LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE ONE

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD

Scripture Reading: Josh. 1:1-2; Deut. 34:8-9; John 1:17; Col. 1:12; Eph. 3:8; Rom. 6:3-4a; Col. 2:20-21; Eph. 2:6; 6:12; Josh. 6:22-25; Ruth 4:21; Matt. 1:5

With this message we begin the life-study of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. My burden in the messages on these three books can be expressed by the following four statements:

1) Joshua led Israel to take the God-promised land that it might become the land of Immanuel (Josh. 1:6; Isa. 8:8).

2) Elimelech swerved from the rest of the good land due to the trial of a punishing famine in the God-given land (Ruth 1:1-2).

3) Ruth, an alienated Moabitess, turned to Bethlehem, the place of the holy birth of Christ, and entered into the realm of the divine economy (Ruth 1:16, 19; Micah 5:2).

4) Boaz married Ruth and produced the royal house of David by Jehovah that Christ might be brought in for the accomplishment of God's economy (Ruth 4:13, 21-22; Matt. 1:1, 5-6, 16).

In studying the histories and prophecies of the Old Testament, we need the full scope, the full view, of the entire Scriptures concerning God's eternal economy for Christ and the church, which consummates in the New Jerusalem. This will render us not only a broader view but also the deeper, intrinsic significance of God's purpose in presenting to us the histories and giving us the prophecies of the Old Testament. The scope, the center, and the intrinsic significance of all the histories and the prophecies of the Old Testament must be Christ and His Body, which will ultimately consummate in the New Jerusalem for God's eternal economy.

For God to accomplish such an eternal economy of His,

He needed to create the heavens for the earth, and the earth for man (Zech. 12:1). God created man in His own image and after His likeness with a spirit for man to contact Him, receive Him, keep Him, and take Him as man's life and content. It was very sad that this man got fallen from God and from God's purpose for His economy.

However, out of fallen humankind God chose a man by the name of Abraham and his descendants and made them a particular people as His dear elect among all the nations (the Gentiles). It took God over four hundred years to produce, constitute, and form such an elect to replace the Adamic race for the fulfilling of His eternal economy. God brought such an elect of His through trials, sufferings, both in Egypt and in the wilderness that they might be trained, disciplined, and qualified to coordinate with Him in taking His promised land for Christ on this earth and in providing the proper persons to bring forth Christ into the human race.

To take possession of God's promised land for Christ and to provide the proper persons to bring forth Christ into the human race are the two major points of the section of the history in the Old Testament in the three books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. These two main points, to take the land for Christ and to provide the bona fide ancestors for Christ, are the spirit of the history from Joshua to Ruth. They are the intrinsic significance of this section of the Old Testament history. We have to have a clear vision concerning this. Otherwise, our life-study on these three books will be in vain, just like the studies of so many historians, Bible students, and Scripture teachers, either Jewish or Christian.

If by the Lord's mercy we see such a vision, this section of the history in the Old Testament will benefit us the same as the New Testament does. Such a vision will help us to see that the history of God's people on earth is actually the history of the working God energizing among His chosen people in the Old Testament and even the history of the operating God energizing in His redeemed people and having them energize themselves together with Him for the accomplishment of His eternal economy concerning Christ and His increase, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem.

I hope that through the life-study of these three books we all will see and realize that our living, our daily walk, our schooling, our job, and our business must be a part of God's history in His marvelous and excellent move on the earth today. To be a normal Christian, to be today's overcomers, to answer the Lord's present calling, and to meet the Lord's present need in His recovery, it is altogether not sufficient simply to be a so-called good brother or good sister, attending the church meetings regularly, behaving rightly, and living a life which is somewhat perfect in the eyes of men. We need to be one with God in His history, moving, and energizing in His loving overcomers; that is, we need to be one with God in life, in living, and in our entire doing today on this earth! We need to write God's today's history! We need to march on as one with the energizing God! In Him! With Him! By Him! And for Him! We need to be vital, living, and active! We need to be today's Joshuas and Calebs to take possession of the God-promised land for Christ that we may become His possession. We need to be today's Ruths to turn to God's economy, to enter into the land of Immanuel, and to marry ourselves to Christ that we may bring forth Christ to meet the need of men today. This should be the intrinsic life-study of these three books—Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. The issue of this life-study should be the gaining of the God-promised land for Christ and the bringing forth of the excellent Christ to meet today's need of both God and men.

In light of the foregoing, let us now begin our life-study of the book of Joshua.

I. THE FIRST BOOK OF THE TWELVE BOOKS OF HISTORY

Joshua is the first book of the twelve books of history from Joshua to Esther. The Bible begins with the five books of the law, the books of Moses, and then, starting with Joshua, the Bible continues with the twelve books of history.

II. THE WRITER

The writer of the book of Joshua was Joshua (1:1), whose name means "Jehovah Savior," or "the salvation of Jehovah" (Num. 13:16).

III. THE TIME

The time of the writing of this book was 1451-1426 B.C.

IV. THE PLACE

The place of the writing of the book of Joshua was the plains of Moab (Deut. 34:8-9).

V. THE CONTENT

The content of the book of Joshua is that Joshua led the children of Israel to enter the promised land and to take it, possess it, allot it, and enjoy it. The sequence here is quite significant. First, the children of Israel entered the promised land, and then they possessed it and occupied it. Following this, the land was allotted, apportioned, to each tribe in a particular way. Then they enjoyed the land.

VI. THE TYPES OF CHRIST

In the book of Joshua there are two types of Christ—Joshua and the good land.

A. Joshua

The first type of Christ in this book is Joshua himself. The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name *Joshua* is *Jesus* (Heb. 4:8; Acts 7:45). Joshua typifies Christ and grace (Christ) replacing the law (Moses—Josh. 1:2a; John 1:17). It was when Moses the lawgiver died that Joshua came in (Deut. 34:8-9) to bring the people into the good land (Josh. 1:6), typifying the Lord Jesus bringing the people of God into rest, into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ.

B. The Good Land

The other type of Christ in the book of Joshua is the good land with all its riches (Deut. 8:7-10) typifying the God-given Christ with all His unsearchable riches (Col. 1:12; Eph. 3:8).

VII. THE TYPES RELATED TO CHRIST

The book of Joshua also reveals two types related to Christ.

A. Israel's Possessing and Enjoying the Promised Land

The first of the types related to Christ is Israel's possessing and enjoying the promised land. This typifies the believers' practical experience of the riches of the blessings in Christ as revealed in the book of Ephesians.

1. Israel's Crossing of the River Jordan

Israel's crossing of the river Jordan typifies the believers' experience of the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4a; Col. 2:20), not the believers' physical death.

2. Israel's Entering into the Good Land

Israel's entering into the good land typifies the believers' experience of taking over the heavenlies, where Satan and his power of darkness are (Eph. 2:6; 6:12), not the believers' going to heaven after their death. This is all related to Israel's possessing and enjoying the good land.

B. The Scarlet Thread through Which Rahab the Harlot Was Saved

The second type related to Christ is the scarlet thread through which Rahab the harlot was saved (Josh. 2:17-19; 6:17, 22-23, 25; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25). This scarlet thread typifies the blood of Christ by which the believers are redeemed (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

VIII. ISRAEL'S TAKING POSSESSION OF THE GOOD LAND BEING IN THE LINE OF BRINGING FORTH CHRIST

Israel's taking possession of the good land was in the line of bringing forth Christ by gaining two females—Rahab and Ruth. These two women play a crucial part in the bringing in of Christ. Rahab as the mother of Boaz became one of the ancestors of Christ (Josh. 2:1-21; 6:22-25; Matt. 1:5a). Ruth was another ancestor of Christ (Ruth 4:21; Matt. 1:5b). She was the wife of Boaz and the great-grandmother of David. Matthew 1:1 says, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David." Hence, Matthew is linked to Ruth

and is the continuation of Ruth concerning the bringing in of Christ.

IX. THE CENTRAL THOUGHT

The central thought of the book of Joshua is that God intended to fulfill the promise concerning the good land that Israel might have a place to carry out God's economy, especially to keep the line of bringing in Christ to the earth through His incarnation in humanity. This book is quite wonderful in this main purpose of Israel's occupying and possessing the good land for the carrying out of God's economy.

X. THE SECTIONS

The book of Joshua has four sections: entering into the good land (chs. 1—5), taking possession of the good land (chs. 6—12), allotting the good land (chs. 13—22), and Joshua's departure (chs. 23—24).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE TWO

GOD'S COMMISSION

Scripture Reading: Josh. 1

When I was young, I was taught many things concerning the three books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, but I was not told that this section of the history in the Old Testament is in line with God's economy. The Bible presents a full picture of God's economy from His creation of the universe to the consummation of the New Jerusalem. The first two chapters of the Bible are on God's creation with man, created in God's image and according to His likeness, as the center. In the last two chapters we have the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem, the corporate expression and manifestation of the Triune God mingled with His redeemed people for eternity. Many things occur between these two ends, but all are linked to God's economy—mainly concerning Christ and His counterpart, the church. The church as Christ's Body will consummate in the New Jerusalem in the millennium for those believers who become mature and in the new heaven and new earth for all the believers.

In Ezekiel 1 God's economy is likened to a great wheel (vv. 15-21). The hub of this great wheel signifies Christ as the center of God's economy, and the rim signifies Christ's counterpart, the church, which consummates in the New Jerusalem. The many believers as the members of Christ are the spokes of the hub spreading to the rim, to the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem. This great wheel is not just the economy of God but also the moving of the economy of God. From Genesis 1 until the present, this wheel has been continually moving. The move of God's economy has never stopped, and today this great wheel has reached us. When I moved from mainland China to the island of Taiwan

with about three hundred fifty to five hundred others more than forty years ago, there were few Christians on that island who knew what God's economy was. But because of the moving of the great wheel of the divine economy, within five years the number in the churches increased to fifty thousand. Eventually, the Lord, the Motivator, burdened me to come to this country. This also was part of the moving of this great wheel. In every age and in every generation, this great wheel has been moving, and today we all are a part of the move of this great wheel on earth. Sometimes the move of this wheel is quite slow, but at other times it is so fast that we can hardly keep up with it.

According to the record in the Old Testament, God's move, which began in Genesis 1, continued through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In chapter one of Joshua, God's move had reached a certain situation. At that time the entire earth was full of idols and demons. In a sense, God had been chased away from the earth, which He had created for Himself, and did not have a way to be the Lord of the earth as well as of the heavens. However, among all the nations and peoples, God had separated Israel, His elect, for the carrying out of His economy. They had nothing to do with any idols or demons. On the contrary, they were occupied with the God of the heavens and the earth. After being formed, constituted, disciplined, trained, and qualified, God's people had come to the plains of Moab where they were waiting to enter into the good land, to take it, and to possess it.

One day, as the people were ready and waiting for God's instruction, God came in to call Joshua and to tell him to take the lead so that he and the children of Israel could enter into the good land and possess it. Joshua took the word from Jehovah and charged the children of Israel to perform God's commission (vv. 1-15). The land-takers had to prepare themselves to move with God in His move. In order to take the good land, they had to enter into a full coordination with God in His move. If the children of Israel had looked at themselves, they would have said that there was no possibility. But their possibility was the unique God, who needed His elect people to cooperate with Him in His move to carry out His economy, in His desire

to move in His economy as the great wheel. Here God seemed to be saying, "Israel, My elect, you must know that there is no need for you to do anything. Simply cooperate with Me. I am motivating the wheel to run. You need to be one with Me. Go in to possess the land, and I will slaughter the idol worshippers through you. Without you I cannot do anything."

This is the principle of incarnation. In particular, this is the principle of incarnation for the destruction of the satanic power in its usurpation of the earth. This means that in order for God to regain the earth from the usurping hand of the enemy, we need to be in full cooperation and coordination with Him in the principle of incarnation. We need to be one with God in His heart's desire and in His move on earth. Today God wants to save people, but in order to do this, He needs us to be one with Him according to the principle of incarnation.

I. GOD'S CHARGE, PROMISE, AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO JOSHUA

Verses 1 through 9 are God's charge, promise, and encouragement to Joshua.

A. God's Charge

God's charge (vv. 1-4) was that Joshua should enter into God's promised land. His charge to the land-takers was based upon His ordination, initiation, and choosing. The land-takers needed to sacrifice themselves, deny themselves, give up their own interest and preference in all things, and run the risk of their lives for the carrying out of God's eternal economy.

1. The Good Land Having Been Given to Israel by God

In verse 2 God said to Joshua, "Moses My servant is dead; now then arise and cross over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land which I am giving to them, to the children of Israel." Here we see that the good land had been given to Israel by God.

2. Israel Still Needing to Take the Good Land

"Every place on which the sole of your foot treads I have

given to you, as I promised Moses" (v. 3). This verse indicates that even though God had given Israel the good land, Israel still needed to take the land. On the one hand, there was God's giving of the good land; on the other hand, there was the cooperation of God's people in rising up to fulfill God's commission to possess the land.

3. The Territory of the Good Land

According to verse 4, the territory of the good land included the south—the wilderness; the north—Lebanon; the east—the Great River, the river Euphrates; and the west—the Great Sea, the Mediterranean.

B. God's Promise

God's promise first was that no man would be able to stand before Joshua all the days of his life (v. 5a). Second, God's promise was that He would be with Joshua and would not fail him or forsake him (v. 5b). In verse 9c God said to Joshua, "Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go."

C. God's Encouragement

In verses 6 through 9 we have God's encouragement to Joshua.

1. To Be Strong and Bold

First, God encouraged Joshua to be strong and to be bold (vv. 6a, 7a, 9a). Joshua was to be bold not in himself but in the moving and operating God.

2. Not to Be Afraid or Dismayed

Next, God encouraged Joshua not to be afraid or dismayed (v. 9b).

3. Saying That Joshua Would Have Success Wherever He Went

Furthermore, God told Joshua that he would have success wherever he went (vv. 7c, 8b).

4. In the Term of Walking in the Word of God

God's encouragement to Joshua was in the term of Joshua's

walking in the word of God. Joshua was not to turn away from the law given by Moses "to the right or to the left" (v. 7b). The book of the law was not to depart from his mouth, but he was to muse upon it day and night so that he would be certain to do according to all that was written in it (v. 8a). Joshua was to be occupied with God's word and to let the word occupy him. By being occupied and filled with the word, he would have prosperity and success in taking the good land.

II. JOSHUA'S CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE

Verses 10 through 15 are Joshua's charge to the people to prepare provisions for their entering into the good land within three days.

A. To All the People

In verses 10 and 11 Joshua's charge was to all the people. They were to prepare provisions for themselves, for in three days they would be crossing the Jordan to enter and possess the land which Jehovah their God was giving them to possess.

B. To the Two and a Half Tribes

Joshua's charge in verses 12 through 15 was to the two and a half tribes—to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Joshua reminded them of Moses' word, saying that their wives, their little ones, and their livestock would remain in the land which Moses had given them, but that they themselves would cross over in battle array before their brothers and help them until Jehovah had given rest to them. This charge indicates that the possessing and enjoying of God's promised land was a corporate matter among all God's chosen people. The land could not be possessed by an individual nor by a single tribe. Rather, all the elect of God were required to rise up, fight for the land, and gain and possess the land, fighting for one another. Then everyone would be able to enter into his particular portion and be at rest.

III. THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE TO JOSHUA

Verses 16 through 18 are the people's response to Joshua.

A. Willing to Carry Out Joshua's Charge

The people answered Joshua, saying, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. As in all things we listened to Moses, so we will listen to you" (vv. 16-17a). This indicates that they were willing to carry out Joshua's charge.

B. Blessing Joshua

The people also blessed Joshua, saying, "Only may Jehovah your God be with you, as He was with Moses" (v. 17b).

