. He **did not resent this** although he may have regretted it. He **asked that** God would **raise up a man**. He was deeply concerned that the people of God would be held together and led together so that **His purpose would be fulfilled**. Similarly we are in something which is **bigger than any person in it**.

We see the importance of the continuity of the testimony and purposes of God **emphasized when** Paul wrote to Timothy a short time before he died... "Thou therefore, **my child...** commit thou to *faithful men*, who shall be able to **teach** others also"¹ (2 Tim. 2: 1-2). We **must be exercised** to hold fast to the **divine teaching** which has gone before. We **must be able to pass it on** to others or we will be found wanting.

Moses was **dead but the work had** to go on, and God **had** His man. That man was Joshua. He was the sovereign choice of God and He **had prepared him** well. He **charged him** to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. When He counselled him He laid considerable **emphasis on the fact that** Joshua **had to be a man** of the Book. In preparation for leadership **this was a matter of great significance**. If Joshua was going to depart from the way of God it would not **matter** how courageous he was in leading the people. God would **speak to him** orally and he would **have access to the Pentateuch**. He would **assimilate it and it** would become **part** of himself.

We should know the value of memorising Scripture. If we are going to **speak** to people about **spiritual experiences** it is indispensable that we can quote Scriptures. In Hebrews 13: 7 we read, "**Remember them that had the rule over you, which spake** unto you the word of God". That is how leaders **rule**. They translate meditation into manifestation.

The Lord's **charge for this dispensation is**, ^MGo ye therefore, and **make disciples... and lo, I am with you always**" (Mat. 28: 19-20).

If we **cut off the condition** we cannot **claim the promise**. We **must bear in mind** our responsibility in relation to the **fulfilment** of God's promise to be **with us in our service**.

G. W. Conway

From Dundas: "Moses **my servant is dead^M**! (Josh. 1: 2). What a traumatic **experience this must have been** for God's people, Israel. The **man who had been their leader, prophet, priest and king in action if not in name** [Comment 2]; **the man** through whom God displayed **His** power **and** the one who **came** between God **and His** people was now gone. Who would replace **him**? Sometimes **we say** when a prominent leader **dies**; **He can never be replaced¹¹**. However our God **is** able to do this **and for many years had been preparing** the young **man** Joshua for this task.

Joshua was of the tribe of **Ephraim** (Num. 13: 8). The **Grecian** form of **his name is "Jesus"**. As he led **his** people into the promised land **he may have been a prototype of his great successor, the Lord Himself as He is leading His own to the promised land of Heaven.**

Josephus says **he was 85 when he succeeded Moses**. He **is** thought to **have been** about **6 years in subduing** the land; **and the rest of his life was spent in settling and governing the twelve tribes; his rule over Israel in all covering about 25 years** [Comment 1]. **He died** at 110, was **buried** at Timnath-Serah **in Ephraim, was a great warrior, man of prayer and man of faith.**

Joshua's preparation goes **back more than 40 years, and** no doubt **began when he was a witness of God's wonders in Egypt. Then, as Israel went through experiences such as those of the Red Sea, Marah and Meribah, Joshua must have been close to Moses. We think this is so because when Amalek appeared, Moses said to Joshua "Go out, fight with Amalek"** (Ex. 17: 9) showing **that at this early stage, the younger man Joshua was well known for his courage and qualities of leadership. On this occasion Joshua must have realised the important work of Moses in God's presence holding up his hands in prayer.**

After this event, we read (Ex. 24: 13) of Joshua and Moses going up into the Mount of God and (Ex. 33: 11) of Joshua staying in the tent with Jehovah after Moses had departed.

Regarding God's commission to Joshua **there are** several salient points:

1. He **was** told to go **and** lead the people into **the** land. **Every** place that the sole of **the** foot trod upon **was to be theirs**. No doubt the lesson for today **is** that **in** their spiritual walk God's people **are to be** led to learn of **His truth** (the whole counsel of God).
2. The scope **was great: from the great sea to the great river**. Today **this** would include Jordan **and** part of Iraq. The reason **why** they **did** not conquer **this far** probably lies **in their** failure fully to follow God's command.

3. God promised ^MAs I was with Moses, so I will be with thee" (Josh. 1: 5). What memories this would awaken in Joshua's heart as he thought of God's ways with Moses!
4. "Be strong and very courageous" (Josh. 1: 7). Joshua already had these qualities but he was encouraged by God to continue in these qualities.
5. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth" (Josh. 1: 8). He was to meditate therein day and night. The book of Moses was now complete and it was available for the use of God's people. Following and observing to do all that was written in the Law would guarantee prosperity and success! What a mandate for God's people and His leaders today! His word is still paramount and the promise of His presence as seen in Mat. 28 is still as vital for spiritual success and spiritual prosperity.

N. MacKay

From Kingston, **Jamaica:** We need to recall a few things from the life of Moses before looking at Joshua, the new leader. In Deut. 11: 23-32, we see the importance of heeding God's word. Moses did not hesitate to do God's will, even though Satan used the behavioural patterns of the children of Israel to frustrate his leadership during the forty years in the wilderness. He had many disappointments, then finally, because of unbelief, he was not allowed to bring the congregation into the land (Num. 20: 12). This example must be noted by leaders of God's people, for God does not act according to our emotion or feelings, and what He commands we must obey without question.

Joshua, who was very close to Moses, must have observed his good qualities. We see that God communicated directly with Joshua (1: 1). Before that, however, (Num. 27: 18-23) Moses laid hands on Joshua at God's command, thus signifying the bestowal of the authority that Moses had upon Joshua in his new role as a leader.

Leaders in the churches of God should follow the apostle Paul's example (Phil. 4: 9) and say to others "the things which ye both learned and received, and heard and saw in me, these things do", and (2 Tim. 2: 2) "the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men". The point is that the lives of men who are in a leadership role should be beyond reproach. It may seem humanly impossible, but God expects it "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1: 16).

A number of commands and promises were made by God (Josh. 1: 1-9). Because God cannot change (Mai. 3: 6) and His Word is settled forever in heaven (Ps. 119: 89) we who are in the house of God today have much

to rejoice about in **the** Lord. Unlike Joshua, our **battle is** against **the** mighty forces of **the** demonic world, **but** our strength comes from our Leader, **the** Lord Jesus Christ. In **Him** we **have** spiritual **treasure in** **the** heavenlies (**Eph: 1: 3**).

God told Joshua **that He** would **never** fail nor forsake **him**. We today who have **been numbered with the** people of God should not only **realize the** position **we have but** also **claim the** promises **that are** set forth for **the** whole congregation as **well** as for leaders. Joshua only **had** God's **guidance if he** obeyed **the** command (verses **7-8**) "observe to do according to **all the law... turn** not from **it to the right hand** or to **the left**". Joshua was told to **walk a** straight line. So **we** should follow our **leader and** stop giving our minds to **the** opinions of **men**.

The commands **that** Jehovah **gave** spoke **firmly** about separation. Today this demands our contending "**earnestly for the faith which** was once for **ail** delivered unto **the** saints" (Jude **3**). People allow themselves to **be deceived with the idea that we** should do **away with** doctrine **and** just love. **We** note very strongly **that** this is **a** **trick of the enemy**.

In leadership we must **learn** to follow and not only to **lead**. **The** Word states **that each man will give** account of himself to God. **Alas, many fear** most what friends or **family might** say. **We** should **never be influenced** by friends nor **family to make a** decision **which** is contrary to God's will. **One may ask if this can be maintained** for long? The answer is "yes" **and** is seen in Josh. **1: 8-9**. **The Bible must never depart** from our minds. We must **study it night and day, and when we do, the** most important **thing to do is** to obey it. This was **the only thing that Joshua had** to do **and** God's promise would **be with him (as leader)** wherever **he went**.

We today **have an even better** promise for **we have** the Holy Spirit **living in** us who **will lead** us into **all the truth**. He **will never leave us** nor forsake us **and** as a testimony to **the** world we should **be sound in doctrine and practice in every** assembly. Until those people who **are called** Christians follow **their leader, the** unity **with which** Moses strengthened Joshua **will not become a** reality **in** their lives. When it becomes **a reality** then they **will see the** good of Josh. 1: 2-3.

Michael Morris

From Liverpool: *A Graduate of God's School*. **In** contrast to **his** predecessor **the new leader** of Israel is of unknown background **and** little of **his** life before assuming **his** new responsibility **is** recorded. **We** know, however, **that he knew the** slavery and oppression of Egypt **being** one of the only two survivors among **the** adult population of **the 40**

years in the wilderness [Comment 3]. This information leaves us in no doubt **that he, like many of God's best men, knew the experience of God's school of instruction in the difficulties of Egypt and the frustrations of the Exodus. He would certainly have learned an appreciation of the land which he and his fellow spies had confirmed "floweth with milk and honey" (Num. 13: 27) and was "an exceeding good land "(Num. 14: 7).**

A Man of Faith and Vision. In the face of stubborn **unbelief** and chronic **spiritual** short-sightedness Joshua **displayed an encouraging trust in his God. As co-supporter of the minority report to Moses following the exploration of the land by the spies he pleaded with the people not to accept the dismal report of the majority declaring "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it unto us.... neither fear ye the people of the land" (Num. 14: 8-9).** Joshua **was not just an optimist rallying the troops, but he knew the Word of God and was prepared to rely on its promises and to obey its commands. We would win many more spiritual victories in our "battles" if we did the same today.**

A Man of the Sanctuary. As Moses' assistant Joshua **spent his time in the Tent of God. We noted that a man of God stays where he is until God calls him to service. Like the greater leader, the Lord Jesus, both in name (Saviour) and in devotion to God's house (cf. Luke 2: 49), this early devotion to God and His things played a major role in Joshua's outlook as a leader of the people of God. At the same time when the other leaders buckled under the pressure of the people's impatience Joshua remained on Sinai awaiting Moses' return. This closeness to God must have been one factor in the commendation that he, along with Caleb, "wholly followed the Lord" (Num. 32: 12).**

David J. Webster

From Nottingham: Joshua **was the son of Nun (Josh. 1: 1) and grandson of Elishama, head of the tribe of Ephraim (1 Chron. 7: 26-27; Num. 1: 10).** His original **name was Oshea or Hoshea which means "salvation".** Later **this name was changed to Jehoshua or Joshua which means "the salvation of Jehovah". It seems from Num. 13: 16 that Moses started to call Oshea by the new name Joshua at the time when he was chosen and sent as one of those who were to spy out the land.**

If this is so, **then the change of name would appear to be associated with that particular event. The man whose name meant "salvation" now bears one which means "salvation of Jehovah" and, as he and his fellows start out on their task, the name change would direct his thought not only to deliverance but more especially to the source of that deliverance, Jehovah. The use of the name Joshua by the inspired**

writer in **Ex 17: 9, 24: 14, and Num. 11: 28** (that is before **the** change took place) is possibly **an example** of prolepsis, **the** anticipation of **the** event.

Of Joshua's infancy **and** boyhood **the** Scripture is silent, **but** from Josh. **14: 7** we learn **he** was **40** years old **when he was** sent to spy out the land, therefore **he** must **have** been approaching **40** years of **age** at **the** time of **the** Exodus [this Scripture **refers** to Caleb, see comment 1]. It follows **that** Joshua was born and **grew up** as one of **the** Israelite slaves in **Egypt**. **At an early age** he would, no doubt, **have** to toil **under** a burning sun along with his fellows **and** it **may be that he felt** on occasion **the** taskmaster's whip. It is interesting to contemplate **that** while Joshua **was** gaining his experience **under** terrible conditions in **the** brick fields, away in **the** wilderness during **the** same period another **man**, Moses, was being **prepared by** God for **a great work and**, in God's good time, **they were** to **be** brought together to work together to carry out God's purpose. God overrules in **the** affairs of **men** to bring about His will. We think of how God works **by** His Spirit in **the** hearts of **men and** women, one **here**, one **there**, **each** with his own particular experiences **under the** Spirit's working **and** brought together in **due** time to serve Him, as it is His desire, in **churches** of God.

In his **early** days in **Egypt** Joshua would **see** for himself the **way** of life of **the** Egyptians. Their worship of **the** sacred **black calf** Mnevis, **the bull** Apis **and** the sun-god along with various deities **may well have been** known to him as **he** could **later** declare, "... **put away the** gods which your fathers served beyond **the** River, **and** in **Egypt..** ". '(Josh. **24: 14**). It seems certain that it was in these years of his youth that **he** **made** his own choice to serve **the** God of **heaven**, to discount, like Moses, **the** "pleasures of sin" **and** this determination did not weaken, for, towards **the** end of his life **he** could say, "... **but** as for **me and** my house, we will **serve the** Lord..." (Josh. **24: 15**). It was, no doubt, **as a result** of **such** spiritual exercises of **heart**, **and** the implementation of **them** when the opportunity **came**, **that** Moses **was** able to discern his worth and so give to Joshua **the** responsibility **he** did **when he** commanded him to choose out **men and** fight with Amalek (**Ex. 17: 9**). This is the first occasion in Scripture **where we read** of Joshua, **the** son of Nun.

The words "now therefore arise..." in Joshua **1: 2** **are** important. "Now" pinpoints **the** time concerned; "therefore" the reason for **the** action, and "arise" **the** type of action to **be** taken. When Joshua **heard** these words from the Lord it **must have seemed** to him that **all** his earlier life **had been** a preparation for this hour and **the** undertaking of this responsibility. So, indeed, it **was**. The battle with Amalek (**Ex. 17: 8-16**) **the** close communion with God (**Ex. 33: 11**), the association

with Moses at crisis times in his experience (Ex. 24: 13, 32: 15-35, Deut. 1: 19-38), even rebukes when necessary (Num. 11: 28, 29), and many more experiences were stages in the development of the man whom God was to call to succeed Moses.

One of the most delightful and important lessons to be learned from Joshua's earlier day is that of the harmony in association and service of an older servant of God with a younger. There was no animosity; no so called generation gap. Joshua was Moses' minister, content to serve him in whatever capacity he was called to do so and while serving, learning of the man chosen by God (Ex. 3: 10). But Moses was not slow in discerning the qualities and abilities of this younger man (*cf.* Ex. 17: 9, 24: 13) and together they worked in harmony and, above all else, in accordance with the will of God (Deut 31: 1-8). We have a similar picture in the New Testament in the relationship between Paul and Timothy and such should also be the position between younger and older saints today.

R. Hickling

From Paisley: In secular matters, a skill is acquired after a period of training and practice. It is so in spiritual matters as well. This applies particularly in the matter of leadership. The same pattern is set out both in Old and New Testament Scriptures.

The first mention of Joshua is in regard to conflict with Amalek (Ex. 17: 8-16). This would suggest that Joshua was a man of physical prowess, who nevertheless was dependent on spiritual power for success; when Moses lifted up his hands Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hands Amalek prevailed. Joshua was thus in the forefront of the battle while still a young man.

Then he is spoken of as Moses' minister (Ex. 24: 13). He shared that great man's experience in his dealings with God, and particularly in regard to the giving of the Law. He also saw God's judgement on the people because of their idolatrous worship of the golden calf (Ex. 32). His presence with Moses in the Tent when he communed with God must have made a deep impression on Joshua (Ex. 33: 11).

The real test of his experience came, however, in regard to spying out the land and seeking to encourage the people to go forward (Num. 14: 6). The odds against him were great, but he was resolute. That earned for him the Lord's commendation (Num. 32: 12). The secret of his success was that he was guided by the Spirit of God (Num. 27: 18).

It is inevitable in human affairs that the time comes for leaders to hand over responsibility to younger men; and it is a good thing

when younger men have been prepared by God to take this on. Older men should encourage younger men to take up the reins and thus provide for continuity in the things of God (Deut. 1: 38). The outstanding example of this in New Testament days is seen in Paul's epistles to Timothy. Paul had reached the time of his departure and encouraged Timothy to carry on the good work which Paul had done. A similar situation exists in the Fellowship today and we must pray for and prepare younger men to take on responsibility.

I. Renfrew

From Stoke-on-Trent: Our study of the New Leader was divided into four:

1. *Epigraph.* It is appropriate that the book of Joshua opens with the words "Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister" and closes with the words "Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord" (Josh. 1: 1, 24: 29). They sum up the life and work of a great leader and warrior for God.
2. *His life and age.* Joshua was born in Egypt as was Caleb. They knew much of the rigour of slavery and sharing in the affliction of Israel in bondage. At the Exodus (if we accept that Caleb and Joshua were contemporaries Josh. 14: 7) Joshua was about 38 years old, and when the spies were sent he was around 40 [Comment 1]. He took charge of Israel after Moses, at the age of 80 and he died aged 110 years (24: 29). In the short time Moses was in Egypt, after his return from the land of Midian, he soon weighed up the potential qualities of the young man, Joshua. Within three months of leaving Egypt he was general of the armed forces (Ex. 17: 8), perhaps among the young men offering sacrifices (Ex. 24: 5) and minister to Moses (Ex. 24: 13).
3. *Characteristics of his life.*
 - (a) He was desirous and content to dwell in God's presence (Ex. 33: 11)
 - (b) As one of Moses' chosen men, he was very zealous for the honour of his lord (Num. 11: 28)
 - (c) Although he was a chief and prince of his tribe, Ephraim, nevertheless, he was willing to be a servant of the nation (Num. 13: 1-3)
 - (d) He was looked upon by his family, as his name Hoshea indicates, as a saviour in his own right. But Moses named him the saviour of Jehovah or Jah (Num. 13: 8, 16)
 - (e) To Joshua and Caleb, murmuring and rebellion were odious and sinful things (Num. 14: 6)
 - (f) He was a man who, having been with Moses at the giving of Law, was ready to meditate therein day and night (Josh. 1: 8)

4. *His qualities of leadership.*

- (a) He knew victory in his early years against "public enemy number one", Amalek, which speaks in Scripture of the flesh. He was a fighter and able to overcome (Ex. 17: 9)
- (b) Through his obedience to the commands of Moses he manifested a spirit of subjection to authority figures (Ex. 17: 10)
- (c) Joshua was a man who was able to report well and express sound judgement of things and of men (Num. 14: 7-9)
- (d) He was a man in whom was the Spirit. He was full of the Spirit of wisdom (Num. 27: 18; Deut. 34: 9)
- (e) Joshua wholly followed the Lord (Num. 32: 12)
- (f) He was charged (indicted) and took his charge seriously (Deut. 31: 14, 23)
- (g) Leaders are men who are faithful to God and His Word having learned first of all to be faithful in small things (Ex. 17: 9; Josh. 8: 30-32, 35)
- (h) Leaders should be men who sanctify the Lord in the eyes of His people, that in turn the Lord may honour and set them apart in the eyes of all the congregation (Num. 27: 14, 19, 20, 22).

We were interested to compare the leadership qualities given in Needed Truth 1949 page 157. These are as follows:

1. First and foremost, he must be a man of the Scriptures.
2. He must be a man of courage, facing criticism fearlessly.
3. He must be able to work with others.
4. He must be able to assess the qualities of others and give due weight to them.
5. He must not be obstinate.
6. He must possess a deep sense of his personal accountability to the Lord.

A. W. Heywood, R. A. Parker

From Sydney, Australia: *His Preparation.* Joshua learned early to take the lower place, as Moses¹ minister (Ex. 24: 13). The Lord said "whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant" (Mat. 20: 26, 27). He learned at the feet of the meekest man. The Lord said "learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Mat. 11: 29). He learned patience. When Moses went up to the mount Joshua went farther than the elders, but he did not go all the way. He had to wait 40 days for Moses to return (Ex. 32) and then he had to wait 40 years before he could enter the promised land. He learned to pray and seek God (Ex. 33: 7, 11) not in fleeting prayer but in long earnest prayer. We listen to the Spirit exhorting us to pray "with all prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6: 18) and to "continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 4: 2); "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5: 17).

He learned that "wisdom is the principal thing" (Prov. 4: 7) and he got it (Deut. 34: 9). "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas. 1: 5).

He learned the secret of power in service being "a man in whom is the Spirit" (Num. 27: 18). This is the "mark" of men of God (Acts 6: 3, 5) and seen in Stephen and his companions as well as Barnabas (Acts 11: 24). Paul says (Eph. 5: 18) "be filled (be getting filled) with the Spirit".

He learned to be an Overcomer. Although it was Caleb who said "we are well able to overcome" (Num. 13: 30), Joshua stood with him on this issue (Num. 14: 7-9). It is well that we remember the Lord's words to the seven churches in Asia because to each one these words appear "to him that overcometh".

His Commission. Joshua received his commission from Moses in the sight of all Israel. But that was not all, for God spoke to Moses and Joshua alone when they presented themselves in the tent of meeting (Deut. 31: 14). He then laid bare what would happen after Moses' death. "This people will rise up, and go a whoring after the strange gods of the land... and break My covenant... My anger shall be kindled against them... they shall be devoured... many evils and troubles shall come upon them... " (Deut. 31: 16, 17).

In the light of this came Moses' words of encouragement (Deut. 31: 7, 23) "be strong and of a good courage", and after Moses' death came God's promise - "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh. 1: 5) and His threefold encouragement to be strong.

1. He was to have strength against the adversary just as the Holy Spirit encourages leaders today (1 Pet. 5: 8; Eph. 6: 10; Josh. 1: 6).
2. He was to have strength to keep His Word against his own people (Josh. 1: 7). How very similar this is to the many words of Paul to Timothy. There were warnings (1 Tim. 4: 1, 2 Tim. 4: 3) of those who would go after doctrines of demons and not endure the sound doctrine and there were exhortations (1 Tim 1: 3, 2 Tim. 4: 2) to charge men not to teach a different doctrine, and to reprove, rebuke and exhort. There were exhortations to Timothy (1 Tim. 4: 12 and 2 Tim. 1: 13) to be "an ensample" and to "hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me".
3. He was to have strength for life's journey (Josh. 1: 9). Paul, writing in the Spirit, said "I can do all things in Him who

strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13); ^MThe Lord stood by me, and strengthened me" (2 Tim. 4: 17); "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12: 9).

There are four words which mark out Joshua as a future leader of God's people; Joshua "wholly followed the Lord" (Num. 32: 12). God chooses men of whom it might be said that they "hazarded their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15: 26); men who hold not their lives of any account as dear unto themselves, so that they may accomplish their course, and the ministry which they received from the Lord Jesus (Acts 20: 24).

D. C. Kinghorne

COMMENTS

lo (Cowdenbeath **and Dundas**)' It does not appear to be possible to work out Joshua's age accurately. At the time of the numbering at Sinai he was over twenty years old (Num. 14: 29-30). A year prior to this he was a young man (Ex. 33: 11). Shortly afterwards he was sent as a spy to Canaan at which time it is his companion Caleb that is subsequently said to be forty years of age (Josh. 14: 7). Since such an age is not normally thought of as being young and since Caleb appeared to take the lead when he returned (Num. 13: 30) it may be that he was older than Joshua. Thus the latter may have been less than forty years old, perhaps nearer twenty at that time and correspondingly at the time of entering into the land of Joshua may have been around seventy years of age.

2. (**Dundas**): It is impossible to be a priest in practice and not in name. Doing priestly work does not make a man a priest. He must first be "named" by God (e. g. Heb. 5: 10). Notwithstanding Psalm 99: 6, Moses was not a priest.

3. (Liverpool): Joshua and Caleb were the only survivors of the men who were numbered by Moses and Aaron at Sinai (Num. 26: 64, 65). From Num. 14: 29 it would appear that the Levites may have been exempt from this but their number at the end of the forty years¹ wilderness journey was little different from the number counted at the beginning. Since this is also true of the tribes who were under judgement we may conclude that the Levites also suffered. Perhaps the most striking person of all in this respect is Eleazar, the son of Aaron. He took a responsible and prominent part at Sinai and apparently outlived everybody, for his death is recorded in the final verse of the book of Joshua.

I. E. P.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8502

The New Kingdom of Egypt had obtained a hold over the province of Canaan when the Hyksos retreated. By the mid-fourteenth century B. C. it had lost this superiority, and was itself troubled by internal problems and insecure frontiers. God was in control of the whole situation. He beheld the iniquity of the Amorite and of the other inhabitants of Canaan, and remembered His promise to Abraham, the man of faith.

God spoke to Joshua, who was in readiness, and Joshua gave the clear command, relayed to the people by the officers, alerting them to the will of the Lord as it affected them, and to the necessity for immediate preparation. Faith was required of them as in the case of Gideon's three hundred who "took victuals in their hand" (Judges 7: 8. Compare also Ps. 78: 26).

The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh were prepared to pass over armed before their brethren under Joshua's leadership, having regard to the command of the Lord through His servant Moses that none of them should be content to return to their possession until their brethren also had rest in theirs. How glorious a fulfilment became possible for the whole people when those tribes pressed on to spearhead the entry to the land west of Jordan.

The word "only" (1: 17) has a qualifying effect. They urged Joshua to be strong and to walk in the ways of the Lord, for then they would joyfully hearken to him. The Lord was with Joshua, and Joshua was strong in faith to lead the people. Thus the congregation of the Lord did not become as sheep which have no shepherd.

Jericho stood in a fruitful oasis and was an important stronghold and so it is singled out in the phrase "the land, and Jericho" (2: 1). Similar expressions are, "Nineteen men and Asahel" (2 Sam. 2: 30) and, "Many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh" (1 Kings 11: 1). With the removal of this fortress the way would be opened up to occupy the land.

Rahab's appreciation of the mighty acts of God was different in essence from that of the Philistines in Samuel's day who said "Woe unto us!... these are the gods that smote the Egyptians" (1 Sam. 4: 8). Rahab said, "For the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and on earth beneath" (2: 11). The secrets of her own heart were made manifest in declaring that God was among them indeed. It was the desire of Solomon at the dedication of the temple "that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord, He is God" (1 Kings 8: 60). Every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God must be brought low and Rahab realised this.

Rahab had dealt kindly with the spies (2: 12) in faith, for she did not betray them to the messengers of the King of Jericho but rather hid them, although she was not yet obliged to them to do so, and she did these things at extreme personal risk.

She asked the spies not only for a token but for a true token, since in showing mercy to her by informing all Israel, and keeping her alive when they came against Jericho, the spies would thereby be true to her. Moreover she in turn asked them to deal kindly with her father's house without any prior good turn on their part towards the spies. In Micah 7: 20 RVM, "Thou wilt give the truth to Jacob... mercy (*chesed*, kindness) to Abraham", truth implies the keeping by God in the case of Jacob of a promise already made to Abraham, whereas kindness implies the promise as it was first made. If her relatives were not present in Rahab's house and so were not in a position to betray the spies, the spies could not be under any obligation to them and it could be properly described as dealing kindly with her kindred if Israel spared them. Rahab had done the spies kindness, but expected from it a return, whereas they would deal kindly and truly with her, for they expected no reward afterwards.

The spies made their conditions plain to Rahab (and she complied with them later when they came against Jericho) that she would bind in the same window the line of scarlet thread by which they had been lowered. She was to gather her relatives to her into the house. "Took them into his house" (Judges 19: 15) is the same expression as "gather". She must have felt the weight of this responsibility. The spies would hazard their lives to prevent any harm to those in that house, but anyone who left it would bring about his own death. Rahab's faith was realised when all her kindred were brought out by the young men, the spies, before the city was set on fire.

E. A.

PREPARING TO ENTER CANAAN (Josh. 1: 10-2: 24)

From **Ajegnle**: The land of Canaan was of such great significance to the children of Israel that they were not to enter therein lightly. Canaan was the covenant land from God (Gen. 15: 18; Ps. 105: 8-11). It was a land of rest (Ps. 95: 10-11; *cf.* Heb. 4: 6-11).

The task ahead was going to be an energy-sapping one hence the need to be strengthened continually by the constant supply of food. "Prepare you victuals" (v. 11) was not seen only in the light of provision of food. For the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh it meant, in addition, putting their families right for their long absence from home. This kind of fellowship is noteworthy (*cf.* Gal. 6: 2).

In Joshua 1: 14 they were told to be "armed". No doubt their weapons would be necessary for attack and defence. The movement from Egypt to Canaan was primarily for the service of God. Exodus 8: 1 says "Let My people go, that they may serve Me"¹¹. A right condition of life was necessary for service hence the people had to go through the redemption experience. Canaan was the place of service. It is no wonder then that Rahab had to go through a redemption experience by faith before she could be a partaker of the privilege of service (Josh. 2: 1-24; Heb. 11: 31).

Today there is a rest for God's people. This rest is on the basis of a covenant relationship and is conditional. It must be received by faith and obedience. The steps of preparation, we note, are clearly stated in Acts 2: 41, 42 and the means to fight the enemy hosts is by the word of God (Eph. 6: 10-18; 1 Pet. 2: 2).

M. A. Imoukhuede, G. M. Okwena

From **Birkenhead**: God's plan to deliver His people from the slavery of Egypt and bring them to the land of promise was accomplished under the leadership of men fitted for and appointed to the task. Joshua considered the obstacles and made his plans accordingly, neither underestimating the difficulties ahead nor the ability of God to overcome them. It was vital that the heart of the people should be united in purpose; dialogue with the officers (1: 10) and those of the two and a half tribes (1: 12) along with the sending of the two spies (2: 1) were all exercises aimed at achieving this end.

It is clear that it was the Lord's intention for the people of Israel to take possession of their inheritance and the occasions when the people failed to move forward in faith caused God's wrath to be kindled. From these events there is a lesson for the redeemed who together are constituted a people for God today. Acts 20: 32 and other scriptures indicate that there is an inheritance for them to enter into by faith.

The people had three days of waiting and were able to see that besides the necessary arrangements there was an evidence of God's grace. It was during this time Rahab and her household were saved from the judgement which was to fall on Jericho because she received the spies in peace and exercised faith in God (Heb. 11: 31).

The words of Joshua to the two and half tribes were considered alongside the record of Numbers 32 and we noticed that Moses was conscious that if the men stayed east of Jordan then the rest of the people might be discouraged and fail to cross the river (Num. 32: 7, 8) and thus again be condemned to wander in the wilderness (Num. 32: 15). Looking at the train of events it was wondered whether in any way the people of the two and a half tribes were acting out of harmony with God's purposes. Events do show, however, how easily the actions of a minority could have influenced adversely the well-being of the whole and it is salutary for God's people today to be mindful of this.

J. D. Williams, R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: As they prepared to enter Canaan, the camp of Israel were aware of the result of Kadesh-barnea. Faithlessness and discouragement of their fathers had brought wandering and death in the wilderness. The next generation must learn the lesson of faith in God. In faith:

- the people prepared fast at the command of the officers
- Joshua was encouraged to send the spies
- the spies brought back a good report
- the two and one-half tribes pledged loyalty to God and to their brethren
- Rahab and her husband were saved.

We may say that, against this background, it is sad that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh were content, as Numbers 32 shows, to settle in Gilead. It would appear that their eyes settled on a plan of comfort for their families and cattle but, in view of their unity as brethren when Israel inherited the land, they were held guiltless before God (Num. 32: 22).

Faith is so essential a preparation for entering upon a God-given inheritance. This has been demonstrated from the days of Abraham onwards. It is true also today.

The spies were commanded to ^Mview the land, and Jericho". The fact that they did not apparently see much of the land does not demonstrate their disobedience. It indicates that their objective was met in Rahab's house. She said, "Your terror is fallen upon us... all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you". Subsequently, the report

of the spies demonstrated their faith and vision. Their report, related in ch. 2: 24, visualises the battles already fought and won.

Rahab was a woman of faith (see Heb. 11: 31; Jas. 2: 25). Her declaration of faith (2: 9) brought her to the grace of God. Evidently, her faith was such that she was fully prepared to sever the links of her past life and to follow the God of Israel. Some have tried to suppress the immorality of her former life but the Spirit raises it consistently. Furthermore, although it may be said that the moral and ethical standards of the Canaanites were low, Rahab told lies to protect the spies unaware, perhaps, that God would be their protection. Despite these lapses, her faith brought salvation to her house thus magnifying the manifold grace of God.

Many gospel messages have been preached from the scarlet cord in the window. It was her security in the day of judgement as was the blood on the doorposts and lintels in Egypt.

R. I. Shaw

From **Derby**: As we saw from our study last month, Joshua received the commission from the Lord to go over this Jordan. This was the Lord's command to him as the one who was to be the leader of the chosen people. So from Joshua 1: 10 onwards we have his commitment to the task that was entrusted to him. The spiritual lessons are clearly seen. Having received the divine call and command, in faith he went forward. Obedience to His will was manifest, to act accordingly in service and witness. We noted that preparation and possession are closely linked together. Following on from this is the goal to partake of the promise.

There was some discussion on the spiritual meaning and applications of Canaan in regard to our present Christian life and experience. Often it is spoken of as a type of heaven, the beautiful Land of Promise, crossing over Jordan being likened unto death. Another view expressed was that we have the promise of the Rest or Repose, the tranquil enjoyment of the blessing of the Lord. The rest of Heb. 4 in some respects seems to indicate this that it could well be identified with Canaan. The spiritual warfare of Eph. 6: 10-17 could also be seen in the context of our entering in and partaking of the spiritual blessings in ch. 1. We felt that the spiritual significance of Canaan is open wide to interpretation and that it would be unwise to limit or relate it to any particular line of thought [Comment 5],

The inheritance of the Land is confirmed in fulfilment of the promise of God.

- God will permit them to settle in the land (v. 13);
- Moses gave them this land (v. 14);
- they are to share in the conquest (v. 15). They rallied behind their leader.
- "all that thou hast commanded we will do" (v. 16). The people gave strong affirmation of confidence in Joshua.
- The Lord their God will be with them (v. 17). There is a final word of encouragement (v. 18), "only be strong and of a good courage".

On Joshua's part the qualities of true leadership were not lacking. On the part of the people was willingness to obey the call and go forward.

The story of Rahab and the two spies leaves many questions unanswered. Why did the spies go to Rahab's house? Was this part of a pre-arranged plan? Why was Rahab chosen as the one who would play such a vital role in their escape? [Comment 1] This we do know, the Lord was working with and for His people. In His sovereign power and wisdom He takes up individuals and nations to fulfil His purposes. Of Rahab's character there can be no doubt. She is described here and in the two references to her in the New Testament as a harlot. Prostitution associated with idol temple worship was a prominent feature among many of the people of Canaan at that time. We have no indication as to whether Rahab might have been involved in this practice. Rahab having heard of the Lord's deliverance of His people, recognised His power and might as they went forward to possess the Land. Her witness to this was bold and unwavering, "the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and on the earth beneath" (Josh. 2: 11).

The references to Rahab in the New Testament make an interesting and fruitful study. Her name appears among the list of men and women of faith (Heb. 11: 31). Her faith is commended, for it was with peace that she received the spies, and she dealt with them kindly. Such faith brings its own rewards. Her faith translated into action is the message of James 2: 25. She is linked alongside Abraham, showing evidence of the outworking of faith in their lives, being justified by works; for without works faith is barren. In the genealogy of the Lord her name appears (Mat. 1: 5). She was chosen by God to be a blessing and have a place among the royal lineage [Comment 2].

A. G. Willis, G. W. Conway

From Kingston, Jamaica: The promises made to Israel were toward an earthly inheritance rather than a spiritual one, unlike those made to believers today. Israel was to receive rest in the Land (Canaan); this is to be compared with the rest we have in Christ and in view of our seeking things above..., and not of the earth (Col. 3: 1) [See Comment 5 and Question 1].

In three days "ye shall pass over this Jordan"; in 3 days the Lord's death, burial and resurrection took place. As a result of this we have come into the fulness of salvation. The preparation of food-stuff speaks of Christ in that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mat. 4: 4). Jordan for us is the baptism of Rom. 6, which plants us not only with the likeness of His death but also the likeness of His resurrection (Rom. 6: 5) [Comment 3].

Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had earned their rest by defeating two kings (Deut. 3: 1-22) [Comment 4], They were supposed to go before their brethren. We also as believers in the sphere of God's house should help the weaker ones who are overcome, but note they should take heed to themselves in doing so (Gal. 6: 1). In this connection we also note that Joshua said they should pass before their brethren (v. 14, cf. Eph. 6: 10).

Comparing the statements about the people with those about the previous generation in the wilderness it is worthwhile noticing, that while the previous generation sought to express their obedience, this was based upon fear (Ex. 20: 18, 19; 24: 1-3). Here, however, in Joshua they speak in faith asking only that God be with him as with Moses [Comment 13].

Rahab looked for over 40 years and had taken note of the deliverance of Israel and in particular Jehovah being with them. Having this faith, she now showed forth her works (Josh. 2: 15) by "putting-up" the spies. From them she now desired a "true token", which speaks to us of our security (eternal) and also we may see as a pledge for our redemption, which unlike her we never earned (John 14: 17; Eph. 1: 14).

The token to her was the scarlet line at the window and would signify in much the same way the token of Christ's blood which has been presented to the Father on our behalf. The promise was that all her family would be spared, so long as . . . (2: 13-18). We remember the word of Paul in Acts 16: 31 "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house". Do not Rahab and her house speak somewhat of this? [Comment 14].

Michael Morris

From **Liverpool: Good Organisation and Faith.** Sometimes we are apt to think of good organisation and trust in God as mutually contradictory. That this is not so is clearly shown by Joshua as he and the people prepared to enter Canaan. With the utmost confidence in God's ability to give them victory Joshua put the people on standby, sent out reconnaissance spies and made sure the supplies were ready. In our

spiritual battles today **we** should do **the same** proving **that we** win spiritual victory not in our own **strength but as we** respond in faith **and** action to our **great** Commander.

The Inheritance. **Canaan** is not a picture to **us** of **heaven** [Comment 5]. We do not **have** to fight our way into heaven, not strive to possess it nor is it conditional upon our obedience. **Rather** **Canaan was the** place of God's **rest**, chosen **by** God as **the** earthly inheritance of His people. It **depends** upon all **three** - battling, striving **and** obedience, **and** is a picture to **us** of **the** kingdom of God today, finding expression among **the** people of God in **the churches** of God according to **the New Testament** pattern. While it is **true that** every believer **has an** inheritance in heaven (1 Pet. 1: 4) **Paul speaks** of "an inheritance among all those who **are sanctified**" (Acts 20: 32 NIV) indicating something to **be** possessed in this life. We **understand that** it, too, is collective **and** not open to individual possession like eternal salvation.

We noted another parallel in **that the** generation **that was** to enter **Canaan was** almost **all** uncircumcized, mostly having **been** born **after** the Exodus, **and** unbaptized in picture [Comment 3]. So **there had** to **be** circumcision and another baptism in **the** Jordan this time before the land could **be** entered.

God's Rest. Joshua promised **that** along with **the** land God **was** giving **the** people rest. God's **rest** is complete satisfaction with **the** situation **and** is the point at which **He** commands no **further** advance. They **were** to possess **Canaan** then settle in it **and** build God a dwelling **place there** so that **He** could dwell with them. So **the** house is **seen to be** essential to God's **rest**.

Unity. The two and a half tribes already settled in **an** inheritance east of **the** Jordan willingly went to campaign with **the rest** of **the** people. There **must be** no division in fulfilling God's purposes. It is essential **that** we all work together!

"By Faith Rahab the harlot_"(Heb. 11: 31). All **the** people of **the** land **heard** about **the** events concerning **the** Israelites. Some dismissed them, some panicked, **but Rahab** threw **herself** on God's **mercy** revealing **her** faith. **Her** knowledge would necessarily **be** extremely limited but **she** believed **that** God would deliver **the** city **and acted** accordingly. **It was** this faith that **saved her**. We could neither approve nor condemn **her** action in telling lies. Firstly **she** cannot **be judged by** present day Christian **standards** (**she was a** heathen prostitute **after all!**), **and** secondly there could **be** circumstances today in which **such** an untruth would **be** overlooked in similar circumstances [Comment 6]. However, **truth** is a requirement for a Christian in a **church** of God today.

D. J. Webster

From **Manchester**: The people were commanded by the Lord to go in and take possession of the land of Canaan (Josh. 1: 11). The entering of Canaan is an illustration of our dying to the old nature and coming into the new. It can also be considered as our coming into God's rest, i. e. salvation through the blood of Jesus. This is a source of great encouragement and comfort to us, as we are in God's dwelling and no one can harm us (John 10: 28; 30). As God's people had to cross the Jordan and take possession of the Promised Land, so we too have to take our inheritance of eternal life (1 Pet. 1: 3-4). We should have the same conviction of heart to go where God calls us and do what God tells us. As the hymn writer expresses it, "Where He may lead me, I will go" [Comments 5, 7].

The Lord chose Joshua to fulfil His purposes regarding the people of Israel. The Lord showed great wisdom in choosing Joshua as a leader, because in sending out the spies, Joshua displayed consideration for the people. He did not doubt God's word. He knew what the report of the spies would be and his reason for sending out the spies was purely to reassure the people, who were probably unsettled at the prospect of what lay before them.

Rahab showed great faith by her actions. Firstly she did so by accepting the two spies, realising that they were from the Israelites and that God was with their people; and they would ultimately take possession of Jericho. Secondly, she trusted the spies and showed her faith in their promise by tying the scarlet cord in her window (Jas. 2: 25).

This faith worked both ways, because the spies also had to put their trust in Rahab. As a result of Rahab's faith, she and her household were saved from Jericho's destruction [Comment 14]. Similarly, we have to put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to save us from the condemnation we deserve.

A. Gutteridge, Craig Jones

From Nottingham: In the tremendous task that lay before Joshua we see he needed the help of others in the administration of the operation (1: 10) so he called upon officers who seem to have been administrators rather than military commanders. These men are necessary in the work of God to enable it to be done with the greatest efficiency to His glory. Of course, others need to be in subjection to and work with them.

Joshua stated that in three days they would pass over Jordan to go in and possess the land. This indicates the faith of Joshua in God's promises and purposes because it was sometime after that when the spies returned (2: 22). Joshua was not dependent on the spies, he was

going forward irrespective of what they found or when they returned. He was going to take possession of that land which had been given them and belonged to them (Gen. 15: 18; Deut. 34: 4). In our day there should be no need for hesitancy on the part of believers when the truth of God is revealed to them. They should be obedient and thus honour God.

The thought of unity is contained in chapter 1 verses 12-18. There was a job to be done and they were united in the doing of it; the words of 1: 16 show how important this unity was even though it involved self-denial and must be done without murmuring. They said, "All that thou hast commanded us we will do, and withersoever thou sendest us we will go^{fi} (Josh. 1: 16). Many believers see the crossing of Jordan as a type of the believer entering into his heavenly rest after his pilgrimage. This is a valid view, but the fightings in the land show that the teaching in Israel taking possession of the land extends beyond this type. The land was their heritage and they were not only to possess it but to value it and to enter into the spiritual blessings God had for them in the place of rest (*cf.* Heb. 4: 8, 9).

In the case of Rahab, whatever her sin, we see God's great grace to one who came in faith with a repentant heart. Indeed, her faith is acknowledged in Heb. 11 but how much more acceptable and useful it is when that faith produces works as it did in her case (*cf.* Jas. 2: 25). It would appear that Rahab had not received any direct revelation or knowledge of Israel or Israel's God but she had come to know Him by hearing of His wondrous doings (2: 9-11). The great onus is put on us as believers that the things we do and say will be a testimony to others and thus draw them to the Lord. The events about which Rahab had heard created in her a greater assurance than is the case of many of the Israelites perhaps because of their familiarity with the events. Because of what she had learned Rahab had every confidence in God. She realised men would be caused to tremble before Him, learning that He was the Lord God of heaven and earth. Therefore, what was true of Rahab should be so with us, that we should fear no ill.