C. Encouraging Joshua

Finally, the people responded to Joshua by encouraging him, saying to him, "Be strong and be bold" (v. 18b).

The children of Israel agreed with Joshua in taking God's commission. Their response implied their willingness, their readiness, and their being in one accord not only with Joshua but also with Jehovah their God as expressed by their blessing of Joshua in the name of their God. They were one with the Triune God in the great wheel of His economy for the purpose of gaining the good land.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE THREE

SPYING OUT THE LAND

Scripture Reading: Josh. 2

Chapter one of Joshua is on the taking of the good land. What is the intrinsic significance of chapter two? Apparently chapter two is on the spying out of the good land, but this is a natural concept. The real intrinsic significance of chapter two is that God gains the right person to bring forth Christ.

In studying the history and the prophecies in the Old Testament, we need to consider the full scope of the Scriptures concerning God's eternal economy. The Bible begins with God's creation, and it ends with Christ as the hub of the great wheel and with the New Jerusalem as the rim to manifest the Triune God for eternity. God's eternal economy, therefore, consists mainly of two things—Christ and His counterpart for the enlargement, the increase, and the spreading of Christ. This counterpart of Christ will ultimately consummate in the New Jerusalem as the full expression of the Triune God for eternity. The intrinsic significance of the book of Joshua is the taking of the land, which typifies our gaining of Christ, plus the gaining of the proper persons to bring forth Christ that Christ might be spread and increased.

Chapter one of Joshua is concerned with the gaining of Christ, and chapter two, with the spreading of Christ, with the bringing forth of Christ to others. For the gaining of Christ, we need to be today's Joshua, fighting the battle, taking the land, and enjoying Christ as our inheritance. For the spreading of Christ, we need to be today's Rahab. Thus, we need to be both a Joshua and a Rahab.

A number of Bible teachers have pointed out that chapter one of Joshua typifies chapter one of Ephesians. Joshua 1 shows us that everything was ready. Israel had been prepared

through God's dealing with them for several hundred years in Egypt and for forty years in the wilderness. Israel had become a corporate Joshua, chosen, called, redeemed, saved, trained, prepared, and qualified by God. There in the plains of Moab they did not have any land or inheritance. They were ready to go on with God as one to take the land of Canaan, which typifies the rich, all-inclusive Christ.

In Ephesians 1, which is typified by Joshua 1, we can see that everything has been finished and completed and that every blessing in Christ is there in the heavenlies, waiting for God's chosen, redeemed, and perfected people to take and enjoy as their inheritance. According to this chapter, we have been chosen by God to partake of His holy nature and we have been predestinated by God to have His life in order to become His sons (vv. 4-5). Furthermore, Christ's redemption has brought us into Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God to be the realm in which and the element by which we can be made God's inheritance (vv. 7, 11). Having been redeemed and having been put into Christ as the realm and the element, we are daily being reconstituted and transformed by this element to be a treasure for God's inheritance. As we take Christ and enjoy Him as our inheritance, we become God's inheritance. In addition, we have the sealing and the pledging of the Spirit (vv. 13-14). The Spirit's sealing is the Spirit's soaking and saturating of us in order to transform us. The Spirit's pledging is the guarantee that God is our inheritance. On the one hand, we are God's inheritance, sealed by His Spirit; on the other hand, God is our inheritance, guaranteed by the pledging of the Spirit.

Ephesians chapter two indicates that in the heavenlies there are different layers. Christ is in the highest layer, the third heaven, to be our everything as our good land. But there is a lower layer of the heavenlies—the air, where Satan as the ruler of the authority of the air is frustrating the people on earth from contacting God and from receiving Christ (v. 2). This is typified by the Canaanites, who were frustrating Israel from entering into the good land.

Ephesians 2 also tells us that we were once dead persons (vv. 1, 5), but then God made us, the chosen Rahabs, the

enjoyers of Christ. In Ephesians 1 we see Joshua, the believers in Christ receiving all the blessings in Christ. But in Ephesians 2 we see Rahab, all the sinners who were wicked, evil, and dead. Nevertheless, God can perform His dynamic salvation through the redemption of Christ to save such sinners, to make such Rahabs the enjoyers of Christ.

How could Rahab, a Gentile harlot who had sold herself to sin to the uttermost, become a member of the chosen people of God? How could she receive Christ and then bring forth Christ to others for His increase? There was no other way but through faith. Faith comes from the hearing of the gospel. Today people need to hear the good news concerning what God has done through the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. People need to hear that everything has been finished and completed and that the all-inclusive Christ is in the heavens for them to receive. However, Satan and his powers in the air try to frustrate them from receiving Christ. The only way this situation can be overcome is by faith. This was Rahab's experience. She heard what God had done for Israel in Egypt and in the wilderness, and she heard how God had defeated Sihon and Og, two strong kings who were the gate guards of Canaan. She heard the good news, and then she believed in the very God of Israel, wanting to be one among His people.

When the two spies came to Jericho, Rahab contacted them and hid them from those who were seeking them. There must have been a good communication between the spies and Rahab, and through this communication she became harmonious with them for God's economy. When she asked them to deal kindly with her father's house and deliver their lives from death, the spies told her to tie a line of scarlet thread in the window. According to the spies' word, she hung the scarlet thread from her window as a sign for the salvation of herself and her entire household, typifying the household salvation of Christ through His redemption by His blood. This is a strong indication that the history in the book of Joshua is related to God's eternal economy concerning Christ in His salvation through redemption.

Eventually Rahab the harlot became one of the excellent,

prominent ancestors of Christ. This Canaanite woman married Salmon, a leader of the tribe of Judah, and through her union with this Jewish leader she became a part of Israel and brought forth Boaz, the great-grandfather of David. What an honor it is that Rahab's name is included in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1! This is a strong sign that the history recorded in Joshua is in line with God's eternal economy concerning Christ.

Let us now consider chapter two of Joshua in more detail.

I. JOSHUA'S SENDING OF THE TWO SPIES

Joshua sent the two spies to spy out the good land, especially Jericho (v. 1a). Joshua's real purpose in sending out the spies was to find Rahab.

II. JEHOVAH'S PROVIDING OF RAHAB THE HARLOT

Verses 1b through 22 are concerned with Jehovah's providing of Rahab the harlot. God provided Joshua for the gaining of the land. However, there was the need of a Gentile female for the spreading of Christ, and for this God provided Rahab the harlot.

A. She Having Believed in the God of Israel

Rahab believed in the God of Israel (vv. 8-11; Heb. 11:31a). She told the spies that she knew that Jehovah had given the land to the people of Israel and that all the inhabitants of the land melted before them. She went on to say that they had heard how Jehovah had dried up the water of the Red Sea before Israel when they came out of Egypt and what they did to the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og, whom they utterly destroyed. Then Rahab declared, "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above and upon earth beneath" (Josh. 2:11b). Because of her faith in God, she "did not perish with those who were disobedient" (Heb. 11:31a).

B. She Turning to Israel and Their God and Trusting in Him and His People

Rahab turned to Israel and their God, and she trusted in

Him and His people (Josh. 2:12-13). She asked the spies to deal kindly with her father's house and to give her some token of trust that they would preserve her father, mother, brothers, and sisters and deliver their lives from death. She committed herself to them and was pleading with them for mercy. This indicates that she turned her whole being not only to God but also to God's people.

C. She Being Willing to Receive the Spies, Hide Them, and Deliver Them by Her Acts out of Her Faith

Rahab was willing to receive the spies, hide them, and deliver them by her acts out of her faith (vv. 1b-7, 15-16, 22; James 2:25). Her receiving, hiding, and delivering the spies were acts of faith. This indicates that her faith was active. After receiving the spies, she had good fellowship with them concerning what God intended to do.

D. The Sign for Rahab and Her Household to Be Saved

Joshua 2:17-21 speaks of the sign for Rahab and her household to be saved.

1. A Line of Scarlet Thread Hanging in the Window of Her House

The spies told Rahab to hang a line of scarlet thread in the window of her house (v. 18). According to their word, "she tied the scarlet line in the window" (v. 21).

2. Typifying an Open Confession of the Redeeming Blood of Christ

The scarlet thread tied in the window of Rahab's house was hung out in the open; it was there for everyone to see. Thus, the scarlet thread tied to the window typifies an open confession of the redeeming blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Rahab made such an open confession and believed that by this sign she and her household would be delivered.

3. Indicating God's Household Salvation to the Gentile Sinners

This sign for Rahab and her household to be saved indicates God's household salvation to the Gentile sinners (Acts 16:31). We praise the Lord for His marvelous household salvation. Acts 16:30 and 31 reveal that whereas the Lord's salvation is for the individual believer, the unit of His salvation is the household. This is also illustrated by the cases of the whole house of Noah (Gen. 7:1, 13) and of the houses of Israel (Exo. 12:3-4). The case of the whole house of Rahab confirms that the family, the household, is the unit of God's salvation. In the New Testament the principle of household salvation is illustrated by the cases of the house of Zaccheus (Luke 19:5-6, 9), the house of Cornelius (Acts 11:13-14; 10:24, 44, 48), the house of Lydia (16:14-15), and the house of the Philippian jailer (16:32-33).

E. A Condemned Canaanite Qualified to Be Destroyed Becoming One of the Main Ancestors of Christ

Rahab was a condemned Canaanite qualified to be destroyed, but she became one of the main ancestors of Christ, associated with Christ in His incarnation for the fulfillment of God's eternal economy, by turning to God and His people and by being married to Salmon (Matt. 1:5a), the son of a leader of Judah, a leading tribe of Israel (1 Chron. 2:10-11), and probably one of the two spies.

III. THE TWO SPIES' RETURN AND REPORT

Joshua 2 concludes with the two spies' return and report (vv. 23-24). They related to Joshua all that had happened to them and told him that Jehovah had given the land into the hand of Israel and that all the inhabitants of the land had melted before Israel. The report of the spies was a right word in faith, yet Israel still needed to take the land by faith in God, sacrificing themselves for God's interest that they might share in what God had gained for the accomplishment of His eternal economy.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE FOUR

CROSSING THE RIVER JORDAN

Scripture Reading: Josh. 3—4

Chapters three and four are on Israel's crossing of the river Jordan. The people of Israel were ready to enter into the good land and to take it as their possession. However, in their old man they could not gain the victory. Their old man had to be buried so that they could become a new man. This corresponds to the New Testament economy of God. The children of Israel were buried in the death of Christ and then they were resurrected in the resurrection of Christ. This indicates that even in the Old Testament time the children of Israel were identified with Christ and were one with Him. Because they were one with Christ, passing through Christ's experiences, His history became their history. In particular, they passed through Christ's death to bury their old man and to become a new man in Christ for the fighting of the spiritual warfare.

We need to realize that our natural man, our old man, is altogether not qualified to fight the spiritual warfare for the gaining of Christ. God's intention is to join us to Christ to have an organic union between us and Christ, making us one with Christ, that His history might become our history. His history is our story, and our story is His history. We have been identified with Christ to experience what He has gone through. In union with Christ, His experiences become ours. He died on the cross, and we died with Him. He was buried, and we were buried with Him. He was resurrected from the dead, and we were resurrected with Him. Now because we are persons in Christ, we are no longer the old man but the new man.

Let us now consider the various matters related to Israel's crossing the river Jordan.

I. THE ARK OF GOD WITH THE BEARING PRIESTS TAKING THE LEAD TO GO INTO THE JORDAN AND STAND STILL IN THE WATERS

The ark of God with the bearing priests took the lead to go into the waters of the Jordan and stood still in the waters (3:3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17a). The ark was a type of Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God. When the ark of God went with the children of Israel, the Triune God went with them, taking the lead and thus being the first to step into the water. Yet the ark was on the shoulders of the bearing priests. This indicates that the priests bearing the ark became one entity with the Triune God; they were one corporate person. God walked in their walking, and they walked in God's walking. The spread of the Lord's recovery today is through Christ's move together with His bearing priests. We and He walk together as a corporate man.

II. THE FEET OF THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK DIPPING INTO THE EDGE OF THE WATERS, AND THE WATERS STANDING AND RISING UP IN A HEAP

When the feet of the priests who carried the ark dipped into the edge of the waters that overflowed all the banks of the Jordan, the waters that flowed down from upstream stood and rose up in a heap a great distance away (vv. 13, 15-16). This was the greatest miracle in human history, and the first miracle performed for Israel as they entered the good land. Such a miracle surely was a sign to the children of Israel that their God was real, true, living, and active.

III. THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK OF JEHOVAH STANDING FIRMLY ON DRY GROUND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JORDAN UNTIL ALL THE NATION HAD COMPLETELY CROSSED OVER THE JORDAN

The priests who carried the ark of Jehovah stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, while all Israel was crossing over on dry ground, until all the nation had

completely crossed over the Jordan (v. 17; 4:10-11). No doubt it took a long time for about two million people, including children, older ones, and weaker ones, to cross over the river with all the things that they were carrying. However, I believe that the priests were not bothered but, happy about the miracle God had performed, were glad to watch all the people cross over the Jordan.

IV. TWELVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL TAKING UP TWELVE STONES FROM THE PLACE WHERE THE PRIESTS' FEET STOOD FIRM IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JORDAN AND BRINGING THEM OVER AND LAYING THEM DOWN IN THE PLACE WHERE ISRAEL LODGED THAT NIGHT

Twelve representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel took up twelve stones from the place where the priests' feet stood firm in the middle of the Jordan and brought them over and laid them down in the place where Israel lodged that night (4:1-5, 8). The twelve stones signify the twelve tribes of the new Israel. Their being raised up from the waters of the Jordan signifies resurrection from death. The twelve stones raised up from the water were a sign, signifying that the resurrected new Israel would be a testimony of the crossing of the death water (vv. 6-7, 21-24). This typifies the believers' experience with Christ of the resurrection from death (Rom. 6:3-11).

V. JOSHUA ERECTING TWELVE STONES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JORDAN, IN THE PLACE WHERE THE FEET OF THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK HAD STOOD

Joshua erected twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark had stood (Josh. 4:9). These were another twelve stones, signifying the twelve tribes of Israel in their old life and in their old nature. Joshua erected these twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan where the ark was, signifying that the Lord wanted Israel in their old nature to remain under the death water of the Jordan. This typifies that the old man of the believers should remain in the death of Christ (Rom. 6:6;

Col. 2:20). We who have been identified with Christ in His death and resurrection, who have been resurrected with Christ to become the new man, should leave our old man under His death. We in the church life should all be able to declare that our old man has been buried with Christ and remains under the death of Christ and that we are the new man.

VI. THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JORDAN UNTIL JOSHUA COMMANDED THEM, ACCORDING TO THE COMMAND OF JEHOVAH, TO COME UP OUT OF THE JORDAN

The priests who carried the ark stood in the middle of the Jordan until all the people had completely crossed over the river and everything was completed and until Joshua commanded them, according to the command of Jehovah, to come up out of the Jordan (Josh. 4:10-11). What a marvelous picture of the move of the Triune God embodied in Christ! As the priests stood in the middle of the Jordan, there was no need for them to be afraid, for the ark was with them. They simply had to look at the ark and be at peace.

The principle is the same with us today. The Triune God is here with us. Because our old man has been buried and our new man is working with the Triune God, we do not need to be troubled by anything that may befall us. The Triune God is with us, and He and we are living together and working together.

VII. THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK COMING UP OUT OF THE MIDDLE OF THE JORDAN, AND THE WATERS OF THE JORDAN RETURNING TO THEIR PLACE

When the priests who carried the ark came up out of the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up onto the dry land, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and went over its banks as before (v. 18).