But Rahab, even though her family appears to have shown little concern, was anxious about them and sought protection for them. This should characterize us as believers and we should have love and concern, not only for blood relations but for the whole world. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy" (Mat. 5: 7).

Kevin Hickling

From Paisley: Joshua seemed to be using the simple equation of "Faith=Power" in his leadership of the children of Israel. To get to the stage we have outlined in this month's scriptures, rivers had been

dried up, armies scattered and much preparation had been made to enter in and possess the land (v. 11). Feelings of human inadequacy seem to have disappeared. God was in it and His promise was being taken at face value. The foot was being put down (Josh. 1: 3) in an exercise of faith!

The point arose again from verse 11 of chapter 1 as to whether there was any significance in the ^Mthree days^M relative to Jonah in the great fish and the Son of Man in the belly of the earth. It was contended that the children of Israel were rising up to walk into a new life. (Alternative views on this point would be appreciated) [Comment 8].

In verse 12 and thereafter we have the two and a half tribes who go for "an excursion" into the Land of Promise but expect the grass to be greener in their own land before they even cross Jordan. How typical this is of some who take a brief tour into the Christian experience but are really just passing through with no thought of service for the Master, satisfied with what their eyes have seen knowing His promises of the believer's reward [Comment 9].

We considered the exercise of true faith made by Rahab on the basis of what she knew quite amazing. Her knowledge seems to be totally summed up in verse 9 of chapter 2. This was accounted unto her for righteousness and she is accordingly mentioned in the New Testament because of her faith. The lesson to us here is that it is not how much we know that is important but how tightly we hold what we really believe. We were also reminded quite forcibly Just how wide God's mercy does extend, excluding none and offering us promised joys in heaven through the exercising of simple faith.

Fergus J. Reilly

From Surulere: The land of Canaan is significant to us as a possession and as a place of rest for God's people. The preparations made were done with due consideration for these features about the land. The seven nations which occupied the land were to be destroyed. Joshua the son of Nun was fitted for this purpose (Josh. 1: 6). We noted the failure which characterized the generation of Israel who left Egypt was because of their unbelief and disobedience; and again that the failure to enjoy the rest of God on the part of those who entered the land, was through not continuing in the things which constituted God's rest for them.

The things of God which constituted rest for His people were prepared during Israel's wilderness journeys; for example, God's Covenant with Israel, the giving of the Law, the building of God's dwelling among His people, the institution of the Aaronic priesthood and the Levitical service. Preceding all these was the joy of their redemption from

cruel bondage in the land of Egypt. By these things Israel had good tidings preached to them regarding the rest in view for them in a land which God covenanted to give to Abraham and to his seed.

As God's New Testament people we have no earthly land of possession answerable to Israel's Canaan, for our citizenship is in heaven. For our present experience, however, "there remaineth... a sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4: 9). The steps set out for every one of us to take in entering the place of rest for God's people and continuing therein are clearly stated (e. g. Acts 2: 41, 42; Heb. 3: 6).

Israel's tribes stood in fellowship to fight their enemies until all the tribes should have entered into their possessions. We noted that the weapons of their warfare were not specified. The fighting men were to be armed so as to be ready and prepared for a long battle. The weapons of our warfare are identified as mighty through God (2 Cor. 10: 4-6), and are to be taken up in their completeness (Eph. 6: 13, 10-18). In anticipation of prolonged battle, God has provided for His people to-day weapons both for attack on the enemies and for defence of their spiritual heritage.

E. S. Okwong, E. Uno

From Sydney, Australia: The desert wanderings were not in the purpose of God for the children of Israel, but because of disobedience they were brought upon them. It is wrong to suppose (as many believers do) that "entering Canaan" is a type of entering heaven only. That would mean that those in the house of God today are still in the wilderness. The promise has been left for us to enter into His rest, for we which have believed (the good tidings of the kingdom of God) do enter into that rest (Heb. 4: 3) [Comment 5].

Joshua's 40 years' wait had not been wasted. He had used those years as years of opportunity in service and training in the house of God. He was God's choice to lead Israel into Canaan. God told Moses "He shall cause Israel to inherit it" and had asked him to encourage Joshua (Deut. 1: 38). Now as leader, Joshua showed great courage and purpose of heart, reflecting the training he had had. He revealed himself as a man of decision and one whose faith and hope lay in a holy God who was "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think". He had a living faith, and his words show the reality of this faith. In Josh. 1: 10, 11 the instructions were given while they were still on the eastern side of Jordan - but see how Joshua was thinking in verse 15! At the end of this verse he speaks of "the land... beyond Jordan toward the sunrising". He was literally standing in that land (east of Jordan) but in his faith and hope he speaks as though he was already in the land (west of Jordan - Canaan) [Comment 10].

Although there was no doubt expressed about the validity of the claim of the 2½ tribes east of Jordan, yet there seems to be a commendation for their attitude and willingness in preparing, not only to fight with the others, but to go in before them. In Num. 32: 16 and the following verses this is seen. It appeared to be in faith that the fighting men left their families and possessions and went across Jordan. Note "Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God^M (Josh. 22: 3). One point was made that at the outset there were 124, 350 fighting men from these 2½ tribes but at the end of the 40 years in the wilderness there were only 40,000. This shows how destructive in the people was unbelief and its consequence [Comment 111].

The two spies were sent out secretly, but it appears that it was only secret to the children of Israel (and perhaps because of the experience that Joshua had had 40 years earlier) [Comment 12]. The events that unfold indicate that it was known to those in Jericho - they had been sent as messengers (Josh. 6: 25) and had a message to deliver. This message was rejected by all except Rahab and her family. ^MBy faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that were disobedient^I (Heb. 11: 31) [Comment 15],

The impact on the world, of the events surrounding God's bringing out the children of Israel from Egypt, was dramatic. Even 40 years after these events the terror was still in the hearts of the inhabitants of the land. They had been dispirited for 40 years and were already losers in their hearts although after this lapse of time the initial Israeli advantage was lost. That was because of disobedience by the children of Israel.

"Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fail after the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4: 11).

D. C. Kinghorne

COMMENTS

1. **(Derby):** An old Hebrew commentary deduces from the word used in the Targum to explain "harlot" that Rahab's house in the city wall was a sort of inn called *pandocheion* in Greek (Luke 10: 34) which by derivation means "receiving all", and it would be an ideal place to acquire information. Nevertheless God had His own sovereign purpose regarding Rahab.

2. **(Derby):** If the Rahab mentioned in Mat. 1: 5 is the same as Rahab the harlot, she was all the more a marvel of the grace of God.

3. **(Kingston, Liverpool):** "The crossing of the Jordan does not speak typically of baptism. Israel were sentenced to death, that is the

numbered men of the twelve tribes, and their children who bore their fathers¹ whoredoms ended their life in the wilderness of death (of which Jordan's flood waters speak)₀ They rose from the Jordan to enter upon a life of victory. Their previous life had been one of frustration through the disobedience of their fathers. Such was our life prior to being saved... But now through Christ (our Ark) we enter our inheritance to go from victory to victory against our foes who are as yet entrenched in heavenly places" (BS. 1958 p. 188) See Question 1.

4. (Kingston): In Deut. 3: 1-22 Moses uses the word "we" with regard to the conquest of the lands of Sihon and Og.

5. (Liverpool, Sydney): Some contributors (see Derby, Nottingham) record that in one aspect the arrival in the land of Promise is often regarded as a type of the believer entering his heavenly rest after passing through the wilderness of this life. This interpretation is implicit in many of our hymns, e. g. "And soon we'll reach our heavenly rest and lay our burdens down", where the hymn has been tracing the wilderness journey. Without doubt "rest" as viewed in Hebrews chaps. 3 and 4 is associated with God's rest in His house, "For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken afterward of another day" (Heb. 4: 8). Hardness of heart and disobedience hindered them from entering fully into God's rest. Confining our thoughts, however, to the Jordan experience as the end of the wilderness journey, then the later experience is of the release from the conditions imposed by the wilderness. In a similar sense we look forward to the ultimate enjoyment of our eternal inheritance with Christ. See Question 1.

6. (Liverpool): Despite the lie God was merciful to Rahab, as He was merciful to us notwithstanding all our sin. E. A.

Lies have been without excuse since the beginning (John 8: 44). Rahab's case is all the sadder since it happened after her demonstration of faith. As friends in Liverpool say, she was in a very difficult situation. Perhaps it was a case of "old habits die hard" but the book of Joshua is very much about the destruction of the believer's old ways of life. I. E. P.

7. (Manchester): The inheritance "reserved in heaven" (1 Pet. 1: 4) comes to us through the new birth, and is being kept for us who are saved until our arrival in heaven. On the other hand diligence on our own part is required if we are to enter into and rest in the blessings of faith and to dispossess and cast down imaginations and every high thing exalted against the knowledge of God (Heb. 4: 11; 2 Cor.. 10: 5).

8. (Paisley): Within three days (1: 11) Israel would pass over Jordan. The people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month (4: 19), and

on the fourteenth day of the month they kept the Passover (5: 10). It is only intended as a suggestion that one might explore the events surrounding the verse ^MJesus therefore six days before the Passover came to Bethany "(John 12: 1). Shortly before the Lord's arrival at Bethany, the conversion of Zacchaeus took place at Jericho, for "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19: 1-10), calling men "out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2: 9). It must have been around then that He sent the two disciples, when He drew nigh unto Bethphage and Bethany at the mount of Olives (Luke 19: 29), thus preparing for His entry into Jerusalem.

9. **(Paisley):** The two and a half tribes kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord and did not leave their brethren those "many days". Having given them the further charge to serve the Lord with all their heart and with all their soul, Joshua blessed them and sent them away, saying "Get you unto your tents, unto the land of your possession" (Josh. 22: 1-6). Three of the cities of refuge were to be in their land, and were to be occupied by Levites (Num. 35: 6, 14). Nevertheless the danger that those two and a half tribes might fall short in their commitment to serve the Lord was important enough to elicit the warning from Joshua.

10. **(Sydney):** We are indebted to our Sydney contributors for putting the matter into true perspective. This was not a case of hindsight on the part of a later writer reconstructing the scene without removing an inconsistency. The expression "beyond Jordan towards the sunrising" suggests that Joshua was already thinking of things from the view point of the warriors of the two and a half tribes returning in victory from the west bank, and this was indeed faith. Compare Num. 32: 32 with Josh. 1: 15 and Num. 35: 14 with Deut. 4: 41, 47.

11. **(Sydney):** Those of Israel from 20 years old and upwards able to go forth to war were numbered by Moses and Eleazar in the plains of Moab after the plague. The total for Reuben, Gad and Manasseh comes to 136,930 (Num. 26: 7, 18, 34). If forty thousand were levied to form the vanguard we might compare, for example, the twelve thousand who were "delivered" out of the thousands of Israel to fight against Midian (Num. 31: 5). While no explicit statement is made in Josh. 4: 13 about the readiness of the remainder, the word "about" suggests an estimated number given in faithfulness to the true facts of those who actually mustered.

E. A.

12. **(Sydney):** If the people had known the spies were going out, they would possibly have been afraid, or have been prematurely elated. The report must have been encouraging to Joshua, although he proceeded by faith. Similarly Gideon, who was charged by the Lord to save Israel from the hand of Midian, was encouraged when he and his servant Purah visited the Midianite camp!

13. **(Kingston):** The difference between the fear that characterized the earlier generation and the faith that characterized the one that entered the land is a vital one. We need, however, to distinguish between the fear of God (Prov. 1: 7) and the fear of man (Prov. 29: 25). The fear of God was

upon the people at Sinai as it should be upon the people of God today (Heb. 12: 28). The fear of man was well shown at Kadesh (Num. 14: 1-3).

14. (Kingston and **Manchester**): Heb. 11: 31; Rahab received the spies as messengers and did not perish. Her faith resulted in the saving of her soul and, later actions, her life. We are left to infer that her father's house exercised a similar faith in believing the message from Rahab. Certainly their lives were saved at the fall of Jericho. / *E. P.*

15. (Sydney): It is apparent from chap. 2 that the men had no public message to deliver to Jericho. The word "messenger" cannot be taken in its usual sense here; they were more like reporters. *P. L. H.*

QUESTION AND ANSWER

1. From Liverpool: Does the believer's spiritual inheritance today consist only in the collective sense or is there an individual application?

We assume that, in the context of this year's study subject, the question is concerned with the New Testament application of the teaching of the book of Joshua in respect of Israel's possession of the land.

Firstly but not necessarily most importantly, Canaan speaks of the believer's inheritance that is reserved in heaven and which he will one day possess (1 Pet. 1: 4). For example, it was a land "flowing with milk and honey" where provision for life's sustenance came down from God unlike Egypt where life depended on man's efforts in channelling the Nile. Secondly, Canaan had to be fought over and its blessing forcibly possessed. As such it is a picture of the believer's daily life in the heavenlies where he may enter into spiritual blessings and wage spiritual warfare (Eph. 1: 3, 6: 12). To the extent that this is an inheritance, though it does not appear to be expressly so called in the New Testament, events in the book of Joshua have their application to all believers. Thirdly, and this is the application which is most fully and strenuously applied in the New Testament, the inheritance that was to be obtained by Joshua and his fellows is that set out in Heb. 3 and 4. There we are told that the entry of the *numbered* people into the land was their entry into the rest (Gk. *katapausi*) of God. That is to say, it speaks of the blessings that today are associated with the house of God, the Place where God has rested down and caused His Name to be put. As such the inheritance so depicted is exclusive to the people of God. That is to say, to those believers who are numbered with or *added* to churches of God. As in the days of Joshua, however, it is an inheritance that must be entered into continually and one which, alas the people of God have been prone not to enter by faith and so lose the blessing. Thus it is an inheritance which is both collective and individual because each one numbered with the people must exercise faith and so doing will find himself "united by faith with them that believe" (Heb. 4: 2). *I. E. P*

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8503

The **passage under** consideration this month contains the account of Israel's crossing of the Jordan, **when** they finally entered the Promised Land **after** forty years¹ **wandering in** the wilderness. It directly shows the power **and** the **grace** of God. The power of God, working for **His** people, **is** shown **in the** cutting off of the flow of the **river Jordan when** the priests **carrying** the **ark** of the covenant stepped into the water's **edge**. The fact that other **instances** of this **are** documented does not **diminish its** miraculous nature: it shows that God controlled the physical creation **in** consonance with His spiritual purposes, to produce **the** event at the exact **time** at which it was **required**. **The grace** of God **is seen in His** continued faithfulness towards those who **had** disobeyed **His** covenant, so that **after the** period of forty years **in** the wilderness **which He** imposed upon them, **He was** willing to **lead** them into the Land, **and** command them to take **again** the **sign** of the covenant with **Abraham**, circumcision.

These are some of the **direct** lessons **which can be learned** from **the passage**, but **it is** also **used in** illustration of other spiritual **truths**. Jordan **is** taken **by many** contributors to speak of **death**, either the death of the individual believer, through **which he** enters into the possession of **his** eternal inheritance, or the death of Christ **and** our identification with **Him in** baptism. **Perhaps in** the context of the book of Joshua the collective aspect of teaching **is** the most important; the people **were** taking possession of a land **which had to be** fought for, **as** some contributors point out. **Three** interpretations **are** mentioned **in the answer** to a question **in issue 8502**. However, **it should be borne in mind that the** New Testament does not anywhere **refer** to Jordan **as a type** of death, **and** although **it may be quite** properly used **as an** illustration, **the** parallel **cannot be expected to be exact in every respect**. For instance, **the fighting men** only of some tribes passed over Jordan, leaving **behind their dependents**, **and they** returned **when the fighting had finished**. They were doing no wrong **in this**, but **it would be hard to find** a parallel

today. Similarly, the stones set up in Gilgal had a purpose as a memorial, but an attempt to find an exact spiritual counterpart must be speculative. We can only be certain in these matters when we have a New Testament reference to guide us.

P. L. H.

CROSSING JORDAN AND EVENTS AT GILGAL (Josh. 3: 1-5: 12)

From Birkenhead: God's chosen people are now about to enter the Promised Land which Moses had seen from the top of Mount Pisgah. Moses and men of like faith had lived looking towards this time, and on more than one occasion he was faced with a people whose lack of faith caused them to question the Lord's word.

This stands as a warning to God's people today, who also have received the promise of God's rest into which they should enter. This matter is dealt with in Heb. 3 and 4. We suggest that in both the above cases entry into a present inheritance is primarily in view. As the children of Israel had conflict as they entered into their inheritance so the entry of God's people today is not without conflict.

Israel were to observe the progress of the Ark of the covenant and take this as a signal for them to move (Josh. 3: 3). We today need to keep in touch with God, and wait for Him to lead us. The people were also to keep a distance between themselves and the **Ark** (Josh. 3: 4) indicative of a reverential fear of God. We too need a reverence for our God. The unchanging God looks for a consecrated people.

It is important that God's dealings with His people are declared from generation to generation. At various stages in the history of God's people events took place to aid this process. We are told that the removal of the stones from Jordan's bed was to serve this purpose (Josh. 4: 6) besides being a constant reminder to those who had passed over Jordan. The evidence of God's mighty hand in working for His people led to them **being** exalted in the eyes of the nations (Josh. 4: 23, 24).

Before the priests came up out of the Jordan twelve stones were set on the river bed as a message that there were incidents which were to be buried, hidden for ever.

There **are** numerous events recorded as taking **place** at **Gilgal**. Firstly, the stones removed from the **river bed** were set **up** there (Josh. 4: 20). Secondly, the people who **were in** covenant relationship with God, who **came** out of Egypt, **were circumcised**. Those who now comprised the people were of a **new generation** and there was a **need** for them to **be circumcised**. This was done **and the Lord declared** that the re-proach of Egypt was rolled **away** (Josh. 5: 9). God's people today also **need** to recognise that there is a **past** from which they have severed all connection. **Thirdly**, when the people **had been circumcised** it was **again** possible for them to **keep the passover** and this was done on the **plains** of Jericho (Josh. 5: 10). Today it is those who **are in a right** spiritual condition **and the right** Place - Eds] who **are** called on to remember **the** Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11: 28) who is elsewhere called our Passover (1 Cor. 5: 7).

God's ways **are perfect** and **He** will **always** meet every need. It is therefore to **be expected** that as soon as the people were able to **eat** of the corn of the land then the **manna** which had served as their **daily bread** during all their journeys would no longer **be necessary**, and on the next day it **duly** ceased.

R. D. Williams, A. Hyland

From Cowdenbeath: The fact that two whole **chapters** of this book **are** devoted to the crossing of Jordan **emphasizes** that there **are** important lessons to **be learned**. It is **interesting in itself** to identify the contrasts and similarities that **exist** between **this** crossing and the crossing of the **Red Sea**. There **are different** lessons to **be learned in each case** but our **paper must not digress**. Jordan is the **river** of death. Its flow to the **Dead Sea** **emphasizes this** fact. At the time of the crossing it was **impassable** and in flood. This was the **spring** of the year; we **take** it to be at the time of the barley and flax harvests by a comparison of 3: 15, 4: 19 and Ex. 9: 31.

In identifying spiritual truths from the passage we believe that the key is the **Ark** of the Covenant. It is mentioned **sixteen times** and alluded to additionally at least **five** times. **Israel had not** "passed this way heretofore", a statement which **suggests** that those who were to cross over were **treading new ground**, but which, we believe, might also mean that, for the first time they were to proceed as the **Ark** went before them rather than the pillar of cloud. The Hebrew word for "way" we believe is translated a number of times "manner" in the Old Testament (eg. Gen.

19: 31). At any rate the Ark was preeminent. It was to be visible to the entire host of Israel. It was essential that they observe what was to happen to it as God began to work miraculously in bringing them into the land of promise. Neither flood nor foe would prevent it. He is "the Lord of all the earth" (Josh. 3: 11, 13).

Joshua was a man of commitment. We noted that the words written concerning him (3:1), "Joshua rose up early in the morning" are repeated in chs. 6, 7 & 8. He was a man of faith and vision. Jordan was almost incidental to what he saw as the accomplishment of the divine purpose as mentioned In ch. 3: 10, It was a test of faith for the priests as they stood with the Ark against the great mass of water in the midst of Jordan "until everything was finished". The waters from the north fled back to Adam, a significant name in the circumstances, and it seems that the clear way across was extremely broad. We understand that "Jor" means "a spreading" and "Dan" means "judging". We therefore believe that the thought of judgement is included in the thought of death in relation to Jordan. We conclude, therefore, that the crossing of Jordan is a picture of the death of Christ, our Sin-bearer and of His resurrection triumph by which way we have been brought into eternal union with Christ and there is opened up to us the inheritance recorded in Acts 20: 32.

The stones from Jordan were large stones. Men carried them on their shoulders. A monument was erected in Canaan as a sign that Israel's crossing owed nothing to their own strength but to the power of God. They stood on Resurrection ground¹ but twelve stones lay covered in Jordan as a testimony to the 'death' which made it possible.

The next thing enjoined upon Israel at Gilgal was circumcision. This was a pre-requisite to the first passover (Ex. 12: 48, 49). Circumcision had apparently lapsed, perhaps since Israel had forfeited the right to bear the mark of covenant relationship with God following Kadesh-barnea. It was certainly a strange omission, the ceremony now to be restored to a new generation of those who would be bound by a special obligation to obey the voice of God. The timing of the ceremony was in itself a mark of faith because the men were unfit to fight despite the proximity of the enemy (cf. Gen. 34: 25).

Circumcision represents the mortification of the flesh. In our day we need to exercise such faith in Christ that we may realise the efficiency of His death and resurrection in our hearts and lives. In this way we may enter upon and possess our spiritual inheritance.

R. I. Shaw

From **Derby:** The 'new' God's people, those born in the wilderness, camped briefly on the banks of Jordan. The old life, of roaming the wasteland, of being fed by God, of living in tents was to end, the new life God desired for their fathers was about to start.

Jordan was a barrier to their new life, unassailable by them but no problem to God, provided that they followed God's instructions. They must sanctify themselves; cleanse themselves and consciously separate themselves from their old life to God.

The ark and the priests went first, the people followed, and in crossing this barrier God demonstrated to His people His confidence in His chosen earthly leader Joshua. To the watching Gentiles He showed that He alone was God, the God of autumn floods and God of His people.

When the Ark stopped on the river-bed only God's people saw it as they passed. They knew its presence was their guarantee of safety and that with their God they would go forward to victory.

Only the people saw the twelve stones taken from the river-bed for when the altar was built it must testify to their unity with each other and their confidence in God [Comment 1], Twelve stones were taken from the bank by Joshua, seen by the people and piled out of sight on the river bed where the Ark and the priests stood.

One memorial was to hidden work by God with His people, the other to be set up in the right place and the right time for all to see and question, spoke of the way God had helped them to victory. God's timing was faultless; from the day they set foot on the Promised Land there was exactly the right length of time to fulfil the Law and keep the passover, the yearly feast which had lain neglected for forty years. The males would still be sore from the physical act of circumcision also neglected for 40 years. This was a time of total new surrender to their God; of restoring His Word among them, showing He only was their God, demonstrating to the Gentiles the power of their God and their determination to follow Him and His instructions.

The old life was over and God stopped "spoonfeeding"¹¹ them with manna, now they must find and eat the growing, living food from the Promised Land.

Stan Wymer, G. W. Conway

From Ibadan: Joshua, as a man of action, here displayed a military prowess in getting the people of God prepared to enter the Promised Land, Canaan. He assumed the posts of the spiritual head of the nation of Israel and Commander-in-Chief of the nation's armed forces. He summoned the army chiefs and gave them the necessary instructions, to pass through the hosts, to command the people, to prepare food for the journey and to make all the mighty men of valour realise that they were to attack while others were to defend, according to Mosaic command.

God wishes us to learn various lessons from these as believers or Israel of the New Testament. Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1: 22, 4: 15, 5: 23, Col. 1: 18, 2: 10) [Comment 7]. Our 'land of promise*' is not in this world and we need a leader to lead us to the 'Promised Land'. He must be a mighty man, a man of action, ready to lead the battle. All these qualities and even more are in Christ. Christ is "Mighty God" (Isa. 9: 6) Christ is a ^f'Man of Action': "Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts 1: 1). Christ has led the battle and has destroyed the Devil through His death (Heb. 2: 14). Thus a leader to the land of Canaan has been found in the New Testament. Nobody can reach the ^t'Land^f', except through His "I am the Way" (John 14: 6). Joshua had officers monitoring the affairs of the host of Israel. So also Christ has elders over His people (Acts 14: 23).

Joshua charged the officers to pass through the host, command the people to prepare food for the journey, and the strong to help the weak in the battle. This means that all saints should at the admonition of the elders be ready to search the Scriptures (John 5: 39) as commanded by the Lord in order to feed themselves on the word of God which is the spiritual food needed for our spiritual warfare.

Leaders should always be with the people of God in all their gatherings, and they should instruct the saints in the things of God. Spiritual food should be prepared for the journey so that the saints may grow and live by the strength of the food (1 Pet. 2: 2, John 21: 15-17, Acts 20: 28).

All these mighty men of valour working with Joshua were ready to comply with the commandments and to launch an attack to capture the Promised Land. People of God should comply with the rules and regulations of the church and obey the elders (Heb. 13: 7, 1 Thes. 5: 12, 13).

What **gave** the host of Israel the incentive to fight **was** God's promise to them that they would **have a** land of their own possession. The **New Testament saints*** incentive **is greater** than this. Their faith **in Christ is a driving** force. They believe **in** the heavenly mansions **prepared by** Christ (John 14: 1-3) [Comment 7]. With faith they continue the battle to **have a place in** the heavenly country (**Heb. 11: 13-16**).

The host of Israel **were** commanded to get themselves **armed**, likewise **the** New Testament saints must **be armed** for the fight (Eph. 6: 11-17, Jas. 4: 7).

M. O. Ajagbe, J. O. Oyekunle

From Kingston, **Jamaica**: The **Ark of the Covenant** (Ex. 25: 10-22) was God's **presence in the** midst of the people of Israel. Its importance **in** testimony **speaks** of the **uniqueness** of the Lord **Jesus Christ and His** walk **and** our walking **in His** footsteps (Josh. 3: 1-4) [Comment 8 J.

Three **days** preparation **was necessary** as the officers **went** through for **it** spoke of the preparation **in** crossing the Jordan (Josh. 1: 10-11). This promise **was made** to the children of Israel, **and** although **the** generation that **came** out of **Egypt died**, **their children** would **have inherited** **this** promise. Likewise today, the testimony still flows despite our **suffering**; God's promise **is sure**.

Two thousand cubits **were to be spaced between** the people **and the Ark**, **which is** about **3,000** feet. la testimony the people **were to be** disciplined **in death**, burial **and** resurrection **because** God **is** holy.

The people **were** to tell the story of **the** stones to their children: **these** two sets of stones **speak** firstly of the administration of the position of Eternal Life (4: 9) **and** the second set **speaks** of the progressive administration of Eternal Life (4: 20) [Comment 2]. Note that the second **set** would **be set up in** Gilgal (rolling **away** or removal of **flesh**).

Jordan **is a type** of baptism [Comment 9] **in that** it **identifies us with** a **new** beginning, that **as a** promise **began in** Egypt but **became a** reality **at** Jordan **with** the circumcision of the **new** generation. **As a** testimony to **us it** means our separation from both Egypt (World) **and** Babylon (Religious Systems). Also **in** reality it **speaks** of Rom. 6: 1 10.

The Gilgal **experience** was meant to put **away** the reproach of Egypt. **It is much** the **same** for **us in** 2 Cor. 5: 17 ^MOld things are **passed away**" [Comment 3]. In Gilgal they kept **the** passover **in remembrance** of what

happened in the wilderness, in other words, no more *manna* (5: 10-12). As a testimony to us it speaks of our appreciation of the Lord Jesus in the **Breaking of Bread.**

M. Morris

From Liverpool: *The Crossing*. We saw the Ark as a type of Christ in its role in this story. The people followed it and knew which way to go and as they passed by it remained firm, watching over their progress. They had to keep a distance of one thousand yards from it firstly, and very practically, to enable it to be seen and secondly because it was very holy, in fact the most holy piece of furniture from the Tabernacle. Figuratively the Jordan crossing speaks of death and is a prefigure of baptism and identification with the "Christ-type" in the middle (Comment 9]. The fact that blockages up-river from earthquakes and landslides (resulting in a dry river bed) are a feature of this area does not detract from the miracle but rather confirms it [Comment 10],

***Consecration*. We could not decide if this was a physical washing or a moral cleansing, but evidently it was because the Lord was going to perform great deeds [Comment 4]. We learned the lesson that our lives must be set apart if the Lord is going to do great things through us.**

***The Stones*. The NIV has only one lot of stones, RV and TEV have two. Obviously the stones taken from the Jordan onto the dry land stand as a testimony to outsiders and as a memorial to Israel. We too should be, collectively, living memorial stones testifying to what God has done. If there really were two lots of stones we struggled to make sense of the second lot, which were allegedly put into the centre of the river. Some suggested that they were a hidden testimony: out of sight but really there and that they speak of the old life buried, the others speaking of the new life. But others failed to see the significance of a 'hidden' testimony! [Comment 11], The NIV reading makes more sense [Comment 5].**

***The Circumcision*. The Lord having given up His people in their rebellion and unbelief seems not to have bothered that they were uncircumcised - a tragic end to the wonderful Exodus [Comment 6]. However, here was a new start and so they had to be brought into line with the revealed will of God.**

***The Promised Land*. The land of Canaan prefigures God's Rest for Him and His people to enjoy and, as promised, it was full of good**

food. The temporary provision in the manna, being no longer required, was withdrawn and the passover was kept.

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: Our consideration of the passage brought to light alternative views on the subject of the memorial or the memorials erected by the Israelites. This mainly surrounded the NW rendering of the passage which gave the impression to some that there was only one memorial erected and that it was not situated in the Jordan.

The RV clearly indicates that twelve stones were set up in the "place where they lodged" (Josh. 4: 8) and, in addition there were twelve stones set up in the midst of Jordan (Josh. 4: 9). The AV reads the same but the NIV reading of v. 9 is "Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood... ". But there is a marginal note "Or Joshua also set up twelve stones... ".

The Good News Bible and the New English Bible both render the passage to indicate that twelve stones were set up in Jordan and a comparison with Young's literal translation seems to indicate that the Hebrew texts in this verse available to us are capable of different translation. Editorial comment is invited [Comment 5].

Assuming the RV translation is sound, the stones erected on the bank were for a memorial for the people and their children (Josh. 4: 21-24j) while the stones in the river, which speaks of death, would be seen by God and would speak of the Lord Jesus who went down into the waters of death.

Another view expressed was that it would seem very strange for a memorial to be erected in the Jordan as it would presumably lie hidden for ever under the waters. Whilst it was appreciated that God would still see it and be pleased with its significance, it would mean nothing to future generations of Israelites [Comment 11].

The importance of memorials in the Christian walk was pointed out, particularly with regard to the Remembrance, but also with regard to day-to-day living and Deut. 11: 18-21 was referred to here. These verses portray the practical outworking of a love for God's word in the home. The dangerous alternative which we must be aware of is to be

solely enamoured with a set of dogmas which by themselves mean nothing to the Lord.

We also learned that there are mixed views as to the significance of the Jordan crossing. Although some see it as a passing through death to reach one's eternal inheritance, this is clearly not applicable here because the Israelites still faced battles when they reached the Promised Land. When we are with the Lord there will be no battles. It was thought that the inheritance referred to was that which we read of in Acts 20: 32.

C. Edis

From Stoke-on-Trent: The central purpose of God in creating the heaven and the earth was to dwell with man. Through Adam and Eve He planned a people among whom He would dwell. The entrance of sin in Genesis 3 temporarily delayed His purpose. To dwell with man on earth, God must have a people, a land, a dwelling place and a house to dwell in. God commenced again in Abraham, out of whose loins came a people, who subsequently were redeemed from bondage and, as believers in God's word to Abraham, were given a birthright of life, rest, peace and an inheritance in a land of promise. They were brought out of Egypt to cross the Red Sea by which they were baptized (1 Cor. 10: 2); to become the covenanted people of Jehovah at Sinai, to build a dwelling place for Him and to worship and serve Him as a collective people.

But the wilderness was not their ultimate goal (Ex. 15: 16-17). It took Israel more than one year (Num. 10: 11-13) to reach Kadesh-barnea but they were *disobedient* and *unbelieving* in respect of the land (Heb. 3: 18-19). It was as a disobedient people Israel came to Jordan 40 years later to make an east-west crossing from Shittim to Gilgal (i. e. Godward, Micah 6: 5) to end their career of disobedience, figuratively in death. It would appear that an entry from the south from Kadesh-barnea was originally intended.

Jordan, which flows into the Dead Sea and overflows its banks in the month Abib, speaks of sin when it is fully grown, i. e. death. Jordan marked the beginning of a path of obedience and sanctification and a new life of victory because the iniquity of the Amorite had reached its fulness (Gen. 15: 16). The Ark opened up the way and secured for them the potential to enter their inheritance. It remained on the bed of Jordan until all the people has passed over, ^Muntil

every thing was finished" (4: 10) reminding us of the One who endured (remained beneath) the cross (Heb. 12: 2) and brought to naught Him that had the power (strength) of death (Heb. 2: 14).

Two important matters **emerge** from the study **passage**:

1. Entrance into their inheritance **was** dependent upon two things:
 - (a) their obedience to the **voice** of God (**3: 3**)
 - (b) their sanctification through their obedience (**3: 5**)
2. Possession of their inheritance **was dependent** upon two things:
 - (a) their taking **up arms and** armour
 - (b) their utter destruction of the devoted things (**3: 10**).

The opening **verses** of **ch. 3** show that obedience **and** sanctification **were** vital to their entrance into the land. They **had not been circumcised (5: 4-6) and** so their obedience to this set the seal to their sanctification (5: 8).

The food for the wilderness journey (manna) **and** the food for possessors of the land (corn) **are** equivalent things. That **is**, the living **Bread which came** down from **heaven** (John 6: 51) **is the same** Person who **grew up** before **Him as a** tender plant **and as a** root out of **a dry ground in** the land (**Isa. 53: 2**). It **is** vital at all times to **feed** upon **Him to be** victorious. **Rahab is an example** of a believer who not only exhibited faith **In the message** but **was** obedient (**Heb. 11: 31**) **and as a persuaded** person **she** ultimately found a **place** among them that **were** sanctified (**Josh. 6: 25**).

Today those who truly **obey** the word of God **may find** themselves **In churches** of God, sanctified **by** their obedience to the Truth. **As we** obey **we are** built **up and given** the Inheritance **among** all them that **are** sanctified (**Acts 20: 32; 26: 18**). Thus **we** enter the **land** today **by** meditation **In** the word of God **and** observing to do according to all **that Is** written therein (**Josh. 1: 8**). **All** believers **have a** birth-right to the land **but many** do not **exercise** that **right**. They fall short **by** unbelief **and** disobedience **which** flows from It (**See Bible Studies 1964 pp 130-137**).

J. N. *Parker*, R. A. *Parker*

COMMENTS

1. **(Derby):** Scripture does not say that an altar was made of the twelve stones; they were simply set up as a memorial of the fact that the Lord had brought the twelve tribes across the dried-up Jordan.
2. **(Kingston, Jamaica):** It is not quite clear what is meant by this. The significance to Israel of the twelve stones taken out of Jordan is quite clear; they were a monument to the mighty power of God in bringing His people into the promised land (4: 23, 24). See the response to the question from Stoke for suggested present day parallels.
3. **(Kingston, Jamaica):** These two things are not exact parallels. The experience at Gilgal was a re-taking of the sign of the covenant which had lapsed because of Israel's disobedience. 2 Cor. 5: 17 refers to what happens at the new birth, when we first believe and receive God's grace.
4. **(Liverpool):** The moral element was surely paramount; they were to enter as the Lord's people the land which He had given them, and they were to be holy, because He was holy (Lev. 11: 44). However, there may also have been a symbolic physical washing, as there was at Sinai (Ex. 19: 10, 14).

P. L. H.

5. **(Liverpool and Nottingham):** Editors have spent a great deal of time searching out the reason for the NIV rendering of Josh. 4: 9. As regards the Hebrew text we find the position is that by itself the verse would be translated in the way it is translated in almost every translation we have been able to lay hold of and these include the Vulgate, the Septuagint and the Coptic. Were there some reason outside the verse itself that required it to be translated in the way it is rendered in the NIV, however, then the original words can be made to bear it. If these considerations are based on the idea that the NIV "makes more sense", as friends in Liverpool aver, then as Comment 11 suggests, it is based on a somewhat carnal view of Testimony. We have also searched rabbinical commentaries going back as far as the 11th century and find all support the view that these were two separate sets of stones. An interesting point which readers may like to pursue is whether the command of Deuteronomy

27: 2 meant that the stones at Gilgal had to be transported to Mt Ebal (Josh. 8: 30-35). If so then there are certainly two sets of stones referred to in Josh. 4.

I. E. P.

6. (Liverpool): "Not to have bothered" is not a very appropriate way of expressing God's attitude. He took no action against His people specifically because of their failure to observe the sign of the covenant, but they were condemned to spend forty years in the wilderness because of the unwillingness to obey Him, of which their uncircumcision was a symptom.

P. L. H.

7. (**Ibadan**): Friends in Ibadan are exactly right to compare the work of Joshua and his men with that of those in churches of God today. All believers are not, however, the Israel of God today and the Church of which Christ is the Head is not seen in the people of Joshua's day and his relation to them. Believers today do not have to fight to enter heaven or to possess their heavenly mansions. Joshua and his men prefigure the Lord and His Fellowship of churches of God. We suggest the Promised Land to which Israel journeyed only speaks of heaven when viewed from the wilderness or from Egypt corresponding to the view of the believer during his wilderness experience or that of his unsaved days in the world.

8. (**Kingston, Jamaica**): In particular it is the Lord's "walk" amongst or in the people of God, which is shown in the line of teaching which culminates in 2 Cor. 6: 16, that is prefigured in the progress of the Ark. See also Question 2.

9. (**Kingston, Jamaica and Liverpool**): It was not the intention of the Lord that the people, redeemed from Egypt and baptized in the Red Sea should pass through Jordan at all. The passage through Jordan was necessary and a direct result of the disobedience of the people. Their children bore the suffering, misery and frustration that resulted from their fathers* sinfulness. They could not enter upon a life of victory till they had passed through Jordan in the presence of the Ark. It is the same with ourselves. Because of the sin we inherit from our fathers we cannot enter into a life of

victory till we have first died with Christ and been raised with Him. This baptism in water commemorates and thus we would suggest that any prefiguring of baptism in the scriptures before us lies in events at Gilgal (cf. 1 Pet. 3: 21)

10. (Liverpool): The scripture does not say that the Lord dammed Jordan with a landslide. Indeed it is difficult to see how such a natural phenomenon could account for what happened since the Jordan had burst its banks (Josh. 3: 15) as might be expected at the end of the three months within which, we understand, two-thirds of Palestine's rain falls today.

11. (Liverpool, **Nottingham**): The view that a testimony cannot be a testimony because it is unseen by men is really quite astonishing. Perhaps the most outstanding Testimony in the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures was unseen by men as generation followed generation. We refer to the Testimony hidden in the Ark which was so powerful that it gave its name to the Ark itself. (Ex. 16: 34, 25: 16, 21). The Ark of the Testimony was itself unseen save by the High Priest on one day in the year. Unseen Testimony thus gave its name to what was seen, the Tabernacle of the Testimony (Ex. 38: 21). Surely the lesson to the Israelite is the same as that for us today: namely to walk by faith and not by sight?

/ . E. P.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. From Liverpool: If the Jordan crossing speaks of death and baptism and Canaan is God's Best, do editors consider that Reuben, Gad and Manasseh were in the will of God to live on the other side?

"All the land of Gilead", which lies on the east side of the Jordan, was among the territories shown to Moses (Deut. 34: 1-3), and God specifically said to him "This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it to thy seed" (34: 4). This land had to be occupied by some of the Israelites, and the tribes who asked for it correctly described it as "The land which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel" (Num. 32: 4). Moses was concerned that they should not discourage the rest of the nation by taking possession of it while the main fighting was still

ahead, but when his fears were allayed by their promise to fight, he said that they could return after the rest of the land had been conquered, and "be guiltless towards the Lord, and towards Israel" (Num. 32: 22). This was subsequently confirmed by Joshua (Josh. 1: 12-18). There can therefore be no reason to say that It was not In the will of God for them to live on the east side of Jordan.

It Is quite proper to use Israel's experience to Illustrate spiritual truths for the present day, but the reverse process Is not legitimate; the actual events cannot be manipulated to suit the illustration. This month's Editorial comments more fully on this issue.

P. L. H.

2. From Stoke-on-Trent: "When ye see the ark of the covenant... " (Josh. 3: 3), Was this a unique occasion, when the Ark was brought out of its normal place during the transit of the Tabernacle, without its covering of veil, sealskin and blue cloth (Num. 4: 5, 6) into the full view of the people, remembering that they were the people of God moving Into the Land?

The scripture cited in the question contains the only details we have about the moving of the Ark. It appears, from Num. 10: 33 together with Deut. 1: 33, that the Ark always preceded the people when they moved, and they would expect to follow It. Josh. 3 does not necessarily imply that the Ark was uncovered, but if it were, this would be the first occasion on which it was seen openly. It was not unique, however, since it was certainly seen publicly afterwards. (1 Sam. 4 and the following events). *P. L. H.*

The Ark journeyed in the midst of the tribes (Num. 4: 1-20; 10: 11-28) being borne by the Kohathites. Reconciliation of this with Num. 10: 33 and Deut 1: 33 may be made by understanding that the Ark went ahead to find a resting place. (See Bible Studies 1958 pp 75-6). We cannot fall to connect this with the events of Josh. 3-4 and what Canaan was to be to the people of God.

I. E. P.

3. **From Stoke-on-Trent:** Is there any spiritual counterpart today of the stones taken from the bed of Jordan and erected In Gilgal (Josh. 4: 8, 20), and those taken from the west bank and set up where the priests stood (4: 9)?

Scotfield suggests that the two sets of stones "are memorials marking the distinction between Christ's death under judgment in the believer's place" (the stones left in the Jordan) "and the believer's perfect deliverance from judgment" (the stones set up at Gilgal).

P. L. H.

The present writer pleasantly recalls that the understanding of this passage given by Scotfield is one of the first truths that he learned during his private reading of the Scriptures immediately following his conversion. He has since learned, however, that the stones more accurately depict the importance of the death of Christ in the spiritual life of the people of God.

I. E. P.

4. From Stoke-on-Trent: What is the "reproach of Egypt" which was rolled away after circumcising at Gilgal?

Israel would at this time have little contact with the Egyptians, so it is unlikely that this refers to taunting of the people by the Egyptians, as some suggest. It may refer to the shame which the nation had as a captive people in Egypt. Although God had brought them out, they had disobeyed His covenant, and had been condemned to wander in the wilderness. Now the sign of the covenant with Abraham had been taken, and they had re-established their position as God's own people, the inheritors of the Promised Land. Alternatively, it may refer to the shame of uncircumcision. The rite had been permitted to lapse while Israel was in Egypt, since it had to be carried out at the Exodus (Josh. 5: 5). It again lapsed during the wilderness wanderings, and this state was like that in Egypt. I prefer this last explanation of the phrase.

P. L. H.

The reproach of Egypt is the opposite of the reproach of Christ. We must have one or the other. Joseph saw the importance of not being left in Egypt. The Lord took His people from Egypt yet time and time again they longed after it. That carnal attitude was to their reproach as it is to the believer today if he yields to worldly desires. What a marvellous thing that the One who was and is without sin should be made so like unto us that it is written "out of Egypt did I call my Son" (Mat. 2: 15).

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8504

The miraculous nature of the capture of Jericho and the "unmilitary" behaviour of the men of war as they encircled the city command our attention in this month's study portion. They teach us as they were to teach God's people in that day that their conquest of the city and the land depended on faith. The outstanding importance of this and of the victory is preserved for all eternity in the words of the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:30). In such a case there is hardly any further step to be taken to appreciate the present-day application of these things. We are pleased to see that many of our contributors emphasize such application has to do with the present-day people of God and not principally with believers as individuals. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that the collective aspect could be brought more vividly to the fore in the prominence given to the Ark and the blowing of the rams' horns with their association with Sinai and the dwelling-place of God.

We should not lose sight of the fact, however, that the instructions for the taking and sacking, or otherwise, of cities by Israelites are clearly set out in Deuteronomy chapter twenty. There we find the reason for the ruthless destruction carried out by the men of Israel. They were not to copy the religious practices of the inhabitants of the land (Deut. 20:18). It was not that they were to examine and reject them but that their policy was a "safety-first" policy. The practices and practioners were to be exterminated. Comparison with companion scriptures such as Deut. 12: 30-31 shows that the danger was not simply that they would be led astray in following after false gods but that they would incorporate the forms and practices of the worship of false gods into the worship of the Lord. Again, the step forward into the New Testament application of this truth requires little effort. Scriptures such as 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Rev. 2:14-15 show that the people of God in the present dispensation may be no less prone to incorporate man's invention into the service of God, In our day we should be* as ruthless as Joshua and his fellows in eliminating from the service of God

those practices which are not based on the Apostles* teaching, the faith once for all delivered to the saints. If we do so we shall be able to say with the apostle ^M"I have fought the good fight... I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4: 7).

/ . E. P.

CROSSING JORDAN AND EVENTS AT GILGAL (continued from BS 8503)

From **Ibadan**: Joshua, having sent out of Shittim two men to spy Jericho did not himself rest at Shittim, instead he rose up to action and did not wait for the report of the two spies. Hopefully relying on the promise of God, he would not allow himself to be dismayed by any report should the spies bring embarrassing reports. He rose up early in the morning with the children of Israel as soon as the spies had gone and they lodged at Jordan for three days after which the spies came back with their report. He taught the children of Israel how to keep cool and be still in order to see the glory of God (Ex. 14: 13, Ps. 46: 10).

The three days stay at Jordan waiting for directives from God is a very good lesson for the New Testament saints. Although God might have promised us many things in this world and the world to come, we need to stand still and be patient to be able to see the glory of God (Rom. 12: 11, 12). Within these three days, it is not unlikely that they were busy praying and fasting to seek the face of God in the task ahead of them. Apart from waiting on Him, we should also endeavour persistently to seek His face in prayer as the Bible enjoins us.

The officers under the command of Joshua stood up to the task ahead of them. The officers were Spirit-filled and commanded the people to put God first. They should allow the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant to go before them and then they should follow.

The people of God in the New Testament should be led by Spirit-filled men who will teach them the way of God; teach them to put God first (Mat. 6: 33) and follow the doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 4: 6).

Joshua commanded the congregation of Israel to sanctify themselves because the next day God was going to perform wonders in their presence. The reason why Israel should make themselves holy is not difficult to know. God is Holy and abhors sins. To allow a Holy God to perform wonders in their midst, they themselves must be holy. The

case of the New Testament saints is not different,, Paul expresses the desire of God for us to live a sanctified life (1 Thes 4: 2-4).

Gilgal originates from the Hebrew word 'gal' which means to roll. The doubling of the root 'galgal' or 'gilgal' means rolling off and away round and round, or rolling off and away. This name was appropriate, for in circumcising the children of Israel at this place, the reproach of Egypt was rolled away (Josh. 5: 9).

Gilgal was the first camp-site of Israel after entering Canaan, and served as the first fortified camp where the Israeli army continually returned from different directions during the conquest of Canaan; and the place for the women and children and protecting soldiers during the whole Canaanite war (Josh. 5: 2-12). The observance of the first passover in Canaan took place in Gilgal, and here at Gilgal the manna ceased after falling for 40 years six times a week, and then there was a change of diet. Here at Gilgal also, God manifested Himself to Joshua as the Great Commander of Israel's army.

The keeping of the passover by the children of Israel at the border of the enemies meant a lot. These people would not allow the wall of Jericho ahead of them to prevent them from obeying the word of God. They knew that keeping the commandment of God had always been a blessing to them. Although the time wasn't all that convenient for them to keep the commandment, yet they put God first. Likewise we, the Israel of the New Testament, should not serve God only when the going is good, and the ways are rosy (Rom, 8: 35-39, Heb, 10: 36).

No sooner was the land arrived at than manna ceased. This was because manna was food provided for the wilderness life. When the promised land was reached, they had to start enjoying the promises of God in His provision of the milk and honey. We are also sure that we shall receive the spiritual counterpart when our Lord takes us to our promised land. We shall be transformed to conform with the nature of the heavenly places in perfectness of nature and begin to enjoy the presence of the Lord.

Anon

VICTORY AT JERICHO (Josh. 5: 13 - 6: 27)

From Ajegunle: *Around Jericho*. It seems to us that Josh. 5: 13-15 is a reminder and an encouragement to Joshua that the Lord is the Captain of the Host.

Victory at Jericho was a result of faith and following the leadership of God, shown by the Ark (Heb. 11: 6, 30; Rom. 10: 17; Hab. 2: 4).

The trumpet in Scripture is used for gathering of the people or for victory. It is significant to note that the great shout and the trumpet coincided with the fall of the walls, a note of victory. It is sweet to look forward to the day of the great shout and the Archangel's voice and the trump of God (see 1 Thes. 4: 16).

It seems from Josh. 6: 16-18 and Deut. 20: 16-17 that even before Jericho was destroyed, it had been condemned and marked for judgement. This is a clear indication that God's word is supreme, and it shall come to pass (Jer. 1: 12; Is. 55: 11).

Inside Jericho. It seems to us from Josh. 6: 16-18 that the Lord is concerned about things devoted to Him. This was true of Jericho and the law of God as recorded in Lev. 27: 28-29 is also applicable. We further suggest that believers in God's house today have been set apart for God's use and there is need to be careful in what we do with ourselves (see Jas. 4: 5) [Comment 9],

It is interesting to note that there is obedience on the part of the Leader and the people to the word of God, without which no miracle could have taken place in Jericho (John 14: 15; 15: 14). It is worthy to note too, that although the city was doomed for destruction, God still remembered Rahab to make mention of her in His instructions. It shows vividly the faithfulness of God.

M. Imoukhuede, G. Okwena

From Birkenhead: With the long-awaited overthrow of Jericho soon to take place the Lord is conscious of the needs of Joshua. There appears to him One whom he worships. This to us was a recognition by Joshua of being face to face with a heavenly visitor whom we consider to be the Son of God. The conversation that took place was interesting. There is the possibility that Joshua's words were spoken as a challenge "Friend or foe"? The response was intended to strengthen Joshua with the knowledge that victory belonged to the Lord. The people were soon to discover that in times of departure from the Lord they did not have the victory.

The people do not seem to have been appraised of all the battle details received by Joshua from the Lord. They exercised faith and were able to so conduct themselves that it is recorded in Heb. 11: 30, ^MBy faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days". So often the Ark of the Lord was a focal point for the people and here it is evidence to them of the Lord's leading

and presence with thorn. The conduct of the people of Israel during these seven days - the people day after day walking in total silence - must have been a mystery to the population of Jericho. Although there were armed men in the procession, victory was achieved by the Lord and the swords were only used to destroy the vanquished.

The pronouncement was made by the Lord that the destruction of Jericho was to be total, apart from Rahab and her household, and a curse was on those who sought to restore the city.

The disciple today is called to deal with his spiritual foes in a similar manner. There is to be no dallying with the enemy. Paul makes clear in Eph. 6:10-12 that for the disciple of the Lord Jesus our strength is in Him. It is He who provides the armour for battle. Victory will only be achieved by total dependence on Him. Our foes are not human (^Mflesh and blood") but spiritual hosts of wickedness and therefore far stronger than any that Israel had to face.

G. H. Roberts, R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: The word 'And' (Josh. 5:13) links the narrative with what precedes it. Previously, Joshua had demonstrated his strong faith and obedience toward God, concerning which manner of person the Lord spoke when He said "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (John 14: 21).

So this theophanic visitation took place. It is remarkable that the Man who appeared at a time when Joshua was contemplating **the** means by which Jericho might be taken, had His sword drawn in His hand. He was neither onlooker nor encouraging spectator as warfare approached. This Divine Visitor had come as Captain to command **and direct in** fulfilment of the promise of Josh. 1: 9. This was encouragement **indeed!**

The heavenly Visitor was more than man or angel for Joshua bowed in worship before Him. We believe it was the Lord Himself. His words "**put** off thy shoe from off thy foot: for **the** place whereon thou standest is holy" must have **reminded** Joshua of Moses's **experience at** Horeb and how, subsequently, **He** showed Himself strong for His servant. The words "There shall not any man **be** able to stand before **thee** all the days of **thy** life: as **I** was with Moses, so I will be with **thee...**" (Josh. 1: 5) **are** particularly appropriate.

Perhaps a reason for this appearance was to **emphasize that the**

battles to be fought and won in Canaan were the Lord's battles. The iniquity of the Amorite was full and God was driving them out. He was gifting the land to Israel. The battles were His (see Num. 21:14). So in the Christian's warfare we are assured of victory through faith and obedience.

Jericho, a seemingly impregnable city, was to be taken. This was another test of the faith of Israel. The walls did not immediately fall nor did the gates swing open by the hand of God. Joshua and Israel were to regard the whole issue by faith in the first instance. "See," said God, "I have given into thine hand Jericho...". The means to be employed must have been extremely strange to Israel but it seemed to us that the obedient execution of God's plan emphasized among other things, that the battle and the glory of it were the Lord's. In fact, not a weapon was used to gain entry to the city. Israel's 'weapon' was the Lord and the Ark, carried in front of the army and illustrating the presence of God, emphasized the fact. God's law was contained within the Ark and obedience to the Word of God is always a condition of victory. Paul wrote, "The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10: 4).

The action in taking Jericho united the people. They took position along with the priests as directed by God. Israel must have regarded the ram's horn as a rather base and futile instrument but God uses "the base things of the world, and the things that are despised" (1 Cor. 1: 28) to accomplish His plan_o

Scripture states that the priests were "before the Lord" (v. 8). This suggests their dependence upon Him and their obedience to His word. The words of Exodus 14: 14 are appropriate to the silence of Israel's marches around Jericho, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace".

R. I. Stow

From Derby: It will be seen from the last verse of the previous reading that the manna had now ceased (Josh. 5: 12). Over the years the people had become used to this way of living and perhaps, because it had ceased, the thought occurred that God had given them up. This may explain the reason for what took place as recorded in the last few verses of chapter 5. It is very open as to who the Person was that Joshua saw. Was the Person in the form of an angel, or was it the form of One whom Moses saw? We can probably assume that it was "Jehovah", although He was not recognised by Joshua immediately because he asked "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries"? By

this vision God showed that the help was going to come from Himself; not from human power but by the power of the "Lord of Hosts". Israel's salvation that day was going to display God's mighty arm and we today can say that our victory was and is through God's Son at Calvary, A lesson we may learn is that, if we are to achieve any measure of success in our spiritual warfare, we must depend on God's strength and not see success in our own strength; otherwise we shall be doomed to failure.

Another thought emerging from studying the last verses of chapter 5 lies in the fact the Joshua, under Moses, was used to being in command of the fighting men. Although he went to the city to weigh up the situation as to what faced the armies of Israel, he had to learn as we today must learn, that God is the One who rules. Joshua was answerable to God and was not in absolute control. The vision only confirmed that God was to them total victory. In the meantime the king of Jericho had done all in his power to secure the city against invasion. Possibly too, provisions were taken to withstand the siege. How futile for men to resist the power of Almighty God.

It was obvious that Joshua did not recognise the Person who appeared for he knew the commandment "Thou shalt worship no other god" (Ex. 34: 14). The conversing continued (6: 2-3) as God briefed Joshua as to what He would do, and what he should do [Comment 1]. It was expected of him to pass on divine instruction to those he was leading. The plan of God concluded (6: 5) by foretelling what would happen.

The priests were instructed to take the Ark of the Covenant and, it can be assumed that the Lord was still there for these things were done "Before the Lord" (Josh. 6:8). It would seem that there is a lesson for us today, particularly to those who would seek to lead the people of God in the way that God has marked out. Today the inspired Word of God is our guide and it is for each one of us to search out these things, for we still have our enemies. Men by nature are enemies of God, the Devil himself is our spiritual enemy, seeking whom he may devour.

The instructions resulted in actions that were part of a set order. The armed men were first; the priests and the Ark were next followed by the people. God has to have things in order not disorder. This orderliness would signify a unity of all concerned, such as is necessary as we go into battle today. Did all the people go round? It was estimated that there were 600,000 men, and total strength of the people perhaps two or three million [Comment 2].

The people within the city must have wondered what was going to happen as they viewed the procession marching round. Day followed day until, when the seventh day came, there was an early start. It must have taken some considerable time but if we are to do anything for God, we have to spend time for Him.

The walls fell down because of faith (Heb. 11:30) and so the shout was one of faith in God, believing He would accomplish what had been revealed. We, too, can draw a lesson that our shout should be in the form of faithful prayer, for we too have had a revelation from God as to His eternal purposes.

Rahab is mentioned in the royal line of our Lord. This was another reason why God had to show His power for, being God, He knew that the outcome of the events would lead to the coming of the Saviour. She was instructed to hang the scarlet cord in the window, and no harm would overtake her or her family. The cord may not have been seen by man, but God saw it, that was the important thing. It is like the day when the Israelites were brought out of Egypt. Then God said "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex. 12: 13). So, when God did see, Rahab was saved from destruction.

Joshua told the people that all the city was to be devoted to God. Devoted means dedicated or consecrated, hence the reason why God decreed that all should be utterly destroyed by the sword. Perhaps this could speak of pending judgement when all men will be destroyed eternally, and only those sheltering beneath the blood of the Lamb will be saved [Comment 3], On this occasion the silver and gold and vessels of brass were to be brought into the treasury of the Lord. These may speak of precious things we can offer to God, something of value to Him [Comment 4].

The Israelites were not a great nation in comparison with others around but God chose them to fulfil His plan. We today, though not many, have been chosen to do His will and His plan. As a result of this tremendous victory fear no doubt came upon others. Well might the last verse conclude "his fame was in all the land".

As a small people we ought to realise the mighty resources at our disposal, and if only we could exercise greater faith and live our lives closer to God, we could achieve great things. This is a lesson we can learn in our warfare down here that we might obtain our spiritual inheritance.

E. W. M. Foster, G. W. Conway

From Kingston, **Jamaica**: The Man with the sword identified Himself and accepted worship from Joshua. Obviously Joshua had previously felt a need for a greater power to aid, before going into battle. This he realised by recognizing the True Leader and worshipping Him. He then sought his advice. In this way we also need spiritual sustenance in the spiritual battles we face in our endeavours for the Lord. This is how He sustains. The sword in the hand reminds us of the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6: 17). Compare Gen. 18: 22.

The priests, who were to an extent responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people of Israel, were in discussion separately with Joshua before directives were given the assembly. A like principle may be exercised in the churches today where elders meet separately before passing decisions on behalf of the assembly. The tabernacle preceded the nation, as does Christ in the Church today [Comment 5].

Obedience to the commands of God is always necessary if we would be successful in waging spiritual battle. Then God will protect. The people were not to utter a word until the final day. We see therefore the need for total and unquestioned obedience if, as was their case, victory is to be achieved.

The gold, silver, bronze and iron were to be consecrated. Perhaps this was a test of faith? {*cf.* Jas, 2: 1-4; Acts 5: 1-10). These things were to belong to the Lord. Can we affirm that our gold and silver belong to God or are we "robbing God" in our "tithes and offerings"? We must remember that if we affirm that we belong to Him so also do our precious things (*cf.* Mal 3:8).

Rahab's deliverance or salvation had come and afterwards the scripture says "she dwelt in the midst of Israel, unto this day". Are we likewise dwelling securely in the faith? Joshua (Jehovah saves) had saved her and brought her into the land. She was now settled. Are we like her? Contrast her with those of whom we read in Josh. 6: 26 and 1 Kings 16: 34.

The scripture was true then as it still is. We see around us the growth of the denominations. Among ourselves in the churches of God we see smallness of numbers, even decline in some instances. But nowhere does any New Testament writer predict other than departure from the faith in the last days. And the Scripture must **be** fulfilled. Though this is so we nonetheless take encouragement for our **part** is to be found to have "continued steadfastly in the apostles' **teaching**" that is the faith (Acts 2: 42).

Michael Morris

From Liverpool: *Background.* The parenthetical verse (Josh, 6:1) reveals that Jericho was tightly shut up. No doubt the people were preparing for a long siege rather than the unconventional and humanly incredible way in which the city was to be taken.

The Commander. Who was Joshua's visitor? The account of this strange interview is told in Josh. 5: 13-15 - 6: 5₀ Some were content to accept him as an angelic messenger who spoke from the Lord much as the prophets later were to say "Thus saith the Lord". Others were convinced that this was a theophany despite the difficulty of his description of himself. Support for this view lies in the facts that (i) the ground became holy (ii) Joshua worshipped (iii) v. 2 states that "the Lord said ...", but it was recognised that this is not conclusive proof. Against this, too, it was argued that the ground would be made holy by the arrival of a great angelic being from the presence of God and it does not say Joshua worshipped the commander! [Comment 6].

Obedience and Faith. A resounding victory was the result of obedience to God, trust in His wisdom and faith to carry out His commands. It would appear that the people did not know the plan but were willing to follow a leader whom they trusted. Through faith, however, Joshua possessed a cast-iron guarantee: the wall *will* collapse and the people *will* go up, every man straight in'.

Obedience demanded encircling the city 13 times; 12 times without visible sign of victory. That was a trial of faith. Faith involves patience, waiting for God to act and, for us, committing our whole selves to Him (*cf.* Rom. 12: 1). Faith comes by listening to the Word of God but it grows stronger by being exercised.

What did happen to the walls ? Bearing in mind that they were very thick walls which could not collapse like a modern day garden wall, it was suggested that an earthquake caused them to sink into the ground allowing Joshua's troops to walk straight in. Of course, we don't really know nor does it matter, for whatever the method, God gave the victory.

Devoted to God. It is hard to come to terms with the apparent cruelty of the Lord's command and we are grateful not to be involved in such bloodshed today. However, neither can we understand the disgust with which God views sin and we are told that the land was defiled by the sinful ways of those people. And sin brings severe judgement. This would be for punishment to those involved and to prevent contamination by the people of God, In the death of the young and innocent it was also seen as an act of mercy.

We found difficulty in understanding in what way a city so terribly contaminated by sin could be devoted to God. Could the answer be that it was devoted to destruction? Normally, of course, anything devoted to God had to be absolutely pure IComment 7J.

The Curse. There seems to have been something outstanding about the sinfulness of Jericho (perhaps similar to Sodom) in that such an unusual curse was put upon it as if to obliterate its name for ever. Despite that it was rebuilt.

A Testimony. In contrast to the attitude of Lot's in-laws to his warnings of impending judgement we noted that Rahab's family obviously believed her and were saved. A good testimony is a tremendous asset in God's things.

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: The fall of Jericho is a story which is well known, but there is still a lot we as Christians can gain from studying it with particular reference to the theme of warfare and victory in our Christian lives.

One of the main things we can learn from the assault on Jericho is the faith and obedience of the Israelites which led to the victory. They did exactly what God told them to do, even to the extent of doing things which must have seemed strange to them and made them look ridiculous to the soldiers who were undoubtedly watching them from the city wall. We can, of course, draw the parallel with our own lives: victory only comes through faith (Heb. 11:30) and obedience (Our actions too, may make us look ridiculous in the sight of others - Eds.).

Jericho represented man and his established worldly way of life. The fight was between the army of the Lord (5: 14) and it. The sin of Jericho had reached its full measure (Gen. 15:16) and it was time for Jericho to be dealt with as happened to many other peoples (Josh. 24: 11).

As we have said great faith was shown by those marching round the walls as they waited to enter the city and this has a parallel with our spiritual forefathers. There came a time when they were presented with the truth and they either had to accept it, 'entering the land that the Lord had offered them' or reject it. There was a certain amount of trouble caused when people made a stand in coming out from Open Brethren [Comment 8]. It was not an easy thing to do. The same applied to the Israelites who entered Jericho, after the Lord paved the way by levelling the city. They had to go in and fight hard, to take control of it.

The same applies to a certain extent as well, *in* our individual Christian lives if we want to be victorious. The Lord will open up opportunities for us, but we are the ones who, with His help, have to conquer the enemy. We fight from the position of the victory won for us by the Lord on the Cross (1 Cor. 15: 57) but we must not let up our assault until the very end. Then, maybe, we will be able to say like Paul "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. 4: 8)

Timothy Elson

From Paisley: In these few verses first of all we considered the Captain of the host of the Lord. We agreed that this Person was the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of the incident (Mat. 8: 2) where the leper came and worshipped Him. The Lord received His worship proving to us that He was God in the flesh. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" says the commandment, so Joshua fell on his face and worshipped. When we come to Jericho itself we find the inhabitants stricken with fear and the city all shut up (Josh. 6: 1). They had heard something of the power of the God of heaven and earth (Josh. 2: 9-11). As Christians we would do well to remember and appreciate something of the power of God in our lives.

Jericho would speak to us of obstacles in our lives which can only be overcome when we acknowledge our total lack of power and yield entirely to God's power. Jericho must not be rebuilt in our lives after the battle has been fought and won.

Donald Black

From Surulere: Joshua's encounter with the Man with a drawn sword in His hand was unexpected. Armed with the word of the Lord which assured him that every place where his feet had trodden was given to him, Joshua marched on with confidence. His question, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" (5: 13) attested to his courage in the circumstances. The answer given to Joshua revealed a whole dimension of vision in which God was at the lead to give rest to His people in the land which He covenanted to His servant Abraham (Gen. 15). The principle is worthy of note that what God promised with His mouth He fulfilled with His hands (1 Kin. 8: 23, 24). Authority in leadership was vested in Joshua but the responsibility in fulfilment of divine purposes remained with God. Some interesting findings about the Man with a drawn sword in His hand include:

His acceptance of worship (v. 14), Joshua called Him Lord (v. 14), He announced His mission as the commander of God's army, and Joshua unshod his feet at His command (v. 15, *cf.* Ex. 3: 5).

At the instruction of the Lord the Ark of the Covenant was carried in the march round the walls of Jericho. It was the first time the Ark was taken from the Holy of Holies to the battle front. [Comment 10]. The seven trumpets of rams' horns blown by seven priests in their march before the Ark gave a note of praise unaccompanied by human voice. We note the contrast in divine principle for the New Testament that praise is called for from redeemed hearts unaccompanied by instruments.

Obedience to divine injunctions was required from all who were deployed by Joshua to fight against Jericho. What a tragedy came upon Achan and his house in the matter of the devoted thing! God remained faithful in the fulfilment of His purposes despite man's failure and so it is written that ^M"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days" (Heb. 11: 30). Victory at Jericho was of the Lord; the experience and the blessings were for Israel by obedience to the principles of victory - self control, following the leadership of God, faith in the word from God and dedication to honour the Lord whether in life or in death.

COMMENTS

1 (Derby): We are indebted to friends in Derby and Liverpool for drawing attention to the fact that verse 1 of Joshua 6 is in brackets in our Bibles, thus showing that the instructions concerning Jericho's capture were given following the meeting with the Captain of the Lord's host. The commencement of the new chapter tends to obscure this. Nevertheless, Joshua 6: 2 does not say that the "Captain said" but that the "Lord said". Further, the words "I have given" we suggest, are not appropriate to the role of the Captain of the Lord's host. Therefore we conclude that the commands concerning the method of taking Jericho were spoken in the same way as Joshua's other commands were spoken (e. g. Josh. 1: 1-9).

2. (Derby): "Every man" (Josh. 6: 5) shows that all the people of Israel did not encircle Jericho. The reference to armed men (Josh. 6: 7. 9) implying unarmed men, may simply be the distinction between fighting soldiers and support soldiers. The latter would need to demolish the city and carry away the heavy materials.

3. (Derby): It was Rahab's life that was saved when she sheltered under the sign of the scarlet cord (which must have been of some size for the spies had been let down by it (Josh. 2: 18). In modern idiom we might say that she "nailed her colours to the mast" and did so from the day that the spies left to the day they returned. Had she died in the sack

of Jericho her soul would still have been saved for she had put her trust in the word of the Lord when she received the spies (Heb. 11: 31) She was justified by works in what followed, but what is before us in the present portion is the fact that she threw in her lot with the people of God as friends in Kingston delightfully show. Alas, many believers today, well justified by works, fail to see the salvation of their lives in association with the people of God.

4. (Derby): Surely there is significance in the fact that these things were those that could not be burned by fire?

5. (Kingston, Jamaica): We commend to all our readers the way in which friends in Kingston have identified the events of this month's study with the warfare of the churches of God today. Unfortunately this sentence is contradictory for the Church which is His Body is not the New Covenant counterpart of Israel today. It does not go to war.

6. (Liverpool): It is very helpful of friends in Liverpool to set out as they do the reasons for the difference of opinion which they have had concerning the identity of the Captain of the host of the Lord. Joshua's behaviour clearly exceeds that which is due to angels (Rev. 19: 10, 22: 8-9). Rather it is reminiscent of that of Abraham (Gen. 18: 1, 2), so that we have little difficulty in concluding that this was a pre-incarnation appearance of the Lord Jesus.

7. (Liverpool): It depends what is meant by "normally". The word "*ekerent*" is used as much if not more for that which is devoted for destruction as it is used for that voluntarily given to God, as in such scriptures as Lev. 27: 28-9 and Num. 18: 14.

8. (Nottingham): We are grateful to friends in Nottingham for making this comparison. Lest any be mistaken, it is not being said that companies of believers were as wicked as the men of Jericho. It is being said that beliefs such as the idea of divine testimony being based on believers being "all one in Christ" and assemblies being autonomous in government had such a stranglehold on believers that they were like strongholds as powerful as Jericho in barring the way to the worship of God as commanded in the New Testament Scriptures. It must surely be true of readers of this magazine that these same strongholds have had to be overcome in the spiritual experience of each.

I. E. P

9. (Ajegunle): The parallel here is not very close. The things and people inside Jericho were devoted by God to destruction because the people were evil; Israel were agents of the wrath of God. This is rather different from the Lord's possession of that which has been voluntarily given to Him.

10. (Surulere): The Ark would not be taken directly from the Holy of Holies, since it appears that the Tabernacle was not erected while Israel were in more or less continuous movement while conquering

the Land. Its setting up at Shiloh is recorded in Josh 18: 1.

P. L. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

I am a bit concerned that some of the comments by IEP in Bible Studies during 1984 may leave readers with an incorrect understanding of the nature of a translation of the Bible. The constant repetition of such phrases as "but that is interpretation not translation" in respect of the NIV in particular may mislead some to the quite wrong idea that there are two distinct categories (i) translations and (ii) interpretations. In fact, of course, every translation contains interpretation; if it did not it would result in nonsense to the reader. A literal translation reads something like this: "Up-stepped yet and Joseph from the Galilee out of city Nazareth into the Judea into city of David who-any is being called Bethlehem through this to be him out of home and of fatherhood of David". (Lk 2: 4). Such a literal translation may be a useful tool for certain types of study but for little else. For an openly admitted paraphrase on the other hand compare the "Living Bible". In the end we have to face the fact that versions of the Bible have been produced by scholars who know more about their subject than we do! That there are errors in all the versions we use is true; hence the value in habitually using 2 or 3 different versions particularly for study.

More disquieting, however, was the phrase in B. S. 810 pp 162-163 in respect of the Good News Bible. "What the Good News Bible gives us here is not the mind of God, but the mind of its writers". This is both unfair in the context and inherently dangerous. For a proper understanding of the principles upon which the TEV was translated see "Good News for Everyone" by E. A. Nida (Fount). Let's make sure we have respect for the Word of God and not just for our favourite version of it!

D. J. Webster

Editors have been able to find only three places in the entire 1984 volume of Bible Studies (pp. 146 & 162) where distinction between translation and interpretation with respect to the NIV has been made. The difference and the problems of translation of the Scriptures have been aired several times in Bible Studies. We recommend the article by Mr. L. Burrows (BS 1963 pp 58, 66, 82). It is also a matter of regular teaching in the churches of God so that we are confident that nearly all of our readers have a correct understanding of the matter. In case that be not so, however, our allusions are intended to clarify the matter. Thus we wrote (BS 8410 p. 162) "the Good News Bible account of Eph. 5:1 is a very loose translation and leans heavily to the side of interpretation" thereby making it clear that interpretation is a necessary part of translation. On the other hand the example quoted by our correspondent.

being a word-for-word rendering, and in the order of the Greek words, with a disregard for English word-order, differs in fact from a literal translation mainly because it offends against commonsense. The degree of interpretation can be so great, however, that faithfulness to the original words is lost. When that happens the translator has trespassed into the realm of interpreting the Scriptures, a field that only belongs to those whom the Holy Spirit has enlightened and done best of all by their Author (Luke 24: 27).

In the cases on which editors have commented this is what has happened. We cast no doubts on the efforts or the integrity of the translators but draw readers¹ attention to the fact that the freer a translation the more likely it is that this will happen. It is precisely in assessing the spectrum between "literal" and "free" translation, that is to say translation which embodies so much interpretation as to tend to obscure the original words from the reader, that the Revised Version is so helpful. Words added to give the sense are clearly indicated by the Revisers use of italic script and, where ambiguity does exist and a more than usual degree of interpretation is involved, then the Revisers clearly indicate this in the margin. Thus the reader is not shut up to a single view but has sufficient information with which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he may make his own decision.

Finally we are sure that very many of our readers will have different versions of our English Bible in their possession and will be aware, as our correspondent has said along with others before him (e. g. BS 1963 p83), that all translations have errors in them. Respect for the words of God, however, has shown us that some have more than others. In the end it is the use we make of such translations that counts. It is fair to say that the NIV and the Good News Bible have not been around for a sufficiently long enough time for us to be able to measure their worth in a practical way as may be done with more established versions. Many new versions have come and gone in the fifty or so years history of Bible Studies and we advise fellow-students to examine for themselves their helpfulness or otherwise as recorded in the pages of our magazine.

Editors

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8505

Achan is described in Josh. 7: 24 as the son of Zerah, marking him as a man of the fourth generation. Whatever his background, Achan nevertheless had to face responsibility for his iniquity. Moreover his actions caused tragic consequences also for others. Because of his trespass it is recorded that the children of Israel committed a trespass (7: 1), and "that man perished not alone in his iniquity" (22: 20). The sin was viewed by the Lord under five charges (7: 11) and unless that sin was exposed and dealt with, failure in everything the Lord's people put their hand to, indeed the threat of imminent destruction in the midst of the Land, lay before them all. The relief of some was matched by the trepidation of others as tribe, family, and household were brought near in turn, and each time only one was taken. Joshua was careful that Achan realised he was confessing to the Lord, albeit in Joshua's hearing. What Achan had meant to be as secret as could be, was fetched and laid down before the Lord in the sight of all Israel. "All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4: 13). As that great heap of stones (7: 26) was bound to keep the fear of the Lord before the eyes of all who knew its meaning, so the warning in these pages of Scripture abides in its significance.

Victory was consequent upon united obedience to the Lord and the courage that resulted from trust in His commands. The Lord was with His people, and another heap was raised, this time in the gates of their enemies.

Joshua was meticulous not only observing to do, but also to teach. He was careful to fulfil the commands of Moses in making plain the way of blessing and its opposite, and in communicating the law of the Lord to the assembly of Israel, the women, the little ones and the strangers among them.

E. A

VICTORY AT JERICHO (Joshua 5: 13-6: 27)

From Ibadan: The secret behind the victory at Jericho is not an hidden one. It was a God-given victory (Josh. 6: 2) and was made possible by their faith in God and total obedience to all He commanded them. (Ex. 23:20-22).

God took over the command of the Israeli army and Joshua the appointed leader was not put in darkness over this issue (Josh. 5: 13-15). He recognised the presence of God and so he fell on his face to the earth and worshipped God. God gave the guideline which the people of Israel should follow to overcome. For the New Testament saints, there is a great lesson about obedience. To obey is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15: 22). Our Lord Jesus Christ promised to be with His followers till the end of the world if they observed all that He had commanded them (Mat. 28: 20).

The material wealth of Jericho was not to be allowed to entangle the Israeli soldiers, and Joshua warned that they should keep themselves from the accursed thing (Josh. 6: 18). Paul entreated Timothy not to entangle himself with the affairs of this life, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, so as to please the Master. This means that victory in battles demands absolute obedience from the fighting soldiers (2 Tim. 2: 4). Faith played a very significant role in the victory at Jericho (Heb. 11: 30).

Here we have got a lesson to learn that our faith can move mountains (Mat. 17: 20). [When it is in conformity to the will of God - Eds. J

The number seven is prominent in this victory and reminds us of the promise of the Lord (Deut. 28:7). The enemies fled from the people of God because the Lord was leading the battle. So the weapons of warfare that are carnal cannot always succeed in battle (2 Cor. 10:14).

Unity also played another significant role in the conquest. Nobody tried his own method that was not commanded by God. Believers should have unity of faith (Acts 4: 32).

M. O. Ajagbe

DEFEAT **AND** VICTORY AT AI (Joshua 7: 1-8: 35)

From **Ajegunle**: Jericho was the first city in the land of Canaan which Israel was to possess. The spoils were devoted to the Lord, and there was a specific commandment from the Lord about this. Achan's sin was threefold.

- (i) disobedience to a definite command from the Lord;
- (ii) covetousness;
- (iii) stealing from that which belonged to the Lord's treasury.

The Lord looked upon Israel as having sinned although only Achan committed the trespass. It seems from the happenings in this chapter that the people of God were judged first before the individual. Achan's sin affected not only himself but his family.

It was pointed out that Joshua and the people made a mistake in their plan to take Ai for their possession for they failed to seek counsel from the Lord. This lapse cost the lives of 36 men and brought great discouragement on the people. Sadly, they turned round to blame God (7:7). In mercy God told Joshua who was to blame and that judgement was to be carried out. Unjudged sin hinders the blessing of God, the work of God and our usefulness in His service (1 Cor. 5: 6). It was interesting to note that we cannot hide sin from God. After the fearfulness of judgement, God encouraged Joshua (8: 1).

We noted the confession of Achan, "When I saw... a goodly Babylonish mantle..." (7: 21). Sight is a gateway to the mind and heart. Is there not the need to control what we see? The Scripture speaks about things seen as temporal but the things that are not seen as eternal. How very important it is to appreciate things eternal as of greater value.

The wisdom of God was seen in the battle of Ai. The obedience of the people to the Lord's instructions led to the victory at Ai. The place of obedience in our Christian experience was seen in the instructions of Eph. 6: 10-18.

Victory was associated with the lifting up of the javelin by Joshua (8: 19, 26). Our victory in the good warfare of **the** faith will not be realised with arms of flesh but with holy hands lifted up before the Lord.

M.A. Imourhuede, G. Okwena

From Birkenhead: With the euphoria of victory at Jericho still very evident the children of Israel moved on to face a new enemy, the people of Ai. A painful defeat at their hands with some loss of life brought the Israelites to a realisation that all was not well. They were self-confident, making their own plans (Josh. 7: 3). It was considered that if they had waited on the Lord in prayer then it would have been brought to their notice that there was sin the camp. Because one man, Achan, had sinned, all the people were viewed as sinners (Josh. 7:11). The process in the garden of Eden where Eve was tempted is here repeated (Josh. 7: 21) saw... coveted... took.

It is always God's purpose to lead victoriously, and today we may need to consider the possibility of failure due to our approaching life as the people did at Ai. Sin must always be dealt with or there will be no blessing for the people, and it was not until Achan had been identified and put to death that the people could move on to further victory. The church of God in Corinth had to recognise sin and deal with it (1 Cor. 5) realising that the sin of one affected the whole church (1 Cor. 5: 6). In the church judgement was to have a benefit for the sinner.

The second attack on Ai was far different from the first. All the people went into war compared with only two or three thousand on the first occasion. The far-reaching consequences of one man's sin and the resultant effect needed to achieve the victory over Ai which God intended are graphically illustrated by this story.

Achan, judging by the property that was destroyed at his death, must have been well blessed and yet he still sinned, and Adam, when in the garden, sinned although he was similarly placed. The people were allowed to take spoils from Ai but not Jericho where it was considered that the Lord was to have the firstfruits of victory as the people entered the land.

After victory over Ai had been achieved an altar made of unhewn stones was built in Mount Ebal. Mount Ebal was the place where the curse was read. The place of judgement was also the place of sacrifice. Man's forgiveness was on the basis of God's work represented by unhewn stones, untools by human hands. The stones were to have the law written thereon. Although we today are not under the dominion of the law we still need a reminder of the responsibility to live holy lives (Rom. 12:1-3) according to God's perfect law as seen in Christ. The sacrifices to be offered on the altar were burnt offerings and peace offerings - a reminder of the One who has secured our blessing and in whom God has great delight.

R. c. M. Bolt, R. D. Williams

From Derby: *The Defeat*. (Josh. 7). There were two avenues of thought concerning the defeat.

(a) Why did it take place?

(b) What are the implications for us in churches of God today?

In looking at (a) we found there was a sin of commission (Achan's) and a sin of omission (Joshua's). Considering, firstly, Achan, we saw how that he had acted deceitfully in taking the "devoted thing". In this regard we are not considering the taking, but the taken. Achan may well have thought it to be a small matter, but what disastrous consequences it had for the people of God.

What about Joshua? He had failed to seek God's guidance before acting. How could this be? He had, no doubt, had time to reflect upon the victory at Jericho. By now, though, it had turned into *his* victory. He had allowed the original sin of pride to come in. This is why Satan was cast out of Heaven (Is. 14: 12-15). We must make no mistake about it, God hates pride. We do well to remember how Nebuchadnezzar was struck down (see Dan. 4: 29-33). Maybe if Joshua had sought guidance from the Lord first, then defeat would never have taken place. That though, is conjecture [Comment 1).

Ultimately Joshua sent spies out, and they brought back a favourable report regarding what they had seen. We could just pause and consider how that God told Samuel, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16: 7). Upon receiving the report Joshua sent out the 3,000 men to take Ai. They were sent packing, along with consequent loss of life. There would probably be widows and orphans who would remember that day for some while. After this, one would think that Joshua should have realised there was sin in the camp. But no, *he* accused God of bringing them over Jordan to destroy them! [Comment 2].

We also considered how that the Lord told Joshua to get up and sort out the matter because *Israel* had sinned. Because of one man's disobedience many had suffered. We also saw how the sin was rooted out and dealt with.

We come now to (b). It was possible, no, probable that others had seen what Achan was about, and turned a blind eye on the matter. No doubt their train of thought may well have been, "There but for the grace of God go I". How often does this attitude affect those in churches of God today? How often do we know of someone who has erred in some way, and we leave off pointing out the error?

Unconfessed sin may well be the reason why the people of God today are failing.

Another lesson is to beware of victory. Once we get the impression we are living a victorious life, we may fall victim to that old sin of pride.

A heap of stones was erected over Achan's body (7: 26). This would no doubt have been a memorial to remind others in future of what had taken place. No doubt passers-by would see the heap and ask, "What are these stones here for"?

The Victory (Joshua 8). In the previous chapter we saw what happened when sin is not dealt with, and what happens when man tries to sort things out in his own strength. In this chapter we see what happens when things are done God's way. We do well in calling to mind Prov. 14: 12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death".

In discussion we saw how Ai was situated on a north-facing slope of a range of mountains.

Humanly speaking, Ai was in an impregnable position. We considered its strategic position, standing between the people of God and Bethel (the house of God. See Gen. 28: 16-19). Ai *had* to be removed so that the people of God could have free and unrestricted access to God's dwelling place. Just as there had to be *nothing* between them and God, so there should be *nothing* between us and God. In this context Ai can be viewed as typical of the world and its ways. We must put aside things pertaining to the world and its ways "with all malice" (see Eph. 4: 25-32).

In 7: 31 we read of the "altar of unhewn stones". We suggest that the stones typify saints in churches of God, while the plaster, binding them together, speaks of the influence of the Lord Jesus Christ binding *us* together [Comment 3].

It is interesting to note that Ai was built on Mount Ebal (the mountain of the curse), while on the opposite side was Mount Gerizim (the mountain of blessing). It is also worthy of note that Joseph's bones were buried on Mount Ebal (and probably the bones of other patriarchs as well). By way of illustration, if someone wanted to get from the mount of the curse to the mount of blessing, he would first have to pass by the "old man" (Joseph's bones) [Comment 4] It is

obvious as to the lessons we can draw from this. Apparently, Jacob's well was there. In order for us to pass from the curse to the blessing there must be some dealings with God's Holy Spirit (which is what Jacob's well speaks to us of).

We also found that in going from the curse to the blessing there would be the "altar of unhewn stones" with the Law of God written on it. It was pointed out that if we go in the opposite direction, we will be disregarding the Law of God, God's Holy Spirit, and we would also be digging up the "old man" once more.

Finally, stones in Scripture usually speak of witness, or testimony. In fact in Joshua 24: 27 we have a stone of witness which "heard all the words of the Lord".

L. E. Foster, G. W. Conway

From Dulwich: Obedience and complete conformity to the law was the principle which would lead to success and blessing for Israel (Josh. 1: 8; Deut. 28). The law was formulated into commandment (singular), statutes, and judgements (Deut. 6). The commandment had all the force of the fearful voice, authority and glory of Jehovah, as seen and heard on Mount Sinai. The statutes engraved on stone and parchment were of an abiding character, and were used in the judicial enactments in the case history of Israel.

Before Jericho, the commandment had been given through Joshua, "all in the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to the Lord (Josh. 6: 17-19), but the abiding statute "Thou shalt not covet" was violated, so judgement and punishment were carried out. In addition to this, Achan was in possession of something that was accursed of the law in the wider sense, and was symbolised in the hanging of the kings from the accursed trees (Josh. 8: 29, 10: 26). The response of Achan to the revelation of Jehovah should have been one of godly fear (Deut. 6: 2), and of love (Deut. 6: 5), but mammon, and the splendour of an idolatrous, Babylonian covering had taken over his affection, to the point of high-handed rebellion.

We now come to a different area: firstly the punishment of Achan's family, and secondly, subsequent defeat and loss to Israel. **If** Achan's sons and daughters were older than those defined in **Deut. 24: 16**, how far were they involved in Achan's trespass? **And what** of the contrast to this in the sons of Korah? The matter of **family**, collective or national responsibility for the sin of the individual, is difficult to resolve without it **being** left to the sovereign, righteous **judgement** of

God. It would seem this is exercised when there is failure of those who are delegated to rule in the kingdom of God (2 Sam. 24; 2 Sam. 21: 1-6). Compare also the tribe of Benjamin (Judges chapters 19, 20 and 21) [Comment 5].