VIII. THE CROSSING OVER OF THE RIVER JORDAN BEING FOR WAR AGAINST THE SEVEN TRIBES IN CANAAN

The crossing over of the river Jordan was for war against

the seven tribes in Canaan (vv. 12-13; 3:10b). As Joshua was participating in this miracle, he was strengthened to take the lead to war against the demonic Canaanites.

IX. JOSHUA ERECTING IN GILGAL THE TWELVE STONES TAKEN FROM THE JORDAN AS A MEMORIAL TESTIFYING OF ISRAEL'S CROSSING OVER THE JORDAN BY JEHOVAH'S MIRACULOUS DEED

After the children of Israel crossed over, Joshua erected in Gilgal the twelve stones taken from the Jordan by the twelve representatives of the twelve tribes, as a memorial testifying of Israel's crossing over the Jordan by Jehovah's miraculous deed (4:20-24).

As we consider Israel's history recorded in Joshua 3 and 4, we need to realize that the same things have happened to us. We died with Christ, we were buried with Him, and we were resurrected with Him to become something new. Ephesians 2 tells us that the believers, who were dead in sin, have been made alive, raised, and seated together with Christ (vv. 5-6) to be one new man (v. 15). This new man is God's masterpiece (v. 10).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE FIVE

THE PREPARATION BEFORE THE ATTACK

Scripture Reading: Josh. 5

In this message we will consider chapter five of Joshua. This chapter reveals that all the kings were afraid because of the miraculous crossing of the river Jordan. Before the children of Israel attacked, the Canaanites were already defeated. Their spirit was gone. Although the Israelites had been disciplined, trained, and qualified, after crossing the Jordan they still needed further preparation before the attack.

Joshua 5 covers four matters of intrinsic significance. The first item is circumcision. Circumcision is a continuation of the burial in the death of Christ. By crossing the river Jordan, Israel's old man was buried and they came out to become the new man. This was an objective work done by God. Israel still needed to apply it to their flesh. Therefore, they prepared knives of flint to cut off their foreskins. This cutting was their application of what God had done in the crossing of the river Jordan. By cutting off their flesh to roll away the reproach of Egypt, they were buried and resurrected, both actually and practically.

In the New Testament circumcision means the constant application of the Lord's death to our flesh. Romans 6:3-4 says that we have been baptized into the death of Christ and buried with Him, but Romans 8:13 and Galatians 5:24 tell us that we should apply the circumcision of the cross to our flesh by the Spirit. In fact, our flesh has already been crucified, but in practicality we need to crucify the flesh day by day. This is the reality and practicality of remaining in the death and burial of Christ, and this is the significance of circumcision.

The second item of intrinsic significance in Joshua 5 is

the Passover. The feast of the Passover was held to remember Israel's redemption from the death judgment on the firstborn sons and their salvation from Egypt and from the tyranny of Pharaoh. This is a type of the Lord's table. At the Lord's table we remember Him as the Redeemer and as the Savior. Our portion today is not death but the partaking and enjoying of Christ at His table.

The third item of intrinsic significance is the eating of the produce of the good land. For forty years the children of Israel had been eating manna without any labor on their part. But when the manna ceased, their food could be produced only by cooperating with God. The produce of the land of Canaan came out of farming. This means that it was the result of man's labor and cooperation with God. This is in keeping with Genesis 2:5, which says that God sends the rain and man tills the ground. This refers to the cooperation of man and God.

Both the manna and the produce of the good land typify Christ. Christ in the stage typified by the produce of the good land is different from Christ in the stage typified by manna. John 6, which is not a deep chapter, speaks of Christ as the manna who came down from heaven to feed us. In the Epistles Christ is no longer just manna; He is the produce of the good land, prepared through our laboring cooperation with God. This brings in more Christ for ourselves and others and provides a surplus to God as our offering.

The fourth item of intrinsic significance concerns the Captain of Jehovah's army. The children of Israel were ready. They had been circumcised, they had enjoyed the Passover, and they had enjoyed the produce of the good land. However, they still needed a Captain. Then Joshua saw a vision in which Christ was unveiled as the Captain of Jehovah's army. Joshua was the visible commander, but Christ was the invisible One. Before the children of Israel attacked the Canaanites, they were fully prepared and qualified with Christ, the embodiment of God, as their Captain. When they attacked Jericho, they did this under the commanding of the Captain typified by the ark. The ark, a type of Christ, who was their Commander-in-chief, took the lead to attack the enemies.

To prepare to possess the good land, we need to enter into these four items. We need to deal with the flesh, enjoy the Lord's table, enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the produce of the good land, and see a vision of Christ, the embodiment of God, as our Captain.

Now that we have seen the items of intrinsic significance in this chapter, let us consider some of the details concerning the preparation before the attack.

I. THE REACTION OF THE KINGS OF THE AMORITES AND THE CANAANITES TO JEHOVAH'S MIRACULOUS DEED FOR ISRAEL TO CROSS OVER THE JORDAN

In verse 1 we see the reaction of the kings of the Amorites and the Canaanites to Jehovah's miraculous deed in drying up the waters for Israel to cross over the Jordan. Their hearts melted, and there was no longer any spirit (boldness) in them because of the children of Israel.

II. THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE NEW ISRAEL

Verses 2 through 9 speak of the circumcision of the new Israel.

A. At Gilgal

The circumcision of the new Israel took place at Gilgal, which means "a rolling." Concerning this, verse 9 says, "Then Jehovah said to Joshua, Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. So the name of this place has been called Gilgal to this day."

B. To Make God's Chosen People a New People for the Inheritance of God's Promised Land

The purpose of circumcision was to make God's chosen people a new people for the inheritance of God's promised land (Gen. 17:7-12; Josh. 5:6).

C. Typifying the Circumcision of Christ, by His Death, on the Believers

The circumcision of the new Israel typifies the circumcision

of Christ, by His death, on the believers in the putting off of the body of the flesh for their inheritance, in resurrection, of Him as the God-allotted portion to them (Col. 2:9-12; 1:12).

III. THE KEEPING OF THE PASSOVER

Joshua 5:10 says that the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho.

A. To Remember Jehovah's Redemption of Israel from the Death Judgment on Their Firstborn Sons

The children of Israel were to keep the Passover to remember Jehovah's redemption of Israel from the death judgment on their firstborn sons (Exo. 12:3-7, 11-14).

B. To Remember Jehovah's Salvation of Israel from the Power of Pharaoh and Egypt

The keeping of the Passover was also to remember Jehovah's salvation of Israel from the power of Pharaoh and Egypt (Exo. 14:13-30).

C. Indicating That Jehovah Would Destroy the Tribes of Canaan and Deliver Israel from Them

The keeping of the Passover indicated that just as Jehovah had saved Israel from Pharaoh and Egypt so would He destroy the tribes of Canaan and deliver Israel from them. Thus the keeping of the Passover encouraged the children of Israel and gave them the assurance that Jehovah would displace the evil Canaanites.

D. Typifying the Believers' Keeping of the Lord's Table to Remember the Lord's Redemption and Salvation

Israel's keeping of the Passover typifies the believers' keeping of the Lord's table to remember the Lord's redemption and salvation (Matt. 26:26-28). The Lord Jesus established His table with the bread and the cup to replace the Feast of the Passover. He has fulfilled the type, and now He is the real Passover to us (1 Cor. 5:7).

IV. THE EATING OF THE PRODUCE OF THE PROMISED LAND

Joshua 5:11-12 speaks of Israel's eating of the produce of the promised land.

A. Manna Having Been the Food from Heaven in Israel's Wandering in the Wilderness

Manna was the food from heaven in Israel's wandering in the wilderness. The manna typifies Christ as the unconsummated heavenly food to God's chosen people, not requiring the eaters to labor on it.

B. The Produce of the Promised Land Being the God-given Food in Their Fighting in Canaan

The produce of the promised land was the God-given food in their fighting in Canaan. This produce typifies Christ as the consummated God-given food to the believers, requiring them to labor on Him.

V. THE VISION SEEN BY JOSHUA

Joshua 5:13-15 is a record of the vision seen by Joshua.

A. Unveiling Christ to Joshua

Verse 13a says, "Now once, when Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked; and behold, there was a man standing opposite him, and His sword was drawn in His hand." This vision was an unveiling of Christ to Joshua.

B. Christ as the Captain of Jehovah's Army

Verses 13b and 14a go on to say, "Joshua went to Him and said to Him, Are You for us or for our adversaries? And He said, Neither, but as the Captain of Jehovah's army have I now come." Whereas Joshua was the visible captain of Jehovah's army, Christ was the invisible Captain of Jehovah's army. Christ was such a captain to fight against the seven tribes of Canaan for Israel. Because of this, Joshua needed to stand on the position of sanctification all the time (v. 15).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE SIX

TAKING POSSESSION OF THE GOOD LAND FOR CHRIST AND BEING MADE HIS POSSESSION

Scripture Reading: Josh. 1:2-6; Phil. 3:8, 12; Rev. 2:7b; Josh. 5:12; Phil. 1:21; Eph. 1:11, 18

According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, we need to take possession of the good land for Christ so that Christ can make us His possession. Our taking possession of the God-promised good land is for Christ, and Christ's making us His possession is for us. What does it mean to say that we possess the good land for Christ and that He, for our sake, makes us His possession? My burden in this message is to try to make these two puzzling matters clear.

OUR TAKING POSSESSION OF THE GOOD LAND FOR CHRIST

In the first message of this life-study, we pointed out that to take possession of the God-promised land for Christ and to provide the proper persons to bring forth Christ into the human race are the two major points of the section of the history in the Old Testament in the three books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. These two main points—to take the land for Christ and to provide the bona fide ancestors for Christ—are the spirit of the history from Joshua to Ruth. Since the God-promised land is a type of Christ, to gain the land for Christ means to gain Christ for Christ.

God's Promise concerning the Good Land

In Genesis God promised Abraham that He would give the good land to Abraham's descendants. More than four hundred years later, God sent Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt, tell-

ing him that He was sending him to bring the people into the good land. It was a fact that God had given the land to Israel, but this fact was not yet practical. Rather, it was a promise that still needed to be fulfilled. Not even at the time when Israel came to the plains of Moab under the leadership of Joshua was the giving of the good land to Israel a practical fact, for the land had not yet become Israel's possession. Only after Israel had gained the good land and had taken possession of it did the land actually become theirs as a practical fact.

The Need for Us to Respond to What God Has Promised, Prepared, and Given

The good land had been promised to Israel, and the situation was ready for the land to be given to Israel in actuality. God, the Giver, had done everything, but there was still the need for Israel, the receiver, to do something to take possession of what God had given.

The principle is the same with the preaching of the gospel today. God's salvation has been promised, prepared, and completed in Christ and with Christ. Everything is ready for this salvation to be given to sinners. God wants to give salvation to sinners, but they need to respond to Him by receiving His gift of salvation. To respond to God by receiving His salvation is to do something helpful for God. Actually, to receive God's salvation is to do God a favor. If you know the heart of God, you will realize that whenever a sinner repents and receives Christ, that sinner is doing God a favor.

At the beginning of the book of Joshua, Israel was ready to go forward, to take the good land, to possess it, and to enjoy it. For Israel to do this meant that they were doing something for Christ, who is typified by the good land. Otherwise, the good land would have lain there idle. Today, Christ as the good land is ready to be taken and possessed by His believers. However, where are those who are ready to take Him, possess Him, and enjoy Him as the all-inclusive good land? Many sinners are not willing to respond to Christ, and even many of His believers are not willing to respond to Him by taking Him, possessing Him, and enjoying Him.

Gaining Christ for Christ

In light of this, let us now con sider what it means to gain Christ for Christ. Christ today is the good land given to us by God in a very rich way. Nevertheless, all the riches of Christ, all that Christ is, remain separatefrom most Christians. As the One on the throne in the heavens, Christ is strong and powerful, but we are weak. He is rich, but we are poor. Whereas Christ is strong, powerful, and rich, we are weak, impotent, and poor. The reason for this situation is that we have not endeavored to gain Christ. However, when we gain Christ, He becomes our experience. Then Christ becomes in us what He should be. This means that our gaining Christ is not only for our enjoyment but also for Christ to be what He should be.

According to the New Testament revelation, Christ is perfect, complete, rich, and powerful. Furthermore, it is a fact that God has given such a Christ to us. Although He is wonderful, we are pitiful. If we see this, we will realize that there is a need for us to do something that will make Christ real to us and even to the unbelievers so that He will be what He should be. How can Christ be what He should be? Christ can be what He should be only by our gaining Him. If we gain Christ and experience Christ, Christ will become real to us. This is not only for us—it is also for Christ. This is to gain Christ for Christ.

Our need to day is to gain more of Christ, to possess more of Christ, and to experience more of Christ. Our gaining, possessing, and experiencing Christ will make Him real to us. This is not only for our enjoyment but also for Christ to be what He should be. At present, the Christ among us is much less than the Christ in the heavens. The Christ among us is different from the Christ in the heavens. This means that among us Christ is not yet what He should be. In order for Christ to be what He should be among us, we need to gain Him. The more we gain Christ, possess Christ, experience Christ, and enjoy Christ, the more He becomes among us what He should be. In this way our gaining of Christ is for Christ. We gain Christ for Christ so that He may have His

corporateexpression. This is to make the good land the land of Immanuel (Isa. 8:8).

God's Need for Overcomers Who Struggle to Pursue Christ in order to Gain Christ

Paul was one who struggled to pursue Christ in order to gain Christ (Phil. 3:8, 12). However, very few of today's Christians, including us, are like Paul. We may be seeking Christians, but we may pursue Christ only to a certain extent, being content with a routine church life and routine work and service for Christ. Following such a routine does not enable us to endeavor to gain Christ. Because so many Christians do not pursue Christ in order to gain Him, God needs the overcomers.

The Bible shows us that, first, God tried to work with the race of Adam, but the Adamic race was a failure. Then God had a new start with another race, with Israel, the race of Abraham. Eventually, Israel also failed God. Then God went to another people—the church. However, although God has been working with the church for nearly two thousand years, God has not yet gained what He desires. Thus, as early as the first century, the Lord came in to call for overcomers (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 20-21; 21:7), and today He is still sounding out the call for the overcomers. Nevertheless, even among devoted Christians it is hard to find some overcomers, some who are pursuing Christ in order to gain Him.

At the time of Joshua, there were two or three million Israelites, but there were not many Joshuas and Calebs. There were not many endeavoring ones, genuine pursuers of God. Without such ones both the good land and the Giver of the land would have been idle. Both the land and the Giver of the land needed certain ones to take the land, possess the land, and enjoy the land. Those who possessed the land did a favor to the One who gave them the land.

We today need to take and possess the land for Christ. We need to gain Christ for Christ. If we do this, we will do Christ a favor. However, if we go on living a routine Christian life and church life, we will not be able to gain the land for Christ. For this, God needs some overcomers. There are millions of

real Christians on earth today, but where are the overcomers? God is calling for overcomers, but who will answer His call? Who will respond to God's call by pursuing Christ in order to gain Christ? I hope that many among us will do Christ a favor by responding to God's call for overcomers.

CHRIST'S MAKING US HIS POSSESSION

When we enjoy Christ, He makes us His possession. This is something organic. If we take Christ, possess Christ, and enjoy Christ as our all-inclusive good land, the land will become our supply. What the land supplies us will cause us to become organic.

Becoming Organic by Being Constituted with Christ as the Food Produced through Our Labor on the Good Land

The main thing that the land affords us is food. If we do not have food, we cannot be organic. When we labor on the land, the land will produce food. Then we eat the food that is produced by our labor on the land, and as a result we become organic.