Over-confidence and self sufficiency after the victory of Jericho, may have led to a lack of discretion, which was evident in their dealings with the Gibeonites. Had they forgotten the cautionary word of Moses that these nations were greater and mightier than they (Deut. 7: 1) ?

The matter of Achan could have been settled first without loss or defeat. Joshua's intercession was embarrassingly irrelevant [Comment 6] Unjudged sin in Israel had to be dealt with first. The omission to do this was the primary cause of defeat.

The men of Ai were sturdy fighters, like the tribe of Benjamin and the inhabitants of Gibeah, and so a similar stratagem was used to defeat both. Pride and arrogance led to Benjamin being almost cut off from Israel, Ai being left in a heap of ruins and its king hanging from a tree.

W. Townsend

From Kingston, Jamaica: The sin of Achan was such that it became a stumbling block for the people of Israel: "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump". Joshua, although he knew before he went into battle that he should have consulted Jehovah and asked for advice, instead consulted men who advised him, and this added to the insult of the accursed thing. These few verses should teach us that in everything we should seek the advice of the Lord so that we lean not upon our own understanding but trust in the Lord.

Samson in Judges 16: 20 and the parents of the boy Jesus in Luke 2: 44 supposed like Joshua that the Lord was with them when this was not so. In the Old Testament the Spirit gave power conditionally both to individuals and to the people collectively. Today, He indwells believers (John 14: 17). Collectively, however, His presence and power is conditional upon obedience.

Where there is failure collectively it is because of the individual's failure with a collective testimony. Compare 1 Cor. 3: 16-17 and 1 Cor. 6: 19 where collective and individual testimony are seen. From 2 Cor. 6: 16-18, we see the condition of God's presence rests upon separation from doctrinal and moral wrong.

God demanded then and still does demand that sin be openly confessed (named) (1 John 1: 9). [Comment 7]. The reason for this is the thought in 1 Tim. 5: 20 where it is stated that others might "fear" and learn a lesson in obeying the true and living God. Ananias and Sapphira's case in Acts 5 should be a lesson; "And great fear came upon the whole church" was the response after what happened to them (verse 11).

The sin of Achan was coveting, a clear breaking of the commandment which he knew so well, and this is idolatry (Col. 3: 5). It is clear to us that we should examine our motives in our dealing with the things around us and not be careless or casual with the things of the Lord. God was clear in His judgement in regard to Achan and his family; He wanted this family and their belongings to be separated from the people of Israel. As the will of God was carried out, Achan's sin was made a testimony to all the people and a monument was made to show God's judgement.

Finally, God displayed His pattern of victory over the king of Ai, a pattern which could not have failed. Similarly, a pattern is set out for our victory and this is set in Christ and obedience to Him. We must keep in mind the words of Peter (1 Pet. 4: 17) that judgement must first "begin at the house of God". Before we attack the enemy we must be sure that our life is in order as a testimony.

The fulfilment of it all was the service and worship that was offered on Mount Ebal. This was told to them by Moses in the wilderness (Deut 11: 26-32; 27: 1-7). Obviously Joshua did not remember these sayings or else he would have consulted the Lord and he knew and was ashamed. This is evident in the fact that he tore his clothes, fell to the earth and covered his face with dust (Josh. 7: 6).

Finally, our responsibility is to God and not man; "am I seeking to please men?" (Gal. 1: 10). Our victory is placed with Him in power and in bearing His reproach outside the camp. We must not shun, as Paul did not shun, to declare "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20: 27).

M. Morris

From Liverpool: *Overconfidence or Realism?* In contrast with the fearful report of the 12 spies that Moses sent out, Joshua's spies predicted an easy victory. Some felt this was self-sufficient overconfidence since God told Joshua later to take the whole army against Ai: others that it was a realistic appraisal of the situation pointing to the dismay at the defeat and the fact that they did not know, nor could have known, that because of Achan's undiscovered sin God was punishing them. Either way, the unexpected set-back made them do what they ought to have done at the outset, namely consult the Lord.

Sin: the effect on the individual: Achan's sin was great, (i) It was a direct rebellion against the word of God. (ii) It involved stealing what belonged to the Lord, (iii) It was an attack on the holiness of God. Even when it was obvious that the sin had been discovered Achan refused to own up and only admitted what he had done when God pointed him out as the guilty one. For this he paid a great price.

Sin: the effect on the people of God; We do not consider that all individual sin will have a devastating effect on the testimony as a whole - but sometimes because of its seriousness a particular sin will have this effect, for there is an intrinsic unity. It was not the lack of numerical strength which lost the battle but the sin of Achan.

Sin: the effect on descendants: In Genesis 38 there is recorded the unhappy story of Judah's relationship with his daughter-in-law resulting in the birth of a child called Zerah. Zerah was the father of Zimri, who was the father of Carmi, the father of Achan. However unfair this may seem to us, the word of God teaches that sin may have its effect down the generations. Such is its seriousness. [Comment 8]

Did the punishment violate Deut. 24: 16? it is strange that not only Achan was punished but that a kind of expiatory sentence was passed not only on his family but his entire household including his possessions. The law expressly forbade this practice. Did Joshua overreact? Are we to assume they were all implicated in a plot? (What about his cattle, donkey and sheep, if so?) The record does not tell us [Comment 5].

Heart Searching: We felt that there must have been a lot of heart-searching and concern as the tribes were presented before the Lord for judgement. No one would be certain he was innocent, and this whole episode would impress upon the people their dependence upon the Lord.

Sin: the Antidote: God's word in our hearts and minds resulting in actions which please the Lord is the answer to the problem of sin. In 8: 34 Joshua read all the words of the law. This is so necessary; both publicly and privately we should read the word of the Lord and meditate on it.

D. J. Webster

From **Nottingham:** Achan's sin and the taking of Ai shows the effect that sin has amongst God's chosen people; the problems when sin was present and the success when it had been expelled.

The corporate effect that Achan's sin had has a parallel with the churches of God today. The sins individual brothers and sisters commit

reflect on the image of the whole church in the town [and its image before God - *Eds.*) [Comment 9]

Joshua's approach to God after his defeat is interesting. His attitude is unselfish as it is not his death that he fears in the extinction of Israel but the fact that God's Name will have no way to survive. [Comment 10]. God, however, had expected Joshua to realise what the reason for His wrath was. As a leader Joshua should have known that there was sin within the community. He admonished Joshua, telling him to act against the sin instead of remaining prostrate. Here, again, there is a similarity with the churches of God. There should be a knowledge of the church's influence in the local area and sin acted on. There is time for prayer and a time for practical work.

God's method of picking out Achan is interesting. The districts and individual churches of God compare with the "breaking down" of Israel into tribes and families.

Amongst the devoted things which Achan stole was a Babylonian robe. The link with us in the present day is that pleasing and appealing things and ideas may be introduced into the church from outside influences. These are not from God and should be destroyed like the Babylonian robe. The nature of the goods Achan stole were such that he could never use them or put them on show. It was his sheer covetousness that brought about the problem. Although the sin was not known by the other Israelites, God knew about it and therefore it spoiled the relationship of everyone with God. This is so today where, although a sin may not be known by others within a church, God is all-knowing and the sin does affect the church's spiritual relationship with God.

The destroying of Ai is different from the destroying of Jericho in that Ai was destroyed by a skilful tactical manoeuvre and not by a miracle as Jericho was [Comment 11]. The contrast between the two attempts at attacking Ai is also great, showing how that when sin is not holding back and preventing clear access to God then great things can be done.

The renewal of the covenant on Mount Ebal **carried** out the order given by Moses (Deut. **11: 29, 27: 11-1. 8**). It was important to **read** the law as a nation. The same applies today.

D. Thompson

From Paisley: The tragic event of Ai must surely be a lesson to all who call themselves Christians. Here we have God's appointed nation defeated by a small city (Josh. 7: 3-4).

There are few reasons for Israel's defeat, **the first** of these

being Achan's sin (Josh. 7:1). Achan had sinned before God by taking those few items from Jericho. This act shows us the full meaning of the verse "for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23). It took just one man to sin to lead Israel to defeat. So it is with us, our one sin or more likely our many sins can lead us to fail God.

Israel then depended upon the strength of their own army and not that of God (Josh. 7: 3-5). Today, however, we may fall into the same trap. We attempt to carry out our Christian service without using God's strength, relying on our own, resulting in failure. Consider the verse "If God is for us, who is against us" (Rom. 8: 31). We can see that without using God we fail. On the other hand, no one can stand against God's power.

Most important, Israel failed to communicate with their God and strength. This was the worst fault because if they had consulted God then they could have cleared up their other faults. It was God's desire for Israel to take the Promised Land so there was no way that God would lead them to their deaths.

Do we seek God's guidance today? We fear that there may be many remembrance meetings, tracting expeditions, gospel meetings, youth work and so on that may be undertaken without it I Comment 12]

So why did Israel then go on to take Ai? Joshua humbled himself before God and communicated with the Lord. Joshua was told of Israel's sin. If we wish to succeed with the Lord's work we must follow Joshua's example of eradicating the sin from Israel. The Lord then instructed Joshua in what manner Israel was to take Ai. Joshua hearkened unto the word of the Lord. We too must listen and obey. Relying on our own strength will only lead to failure. Remember. God does not ask us to do anything which we cannot.

The communication with God was of vital importance. Joshua discovered Israel's sin and was also instructed how to take Ai. If we want to *give* to the Lord as we ought, or to go and work for Him we, too, must pray beforehand. Praying afterwards may be too late as it was here. The Christian must pray and obey; doing this we will never fail.

The Christian that most pleases God will be the one who humbles himself before God and allows the Lord to use him as a tool for His
service_

W. F. McKaig

From Surulere: The remarkable victory over Jericho gave no small confidence and joy to the children of Israel. The humiliating defeat they suffered at Ai after that victory was, no doubt, very disheartening. In self-confidence and "assumed" presence of God, Israel went to war with Ai without the direction of God. The physical preparations were taken care of: "And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai . . . , Go up and spy out the land" (Josh. 7: 2), "Let not all the people go up" (verse 3).

In the case of Jericho, Joshua acted only as directed by God (Josh. 6: 2 and 6: 17). Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10: 17). We are exhorted to walk by faith and not by sight. The spies reported "make not all the people toil up thither, for they are but few".

Regrettably therefore the people met with defeat. Churches of God (and the individual saints within the churches) suffer defeat if they rest upon past victories and are not guided by God's word. We are commanded, "... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2: 12). We cannot expect victory if we exclude self-examination, confession and repentance from any known sin (2 Cor. 13: 5; 1 John 1: 8, 9). Also we should never under-estimate our common enemy.

One man, Achan, was seen as the source of the defeat and losses which Israel suffered. Our individual attitudes within and outside the church have a far-reaching effect on the performance of the church. Our individual action can either be a curse or a blessing to the Fellowship (Josh. 22: 20).

A question was raised: why did Achan covet the accursed things though definite instructions were given concerning them? (Josh. 6: 18). The question was answered in the light of the scripture in 1 John 2: 15, 16.

- (a) Lust of the eyes, as in the example of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3: 6; Mat. 6: 22, 23).
- (b) Pride, as in the desire to have more than others.
- (c) Covetousness, as in the greed for wealth (Josh. 7: 21; Luke 12: 15; Mark 7: 21-22).

We are exhorted to keep our hearts with all diligence (Prov. 4: 23), or we fall into the same wrong example of Achan. The severity of the punishment meted out to Achan was considered. God is of purer eyes than to behold evil (Hab. 1: 13). Sin must be punished. The punishment was meant to serve as a deterrent to others. In dealing with matters of known sin, the church of God carries out public judgement

as commanded by the Scriptures (1 Tim. 5: 20; 1 Cor. 5: 4. 5)
[Comment 13]

Joshua's attitude in the face of defeat was also considered (Josh. 7:7-9) "... wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to cause us to perish"? It is a commonplace experience for us to blame God in the face of defeat, difficulties and disappointment which we might have brought upon ourselves as a result of our ignorance of the Scriptures or disobedience to what the Scriptures command. Leaders must learn to find out the state of their flock before they turn to ask God, 'why'? However, Joshua's attitude was also seen as the expression of his concern for the glory of God (Josh. 7: 6-9).

E. S. Okwong, E. Uno

COMMENTS

- (Derby):** Since it was Joshua's normal practice to seek the Lord before each of his battles then we may deduce that he was in error when he failed to do so before attacking Ai. There is no evidence to suggest that this was due to pride. That would be a very serious thing to lay to his charge. *I. E. P.*
- (Derby):** Joshua was perplexed and was desperately trying to understand the course of events. *E. A.*
- (Derby):** The altar speaks of the enduring of the divine fire by the Lord Jesus Christ at a particular place appointed by God. It is difficult to see how saints in churches of God have anything to do with this. Further, such saints are more usually typified by hewn rather than unhewn stones (e. g. 1 Kings 5 and 6). Perhaps contributors have more to offer on this matter. *J. E. P.*
- (Derby):** The bones of Joseph were carried into the land of promise in fulfilment of that command which he made by faith before he died (Josh. 24: 32, Heb. 11: 22). It may be that we have before us the experience of the apostle which he described in 2 Cor. 4: 10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body". The reverse of this would be seen in Heb. 6: 6, "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame".
E. A.
- (Dulwich and Liverpool):** If the sons and daughters were too young or were not implicated in any plot, the purpose of bringing them to the valley of Achor could have been to show them the judgement, so that thereby they would be instructed to avoid such conduct. In

2 Kings 14: 6 the application of Deut. 24: 16 was observed carefully. In Josh. 7: 25 two different words are used for stoning. The first stoning was of Achan, the burning was of him and all that he had (Josh. 7: 15), including, for example, his tent (7: 24). and the second stoning included also his oxen, his asses, and his sheep.

E. A.

One can only assume there was guilty knowledge on **the part** of Achan's family. As the paper from Dulwich points **put, there is a contrast with the judgement carried out after the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram** (Num. 16: 1-35). In this case, although **"their wives and their sons, and their little ones"** stood **with them when the sentence** was pronounced, it was only **"the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods"** that perished, as Num. 26: 10, 11 **makes clear. The animals were simply part of Achan's goods.**

P. L. H.

Deut. 24: 16 deals principally **with substitutionary death.** No one substituted for **Achan. He was a man** who could **expect nothing but a "certain fearful expectation of judgement"** (Heb. 10: 26-31). **Neither he nor his family made** expiation for no sinner **can die for the sins of another.** Expiation for what **happened at Ai would be made** according to Lev. 4 and 5, **which have in view the death of the Lord Jesus at Calvary. By taking the devoted thing into his tent, Achan placed the same curse on his belongings** (Josh. 6: 18), therefore they shared **the same fate of those things and were burned with fire. We think the gold and silver would be returned to the treasury where they rightly belonged. The lesson today is simple and obvious. Those who harbour or practise the habits of spiritual Babylon defile the separation of the people of God, hinder their progress and, since they are part of a people whose very reason for existence rests on the pledge to be separated from ail other peoples, cannot escape the judgement of God. These scriptures, as do those concerning Korah and the sons of Benjamin show in different ways the importance of the unity of the people of God. Although it is true that leaders should be able to discern the fruit of hidden sin among the people, it is hardly fair to blame them for all the secret sins of the people. Moses was certainly not at fault in the case of Korah whose surviving sons presumably obeyed the call of Moses to separate** (Num.

16: 21) >

I. E. P.

6. (Dulwich): Joshua was encountering such a challenge to his faith that he was inclined to see things at first from a human standpoint.

E. A.

7. (Kingston): 1 John 1: 9 is usually taken to apply to the individual's confession of sin to the Lord, not public confession before others, although of course admission of wrongs done to others is sometimes

necessary. Then Matt. 18: 15-20 is the scripture to follow.

P. L. H.

8. (Liverpool): But Perez and his descendants who include the Lord Jesus (after the flesh) also trace their lineage to Genesis 38. Is it not more a question of giving "diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1: 10)?

LE. P.

9. (Nottingham): "Image" suggests knowledge on the part of others about sins committed, but it is not stated that others knew of Achan's sin before God revealed it.

10. (Nottingham); God would in any case lightly esteem all who despised His Name, and this without respect of persons, whether in the case of those who dishonoured their position, or those who gloated over the result.

E. A.

It was not that God's Name would not survive, but that God had placed His Name upon His people, and the failure of His people would bring discredit upon Him.

P. L. H.

11. (Nottingham): The tactical manoeuvre was in itself no guarantee of victory. The Lord said. "I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people and his city and his land".

12. (Paisley): Such consideration is necessarily limited to our own experience.

E. A.

13. (Surulere): 1 Timothy 5: 20 refers to overseers.

LE. P.

ERRATA

BS 8502 p. 20; line 21 for "fast" read "food".

BS 8502 p. 20, line 25 for "husband" read "household".

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8506

As many of our contributors this month point out, the deception of Joshua by the Gibeonites, described in Joshua 9, was only possible because ^Mthe men... asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord" (v. 14). This was in spite of the fact that specific provisions had been made for divine guidance through a priest with the Urim and Thummim (Num. 27: 21). Through this omission men acting in good faith used their judgment to apply the provisions of Deut. 20:10-15 to the Gibeonites, instead of those of Deut. 7: 1, 2 and 20: 16-18. They thus did wrong without intending to. The moral of this story is clear; we need to know the word of God and use our minds to apply it, but we need to ask for discernment given by the Spirit of God before we do so.

A further point of importance is the binding nature of the promise given. In this case, the princes of the congregation had sworn by the Lord in making the covenant with the Gibeonites, and even though it had been obtained under false pretences, the promise could, not be withdrawn. This was the Lord's commandment to Israel (Num. 30). There are a number of instances in Scripture where men made vows which they afterwards regretted (e. g. Jephthah and Herod), and they should warn us not to make rash promises which we might not wish to keep. The Lord Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, told His disciples not to swear oaths at all but simply to let their yes mean yes, and their no mean no. Swearing effectively calls in God as the guarantor of the fulfilment of the oath, and the passage studied in 2 Sam. 21 illustrates the dangers to which this can expose the swearer, and even others. James has an echo of this: "swear not... that ye fall not under judgement". The saying that "a gentleman's word is his bond" has an old-fashioned ring today, but it is none the worse for that. It should be true of every Christian.

P. L. H.

THE COVENANT WITH **THE** GIBEONITES (Joshua 9: 1-10: 15; 2 Sam. 21)

From Ajegunle: It has been suggested that a covenant is an agreement between two equal and unequal persons or parties on oath.

Joshua and Israel made another mistake concerning the Gibeonites, for they were not quick at identifying the Gibeonites, yet made no effort to enquire from the Lord. They did not seek the Lord in the matter of covenant which the Gibeonites put to them (see Josh. 9: 14; Prov. 3: 5). Although the Gibeonites were mighty men, when they heard of the works of the Lord, they were put to fear and took a humble stand before Israel. We suggest that the Lord honoured their faith, for they got a portion with the Israelites (Is. 30: 1-2; 2 Cor. 6: 17-18) [Comment 1].

The principles of separation and seeking the Lord are the same in both Old and New Testament in the matter of making agreements, promises or covenants.

In the *terms* of the covenant,

- (a) the Gibeonites were to be servants, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of the Lord (9: 23, 27),
- (b) Israelites were to rule and protect them.

In the *blessings* of the covenant the Gibeonites were associated with God's house (see Ps. 84: 9-10). We note that although Joshua did not speak to the Lord when he made the covenant, He however encouraged him when His glorious Name was brought to test (10: 8).

The *consequences* of the covenant are seen in 2 Sam. 21. The man (Saul) who broke the covenant lost his children because blood is required for blood, and God is faithful in all covenants affecting His great Name.

The Lord manifested His mercies in the matter of the Gibeonites (see Deut. 7: 1-2). The Gibeonites (Gentiles), it seems, were grafted, because of their faith to the Israelites, but in the New Testament the Gentile (we) are grafted into the purpose of God when Israel (the Nation) fell due to unbelief (see Rom. 11: 14-19)

M. Imoukhuede, G. Okwena

From Birkenhead: The exploits of Joshua and the children of Israel were becoming widely known by the inhabitants of the land and many were mobilising for war.

However, the inhabitants of Gibeon chose to work craftily, posing

to Joshua and the princes as coming from a far country. On the basis of Deut. 20 a treaty was correctly concluded with them before their deceit was realised. This agreement was binding in the Lord's sight but He was able to work out His purpose nonetheless.

It was considered that the key error in the matter was that counsel was not asked at the mouth of the Lord (Josh. 9: 14) and thus they compromised their position. A lesson for God's people today is to be alert to seek the Lord's guidance at all times and thus appreciate that a situation which we may naturally view as of little consequence may in actual fact be crucial. The involvement of leaders in this failure is cautionary and the condemnation of them by the people is sad. Leaders today need to be prayerful and aware of the significant consequences of failure to lead in right paths. They value highly the support in prayer and practice of those for whom they have a care.

The alliance of kings in Josh. 10 made war against Gibeon and thereby drew the Israelites into the conflict. On this occasion there was a clear word from the Lord, and He intervened on the people's behalf to bring about a decisive victory.

Consideration of this incident from the point of view of the inhabitants of Gibeon, caused us to wonder about their measure of the knowledge of God and whether they had an attitude similar to Rahab in seeking peace terms. Although a servile role was decreed for them we saw that in later years they are identified amongst those involved in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah (Neh. 3: 7).

R. D. Williams, A. Hyland

From Cowdenbeath: The early verses of ch. 9 describe a uniting of evil forces in an attempt to defeat Israel. This was not so much a uniting for defence as a grouping for attack. This was a different situation from Jericho. The kings of Canaan were determined to stop Israel from further invading their land but God had promised it for an inheritance and no army of men can defeat the purposes of God.

These events, however, serve as a solemn reminder of the combined forces of the adversary in every form today. Despite Jericho, Ai and the warnings of ch. 2:9, 10, these kings persisted in battle. Similarly, the Devil accepts no defeat. "Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour^M (1 Pet. 5:8). The 'roaring lion' is also a wily serpent.

The Gibeonites put on a pretence to achieve their objectives. They intended to deceive Joshua and Israel and they achieved their goal.

Heb. 3: 13 speaks about "the deceitfulness of sin", aptly illustrated here [Comment 2]. We believe that the story of the Gibeonites appears after that of Jericho and Ai, not only from a point of chronology but to warn us of the fact that deceit is often more insidious than open hostility. Like the disguise of the Gibeonites it is more difficult to detect. 2 Sam. 21 proves this point.

It is worthy of note that the Gibeonites met Joshua at Gilgal, the place of covenant relationship and separation (Gen. 17: 9, 10). This was an attempt to break down that essential separateness which must characterize the people of God. It succeeded, and the Gibeonites became a thorn in the flesh of Israel. Ex. 34: 11-13 had warned against it. Verse 7 calls the Gibeonites, "Hivites". These were the people deceived by the sons of Jacob in earlier days. Now the tables had turned and Israel was deceived.

The enemy used one of the oldest and craftiest of all tricks. They flattered to deceive in the following manner:

- they pretended to have heard of Israel's fame from afar
- they posed as subordinates
- they pretended to honour the Lord God of Israel
- they stated that they were from "a very far country" appealing to the conditions of Deut. 20: 10-16.

Appearances also can be deceptive and the Gibeonites proved it with their old clothes and stale bread. Israel walked by sight. We believe that the unfortunate alliance was really born out of the fact that Israel "asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord" (9: 14). They should have known better, especially Joshua who for so long had been close to God. It proves the point that, off guard, we can fall again in the same evil and that even mature leaders of God's people can lapse. The lapses of Ai and the Gibeonites remind us of the constant need for waiting patiently in prayer.

Had Israel waited, they would have discovered how close they had been to Gibeon and the truth of the matter would have been evident. As it was, an oath had been sworn and Israel's leaders were careful to abide by it. Despite the lies of the Gibeonites, God's law in the matter of the oath was clear (Num. 30: 2).

The Gibeonites suffered in that liberty was denied them as Canaanites (9: 25) but they knew God's divine protection. They certainly believed in the fulfilment of God's purposes for Israel and, it would

appear, had decided in their unique way to appeal to His mercy. They attributed all to the might of the God of Israel whereas, in ch. 10, Adonizedek apparently had no thought of God at all.

We compared the new allegiance of the Gibeonites, renouncing their former "freedom" and the resultant attack of the enemy with the concerted attack of the Devil on all those who, trusting Christ, follow Him in service.

R. I. Shaw

From **Derby**: One of the lessons which we may learn from the story of the Gibeonites relates to the dangers of deceit. Our adversary is described as "the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole inhabited earth" (Rev. 12:9 RVM). He is the arch-deceiver and he uses many agents to carry out his pernicious work. Deceit inevitably leads to lies and the Lord Jesus described the great deceiver as the father of lies.

We shall never be faced with circumstances identical with those narrated in Joshua 9 but disciples of the Lord have to be on the alert if they are to avoid being led astray by deceit and caused to forfeit blessings and privileges that are in God's purpose for them. Paul said to the Corinthians "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ" (2 Cor. 11: 3). Later the apostle warned Timothy that in "later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies" (1 Tim. 4: 1-2). Shortly before his departure to be with Christ he wrote, "Evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3: 13). We may deceive ourselves. We may be deceived by individuals. There is a very real danger that deceit may be systematized and organised. Many children of God have been deceived by false doctrine.

We thought of mistakes that were made by Joshua and the people of Israel. The first one was one of omission. They "asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord". The Lord had made remarkable provision for the guidance of the leaders of His people in making decisions of policy and strategy. It was most important that the leaders should hear the voice of the Lord and receive guidance. "He (Joshua) shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgement of the Urim before the Lord" (Num. 27: 21). Joshua failed here. Failure to seek counsel from the Lord leads to actions and

attitudes based on our own opinions. We today do not have the Urim and the Thummim that the high priest of old carried, but we have the indwelling Spirit of truth to guide us and we have the inspired Scriptures which the Spirit uses to counsel us in the truth. It will be to our peril to neglect such counsel.

Joshua and God's people erred also in making a covenant with the Gibeonites. The Lord had clearly commanded His people that they were not to make covenants with the nations in Canaan whom they would dispossess. The failure to take counsel from the Lord led to a situation where active disobedience ensued [Comment 3].

The sequel to the incident involving the Gibeonites offers lessons on the important matter of the sovereignty of God and demonstrates how He can overrule for the fulfilment of His own purposes. We noted in 2 Sam. 21 that Saul's wrong actions in his dealings with the Gibeonites were said to proceed from his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah. Zeal may be an excellent characteristic but if it is not according to knowledge and directed by the will of God it can be a menace.

Derby Bible Reading

From Ibadan: The circumstances that led the Gibeonites to devise a means of entering into covenant with the Israelites can be traced to the fear of being exterminated by God through the people of Israel. Having learned of the fate of Jericho and Ai and the great power of God manifested in the life of the Israelites and fearing the terrible consequences of falling into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10: 31), they decided not to join hands with their Gentile colleagues who had formed a common front to fight their enemy, Israel. They knew that if they should endeavour to fight them, they would not triumph because God was fighting for Israel.

But in spite of this reason for making a covenant with the Israelites, the deception adopted in the process was not in accordance with the will of God, and so the Gibeonites erred by thinking that they could avert God's judgement by foul means. If they believed in the saving power of the living God and they had heard about Him, how He saved Rahab and her household with Rahab receiving God, they also could have waited on His saving grace. One cannot mock God and go scot-free (Gal. 6: 7). Therefore it is totally unnecessary to adopt deception as a means of gaining favour with God, for God is true (John 3: 33) and anyone who wants to come to God's side should be true himself (John 4: 24).

Considering the manoeuvre of the Gibeonites to outwit Joshua and the Israelites, one would agree with the words of the Lord that the

children of the world are in their generation wiser than the children of light (Luke 16:8). This poses a challenge for Christians to be prepared, watchful and vigilant to guard against the whims and caprices of the Devil. Joshua and the princes could not have been outwitted had they kept the commandment of God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9: 10) and this can be demonstrated by keeping to His commandments, so when human wisdom fails or when man is outwitted, God cannot be outwitted. Joshua and the entire nation of Israel had never been kept in the dark as to what the commandments of God were. God had on many occasions warned them against unholy alliance with the Gentile nations especially the dwellers of Canaan (Ex. 23: 32; Ex. 34: 15; Deut. 7: 1-2; Num. 33: 53). For anyone just to agree with these people would have amounted to flouting God's injunction on the issue (Heb. 2: 1; 2 Cor. 6: 14-18). To avoid conflicting with God on His principled decision, Joshua and the princes could have employed two possible avenues, either the discerning Spirit of God or seeking the face of God in prayer.

What happened to the Israelites can also happen to us today. What the Bible directs us to do is (1 John 4: 1) to test every spirit whether it be of God or not. Every suspected device of the evil one should be subjected to the test of the word of God (2 Cor. 2: 11; 1 Pet. 5: 8, 9). The carelessness of prayerlessness that is evident in Joshua 9: 14 is another deadly sin. The Lord enjoins us to pray so as not to enter into temptation (Lk. 22: 40; 1 Thes. 5: 17).

Another striking point in the story is the attitude of the princes and Joshua to the word of oath they gave to these Gibeonites in the Name of the Lord. The ungodly attitude of covenant-breaking is common today. We ought to be watchful in this regard (Rom. 1: 31; Ecc. 5: 1-5). To show God's perfect backing of this covenant, the first attempt to exterminate the Gibeonites by the five kings of the Canaanites was put off by God through the victory He won for the Gibeonites by Joshua. The terrible repercussion that attended the killing of Gibeonites by king Saul is another proof that God sanctioned the covenant made by His people. The oath with the Gibeonites made by Joshua and the princes had the seal of God. It was not surprising therefore to see David sticking to the principles of the oath, having learned of the same from his fathers (2 Tim. 2: 2).

M. O. Ajagbe

From Kingston, **Jamaica**: Israel did not learn by their experience and again were deceived by the guile of their enemy. This time it was the guile of the Gibeonites, the act of a unity that seemingly was correct in the eyes of Joshua their leader. Ex. 23: 20-33;

34: 10-17 warned plainly that they must make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land. Once again this shows that men in leadership roles must never lean upon their own understanding but seek the guidance of God every minute of their lives. Today this involves total submission to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Joshua was again looking at compassion in a human sense and not at what God had told him [Comment 4]. Num. 27: 21 bears witness that the counsel of the Lord should have been sought before Israel did anything. We are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This brings us under the total command of the counsel of God in the affairs of worship and service (Eph. 5: 18).

The Bible recalls that they worked "wily". This word has the meaning of craftiness by using deceit. We note in Josh. 9: 24 that the Gibeonites had heard how God through His servant had told Joshua to destroy all when they came to dwell in the land. We note that the Gibeonites did not come to Israel to know the true God, but were only concerned about saving their lives.

In Josh. 9: 1-2 we see nations who were hostile against each other willing to forget their differences to fight against God's people. We see the same thing today in Christendom; those who claim to have the ecumenical spirit are willing to drop doctrine and unite under the banner of God which is Love. Those who resist this type of false unity are usually looked down upon. However, the Bible teaches that they who worship God must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4: 24). It is clear from 1 Cor. 13: 6 that love can only rejoice in the Truth.

M. Morris

From Liverpool: The Gibeonites were acting purely out of self-interest. Their subtle ruse even involved their not mentioning the recent battles, the actual cause of their fear, which would have given the game away. Their intelligence service was working well: they knew of Moses^f command (9: 24) and had heard of the total destructions of Jericho and Ai. Their fear was not fear of the Lord but of an unstoppable Israeli army, despite what they said (9: 9)!

The Fey to the problem. "The men of Israel... asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord". Often we are driven to the Lord when faced with some problem or situation that common sense tells us we cannot stand up against. Sadly we are tempted to rely on our own judgement when the situation seems straightforward. Such was the situation faced by Joshua.

God's prerogative of mercy. We could see no **evidence** of faith or fear of the Lord that we see in the case of Rahab. Despite this God overruled in this way to bring mercy to these people who otherwise would have perished. Repentance came later. We felt as so often in these historical narratives that we must not judge these people on the basis of Christian morality. How else could they have been saved? They could hardly have thrown themselves on Joshua's mercy for he had a command to destroy them, and only strong leadership stopped them being destroyed later with what could have been disastrous consequences to the people of God [Comment 5],

Were they cursed? We delight in the words of Psalm 84: "a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84: 10). So how was perpetual service in the house of God a curse? Surely viewed spiritually it is a privilege [Comment 6].

A lessor. The Gibeonites enjoyed certain privileges **and** divine protection because of their relationship to the people of God. Eph. 2 spells out our similar position in being brought into privileges to which we had no claim, through the mercy of God.

Horrific vengeance? We failed to understand the event of 2 Sam. 21 and were left with a lot of unanswered questions. Did God really withhold rain on account of Saul's actions years before and after Saul's death? Did God really require human sacrifice to take away the curse? Was David right in acceding to the demands of the Gibeonites? Certainly a man reaps what he sows and nobody lives to himself, but this seems excessive. Are we missing something? I Comment 7 J.

David J. Webster

From Nottingham: Deut. 20 tells how battles or wars were to be fought by Israel. If the cities were those which the Lord was giving to them as an inheritance, then they were not to leave anything alive (Deut. 20: 16). There was, however, a different set of rules for cities which were very far off. Presumably the Israelites agreed not to destroy Gibeon completely, because they were deceived into thinking it was not a neighbouring city (Josh. 9:16). In the end they could not fight the Gibeonites because of the treaty that was made between the two peoples (Josh. 9: 15).

We thought that it was important to realise that the Israelites made a big mistake in making the peace treaty, because they did not "inquire of the Lord" (v. 14). They made hasty decisions without first

asking God's help. Sometimes we might make the same mistakes. Whatever we intend to do, we must ask God first for His guidance in our decisions.

Although the Gibeonites lied to the Israelites because they were afraid of them, God was merciful to them because He had a purpose for them. They were made, by Joshua, to be woodcutters and water-carriers (9: 27). They were to do this service in the place of the altar wherever the Lord would choose it to be. The altar was eventually set up in Shiloh (Josh. 18: 1). At the end of David's days it was in Jerusalem where the house of God was built to enable man to approach God in worship. The place today is Mount Zion where the "Heavenly Jerusalem" is (Heb. 12: 22). To that heavenly Mount Zion we bring our spiritual sacrifices to God, if we are in the house of God (1 Pet. 2: 4-6).

God had a purpose for the Gibeonites. Their service associated with the altar would have prevented them from worshipping false gods and idols. Such things are detestable to God. The Gibeonites were thus saved from doing things that were evil in God's sight.

In Genesis 11 we read how the nations tried to shut out God. While in Genesis 12 we read how God chose one man, Abram, out of the nations to make him a great nation (Gen. 12: 2) which was to be a people for God. The Gentiles had no immediate share in the covenants of God made with Abram, which all related to Israel first. God did promise, however, that eventually all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12: 3). This has come true, in part, in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and will also be true in a future day. Yet in God's mercy and grace some of the Gentiles (such as the Gibeonites) in the past did not have to wait for the future day, but were allowed an early share in the blessings of Israel.

Although they had used trickery God was merciful and He gave them a place of peace with Israel. In a similar way we, who are Gentiles, had no share in the covenants God made with Israel, yet, in His grace, God has opened the way of salvation to both Jew and Gentile, and we who once were afar off are now made near through the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Steven Greenwood

From Paisley: The possession of the land involved conflict of different kinds: such are the stratagems of warfare. The battle with the enemy may not always be conducted by frontal assault; in Ai the enemy was lured out of the city by seeming retreat of the Israelites, while the men of war occupied the city from the rear. At Gibeon the Israelites were "taken in" by deception, which led them to do the thing which the Lord commanded not to be done, namely making a covenant with the inhabitants of the land (see Deut. 7: 2). We are reminded that we also have a wily adversary (Eph. 6: 11), against whom we need to be on constant guard, because we also can experience defeats as well as triumphs.

A covenant is a compact which was in those days sometimes made by passing between two pieces of flesh (see Gen. 15: 9, 10), and was often accompanied by eating together (Gen. 31: 44, 54). It can apply between two individuals (1 Sam. 18: 3), and also applies in the marriage bond (Mai. 2: 14). It should not be broken.

When Saul slew the Gibeonites he was breaking a solemn covenant sworn before the Lord (Josh. 9: 19). The famine in David's day signified God's disapproval, and could only be put right by death, this time the death of the seven men of Saul's family (2 Sam. 21). This reminds us of the heinousness of sin in the sight of God and leads to a fresh appreciation of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ who was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5: 21).

The conflict with the five kings of the Amorites led to unprecedented divine intervention in the form of hailstones from heaven and the sun standing still upon Gibeon. How this latter incident came about baffles human understanding and seems to go against scientific principles but it illustrates the mighty power of the God of creation [Comment 8].

J. Renfrew

From **Surulere**: The covenant between the Israelites and the Gibeonites was seen as an "unholy agreement" with far-reaching consequences. It was noted that our future happiness and even the happiness of the future generation may be greatly marred by what actions we take today.

What led to this agreement soon after the resounding victory over Ai was noted:

- the leaders of Israel were deceived by the outward appearance of the Gibeonites;
- although the men of Israel examined the bread and the wineskins, they did not seek counsel from the Lord;

- Joshua single-handedly entered into the agreement and the leaders ratified it.

Joshua and the whole congregation soon discovered that they were deceived, but it was too late. The agreement had been sealed by an oath in the Name of the Lord, the God of Israel. The glory and the Name of God were at stake. In realisation of this, the leaders and the whole people said "we may not touch them" (Josh. 9: 19).

We saw in the above the danger of relying on our wisdom and taking decisions without seeking what the will of God is in the matter. Appearances often deceive. We should walk by faith and not by sight (1 Cor. 3: 19; 2 Cor. 5: 7). Fellowship in the decision-taking process by leaders of God's people was also noted as one vital omission on the part of Joshua at the particular occasion [Comment 9]

The sovereignty of God was seen in the way God dealt with the Gibeonites. Although they obtained the favour through deceit, nevertheless they came under God's protection (Josh. 10: 5-6; 2 Sam. 21).

"So the king called the Gibeonites and said to them" (2 Sam. 21: 2). We notice here the principle of restitution. Israel was under obligation to meet the demand of the Gibeonites. They were to be appeased so that the inheritance of the Lord might be blessed. Even after we have been pardoned by God, there is need to ask forgiveness from those we have offended.

E. S. Okwong, E. Uno

COMMENTS

1. (Ajegunle): We can hardly say that Joshua was wrong to make a treaty with the Gibeonites and at the same time maintain that this was the Lord honouring their faith. Their elaborate deceit contradicted their profession to know the Name and fame of the Lord who had worked such wonders in Egypt. They were like those who profess faith but show by their works it is vain.

2. (Cowdenbeath): Friends in Cowdenbeath are exactly right here. Hebrews 3 deals with entry to the rest of God which is the spiritual counterpart of Joshua's entry into Canaan

I. E. P.

3. (Derby): It seems a little hard to call Joshua's action "active disobedience", since he did not know he was doing wrong. It was "unwitting sin", such as that described in Lev. 4: 2.

4. (Kingston, **Jamaica**): It was not compassion which actuated Joshua, but the fact that these ambassadors were willing to put their people into a state of vassalage without a fight. He doubtless thought that Israel had enough fights on their hands in dispossessing the nations of Canaan.

5. (Liverpool): Lies have always been condemned by every morality worthy of the name, and the Gibeonites knew they were guilty of deception, but they excused their conduct by stating their fear (9: 24). We can only speculate as to what would have happened had they thrown themselves on the Lord's (not Joshua's) mercy, but we note that later Nineveh was spared when its people showed genuine repentance (Jonah 3).

6. (Liverpool): The curse lay in their loss of freedom, and reduction to the status of slaves, to serve the congregation, as well as the altar (9: 21). *P. L. H.*

King Uzziah spent a day in the house of God and rued it for the rest of his life. Likewise, Iscariot must have spent many a day in the house of God with its most illustrious Visitor but it would have been better for him if he had never been born. Psalm 84:10 does not apply to those whose heart-condition is not right. The Gibeonites were conscripts; second class citizens labouring at an altar and for a people whether they liked it or not. No doubt the purpose of their nearness to the altar was to prevent them continuing in idolatry as nearness to God's altar ever should. The experience of Psalm 84, however, is the other way round. It is for those whose hearts have been won, are willing and who have come to the knowledge of the truth of the house of God. *LE. P.*

7. (Liverpool): The Lord's statement is clear enough that the famine occurred because of Saul's killing the Gibeonites, but we have no means of knowing why it took place after his death. It is also clear that the Lord, as the avenger of the covenant, expected David to take some action to remove the blood-guiltiness into which Saul, as king, had brought the nation. We note that the Lord did not specify what had to be done, and David accepted what the Gibeonites suggested. It seems that they were acting on the law of Israel in refusing a ransom price (Num. 35: 31), and bloodshed by the law required "the blood of him that shed it" in expiation (Num. 35: 33). We do not know how many people Saul killed, and the Gibeonites must have thought that the death of one man was not sufficient. However, it is difficult to see why the sons should die for the misdeeds of their father, unless we acknowledge that headship of a family or a nation involves the whole group in the head's deeds. This is certainly true as far as the actions of Adam are

concerned in relation to his posterity. The whole incident certainly shows how seriously God views the breaking of oaths made using

His Name.

P. L. H.

We need shed no more tears for those sons of Saul than we would for all who are ushered into eternity having wasted their lives. The Lord lays a very serious thing to their name when He calls them ^Ma bloody house" (2 Sam. 21: 1). They were responsible for much suffering in Israel and had been central figures in a rebellion against the Lord and against His anointed. We cannot help but think they were worthy of death several times over although of course only the Lord now knows their individual relationships to the affair of the Gibeonites. We do well to note that Saul failed to heed the lessons of the very scriptures that we are studying in this issue.

I E P

8. (Paisley): The incident recorded in Josh. 10: 12-14 has been much discussed, and the parallels have been found in Chinese, Egyptian and Mexican stories, which however do not coincide in time and date. It would be expected that an astronomical irregularity would have been recorded in Babylon, of which there is no sign. As the RV margin indicates, the word translated "stand still" means literally "be silent" and it may have the meaning "cease" or "leave off". On this basis the New Bible Commentary (2nd Ed., p. 231) suggests that the phrase may be translated "The sun made no haste to come, about a whole day" and refers to a continuation of the darkness under cover of which Joshua attacked the kings (v. 9). This darkness was accompanied by the hail-storm which destroyed the enemy. This is, of course, just as much a divine intervention on behalf of Israel as the alternative.

p L H

It is true that the RVM has "be silent" for "stand still" (Josh. 10: 12) and that the same Hebrew word is used for "stand still" in Josh. 10: 13 but the word "stayed", used concerning the moon and the sun (also in Josh. 10: 13), is the ordinary Hebrew word for standing still. In addition the verse says that the sun did not go down, not that it did not rise. Further it stayed in the midst of heaven, i. e. it was high in the sky. Thus it would appear that day and light were prolonged rather than night and darkness. In the matter of the sun "staying silent", it might be helpful to observe that the declaration of the glory of God referred to in Psalm 19 appears to connect "day unto day uttereth speech" (v. 2) with the sun's motion (v. 6).

I. E. P

9. (Surulere): Joshua did omit to consult God, but the other leaders of Israel were involved with him in the decision to make a covenant with Gibeon, as vv. 6, 7 and 15 show.

P. L. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Two **and a Half Tribes** East of the Jordan

I refer to the question posed by Liverpool and the editorial response to it (BS 8503 page 46).

It was pointed out in the answer that the land of Gilead was within the confines of the land shown to Moses (Deut. 34: 1-3) and that it could be rightfully possessed by the two and a half tribes provided they played their part in the conquest of the land west of the Jordan (Num. 32).