Anything that we take into us as food transforms us organically. When the Israelites were in Egypt, they ate Egyptian food, and this food caused them to have an Egyptian constitution. Eventually, God brought them out of Egypt and into the wilderness, where they remained for forty years. Every day while they were in the wilderness they ate something heavenly—manna. The manna constituted them into a heavenly people. Eventually, the manna ceased. Regarding this, Joshua 5:12 says, "The manna ceased on that day, when they ate of the produce of the land; and there was no longer manna for the children of Israel, but they ate of the yield of the land of Canaan that year." From that time onward, their constitution began to be different, for they began to be constituted with the produce of the good land. Thus, the children of Israel were constituted in three ways: first, in Egypt with Egyptian food; second, in the wilderness with manna; and third, in Canaan with the produce of the land. In each case they were

constituted not by teachings or regulations but by what they ate.

As believers in Christ today, we also are constituted according to what we eat. If we want to be a heavenly people, we need to eat Christ as our heavenly manna. If we want to be overcomers, we need to labor on Christ as our good land. To labor on Christ means to gain Christ as our enjoyment. First, of course, we need to take the land. This requires that we dispossess the "Canaanites." After possessing Christ as the land, we need to labor on the land. Through our labor something will be produced, and that produce will become our food, our supply. As we eat Christ as this food and enjoy Him, we will be constituted with Him, being made the same as Christ in life and nature. This is what Paul meant when he said, "For to me, to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21).

Transformed Metabolically to Become God's Inheritance

This enjoyment of Christ will transform us metabolically and cause us to become Christ's treasure, His possession. Paul speaks of this in Ephesians 1. In this chapter we first have God's choosing and predestinating, and then we have Christ's redeeming. Through the redemption of Christ, we enter into Christ as a particular kind of element, and this element becomes our enjoyment that constitutes us into God's inheritance.

First, God comes into us to be our inheritance. When we enjoy Christ, He constitutes us to be God's inheritance. On the one hand, we have Christ as our good land, as our possession. On the other hand, the enjoyment of this possession constitutes us with Christ, and we thereby become God's inheritance.

An Organic Matter

The process of being constituted with Christ to become God's inheritance is altogether organic. This means that we need to take the all-inclusive Christ as our good land and labor on Him to gain some produce, which will be our organic, transforming food. As we eat this food, we will grow and grad-

ually mature in the divine life. We will be constituted with Christ organically, transformed by Christ as a new element. Then in an organic way we will become God's inheritance, His treasure and possession.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE SEVEN

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICHO

Scripture Reading: Josh. 6

Joshua 6 is a record of the first warfare and destruction by Israel in the land of Canaan. In order for the children of Israel to gain the good land, they had to defeat the enemy and drive out the evil forces. Nevertheless, the children of Israel actually did not need to fight. When they crossed the Jordan, God did everything. In the same principle, God's people did not need to do anything to destroy Jericho. They only needed to believe and trust in God, to listen to the instruction from the Captain of the army of Israel, and to exalt Christ by bearing the ark. From this we see that in the spiritual warfare the first thing we should do is exalt Christ.

Jericho was strongly fortified. But when the king heard what Jehovah had done for His people, his heart melted and he lost his spirit, his boldness. Not knowing what to do, he shut the gates of the city and used the walls to protect himself and his people. There was no traffic, no coming in or going out. This indicates that the powers of darkness were bound, that there was a real binding of the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. The king trusted in the wall, knowing that the Israelites did not have any weapons to breach the wall. Even though the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, he did not think that they would be able to cross the wall. He did not have any thought concerning what God would do. It was an easy matter for God to destroy the wall.

In verse 2 Jehovah told Joshua that He had given Jericho, its king, and the mighty men of war into Joshua's hand. Then God instructed Joshua to have the men of war with the priests bearing the ark to circle the city, going around it one time. This they were to do for six days. Seven other priests were

charged to carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Jehovah. The priests did not blow their trumpets according to their own will. Instead, they waited for the captain to give the command. They needed instructions and leading, just as we today need the leading and guiding of the Spirit.

For the first six days, the army of Israel just walked around the city with the ark, which typified Christ as the embodiment of God. I believe that many of the people of Jericho were on the wall watching, wondering what the people of Israel were doing. On the seventh day, the Sabbath day, the situation was different. Israel actually did not have to fight but enjoyed the Sabbath, that is, enjoyed the rest. They walked around the city seven times, and then the visible captain gave the command: "Shout!" The priests trumpeted, the people shouted, and the wall fell down. The city was utterly destroyed, and a curse was placed on anyone who would rise up and build it. The way that Israel conquered Jericho was a strong testimony that Israel's God, Jehovah, is a true and living God.

We may apply this account of the destruction of Jericho to the matter of preaching the gospel. As we take up the burden to visit sinners, we need to realize that every sinner is a "fortified city" that has been cursed. In dealing with such a fortified city, we must exercise patience, considering when we should be silent and when we should speak. This means that we should follow the Lord's leading. At the right time, the proper declaration will be very effective, and there will be a Sabbath day in which we can shout, "Praise the Lord! Jesus is Lord! Christ is Victor!" The "wall" will fall, and we will be able to defeat all the demons and possess that sinner for Christ.

Let us now look at the various matters involved in the destruction of Jericho as described in Joshua 6.

I. THE REACTION OF JERICHO TO ISRAEL

In verse 1 we see the reaction of Jericho to Israel. Jericho was shut up tight because of the children of Israel. No one went out and no one went in. The people of Jericho were

limited, unable to do anything. This indicates that even before Israel went up to take the city, Jericho was already defeated.

II. JEHOVAH'S PROMISE TO JOSHUA

According to verse 2 Jehovah promised Joshua that He had given Jericho and its king and its mighty men of war into his hand.

III. THE INSTRUCTION OF JEHOVAH, THE CAPTAIN OF HIS ARMY, TO JOSHUA

Verses 3 through 5 are a record of the instruction of Jehovah, the Captain of His army, to Joshua.

A. To Circle the City by All the Men of War

First, Jehovah charged Joshua to have all the men of war circle the city (v. 3a).

B. Going around the City Once a Day for Six Days

Jehovah instructed Joshua that the men of war were to go around the city once a day for six days (v. 3b).

C. Seven Priests Carrying Seven Trumpets of Rams' Horns before the Ark

Jehovah further instructed Joshua that seven priests were to carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark (v. 4a).

D. On the Seventh Day Circling the City Seven Times, and the Priests Blowing the Trumpets

On the seventh day all the men of war were to circle the city seven times, and all the priests were to blow the trumpets (v. 4b). This signifies the declaring, the proclaiming, of Christ.

E. At the Hearing of the Trumpet Sound, All the People Shouting with a Great Shout

According to verse 5a, when the priests gave off the blast of the ram's horn and the people heard the trumpet sound, all the people were to shout with a great shout.

F. The Wall of the City Falling Down Flat, and the People Going Up

Jehovah went on to instruct Joshua that when the people shouted with a great shout, the wall of the city would fall down flat. Then they were to go up, each straight ahead (v. 5b).

IV. JOSHUA'S CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE ACCORDING TO JEHOVAH'S INSTRUCTION AND THE PEOPLE'S ACTION ACCORDING TO JEHOVAH'S CHARGE

Next, this chapter shows us Joshua's charge to the people according to Jehovah's instruction and the people's action according to Jehovah's charge (vv. 6-17a, 18-21, 24).

A. In Circling the City

In circling the city, the armed men passed on before the ark of Jehovah. The seven priests passed on before Jehovah and blew the trumpets, and the ark of Jehovah went after them. The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rearguard went after the ark, the trumpets continually blowing (vv. 6-9).

B. The People Not Shouting until the Day Joshua Told Them to Shout

Joshua commanded the people not to shout, nor to let their voice be heard, nor to let a word go forth from their mouth until the day he would say to them, "Shout!" Then they would shout (v. 10). There was a time to be silent, and there was a time to shout. Here, to be silent means to be one with the Lord to carry out the matter in the Lord's way without the expression of any thought, opinion, or feeling.

C. The Ark of Jehovah Circling the City Once a Day for Six Days and Seven Times on the Seventh Day

The ark of Jehovah circled the city, going around it one time, and did the same on the second day, circling the city one time. This they did for six days. Then on the seventh day

they circled the city in the same manner seven times (vv. 11-15).

D. The People Shouting with a Great Shout, and the Wall Falling Down Flat

The seventh time they circled the city on the seventh day, the priests blew the trumpets, and Joshua said to the people, "Shout!" The people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, each straight ahead, and they captured the city, utterly destroyed it with the edge of the sword, and burned it with fire (vv. 16, 20-21, 24a).

E. The Victory over Jericho Being Won by Israel's Blowing of the Trumpets and Shouting

The victory over Jericho in Israel's first battle after crossing the Jordan was won not by Israel's fighting but by their blowing of the trumpets and shouting, by their testifying and proclaiming of God with His ark, through their faith in God's word of instruction (vv. 2-5). These were the vital factors that enabled them to win the victory.

F. Not Taking Anything from the Destruction but Saving All the Silver, the Gold, and the Vessels of Bronze and Iron

They did not take anything from the destruction but saved all the silver, the gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, sanctified them to Jehovah, and put them into the treasury of the house of Jehovah (vv. 18-19, 24b).

V. THE SALVATION RENDERED TO RAHAB AND HER HOUSEHOLD

This chapter speaks not only of the destruction of Jericho but also of the salvation rendered to Rahab and her household (vv. 17b, 22-23, 25). This was done in order to keep the promise that had been made to her (v. 22). Joshua preserved Rahab and her father's house and all that she had, and she remained within Israel (v. 25).

VI. THE OATH MADE BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE CURSING OF JERICHO

Finally, this chapter tells us of the oath made by the people for the cursing of Jericho. "At that time Joshua charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man before Jehovah who raises up and builds this city Jericho! At the cost of his firstborn son shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates" (v. 26). This word was fulfilled with Hiel in 1 Kings 16:34.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE EIGHT

THE DESTRUCTION OF AI

Scripture Reading: Josh. 7—8

In this message we will consider Joshua 7 and 8. These chapters give the account of the destruction of Ai.

The first time the children of Israel went up to destroy Ai they suffered a defeat. There were four reasons for this defeat. First, Israel sinned. God's people were to be holy, sanctified, especially during the time of war. But one of the men of war from the tribe of Judah sinned by stealing something that was devoted to destruction. Second, they lost the presence of the Lord. Third, they trusted in themselves. Fourth, they lost their oneness with God.

God can do everything without man, but according to the record of the book of Joshua He wants man to be one with Him. In keeping with the principle of incarnation, God wants to do everything through man, with man, and even in man. At Jericho Israel marched around the city with the ark, a type of Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God, on the shoulders of the priests. The spiritual significance of this scene is that it is a picture of a corporate God-man, God and man, man and God, walking together as one person. This was the way the children of Israel crossed the river Jordan, and this was the way they destroyed the city of Jericho. God and Israel were fighting together. Actually, however, God did the fighting, and Israel simply shouted, proclaimed, and testified and then occupied the city.

This scene should have continued through all the taking of the land. But after the destruction of Jericho, Israel sinned by taking something from Jericho that was devoted to destruction (6:18-19). Although this sin was committed by an individual, Achan, it affected the entire body of God's people.

For this reason God said to Joshua, "Israel has sinned" (7:11a). Because of this sin God stayed away from them, withdrawing His presence from them. This was the reason that Joshua and all the children of Israel became foolish, proud, and blind in attacking Ai.

At Jericho, according to God's economy, Joshua sent out spies, not for fighting but to gain Rahab. In the destruction of Jericho, no fighting was needed. But at Ai, because they lost the presence of the Lord, Joshua sent out spies for fighting (v. 2). The spies returned to Joshua and said that because the enemies were few, not all the people needed go up. They suggested that about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai. Because of their foolishness, pride, and blindness, they despised their enemy. Nevertheless, Joshua received the report from the spies and sent three thousand men of war against Ai. But when Israel was defeated by the people of Ai and thirty-six men were slaughtered, Joshua realized that something was wrong. He then fell to the ground upon his face before the ark of Jehovah until evening (vv. 6-9).

God spoke to Joshua, telling him that unless they judged the sin, He would not be with them anymore (v. 12). Joshua called the people together, and through the Urim and Thummim he found the tribe (Judah), the family (Zerah), and the person (Achan) who had sinned (vv. 16-18). The children of Israel then stoned and burned Achan and all that he had. In this way Israel was cleared up and brought back to God to be one with God again.

We all need to learn a lesson from this account. We, the people of God, should always be one with our God. Today, especially in the New Testament, our God is not only among us but also within each one of us. Therefore, every one of us is not a solitary individual, a person alone. On the contrary, we are men with God, God-men. Do you realize that, as a believer in Christ, you are a God-man, that God is a part of your being and that you are a part of God's being? We come from many different countries, but we all are the same kind of person. We all are God-men. For this reason, we must realize that whatever we do, wherever we go, and whatever

we are should not be by ourselves. We should not act, behave, or do things by ourselves but with God.

The report of the spies to Joshua indicates that Israel had set God aside. They forgot God and knew only themselves. At that time they were not one with God but cared only for themselves. Thus, God stayed away from them, and He said to Joshua, "I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy that which was devoted to destruction from among you" (v. 12c). It is a very serious matter for God no longer to be with us. Nothing can replace Him. I can testify that without God I cannot live. Apart from Him I cannot have any being.

Israel was separated from God because of their sin. This sin caused them to become foolish. Israel should have asked God what He wanted them to do against Ai. This was the secret for their victory. Joshua should have said to the people, "Do not forget what we experienced at Jericho. We did not fight, but instead we walked with God as one. Let us do the same thing at Ai, walking around the city with the ark." If Joshua had said this, he would have been a wise man, and the children of Israel would have followed his wise counsel.

The secret of Israel's defeat at Ai was that they lost God's presence and were no longer one with Him. After this defeat, Joshua learned the lesson of staying with the Lord before the ark. Eventually, the Lord came in to speak to him and to tell him what to do. The principle is the same with us today. If we have God's presence, we have wisdom, insight, foresight, and the inner knowledge concerning things.

As we study the intrinsic significance of this part of Israel's history, we need to learn the secret of walking with the Lord. Today we should not merely follow the Lord but walk with Him, living with Him and having our being with Him. This is the way to walk as a Christian, to fight as a child of God, and to build up the Body of Christ.

We need to remember that we are God-men and to practice being one with the Lord. Concerning this, the Lord Jesus said, "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20). This word reveals that we are a people of "ins": we are in Christ and He is in us

(15:4). Therefore, whatever we do should not be done by ourselves but should be done with and by another One.

In my youth I was taught various ways to overcome, to be victorious, to be holy, and to be spiritual. However, not any of these ways worked. Eventually, through more than sixty-eight years of experience, I have found out that nothing works but the Lord's presence. His being with us is everything.

Let us now consider Joshua 7 and 8 in a more particular way.

I. THE DEFEAT AT AI

The defeat at Ai is described in chapter seven.

A. The Children of Israel Committing a Trespass in the Thing Devoted to Destruction

The children of Israel acted unfaithfully and committed a trespass in that which was devoted to destruction, for Achan took of that which was devoted to destruction. Concerning this, the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the children of Israel (v. 1).

B. Israel Acting on Their Own, without Seeking the Lord's Direction and without Having the Lord's Presence

Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, telling them to spy out the land. After they spied out Ai, they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Not all the people need go up; let about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai. Do not make all the people labor there, for the enemies are few" (vv. 2-3). So only about three thousand men from the people went up there (v. 4a). This indicates that Israel acted on their own, without seeking the Lord's direction and without having the Lord's presence.

C. Israel Being Defeated and Driven Away by the Men of Ai

Israel was defeated and driven away by the men of Ai

(vv. 4b-5). As a result, "the heart of the people melted and became like water" (v. 5b).