It was apparently the material advantages offered by the land of Gilead that appealed to the children of Gad and Reuben. They had much cattle and "the place was a place for cattle" (Num. 32: 1). Their desire to settle down in Gilead might have hindered their brethren from going in to possess the inheritance that God had given to Israel west of the Jordan. That did not happen, however, for they in due course honoured the commitment that they gave to Moses.

While there were material advantages in dwelling in Gilead there were spiritual disadvantages. The distance to be travelled to the place of the Name was greater and the Jordan, which overflowed its banks at Passover time (Josh. 3: 15; 5: 10), would prove a formidable obstacle to those who sought to comply with divine requirements and present themselves before the Lord at the place of the Name three times in the year (Deut. 16: 16).

If we give a higher priority to the material than to the spiritual we shall be the losers.

There are helpful practical observations on this subject to be found in BS Volume 26 (1958) page 189 in the Question and Answer section.

J. K. D. Johnston

Reading in February's issue several references to the two and a half tribes passing over Jordan before their brethren, it seemed that some contributors found this specially commendable, perhaps because 'before' was understood to mean 'first' or 'beforehand'. A study of the repeated mentions of what was required of these tribes yielded the following considerations.

In 1: 14. ^M... but ye shall pass over before your brethren armed ... and shall help them".

"before" translates the Hebrew expression *li-phene*, which can

mean 'in the presence of', or 'in front of' (in position), or 'before' (in time), depending on the context.

Since the immediate context above does not decide among these three this verse should then be compared with 4: 12:

"... passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them".

Again, the context does not indicate whether those warriors were the first of the tribes to enter Jordan after the priests, (we note also that the same expression is used in v. 13:

"... passed over before the Lord unto battle",

where it must mean 'in presence of'.)

Similarly in Num. 32: 17, when the two and a half tribes promised to accompany the others to the west side of Jordan,

"ready armed to go before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place... "

the same expression could mean 'in the presence of' as readily as 'before in time'.

Again, when Moses described their promise, he says,

"... if ye will arm yourselves to go before the LORD to the war" (Num. 32: 20)

suggesting that what mattered was that those tribes be seen to be ready to share in the battles for possession.

Surely any interpretation of their actions must be governed by:

1. Moses' outright rebuke for their request, "bring us not over Jordan".
2. Their proposal that the first land in sight of Jordan to be conquered by the whole nation should be assigned to themselves because it was suitable for their cattle¹.
3. These requests being made without invitation having been given to any of the tribes, to our knowledge, to begin choosing sites.

One is then inclined to commend rather their prompt promise of help given once they had realised their mistake. There is, however, no special merit in offering to share in what the whole nation had been intending to do since the failure at Kadesh. We also note that one of Joshua's first actions in leadership was to speak to the two and a half tribes so as to ensure that they were still in agreement with the judgement of Moses. After the gross selfishness of Numbers 32, was it not by God's grace that these tribes were granted the privilege of three cities of refuge out of the six, with the priestly and Levitical presence and instruction that belonged with them? We do not hurry to judge, but wish to be clear-sighted about human prudence to adapt the Divine pattern to accommodate the 'advantages¹ we may suppose to be good.

M. Archibald

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8507

The names of Joshua's victories **are** listed (Josh. 10: 16-43) in a manner recalling **the** listing of **the** names of famous victories on a regimental battle-standard or flag. The purpose of this **practice** among those who **war earthly warfare** is usually so **that each new** generation of soldiers **that bears the** colours **might have the** illustrious **deeds of their** forbears **vividly before them** when they go to **fight fresh** battles. **It is** hoped **that they will quit** themselves as valiantly as **did their** predecessors. No doubt **the** godly Israelite who **was called** upon to **fight the** Lord's battles would **be similarly inspired by reading or hearing the recital of the** battle-honours of Joshua **chapter ten**. **We feel sure that we** today, who **war the spiritual warfare, are meant to be** inspired likewise.

The similarity of **what** is said concerning **the** successive capture of **Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron and Debir, while emphasising the** importance of **detailed** obedience to **the** Lord's commands, makes **it at** first **difficult** for **us**, today, to **appreciate the significance** of each. This **similarity**, however, forces **us** to **think that the significance of each must lie in their most significant point of difference, namely their names**. Unfortunately **the** interpretation of **the names is fraught with difficulty** for **English or non-Hebrew speaking** readers. **Yet the Scriptures mention the** interpretation of **names, often associated with some appropriate deeds, so that clearly we are meant to search these things out**.

Almost **all** our readers **will be familiar with** Hebron and its significance **in** association **with** companying or fellowship. **We**

can be confident, too, that the name, **Debir**, has to do with **speaking** for it is so similar to the usual Hebrew word (*dabar*) for **speech and speaking** (see for example **Gen. 8: 15, 11: 1, 16: 13, Mai. 3: 16**). From the fact that **Hebron was captured before Debir** we may conclude that before the **disciple masters the control of his speech, to utter words well pleasing to God and of benefit to men, he must first have sought the place of communion with the Lord and perhaps with others of like mind. That was the experience of the disciples in their conflict. Men marvelled at their speech. To them they were ignorant and unlearned men, but it was clear from their speech that they had been with Jesus (Acts 4: 13). Again, the fulness of this line of truth may be seen in the opening verses of the first epistle of John. The truth is no less true in our day, it being desirable that what we write in our magazine should bear the evidence of prior communion with Him as indeed should everything we say.**

We would encourage fellow-students to make similar search concerning the **significance of the earlier names in the "battle-honours" of Joshua 10. We would suggest that we will be on sound lines if we try to understand the capture of the cities prior to the capture of Hebron in terms of the defeat of these barriers to communion that are constantly placed before the disciple and the people of God.**

LE. P.

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN (Joshua 10: 16 - 12: 24)

From Birkenhead: The continuing work of following the command of the Lord to possess the land brings us face to face again with the five kings who had formed an alliance to attack Gibeon. The fact that they were captive in the cave at Makkedah did not satisfy the requirement for them to be destroyed. They were brought out and the chiefs of the men of war amongst the Israelites placed their feet on their necks, a symbol of victory achieved, and then slew them. These events forcefully remind us of the need to carry through to finality our battle with our spiritual foes.

Against Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon and Debir battle was joined and utter destruction was wrought. From Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, from Goshen to Gibeon there was victory because the Lord fought for the Israelites. Whilst the people were with the Lord all was well. They were encamped at Gilgal where there were so many things to remind them of their deliverance by God from slavery and their crossing of Jordan.

Away in the north of the country, Jabin, king of Hazor, heard of events in the south and with other kings mobilised an army which camped at Merom to war with Israel. They numbered "as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude" (11:4) and yet the word came to Joshua to go into battle, confident in the Lord, and in twenty four hours the enemies were all dead. After this key battle there was a more lengthy operation to make war with other kings, thus extending their area of conquest.

The overall purposes of God and their outworking are fascinating. We noticed two points on this matter in our study. Concerning the Gibeonites we are told that they made peace (11:19) but those who came out to battle did so because the Lord hardened their hearts (11:20). So many inhabitants of the land were killed and yet there is record of some remaining alive in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. Turning to Judges we see how the Lord used the surviving inhabitants to act as a goad to Israel in their times of departure (Jud. 2:20-23). The exploits of God's people caused the tongues of the enemy to be still. God was magnified in His people (Josh. 10:21).

We were caused to consider the extent to which a parallel situation existed today. The record declares that God's people had rest from war. In Hebrews 4 we are directed to a realisation that there is a possession into which God's people, today, are called to enter. This is a personal matter and consideration of Deut. 11:21-25, where the picture of placing the sole of the foot illustrates the practicality of the matter, is helpful. The disciple today is equipped of the Lord for the struggle and He will lead the willing-hearted into the place of His choice.

J. D. Williams, R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: Rom. 7:23, with other scriptures introduces the concept of a constant warfare against the flesh, part of our service as God's people. In our study we have a vivid picture of the force and persistence of this evil and of the fact that it must be met with determined resistance. We recognized that the Devil, seeking to defeat God's saints, is waging war against God Himself. The Devil has no feelings for others. Though defeated, he will regroup forces in a persistent battle for the lives of God's people. But the scripture says: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20) "Thou didst put all things in subjection under His feet" (Heb. 2:8). We compared these statements of victory with Josh. 10:24.

It is curious that the five kings of ch. 10 managed to escape and to hide in a cave, apparently by themselves. There is no reference to their loyalty to their subjects at the field of battle. We might deduce, however, that there were competent, trained men who would use every means to regroup for warfare with Israel. Perhaps they recognized a superior power at their battle with Israel. The cover of darkness deserted them. They sought refuge in the darkness of the cave but could not hide from God.

Joshua might have been excused for concentrating on the discovery of the cave but he was a leader well balanced in service and knew that his priorities must be in dealing with the enemy of God and His people according to God's word. The words v. 19, "Stay not ye" emphasize the urgency for complete victory. There was no room for complacency or relaxation. God had delivered the enemy into their hand (v. 19) and this necessitated total slaughter in obedience to His word (see Deut. 7:2).

We thought that the fact that some of the enemy reached the safety of the fenced cities illustrated the persistence of the forces of evil, determined to return after a time. We were reminded of Luke 4:13 in relation to the Lord's temptations.

We were impressed by the words of ch. 10:21 that all returned in peace to Joshua. Obedience to the word of God in conflict will always result in victory and ought to produce

a spirit of tranquillity **and** thankfulness to God. The fact that "none moved **his** tongue **against** any of **the** children of Israel" shows **the** fear of **the** enemy. Perhaps we may say that, as the world looks on, **the** upright conduct **and** testimony of **the** people of God ought to produce **respect** **and** a conviction of **divine** power.

No **mercy** was to **be** shown to **the** enemy. **Everything** that **breathed** (11:11) was **put** to death. This is to **be** our **attitude** to temptation.

We noticed **that**

- (i) some of **the** cities were more powerful **than** others (10: 28, 32),
- (ii) numerically **at** least, **the** enemy became stronger as Joshua proceeded **with** his **task** in **Canaan** (11:4),
- (iii) **the** battles were persistent (11:18),

and related **these** facts to **the** progress of **the** people of God today. Some temptations are **fiercer** than others. They are often more **severe** as we progress through life. **Certainly**, we are **never** left alone for **very** long. **The** Devil is **always** on our track.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: God sent **His** army under Joshua to dispossess the Canaanites. **We** must realise, when we wonder **what** right they had to take it over in this ruthless way, that God is God. **He** is sovereign **and** He is righteous. **The** earth belongs to **Him** **and** He has the right to **put** people where He chooses. **He** had chosen **this** land **and** promised it to Abraham. **It** is Immanuel's land **and** the day is coming when we will see that it belongs to Christ. Joshua commanded **the** men of Israel to put **their** feet upon **the** necks of **the** five kings. **In** a future day **all** the nations **will** be brought into subjection **under** **the** Lord Jesus Christ.

The conquest of **the** land was harsh. **We** have a conflict **within** us **and** that is a serious conflict. **Paul** says (Col. 3:5) that we must mortify, that is **make** dead¹, our members which are upon **the** earth. There can be no compromise; **these** things must be

killed. We have to make no provision for the flesh as it is the enemy within us. We are entirely dependent on the Holy Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body.

Paul tells us (Eph. 6: 12) about the enemies we are fighting against today. Our hope of victory in this warfare rests entirely on the work of God in our lives. The Lord spoke to Joshua and he was able to encourage the people. If our leaders spend time with the Master they will be able to inspire, feed and lead us. He did as the Lord, the God of Israel commanded. The Lord was going to deliver the kings slain before Israel. After that had been accomplished the Israelites themselves had instruction to obey. Joshua left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. The Lord Jesus left nothing undone of all the work He was given to do, and if we submit entirely to His will we will experience the rest that He gives.

G. W. Conway

From Kingston, Jamaica: Joshua with Israel had returned to Gilgal (the place for renewal). They were now able to launch a new assault upon their enemies. The believer needs such renewal too. Calvary is our place of renewal after our daily battles to remember Him who made the victories all possible. Does this renewal not speak, too, of the weekly Remembrance? Thus we see that in order to be strengthened we, too, must return to the place of Christ's death, burial and resurrection on a regular basis.

Joshua fulfilled his part fully as was commanded him, as Moses' fit successor. We therefore liken Moses unto our Lord and Joshua unto the Holy Spirit. In 11:23 we note "Joshua took the whole land____according to all____the Lord spoke unto Moses". We remember our Lord telling the disciples of the Holy Spirit in Jn. 16 and what He would do. This is in the aspect of continuance and not of position (see John 16: 7-11). It is the Holy Spirit who does the conquering for us as we walk in His strength. "Walk by the Spirit..." (Gal. 5: 16). As with Israel, if we walk in obedience, we will be victorious. Christ has already outlined the path, we now proceed by the Spirit [Comment 2]. Notable scriptures are 2 Cor. 5:7, 10:3-6, Heb. 4: 16.

The Anakim were giants who dwelt in the land. We contrast the fear which the Israelites had when the report of the spies was given them in Num. 13: 32-33 and their reaction to the Anakim; it made no difference to them now. We know, that the Lord made the difference. We compare this with Phil. 4: 13: "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me". There are no giants then, when we remember that Christ our Lord has conquered and now

succours us in all our battles (Heb. 4: 14-16).

P. Dalcott, M. Morris

From Liverpool: *The Opposition-* Israel faced a host of small, independent city states each having its own king and army. This might be thought an inherently weak political system, but temporary alliances, especially motivated by fear of an invading army, made the opposition stronger. This is not to underestimate the fact that each victory was gained through the power of their God who fought for Israel.

No Compromise - We noted the uncompromising attitude of God towards the indigenous population of Canaan (11:20) and found reason for this in the state of the religion they practised: "Its sordid and debased nature stood in marked contrast to the high ethical ideals of Israel. The absolute lack of moral character in the Canaanite deities made such corrupt practices as ritual prostitution, child sacrifice, and licentious worship in the normal expression of religious devotion and fervour. In consequence there could be no compromise between the morality of the God of Israel and the debased sensuality of Canaanite religion". (R. K. Harrison "Old Testament Times" IVP) [Comment 1]

This puts the "utterly destroy" commands into perspective, and teaches us valuable lessons as to God's will in relation to worship and service.

Incomplete - Despite the words of Josh. 11:23 it is evident that there was still a lot of territory to be possessed even after this successful series of campaigns (*cf.* 13:1). Nevertheless great strides had been taken and the victories could be used as a springboard to further advances, each victory helping towards the next. Only lack of faith in the long run prevented the entire land, promised to them by God, coming under the control of Israel.

Canaan - This was the promised land in which the kingdom of God was to find its expression, and where the people of God were to enjoy its fruit and were to serve God according to His revealed will. They were not to share the land with heathen idol-worshippers nor were they meant to be defeated and pressed into a corner. The land was a good land; big enough to sustain them and easy to cultivate. Yet it had to be actively possessed and held on to against a constant onslaught from all round.

Lessons:

1. The promises of God are meant to be taken seriously. God

can and will **give** us victory if we trust **Him**.

2. The symbolic subjection of **the entire** forces **arrayed** against **them** is brought out in placing **their feet** on **the necks of the kings** and is echoed in "The God of **peace** shall **bruise Satan** under your **feet** shortly" (Rom. 16: 20).
3. A worse **enemy than Satan**, however, is **the old nature** ("**flesh**" **RV**) **within us**, **which** needs constantly to **be fought and defeated**. James, posing **the question as to what** causes fights and quarrels, answers **it by stating that they** come from **desires that** battle within us (cf. Jas. 4: 1-3). **If we** fail to **win the** victory against this **enemy it** will destroy our lives for God. However, **if we turn** to our Joshua, **the Lord Jesus**, and follow **Him** we will overcome.
4. A **third enemy** is the "World": society **with its attitudes**, values, pressures and pleasures. This is a **subtle enemy** **which it is** easy to learn to live with. Israel's **experience** of allowing **peaceful** co-existence **turned** to **their** spiritual peril **and we** must **be** on our guard.
5. **Each** arising generation must learn to "possess **the land**" in spiritual experience. Jude urges us to contend for **the faith** entrusted to us and **it** was Paul who **predicted that it** is through **many** hardships **that we enter** the kingdom of God (*cf.* **Jude 3 & Acts 14: 22**).
6. Today God has a spiritual land **which is** promised to **us by faith and** obedience. **In it** are spiritual blessings for our enjoyment. **It** is sad **if we never** taste this '**fruit**' **which** God has **prepared** for us because of a lack of appreciation of **its** importance or because **we** lack **the** will to **take** possession of it.

David J. Webster

From **Nottingham**: As **the title** of our study **indicates**, the portions before **us deal with** the conquest of **Canaan** as a whole. **We have** **the fight and** execution of **the five kings** (10: 16-27), **the** conquest of southern **Canaan** (10: 28-39), **the** confederacy of **the kings** of northern Canaan (11: 1-15), **the** extermination of **the Anakim** (11: 21-23), **a catalogue of kings** conquered in **eastern Canaan** (12: 1-6) and **the same in respect** of kings on the west of Jordan (12: 7-24). In the list of kings **given in chapter 12**, **thirteen** come from **the** territory of **Judah**, **ten** from **the area of Galilee** and **five** from **the central** Canaan. **In** order to conquer

the land as a whole a series of battles was **necessary**.

Canaan can speak to us of the **entire** sphere of spiritual blessing into **which** God has brought **us** now, **which we must enter** into through **faith** and thus enjoy our **spiritual inheritance**. It is well to **read the book of Joshua in conjunction with the letter to the Ephesians**. Israel's battles **were against flesh and blood but "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"** (Eph. 6:12). **Further, God's rest was in that land and it was there where His perfect will could be carried out**. So, **in seeking to give expression to God's will today, in respect of the house of God, battles will be involved; warfare against that which is wrong and strivings for that which is right**. **Over and over again** God impressed upon His people **that their success depended upon His strength and not theirs, a lesson which is still applicable** today.

There is a prophetic **aspect in the events recorded in Joshua 10:24,25**. The **placing of the victor's feet on the necks of the defeated kings** was a sign of **what the Lord was going to do to all the enemies Israel was to fight in His strength**. **It takes us further also in God's purpose to a future day** (Ps. 110:1), "**Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool**". Eph. 1:15-23 is also relevant.

To **human reasoning the treatment of the five kings may seem particularly harsh**. We **have to remember that God is not only a God of love and mercy but a God of righteous judgement**. He looks on **the heart**; only **He can assess the measure of iniquity in any one or any people**. Long years before, God had declared "**the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full**" (Gen. 15:16). The practices of the people of the land were **sinful in the sight of God** (Ex. 23:23,24, Deut. 12:30,31). **Even when men can see the judgements of God being carried out their hearts often remain hard and there is no repentance** (*cf.* Rev. 9:20,21).

We read (Josh. 11:23) "**so Joshua took the whole land**_____". There was still **land to be possessed and these words would rather seem to indicate that the time had arrived for the different tribes now to occupy the land for, from time to time, battles were still necessary, and the words "and the land had rest from war" seem to imply a temporary cessation rather than a permanent one** (compare for example **Judges 7:19-25**). The **thought of taking the whole land is important as we draw a parallel for our times**. **It is the will of God that we should embrace the whole truth in respect of His way for us today**. **Many believers**

practise only part of that which is involved in the Faith and, in some cases, emphasis is placed on one aspect of truth at the expense of another. God desires that we, too, should "take the whole land". In the light of Deut.13:16, we wondered why it was that Joshua did not burn "the cities that stood on their mounds" (Josh. 11:13) [Comment 3].

According to Dr. Young, the Hebrew verb used in Josh. 11:16, "Joshua took all that land_____", and in v.23, "So Joshua took the whole land..." is "*laqach*" and one authority remarks in regard to its use in this context that it "is better translated 'receive' as in 13:8 and 18:7. . . . than 'take' or 'capture', i.e., by force". The English word 'take' in certain contexts can imply to "take without authority or right" and history is full of examples where this has been done. Joshua's taking of the land was not an act of unwarranted aggression. The land had been given by God to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 13:14, 15; 50:24; Deut. 34:4) and now Joshua was to "receive" it, in trust, on behalf of Israel. There have been times, in these days, when some have said that it is presumption for any people to be known as the people of God or to claim to being the spiritual house of God. But why? These things are given by God and we can "receive" them in obedience and in faith (1 Pet. 2:3-10).

R. Hickling

From Paisley: This portion deals with the subjugation of the cities and inhabitants of Canaan. The word of the Lord was clear in this respect; they were to save alive nothing that breathed. It is written "as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee: that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have to their gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God (Deut. 20:16-18). In other words there was to be NO COMPROMISE. The reasons for this were clear; if the nations had been allowed to remain in the land their corrupting influence would have affected the people of God and would have turned away their hearts from the Lord. The subsequent history of the people of Israel corroborated the truth of this.

What is the New Testament parallel? The apostle Paul said, "Mortify, (ie. put to death), the deeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13). If the flesh gets the upper hand in Christian experience, then the service of the people of God is hindered. That was Saul's experience (1 Sam. 15) for he failed to destroy Amalek, and it was an Amalekite who finally killed Saul (2 Sam. 1:8, 9).

The hanging of the five kings on five trees shows the Lord's abhorrence of the people of the land: he that is hanged is

accursed of God (Deut. 21:23). **In accordance with the word of the Lord, their bodies did not remain all night on the tree but were taken down at sunset. Our thoughts project forward to another who hung on a tree, our Lord Jesus Christ, suffering the judgement of God on account of our sins (Gal. 3: 13).**

Joshua meticulously **carried out the commandments of the Lord.** This emphasized **in ch. 11: 15; the Lord commanded Moses; Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua acted on the word of the Lord by observing every jot and tittle.** That is **the pattern** for prosperity in spiritual things: **undeviating obedience to the word of the Lord.** Failure to do **this will only bring defeat and disaster.** That is **a challenge facing us in the churches of God today.**

Joshua's life was one of conflict, **but from that conflict peace emanated.** Thirty-one kings **had to be fought against in the land, beside the kings that reigned in the land beyond Jordan.** There was to **be no relaxation.** While **the enemy was there he had to be subdued.** This again **reminded us of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ who made peace through the blood of His cross, and of the unrelenting conflict the believer has with the powers of darkness.**

J. Renfrew

COMMENTS

1. Liverpool: Scriptures such as Deut. 12:31, 18:10 **and 23:18 (by inference) may well refer to the moral issues referred to in this quotation.** Consideration of **the truth behind the adage "immorality goes with idolatry"** will show, however, **that moral issues though important are not the key issues.** The Lord's reasons **are given properly in Deut. 7:1-5, 12:29-31, 18:9-13 as well as 23:18 from which it will be seen that the spiritual reasons far outweigh moral grounds.** The Lord will not allow **any peaceful co-existence between the worship of Himself in His house and any other form of worship that arises from man's devising his own approach to God.** No **matter how high the moral tone, if it is of the flesh, it is an abomination to the Lord and will be judged sooner or later.** Deut. 18:9-22 **are vital scriptures in this regard for they clearly identify systems of worship of men's choosing or devising as being a direct challenge to the throne and authority of God.** These **scriptures are especially relevant to us in our day for they show that such systems are**

an attack on our Lord Jesus Christ for He is the "prophet like unto thee" (Deut.18:18) as Acts 3:22-23 and 7:37 clearly show. Having seen how Deut. 18: 18, 19 directly apply to the present dispensation we may see the seriousness of heresies (Gal.5:20) and the necessity for the people of God not only to cleanse themselves from defilement of flesh but also from defilement of spirit (2 Cor.7:1).

LE. P.

2. **Kingston, Jamaica:** Friends in Kingston are exactly right to compare Moses with the Lord for the New Testament scriptures say exactly this (eg. Acts 7:37). They are also right to emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's warfare. There are shortcomings, however, in comparing the work of Joshua with the work of the Spirit. For example Joshua led Israel in battle while Moses was alive but the Lord sent the Spirit after His ascent to Heaven. Again, Israel's warfare continued after the death of Joshua so that unlike the Spirit, Joshua's presence was not permanent. It is true that the foreshadowings of the New Testament in the Old Testament all fall short in some respect but, without a more definite New Testament guidance, it would be as well to be cautious in what we say. Perhaps we may prefer to compare the leadership of Joshua, who received the Law from Moses, with that of the Apostles who received the Faith from the Lord Jesus. In so far as the Acts of the Apostles may be considered as the Acts of the Holy Spirit we may then see some foreshadowing of the work of the Spirit in the life of Joshua. The pre-figuring in the Old Testament scriptures of the work of the Spirit appears to be a somewhat neglected line of truth and perhaps contributors would like to turn their minds (and their pens) to it.

/ E. P.

3. **Nottingham:** It is clear that Joshua did not fall short of the Lord's command in his utter destruction of the cities (Josh. 11:12). The burning of certain cities (Deut.11:16) appears to be because they took a leading (Deut.13:16) appears to be because they took a leading part in leading others astray. This was certainly true of Hazor. We are reminded of the Lord's censure of the Scribes and Pharisees

(Mat. 23:15). There appears also to be something of importance **in the resultant mound or heap that was the product of the burning and perhaps the fact that cities already possessing a heap or mound were absolved from burning.** **Did these pre-existing mounds speak of some earlier judgement? Perhaps other readers have more light on this matter?**

/. E. P.

CORRESPONDENCE

Was Moses a priest?

We were surprised to read the statement of Editors that -

"Notwithstanding Psalm 99: 6, Moses was not a priest". (BS 8501 p. 16)

We believe that this verse states clearly that Moses was a priest. While he did not function at the altar in the Levitical order according to the Law, he was a true priest according to the meaning of the word. The word 'cohen' comes from the word 'cahan' which means 'to plead a cause' as an advocate, mediator or intercessor. Moses was an intercessor for Israel (e. g. Ex. 24 and 32) and represented God in teaching Israel and in the exposition of His love and grace. Perhaps Editors will expand their views, please?

R. I. Shaw, Cowdenbeath

Friends in Cowdenbeath may have been startled by the starkness of our statement to which they refer and, if so, we apologise.

Our reasons for stating that Moses was not a priest are: -

- (i) He would have occupied the position of prophet, priest and king (or leader) and we believe that all three offices have been found ever only in one Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- (ii) Moses had no qualification by birth nor was he taken from**

amongst **men and** appointed for **them in things pertaining** to God (Heb. 5: 1-5). **As is often said, it was Aaron who was taken, for he, unlike Moses, had known the daily suffering of the people in Egypt.**

- (iii) **Moses did not stand "day by day ministering and offering" as every priest is supposed to do (Heb. 10: 11).**
- (iv) **If Moses were a priest we do not see what priesthood he was in nor do we see how the priesthood of Aaron could co-exist with that of another, namely Moses. Indeed Moses was clearly superior to Aaron in that he mediated the Covenant by which Aaron and his sons were appointed priests (Heb. 7: 14).**

In saying these things we think we are saying, in expanded fashion, what friends in Cowdenbeath say when they write that "Moses did not function at the altar in the Levitical order according to the Law".

It will be seen that, in the reasons given above, we draw on the teachings of the book of Hebrews as to what constitutes a priest for we do not think it safe to rely solely on the meanings of Hebrew words. As friends imply the word 'cohen' is the common Old Testament word for priest. The word, however, has other uses. For example it is used of men who were false priests such as Potiphera the priest of On (Gen. 41: 45), Mattan, the priest of Baal (2 Kings 11: 18, 2 Chron. 23: 17) and of the priests of Dagon (ISam. 5: 5). More particularly, however, 'cohen' is used of men who were not priests at all but were rulers or princes (2 Sam. 8: 18, 20: 26, Job 12: 19 and I Kings 4: 5). Thus 'cohen' is not universally translated "priest" and consideration to the context must be given when translating. We would therefore suggest that it is in the sense of leaders or rulers rather than priests that 'cohen' occurs in Psalm 99: 6, a Psalm which deals with the rule and judgement of the Lord. Pursuing this, we would further suggest that the definition of a priest "according to the meaning of the word" given by friends in Cowdenbeath, in which intercession is made (without an altar in Exodus 32) on behalf of the people and God is represented in the teaching of the people, exactly describes what Israel's leaders or kings such as Joshua and David were to do. Having said this, however, we are conscious that the

meaning of '*cohen*'¹ given by our friends is not readily apparent from the scriptures themselves. Examination of its occurrences shows that it is usually translated "to minister in the priests office" (e.g. Ex. 28:1,3,4, 41 etc.) which does not really tell us what being a priest is about.

J. E. P.

May we have further clarification of Comment 2 (BS 8501 p.16) about Moses not being a priest (Psalm 99:6, Ex. 19:6, Ex.28, 29)? Would Moses have been consecrated as a priest being a Levite? Could Moses not be regarded as a priest like any faithful Israelite in the light of Ex. 19:6, Ex.24:6-8 (Israel being a kingdom of priests) even though he could not be named a High Priest as Aaron (Heb.5:10)?

S. Coker, Surulere, Nigeria

Taking the last part of our friend's question first, it is easy to show that Israel being called a kingdom of priests does not mean that every man in Israel was a priest. If that were so then the Lord Jesus would, as to His earthly lineage, have been a priest. Heb.7:11-14, however, shows that the Lord's earthly birth prohibited Him from that office. By the same reasoning and from the same scripture, all who were not of the tribe of Levi could not be priests. As has often been said, the expression "kingdom of priests" means that Israel was a kingdom characterized by its priesthood. In illustration of this, when Napoleon said that England was a nation of shop-keepers he did not mean that every one in the land was a shop-keeper. What he meant was that commerce was all that England was really interested in. The distinction between Israel in the past who were a kingdom of priests, meaning that only a few men were in the priesthood, and the people of God today where every one is a priest is precisely brought out by Rev.1:6. There it will be seen that certain words are in italics in our Revised Version Bibles. If these italicised words are omitted then the New Covenant counterpart of Ex. 19:6 reads "made us a kingdom, priests unto His God and Father".

Heb. 7:11 shows that the priesthood was restricted to the male descendants of Aaron and therefore excluded the remainder of his tribe. This is clearly shown in Num. 3 where we find that the priesthood was so exclusive to Aaron's family that "they shall keep their priesthood: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death" (Num. 3:10). This is exactly what happened later when sons of Levi were slain because they sought the priesthood also (Num. 15:8-10). Thus Levites were not entitled to call themselves priests under pain of death so the fact that Moses was of the tribe of Levi cannot be taken to mean that he could be called a priest. A fuller explanation of the comment concerning Psalm 99:6 has been given in reply to friends in Cowdenbeath.

I. E. P.

POSTSCRIPT: THE PERVASIVE NATURE OF IDOLATRY

When he was but thirty years of age the late Dr Luxmoore wrote words which are very helpful to us in consideration of the current study topics. We quote from his first article to our companion magazine **Needed Truth** (1888, vol 1 pp 40-1). "It is important to observe what their thought and purpose was in this their idol-making. The golden calf was not intended to be to them in place of Jehovah, but in place of Moses. It should be recollected that God Himself had said to Moses that he should be a god to Pharaoh and even to Aaron and the people; and it was the lack of a visible Moses that led Israel to yearn for a substitute, and to induce Aaron to make for them the molten calf, and says he, 'Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah/ (Ex. 32: 1; 7: 1, 4: 16; 32: 5). Thus their thought was, to have a substitute for God's servant, Moses: a calf of their own making, within their own control, instead of Moses, who was of God's making, and under God's control: in common with all idolaters, Jewish, Pagan, and Christian, who, whilst professing in reality to worship a Supreme Being, practically deny to Him any right to say how He will be worshipped, preferring to do everything according to their fancies and thoughts, and so 'they exchange the truth of God for the lie, and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator' (Rom. 1: 25)"

I. E. P.

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EDITORIAL

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We read in Josh. 11: 18, "Joshua made war a long time with all those kings", and in 11: 23 "So Joshua took the whole land,....and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel". God's promise to give this land to Abraham and his descendants was now **being** realised in greater fulness as the purposes of God unfolded. The allotment of the land and the possession of it are here described in considerable detail. In the matter of the "lot", the portion received was again dependent upon the sovereignty of God.

The land described in 13: 2-6 was extensive, and, if scarcely occupied by Israel to the full extent even in their days of great prosperity, yet it afforded an outline of God's purposes for them in a coming day (Is. 11: 14-15).

The fighting men of the two and a half tribes had not been permitted to participate immediately in the enjoyment of their possessions, but only to rejoin their families after the conquest of the land west of Jordan. The timing was not left to themselves even as those of faith in a past dispensation have had to await the ripening of God's purpose "that apart from us they should not be made perfect"¹¹ (Heb. 11: 40). It was important for the ultimate unity of Israel that those tribes should not act irresponsibly.

Caleb was mightily used by God in the possession of the land, since his purpose of faith was unshaken, to dislodge from those great and fenced cities the Anakim who had been such a source of discouragement to the people (14: 12). He was of such as "the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor. 10: 18).

Moreover his daughter desired the blessing of springs of water, and received from Caleb the upper and nether springs. It was against Caleb's principles to monopolise those well-springs. Speaking of the gifts of our heavenly Father, the Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be

given you^M (Luke 11:9). The oracles of God, though straightforward like the **upper springs, are at the same time profound in their depths.**

Our section began with the situation where, "...there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed". The Lord had said, "By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land" (Ex. 23: 30). Also the closing verse says "... the children of Judah could not drive them out" (18: 63). More than once the Lord said to His disciples, "O ye of little faith". May we heed this remonstrance and put aside all that would hinder the securing of the promised inheritance.

E. A.

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN (Joshua 10: 16-12: 24)

From Ibadan: Knowing full well **that the race** is not to **the swift** nor battle to **the strong** (Eccles. 9: 11) one would come to **the conclusion that the conquest of Canaan was fundamentally the handiwork of the Lord.**

The Lord **had** assured Joshua of total victory over **the Canaanites and to make this assurance doubly sure He** made manifest His unparalleled miraculous power. **He** cast down from heaven **great** hailstones upon **the Canaanites in one sector of the battle so that the enemies in that sector died.**

This assurance, given to Joshua **and the** people of Israel, which was demonstrated **by** God before **them** also applies to **the** present-day believers: for all **the** marvellous works of God speak of **His** glory **and** assure us **that there be more with us than with the world (2 Chr 32:7-8).** Joshua, assured **by the** promises of God, moved into action together **with the** Israelite army. **A dynamic and dedicated man** well versed in **the** Mosaic law, **he did** not relent **in** his efforts **in** instructing **the** children of Israel to **keep the** commandments of God which **he** himself **kept.** This is **because it was** indispensable for total victory. Although **they were** to rely on God for victory, **the** role to **be** played **by each and every one of them was** essential. All **the fighting** soldiers **were** to go to **the** battle in **the Name** of the Lord of Hosts.

New Testament **saints** should also know **that their** strength **may be renewed** constantly **by** waiting upon **the** Lord **and keeping His** commandments. Joshua's **strength** could have **been exhausted by the burden of** administration and constant warfare **but he** waited upon **the** Lord all **his** days. So **he** received instructions from **Him, and his strength was** always renewed. Let **us** follow **his** example (Is. 40: 31).

The Gibeonites took a wise decision by not confronting the Israelites in battle but it should be realised that it was not of their own making but of the will of God that they were not destroyed. We know this because the Lord hardened the hearts of others who came against Israel that He might destroy them utterly (Josh. 11: 20). Believers in Christ have apparently taken a wise decision, but we should also know that it is not of our own making, it is by the grace of God (Eph. 2: 8).

The threat posed by the thirty-one Canaanite kings who came against Israel was enough to melt the heart of any strong man, but this could not be so in the case of Joshua and the people of Israel because the Lord was with them all the time. We saints of the New Testament have been warned by our Lord Jesus Christ that we should not let our hearts be troubled (John 14: 1). Let us therefore rest assured that if God be with us no one dare come against us (Rom. 8: 13).

A non

THE INHERITANCE ALLOTTED (Josh. 13: 1-15: 63).

From Aberdeen: *Joshua's Day*. Joshua was old, yet very much land remained to be possessed. He had the opportunity to influence the welfare of the people of God as leader, nevertheless this opportunity of service was limited by the time allotted to him. In whatever position in the Fellowship men of God find themselves placed today, the opportunity to help and benefit God's people is also limited by the time given to each servant. Like Joshua the time comes when each man must say "farewell" to his work among God's people. God then continues His work using fellow-labourers of the next generation. The importance of a leader like Joshua finds its place within the master-plan of God in which God chooses and fits men to contribute to the cause of His people.

The Lot. The land was divided by "lot". Each tribe received a portion. This was God's way of handing out the promised land to Israel. This method meant that there would be no need for squabbling between the tribes. Solomon's proverb says, "The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty" (Prov. 18: 18). Among God's people today do we not have a similar division of spiritual inheritance for those who labour in the gospel of Christ? Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth, "...we will not glory beyond our measure, but according to the measure of the measuring rod (RVM) which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even unto you". They did not stretch beyond their apportioned lot nor glory in other men's labours (2 Cor. 10: 13-18).

Responsibilities. When a tribe was allotted a portion, it then became their responsibility to go in and take possession of that lot. As a tribe

Judah was held responsible for not driving out the Jebusites. As a nation, the sons of Israel were held responsible for not expelling the Geshurites and the Maacathites. In the present testimony some matters must be dealt with by the overseers of the local church of God, while others must be dealt with by those of the whole Fellowship [Comment 1]. It seems reasonable that a holy nation should be able to identify the "inhabitants of the land", not always a simple thing to do as the matter of the Gibeonites shows. Having identified the "inhabitants", courage is needed in order to drive out "all" these foreign inhabitants of the land promised to the holy nation. Courage was required by the people of God under Joshua. Our Lord Jesus showed the perfect example of courage in defeating every enemy. Today God's people need courage to carry out the whole counsel of God in a hostile world.

J. C. Johnson

From **Ajegunle**: God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15) secured the land of Canaan for Israel's inheritance. The nations which inhabited the land were destined to destruction according to the word of the Lord to Israel (Deut. 7: 24). Israel were to fight to gain their inheritance, not all at once, but by a gradual process (Deut 7: 20-26). Much land remained to be possessed by Israel at the close of Joshua's earthly life. Divine injunction gave Joshua the authority to divide the land, fully possessed and yet to be possessed, by lot to the tribes. The inheritance allotted to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh had been battle-won possessions in Moses¹ time (Num. 21: 24-35). The princely tribe, Judah, received the first lot for an inheritance, of which the most part was occupied by their enemies. Caleb, the prince of Judah, received a possession in honour of his faith, which is Hebron. It has been suggested that Hebron means "fellowship". There is a sweet fellowship of memories about the place Hebron where Abraham and Isaac pitched their tents as sojourners (Gen. 35: 27); from where Jacob sent Joseph to his brethren in Shechem (Gen. 37: 13, 14); from where God sent a man before them (Ps. 105: 17); where Caleb's feet had trodden forty-five years before as a spy (Num. 13: 21, 22). Aged Joshua blessed Caleb the son of Jephunneh as he received the mandate for his inheritance at Gilgal.

The land of Canaan as Israel's inheritance pertains to a possession in time. Those called under the Old Covenant could also receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9: 15). Believers in Christ have similarly a present as well as an eternal inheritance. In principle, eternal inheritance for those called in the Old and New Covenants, is by promise and grace of the Mediator by virtue of the redemption which has taken place (1 Pet. 1: 3-5; Heb 9: 15).

By another principle, "the present inheritance" for those called in the Old Covenant, could not be gained except by obedience. There is the same requirement for New Testament believers (see Ex. 19: 5, 64 Heb. 3: 6; Acts 20: 32; 1 Cor 6: 9; Eph 5: 5). Israel's inheritance could be defined by geographical boundaries and was never to be sold except with provisions for restoration in the year of jubilee (Lev. 25: 25-28). Believers in Christ in New Testament times are called to a present inheritance which is spiritual, although it has geographical setting in churches of God in different parts of the world (Eph. 2: 18-22; 1 Cor 1: 2, 9). The "present inheritance" given to Israel in the Old Covenant and to the New Testament people of God could be lost through disobedience to the will of God. It is encouraging to note that, associated with the allotted inheritance, is the "rest" which remains for the people of God (Heb. 4: 1-11).

G. Okwena, E.I. Bassey

From Birkenhead: With Joshua now an old man the Lord made it clear to him that there were still large areas of the land of promise to be taken and the geographical outline is given.

It is interesting to see how the people were to rely wholly on the Lord and know His working for them in achieving His purposes. In ch. 13: 6 the Lord declared He would drive out certain of the inhabitants and yet in Judges 2: 20 it is seen that His purpose in leaving some of the inhabitants in the land was to have them act as a means of bringing the people of Israel into line. In Josh. 13: 13 it appears that the people had not the will to drive out the inhabitants and this would only create future problems for them. In Josh. 15: 63 we learn that Judah could not drive them out, which seems to indicate they were not spiritually able to know the Lord's blessing at this time and therefore could not take advantage of His help.

Levi had no area of land allotted to them. Their privilege was to serve the Lord. They were not handicapped in any way by this because things were so arranged that their material needs were catered for. It is encouraging to note that they had this privileged position in spite of past failure as outlined in Gen. 49. It was considered that the Lord would have high regard for the Levites because of their willingness to join Moses on the Lord's side in a time of crisis (Ex. 32: 25, 26).

As to the allotment of the land, it was not done in any capricious manner, and whilst Moses and Joshua were those used to carry out this task it was done under the Lord's guidance. As far back as the days of Jacob there are some indications given of the Lord's purposes.

A study of Caleb at this time is encouraging. At 85 years of age

he was **granted** as his promised **inheritance** a part of the land which he had **spied** out over **45** years before (**Num. 13: 22**). His **faith** in God was unchanged over all the years as **evidenced** by his **driving** out ail the **enemy** with the help of the Lord; confirmation of the testimony he had borne (**Num. 13: 30**). His unwavering faith in adversity is a great example to all who would **be** faithful in similar situations.

The record of **experiences** of the children of Israel to date was compared with the **experience** of God's people today as the latter are encouraged to **enter** into the **inheritance** of **truth** which is open to **them**. The people of Israel were constantly **kept in mind** of their having **received their inheritance** from the Lord as the Lord **required** of them the firstfruits of their land.

A. E. Sands, R. D. Williams

From Derby: God stated His aims (**Ex. 6:7, 8**) in those lovely words "**I will take you to Me for a people... 1 will be to you a God**" and as Jehovah (**v. 8**) "**I will bring you in unto the tend**". (**v. 8**). God now **had** His people. **They had their** God. The promise of the land was now to **be** fulfilled.

God set the boundaries (**Josh. 1: 4**), and what God **gave** was **far** more than His people took possession of. God sets the standard of **giving**, and always remains **true** to Himself (**Is. 64: 4**; **1 Cor. 2: 9**).

The **inheritance** of the children of Israel was land, a place on **earth**. God will never **change**. His promise will **remain** as long as the **earth** remains, and the Jews will repossess **their** land when the **King** of kings reigns there. **Our** "land" is above (**John 14: 2**) [**Comment 2**]. That promise will remain as long as God **is**.

It would seem that Machir a son of Manasseh just "took off", fought for, and claimed land **east** of Jordan. Moses **granted** the wish of the cattlemen of Reuben and **Gad** (**Num. 32: 1-5**), **but** imposed conditions (**v. 17**) because of their failing at Kadesh-barnea. The allotment was done **by** the leader and the **priest**.

At Kadesh-barnea Caleb was promised Canaan **because he trusted** his God but Joshua was given nothing for his trust. Later God took **up** Joshua as leader and Caleb was left **just** with **His** promise. Finally, however, Joshua felt **his** years **but** Caleb **did** not (**Josh. 13: 1**; **14: 10, 11**). We pondered how **each** of the two **felt** towards **each** other and toward God at **each** of these stages in their lives. It is always **hard**, at the time, to **say** "not **my will**, **but** your will". God **will be** no man's debtor [**Comment 3**]

S. J. Wymer, G. W. Conway

From Halifax: Joshua **and** Caleb were by this time the two oldest men of Israel, as all **their** contemporaries **had died in the** wilderness (see Num. 14: 37, 38). It would **appear that** Joshua was **beginning to feel** the burden of his **age**. The Lord refers to **him** as "well stricken in years"), whereas Caleb seemed to **be** vigorous **and** strong, his strength not **having diminished** from his **capabilities** of forty-five years previously. Joshua **had apparently** come to a crossroads in his service for God. **He** was told **by** God **that** there was still **much** to do **in the claiming** of the inheritance and, **in** mentioning his **age**, God **seems to infer** that Joshua was not **able** to carry **this** through.

Caleb was first seen **in the** Scriptures **in the** role of a spy, a potentially dangerous mission. **He** was a **man** of spiritual vision **and** courage (see **Num.** 13: 30 where his **faith** is expressed **in his belief that the land** was **there** to be taken, **in** God's power. See also **Num. 14: 6-9**, where both **he and** Joshua **entreated** the people to take possession of the land). Both Caleb **and** Joshua demonstrated, **in these** two instances particularly, an **ability** to work together **in** seeking to carry out God's **will**.

From our consideration **and** comparison of Joshua **and** Caleb we concluded that, **in** God's **scheme** of things, **men** of the same generation **can** have **differing**, sometimes apparently **divergent** roles **which** **He** means to **be** complementary to **each** other. For **example**, at one point **in their** careers they were both **men** of battle. **But** Joshua's role **changed**. **His** responsibilities **became** strategic. **He** was still involved **in a** spiritual battle, but now **he** was to **delineate and thereby** pass on the **inheritance** to those who could physically **take** possession. **On the** other hand, Caleb was still physically involved **in** the acquisition of the inheritance.

We attempted to make a clear parallel with our Christian **experience in the** churches of God today. Firstly, our Lord, who is "our portion" or **inheritance** (Lam. 3: 24), is a God who is to **be** worshipped. We noted some New Testament **scriptures that** point out reasons to praise **Him**, **namely** 2 Cor. 1: 3, which speaks of **an inheritance** of relationship **and** protection; 1 **Pet. 1: 3**, which speaks of the present **and** future possession of **eternal life**; **Eph. 1: 3**, **speaking** of the limitless character of God's provision **in Christ for the believer**. Secondly, God is to **be served** in His house, through sound teaching of the **Word and the** preaching of the gospel (both serving to **delineate the** inheritance possessed by some **and available** to **all** responsive believers).

We will only **achieve** this **aim by being** "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His **might**" (**Eph. 6:10**).

J. R. Butler, R. K. Fisher

From Ibadan: For a period of more than five years, Israel had been warring against the Canaanites and with the help of God they had been able to conquer a sizeable portion of the land. When the Lord had given them rest from their enemies, they were able to settle down to divide the land among the tribes so as to allow for consolidation. Joshua and the whole of Israel whole-heartedly followed the Lord and for a while they had necessary rest from their enemies. Whosoever will come to the Lord will surely have rest from his labours. (Matt. 11: 28). Joshua, now very old and stricken in years, needed rest more than anything else for his soul but this would not come until he had completed the assignments given to him by the Lord. To do this creditably, he has to follow to the letter all the commandments of God which he has learned. New Testament saints will do well and have complete rest of mind by taking the yoke of the Lord and learning of Him (Matt. **11: 29**) [Comment 2].

Joshua set out to allot the land in God's own way without fear or favour to any individual or tribe (Acts 10: 34; Deut. 1: 17). A prominent difference in the allotment to Judah under the headship of Caleb was that, while the rest of the nine and a half tribes took their own portion according to lot cast by the use of Urim and Thummim by Eleazar, the priest (Num. 27: 18-23; 34: 17; Josh 17: 4), Caleb traced back the truthful word of God spoken to him some forty-five years earlier (Josh. 14: 6-24). "Thou knowest the thing that the Lord said unto Moses the man of God concerning me".

It is clear that Caleb had known what God had apportioned to him in particular and to his father's house-hold in general. Please note carefully that the portion allotted to this man was not a peaceful place. Firstly the place was a mountainous region and secondly, the place was a hideout for the Anakim. All this did not happen to him as a result of his not serving the Lord. But God did according to the counsel of His heart. The question for us now is whether we have known God's allotment - His perfect will for our lives, and whether we are ready to face up to accepting it.

Caleb was just a dynamic man who would not dare tamper with God's will for his life. He would not accept prevailing circumstances and situations to prevent him from seeing and accepting the perfect will of God (Jer. 29: 11-13). For the people of Israel to dwell peaceably and enjoy perfect rest in the land, they had to do certain things, (a) They had to get rid of all abominable things that may have provoked God to strike against them or not to drive out the inhabitants any more. Thus the killing of Balaam, the sooth-sayer {Josh. 13: 22) was in wonderful obedience to Deut. 23: 14; (1 Cor. 10: 14). (b). They had to get rid of the former inhabitants of the land by total annihilation (Josh. 13: 21; 15: 14-19).

This is **where the** cost of discipleship comes in. For Caleb **knew** that to enjoy God's **peace he** must **have** this thing done. Thus **he** called for a tender for those who could help after which **he** paid **the** price. For us also **there are** some prices to pay, not for our redemption **but** for our daily living as Christians (Rom. **12: 1-3**). We will **have** to strive **harder**, earnestly, vigorously **and** rigorously for **the** Faith once delivered unto us (**1 Pet. 3: 15; Rev. 2: 25; Jude 3**). **After** doing this we expect **the great** Rewarder to do as was done to Othniel (**2 Tim. 4: 7-8; Rev 2: 7-11; 3: 5; 12: 21**).

We **read** in Josh. **15: 63**, "As for **the** Jebusites... **the** children of Judah could **not** drive **them** out". We should consider this **and** contrast it with Josh **1: 5** **and** let us think of the reasons **why** we live a life of despondency **and** prefer the life outlined in Josh **14: 9; Dan. 11: 32**.

Anon

From Kingston, Jamaica: This section of Joshua sets forth in geographical detail the assignment of **land made** to **each** tribe, with the boundaries of **the** tribes future possessions

Joshua **was** old **and** **advanced** in years. **By** the time of Josh. **23: 1** **he** was **110** years old, so we estimated his **age** to **be** about **90 - 100** years. We note **verse 1** stated **he had much land** to possess. The spiritual application is **clear as we study** the Bible **and** its truth about the person **and** work of Christ. The older we grow in the things of God, we cannot **seem** to **get** enough of Him; **yes** indeed we do **have much** to possess.

Joshua begins **the** allotment of **the land that** remains to **be** possessed. This is described in **the** following **chapters (13-19)**. Other unconquered **lands were the** borders of the Philistine **and** the Geshurites (Josh. **13: 2**). We note in **1: 6** that **these areas** would **be** acquired over **several** centuries as promised. We in **churches** of God must **remember** that God does His conquering in His own time. We in Jamaica would love to **see churches** of God **planted** on this island, but like Joshua, **as we walk** in His will **and** obey His voice, we will possess **many lands**.

Caleb is **an** outstanding **example** of a godly believer **because he** followed the Lord (**14: 9**). We note **as a** result the Lord **gave** him physical strength **and** long life. He also conquered Hebron **and** Debir (**15: 13-20**). When **any man has** received Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, is baptized **and** added to a **church** of God **and** decides to follow the Lord wholly, **much** can **be** achieved in his personal life **and** in **the assembly**. We see Paul, the apostle, **a man** who dedicated his whole life to following **the** Lord, accomplish **much** in his lifetime. We **pray** God would use us **thus**.

The closing verse of chapter 15 tells us that the children of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites. The verse ends telling us that they dwelt there "up to this day". We note from 2 Sam. 5: 6-8 and 1 Chron. 11: 4-9, that David eventually captured the city from them, but we would like to point out a very important principle. We the people of God, a separated people, must remember as individuals, we all have our various problems. Some of these problems are the direct results of sin, which we have not been able to drive out of our lives. Sad to say, some may have died with unconfessed sins, but as David was given strength by God to drive out the Jebusites so we are given the Holy Spirit to drive out sin.

R. Walcott

From Liverpool: This is to us a difficult passage to interpret both from a historical perspective and in terms of lessons for today. Judah, as one of the major tribes appears to have chosen the bulk of the southernmost part of Canaan and Reuben, Gad and the Machirite clan of Manasseh the land to the east of the river Jordan. The tribes of the sons of Joseph likewise chose the bulk of the northern territory while the rest of the tribes were given their portions by lot after a land survey [Comment 4],

The Land. Numbers 34 gives details of Israel's boundaries within Canaan and on this reckoning the Transjordan tribes lived outside the promised land, whose eastern boundary runs from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain and continues along the slopes by the Sea of Chinnereth, then down along the Jordan to the Salt Sea. An earlier chapter, however, records Moses granting these two and a half tribes their inheritance to the east of that line. Whatever the original intention the territory of Gilead was definitely considered to be part of Israel.

An Ideal. We noted that these boundaries were very much according to an ideal to be possessed by faith and obedience to God's word. Judah's allotted territory included land which remained Philistine and Geshurite territory and its western boundary was never, in fact, the Great Sea.

Problems. There are difficulties in delineating precisely where tribal boundaries lie. Some cities are recorded as belonging to more than one tribe (*cf.* Jerusalem - 15: 63; 18: 28) and the sites of many cities are now uncertain [Comment 5].

By Faith. Caleb, already having proved himself to be a great man of faith, having been given Hebron, wasted no time in making it his own. His daughter seems to have been a woman with an appreciation of the importance of her inheritance. Having been granted land in the Negev she wanted it to be fruitful and sought springs of water. We need people today who are not just content to have a stake in the land, but who want spiritual fruit to the praise and glory of our God.

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: The Hebrew leader was perhaps about ninety years of age and there was still a lot of land to be occupied including such places as Jerusalem, and Gezer (16: 10). Yet he was told to proceed to the division of the land, this being done by drawing lots (Num. 36: 12). Each tribe was to keep the area to which it had been allotted. It is noted that ten chapters of the book are devoted to a description of the country, and not only are its general features and boundaries carefully laid down, but the names and situations of its towns and villages are enumerated with a precision of geographical terms.

It seems that the receiving of this inheritance can be paralleled in a number of ways. It is written that at Mount Sinai the people of Israel said, "... all that the Lord hath spoken we will do..." (Ex. 19: 8). It is suggested that this pledge of obedience has a parallel at the present time when a believer takes his or her place in a church of God. This being so, we see that the people of God of the present time have a fuller inheritance than that which is common to all believers and of which Peter writes (1 Pet. 1: 4). This latter inheritance relates to our eternal position and blessing, is common to all believers and is unconditional depending entirely upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The inheritance which is the portion of the people of God is an inheritance within an inheritance, relates to our life here on earth and depends on our faith and obedience to the Word of God. The suggestion was put forward that there is a further step in that we need not only our place among God's people but that we have to bow to the King and obey His laws and thus enter the Kingdom of God [Comment 6].

As regards the parallel between the receiving of the inheritance by Israel and the people of God today some thought that if this is so then the "inheritance" could not be exclusive to the saints in churches of God but must be broader in its application and that the churches of God were a "slot" within the inheritance among other believers, but, if we, as was the case with Caleb, follow the Lord's will whole-heartedly

we shall be allocated a particular spot which will be a place in a church of God [Comment 7 J

K. S. Hickling

From **Paisley**: The principles for division of the land among the tribes of Israel were determined by the Lord to Moses: "to the more thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to the fewer thou shalt give the less inheritance... notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit" (Num. 26: 52-56). Before this could be achieved however, they had to drive out the inhabitants of the land (Num. 33: 52). The responsibility for dividing the land among the tribes rested with Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun (Num. 34: 17). The Levites were not to share in this inheritance because the title of the children of Israel was given to them as an inheritance (Num. 18: 24), though they were given cities to dwell in among the tribes of Israel (Num. 35: 2).

The Lord's purpose was for the land outlined in Num. 34 to be allotted to the nine and a half tribes, as Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had already accepted the land east of Jordan as their inheritance, but had agreed to help their brethren to possess the land of Canaan (Num. 32). The wisdom of such a choice is to be questioned because of the difficulty of travelling to the house of the Lord which involved the crossing of the river Jordan when it was in spate. Also they had no natural barrier against their enemies from the east or the north. Moses, however, agreed to their request and Joshua confirmed their inheritance (Josh. 13: 15-33).

Caleb's faithfulness in an earlier day was rewarded also. It is fitting tribute to his zeal that it is recorded of him that he wholly followed the Lord, the God of Israel (Josh. 14: 14). Faithfulness in the service of the Lord will surely bring its reward. Judah's portion lay in the south of the land stretching from the Salt Sea to the Mediterranean coast: a land of hills and valleys, including Jerusalem which nevertheless was not subjugated until the days of David (2 Sam. 5: 6).

Extending the thought of inheritance to our own day, it is evident that faithfulness in the present time will bring its reward in a coming day (Luke 19: 26). The man who gained ten pounds was given authority over ten cities; the man who gained five pounds was given authority over five cities. This would seem to embrace not only reward in

the millennial reign of the Lord, but also in the eternal state (2 Cor. 4: 17).

J. Renfrew

From **Surulere**: After years of wanderings and murmurings, trials and wars, victories and defeats; it was now time to divide the land, and settle down. The conquest could be perfected little by little as God had promised (Ex. 23: 29-33, Deut. 7: 20-24). The situation holds true for the present day pilgrim. For "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22 AV).

The inheritance was shared according to the tribes. Individuals within each tribe were to receive their portion within what was allotted to their own tribes. This indicates unity; today there must be unity amongst the saints in doctrine and practice; in worship and service. There must be unity in fighting the common foes, the Devil, the flesh and the world. Yet it was the duty of the different tribes and individuals - for instance Caleb, to expand and perfect the victory over what was allotted to them.

It was noted that each tribe received its inheritance without grudging the other. A lesson was deduced from here; that within the house of God our brothers' God-given progress in spiritual and material things should cause us to give glory to God, and not provoke jealousy and grudges or murmurings against one another. (James 5: 9).

Caleb's faithfulness; his ability and determination to follow the Lord wholly (Josh. 14: 9; Deut 1: 36; Num. 14: 24) and God's preserving mercy on him were brought into focus. "The counsel of the Lord standeth fast for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Ps. 33: 11). This was true for Caleb.

For forty-five years he had to wait patiently to see the fulfilment of the Lord's promise for him (Josh. 14: 10-12). God always keeps His Word with men. Patience, faith and "wholly following the Lord" pay off with a big dividend. The promptness to make a definite request (Josh. 14: 12) must be governed by our knowledge of what is available for us, of what has been promised. (Deut. 1: 35, 36).

No specific area of land was given to the tribe of Levi, (Josh. 13: 33). Yet it could be said they had the very best, the service of the House of God, (Deut. 10: 8). However, the land is God's (Lev. 25: 23) and others had nothing to boast of. The saints were exhorted to "sit loose"

on the things of this world, "for things which are seen are temporal" (2 Cor. 4: 18) and to hold firm and guard our inheritance in Christ (Acts 26: 18).

E. Uno

COMMENTS

1. (Aberdeen): A major feature of this month's study has been highlighted here. Previously the land had been possessed by the nation as a whole. Thereafter it was the responsibility of each tribe and of individuals such as Caleb to possess their inheritance. While it is usually easy to draw New Testament parallels in the possession and more particularly the practice of divine truth by individuals, the premier thing about the teaching of the book of Joshua is that divine truth has to be held and practised by saints collectively in churches of God and in the Fellowship in our day. We would like to draw attention to the order in which possession by the nation as a whole preceded possession by its component tribes and individuals. Mass-movement in divine things often precedes movement on a smaller scale. For example, the majority of those who returned from Babylon to Jerusalem did so in the initial movement (contrast Ezra 2 and 8). Likewise in the present dispensation, thousands were added to the Lord in Jerusalem but as the work proceeded in a more dispersed fashion throughout the Roman Empire we do not read of such a scale of movement. Again, ninety years ago a mass-movement occurred as believers separated from other believers to return to build the house of God. Since then, however, the return has been on a smaller, localised scale over a larger span of time as friends in Kingston make us so vividly aware this month.

2. **(Derby and Ibadan):** The rest described in the book of Joshua is the rest for a collective people identified in Hebrews 3 and 4 as the resting down of God. The 'rest'^T of Mat. 11: 28 is for the sinner and that of Mat. 11: 29 for the individual saint.

3. **(Derby):** It is evident that many contributors have enjoyed contemplation of Joshua and Caleb. Like Paul and Barnabas they are one of the great partnerships of the Scriptures. Josh. 14: 6-15 show clearly the truth that subjection does not mean inferiority.

LE. P.

4. **(Liverpool):** While it is true that the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal (Josh. 14: 6), each of the nine and a half tribes had their territory designated by Lot (14: 2). Nevertheless Judah

and the children of Joseph had received theirs first (Josh. 18: 5), leaving **seven** tribes for **the** seven portions described, **as the** allotment continued. In **the** foresight of God Judah **was first**, for from **him** was to come **the sceptre** (Gen. 49: 10).

5. (Liverpool): **The** border went **up** by **the** valley of the sons of Hinnom unto **the sides** of **the Jebusite** southward (Josh. 15: 8), so that "**the Jebusite**" was **assigned** to Benjamin (18: 28). Nevertheless the children of **Judah** fought **against** Jerusalem and took **it** (**Judg.** 1: 21). **The** situation was altered **in the days** of David.

E. A.

6. (Nottingham): It was not **their** pledge of obedience that constituted Israel **the** kingdom of God **but** their identification **as a** collective people with **the** blood of sprinkling (Ex. 24: 8). Practice **and** not pledge **is** what God **is after** for **the** kingdom of God **in** doing **the will** of God **by** the people of God. They were **then required** to continue steadfastly **in** the law of Moses and, **as a** people together, to **build the house of God and thus be able to engage in divine service**. We can hardly fail to **see the** comparison **between Ex. 19** to Leviticus 1 **and later scriptures** with what **is said** about **the first church** of God (Acts 2: 42). It **is** so today. **There can hardly be a clearer example** of **the** kingdom of God **being entered** as when **the assembly** practises "**Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven**" when it receives a **disciple** of the Lord Jesus **and** when **the disciple** practises **the same in taking his place in God's assembly**. But together they must continue to **enter**. Alas some do not enter but **exit**. **In** so doing the kingdom of God **is still being entered by the assembly** for they **practise the doing of the will of God on earth as it has been settled in heaven** where **the erring saint's place has been** declared forfeit (Mat. 18: 18) and **his inheritance** removed (Eph. 5: 5). **Thus entering** the kingdom of God **is not a step** additional to **being received** into Fellowship. It **is a process that begins with the latter as the believer begins to possess the inheritance that has been allotted to him**. Similarly losing **the inheritance** does not **take place on leaving the assembly**. It **has been settled in heaven and the assembly are then meant to carry out the will of God on earth by excommunicating the dispossessed saint**.

I. E. P.

7. (Nottingham): **The believer's eternal inheritance is the portion** which **all** who **trust in** Christ for salvation **can** look forward to. **If**, however, **we are** drawing a **parallel** between **the inheritance of Israel, the people of God in a past day, and that of God's people today, then the scope of the parallel is defined by the separation which ought to**

obtain between those who constitute the people of God and those who do not.

The matter of reward for faithfulness in relation to inheritance is developed in the closing paragraphs of the Paisley contribution.

E. A.

It will be observed that friends in Nottingham do not give any New Testament scriptures in support of their statement implying that the people of God today embrace others who are outside churches of God. This is hardly surprising for the New Testament teaches the opposite: namely that churches of God forming the house of God are coextensive with the people of God as 2 Cor. 6: 16 amongst other Scriptures clearly shows. The importance of this is well seen in the very scriptures (Heb. 3 and 4) which are declared to be the counterpart of the possessing of the land in Joshua's day. This counterpart, the rest of God which the people of God enter today, is none other than the house of God (see Acts 7: 49).

/. E. P.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From Derby: Will God give to the Jews the land they took, or the land He promised?

The land they took by God's help and held, varied in extent according to their condition before Him, but, when the King of kings reigns among them, they will be victorious, as described in Is. 11: 14-15, and will possess the full extent of the land.

E. A.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Will contributors please ensure that their articles arrive before the allotted date and that they bear the appropriate signature. In some cases only the covering letter is signed and it is not clear that the same person is responsible for the contents of the paper.

Eds.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8509

One of the notable features of the passage under consideration in this issue is the attitude of the descendants of Joseph to the division of the Land. Ephraim and Manasseh, taken together, were larger in number than any of the other tribes, according to the tribal numbers given in Numbers 26, and so, by the rule which God had given to Moses (Num. 26:53) they should have had a larger territory. This they did, in fact, receive. Half of the tribe of Manasseh had a substantial territory to the east of the Jordan, and Ephraim and the rest of Manasseh were allotted a large area of the hill country to the north of that given to Judah. However, they were not satisfied with their allotment, and asked for more. As one of our contributors points out, they were the only tribe to do so. At the time, Manasseh was the largest tribe, but Ephraim rapidly outstripped its brother tribe to become the more important, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Gen. 48:19. It seems that even in the time of Joshua there were seeds of arrogance and pride which Ephraim later manifested. When Gideon fought with the Midianites, the Ephraimites complained that he had not called them to fight, more in a spirit of pique at being left out than in a genuine wish to help, and Gideon had to mollify them by flattery: "Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer"? (Judg. 8:2). By the time of Solomon's reign, Ephraim had become so strong that the right of Judah to the kingship was challenged, and Rehoboam's unwise behaviour after his father's death led Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite, to divide the kingdom and establish himself as king of the ten tribes. This in turn led to the disastrous setting up of separate centres of worship, for which Jeroboam is notorious in the Old Testament scriptures. Later still, in Hosea's time, Ephraim had become so dominant in Israel that the two names were used almost interchangeably. Ephraim was proud of its status (Hos. 13:1) and of its riches (Hos. 12:8), but it had turned to idols, and its riches were obtained by fraud and violence. To such lengths had covetousness and pride brought those who were blessed by God.

What was Joshua's response to the claim for more territory?

He told them to get to work to take possession of the afforested land on the hills. This was already part of the land which they had been allotted, but they apparently wanted land which was easy to occupy, both in terms of existing cultivation and lack of enemy opposition. Their boast of greatness was turned back upon themselves; their strength had to be used to extend their territory to meet their needs. The extra land which they could gain was as much as others obtained as their allotment. The moral is obvious; in taking possession of the Lord's inheritance we should not only grasp what is easy to grasp, but use our abilities to obtain it to the full.

P. L. H.

THE INHERITANCE ALLOTTED (2): THE CHILDREN OF JOSEPH AND THE SEVEN TRIBES (Joshua 16: 1-19: 51)

From Aberdeen: *Joshua and leadership of the tribes.* It is evident that the people needed to have Joshua's leadership. Seven tribes stood still until Joshua had to address them. "How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land, which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, hath given you?" (Josh. 18:3). The Lord said "HATH given" you yet they were slack to go in to possess it. Joshua had to set the matter of possession in motion by appointing three men for each tribe, who were to walk through the land and report back to Joshua. He gave the lead. Our Lord Jesus is our great Leader, having set an example, for us to follow in His steps. Moreover, we need the Spirit of Truth to lead us into all the truth, as was promised; "He shall guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). Finally, God uses men to lead His people - "chief men among the brethren" and those "reputed to be pillars" (Acts 15:22, Gal. 2:9). True leadership of God's people requires that a man be confident in God, just like Joshua. For example, when the children of Joseph halted at the thought of facing Canaanite chariots of iron, Joshua ably encouraged them because he was confident in God. To the unsure tribe he spoke the stabilising word, "thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron and though they be strong" (17:18).

Inheritance and the tribes. God's faithfulness is recorded in those words "hath given you". Man's unfaithfulness is recorded in the words, "slack to go in". The same matter is presented in the New Testament when Paul wrote to Timothy, "If we are faithless, He abideth faithful" (2 Tim. 2:13). God's unalterable character encourages us to lay hold on Him and to claim His promises. Before possessing their promised inheritance each

tribe had to fight. However, the inheritance of the tribe of Levi was not associated with fighting, for their inheritance was the priesthood of Jehovah. In the present testimony our warfare (fighting the good fight of the faith) is only associated with our pilgrim days on earth. The priesthood of the spiritual house today is not earthly in character but is associated with heaven. The service of a holy priesthood, which by the grace of God is a reality today, is not confined only to the pilgrim days of earth (as contending for the faith is) but will continue throughout eternity.

J. C. Johnson

From Ajegunle: The children of Joseph (17:12-18) had not appreciated the exceeding riches of the grace of God to do exploits. Recognition of the principle (Heb. 10:38 AV) "the just shall live by faith", was lacking in this situation. There is need today for saints to appreciate the truth of 2 Cor. 10:4-6 in the present day warfare.

The words of the daughters of Zelophehad (17:3-4), and the children of Joseph (17:14), reminding Joshua of the words of the Lord concerning their inheritance (see Num. 27:6, 7; Gen. 48:20-22), encouraged us to read the scriptures and to align ourselves to God's purposes.

The Canaanites became a hindrance to the Israelites in later times because they could not drive them out completely (Num. 33:51-66; Judges 2:3). The present day believer could be hindered by the flesh, hence the exhortation in Eph. 4:22-24 to put away the old man and his deeds.

We note that Shiloh was a place of service and worship which the Lord Himself chose but sin caused a change of location (Ps. 78:55-60; Jer. 7:12-15). We suggest that this principle is similar to the change of a people for God as a result of unbelief and disobedience (Heb. 3:19, 4:6; Mat. 21:43).

It seems to us that the remaining seven tribes were content still to live in tents, hence the question of Joshua recorded in 18:3 with which we began our article. The believer in God's house today has an inheritance "with the saints in light". The question we ask ourselves is, how much of it have we made our possession?

M. Imoukhuede, G. Okwena

From Birkenhead: The lot for the children of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh covered a large tract of country. This was necessary because they were numerous. However they complained to Joshua that there was insufficient land for their needs. They were the only ones to do so. To deal with this matter they were told to (a) go up to the hill country which was forested, and cut down trees and (b) drive out the Canaanites dwelling in the valley of Jezreel. To do this required effort and conflict, and we readily took the lesson that the disciple today must be prepared to enter into conflict to enjoy fully spiritual blessings. It was not reasonable for the children of Joseph to complain about their lot. It was given them by the Lord who knew their every need and circumstance. We today can also appreciate the Lord's complete knowledge of our situation, and He will grant the victorious experience to those who rely wholly on Him.

Seven tribes were still to receive their allotted inheritance. Joshua highlighted the reason for this state of affairs as slackness on the people's part, and called them to action. A parallel situation in the present day can exist and we need to be watchful lest we be lacking in diligence.

To move forward in the matter of the allocation of the remainder of the land, Joshua instructed them to appoint three men from each of the tribes, who were to survey the land or describe it into seven parts (i.e. to mark off or distribute it - O.E.D. [Comment 1]). When this was done Joshua cast lots for them before the Lord in Shiloh. The outworking of God's purposes is seen as this took place. Simeon was allocated a portion within Judah's territory. This was a step towards the tribes being assimilated (see Gen. 49) [Comment 2]. God is faithful to His promises and this was noticed as the daughters of Zelophehad received their promised portion (Num. 27: 1-11; Josh. 17: 4).

It is moving to notice the gracious manner of Joshua. He, who was the great leader, waits until the tribal distribution is complete, and receives for an inheritance the city of his choice from the people. This is in marked contrast to the two and a half tribes east of Jordan who had too quickly made their request for their portion to be allocated.

R. D. Williams, A. Hyland

From Derby: The division of the land emphasizes the sovereignty of God and how His sovereignty manifests itself. The purpose of God in having His house in Jerusalem was protected by the allotment of the territory to the tribe of Judah. God, who sees the end from the beginning, fitted everything in.

Joshua and Eleazar, the priest, made an important combin-

ation in dividing the land. They sent men out to describe the land but they had to come back to Shiloh and the final choice lay with God. If we are in the way of divine choice, God will guard and keep us. There is a secure inheritance for us which is incorruptible and undefiled, (1 Pet. 1:4) but we have an inheritance (Acts 20:23) which has to do with the privileges associated with the house of God. The inheritance of the present day is associated with the truth of the house of God.

Although the places which are so carefully recorded may be obliterated, the names will never be obliterated. The possessions of the tribes may reappear in the days of Israel's reconciliation.

The truth which we win while we are on the earth we will have forever. We will gain something which we will never lose. The disciple should be concerned about coming rewards.

The daughters of Zelophehad were spiritually minded women. They had no brothers so they had no inheritance when their father died. They said they were entitled to an inheritance and they were not prepared to let it slip. God said they were right to want it. There are godly sisters who value their inheritance in the assembly today.

The children of Joseph said that their place was not big enough for them so Joshua told them to get to work. For them it was not a matter of extension but of possession.

Joshua had to rebuke the children of Israel. They were losing out because they were slack and not diligent.

We have time to work our inheritance in the purpose of God. The Levites had no portion among the tribes. They had the Lord as their inheritance and this was better than all the land of Canaan.

G. W. Conway

From Ibadan. The children of Joseph were allotted a peaceful location which was not accidental but in fulfilment of the words of God which carried messages of blessings by the mouth of Jacob their father and Moses the servant of God (Gen. 49:22-26; Deut. 33:13-17). The areas that fell into their possessions were mostly conquered territories [Comment 3] (Josh. 16:1, 2). The male children of Joseph were not the only ones to enjoy the inheritance, there were provisions for females too. God commanded Moses to allow the daughters of Manasseh to have their own share of the inheritance among their brethren

because He wanted them to remain as a unified body. In the house of God which is formed by churches of God today, the story is the same. God bestowed His mercy on the generality of the people without discrimination (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 12:13) [Comment 10].

However, **the children of Joseph were not content with the Lord's lot for them; rather they began to complain of the smallness of their allotment. We saints of the New Testament should learn to be content with whatsoever God allots us, because godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6; Mat. 6:31-34). The children of Joseph in Josh. 17:14-18 are seen to be craving for more territory, thus exposing themselves as covetous; which led them to be given the challenge of facing up to the enemies they could not subdue, as already envisaged by Joshua.**

Joshua's reaction to **the demands of these people stands out as a significant lesson to those that God has put at the helm of affairs in His house. For here Joshua represented the Lord as His good ambassador. He was impartial, just and prudent (2 Sam. 23:3; 1 Cor. 4:2; 1 Tim 5:21). If Joshua had been carnally minded he might have succumbed to the ungodly demands of his kinsmen, opening himself to the charge of nepotism. Leaders in the house of God should be spirit-filled and just (2 Sam. 23:2). Joshua knew that this people were arrogating to themselves the position of a great tribe and to suppress this egocentric attitude, he challenged them to battle with men with chariots of iron so as to teach them that it is ungodly for men to think of themselves more highly than they ought (Rom. 12:3).**

The challenge posed by Joshua to **the remaining seven tribes of Israel as to their slackness in possessing their own inheritance seemed to be paradoxical in view of the fact that each tribe had to get its own inheritance by lot. If Joshua attributed the inability of the remaining seven tribes to possess their own inheritance to slackness or inertia, why should he delegate some men to map out the land again? This is something he never practised in the allotting of inheritance to the other tribes [Comment 4].**

However, necessity may warrant the leaders of God's people to **'ginger up' the saints, as brother Paul enjoins us in 1 Cor. 16:13 and Eph. 5:16. Therefore, it might not be unreasonable for Joshua to arouse the spirit of the remaining seven tribes to pursue their inheritance without being slothful (Rom 12:11).**

Anon

From Kingston, Jamaica: Manasseh the half-tribe obtained an inheritance in the land (on the other side of Jordan). While this was according to prophecy (**Gen. 48: 5-6, Deut. 3: 12-17**) we note that it had to do with what God through Joshua said to them "Thou art a great people, and hast great power" (17: 17). Here, they had come over Jordan to go before their brethren to assist in acquiring the land. A parallel is drawn in **1 Cor. 3** where our future rewards will be in direct proportion to the effort (works) put in. We can also refer to passages where we are designated as soldiers in a spiritual battle (**Eph. 6 and 2 Cor. 10**).

The inheritance of the tribes was a physical thing with the exception of the Levites whose inheritance is the Lord's and on this particular occasion "the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance" (18: 7). We note in **Acts 20: 32** that our inheritance is among those that are sanctified (to purify internally to the reformation of the soul) and this has a present aspect. The inheritance spoken of in **1 Pet. 1: 4**, however, is a future aspect.

It is no wonder that we see Shiloh, where the Tabernacle (the dwelling-place of God) was in relation to the distribution of the land amongst the remainder of tribes who were tardy. Joshua appointed twenty one men to go and describe the land (three from each tribe). Everything that one does should be as a result of service in the house of God.

The ark dwelt in Shiloh, and there are many interpretations as to the significance of this, but we are certain, however, of one thing; Shiloh was built on a hill (cp. **Judges 21: 19**). From there it would have been visible to every eye. Does not this bring our minds to **Mat. 5: 14-16**? Our testimony as individuals in God's house and also collectively must bear this out at all times, being the 'light of the world' [Comment 5].

Finally, as it was in the beginning so shall it be at the end. The words of the Lord echo in our minds, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (**Rev. 21: 6**). Joshua (Jehovah saves) had asked for his city as Caleb (bold, impetuous) did in the beginning of the allotment. Perhaps this foreshadows the Lord saying in the Psalms, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (**Ps. 2: 8**). This therefore, shows the kingly role of the Lord in reward (not divine) on earth and for us practically (**1 Tim 5: 17**) and in the future (**1 Pet. 1: 4-5 and 1 Cor. 3**), all of which is wrapped up in the person of Christ [Comment 6].

M. Morris

From Liverpool: Between them Ephraim and half of Manasseh received the major part of the land. Ephraim and Judah were the two most powerful tribes but already the seeds of a future political rift were being sown.

The Joseph Tribes' Complaint. Both Ephraim and Manasseh met with failure in attempting settlement of their portion (16: 10, 17: 12). If "The children of Joseph" (17: 14) refers to both tribes we found it difficult to make sense of their complaint. They had, in effect, been given three not inconsiderable pieces of territory comprising Gilead and the large area from the northern boundaries of Dan and Benjamin to Asher in the north. Whatever the problem the root was failure to work at it, using the Canaanite chariots as an excuse.

The Curse on Simeon and Levi Gen. 49: 5-7 Levi was dispersed in an honourable way as the tribe chosen for the service of the house of God; Simeon, however, was swallowed up in Judah and ceased to play any part in the subsequent history. At the time of the two kingdoms, Judah is stated to be a two-tribe kingdom (Judah itself and Benjamin), with no mention of Simeon. Even the cities listed for Simeon have already been listed as belonging to Judah. In the blessing of Moses in Deut. 33 Simeon does not feature at all. From 1 Chron. 4: 24-43 it is clear that they did maintain their genealogical record. Do editors agree that this is a fulfilment of this curse? [Comment 7],

Zelophehad's Daughters (cf. Num. 27: 1-11, 36: 1-12). Manasseh's portion consisted of 12 shares: two (Gilead and Bashan) were given to the Machirites; five to the families descended from the daughters of Zelophehad and five to the families descended from the remaining sons of Manasseh. These women obviously valued their inheritance and made sure it was not lost to them or their tribe.

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: The necessity of Joshua's words (Josh. 18: 3) puzzled us. Why should the people have needed any prompting to take what was their inheritance? Laziness and slackness were suggested as reasons. Why should they go out to fight when they could stay safe at home? It was suggested that we were the same because many of us take a lazy attitude towards our inheritance. Having been saved and baptized it is often easy to become a passenger in an assembly and watch others do the work.

It was also suggested that the Israelites¹ own strength worked against them. A characteristic weakness in some strong people is that they feel they can deal with a nagging irritant at any time

Sometimes **it** overcomes them. The Canaanites who **were** not **driven** out **were** to **be** a problem to **the** Israelites for **years** to come.

The **embarrassing** position of **the remaining** Canaanites was seen **by** some to **be relevant** to **us** in **that we are** sometimes embarrassed **by** unbelievers. They **are** often involved in doing good works **that we should be doing**¹. The **example of famine relief** was **cited**. Should **we** not **make** a contribution as a fellow-ship? Amongst ourselves **there were mixed views** [Comment 8].

We also noted **that while Gezer** was **part of the inheritance** of Joseph **it was eventually captured** by Pharaoh and only returned to Solomon as **part of the wedding dowry**. In fact it was never Pharaoh's to **give** and he should not **have been involved in this** (1 Kings 9: 16). [Comment 9].

C. Edis

COMMENTS

1. (Birkenhead): "**Describe**" here is the ordinary Hebrew word (*kathab*) meaning to write and would thus indicate that the report of **the men** who were sent out was written. Perhaps it formed **the basis** for the geographical record of the verses we are studying. We can hardly fail to connect **this with the present inheritance of saints in churches of God today** which consists of **the possession of divine truth**, appropriate to a collective people, **which has been written down** (Acts 20: 32).

I. E. P.

2. (Birkenhead): The prophecy of Jacob **that Simeon and Levi** should **be scattered in Israel** (Gen. 49: 7) was fulfilled in **rather different** ways. The Levites, of course, were given **the priesthood, and so had** no territory of their own. Simeon's territory, as is pointed out, **lay within that granted to Judah, and they seem** not to have prospered as much as the tribe of Judah. 1 Chron. 4: 27 records that "**neither did all their family multiply, like to the children of Judah**". The tribe is not mentioned **after the Captivity**. See Comment 7.

3. (Ibadan): This was not **entirely true**. They **had, indeed,**

already pacified some areas, but in others the Canaanites remained to be driven out, and their reluctance to attempt this was at the root of their request for a further allotment.

4. (Ibadan): It seems that there was a certain amount of inertia among the remaining seven tribes, which Joshua sensed. In contrast to the two and a half tribes to the east of Jordan, who were rather too ready to claim land for themselves, the seven may have made the lack of definite allotment the excuse for idleness. The "boundary commission" which Joshua sent out described definite areas which each tribe had to occupy, as allocated by lot. It does seem that Judah and the children of Joseph had at least partly occupied the land before it was officially shared out, because they knew it well. Some people will get on with a job without detailed direction: others need to be told what to do. A leader sometimes has to restrain the one and encourage the other.

P. L. H.

5. (Kingston): Men always go "up" to the house of God. Departure from it is always "down". What was true in a physical (and spiritual) sense under the Old Covenant is no less true in spiritual things today. This is at the beginning of the Lord's teaching illustrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho" (Luke 10:30).

6. (Kingston): Friends in Kingston are on to a good line of things here. Many of the truths which we are to practise, especially collectively and in imitation of Christ, have their origin in the Godhead (John 17:11-23).

I. E. P.

7. (Liverpool): This does seem to be a fulfilment of Jacob's curse. Simeon is mentioned at a later date, when Asa renewed the altar of the Lord (2 Chr. 15:9) and some returned to him from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon, but it seems that they lost identity as a whole tribe.

P. L. H.

The Simeonites are to be prominent during Daniel's 70th week and in the Millennium (Rev. 7:7; Ezek. 48:24) so we can hardly say that they have been lost forever.

I. E. P.

8. (Nottingham): The analogy seems rather strained. The Canaanites represented an evil, idolatrous way of life, which God required to be put away from their midst. Their

presence **prevented the full enjoyment of God's inheritance.** The **shame which we might feel when we see others more zealous in good works than ourselves is of a rather different nature.**

P. L. H.

9. (Nottingham): The point here is that if Gezer had been captured when it ought to have been then it would not have given the enemy the opportunity at a later date to enslave the very king of Israel.

10. (Ibadan): The daughters of Zelophehad were named in association with their inheritance only after the expiry of their men-folk. Their exceptional case underlines the fact that men were treated differently from women in this matter. It is so in the kingdom of God for there the Lord maintains sexual distinction in the different roles He has for men and women. This is clearly seen in the churches of God (e. g. 1 Cor. 14: 34; 2 Cor. 6: 17-18) and is a continuation of what was practised in the Old Testament which thus foreshadows the New. Generally speaking, women come to prominence in the kingdom of God when the men-folk fail as in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, or Jael and Deborah. Neither in the Old or New Covenant Scriptures is it taught that such prominence is of a public nature. The scriptures which friends in Ibadan cite have to do with the Church which is His Body and not with churches of God but their general point about the importance of impartiality in judgement is, of course, true.

I. E. P.

BEFORE THE LORD

Further to the correspondence of bro. M. Archibald in B. S. 8506 the following considerations are offered.

Was it not the intent of Moses that the two and a half tribes should feel the weight of their responsibility, seeing they had asked for what seemed to them a privilege? They on their part may have been keen to demonstrate that they were more than willing to comply with the condition laid upon them. Those who were in the forefront of the battle would run the greater risk.

Accordingly before accepting that "before" means "in the presence of" in Josh. 1: 14 and similar contexts it is worth

considering the occurrences of the whole phrase '*abhar li-phene* (pass over before), even on the understanding that Moses registered disapproval of the timing and circumstances of their request. It occurs in the following scriptures:

Gen. 32:21 "So the present passed over before him: and he himself lodged that night in the company". It is evident from the words "afterward I will see his face" (32:20) that "before" in this context means "ahead of", and not "in the presence of".

Gen. 33:3 "And he himself passed over before them" must surely indicate that the women and children with Jacob were behind him, since v.5 says that Esau lifted up his eyes, and v.6 says that the handmaids came near, and each came forward in order, some foremost, some hindermost (v.2).

Gen.33:14 "Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly" makes it clear that Esau was likely to become so far ahead that he might need to leave some of his own men with Jacob (v.15).

Ex. 17:5 "Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel" appears to mean that Moses was to take the elders with him from the place where the congregation of Israel were encamped in Rephidim and to go out to the rock in Horeb.

Deut. 9:13 "The Lord thy God is He which goeth over before thee as a devouring fire; he shall destroy them". The Lord was leading the way as Deut. 31:3 also emphasizes.

The remaining scriptures where the expression '*abhar li-phene* occurs are: Num. 32:21; Josh. 1:14, 3:6, 4:12, 4:13; 1 Sam. 9:27, 25:19; 2 Kin. 4:31; Micah 2:13. The frequent use of the expression "before the Lord" in other phrases not involving the verb "pass over" (e.g. Num. 32:20 influencing Num. 32:21) itself appears to affect the meaning of the phrase in Josh. 4:13, making it perhaps an unusual example.

We do not attach undue importance to the fact that the expression "before the Lord" is treated differently in the Septuagint Version from the expressions "before your brethren" and "before the children of Israel". "Before" the Lord is *enantion* (Josh. 4:13) and *enanti* (Num. 32:20,21), both meaning "in the presence of" the Lord. "Before your brethren" (Josh. 1:14) and "before the children of Israel" (Num. 32:17), however, are represented by *proteroi* which, being in the comparative degree has to do with relative position rather than presence. The Targum explains Num. 32:20 as "go over before the Lord's people".