D. The Anguish and Cry of Joshua and the Elders of Israel to Jehovah

In verses 6 through 9 we have the anguished cry of Joshua and the elders of Israel to Jehovah. Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the ground upon his face before the ark of Jehovah until the evening. The elders of Israel did likewise. Joshua said, "Ah, Lord Jehovah! Why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all, to give us over into the hand of the Amorites and cause us to perish? If only we had been content to dwell across the Jordan! Oh, Lord, what can I say after Israel has turned its back before its enemies?" (vv. 7-8). Joshua continued by asking Jehovah what He would do for His great name.

E. Jehovah's Charge

Verses 10 through 15 are a record of Jehovah's charge—to deal with the stealing of the thing devoted to destruction. Jehovah told Joshua that Israel had sinned, trespassing His covenant by taking that which had been devoted to destruction and putting it among their goods. That was the reason the children of Israel were not able to stand before their enemies but instead turned their backs before them. Jehovah went on to say that they would not be able to stand before their enemies until they removed from among them that which had been devoted to destruction. Jehovah charged that he who had stolen what was devoted to destruction was to be burned with fire, he and all that belonged to him.

F. Israel's Dealing with Their Sin

Verses 16 through 26 describe Israel's dealing with their sin.

1. Finding Out the One Who Committed the Sin

First, Israel found out the one who committed the sin (vv. 16-21). They did this by the Urim and the Thummim on the high priest's breastplate of judgment (Exo. 28:30). The

one who committed the sin was Achan, of the tribe of Judah. When Joshua commanded him to say what he had done, Achan replied, "It is true; I have sinned against Jehovah, the God of Israel; and this is what I did: When I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle of Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And now they are hidden in the earth in my tent, with the silver under it" (Josh. 7:20-21).

2. The Death Judgment on the Sin by Stoning

Israel dealt with Achan by taking him, his sons and his daughters, and all that he had and stoning them with stones and burning them with fire. Then they erected over him a great heap of stones, and Jehovah turned from the fierceness of His anger (vv. 22-26).

II. THE VICTORY OVER AI

In 8:1-29 we see the victory over Ai.

A. Jehovah's Instruction

Verses 1 and 2 are Jehovah's instruction to Joshua regarding Ai. Jehovah charged Joshua not to be afraid or dismayed but to take all the people of war with him to attack Ai. Jehovah promised Joshua that He had given the king, the people, the city, and the land of Ai into his hand. Then Jehovah charged Joshua to do to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king and to take the spoil and cattle of Ai for Israel's plunder. Finally, Jehovah instructed Joshua to set an ambush for the city of Ai behind it.

B. The Conquest and Destruction of Ai

In verses 3 through 29 we see the conquest and destruction of Ai. Joshua accomplished the attack according to Jehovah's instruction (vv. 3-26, 28-29). Then Israel took the cattle and the spoil of the city of Ai for themselves as plunder according to what Jehovah had commanded Joshua (v. 27).

III. JOSHUA'S RECORDING AND READING OF THE LAW TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Verses 30 through 35 are concerned with Joshua's recording and reading of the law to the people of Israel.

A. Building an Altar and Offering Burnt Offerings and Peace Offerings to Jehovah

Joshua built an altar to Jehovah, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, and they offered upon it burnt offerings to Jehovah and sacrificed peace offerings (vv. 30-31).

B. Writing the Law of Moses upon the Stones

There at Mount Ebal, in the presence of the children of Israel, Joshua wrote upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses (v. 32).

C. Blessing the People of Israel according to What Moses Had Commanded

Verse 33 speaks of the blessing of the people of Israel according to what Moses had commanded (Deut. 11:29-30; 27:11-13).

D. Reading the Entire Law to the Congregation of Israel

Finally, Joshua read the entire law of Moses, both the blessing and the curse, to the congregation of Israel (Josh. 8:34). Thus, verse 35 concludes, "There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read before all the congregation of Israel and the women and the little ones and the sojourners who went among them."

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE NINE

THE SAVING OF GIBEON

Scripture Reading: Josh. 9

To study the Old Testament histories and prophecies we need a full scope, a full view, of the entire Scriptures concerning God's economy for Christ and the church which consummates in the New Jerusalem. My burden in this message is to apply this principle to Joshua 9 so that we may see the intrinsic significance of this chapter.

Joshua 9 is a record of how the children of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites. They were deceived because they were like a wife who forgot her husband. What they did here was exactly the same as what Eve did in Genesis 3. The subtle serpent wanted to tempt, to seduce, Adam, yet he did not dare to go to him directly. Instead, Satan went to Adam's counterpart, a female, because he knows that it is easier to deceive a female (2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14).

The Bible reveals that in the universe there is a divine romance between God and His elect. The Bible is the record of a romance, in the most pure and holy sense, of a universal couple. The male of this couple is God Himself, and the female is God's redeemed people as a corporate being. The Bible shows us that we, as God's elect, are His wife and that between Him and us there must be a marriage union based upon mutual love. The universe, therefore, is a wedding place, the place where the Husband, the processed and consummated Triune God, is being joined in marriage to the redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, transformed, and glorified tripartite man. The Husband is triune and the wife is tripartite, and thus they match each other very well to live together as the unique couple in the entire universe. The consummation of this romance, of this married life, is seen in Revelation 21 and 22,

two chapters that we need to read again and again until we have a clear view of the married life of this universal couple.

This divine romance is revealed repeatedly throughout the Bible. After man fell, God selected one man, Abraham. This one with all of his descendants, both Jewish and Gentile, became God's wife. In the Old Testament God often refers to Himself as the Husband and to His people as the wife (Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 2:2; 3:1, 14; 31:32; Ezek. 16:8; 23:5; Hosea 2:7, 19). Eventually, the Bible ends with the New Jerusalem as the ultimate consummation of God's elect in the new heaven and new earth, as the universal wife for eternity (Rev. 21:9-10).

In Jeremiah 2:2 Jehovah said to Israel, "I remember concerning you… / The love of your bridal days." There were some "bridal days," a period of time in which God "courted" Israel. By the time God had brought Israel out of Egypt to Sinai, surely she had "fallen in love" with this universal Man, this unique Hero. Whatever Israel wanted, He could do. What they needed, He had. He had the wisdom, the capacity, the ability, the strength, the might, the power, and the authority to do everything. He seemed to say to Israel, "I am the unique One for you, and I am sufficient for you. Since I am the best One, you should not go to anyone else but just take Me. I am the loving One, and you are My beloved." I believe that when Israel arrived at Sinai they made a definite determination to "marry" this One.

At Sinai they were married, and they went on together as a couple. Wherever they went, they were a couple walking together—the husband and the wife, the Triune God and His elect, walking as one. That was a picture of the God-man, partly God and partly man. The part that is God is the Husband, and the part that is man is the wife.

A wife should never leave her husband. Rather, she should always rely upon him and be one with him. If Eve had kept this principle when Satan came to seduce her, she would have run away to her husband. That would have been her protection, her safeguard.

Suppose I am a wife and a poor woman comes to me asking for some help. As a wife, should I do something directly, on my own, for this poor woman? Since this seems

to be an insignificant matter, I might just give her a little money or some bread without asking my husband about it. This is what happened in Joshua 9. The Gibeonites came to Israel like a poor woman coming to a rich lady from a strong, high-ranking family. Israel, the wife, should have gone to her Husband and checked with Him. But Israel "did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah" (v. 14). Instead, Israel was deceived by the Gibeonites and made a covenant with them. Once the people of Israel had made this covenant, swearing to the Gibeonites by the name of Jehovah, the covenant could not be altered, and the Israelites could not touch the Gibeonites.

The real married life is when the wife is co-living with her husband, always one with him. This means that the only way to have a pleasant married life is for the wife to be one with her husband. However, this dear wife, Israel, never learned to be habitual in this matter. At Ai they suffered a defeat and learned the lesson to be one with the Lord, but they did not learn it fully. In chapter nine the Gibeonites came to them in a different way. Whereas the people of Ai fought against Israel strongly, the Gibeonites came to them begging to be their servants. The result was that Israel, this independent, individualistic wife, was deceived. She had no protection, no safeguard. From this chapter we need to learn that, as the Lord's wife, we should be one with Him all the time. This is the intrinsic significance of Joshua chapter nine.

Now that we have seen the intrinsic significance of this chapter, let us go on to consider what it says concerning the saving of Gibeon.

I. THE KINGS ACROSS THE JORDAN BEING THREATENED AND GATHERING TOGETHER TO FIGHT WITH ISRAEL

The kings who were across the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the shore of the Great Sea toward Lebanon were threatened and gathered together to fight with Israel (vv. 1-2).

II. THE TRICK OF THE GIBEONITES

Verses 3 through 15 show us the trick of the Gibeonites.

A. Deceiving Israel with Craftiness

The Gibeonites deceived Israel with craftiness (vv. 3-13). They went out as though they were envoys, taking old sacks upon their donkeys, old torn up and bound up wineskins, old patched sandals on their feet, and old garments upon themselves. All the bread of their provisions was dry and had become moldy. They went to Joshua at the camp of Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "From a faraway land we have come; now therefore make a covenant with us" (v. 6). The men of Israel said to these Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us. How then can we make a covenant with you?" (v. 7). They told Joshua that they would be their servants. When Joshua asked them who they were and where they came from, they answered that they came from a very far land, having heard reports of Jehovah and of all that He had done in Egypt and to the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan. They went on to say that their elders and the inhabitants of their land told them to take provisions, go to meet the people of Israel, and say to them, "We will be your servants; make then a covenant with us" (v. 11). They claimed that their bread had been hot but was now moldy, that their wineskins were new but were now torn up, and that their clothes and sandals had become old because of the very long journey. From this we see that the Gibeonites acted craftily.

B. Israel Making Peace and a Covenant with Them to Let Them Live, without Asking the Counsel of Jehovah

The men of Israel took some of their provisions, but they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah. Joshua then made peace with them and made a covenant with them to let them live. Furthermore, the leaders of the assembly swore an oath to them (vv. 14-15).

III. ISRAEL UNCOVERING THE TRICK

Eventually Israel uncovered the Gibeonites' trick (vv. 16-27). At the end of three days, after Israel had made a covenant

with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and that they dwelt among them (v. 16).

A. Still Keeping Their Oath because of the Faithfulness of Jehovah

Israel still kept their oath because of the faithfulness of Jehovah (vv. 16-20, 22-25). The children of Israel came to the cities of Gibeon, but they did not strike them, for the leaders of the assembly had sworn to them by Jehovah the God of Israel. When the assembly murmured against the leaders, they told the assembly that because they had sworn to the Gibeonites by Jehovah, they could not touch them. They let them live so that wrath would not come upon Israel because of the oath that they had sworn to the Gibeonites.

Joshua called for the Gibeonites and asked them why they had deceived Israel by saying that they were far from them when they actually dwelt among them. The Gibeonites told Joshua that they knew that Jehovah the God of Israel had commanded Moses His servant to give all the land to Israel and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. Then they said, "Therefore we were very afraid for our lives because of you, and we did this thing. And now here we are in your hand: Do as it seems good and upright in your sight to do to us" (vv. 24b-25).

B. Taking Them as Slaves

Joshua delivered the Gibeonites from the hand of the children of Israel, and they did not slay them. Instead, Joshua took the Gibeonites as slaves—woodcutters and drawers of water for all the assembly and for the house of God and for the altar of Jehovah (vv. 21, 23, 26-27).

IV. INDICATING THAT JEHOVAH HAD MADE HIS ELECT, ISRAEL, POWERFUL BEFORE THE EYES OF ALL THE CANAANITES

This account of the saving of Gibeon indicates that Jehovah had made His elect, Israel, powerful before the eyes of all the Canaanites.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE TEN

THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL THE REST OF THE NATIONS IN THE HILL COUNTRY AND THE LOWLAND WEST OF THE JORDAN AND ON ALL THE SHORE OF THE GREAT SEA

Scripture Reading: Josh. 10—12

We all need to learn how to study the Bible. In studying the Bible, we should not understand it merely according to letters nor according to the natural way by the natural mind. The Bible has its spirit, reality, and center. Therefore, we need to learn how to know the center, reality, lines, and principles of the Word of God. We should keep this in mind as we come to Joshua 10 through 12. My burden in this message is that we would see the intrinsic significance of these chapters.

Joshua 10 through 12 show Joshua's destruction of all the rest of the nations in the hill country and the lowland west of the Jordan and on all the shore of the great sea. The strongest people in Canaan were in a strip of land from Lebanon in the north to Egypt in the south and from the Mediterranean Sea to the river Jordan. These people included the Anakim, a race of giants. According to Numbers 13:33, the sons of Anak were from the Nephilim. Genesis 6 reveals that the Nephilim were the issue of the evil union between the daughters of men and fallen angels. Because of the Nephilim, God charged His elect to slaughter everyone in the land. God is kind, loving, and merciful, but He is also severe because He has an enemy on earth.

God made the earth in His economy, and He purposely created a strip of land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. God promised this land to Abraham and

his descendants. Eventually, this land became the land of Christ, the land of Immanuel (Isa. 8:8). But when Israel was ready to take possession of Canaan, it was filled with demon-possessed people, idol worshippers, and Nephilim. Joshua slaughtered them (Josh. 11:21-22), but some on the mountain were quite strong, so Caleb came in and conquered them (14:6-14).

The significance of this is that without Joshua we cannot fully understand the spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6. There is spiritual warfare in the invisible scene behind the visible scene. This means that in addition to war on the earth, there is a war between God and Satan in the air. The heavenlies are full of Satan's forces. Christ is our good land, and God wants us to gain Christ, but there is a layer of devilish, demonic forces between us and the good land. If we would take possession of the good land for our enjoyment, we have to defeat these satanic forces.

Joshua conquered many nations and killed many kings, but he conquered only a narrow strip of land. According to Joshua 1, the land stretched from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. The good land was wide and spacious; however, Israel's territory never spread to the Euphrates. Since there was much fighting and rebellion after the time of Joshua, there was not the opportunity for God's people to build a temple. When David gained more land and there was a time of peace, Solomon, David's son, was able to build the temple of God to set up God's kingdom on earth.

In principle, our situation is the same in the Lord's recovery today. Our standing on the church ground annuls the standing of all the denominations, and this stirs up opposition. We are God's Israel, and we have our Captain, but the Lord's recovery is still involved in a struggle. Every day we need to engage in spiritual warfare.

In the United States there are more than two hundred and fifty churches, but nearly all of them are small. It is hard to get an increase. There is a struggle in the United States because it is a crucial country, affecting the entire world situation related to the Lord's move. Our enemies are not humans on the earth but evil forces in the air, who hinder

people from believing into the name of the Lord Jesus and who frustrate the saved ones from pursuing Christ to the uttermost.

We all need to know what the recovery is, where the recovery is, and what kind of persons can take the recovery on. We all need to see that in the Lord's recovery today we are on a battlefield. We should be today's Joshua and Caleb, fighting against Satan's aerial forces so that we can gain more of Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ, setting up and spreading the kingdom of God so that Christ can come back to inherit the earth. It is not adequate for us simply to be spiritual and holy. We need to learn of Joshua and Caleb to represent God's interest in this age to fight down the enemies that Christ can be gained by people and that Christ can be increased by His pursuers.

Let us now consider a number of the details in Joshua 10 through 12.

I. THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, HEBRON, JARMUTH, LACHISH, AND EGLON

Joshua 10:1-27 records the destruction of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon.

A. The King of Jerusalem Being Threatened by Israel's Destruction of Jericho and Ai and Their Peaceful Agreement with Gibeon

The king of Jerusalem was threatened by Israel's destruction of Jericho and Ai and their peaceful agreement with Gibeon (vv. 1-2). When he heard that Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it as he had done to Jericho and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, he was afraid, knowing that Gibeon was a great city and that all its men were mighty men.

B. The Kings of the Five Nations Forming an Alliance to Fight against Gibeon

The kings of the five nations formed an alliance to fight against Gibeon. The king of Jerusalem sent word to the kings

of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, saying to them, "Come up to me and help me, and let us strike Gibeon; for they have made peace with Joshua and the children of Israel" (v. 4). Thus the five kings of the Amorites went up to Gibeon and fought against it.

C. Israel Engaging in War against the Five Nations

In verses 6 through 27 we see that Israel engaged in war against the five nations.

1. The Gibeonites Begging Israel to Fight for Them against the Five Nations

The Gibeonites begged Israel to fight for them against the five nations (v. 6).

2. Jehovah Encouraging Joshua to Defeat Them

Jehovah encouraged Joshua to defeat these nations, saying to him, "Do not be afraid of them, for I have given them into your hand. No man among them will stand before you" (v. 8). Joshua came upon them suddenly, and Jehovah threw them into a panic before Israel, struck them with a great stroke, and pursued them.

3. Jehovah Sending Hailstones to Destroy Them

While the five nations fled from before Israel, "Jehovah sent large stones upon them from heaven as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the children of Israel slew with the sword" (v. 11).

4. Jehovah Causing the Sun and the Moon to Stay Still for about a Whole Day

Jehovah caused the sun and the moon to stay still for about a whole day (vv. 12-14). These two miracles by Jehovah were by natural forces.

5. Joshua and the Children of Israel Destroying the People of the Five Nations and Killing Their Kings

Joshua and the children of Israel destroyed the people of the five nations and killed their kings (vv. 15-27). The five kings were brought out of the cave into which they had fled, and Joshua told the chiefs of the men of war who were with him to put their feet on the necks of these kings. They did so, and Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and be bold, for thus will Jehovah do to all your enemies against whom you fight" (v. 25).

II. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE THIRTY-ONE KINGS OF THE THIRTY-ONE NATIONS IN THE HILL COUNTRY AND THE LOWLAND WEST OF JORDAN

Joshua 10:28—12:24 is a record of the destruction of the thirty-one kings of the thirty-one nations in the hill country and the lowland west of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon unto Mount Halak going up to Seir.

A. Jehovah, the God of Israel, Fighting for Israel

Joshua 10:42 says that Joshua took all these kings and their lands at one time, "for Jehovah, the God of Israel, fought for Israel." When certain other kings came together to fight with Israel, Jehovah said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow at this time I will deliver all of them up slain before Israel" (11:6a).

B. According to the Command of Moses the Servant of Jehovah

Joshua took all the cities of these kings with their kings, struck them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed them. This he did according to the command of Moses the servant of Jehovah (v. 12). Verse 15 says, "As Jehovah had commanded Moses His servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that Jehovah had commanded Moses." Therefore, Joshua took the whole land according to all that Jehovah had spoken to Moses (v. 23).

C. According to God's Intention

The destruction of the thirty-one kings of the thirty-one nations was according to God's intention. Concerning this, verse 20 says, "It was of Jehovah to harden their heart to meet Israel in battle so that He might utterly destroy them and that they might not receive mercy but be destroyed as Jehovah commanded Moses." From this we see that God's intention was not to have mercy on these kings but to destroy them.

1. Israel Burning None of the Cities That Stood on Their Mounds except Hazor

Verse 13 says that Israel burned none of the cities that stood on their mounds except Hazor.

2. Some of the Anakim Being Left in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod

Some of the Anakim were left in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (v. 22; cf. Num. 13:33).

III. THE DESTRUCTION OF HESHBON UNDER KING SIHON AND BASHAN UNDER KING OG EAST OF THE JORDAN

Joshua 12:1-6 speaks of the destruction of Heshbon under King Sihon and Bashan under King Og east of the Jordan.

A. By Moses and the Children of Israel

The destruction of Heshbon and Bashan was by Moses and the children of Israel (v. 6a).

B. Before Israel's Crossing of Jordan

This destruction took place before Israel's crossing of Jordan (v. 1a).

C. Given by Moses to the Tribes of Reuben and Gad and the Half-tribe of Manasseh

The land of Heshbon under King Sihon and of Bashan under King Og was given by Moses to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh (v. 6b).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE ELEVEN

THE ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND

(1)

Scripture Reading: Josh. 13—17

Within God's economy there is such a thing as the allotment of the land. After Joshua took possession of the land, God commanded him to allot the land that had been possessed and even the land that had not yet been possessed, because in God's eyes all the land was for Israel. In this message we will begin to consider the allotment of the land. In particular, we will endeavor to see the intrinsic significance of the allotment of the good land.

In His wisdom, God did not allot the good land as a whole to all the children of Israel. Rather, He allotted the land, that is, Christ, to the different tribes. All the tribes were not the same; they were different.

In Genesis 49 Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, blessed each of his sons in the form of a prophecy (see *Life-study of Genesis*, Messages 98-107). Jacob's blessing of Judah reveals that God considered Judah a threefold lion: a lion's whelp, a mature lion, and a lioness (v. 9). As a whelp he could grow and become strong, as a lion he could fight, and as a lioness he could produce. Benjamin was a ravenous wolf (v. 27), and Dan was a serpent on the way, biting the horses' heels to frustrate God's people from going on (v. 17). Zebulun was a haven of ships (v. 13), and Naphtali was a hind let loose (v. 21).

Because the tribes were different, God could not give the same land in the same way to every tribe. All the tribes were possessors of the land, but the tribes possessed particular

portions of the land according to what they were. The top portion of the land was allotted to Judah. Dan was allotted a portion, but they did not dispossess the occupying Canaanites. They were God's people, yet in their actions they were in the principle of God's enemy.

The fulfillment of this type of the allotment of the land is among us today. We all have the same Christ, but we experience Christ in different ways. The land (Christ) we possess is according to what we are.

In Leviticus 1 Christ is unveiled as burnt offerings in five types: a bullock, a sheep from the flock, a goat, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. These items typify just one Christ, but they were offered according to the offerer's ability, indicating that our experiences of Christ differ in both size and kind. The size and kind do not depend on Christ but on our experience and enjoyment of Christ. Whereas the Christ experienced by Paul was typified by a bullock, the Christ experienced by many believers today is typified by a pigeon.

Christ is also unveiled by the three kinds of meal offerings in Leviticus 2: fine flour, a wafer, and grain that remains in the ears. If we are weak and cannot eat the wafer, we can eat the fine flour. As we grow we can experience Christ as the wafer. The apostle Paul was fully mature and full of energy. He was one who ate the grain. Once again we see that there is only one Christ—one Christ in many types and sizes—but we may experience Him in different ways and in different degrees as fine flour, a wafer, and grain.

The intrinsic significance of the allotment of the land is that the possessors of the land are different. This indicates that the experience of Christ among God's people is not the same. In God's ordination the good land is allotted to His people in different degrees. The New Testament clearly tells us that "God has apportioned to each a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). We are also told that "all the members do not have the same function" (v. 4). Therefore, God gives grace to each member according to its function in the Body (Eph. 4:7). This is God's ordination and the divine allotment.

Our hymnal, which was compiled in 1963 and 1964,

illustrates this allotment. I would ask you to compare John Nelson Darby's hymn on the exaltation of Christ (*Hymns,* #127) with Charles Wesley's hymn on the incarnation of Christ (#84). Here is the text of Darby's hymn:

1

Hark! ten thousand voices crying,
"Lamb of God!" with one accord;
Thousand thousand saints replying,
Wake at once the echo'ng chord.

2

"Praise the Lamb!" the chorus waking,
All in heav'n together throng;
Loud and far each tongue partaking
Rolls around the endless song.

3

Grateful incense this, ascending
Ever to the Father's throne;
Every knee to Jesus bending,
All the mind in heav'n is one.

4

All the Father's counsels claiming
Equal honors to the Son,
All the Son's effulgence beaming,
Makes the Father's glory known.

5

By the Spirit all pervading,
Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,
Crowned with light and joy unfading,
Hail Him as the great "I AM."

6

Joyful now the new creation
Rests in undisturbed repose,
Blest in Jesus' full salvation,
Sorrow now nor thraldom knows.

7

Hark! the heavenly notes again!
Loudly swells the song of praise;
Through creation's vault, Amen!
Amen! responsive joy doth raise.

Let us now consider the text of Wesley's hymn:

1

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

2

Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord:
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel.

3

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings:
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth;
Born to give them second birth.

4

Come, Desire of nations, come!
Fix in us Thy humble home:
Rise, the woman's conqu'ring seed,
Bruise in us the serpent's head;
Adam's likeness now efface,
Stamp Thine image in its place:
Final Adam from above,
Reinstate us in Thy love.

As we compare these two hymns, we see that Darby's hymn is higher than Wesley's. This indicates that Darby's experience

of Christ as expressed in his hymn was higher than Wesley's as expressed in his hymn. Although both Darby and Wesley experienced Christ as a bullock, Darby's bullock was larger than Wesley's.

If we go on to compare their experiences of Christ with the experience expressed in *Hymns*, #551, we will see that this hymn expresses a much lower experience of Christ:

1

I've believed the true report,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!
I have passed the outer court,
O glory be to God!
I am all on Jesus' side,
On the altar sanctified,
To the world and sin I've died,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
I have passed the riven veil,
Here the glories never fail,
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
I am living in the presence
of the King.

2

I'm a king and priest to God,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!
By the cleansing of the blood,
O glory be to God!
By the Spirit's pow'r and light,
I am living day and night,
In the holiest place so bright,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!

3

I have passed the outer veil,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!
Which did once God's light conceal,
O glory be to God!
But the blood has brought me in
To God's holiness so clean,

Where there's death to self and sin,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!

4

I'm within the holiest pale,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!
I have passed the inner veil,
O glory be to God!
I am sanctified to God
By the power of the blood,
Now the Lord is my abode,
Hallelujah to the Lamb!

The hymns in our hymnal are arranged according to theological order and according to spiritual experience. Of the original 1080 hymns in our hymnal, approximately 700 were selected from many different hymnals. Among these hymns there was something lacking concerning the all-inclusive and all-extensive Christ, the compound life-giving Spirit of Christ, the divine life, and the church. To fill this lack, we composed more than 200 new hymns on Christ, the Spirit, life, and the church. Consider, for example, *Hymns*, #499:

1

Oh, what a life! Oh, what a peace!
The Christ who's all within me lives.
With Him I have been crucified;
This glorious fact to me He gives.
Now it's no longer I that live,
But Christ the Lord within me lives.

2

Oh, what a joy! Oh, what a rest!
Christ now is being formed in me.
His very nature and life divine
In my whole being inwrought shall be.
All that I am came to an end,
And all of Christ is all to me.

3

Oh, what a thought! Oh, what a boast!
Christ shall in me be magnified.
In nothing shall I be ashamed,
For He in all shall be applied.

In woe or blessing, death or life,
Through me shall Christ be testified.

4

Oh, what a prize! Oh, what a gain!
Christ is the goal toward which I press.
Nothing I treasure, nor aught desire,
But Christ of all-inclusiveness.
My hope, my glory, and my crown
Is Christ, the One of peerlessness.

The words of this hymn are simple, but they are very rich concerning the experience of Christ as life. This shows that the hymns in the Lord's recovery are full of truth and touch the experience of Christ in a rich way, indicating our rich divine allotment.

Hymns are poetry, and every poem is an expression of the writer's sentiment. The word *sentiment* means more than just a feeling. This word implies feeling, realization, understanding, and appreciation. The more we consider our sentiment, the more we will have the burden to write poetry. The kind of sentiment expressed in a particular hymn is a measure of that writer's enjoyment of Christ; it indicates the "size" of the Christ experienced and enjoyed by that writer. Thus, Wesley wrote his hymn on the incarnation of Christ according to his sentiment, and Darby wrote his hymn on the exaltation of Christ according to his sentiment. Both hymns were written according to the measure of the Christ enjoyed by the writers.

At this point I would like to say a word concerning *Hymns*, #132, a hymn on the exaltation of Christ written by me according to my sentiment:

1

Lo! in heaven Jesus sitting,
Christ the Lord is there enthroned;
As the man by God exalted,
With God's glory He is crowned.

2

He hath put on human nature,
Died according to God's plan,
Resurrected with a body,
And ascended as a man.

3
God in Him on earth was humbled,
God with man was domiciled;
Man in Him in heav'n exalted,
Man with God is reconciled.
4
He as God with man is mingled,
God in man is testified;
He as man with God is blended,
Man in God is glorified.
5
From the Glorified in heaven
The inclusive Spirit came;
All of Jesus' work and Person
Doth this Spirit here proclaim.
6
With the Glorified in heaven
Is the Church identified;
By the Spirit of this Jesus
Are His members edified.
7
Lo! a man is now in heaven
As the Lord of all enthroned;
This is Jesus Christ our Savior,
With God's glory ever crowned!

If we consider what this hymn says regarding Christ's being God mingled with man, His putting on human nature, His dying according to God's plan, His resurrecting with a body, His ascending as a man, His sitting in the heavens, and His being crowned with God's glory, we will realize that this hymn is full of truth and enlightenment. This hymn is an expression of my holy, heavenly, and spiritual sentiment; it is an expression of the Christ whom I know and whom I have gained, experienced, and enjoyed.

We have seen that the intrinsic significance of the allotment of the good land is that we, the possessors of the land, experience the one Christ in different ways. Let us now consider the details concerning the allotment of the land described in chapters thirteen through seventeen.

I. THE LAND REMAINING TO BE POSSESSED

Joshua 13:1-7 speaks of the land that remained to be possessed. When Joshua was old, Jehovah said to him, "You are old and advanced in age, and very much of the land remains to be possessed" (v. 1).

A. The Regions of the Land That Remained to Be Possessed

The regions of the land that remained to be possessed included that of the Philistines, the Geshurites, the Canaanites, and the Gebalites and all of Lebanon (vv. 2-6a).

B. Jehovah's Promise

In verse 6b we have Jehovah's promise that He would drive out all the inhabitants of the remaining land before the children of Israel.

C. Joshua Being Charged to Allot the Remaining Land West of the Jordan

Jehovah charged Joshua to allot the remaining land to Israel as an inheritance as He had commanded him. Jehovah told Joshua to divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh (vv. 6c-7; 14:1-2).

II. THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN ALLOTTED TO THE TWO AND A HALF TRIBES BY MOSES

The land east of the Jordan had been allotted to the two and a half tribes by Moses (13:8-13, 15-32; 14:3a).

III. NO LAND ALLOTTED TO THE TRIBE OF LEVI

No land was allotted to the tribe of Levi because the offerings of Jehovah, the God of Israel, were their inheritance (13:14). Verse 33 goes on to say that the God of Israel would be the inheritance of the tribe of Levi. Thus, the children of Israel divided the land as Jehovah had commanded Moses. They gave no portion to the Levites in the land, but only cities to dwell in with their pasture lands for cattle and their substance (14:4-5).

IV. THE LAND ALLOTTED TO THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

Joshua 14:6—15:63 describes the land allotted to the tribe of Judah.

A. The Claim of Caleb

The first matter covered here was the claim of Caleb (14:6-15; 15:13-19). Caleb claimed Hebron with the hill country (14:10-15). His claim was according to the oath of Moses and the promise of Jehovah (14:6-9a; Num. 14:24; 32:12; Deut. 1:36). This land was promised to Caleb because he had fully followed Jehovah his God (Josh. 14:9b). Caleb took possession of the land promised to him by Moses and Jehovah (15:13-15), and then Caleb's son-in-law gained the springs in the region of the land (vv. 16-19).

B. The Extreme Southern Part of the Good Land

The lot for the tribe of the children of Judah extended to the border of Edom, to the wilderness of Zin at the south, the extreme southern part of the good land (15:1).