It is hoped **that the** presentation of **the full range** of scriptures **cited** above **in which the** expression "pass over before" occurs, will **put** readers **in a** position to **judge** for themselves **whether they are right in** understanding "before" as **meaning** "ahead of", or "**in the** presence of" in **the** Joshua occurrences of **the** phrase, bearing in mind of course, **the** thoughts which our brother Martin has put before us.

Hebrew *'abhar li-phene*

		Greek	Latin
Gen.	32: 21	<i>proporeuomai kata prosopon</i>	<i>praecedo ante</i>
	33: 3	<i>parerchomai emprosthen</i>	<i>praegredior</i>
	33: 14	<i>proserchomai emprosthen</i>	<i>praecedo</i>
Ex.	17: 5	<i>proporeuomai</i>	<i>antecedo</i>
Num.	32: 21	<i>parerchomai enanti</i>	<i>transeo</i>
Deut.	3: 18	<i>proporeuomai pro prosopou</i>	<i>praecedo</i>
	3: 28	<i>diabaino pro prosopou</i>	<i>praecedo</i>
	9: 3	<i>proporeuomai pro prosopou</i>	<i>transeo ante</i>
	31: 3	<i>proporeuomai pro prosopou</i>	<i>transeo ante</i>
Josh.	1: 14	<i>diabaino proteros</i>	<i>transeo ante</i>
	3: 6	<i>proporeuomai</i>	<i>praecedo</i>
	4: 12	<i>diabaino emprosthen</i>	<i>praecedo</i>
	4: 13	<i>diabaino enantion</i>	<i>praecedo</i>
1 Sam.	9: 27	<i>dierchomai emprosthen</i>	<i>antecedo</i>
	25: 19	<i>proporeuomai emprosthen</i>	<i>praecedo</i>
2 Kings	4: 31	<i>dierchomai emprosthen</i>	<i>praecedo</i>
Micah	2: 13	<i>exerchomai pro prosopou</i>	<i>transeo coram</i>

E. A.

In attempting to summarize the results of the articles by our two brethren, it would appear that the context of the majority of the occurrences of 'abhar li-phene is such that it means "ahead of". In two cases it definitely does not (Num. 32: 21 and Josh. 4: 13). In seeking to judge its meaning in the other scriptures concerning the two and a half tribes we need to be satisfied as to whether the order of march (Num 10: 11-28) was or was not altered at the crossing of the Jordan. That this order was substantially maintained is assumed by our correspondent in the next article.

I. E. P.

CORRESPONDENCE

COMPASSING JERICHO

Most readers, we feel sure, will be following closely the studies in Joshua. The April issue is to hand and in it are many stimulating comments but in one aspect of the fall of Jericho certain details appear to have been overlooked, except by Derby. With a view to drawing attention to detail the following observations and comments are made.

By superficial reading it may appear from Joshua 6: 7, 8, 10, 16, 20 that all the people of Israel compassed the city. Comment 2 in 4/85 rightly makes clear that every man (v. 5) does not mean all the people. Indeed the women and children of the two and a half tribes stayed eastward beyond Jordan (4: 12). Also 23,000 Levites less 11 (Num. 26: 62) stayed behind.

Of all the armed men from 20 years old and upward with the two and a half tribes, only 40,000 "passed over before the Lord unto battle" (Josh. 4: 13) which is about 36% (36.1729) of the total of 110,580 (Num. 26).

Reuben	43, 730		26: 7
Gad	40, 500		26: 18
Manasseh	26, 350	52, 700	26: 34
		2	
	<u>110, 580</u>		

We suggest the same proportion of the armed men stayed behind in the camp of Gilgal to protect the camp. In which case all the men of war (6:3) used to compass the city would be as follows:

The Rearward (Numbers 26)

Formed by	sons of Dan	64,400	26: 43
	sons of Asher	53,400	26: 47
	sons of Naphtali	45,400	26: 50
		<u>163,200</u>	

then: c. 36% compassing Jericho rearward is 59,034

The Forward (Numbers 26)

As the 2½ tribes formed part of the forward arrangement then from Num. 26: 51

601,730 total armed men
less 163,200 the rearward

438,530
less 110,580 2½ tribes

327,940 7½ tribes

then c. 36% compassing Jericho is 118,629 of the 7½ tribes
plus 40,000 of the 2½ tribes

158,629

Thus the Forward plus Rearward or total armed men was
217,663

(Check: c. 36% of 601,730 217,663)

Thus the army may have appeared as follows as it encircled Jericho:

158,629 (forward);	7 (priests & trumpets);	4 (Levites & Ark);	59,034 (rearward)
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R. A. Parker

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Most readers will by now have copies of the 1986 syllabus. It is, therefore, appropriate to remind contributors of matters of presentation which aid editors (and printers) in the production of the magazine.

1. Contributions should be written on one side of preferably A4 size paper. Wide margins should be left on both sides and ample space left between the lines. If lined paper is used, for example, then write on alternate lines. If at all possible, and it may not be for some, contributions should be typed with double spacing used throughout. Submit the full A4 page even when it is the final page of the article and contains only a few lines.
2. Follow the publication format. Thus begin with: From . . . and continue the text on the same line. Non-English words, which will appear in italics, should be underlined as should the writer's signature at the close of the article. It is important that the paper should be signed since we hold strongly against anonymous documents. It will be observed that special dispensation in this respect has been granted lately but we do not wish this practice to continue.
3. Quotations must be exact and within double quotation marks. They should always be followed by the scriptural reference. The latter should be given in the Bible Studies format i.e. within brackets and composed of the abbreviated book name, followed by the chapter number separated by a colon from the verse number.
4. Avoid long-winded expressions such as "as Paul says in the scripture in so and so". All that can be condensed to a scripture reference following the contributors comment or exposition of the scripture in question.
5. Avoid lists and sub-headings whenever possible. They use up much valuable space and are time-consuming for the printer.
6. When the paper has been completed, check the references, and, if at all possible, get another to read it. Often we do not actually write what we intend to write and it takes another to see it.
7. Finally, we would remind contributors of the importance of meeting the deadline indicated for submission. It is not always the papers which have travelled the farthest which arrive latest. We all know what it is to be inconvenienced by another's lateness and so should need no prompting about this in the things of the Lord.

Eds.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8510

Apart from the demonstrations of the character of God and of divine principle shown in the law concerning the Cities of Refuge, contributors have seen three applications of its teaching to the present day: (i) in the gospel, (ii) in assembly life, (iii) prophetically in relation to Israel. We need to be clear as to whether one of these interpretations necessarily excludes the others. If they do not then we need to be clear as to which parts of the instructions correctly refer to which interpretation. For example, this law was given for a rather special circumstance and it is likely that most Israelites would not find it applied to themselves. Indeed, it is hard to find a case of its operation in the Old Testament scriptures. Thus in applying the teaching of the Cities of Refuge to the gospel we must search for a somewhat special circumstance involving a serious offence that applies to all men. We would suggest that when the Lord said "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34), He placed men in the place of the unwitting manslayer as far as their responsibility for His crucifixion was concerned. On this basis it is sensible to proceed with the interpretation of the Cities of Refuge in respect of the gospel, as many contributors do. The fact that the Lord has done this, however, means that there is no place in this interpretation for the work of the elders of the city. We are then forced to conclude that the interpretation with respect to assembly-life is equally true for that provides us with ready explanation of the role of the elders.

There are other aspects, too, of the law concerning the Cities of Refuge which find no answer in its interpretation concerning the gospel but are better explained by relating them to the believer's assembly experience. For example, the refugee needed to maintain his position in the city under pain of death for his original offence. This cannot apply to the gospel but it is applicable in assembly life where it is possible for those who leave the assembly to "crucify to themselves the Son of God

afresh" (**Heb. 6: 6**). Even more striking is **the** linking of **the** refugee's **stay** to **the** life of **the high** priest. The Lord as High Priest has nothing to do with **the** salvation of **the** sinner **but** everything to do **with** the salvation of **the** life of **the** saint, so fitting **him** for divine service. **We** can hardly avoid **the** importance of this when **we** consider **that every City of Refuge** was **a Levitical city**. Just as **the** Gibeonites **were** to **be** occupied with **the** things concerning **the** house of God, so **the** refugee would find himself in **a** city preoccupied **with** **the** importance of preparing men for divine service. **Such** would **be** **a** merciful provision for **a** man who **might** otherwise **have** fled **the** country and been **cut** off from **the** Lord and His things as surely as **he** **had** been **executed**. Such things readily depict **the** importance of assembly-life today. Pursuing **the** comparison **further**, **we** suggest if our **High** Priest never dies **we** **are** meant to **abide** in **the** assembly of God all **the** days of our life (. «; /. Ps. 23: 6). In such an understanding **the** separation of **the** refugee from his family **might** **have** its answer in **the** teaching of **the** Lord concerning **the** separation **that may** exist within **the** believer's family (Mat. 10: 34-39; **Luke** 12: 49-53).

Given **that** both applications of **the** law of **the** Cities of Refuge **may** **be** **true** today then it is sensible to consider **their** relationship as being complementary. Thus **the** sinner flees to **the** Refuge for **the** salvation of his soul and then should continue **there** to ensure **the** salvation of his life. This is brought out in **that** **we** "who **have** fled for **refuge**" **have** to "lay hold of **the** hope set before us" (**Heb.** 6: 18-20). That is, **the** One who saved us once from eternal destruction, now saves us **day by day** as His people in His office as **High** Priest and in His position within **the** veil. **We** **are** struck **by** **the** similarity **here** of **the** two immutable things, **the** promise and **the** oath, to **what** is apparent in **the** teaching of **the** Cities of **Refuge**. The promise refers to **what** **has** been promised before in Christ and recalls **the** provision concerning **the** Cities of **Refuge** being **made** prior to their need. The oath refers to **the** **making** of **the** High Priest following His resurrection and recalls **the** reference to **the** anointing of **the** high priest (**Num.** 35: 25).

Finally, as to **the** application of these truths to Israel, **if** **we** **accept** **that** **the** Lord's words (**Luke** 23: 34) placed all men in the position of unwitting manslayer in respect of His **death**, **we** **can** hardly **deny** its application to Israel. This is because **the** same **truth** is specifically applied to Israel **by** **Peter** (Acts 3: 17). Indeed this **was** **stated** as long ago as 1896 in our companion magazine *Needed Truth* vol. 6, pp. 89-94). Thus **the** law of **the** Cities of **Refuge** contains **much** **that** requires **careful** handling of **the** word of God. It requires us to speak suggestively about matters **where** **there** is uncertainty. Though **we** **may** not **reach** finality

of understanding of these things, **it is certain that by our very exploration of them we shall be the better equipped to deal with divine things in this life and to be "at home" in His company in the next.**

LE. P.

CITIES FOR REFUGE AND FOR LEVITES (Josh. 20, 21)

From **Aberdeen**: God had already planned cities of **refuge** before Israel entered the land of Canaan (**Num. 35**). However, **if the manslayer was to find refuge he had to flee to the city and be "gathered" by the elders and "given" a place.** As believers today God planned out salvation long before **we were born.** **We were chosen in Christ before the world's foundation; yet the day had to come for each chosen one to repent and believe in the gospel in order to be "gathered" under the blood of Christ and be "given" a refuge in Him.**

The names of **the six cities of refuge** contain **meanings which seem to indicate the word and person of Christ** [Comment 1].

Kedesh or sanctuary (**His work in the true tabernacle**)

Shechem or shoulder (**He bears us in His strength**)

Hebron or joining (**our union with Christ**)

Bezer or defence (**none can snatch us from His hand**)

Ramoth or heights (**seated in the heavenlies with Christ**)

Golan or **great** exodus (**our freeing from darkness**).

Heads of fathers¹ houses of the Levites consulted with heads of fathers¹ houses of the tribes of Israel. Evidently God **recognizes headship** over all. **Divine order of authority and responsibility are reflected in His people then and now.**

Responsibility was given in greater or lesser measure to each tribe to provide cities for the Levites. Smaller tribes were to give fewer cities while larger tribes were to give proportionally more. In the New Testament Paul seems to touch on this point in the matter of giving. The saints in Corinth were to give of their "ability" to fellow-saints in need... "your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that there may be equality" (2 Cor. 8:14).

Dotted throughout **the land of Israel were centres where Levites could be found. The Israelite would be within reach of at least one of those cities, and so he could readily make**

contact **with a Levite, if he** wanted to consult on matters relating to **the** things of God. "For **the** priest's lips should keep knowledge, and **they** should seek **the** law **at** his mouth" (Mai. 2: 7). Saints in testimony in **the** house of God today **act** as God's centre **where truth may be** sought out. A standard of behaviour is **required** of men "in **the** house of God, **which is the church** of the living God, **the** pillar and ground of **the truth**". Therefore churches of God dotted throughout **the** world ought to **be** testimony-bearers to **the truth**. As such **they are** like centres **where** people can **make** contact **with** saints who **are** able to **give** counsel concerning **the truth** of God.

James C. Johnson

From Birkenhead: The avenger of blood (Josh. 20: 3) was **the** nearest relative who fulfilled upon **the murderer** the law of a life for a life (Gen. 9: 5, 6). **He** was a law unto himself, however, and even accidental homicide justified revenge **which** led to endless blood feuds between families [Comment 2]. **It** was to end these blood feuds **that** six cities of **refuge** were instituted, **three** on **either** side of Jordan, to **which** the manslayer who **had** committed unintentional **murder** might flee. They could usually **be reached** within a **day**, the manslayer having to travel not more than **40-50** miles.

They **were** easily visible **at** a distance, and **the** broad roads leading to **them** **were** always well signposted and in good repair. No obstacle **barred** the pathway, **every** river was **bridged**, and **the** gates **were** open **day** and night [Comment 3],

We also **read** of **the** cities and **the** regulations concerning **them** in Num. 35: 9-34 and Deut. 19: 1-14. **If** the manslayer was overtaken **by** the avenger before reaching **the** city, **if** he was proven guilty of intentional **murder**, or **if** he strayed outside **the** city, **the** avenger was permitted to kill him. Only **after** the death of **the** high priest could **the** manslayer return home. **If** the avenger then killed **the** manslayer, **he** himself **was** guilty of murder.

The cities of **refuge** beautifully illustrate God's love and concern for us in providing **peace**, rest, and protection **in** Christ. **Our** city of **refuge** is easily accessible **at** all **times** and **the** way of salvation **is** shown clearly through God's word **and** the Spirit's guidance. **Our** High Priest, Jesus Christ, shall never **die**, and so our **refuge** is eternal.

A study of **the** meanings of **the** names of these cities serves to reinforce **the** above point in **that** **they** all speak of truths concerning Christ.

Our attention was also drawn to the future day when the Lord will return to the earth, and He Himself shall be a refuge for His ancient people. We can read of this in the closing chapters of Isaiah.

The **Levites, the descendants of Levi** (Gen. 46:11) were those who were given charge of the sanctuary. They received this position of **privilege because of their faithfulness to Jehovah when Israel worshipped the golden calf** (Exod. 32:26-29; Num. 3:9) [Comment 10].

Levites other than priests instructed people concerning the law and judged on religious matters (Deut. 17:8-13; 2 Chron. 19:8-11) and it was their responsibility to **administer justice in the cities of refuge. As the Levites did not plant crops or cultivate the land, they were allotted 48 cities and their surrounding pastures, where their sheep could graze, in order to provide themselves with food. In addition the Israelites gave them of their substance** (Num. 18:21-24). Those who today devote themselves to the service of the Lord will find themselves similarly provided for.

J. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: *Cities of Refuge.* In addition to our study passages we incorporated the detail of Exodus 21, Numbers 35 and Deuteronomy 4. We marvelled at the truth of the Word, "A God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth; keeping mercy for thousands" (Ex. 34:6-7).

Gen. 9:6 was quite specific but, in the case of involuntary manslaughter, a shelter was provided in the mercy of God, first, it would seem, in the wilderness and then in the Land of Promise. It was significant to us that immediately following the law of the justice of God (Ex. 20) was a description of the mercy of God (Ex. 21).

We recalled that two and a half tribes were allotted an inheritance east of Jordan and so the cities provided for refuge were divided between east and west. Once in the safety of the city the manslayer could not be slain although, for his carelessness his freedom was forfeited until the death of the High Priest. The avenger could not execute. He could only present his case in prosecution.

We believe there are helpful principles here governing the attitudes of brethren together as God's people. Truth and

righteousness must be upheld at all times and God's mercy is not an offsetting principle but a resulting one. The repentant heart must know the mercy of God.

We could not resist dwelling on the parallel between our subject and the beauty of the gospel and in this we welcome comment as to whether the full freedom of the manslayer only on the death of the high priest signifies that ours is through Christ's atoning death alone [Comment 4].

1. Cities of refuge are mentioned in four books and, in passing, we recalled that there are four gospel records. The main point, however, was their obvious importance.
2. The awakened manslayer, realising his exposure to judgement, had to leave all and flee to lay hold upon God's merciful provision.
3. There was a way prepared, marked out to guide the manslayer (Deut. 19:3).
4. The cities were easily seen as they appear to be mainly on hilly ground.
5. There was ease of access as they were strategically placed throughout the land.
6. They were available for Jew and Gentile.
7. Heb. 6:18 links our passage with the gospel truth [Comment 5],

We noted that the meanings of the names of some of the cities seem to express the portion of the believer who has "fled for refuge". Shechem and Bezer signify safety and strength, Golan speaks of joy, Hebron of fellowship and Ramoth of exaltation. Kedesh signifies holiness. It is the provision of God.

Cities for Levites. The statement (Deut. 25:4), "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn", illustrates God's gracious provision and in Josh. 21 we have the same in relation to His servants, the Levites. This was a promise which God had made and the Levites pleaded the promise before their brethren. Humbly, they waited until each tribe had settled in its inheritance before raising the matter with them.

The principle was very clear to us that the blessings of God upon His people demand a return. It is not really optional but obligatory (see 1 Cor. 9:13). God had made a full provision for Israel in Canaan. It was a land of milk and honey

and, by His power alone, they had inherited it. Now out of their own inheritance, they gave to the Levites. Num. 35: 2-5 gives further detail of this. Caleb became a mighty example to his fellows. Josh. 15:13 tells us **that Hebron was given to him by God. It was extremely precious to Caleb (Josh. 14: 13-15) and with joy he gave what was dear to his heart to the Lord for the Levites. Caleb's mighty example was a salutary word to all of us.**

R. I. Shaw

From **Derby: Ex. 21:13** would seem to be the first mention of the promise given by God of a place **that the unwitting manslayer would have in the purpose of God. Provision was made from the very beginning when the nation was delivered out of Egypt, before they moved into the wilderness and continued right into the land. The Scriptures are very clear in relation to the purpose of God in the land. The object of God's bringing them out was that they might have a land flowing with milk and honey.**

Num. 35 gives the appointment of those six cities of refuge. There were **three** cities beyond Jordan, **and three** in the land of Canaan.

The purpose of this was **that expiation might be made for the land (or amends made) because of the pollution by blood. Blood polluted the land, and so provision was made that the land might be cleared of blood that was shed unwittingly by manslayer (Num. 35: 33).**

Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh saw the land of Jazer; in the land of Gilead, They liked it because they had much cattle and thought the provision should be theirs. Then they asked Moses for it in possession, and settled in it. Moses, knowing that the 2½ tribes were to settle on the east side of Jordan, separated three cities beyond Jordan toward the sun-rising (Deut. 4: 41).

Further instructions (Deut. 19) add that in relation to the cities of refuge, there must be a prepared way distinct from the city itself. In order to facilitate the flight of the manslayer the pathways were to be kept clear of all obstructions.

Josh. 20 details the giving of the cities, in Canaan to Israel, **and chapter 21** details the giving of the cities to the Levites. The latter, **after they had settled in the land of their inheritance, requested their cities. Forty-eight were then**

given to the Levites of which six were cities of refuge (Josh. 21).

The cities were at equal distances from each other, that they might be convenient to every part of the land. It is said they were situated on eminences that they might easily be seen at a distance. The fact that God gave these cities, equally distributed on each side of Jordan conveys the thought that God is equal in all His ways. There was equality for every such manslayer. The manslayer had to stay in the city (Josh. 20:6) until the death of the high priest after which he was free to return to his own land.

The people of Israel were the people who would reject the Lord Jesus. Their attitude was "this is the Heir; come let us kill Him, and take His inheritance" (Mat. 21:38). Consequently, God cast them aside.

In their setting aside provision, like a city of refuge (where they will be kept until the time when the High Priest returns to this earth) has been made for them. As God is their Judge He has judged them as those who have acted unwittingly (Acts 3:14-21). The time is coming when the High Priest will come out a second time, and He will deal with His people Israel [Comment 6].

There is a secondary application of these scriptures which is often used in the gospel. In this every person in the world is counted as a manslayer; that unwittingly we, as those who are sinners, are counted as those who have put to death God's Son, but provision has been made whereby we can flee for refuge. We can come and know salvation. The cities were six but there is only one Refuge for the sinner today. By contrast we see how the cities speak of the Person of our Lord Jesus. There was equal opportunity. No one who had slain unwittingly could not say he did not have a chance to flee. The refuge was available at all times. So it is with the Lord. Today in the gospel there is equal opportunity to everyone. The price has been paid that sin might be done away, and we can acknowledge Him as Saviour. In the nearness of the refuge there is a picture of our Lord Jesus, the One who came very near and brought salvation to us.

Safety was to be for the lifetime of the high priest. In contrast God gives eternal security in Christ, when we put faith in Him.

When the manslayer came to the city he came to the gates and elders were to gather him into the city. This portrays the Lord's action; when a sinner puts faith and trust in Him, he brings

them unto Himself. **We are placed in Christ beyond the reach of harm.**

The names of **the** cities seem to **be** appropriate to **the** Person of Christ. **Of** those on **the** east side of Jordan, **Bezer** seems to mean Rock, **their** stronghold; Golan, rejoicing or Joy of **the** Lord and Ramoth, raised and exalted. **Of** the cities in Canaan, Kadesh seems to **mean** holy or set **apart**; **Shechem**, shoulder or place of strength **and** Hebron seems to indicate fellowship.

E. M. Foster, G. W. Conway

From **Ibadan**: The children of Israel, **having finished the** division of **their inheritance** by lot at Shiloh, **were given** other directives to **guide them in the** administration of **justice in** their land of habitation. They **had** already **been made** to understand **the laws and** ordinances of God, **and the punishment that** awaits law-breakers. **But here we see** the perfection of God in making the laws **perfect** because of **the erring nature of man**, in **that He** allowed for merciful **treatment** of those who broke the laws unwittingly **by** appointing Cities of Refuge.

The New Testament saints **are** equally seen of God as **being imperfect and** liable to commit errors unintentionally, **hence the** intercession of **the** Lord Jesus Christ for **the** transgression of the saints (1 John 2:1, Is. 53:12).

The **cities of refuge** were six in number; **three in the** land of Canaan **and three** on **the** other side of Jordan by Jericho eastward. This **was** to **give** equal opportunity to all **the** tribes. The elders among **the** Levites **were** to **be** judges in **these cities** **while** the rest of **the** congregation would **be** **the** remaining inhabitants of **these** cities who would **be** mostly Levites, **being their cities**. The congregation before whom **the** refugees came **were all** conversant with **the** Mosaic laws **and were** to **be** trusted **in the** dispensation of justice. **Any** refugee entering **any** of these cities would **declare** the motive **behind his** mission **at the gates of the** city. The elders of **the** city would **admit him** into **the** city on trial, **pending the time** when he would **be** convicted or **acquitted** (Num. 35:15-25).

These cities of refuge depict what the Bible calls the Name of our Lord (Prov. 18:10). **In** the house of God, (**churches** of God), elders occupy **the** position of judges **while** other saints constitute the congregation before whom **the** judgement is pronounced (e.g. 1 Cor. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 5:1-5).

The offender's **return** to his former dwelling was related to

the life of the high priest. As for the present day believer, our High Priest lives for ever and He is at all times ready to restore believers to their former position through His prerogative of mercy (John 6: 37).

The Lord pronounced that the Levites should not have any inheritance amidst their brethren; the Lord's sacrifices were their inheritance. This the Levites accepted in compliance with the commandment of God. However, obeying and serving God did not imply that they should live in abject poverty. Therefore it was not too much of them to ask for a place for their dwelling and pasturage (Josh. 21:2). Their request conformed with the mind of God. God wishes to treat us in the same way as emphasized by the Lord Jesus Christ, that we should first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness before pursuing necessary earthly possessions. God knows that we need these things for our physical survival (Mat. 6: 31-33). It is therefore here submitted that it is not wrong for a Christian to strive righteously for the good things of life for his/her physical upkeep. This however must be governed by the Spirit of God because of the dangers of wanting to be rich (1 Tim. 6: 9-10).

Anon

From Kingston, Jamaica: We see from such scriptures as Gen. 9: 6 and Ex. 21: 12 the difference between killing and murdering. We note here in Joshua the setting aside of cities of refuge for those who killed unintentionally and without premeditation. This was to be a follow-up to what Moses had been told by the Lord in Ex. 21: 13 and Num. 35. Three cities were to be appointed on the eastern side of the Jordan, i.e. Reuben (Bezer), Gad (Ramoth) and Manasseh (Bashan); as can be seen in Deut. 4: 43. Joshua on crossing over the Jordan appointed in obedience three other cities, Judah (Hebron), Ephraim (Shechem) and Naphtali (Kedesh).

Such a person, having fled for refuge to one of these cities, had to stand at the entrance and speak his words before entrance was given. This reminds us of the attitude of the sinner who approaches the Lord Jesus for salvation. Only to those who truly repent can entrance be given, and this is not with a view to leaving in the future. This is because our High Priest, who has been touched with our infirmities, yet without sin, never dies; thus our salvation is eternal.

Another type is to be seen in verse 5 where the fleeing person may be surrendered to the avenger of blood. This can be compared to the result of sin and the dealing thereof as was

evidenced in **the brother at Corinth (1 Cor. 5)** who was found guilty of practising sin. **He** was given over to **Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5)**. However, **he** was eternally saved.

Other scriptures bear the thought of refuge and strength in the Lord and these can be seen at 2 Sam. 22:3; Ps. 9:9; 46:1 and 48:3. A type of this is seen in Heb. 6:16-20 speaking of Christ our refuge "which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast..." [Comment 6].

In **chapter 21 we see the allotment being given to the Levites, of whom we saw previously that "the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance" (Josh. 18:7). Here they received a portion of land (pasture land) from every one of their brethren.**

We should, like some of the Israelites, be diligent, although like them also we fail. But thanks be to God that He remains faithful (2 Tim. 2:13) and they who question their salvation cannot nullify God's faithfulness in this promise.

M. Morris

From Liverpool: *Cities of Refuge*. These cities were set up to prevent miscarriage of justice and to temper the "eye for eye" justice which prevailed under the law [Comment 7]. Provision, however, only related to accidental and unintentional killing and, in any event, even if the elders of the town were satisfied that the refugee was so entitled to come under its protection, he was only covered so long as he remained within the confines of the city, as Abner's death at the hand of Joab confirms (2 Sam. 3:27) [Comment 8]. The death of the high priest seems to have been the official end of an era.

Parallels. These cities do not speak of the gospel:

1. They were for the innocent manslayer. A guilty murderer was handed over to justice and to death.
2. The refugee could leave the city at any time and risk death at the hand of the avenger.

However the meanings of most of the cities are seen by some to relate to the Lord Jesus.

Kedesh (Naphtali)	Sanctuary
Shechem (Ephraim)	Shoulder (Government?)
Hebron (Judah)	Alliance/Fellow ship
Bezer (Reuben)	Fortress
Ramoth Gilead (Gad)	High Place
Golan (Manasseh)	Circle/Joy/Exaltation.

It was suggested that Israel is the manslayer who, unintentionally killed the Lord Jesus declaring, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Mat. 27: 25). Comparing Rev. 12: 1-6 with Mat. 24: 15-22 it is suggested that the avenger is the Dragon and the two beasts of Rev. 13. Israel will flee to Edom, Moab and Ammon (Dan. 11: 41) and the promise of Isaiah 33: 16 will comfort them at that time, and they will remain there until the King returns (Is. 33: 17) [Comment 9].

Towns for the Levites. The Levites alone of the tribes of Israel received no territorial inheritance. Naturally they needed somewhere to live and keep their sheep and cattle and they were allocated towns within the geographical boundaries of the other tribal homelands. Presumably they shared them with the people of the tribes to whom they otherwise belonged. The Levites continued to be responsible for the day to day work involved in maintaining the central sanctuary according to the word of the Lord.

David J. Webster

From Nottingham: The Cities of Refuge were an unusual but fair system of justice. The situation of the cities was such that they were approximately equidistant, enabling all areas of the country to be treated fairly. Fuller accounts of the system are given in Num. 35 and Deut. 19. Indications of the number of witnesses add to the effectiveness of the system. One possible area when the system could fail would be if the avenger killed an innocent man before he reached a city of refuge. The avenger, having shed innocent blood would then have to flee to a city of refuge and after trial would be put to death (Deut. 19: 6). The avenger would therefore be reluctant to act before judgement.

There has been many an excellent gospel message given on this subject and certainly the parallels with the gospel are there. The major one is that the sinner, like the killer in Joshua, must come to some place of refuge to be safe from death. The city of refuge is a parallel with Christ. When we come to Christ we are saved from the death that our sins deserve.

An alternative view would be that the teaching foreshadows,

not **the** gospel **but** being in **the** house of God. The Lord's teaching for believers sets such a **high** standard **that** **we** must fail in our lives of service. There is though a place of **refuge**, **the** people of God. The parallel **with** **the** gospel presents difficulties when **the** killer leaves **the** city before **he** is allowed to, for then **there** is no safety from **his** sin. **With** **the** gospel, however, once **we** **are** saved **we** **are** saved forever. **We** can, leave a **church** of God.

The aliens or strangers could **be** saved in Israel **but** anyone who believes in Christ is saved. There is thus a difficulty in fitting **the** alien **idea** **with** **the** second parallel.

The reason **the** Levites **had** no set **area** when **they** **entered** **the** land was because when **the** Israelites **entered** **the** land **they** **were** scattered amongst **the** people to **teach**. Their life was **centred** not on obtaining material possessions **but** on God. A lesson, perhaps for us.

D. W. Thompson

From **Paisley**: The Cities of **Refuge** stand out like beacons in **the** Old Testament as proof of **the** **grace** of God in action, relating to His law. However, for **premeditated murder** **there** was no escape nor forgiveness. The Cities of **Refuge** only provided sanctuary for **the** person who killed unintentionally.

In order **that** no confusion should arise, God **gave** a **clear** **example** of **what** an accident was (**Deut.** 19:5). These cities **were** provided for both **the** **killer** **and** **avenger** - **after** **all**, **the** avenger **might** **have** shed **the** blood of an innocent **man** (**Deut.** 19:6).

The judges of these cities **had** no power nor authority to forgive, as **the** **law** **did** not forgive, **but** **their** function was to determine **whether** **the** person standing before **them** **had** **murdered** intentionally or **by** **accident**.

The Cities of **Refuge** **were** part of **the** possession of **the** Levites to whom God **had** **given** responsibility for **the** service of **the** tabernacle of **the** house of God (1 Chron. 6:48). Thus **it** would **be** **with** obvious confidence **that** **the** innocent person **knew** **that** **the** word of God would **be** honoured, **and** **by** **the** same token **the** guilty **knew** **there** was no escape (**Gen.** 9:6).

God **gave** **very** **clear** **and** uncomplicated instructions **regarding** **the** cities. **They** **were** to **be** chosen for **their** ease of accessibility, so **that** no **matter** **where** **the** **accidental** **killing** took **place**, **refuge** was **at** hand. The road was **well** signposted **that** no doubts or confusion arose as to how to **get** **there** (**Deut.** 19:3).

God made ample provision, and the facility was there for protection. How sad it would have been for the person who ignored that provision to lose his life just because he did not make the effort. The City of Refuge meant life (Deut. 4:42). It guaranteed protection (Josh. 20:5).

The innocent fugitive was to be given his own place within the city, and not to be treated as a "decanted" person (Josh. 20:4). While the anointed high priest lived the manslayer was safe and secure within the boundaries of the city, but on his death the innocent manslayer was free to venture outside the city and return to his own place without fear of reprisal.

To the guilty, no mercy was to be shown, as according to the law, guilty was guilty with no grey areas. It was possible that a killer was very much provoked, and the story he had to tell those in the City of Refuge touched their heart strings, but God instructed they were not to be swayed, "thine eye shall not pity him" (Deut. 19:13). No authority was given, nor had they the ability to cover that sin.

How glad we are that today is the day of the grace of God, that grace being revealed in the fact that while we were still enemies of God, Christ died on Calvary's cross for us. We were surely as guilty of the death of the Lord Jesus, as were those who crucified Him those many years ago. However, God has made the way of escape very clear and easily understood and followed, that way leading to Calvary.

Robert McKaig

COMMENTS

1. (Aberdeen and others): There appears to be broad agreement amongst contributors as to the meanings of the names of the cities with the exception of Golan. It is worth noting, however, that their significance may be equally applicable to the work of the Lord or to the life of a church of God.

2. (Birkenhead): Which scripture tells us of these endless blood feuds? The incident of Moses smiting the Egyptian (Ex. 2:11-14; Acts 7:22-28) shows that both Moses and the Israelites recognized a rule of law that transcended family relationships.

3. (Birkenhead) Where do we read of bridges and open doors? If these things are in the Scriptures then we need to find their typical teaching. If they are not then the Lord has judged they are not for our learning.

4. (Cowdenbeath): Since the Lord was not a High Priest when He died the atoning death then we can hardly say that that is prefigured in the death of Israel's high priest. In application to the gospel, it is usually argued that since the Lord was a High Priest in resurrection and therefore is no longer subject to death then the eternal security of the believer is illustrated. Since high priests function on behalf of the people of God, however, it may be more appropriate to refer this part of the law to assembly-life.

5. (Cowdenbeath and Kingston): Hebrews 6: 18 has to do with the people of God and their hope within the veil. Therefore we suggest that its prefiguring has to do primarily with the salvation of the life.

6. (Derby): It is true that the Lord is coming a second time and in judgement to Israel but the scripture to which friends in Derby refer (Heb. 9: 28) is about the Lord coming to the air for those in Christ.

7. (Liverpool): These words of friends in Liverpool are capable of being misunderstood to mean the common view held by worldly men that there was something savage and personally vindictive about the Law of Moses. Examination of the relevant scripture (Ex. 21: 22-27; Lev. 21: 17-22; Deut. 19: 15-21) will show that this is not so and that what is brought before the reader is the importance of equity in judgement.

8. (Liverpool): Was Abner in the position of being an unwitting manslayer? It is hard to imagine a less accidental slaying than that of Asahel (2 Sam. 2: 23).

9. (Liverpool): This is an interesting not to say ingenious application of prophetic events to the law of the Cities of Refuge. One doubts that any performing the will of God ignorantly or unwittingly or in heart-felt opposition to God would be prefigured in acting righteously in obedience to the laws of the Kingdom.

10. (Birkenhead): This is commonly said, and may be true; but does the Scripture actually say so?

LE. P.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

From Cowdenbeath: Deut. 27: 11-12 "And Moses charged the people ... saying, these shall stand upon mount Gerizim to *bless the people* when ye are passed over Jordan; Simeon and Levi, and Judah and Issachar (sons of Leah) and Joseph and Benjamin (sons of Rachel)". Is there any special significance in the selection of four of Leah's six sons and Rachel's two sons for the purpose of blessing Israel?

This is not an easy question to answer since we do not know of scriptures which give definite guidance. It is possible to make some suggestions of an exploratory nature and we invite readers to contribute to further discussion. It is clear from the fact that the names of Jacob's sons are given that we are to look in that direction for guidance. The names associated with blessing are all those of Jacob's sons by Leah and Rachel with the exception of Reuben and Zebulun who are associated with the sons of the hand-maids. Gen. 49: 3-4 may give a ready explanation as to Reuben, the oldest son, being displaced but it is more difficult to see why the youngest son of Leah should be displaced. We would suggest that this may have to do with the fact the Nazareth was in Zebulun and the citizens of that town so comprehensively rejected the Source of all blessing, the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be seen, however, that we have already looked to three different factors in explaining the distribution of names: (i) birth (ii) behaviour of a forefather (iii) behaviour in respect of the Lord Jesus Christ. The matter is further complicated by the fact that we can hardly give reasons for the choice of those for blessing without giving a consistent explanation concerning those associated with the curse. Examination of Deut. 27: 13 shows that the names are listed in two groups with Reuben at the head of Gad and Asher and Zebulun at the head of Dan and Naphtali. Thus within the list associated with the curse the sons of the wives again take precedence over the sons of the hand-maids with the elder, preceding the younger. We may observe that Leah's hand-maid's sons precede those of Rachel's hand-maid's despite the fact that the latter were older than both Gad and Asher. Thus in the list for blessing, the children of Leah take precedence over those of Rachel. A final point is that each child by the same parents is mentioned in order of age. In summary, the sequence of names in Deut. 27: 12-13 is arranged such that the children of the wives take precedence over the children of the hand-maids and those of the first or older wife take precedence over the second or younger. Further, this seniority is transmitted through the respective hand-maids and overrides that due to the seniority of birth of the hand-maid's children. Despite such order the cases of Reuben and Zebulun show that favoured position may be lost through wrong behaviour in relation to each other and to the Lord.

In attempting to generalize these relations, availability for blessing as indicated by the ordering of the tribes is in keeping with the underlying principles of scriptures such as Deut. 21: 15-17; Prov. 16: 31 Prov. 30 21-3; Lev. 19: 32. Blessing is not necessarily automatic and admonitions such as those in 2 Pet. 1: 10 and Rev. 3: 11 have to be observed.

I. E. P.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8511

Joshua, having witnessed the fulfilment of the Lord's word of oath to give Israel the land of promise, was careful, in blessing the two and a half tribes, to exhort them that they would cleave unto the Lord. The geographical features which placed those tribes at a distance made the warning particularly important. The remainder of Israel were in no doubt that the welfare of Israel as a whole would be drastically affected, if serious trespass on the part of those tribes against the Lord was overlooked (22: 18).

Deut. 12 was categorical in its insistence that so far as sacrifice was concerned there could be but one altar, and this would be in the place of the Lord's choosing. At the time under consideration that altar was before the Lord's Tabernacle (Josh. 22: 29). Israel were prepared to execute judgement, if it was a case of rebellion on the part of their brethren against God. At all events the matter of the altar demanded explanation.

It appears that the two and a half tribes had failed to communicate their intentions to the rest of Israel, or to unite with them in seeking the Lord's will in this action. Their building of the altar was evidently motivated by concern lest future generations of Israel might claim that the two and a half tribes had no portion in the Lord, on the ground that those tribes lived to the east of Jordan (v. 25). Those tribes therefore wanted the altar to be regarded as witness to their affirmation that "the Lord is God" (v. 34).

It is noticeable how carefully the congregation of the Lord ascertained whether charges of rebellion were justified, before becoming committed to a damaging war. God knew the truth of the matter, and the anointed priest in the presence of the princes elicited such a declaration as assured them that the Lord was in their midst.

Independent action was bound to imperil unity, whereas proper communication led to the realisation that the tribes west and east of the Jordan had a oneness of purpose* All the tribes were resolved to follow the divine pattern. Consciousness that such a desire was shared by all was conducive both to the maintenance and the continuance of divine unity.

E. A.

DIVINE UNITY AND THE TRIBES BEYOND JORDAN (Josh. 22: 1-34)

From Aberdeen: How was divine unity to be maintained between tribes which were separated by a natural barrier, the river Jordan? They had to recognize divine choice. God had a divinely chosen place for His one altar and Tabernacle (Deut. 12: 5). Shiloh was duly recognized as that place. It was the rallying point, because God's habitation was there. This gathering point was not chosen by any one tribe - rather it was God's choice for all the tribes. God chose a place. He had also chosen a people and furthermore within that people He also made choices concerning who would minister in the priest's office, namely Aaron's sons, and what man would lead the people, namely Joshua. If the tribes beyond Jordan were to remain united under God then they must recognize God's choices. In spite of their geographical location beyond Jordan they must recognize "the place" of God's habitation together with the recognition that it was their "brethren" who were located on the other side of Jordan. These two things seem to be reflected in Joshua's farewell speech to them. He exhorted them to cleave to the Lord and commended them for not having left their brethren (Josh. 22: 3, 5).

The term "brethren" in Joshua 22 strongly implies the closeness and affinity known by brothers. "Your brethren" is a recurring phrase (vs. 3, 4, 8). Again, it is "brethren" who are expected to dwell together in unity (Psalm 133). Peter wrote, "Love the brotherhood" (1 Pet. 2: 17). John wrote, "We love the brethren" (1 John 3: 14). Paul wrote that saints should be "loving as brethren". The principle of divine unity is clearly unchanged between Old and New Testament "brethren".

In New Testament times what natural barriers might exist? [Comment 1]. They might be between Jew and Gentile, rich and poor (Jas. 2: 2-4), between nationalities or cultures. By

drawing a parallel between Israel and ourselves we see that divine unity will be maintained by our recognition of the divine choice as to (1) God's dwelling place and (2) the "elect race" (1 Pet. 2: 9). To recognize that chosen dwelling place is compatible with wholehearted service to the one God (Josh. 22: 5). To recognize the chosen race is compatible with the policy of consultation between brethren in the face of a problem arising as a threat to unity. Consultation among leaders is seen in Josh. 22 and also in Acts 15 where unity was maintained when brethren consulted together.

J. C. Johnson

From Birkenhead: The time had now arrived when the fighting men of the two and a half tribes were sent back home with words of warning and exhortation.

As they were on their journey eastwards they stopped on the west bank of the Jordan to build an altar, the purpose of which was not clear to those of the other tribes. The conclusion reached was that they were setting up an alternative centre of worship and this caused great alarm. The belief that divine judgement would fall on all the people, as in the past because of sin, caused representatives of the nine and a half tribes to come and take action to prevent this. When an assurance was given that the altar was only to serve as a memorial to which following generations would be pointed there was relief (Josh. 22: 30). This action highlights the keenness of those in the west to preserve unity amongst God's people. This unity is to be guarded amongst God's people today.

Some time was taken to discuss the position of the two and a half tribes. Two points seem to have been considered when they built the altar (i) the distance from the divine centre of worship and (ii) the river causing a barrier between them and the rest of the tribes. These could be used as reasons for their descendants to be forgotten in the future (Josh. 22: 24, 25). Discussion was also held as to the wisdom in their asking immediately for this area on the basis of their natural instincts and not waiting for the general distribution. To counter the above argument it was proposed that the area occupied by the two and a half tribes was within the prescribed boundaries, and somebody was therefore expected to occupy it. The river was not impassable and if it is argued that living near to the chosen

place for worship was commendable then it must be noted that since this was moved during Israel's history then this point would be difficult to sustain [Comment 2].

G. H. Robert, R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: The opening of chapter 22 links with the last three verses of the preceding chapter. Despite the behaviour of Israel God's promises are sure. Chapter 21 ends with the words "all came to pass". How confident should be our trust in God!

The two and a half tribes, it would seem, showed no impatience to return to their families now that God had given Israel rest. They courteously waited for dismissal. True to their word to Moses and, subsequently, to Joshua they had endured to the end of battle. They received a tribute of praise for this from their leader.

Whether or not they were right to settle on the east of Jordan is a matter which will exercise Bible students in every age. Certainly, God had delivered the land into their hands and we question whether the border of Canaan was Jordan or the mountains of Gilead. Moses had been displeased with their request in Num. 35 but, from the statements of the tribes, his fears would seem to have been unfounded. We wondered, however, whether their decision might not have contained more of human reasoning than of divine command because this seems to repeat itself in our present study in the matter of the altar.