C. One Hundred Twelve Cities with Their Towns and Villages

The land allotted to the tribe of Judah included one hundred twelve cities with their towns and villages (vv. 21-62).

D. The Children of Judah Being Unable to Dispossess the Jebusites

The children of Judah were unable to dispossess the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who dwelt with the children of Judah in Jerusalem (v. 63).

V. THE LAND ALLOTTED TO THE TRIBE OF JOSEPH

Chapters sixteen and seventeen describe the land allotted to the tribe of Joseph.

A. From Jericho to Bethel and to the Sea

The lot for the children of Joseph went from Jericho to Bethel and to the sea (16:1-4).

B. The Land Allotted to the Children of Ephraim, the Second Son of Joseph

1. From Jericho through the River Jordan to the Sea

The land allotted to the children of Ephraim, the second son of Joseph, went from Jericho through the river Jordan to the sea (vv. 5-8).

2. With the Cities in the Midst of the Inheritance of the Children of Manasseh

This allotted land was together with the cities with their villages set apart for the children of Ephraim in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Manasseh (v. 9).

3. Not Dispossessing the Canaanites Who Dwelt in Gezer

The children of Ephraim did not dispossess the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer. Thus, the Canaanites dwelt in the midst of Ephraim and became forced labor (v. 10).

C. The Land Allotted to Manasseh, the Firstborn of Joseph

In 17:1-18 we have an account of the land allotted to Manasseh, the firstborn of Joseph.

1. Gilead and Bashan Having Been Allotted to Machir, the Firstborn of Manasseh

Gilead and Bashan, east of the Jordan, were allotted to Machir, the firstborn of Manasseh (vv. 1b, 5b, 6b).

2. The Land Allotted to the Rest of the Children of Manasseh

The land allotted to the rest of the children of Manasseh

went south to Ephraim, west to the sea, north to Asher, and east to Issachar (vv. 1a, 2, 5a, 7-10).

3. Manasseh Having Some Cities with Their Towns in the Land of the Tribes of Issachar and Asher

Manasseh also had some cities with their towns in the land of the two tribes of Issachar and Asher (v. 11).

4. The Daughters of Zelophehad Claiming an Inheritance among Their Brothers

Zelophehad, the fourth generation of Manasseh, had no sons but daughters. His daughters claimed an inheritance among their brothers according to Jehovah's command to Moses (vv. 3-5a, 6a; Num. 27:1-11).

5. The Children of Manasseh Being Unable to Dispossess the Cities in Their Land

The children of Manasseh were unable to dispossess the cities in their land, but the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in the land. When the children of Manasseh became strong, they made the Canaanites forced labor, but they did not utterly dispossess them (Josh. 17:12-13).

6. The Children of Joseph Requesting More Land

The children of Joseph requested more land because they were a numerous people. Joshua encouraged them to dispossess the hill country with its valley, though the Canaanites had chariots of iron and were strong (vv. 14-18).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE TWELVE

THE ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND

(2)

Scripture Reading: Josh. 18—22

Many spiritual items concerning Christ and the church are revealed in the New Testament in principle but not in detail. This is especially true in the matter of gaining Christ, experiencing Christ, and enjoying Christ.

In the book of Ephesians Christ is revealed as being all-inclusive because He is the One who fills all in all (Eph. 1:23). He is not only all-inclusive but also all-extensive because His love is immeasurable in its breadth, length, height, and depth (3:18-19a). Christ's love is just Himself. If His love is immeasurable, He is immeasurable. In Ephesians 3:8 Paul speaks of the unsearchable riches of Christ. His riches are so plentiful and vast that they are untraceable. Although Ephesians reveals a Christ who is all-inclusive, all-extensive, and unsearchably rich, in this book we cannot find the detailed ways to gain this Christ.

The detailed ways to gain Christ, experience Christ, and enjoy Christ are not in the New Testament. However, Joshua 13—22 provides the detailed way to possess and enjoy the land, which is a type of the all-inclusive Christ.

The good land was spacious, stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates, but the children of Israel did not possess all the land. Even with what they possessed, they still needed a detailed way to allot the land in order to gain and enjoy it. The way was by casting lots. In the book of Joshua the word *lot* is used in the sense of casting lots (18:8, 10). Humanly speaking, we know that casting lots depends on fortune, but God is our fortune, and the outcome of the casting

of lots was according to what He had ordained. When God created the earth, He had a clear view concerning the situation of the good land. He was clear, for instance, that Jerusalem and the surrounding district were for Judah, out of whom Christ would come. This was foreordained, but it still had to be realized by casting lots. God's ordaining hand was present in the casting of lots to direct the result. This means that the division of the land did not depend upon Joshua, upon the high priest, or upon anyone other than God. As a result, there was no ground for the tribes to complain about the portion of the land allotted to them. The way of allotting the land was fair, and it caused everyone to be subdued.

At this juncture, I would like to emphasize the fact that Christ in Himself is uniquely one and always the same. As to Himself there is no change; He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). However, in our experience and enjoyment Christ is of many sizes and types, as indicated by the different kinds of burnt offerings and meal offerings. What Christ is to us in our experience does not depend upon Him—it depends upon us. We gain Christ, experience Christ, and enjoy Christ according to what we are. Therefore, someone who is diligent in pursuing Christ will experience a larger Christ than someone who is lazy in this matter.

Recently I have been considering that we may regard the twelve tribes of Israel as a picture of the believers from the first century until today. Galatians 6:16 says that we are "the Israel of God." This indicates that among God's New Testament elect there should be twelve "tribes." The first tribe was the early apostles, who brought in the New Testament revelation. The second tribe was the church fathers. The third tribe was the martyrs in the Roman Empire. The fourth tribe was the reformers in the Roman Church, before the papal system was established. The fifth tribe was the Protestants, and the sixth was the mystics. The Protestants became shallow and dead, so there was a reaction from the mystics, including Madame Guyon, Father Fenelon, and Brother Lawrence. The seventh tribe was the Moravian brothers under Count Zinzendorf. The eighth tribe was the British Brethren under John Nelson Darby. When the Brethren became full of

dead knowledge, there was a three-way reaction. First, there was a reaction from the inner life Christians, including Andrew Murray, Jessie Penn-Lewis, and T. Austin-Sparks. This was the ninth tribe. Second, there was a reaction from evangelical Christians, including C. H. Spurgeon, D. L. Moody, Charles Finney, Hudson Taylor, William Carey, and David Livingstone. This was the tenth tribe. Third, there was a reaction from Pentecostal Christians. This was the eleventh tribe. The twelth tribe is the recovery, which has recovered the New Testament revelation back to the early apostles.

In the recovery the truths from Matthew to Revelation have been recovered by the Lord. In particular, the Lord has recovered the truths concerning the all-inclusive Christ and the New Jerusalem. The truth in the recovery is the consummate truth of the past nineteen centuries. We are standing on the shoulders of all the tribes that have gone before us. Thus, the truth has been extracted, condensed, and crystallized for us.

Let us now consider from chapters eighteen through twenty-two more of the details concerning the allotment of the land.

VI. THE LAND TO BE ALLOTTED TO THE REST OF THE SEVEN TRIBES

In 18:1 through 19:51 we have the record of the land to be allotted to the rest of the seven tribes. Joshua charged the children of Israel to take possession of the land not yet possessed by them (18:1-3). Then he sent three men from each of the seven tribes to go through the land and write a description of it with a view to it being their inheritance (vv. 4-6, 8-9). After this, Joshua allotted and divided the land unto the seven tribes (v. 10). No land was allotted to the Levites, for the priesthood of Jehovah was their inheritance (v. 7).

A. The Land Allotted to the Tribe of Benjamin

The land allotted to the tribe of Benjamin (vv. 11-28) was between the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Joseph (vv. 11-20). The land had twenty-six cities with their villages, including

Jerusalem (vv. 21-28). Jerusalem was located in the land of Benjamin but was inherited by the children of Judah (15:63).

B. The Land Allotted to the Tribe of Simeon

The land allotted to the tribe of Simeon (19:1-9) was in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah (vv. 1, 9) and included seventeen cities with their villages (vv. 2-8).

C. The Land Allotted to the Tribe of Zebulun

The land allotted to the tribe of Zebulun (vv. 10-16) consisted of twelve cities with their villages, including Bethlehem (v. 15).

D. The Land Allotted to the Tribe of Issachar

The land allotted to the tribe of Issachar went from Jezreel to the river Jordan and included sixteen cities with their villages (vv. 17-23).

E. The Land Allotted to the Tribe of Asher

The land allotted to the tribe of Asher went from Helkath to the sea (vv. 24-31). It had twenty-two cities with their villages, including Great Sidon and the fortified city of Tyre (vv. 28-29).

F. The Land Allotted to the Tribe of Naphtali

The land allotted to the tribe of Naphtali (vv. 32-39) was in the midst of Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west, and Judah at the Jordan toward the rising of the sun. This land included nineteen cities with their villages.

G. The Land Allotted to the Tribe of Dan

The land allotted to the tribe of Dan (vv. 40-48) was opposite Japho (v. 46—Joppa, Acts 10:5). When the territory of the children of Dan was lost to them, they went up and fought against Leshem (Laish—Judg. 18:29, at the extreme north of the good land), taking possession of it and naming it according to the name of Dan their father (Josh. 19:47).

H. The Inheritance Given to Joshua

The inheritance given to Joshua (vv. 49-50) was the city of Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. He asked for this city, and the children of Israel gave it to him according to the commandment of Jehovah.

VII. THE CITIES OF REFUGE

The record in chapter twenty is concerned with the cities of refuge (Exo. 21:13; Num. 35:6a, 10-15).

A. Designated for the Manslayer Who Killed a Person by Mistake and Unwittingly

Jehovah charged Joshua to tell the children of Israel to designate the cities of refuge so that the manslayer who killed a person by mistake and unwittingly might flee there from the avenger of blood (Josh. 20:1-6).

B. Three in Canaan, West of the Jordan

There were to be three cities of refuge in Canaan, west of the Jordan (v. 7). These cities were Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Hebron in the hill country of Judah.

C. Three in the Land East of the Jordan

There were to be three other cities of refuge in the land east of the Jordan (vv. 8-9). These cities were Bezer in the wilderness on the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

D. Allotted to the Levites

All the cities of refuge were allotted to the Levites (Num. 35:6a).

VIII. THE CITIES WITH THEIR PASTURE LANDS ALLOTTED TO THE LEVITES, CLAIMED BY THEM AT SHILOH

The cities with their pasture lands allotted to the Levites were claimed by them at Shiloh. They were given to the

Levites by the children of Israel according to God's command to Moses (21:1-3). In total, there were forty-eight cities, including six cities of refuge (v. 41).

A. To the Families of the Kohathites and the Children of Aaron the Priest

To the families of the Kohathites and the children of Aaron the priest were given thirteen cities from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin (vv. 4, 8-19).

B. To the Rest of the Children of Kohath

To the rest of the children of Kohath were given ten cities from the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (vv. 5, 20-26).

C. To the Children of Gershon

To the children of Gershon were given thirteen cities from the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (vv. 6, 27-33).

D. To the Children of Merari

To the children of Merari were given twelve cities from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun (vv. 7, 34-40).

IX. THE FULFILLMENT OF JEHOVAH'S PROMISE TO THE FATHERS OF ISRAEL THAT HE WOULD GIVE THEM THE GOOD LAND

The allotment of the good land recorded in these chapters was the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise to the fathers of Israel that He would give them the good land for their possession and dwelling place (vv. 43-45). Regarding this, verse 45 says, "Not a word failed of all the good things that Jehovah had spoken to the house of Israel; all came to pass."

X. THE RETURN OF THE TRIBES OF REUBEN, GAD, AND THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH TO THEIR LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN

Chapter twenty-two gives us an account of the return of

the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to their land east of the Jordan.

A. Joshua Sending Them with Blessing

Joshua sent them with blessing (vv. 1-9). He called them and said to them that they had kept all that Moses had commanded them and had listened to Joshua's voice in all that he had commanded them, telling them that they had kept the charge of the commandment of Jehovah their God.

B. They Building an Altar at the River Jordan in the Land of Canaan

When the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh came into that region of the Jordan that is in the land of Canaan, they built at the river Jordan an altar great in appearance (v. 10).

C. The Children of Israel Wanting to Go Up in Battle against Them

When the children of Israel heard about the altar that had been built out in front of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan, they wanted to go up in battle against the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (vv. 11-12). The children of Israel sent Phinehas the priest with ten leaders of the ten tribes of Israel to deal with them (vv. 13-20).

D. The Tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the Half-tribe of Manasseh Explaining That the Altar Was Built Not for Offerings to God but for a Witness

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh explained to Phinehas and the ten leaders of Israel that they built the altar not for offerings to God but for a witness (vv. 21-29). They claimed that they did not build the altar in rebellion or in trespass against Jehovah (v. 22). They concluded by saying, "Far be it from us that we would rebel against Jehovah and turn away today from following after Jehovah by building an altar for burnt offering, for meal

offering, or for sacrifice, besides the altar of Jehovah our God, which is before His tabernacle!" (v. 29).

E. Phinehas the Priest and the Ten Leaders of Israel Being Satisfied with Their Explanation

Phinehas the priest and the ten leaders of Israel were satisfied with their explanation and returned to their land (vv. 30-33).

F. They Naming the Altar

The children of Reuben and the children of Gad named the altar, saying that it was a witness that Jehovah is God (v. 34).

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE THIRTEEN

TEN ASPECTS OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: Josh. 21:43; 13:33; Deut. 8:7-10

From the first century A.D. to the fifth century, there were many teachings and debates concerning Christology, the study of the person of Christ. The entire Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi is a book on Christology. In the Old Testament there are many types of Christ, and each of these types is related to the study of Christ. The full, complete, and consummate type of Christ is the good land. My burden in this message is to consider ten aspects of the all-inclusive Christ, who is typified by the good land.

CHRIST IN ETERNITY

In eternity Christ was only God, not man. He was the Son of God as the embodiment of God (John 1:18) and the Word of God as the definition of God (v. 1).

IN HIS INCARNATION

One day the eternal Christ came into time, becoming flesh in His incarnation. In His incarnation Christ as the Son of God came "in the likeness of the flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:3). He was not sinful, but by becoming flesh He became something that is related to sin.

Through incarnation the infinite, unlimited, and holy God came out of eternity, and with divinity He entered into time and into the womb of a virgin, remaining there for nine months. Matthew 1:20 indicates that the One who was born into Mary's womb was the very God. First, Christ was born into a human virgin, and then, as a man, He was born out of her. Therefore, Christ is now the God-man; He has not only divinity but also

humanity. This reveals that incarnation means that man has been added to God.

Whereas in eternity Christ was merely God, in His incarnation He became the God-man. In Christ as the God-man the human nature and the divine nature have been mingled, blended. However, in this mingling, this blending, the two natures remain distinct, and a third nature is not produced. The divine nature and the human nature remain distinct, yet they are mingled as one. This is Christ in His incarnation.

IN HIS HUMAN LIVING

It is hard for us to imagine that the almighty, unlimited God became an infant lying in a manger. Even in His infancy Christ was a God-man. In a slow, gradual way Christ passed through boyhood into manhood. For thirty years Christ in His humanity lived in a despised country, in the despised town of Nazareth, and in the home of a poor carpenter. Then He came out to teach God, to minister God to people, and to express God's attributes through man's virtues.

This God-man expressed God in man, through man, and with man. Although He was not learned, His speaking was full of wisdom. Although He was humble, He spoke not only with power but also with authority. In every virtue of this One there was something divine, for He was the God-man, God with the divine attributes expressed in man with the human virtues. He was God living as a man, God living a human life.