As Joshua dismissed them he gave no instruction as to their future material prosperity or their defence against possible attack. His instructions were clearly of a spiritual sort. He made five important points. They were to:

love the Lord
walk in all His ways
keep His commandments
cleave unto Him
serve Him with all heart and soul.

It is one thing to know the commandments of the Lord. Their instruction was to do them. We remembered the parallel for ourselves in 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.

The principle of sharing together in the blessing of God was emphasized by their distribution of the spoils of war. Moses had recommended this action in Num. 31, as did David at a later stage (1 Sam. 30: 23-25).

In the matter of the altar we believe we come once again to human reasoning rather than the command of God. If the motive appeared sound at least the method was questionable. Any departure from the divine will brings difficulty and what was meant to be a witness for future generations may in fact have become a trap to them. It was something to be seen - something the eye could gaze on. Some generations later the very people for whom the altar was intended had become ensnared in idolatry, worshipping what was seen (1 Chron. 5:23-26). Human method was evident in the construction of the altar. It was a large one, generally the measurement of what man thinks is important.

The principles of investigation of apparent error to preserve unity are outlined for us in our study. The tribes who built the altar seemed to have violated Deut. 27 and the process of investigation was clearly defined in Deut. 13:12-18. First there was to be enquiry, then, more intensively, searching, then most intensively, asking diligently. It is work for wise men (see 1 Cor. 6:2-5) and Phinehas was chosen. His pedigree as a man pledged to maintain the honour of God is outlined in Num. 25. Representatives from the tribes accompanied him, senior men of experience among their fellows.

In studying their approach, it is evident that their attitude was firm but gracious. This produced humility and courtesy from the two and a half tribes. We thought that the passage contained wise counsel to elders among the Lord's people today, reminding us at the same time of Acts 15.

The elders, with Phinehas, were satisfied that no commandment of the Lord had been violated. What their personal thoughts were regarding the building of the altar is not known.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: The main fighting for the Land had stopped though not until Solomon's day would there be peace.

The eastern tribes were given permission to go home beyond Jordan. We considered Joshua's 'well done'. He did not stint his words of praise. We considered this whole chapter to be about relations between brethren and the leaders of the people and their God.

Joshua, ever true to his calling (Josh.1:8), must add the words of warning or exhortation (v. 5) and blessing (v. 6) to add to their considerable riches.

The eastern tribes would be joyous at going home, but sad at leaving those with whom they had lived and fought for many years.

They were also afraid of what the future might hold, so they built a great altar (imposing N.I.V.), of little practical use, but one which reflected their feelings. V.12 is very sad, but they did first send their leaders and Phinehas the priest, to talk.

They were prepared to kill their brethren because of a misunderstanding [Comment 3]. Great grace was shown by all the leaders and priests as they met together, probably in sight of this structure.

We considered the eastern tribes could have chosen something less controversial to copy than the altar, and yet the leaders were satisfied with the explanation given (v.30) and also the people (v.33). Unity of mind and purpose was seen to be present, a unity which pleases God well.

We considered divine unity, the collective mind and purpose of the triune God. In heaven this is done perfectly. On earth it was done perfectly, gladly and willingly, by the man Christ Jesus. For us it is something constantly to strive to achieve and to be perfected only as we are changed into those future glorious bodies. It will be done on earth when He reigns King of kings and Lord of lords.

Much of our time was spent considering the practical aspect of brethren dwelling together and of the sadness caused by misunderstanding, of arguments, quarrels, bad feeling between brethren in the church or churches.

How easy it is to speak quickly or roughly instead of to praise, to thank each other to bless or wish happiness one to another, to exhort and speak kindly of others. We tried to project v. 18 to our own day.

The people were afraid, if this was rebellion God would bring judgement on the whole congregation of Israel.

Today we do not see God working in judgement (it is the day of His grace) but perhaps we do see withholding of blessing and we pondered the reason for shrinking numbers in many churches [Comment 4]. It may be associated with rebellion in our hearts with regard to the Lord's command (John 15:12).

We noted that the fears the eastern tribes expressed in v. 27 did sadly happen. We also noted the tent of meeting was at Shiloh. God forsook the Tabernacle of Shiloh, (Psalm 78:60), the tent which He placed among men, a tent being by nature a temporary thing.

Jerusalem, permanent in man's eyes, transient to God, is left desolate (Luke 13:35).

How desolate is a place God leaves! We were referred to Rev. 2 ft 3 to consider what the One who walks among the churches sees and what He would say if today He spoke face to face to us about the church in which we worship and serve.

S. Wymer, G. W. Conway

From Ibadan: The children of Israel had been commanded to sacrifice in one place only, which was to be the one chosen by God (Deut. 12:11, 14). They were not to offer their sacrifices in every place they saw but where God had put His Name, to make for divine unity. Therefore, it would be sacrilege or an act of rebellion for any tribe or tribes to decide on choosing another place of their own volition. Doing this would definitely incur the wrath of God. This is the major reason why everyone in Israel was always prone to react spontaneously to any violation of the commandments.

Christians should not be in any accord with 'liberal'¹ worshippers or succumb to unchristian doctrines but they should adhere strictly to the apostles' teaching so as to be able to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (2 Cor. 6: 14-15, Acts 2: 24; Eph. 4: 3).

The tribes of Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh erected an altar on the pattern of that which was at Shiloh on the other side of Jordan. They did not intend to use it for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice but to serve as a witness that they were divinely united with their brothers in the things of the Lord. However, the other nine and a half tribes beyond Jordan did not see eye to eye with them and so they were justified in reacting spontaneously to curb an act which seemed to be dangerous to the nation's survival [Comment 5].

Christians should be watchful over the infiltration of doctrinal heresies and be ready to defend the Faith because our adversary, the Devil, would not like the church to survive. Rather he would devour erring saints (Jude 3; 1 Pet. 5: 8).

Recalling the nation's past experiences of the wrath of God that fell on them because of the iniquity of Peor and the sin of Achan, the other nine and a half tribes felt duty bound to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy. Hence they gathered themselves together to war against the tribes of Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh who seemed to have gone astray (Deut. 13: 12-17). But God put His Spirit in them to guide them in their action until they reached an amicable settlement after each of the opposing tribes had given their own version of the case.

Among Christians there is equally the possibility of misunderstanding. When this happens, the best thing is to find the root cause of the matter before deciding on any action to be taken (1 Thes. 5: 21). This we submit would be the ideal way of solving misunderstandings in churches, thus enabling divine unity to be maintained.

The way the two and a half tribes presented their case demonstrated a godly measure of strengthening brotherly love and unity. Also the fruit of the Spirit, meekness and temperance, was manifested in their way of presenting their

case (Gal. 5:23). The soft answer given by the two and a half tribes turned away the anger of the rest of the tribes (Prov. 15:1).

Christians should not make provocative statements to stir up anger in a bid to defend themselves or their actions but rather to be ready to give a soft answer with all meekness and temperance. This will provoke to love and unity as befits disciples of Christ (Heb. 10:24; Col. 4:6).

Anon

From Kingston, Jamaica: The chapter opens with Joshua blessing the two and a half tribes. Note well the acknowledgement that they had fulfilled their obligations to Moses and himself (v. 2, also Num. 32:20-33 and Josh. 1:16-17).

There were six things that they were encouraged to do. Six speaks of the number of man. As such, we see the basic principles for a godly life which man must adhere to before the Lord. The six are:

- (1) to take diligent heed to the things of God;
- (2) to love the Lord;
- (3) to walk in His ways;
- (4) to keep His commandments;
- (5) to cleave to Him; and
- (6) to serve Him.

If only we today in the churches of God would commit ourselves one hundred per cent to these principles, then our very presence in this world of sin would be a testimony to the world.

The incident in vs. 10-14 illustrates the centralized worship of Israel from the beginning of its possession of the land. It was never God's intention to have any separate worship no matter how good the intention is. God's method to preserve unity was to have all the tribes gather three times yearly around the altar at Shiloh (Ex. 23:17).

One can see that this matter (v. 12 onwards) displeased **the congregation and they had the right to wage war. Lev.17: 8-9 and Deut. 12:4*14 clearly warn that any one who offered a burnt offering or sacrifice and did not bring it to the door of the Tabernacle should be cut off from his people.**

However, they sent a delegation headed by Phinehas, a man **who** had once before stemmed the tide of apostasy when Israel had turned to Baal-Peor (Josh. 22: 17 and Num.25)

We would like to make it absolutely clear that although the two and a half tribes seem to be defending their action even by calling on the three divine names of God (v. 22), their action seemed perfectly honourable to the congregation.

In our opinion this departure from God's plan for united worship later resulted in apostasy [Comment 6]. This is seen in their refusal to come to Deborah's aid (Judges 5: 15-17). This brings us to a basic principle for us as the churches of God and that is that a departure must never take place because we want to be a witness on our own. Note well the two and a half tribes offered up the same sacrifice, addressed the same God, did the same things and even justified their action.

Finally, remember the best intention no matter how good, is never good enough unless it is done in the way that God wants it to be done.

M. Morris

From **Liverpool:** *Unity* " It was, in fact, only their status as a holy nation before the Lord, that kept the otherwise disparate tribes of Israel in any way united. Divine unity was the most important fact from a spiritual perspective and from this ought to have sprung all else of importance.

The Transjordan Tribes: v.9 confirms that the land of the two and a half tribes was theirs from the Lord. The river Jordan was a boundary, not for the nation as we previously thought (see 8508 p122) but for the nine and a half tribes, and they were not outside the divine will in returning to live in Gilead. As for their action in building an altar, they had no command

to do so, but neither were they subsequently condemned for what they did and we accepted that it was a genuine attempt on their part to maintain their place within Israel. There are other instances in Scripture, of an altar being built, not for sacrifice, but as a memorial and witness (e.g. Ex. 17: 15).

The Conference: This confirms the sense of unity that existed under Joshua's leadership although, significantly, he does not feature in this episode. They are to be commended for not taking hasty action and also for rightly being alarmed at the possibility of division and God's anger. That previous actions which led to divine wrath were in their minds is expressly stated. What a pity that Israel was not so sensitive throughout its history. We saw a foreshadowing here of the conference recorded in Acts 15. It is important that actions which might be a cause of division and unrest should be investigated and a decision reached. Often rumours and misconstrued motives can cause serious trouble and we should always take care to investigate before pronouncing judgement.

David J Webster

From Paisley: We were impressed by the faithfulness displayed by the two and a half tribes in assisting the others, despite the fact that the former were already installed in the land of their own possession. We thought the promise made to Joshua in chapter 1 (vv. 16 and 17) had been fully honoured.

Their faithfulness was obviously well rewarded (v.8), but we could not help feeling that the division or misunderstanding which arose later in the chapter was a direct result of the physical distance which separated the two and a half tribes from the other nine and a half, although the direction relating to the possession of land was received directly from the Lord, through Moses (v.9).

It was suggested that, perhaps with the sound of Joshua's blessing and exhortation still ringing in their ears, (v.5) or the memory of the way in which the sin of Achan (Josh.10:7) affected the whole congregation of Israel, that they decided to act there and then, without divine instruction, to erect a physical reminder at the Jordan, the point where the two groups were physically separated.

This was a forceful reminder to us that the movement of the Holy Spirit of God is not governed by any physical or geographical boundaries and that in a similiar way God's might is not restrained or diluted by diplomatic or natural barriers or by distance.

The purpose in the erection of this altar was to preserve the unity and togetherness of the children of Israel in future generations but the immediate result was a tense situation and a war was only narrowly averted. We felt that these incidents served to underline how important it is to try and act prayerfully under divine guidance both individually and collectively* no matter how honourable the intentions, if such misinterpretation of actions, compounded by problems of distance is to be avoided.

The Lord has overseen the establishment and distribution of the churches of God and their testimony upon the earth today, some in very isolated locations [Comment 7]. We felt it should be a warning and a reminder to us to ensure that nothing carried out in "the land of our possession" could be misconstrued as trespass or rebellion (v. 16) and that as and when we strive to spread the gospel message and truth of the house of God we ensure the preservation of the scriptural pattern of the churches of God for the future generations in His will.

Fergus J. Reilly

COMMENTS

1. (Aberdeen): The main issue in the crisis is the possibility of the two and a half tribes seceding or forming a breakaway movement from Israel as happened later, in Jeroboam's day.

Then the Lord intended that the ten and the two tribes should be ruled by two separate kings but should worship together in the house of God. The ten tribes broke away, however, when Jeroboam foolishly and wickedly instituted his

own forms of divine serviced Kings 11:26-12:33). A further parallel with what Israel feared to be happening at the end of Joshua's rule lies in Jeroboam's invention being an imitation of the true altar (1 Kings 12:32-3). We can all recognize the hallmark of the Devil, the arch counterfeiter of divine things, who is the driving force behind all divisions which are *contrary* to sound doctrine (Rom. 16:17). In applying the events of Joshua's day to ourselves, we suggest, the counterpart may be seen in any tendency of districts of churches of God to act in a spirit of independence from the others.

2. (Birkenhead and others): As friends in Cowdenbeath point out, the position of the two and a half tribes was a recurring source of trouble to Israel (as, indeed, it appears to have been to ourselves in trying to assess the tightness of their position). A number of points in this connection remain to be considered. For example, in the Millennium the Jordan will be the eastern boundary of Israel (Ezek. 47:18). Again, the inheritance of the two and a half tribes nearly always is said to have been given them by Moses and not directly from the Lord as with the remaining tribes. Is there some divine disapproval indicated in this? Though we may not know the certain answer as to the rightness of their position as yet, we can be certain that the way in which the two and a half tribes went about their business left something to be desired. In particular, they appear to have been poor, as this month's study shows, at foreseeing what effect their actions would have on their brethren.

As regards the Jordan being a barrier, difficult to cross, it would appear that we are to regard it as such. The reason for saying this lies in the fact that half of the Cities of Refuge lay east of Jordan. That is to say abundant provision was made so that the unwitting man-slayer did not have to cross the river. As to its New Testament application, we can readily see of course that, if the Jordan speaks of death, then the sinner must flee to the Refuge before passing through death.

3. **(Derby):** From a constitutional point of view, the major lesson to be learned about divine unity in this episode is, as friends in Kingston clearly state, that the nine and a half tribes **had** the right to act in judgement on their brethren. It is so **today** when districts or groups of districts may have to be judged by the remainder in the Fellowship if the need arises. In Joshua's day, the need did not arise in the end.

4. **(Derby):** Judgement always begins at the house of God. If saints will not judge themselves then their brethren may have to judge them. If assemblies do not judge themselves then their district may have to. If districts do not judge themselves then other districts may have to. If brethren are not prepared to carry out the will of God in this fashion then it will not be long before there is no house of God **at** all.

5. **(Ibadan):** Yes, the nine and a half tribes had a right to act in judgement on the two and a half but it is a key feature of what happened that they did not act spontaneously. Leaders had to evaluate the position first of all. Here we have a similarity with the Cities of Refuge. The refugee had first to convince the elders of his case. It is the same in churches of God today. No judgement can be carried out by the assembly, in for example receiving or putting away a saint, without overseers first investigating the matter and bringing a true report to the Assembly

I. E. P.

6. **(Kingston):** The other tribes established **that** there was no departure at this time. There was, of course, apostasy later which was not confined to the **two** and a half tribes.

P. L. H.

7. **(Paisley):** We know that churches of God are in no sense isolated from the place of the Name, even though placed at vast distances from each other geographically. Nevertheless

communication between them in adherence to the divine pattern is vital for unity.

E. A.

QUESTION and ANSWER

From Aberdeen: Some questions could be asked about the tribes beyond the Jordan in relation to the altar for witness. Did they erect the altar of witness by faith? Was God pleased with the solution?

It is questionable whether a visible monument such as was intended by this altar was really required, since it is not recorded that God commanded its construction. What is stressed in the passage is that no altar intended for sacrifice could be tolerated apart from the one altar in the place of the Name. Insecurity and fear that the other tribes would monopolise worship of the Lord prompted their action. To this extent the building of the altar perhaps manifested weakness of faith, and their brethren were content to bear with this weakness, provided no rebellion was at the root of it. God in their midst was a consuming fire, and we may regard the fact that there was no immediate token of God's displeasure as an instance of His mercies towards them.

E. A.

ERRATA

BS 8509 p.143, line 18: for 327, 940 read 327, 950
for 7½ read 9½
line 19: for 7½ read 9½

We apologise for these mistakes which have no effect on the substance of the article.

Eds.

The following extract from *Bible Studies* (1958, p.31) underlies the fact that Paul (and other illustrious followers of the Lord) were Bible students too. But, does our determination match theirs? 2 Tim. 4:13 'reminds one of the similarity to what is contained in a letter written by that noble martyr, William Tyndale, to whom the English speaking races owe a great debt. The letter was written before his martyrdom, from the castle of Vilvorde in Belgium.

"If I am to remain here during winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from the cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in the cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings; my overcoat is also worn out: my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thick cloth for putting on above: he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also to have a candle in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit in the dark. *But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with the study.*"

Paul's request to Timothy is briefer regarding his cloke, books and parchments, but it is of the same nature as William Tyndale's. It is easy enough for the comfortable infidel, who can toast his toes at the fire on a cold winter's night and then retire to a warm and comfortable bed, to criticize men and their writings and the divine character of the Scriptures, men who suffered so much to bring untold blessing to untold multitudes. We can write over the memory of such men — "Of whom the world was not worthy." All honour, we say, to these illustrious, yet suffering, servants of God'. They shall yet shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever¹.

Eds.

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8512

Joshua's valedictory addresses reveal **his understanding** of the people **which he led** for so long. **He knew their weaknesses, and feared for their future, so he impressed on them the faithfulness of God towards them, in fulfilling all His promises.** This is **perhaps the central theme** of the whole book of Joshua, **summed up in Joshua's words "ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof" (Josh. 23: 14).** **He feared that once the people were settled in the land they would be unfaithful towards God, and bring upon themselves the curses of the Covenant (Deut. 28), a fear fully justified by subsequent events.** Two connected **things were at the heart of his warnings; the breakdown of the separation between the people of God and the surrounding nations, and the service of pagan gods.**

God's **desire was, and still is, that He should have a holy people, separated to Himself from all others.** This was not solely **a matter of separation from the evil practices of the Canaanites, but additionally God's people were to reflect His own character and be a people who love Him (23: 11), among whom He could dwell. Once they began to intermarry with those who had no love for the God of heaven, the place of the Lord in the national life would diminish, and it would be a matter of time before He would be regarded as a god among other gods.** The service of false gods was therefore **a likely consequence of failure in separation. It seems that the percipient Joshua knew that such apostasy had already begun, hence the vehemence of his challenge "if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve. . . .but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (24: 15).** Despite the people's answer "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord" (24: 16), Joshua **had to say "put away... the strange gods that are among you" (v. 23), and erect a stone for a witness to the promises made.**

Joshua's **strength of character and dedication to the will of God had its effect in his lifetime, and during the lifetime of those elders**

who outlived him (24:31). Every generation of God's people needs such leaders, and the study which we conclude in this issue should encourage us to serve as Joshua served. We should also be warned not to be like the following generation of Israelites, who "knew not the Lord, nor yet the work that He had wrought for Israel" (Judg. 2:10). Although we value the work and example of men of God, ultimately our trust is not in leaders, but in the word of God, and the knowledge of Him.

P. L. H.

THE INFLUENCE OF JOSHUA AND HIS FELLOWS (Joshua 23:1 - 24:33)

From **Aberdeen**: The influence of Joshua and his fellows was felt by the people of Israel who were contemporary with them. However, their influence did not extend to the rising generation who "knew not the Lord" (Judg. 2:10). This suggests how difficult it is to pass on that intimate "knowledge" of the Lord. The word "known" of Joshua 24:31 is helpfully rendered "seen" in Judges 2:7 [Comment]. Strong indicates that it has to do with recognizing and acknowledging the Lord and His work. The later generation never did this.

Joshua encouraged this knowledge of the Lord by seeking a commitment from the people of his day - "choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Josh 24:15). Having reminded them of all the Lord's work (recalling specific evidences of God's hand) he provoked a stirring in their hearts of the things they knew to be true and so he brought them to the point of commitment to their God.

How will this knowledge of the Lord be sustained by the generation of the present time? Joshua spoke the word of God to the people. This same pattern is recorded in the New Testament (Heb. 13:7; "Remember them... which spake unto you the word of God"). The people of Israel were instructed to "talk" of the words of God with great regularity (Deut. 6:7). Joshua was also given specific instructions to meditate in the book of the law "day and night" (Josh. 1:8). It seems that this daily application of Israel's minds and tongues was the means whereby their knowledge of the Lord was to be sustained. Timothy was called upon to read, exhort and teach; and he was to continue in these things not only that his own life might be preserved for God but that those who heard might also be preserved (1 Tim. 4:16).

This world in which the Christian must live is full of attractions contrary to God. How can he cope with the enveloping temptations unless the word of God is constantly made fresh and attractive to him? Joshua refreshed the minds of Israel. Timothy had a similar work to do. So today, men are still needed to speak to the saints both in public and in private in order to sustain the intimate knowledge of the Lord in our generation.

James C Johnson

From **Birkenhead**: It is now about **20** years since **the** children of Israel **entered** the land. The leader, Joshua, **reviews** the present situation **and** highlights for **the** people **certain key** issues. **He** sees **the** Lord's people in **the** land of promise **and** interspersed amongst **them** those of other nations. Because of **this** **he** warns against certain problems **which might** develop.

The people **were** to **remember** the past **and** God's dealings **with them** (23: 3, 4, 9, 10, 14); **remember** His promises (23: 5); **take** encouragement (23: 6-8) **and** love God (23: 11). **Set** against **this** **there is** warning **that** failure would **bring** judgement (23: 15, 16) **and** also **that** mixed marriages would compromise **their** position **and** **bring** defeat to them.

The people **were** to realise **that** **there** was to **be** constant vigilance - a sense of false security **that** **they** were in an impregnable position would **be** disastrous. **If** **they** were to show loving obedience then **they** would **find** **their** separation preserved. These **were** the thoughts of Joshua the aged leader who **had** found his God to **be** wholly **reliable** over **all** the years.

In ch. 24 Joshua addresses **the** leaders, challenging **them** concerning **their** allegiance. In vv. 2-13 the word of **the** Lord is brought to **them**, **emphasized** by the frequent "I". **They** were to realise **that** **they** owed **everything** to God, **and** therefore **it** was reasonable to serve Him. **They** were called to choose (v. 15) **and** **warned** **that** **there** should **be** no divided loyalty (v. 23). **It** is needful for **each** succeeding generation to **exercise** faith on its own account.

We continued to realise **the** parallels between the book of Joshua **and** the Epistle to the Ephesians. **On** **this** occasion **we** noticed **that** ch. 2 of the Epistle starts outlining our **past** **and** God's work for us; **it** tells of **future** blessings **and** calls for a commitment to service. Also in Acts 20: 28-31 the elders of **the** church were called together **and** alerted to the problems **they** would face **and** have to deal with if **they** were to **be** faithful to **their** Lord.

All of this is relevant to us in our situation today **and** **thus** **we** saw **that** the things **that** were written **are** **there** for our benefit.

R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: There **are** interesting similarities between ch. 23 and Acts 20 where Paul called together **the** elders of Ephesus. Joshua realised **that** his **time** was short as Israel's leader. Paul realised **he** would not see **the** Ephesian leaders again. **In** both cases **their** words were weighty **and** instructive.

Joshua, a wise **and** godly leader, **had** taken Israel through many battles **and** **had** himself felt the strain of leadership **and** trial. **It** is interesting to compare **the** words of Caleb in ch. 14 **with** the words of Joshua in chapters 13 **and** 23. Joshua was "old **and** well stricken in years".

It is true that the Lord had driven out the inhabitants of Canaan because of their iniquity but we were impressed with the phrase used in Josh. 23: 3 "because of you". God had given Canaan to a people whose hearts were true to their God and from whom He would receive obedience, worship and praise. They were exhorted to be "very courageous to keep and to do all that is written"(Josh. 23: 6). To keep is to receive and to hold as the athlete receives and holds the baton. It must be held firmly. The courage demanded is not that which is needed in the face of danger but refers to a strength derived from a conviction that that which is written is right. With this courage they would cleave to the Lord. This does not mean to cling for help but to adhere to the Lord and His word. Barnabas had the same message for the disciples (Acts 11:23).

Three important messages were delivered to Israel. They were to:

- keep and do all that is written (v. 6)
- cleave to the Lord (v. 8)
- love the Lord (v. 11)

The first words of Joshua were the words of God. Joshua was God's mouthpiece; first of all reviewing Israel's divine call as God's chosen people and then recalling their preservation, establishment and planting as a nation in Canaan. We judged that the reference to the idolatry of Abram's father and his house was to emphasize his separation from it to do the will of God. Israel also had to consider themselves separated from the evil of idolatry. Then there were the enemies of Israel as they prepared to enter the land of promise, a reminder that victory had been achieved by the hand of God. These were all recollections of the grace of God to appeal to the hearts of Israel for an attitude of holiness, fear and love toward God.

The appeal of Joshua was primarily against idolatry. He seemed to have reason to fear defection in later days. They were influenced for good in their own generation by the example and power of Joshua. So we read with satisfaction the words of Josh. 24: 31. Unfortunately, the words of Judges 2: 10 signal a sad departure.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: Joshua was a faithful man. He was outstanding from the time he stood with Moses in the tent of meeting until he died aged 110 years. His interests in the purposes and the people of God were still the same.

There are many warnings in the Bible of dangers which may be allowed to overthrow us in the closing days of our life. We may be like the successful athlete who becomes careless. There is the warning from the life of Solomon whose last days were his worst. Joshua went on consistently from the beginning to the end. The apostle Paul was able to write, "I have finished the course, I have kept the faith--"(2 Tim. 4: 7). We may all be stirred in our minds and hearts

by the grace of God that we may go on to the end.

What a grip Joshua had of the goodness of God in His dealings with the children of Israel! God had given them rest. By submitting to His authority and word He will give us rest in Christ and in service and we can know the rest associated with the house of God. As He wrought for Israel God will work for us in the world of unrest. They knew victory because the Lord fought for them. Some hard battles have to be fought. If we rely on our own resources we will suffer defeat.

Joshua laid upon their conscience the necessity for laying up the law of Moses. They had to keep it and to do it (23: 6). It was important that they should recognize the authority of the Lord as seen in the Law. Paul warns Timothy about the consequences of teaching a different doctrine in 1 Tim. 6: 3. One of the features of the last days is a turning away from the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. The law given by Moses has its counterpart in the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

There are great forces at work to draw away disciples from the word of God. It started in the Garden of Eden where the terrible tragedy of the Fall took place. In our lives we have to meet the world, the flesh and the Devil. We must realise that we can only know victory if the Lord fights for us.

In v. 7 and v. 12 we clearly see that the Israelites had to maintain religious and social separation, and we also must come out and be separate (2 Cor. 6: 17). Paul said, "Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Gal. 6: 14). The cross had a separating power between him and the world.

Joshua impressed upon them that they were not being asked to do a negative thing. They had to separate and cleave (23: 8). This reminds us of Ruth who was steadfast in her commitment to Naomi's people and to her God. Barnabas exhorted the Christians at Antioch "to cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11.23). We also should be encouraging one another to cleave to the Lord. In ch. 24: 14 Joshua told the people to:

- (1) fear the Lord
- (2) serve Him in sincerity and in truth
- (3) put away the false gods.

Sentimentality can be a dangerous thing. We must deal with each other in truth and serve the Lord in truth.

Joshua raised the stone as a witness. It remained a testimony either for or against the people. The Gospel should remind us of our obligation to respond. Joshua was "the servant of the Lord" and because of his influence "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua" (24: 31).

G. W. Conway

From Kingston (Jamaica): Having come to the end of the book of Joshua, we see him giving an overview of the past (the conquest), the present (their dwelling in the land, having obtained rest) and the future (being conditional upon them maintaining their rest).

The Lord no longer would be driving the enemies out, and to preserve the rest they had obtained, meant not to intermarry with the remnant of the nations amongst them. We noted the use of the words 'go back and cling' and saw a parallel today in our preserving our separation by not going back to our former association (i. e. the denominations), whether for fellowship or to link ourselves in any way with these.

In both chapters Joshua called together the whole nation, but we see also that special attention is given to those in leadership. We think that it is appropriate as the greater responsibility rests with those who lead. A somewhat similar situation is seen in the book of Acts (20: 17-33), where Paul called the overseers into a final meeting in which he reminded them of their responsibilities to protect the flock from error, in keeping with their separated stance.

Joshua shows that in serving God, fear (reverence) must be coupled with sincerity and truth. We compared this with 1 Cor. 5: 8 where similar words are used by Paul. Throughout the Fellowship there will be different values based upon the particular society to which we each belong, but as we serve God in the above way (based upon His word) there will be unity in purpose and doctrine. Joshua then drew the line stating his and his family's position and asked Israel where they stood. Upon their declaration, he made a covenant with them. A covenant is defined in one dictionary as "an agreement between.... persons to do.... some act".

In applying this to us today, we again refer to 1 Cor. 5: 8 instancing the Remembrance as a visible 'agreeing together' in which we serve God, 'in sincerity and truth' (cf. John 4: 23-24). Others may practise some form of it, but only as it is done according to the revealed will can it be done in truth [Comment 6].

A. Crombie

From Liverpool: *Farewell Addresses* - These two chapters contain Joshua's last charge to the people of Israel before his death. In chap. 23 he speaks to the rulers - those who were educated and had positions of authority within the community. This speech contains a reminder of the basic teaching already given to them, in particular he speaks of the fundamental of separation. The second address, given to all the tribes follows their national history and gives to them the ever-echoing call to be separate from the other nations and to serve with sincerity.

The Importance of Separation: All that Joshua says is that which is the first lesson of the covenant: I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before Me (cf. Ex. 20: 2, 3). It is on the basis

of this command that the service of sincerity and truth is built and stands. The lesson to us is obviously the same, but is it that obvious to the people? In these days of multi-cultural societies are we to be separate from all other nations? The Israelites were not only living with foreigners but living like them too. The lifestyles and practices of these nations were contrary to the law of God given to them as the chosen people and would certainly be their downfall. The same is true today in that some people's lifestyle is ungodly or wicked and others¹ misguided and contrary to the position into which God has brought us.

The Importance of Teaching: Joshua called the people together and spoke to them. Is it not the responsibility of overseers to call those for whom they are responsible and to instruct them positively as opposed to just teaching, which can to many young minds today be left to interpretation! [Comment 2], The declaration of 24:24 was the response Joshua wanted, though it is not so clear that they actually carried it out!
Kevin J Jones

From Nottingham: The last words of a person are often of great significance and history has recorded several examples. The words of Moses, as recorded in Deuteronomy, spoken at the end of his life must have made a considerable impact upon those who heard them, as would the words of Jacob as recorded in Genesis 49. In the portions before us there are several similarities to the contents of the first chapter of Joshua and parts of the closing chapters of Deuteronomy. There is a review of what has gone before, a call to obedience and to separation as necessary for forward progress. As Joshua reached the end of his life his concern was for the people of God who were going to be left behind and for their future progress before God.

When Moses died there was a definite call to Joshua to lead the people to take possession of their inheritance (Josh. 1:2). Even as his days drew to a close Joshua made clear his determination to serve the Lord, "...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and after his death the elders who outlived him continued in his ways and served the Lord (Josh. 24:31, Judges 2:7). Yet a sad picture is presented soon afterwards in that "...there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the work which He had wrought for Israel" (Judges 2:10).

What was the cause of this decline? If we compare Josh. 24:31 with Judges 2:10 we find that the elders who served the Lord after Joshua's death were cognisant of the works of the Lord which He had wrought for Israel and in the light of His wonderful ways they continued to obey and serve Him. In contrast, the new generation "knew not the Lord" nor "the work which He had wrought" (Judges 2:10). Yet, surely, there was no reason why they should not have known these things for their very presence in the land was evidence

of the Lord's working for them. This teaches the importance of looking back, not in the sense of longing after that which has been left behind and from which we should be separated as did Lot's wife (Gen. 19:26), but rather reviewing the way the Lord has led, not only ourselves, but also our spiritual fathers. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led..." was the command to Israel (Deut. 8:2).

The keenness, determination and assurance that characterized the early stages of man's response to a divine revelation and movement can, with the passage of time, soon give way to indifference and doubts along with the introduction of false teaching and wrong practice. Such was the experience of Israel and such was the import of the apostle's warning (Acts 20:29) and of his entreaty to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:13). A look back to remember the way the Lord exercised and taught the hearts of men and women concerning His house nearly one hundred years ago is a real spiritual stimulus. The outcome of Israel's failure to remember the wondrous works of God led to the forsaking of God and to their following of other gods (Judges 2:12) and in our study we were reminded of the serious words of Col. 3:5, "... covetousness, the which is idolatry...". Further, some, if not much, of the decline seems to have started with the elders which again reminds us of the apostle's warning.

The secret of remaining faithful was the same when Joshua reached the end of his days as it had been when Moses was to die and as it ever is; that is "... to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law..." (Josh. 23:6). This, especially in a day of departure, requires courage, so we have Joshua's words "... be ye very courageous..." (Josh. 23:6) and as Israel had the promise (23:5) so do we have the promises of the Lord.

R. Hickling

From Paisley: One can feel a sense of peace and tranquillity as at long last the Israelites had come to peace and almost finished their task of occupying their home. As we can discover from 23:4,5 there were nations still dwelling in the land which should have been driven out. The work was never finished although there was the promise that the Lord would drive them out (23:5). The result of this failure to complete the task is clearly evident as we proceed further through the Scriptures - rebellion against God, worshipping gods and idols of the indwelling nations. Truly this must show a clear lesson for all those in Christ. If we do not clear out fully what the Lord asks of us and expects us as servants to do then these will serve only Satan in their power of hindrance to our service for Christ.

We can see in chap. 23 Joshua's warning to the people of the influence of the remaining nations and the result of any inter-communion with them (23:7, 12, 13). We have clear warnings to be separate and not associate with the world (2 Cor. 6:17) but walk in the light of the word (1 John 1:5-7).

Joshua appears to know full well **the** minds of **the** people, as shown **by** his closing words in **chap. 23**. **He** gives such a clear statement of **the** penalty of serving other gods **that we** cannot understand **the** Israelites who **did** practise such things later on, until **we** consider our own minds. Do **we** serve other gods, e.g. our jobs, our possessions or television?

How lovely to consider **the** works of **the** Lord when **He** states **that** Israel has a land for **which** they did not labour. They **were** presented **with** **the** homes, given to **them** as **the** Lord's people. **We** too shall **have** our **heavenly** home **prepared** (John 14:2), one **which** **we** also **have** not laboured for.

Upon conversion **the** Christian has a challenge, to serve **the** Lord or to follow **his** or **her** own desires. Joshua gives **the** same ultimatum to **the** people (24:15) "choose you this **day** whom **ye** will serve...**but** as for **me** and **my** house, **we** will serve **the** Lord". Beautiful **are** **the** words in **which** Joshua states his desires. The people responded well although Joshua still knew **their** full **nature** (vv. 19,20) and a witness was set **up** before **the** Lord (vv. 25,27). This witnessed **what** **the** people undertook, just as our baptism is a witness to **the** world **and** our Lord of our commitment. **Once** our witness is set **up** **we** must follow **the** Lord. **What** a loss **it** will be to us **if** **we** do not **after** having entered into **the** sanctuary of His **grace**.

The people needed **great** leaders to **keep** **them** on **the** true **path** (24:31) just as **we** do in **churches** of God today. Without men of wisdom and **full** of **the** Holy **Spirit** Satan can **quickly** **turn** **the** minds of **the** weaker saints. Therefore **it** should **be** our constant **prayer** for men of God to **be** raised **up**, as long as **the** Lord carries, **that** **we** **may** **be** **kept** within God's **truth** and paths of righteousness.

W. M. McKaig

From **Surelere**: Joshua was a man of **like** passion **with** **us** **but** **he** knew, trusted and followed **the** Lord. Joshua's **faith** and qualities of leadership **were** **evident** at Kadesh-Barnea **when** **he** and Caleb said to **the** people "...**neither** **fear** **ye** **the** people of **the** land...**the** Lord is **with** **us**" (Num. 14:8-9).

Joshua's leadership and consequent influence upon **the** people was not self-willed or self-imposed **but** **he** was **prepared** **by** God under Moses and **revealed** to **the** people. Now **the** Lord said to Joshua "This **day** **will** **I** begin to **magnify** **thee** (Josh. 3:7). **It** is **the** Lord who prepares leaders and reveals **them** for recognition **by** **the** people of God.

He lived an **exemplary** life and was **faithful** to **the** word of God. **He** was in **the** forefront, fighting **the** Lord's battles **and** knew how to encourage and strengthen **the** people **with** **the** word. **He** was a man of his word as evidenced in **the** incident of **the** Gibeonites' **deceit**. **"We** **have** sworn unto **them** **by** **the** Lord, **the** God of Israel: now

therefore **we may not touch them**" (Josh. 9. 19) **were their words when the deception came to light.** Joshua was also **very concerned about the spiritual well-being of the people for which reason, he took time to remind them of the faithfulness of God, His hatred for unrighteousness and the need for them to obey and love their God.**

The words of God spoken through Joshua **that day led to a renewed covenant by the people to serve and obey their God.** There is no **gainsaying the fact that a life full of traits such as were found in Joshua would be of immense influence among God's people today. He left a lasting witness: "a great stone set... under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord" (Josh. 24: 26) to remind them of their covenant lest they deny their God. Thus Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua.**

E. S. O

DIVINE UNITY AND THE TRIBES BEYOND JORDAN (Cont'd)

From Dulwich: **Divine unity is based on the fact that God is one; "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah, our Elohim is one Jehovah" (Deut. 6: 4).**

We gather from the usage of the Hebrew word "echad" for 'one' in Genesis 2: 24; Judg. 20: 1, 11, with other like scriptures, also the recurrence of Elohim (twenty-seven times in Genesis 1) that this is a composite unity. Monotheistic Judaism has failed to understand this wonderful fact.

Peter's declaration in Mat. 16: 16 was a matter of revelation, but could Nathaniel's answer in John 1: 49, and the High Priest's challenge in Mat. 26: 63, and Isaiah 9: 6 mean that the Son and therefore Father relationship in the deity was understood by some in Israel? [Comment 3] If in Deut. 4 the point of emphasis is on the singularity of this unity, it is the ground of devoted, undivided love, expressed in exclusive worship, statutes and judgements of Jehovah.

With all the administrative unity under the leadership of Moses, and the princes of the congregation, it seems surprising that there should have been an independent decision by the two and a half tribes to live on the east of the Jordan; indeed, it appeared to Moses as an act of rebellion and discouragement to the other tribes. From Josh. 1: 2, 11 it would seem that this decision was outside the settlement of Israel westward of the Jordan [Comment 4].

The command of Jehovah, and the provisional affirmation of Moses, and the heads of the tribes seem to follow on from that decision. The layout of the settlement of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, eastward of Jordan would be a buttress for the nation as a whole. Added to this, the advance of the fighting men, with the other tribes was also an expression of unity, and though the motive for this was not unmixed, yet cattle for sacrifice were essential to Israel as a nation.

Baal-peor with the judgement of the plague to the cost of

twenty-four thousand deaths, and Achan's trespass involving the death of others, were the basis of Phinehas's charge against the two and a half tribes.

Jehovah **in extenuating** circumstances, **in grace**, could accept Samuel's altar **at Ramah**, (1 Sam. 7: 17) or **even tolerate Dan's idolatry when the house of God was still at Shiloh** (Judg. 18: 30, 31; see also Malachi 1: 11) [Comment 5].

Such an extension of **grace might apply in the present dispensation**. There seems to **be no parallel in this dispensation of direct judgement on the people of God as a whole**. 1 Pet. 4: 15-17 seems to **refer to individuals, and Rev. chapters 2 and 3, to churches of God** [Comment 7].

An altar is usually used for sacrifice, **but this great altar on the westward side of Jordan, was for a witness. If there were misgivings by Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh because of the natural barrier of Jordan, it was to do with future generations on the other side, who might be tempted to say, ¹ What portion have you in Jehovah?**¹.

The answer to **Phinehas and the princes** was a glorious appeal to El-Elohim-Jehovah (R. V. M.): **He knoweth. The tension was broken and the pleasure and delight of Phinehas, the princes and the thousands of Israel, was an answer to the carefulness that dictated the pattern and the purpose of the altar.**

W. Towns end

COMMENTS

1. (**Aberdeen**): The **Hebrew** words used **in** these two passages **are not the same**, despite **the fact that the sentences appear to convey the same sense**. In Josh. 24: 31 the word *yada* (to know) is used, while **in** Judg. 2: 7 it is *raah* (to see, behold, look).

2. (**Liverpool**): Joshua was able to call **the people together and say "Thus saith the Lord..." (24: 2)**. **He had a clear word of instruction for them which was based on the history of the Lord's working with them and the commandments He had given**. Doctrinal **teaching is the basis for practical instruction; without this basis divinely delegated authority may degenerate into despotism. It may be, of course, that sometimes teachers do not make the practical consequences of their teaching sufficiently clear, and the comment of our correspondent is then justified.**

3. (**Dulwich**): There was **certainly an expectation of the coming of the Messiah, and some must have realised from Is. 9: 6 and elsewhere that He would be the divine Son**. However, **the corollary of God the Father does not appear to have been recognised. He was known, of course, as the Father of Israel, but we have no indications of a developed doctrine of the Trinity.**

4. (**Dulwich**): The decision was not **made independently; perm-**

ission was asked from Moses (Num. 32: 5) and it was granted by him under conditions (Num. 32: 20-22). The question of the settlement of the two and a half tribes has been discussed in previous issues.

5. (Dulwich): God could never tolerate idolatry, although, of course, He does not often bring immediate punishment on the idolater. Judg. 18: 30 records the facts, without approval.

P. L. H.

6. (Kingston): Friends in Kingston are exactly right in what they say about the importance of truth as well as sincerity in divine service. It should be noted, however, that the festival of 1 Cor. 5: 8 refers to how the believer is to behave throughout his whole life and is not limited to the Remembrance.

7. (Dulwich): This is a point of vital importance and underlines the importance of the danger to divine unity of breakaway districts. Time and again Israel failed and were judged on a district basis e.g. at the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16) or at the secession and ultimate carrying away of the ten tribes. Again, the destruction in Nebuchadnezzar's day happened bit by bit and not all at once. We might even say it was the same in the Lord's day. Judgement fell on the nation as a whole as a result of their rejection of Him but a remnant was saved to begin the churches of God. Even among the latter there are suggestions that Asia, in particular, was a difficult district to hold on to and may even have led the way into the apostasy that followed the early success of the churches of God. How we should guard against districts "doing their own thing" in our day.

ERRATUM

I. E. P.

Bible Studies 8509 p. 133, line 6 Acts 20: 23 should be Acts 20: 32.

POSTSCRIPT

When, in eternity, we meet Joshua we will be able to get many of the questions raised in our studies answered at first hand. Editors, and we trust fellow-students, readers and particularly contributors who have provided the building-blocks for our magazine, will be the better able to company with him in that day as a result of this year's study. Best of all, any wiser we may be in the things of God will make us fit companions for Joshua's Leader and our Lord, Jesus Christ. There is nothing but gain, and that of an eternal nature, to be had from the study and doing of the word of God, let us all continue steadfastly, if the Lord will in 1986.

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