IN HIS CRUCIFIXION

In His crucifixion Christ died as the Lamb of God to take away man's sin (John 1:29), as the bronze serpent (3:14) to destroy the old serpent, Satan (Heb. 2:14), and as a grain of wheat to release the divine life from within the shell of His humanity (John 12:24). The divine life, which was concealed in His humanity, needed to be released in order to increase and multiply. Therefore, Christ died not only to take away sin and to destroy Satan but also to release the divine life.

By His death on the cross, Christ also terminated the old

man and the old creation. Through incarnation Christ became a man, and that man was the old creation. When Christ died, the old man in his totality and ultimate consummation also died. Therefore, when Christ was crucified as a man, the old man was terminated (Rom. 6:6). Furthermore, when Christ became a man, He also became a creature, the Firstborn of all creation (Col. 1:15). This creature was not of the new creation but of the old creation. When Christ was crucified as a creature, the entire old creation was brought to an end.

In addition, in His crucifixion Christ abolished "in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances" (Eph. 2:15). The word *ordinances* here refers to rituals, the forms or ways of living and worship, which create enmity and division. Because every nation and culture has its particular ordinances, today there are thousands of different ways of living. Nevertheless, in His crucifixion Christ abolished all these ordinances. Now among us in the church life there is only one way to live—to take Christ as our life, our living, and even our way of living and to live Him.

After the Lord Jesus died, "one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water" (John 19:34). Blood is for redemption, to deal with sins (Heb. 9:22) for the purchasing of the church (Acts 20:28). Water is for imparting life, for the ministering of God into us as life. The blood of Christ has redeemed us, and the divine life of Christ has flowed into us as a river to minister God into us. Now, as believers in Christ, we have been redeemed back to God, and we have God flowing into us as living water.

Through the crucifixion of Christ, sin has been taken away, Satan has been destroyed, the divine life has been released, the old man has been terminated, the old creation has been brought to an end, the ordinances have been abolished, we have been redeemed back to God, and we have God flowing into us as living water. We all need to have such a view of the crucifixion of Christ.

IN HIS RESURRECTION

In His resurrection Christ became the firstborn Son. Acts

13:33 indicates that resurrection was a birth to the man Jesus. He was begotten by God in His resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God among many brothers (Rom. 8:29). He was the only begotten Son of God from eternity (John 1:18; 3:16). After incarnation, through resurrection He was begotten by God in His humanity to be God's firstborn Son. We may say that in His resurrection His humanity was "sonized." Furthermore, Christ's resurrection was a birth not only to Him but also to all His millions of believers, who were regenerated by God in the resurrection of Christ (1 Pet. 1:3) to be the many sons of God and the many brothers of Christ (Heb. 2:10-12).

In resurrection Christ also became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b), compounded with divinity, humanity, death, and resurrection. This Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God and the reality of resurrection. Actually, this Spirit is the pneumatic Christ Himself. According to John 11:25 resurrection is Christ Himself, and Christ is now the life-giving Spirit. Hence, the life-giving Spirit is the reality of resurrection. When we live in this Spirit, we live in resurrection. When we love others in this Spirit, we love them in resurrection.

IN HIS ASCENSION

In His ascension Christ was appointed to be the Lord to possess the whole earth and to be the Christ to bear God's commission to complete God's economy (Acts 2:36; 10:36). He is also the Ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5) so that He can be the Savior to save God's chosen people (Acts 5:31).

IN HIS BODY

Christ today is in the Body. In His Body Christ has been enlarged, increased, and multiplied. Originally, the God-man was an individual, but now He is a corporate, universal God-man. Concerning this, 1 Corinthians 12:12 says, "Even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ." This refers to the corporate Christ, composed of Christ Himself as the Head and the church as His Body with

all the believers as members. All the believers of Christ are organically united with Him and constituted with His life and element and have thus become His Body, an organism, to express Him. Hence, He is not only the Head but also the Body.

IN HIS ADVENT

In His advent Christ will come like lightning in the twinkling of an eye (Luke 17:24). We do not have human expressions to describe His coming, but He will be extraordinary to us in His coming.

IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

In the millennial kingdom Christ, the King, will rule the earth with His overcomers as His co-kings (Rev. 20:4, 6).

IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

In the New Jerusalem Christ will be the holy city. The New Jerusalem will be the consummate manifestation of Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God.

The Christ whom we know, enjoy, possess, and experience is typified by the spacious good land of mountains, rivers, brooks, and plains (Deut. 8:7-10). According to the book of Joshua, this is the Christ not only of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin but also of the tribe of Levi. In the Lord's recovery we are today's Levites. Judah's portion is our portion, and Benjamin's portion also is our portion. This means that we are enjoying all of the experiences of Christ in the twelve tribes, including the early apostles, the church fathers, the martyrs, the reformers, the Protestants, the mystics, the Moravians, the Brethren, the inner life Christians, the evangelicals, and the Pentecostals. This is spoken of in the preface to the Recovery Version:

> Throughout the centuries the understanding of the divine revelation possessed by the saints has always been based upon the light they received, and this understanding has progressed steadily. The consummation of this understanding forms the

basis of this translation and its footnotes. Hence, this translation and the accompanying footnotes could be called the "crystallization" of the understanding of the divine revelation which the saints everywhere have attained to in the past two thousand years. It is our hope that the Recovery Version will carry on the heritage that it has received and will pave the way for future generations.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE FOURTEEN

THREE PARTICULAR MATTERS CONCERNING THE ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND

Scripture Reading: Josh. 17:3-4; 20:1-9; 22:10-34

In this message I have the burden to give a further word on three particular matters concerning the allotment of the good land—the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, the cities of refuge, and the return of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to their land east of the Jordan. In typology, these three matters show us certain details regarding the enjoyment of Christ.

THE CASE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

Zelophehad, a descendant of Manasseh, had five daughters but no sons (17:3). The daughters claimed the right to inherit their father's inheritance, so that it would remain in his tribe (v. 4; Num. 27:1-11). According to God's ordination, only males had the right of inheritance. Here, however, some females requested an inheritance, and God honored their request.

Having Their Father's Life

The five daughters of Zelophehad had their father's life. This indicates that in order to inherit Christ as our good land, we must have the proper genealogy; that is, we must have the proper origin of life. In the Bible, inheritance is determined according to genealogy. A genealogy is a matter of life, and this life is related to tribes, houses, and families. The fact that the daughters of Zelophehad were of one of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph indicates that they had the proper origin of life. The enjoyment of Christ as our inheritance depends very much on the life which we have received in Him.

The Father's Family Signifying the Church

Their father's family signifies the church. In the church we have the standing to inherit Christ for our enjoyment. This means that if we would enjoy Christ as our inheritance, participating in His riches, we must have the church life. Our fellowship with the saints in the church life is crucial for our enjoyment of Christ. If we lose our fellowship with the saints, we will lose our enjoyment of Christ. Those who give up the church life with the fellowship of life spontaneously lose their right to inherit the enjoyment of Christ.

The Females Being Weaker Ones

The females signify the weaker ones. In the sight of God, we all are females; we all are weaker ones. Only Christ is the strong One. Spiritually speaking, in the entire universe there is only one male—God embodied in Christ. All the believers, including the brothers, are females. Therefore, the five daughters of Zelophehad typify us.

In particular, the daughters of Zelophehad, being females, signify the weaker ones in the church life. We have been born of God and we are in the church life, having the standing to inherit Christ as our good land for our enjoyment. However, we may be weak, not having the strength or capacity to enjoy Christ. We may have the heart to enjoy Christ but may lack the capacity or the strength to enjoy Him. How, then, can we inherit Christ as the good land? We need to take the way of fellowship, indicated by the contact the daughters of Zelophehad had with their kinsmen. Among the tribe of Manasseh, there were many families with men, signifying the stronger ones. By contacting the stronger kinsmen, the weaker ones were able to keep their father's name and his inheritance within the tribe, signifying the keeping of the enjoyment of Christ. Today, you may be weak, but in God's house, the church, there are stronger ones. Through fellowship, especially in the vital groups, the weaker ones will be strengthened by the stronger ones and thus will be able to enjoy Christ as their inheritance.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

The cities of refuge (Josh. 20:1-9) were set up by Joshua for those of the children of Israel who unwittingly killed someone. If they would flee to the city of refuge away from the avenger of blood (v. 5), they would be protected. At the death of the high priest, the manslayer would be released to return to his own city (v. 6).

The cities of refuge signify the all-inclusive Christ as the place to which we can escape when we realize that we are sinful. The all-inclusive Christ as the embodiment of the redeeming God is the city of refuge where we are safeguarded, covered, and concealed. Christ is not only our Savior but also our refuge. Whenever the "storm" of our sin comes, we can run into Christ as our refuge to stay with Him. Then by Christ's death, signified by the death of the high priest, we are released.

THE RETURN OF THE TRIBES OF REUBEN, GAD, AND THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH TO THEIR LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN

Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh inherited land east of the Jordan (22:9). Moses charged them that they had to fight along with their brothers west of the Jordan before they could enjoy their inheritance east of the Jordan (Num. 32:20-22). After these tribes fought along with their brothers, they were qualified to return to their land to enjoy their inheritance. This indicates that we cannot enjoy Christ without the Body. We must be one with the Body in order to share the inheritance of Christ.

When Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned to enjoy their inheritance of the land, they built a great altar at the river Jordan (Josh. 22:10). This offended the other tribes and caused the children of Israel in Canaan to go up in battle against them (vv. 11-20). Eventually, the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh explained to the other tribes that they built the altar not for offerings but for a witness (vv. 21-29). When Phinehas the priest, the leaders of the assembly, and the heads of the

thousands of Israel who were with him heard this explanation, it seemed good in their sight (v. 30).

The record in Joshua 22 shows us that no matter what the situation of God's people might be today, we are not allowed to set up another altar for the worship of God or for fellowship with God. In God's economy, among God's people there should be only one altar, in Jerusalem. All God's people had to go there to offer their sacrifices to God for their worship and fellowship with God. This indicates that in the enjoyment of Christ division must be avoided to the uttermost. Nevertheless, in certain places the dissenting ones, not caring for the one accord in the Lord's recovery, have formed divisions by building another altar.

It is very significant that in a portion of the holy Word concerned with the inheritance of the good land we have a record about the building of another altar. This account shows us that we must avoid division. To enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the good land, we must be one people, one Body, one universal church to testify for Christ.

LIFE-STUDY OF JOSHUA

MESSAGE FIFTEEN

THE DEPARTURE OF JOSHUA

Scripture Reading: Josh. 23—24

In this message we will consider the departure of Joshua described in chapters twenty-three and twenty-four.

At the time of his departure, Joshua had a burden to charge the people of Israel not to forsake God but to remember Him in all His gracious and merciful deeds for them in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the good land. Joshua told them that if they forsook Jehovah their God, He would no longer dispossess the nations out of their sight. As a result, the nations would become a snare and a trap to the people of Israel (23:13).

Joshua's charge was based upon his more than seventy years' experience with God. When Joshua was young, he was with Moses. During the forty years in the wilderness, Joshua saw what Moses did and learned of him. Then after Moses left, Joshua became the leader of the people of Israel, and he continued as the leader for about twenty-five years. During his years with Moses and his years as leader, Joshua was involved with God's interest. He had learned that God is unique, faithful, and right in everything. He knew that if the Israelites forsook God, they surely would suffer. Therefore, he issued a warning to them, and afterward he died in peace.

Let us now consider the details concerning Joshua's departure recorded in these chapters.

I. JOSHUA'S PARTING WORD TO THE ELDERS, HEADS, JUDGES, AND OFFICERS OF ISRAEL

Chapter twenty-three is Joshua's parting word to the elders, heads, judges, and officers of Israel.

A. Reminding Them of Jehovah's Faithfulness in Promising Them and Fighting for Them

Joshua reminded them of Jehovah's faithfulness in promising them the land and in fighting for them. Joshua reminded them that they had seen all that Jehovah their God had done to all the nations because of them (v. 3). Joshua went on to say that he had allotted to them all the nations that remained as an inheritance for their tribes, as well as all the nations that he had cut off (v. 4). Then Joshua said, "Jehovah your God, He will thrust them out before you and dispossess them out of your sight; and you will possess their land, as Jehovah your God spoke to you" (v. 5).

B. Encouraging Them to Love Jehovah Their God and to Cling to Him

Next, Joshua encouraged the elders, heads, judges, and officers of Israel to love Jehovah their God and to cling to Him (vv. 6-11). He charged them to be strong to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, not going unto the nations that remained with them and not making mention of the names of their gods, nor serving them, nor bowing down to them (vv. 6-7). Rather, the people of Israel were to cling to Jehovah their God, for He had dispossessed great and strong nations because of them. After speaking about this, Joshua said, "Be very careful therefore for yourselves, that you love Jehovah your God" (v. 11).

C. Warning Them with the Snare, the Trap, the Scourge in Their Sides, and Thorns in Their Eyes

Joshua continued by warning them not to turn back and cling to the remainder of the nations, not to marry into them, and not to go among them (v. 12). Then Joshua charged them, saying, "Know for certain that Jehovah your God will no longer dispossess these nations out of your sight, but they will become a snare and a trap to you, and a scourge in your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this

good land that Jehovah your God has given you" (v. 13). Joshua went on to remind them that they knew in their hearts and souls that not a word had failed of all the good things that Jehovah had spoken concerning them. All had come to pass for them. However, if they forsook Jehovah their God, just as the good things had come upon them, so would Jehovah cause all the evil things to come upon them, until He destroyed them from the good land that He had given them (vv. 14-15). If they transgressed the covenant of Jehovah and served other gods, the anger of Jehovah would burn against them, and they would perish quickly from the good land (v. 16).

II. JOSHUA'S PARTING WORD TO ALL THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL WITH THEIR ELDERS, HEADS, JUDGES, AND OFFICERS

Chapter twenty-four is Joshua's parting word to all the tribes of Israel with their elders, heads, judges, and officers.

A. Reminding Them of Jehovah Their God's Marvelous Deeds to Their Forefathers and to Themselves

Joshua reminded them of Jehovah their God's marvelous deeds to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to themselves in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan the good land (vv. 1-13).

B. Charging Them to Fear Jehovah and Serve Him in Sincerity and Faithfulness

In his parting word to all the tribes, Joshua also charged them to fear Jehovah and serve Him in sincerity and faithfulness and to put away the gods whom their fathers served across the River and in Egypt (v. 14). Joshua told them that if it seemed wrong in their sight to serve Jehovah, they should choose for themselves whom they would serve—the gods from across the River or the gods of the Amorites. Then Joshua assured them that he and his house would serve Jehovah (v. 15).

C. The People Answering That They Would Not Forsake Jehovah to Serve Other Gods

The people answered that they would not forsake Jehovah to serve other gods (vv. 16-18). They claimed that, since Jehovah had brought them out of the land of Egypt, had done great things in their sight and had preserved them, and had driven out all the peoples from before them, they would serve Jehovah, for He was their God.

D. Warning Them That Jehovah Would Do Them Harm and Consume Them If They Forsook Him and Served Other Gods

Joshua warned them that Jehovah would do them harm and consume them if they forsook Him and served other gods (vv. 19-20). Then he charged them to put away the foreign gods that were among them and to incline their hearts to Jehovah, the God of Israel (v. 23).

E. Making a Covenant for the People of Israel in Shechem

Finally, Joshua made a covenant for the people of Israel in Shechem. He also made a statute and an ordinance for them, taking a great stone and erecting it there under the terebinth that was at the sanctuary of Jehovah to be a witness against Israel, lest they act deceptively against their God (vv. 25-27).

III. THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF JOSHUA

Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten years, and they buried him in the territory of his inheritance, in Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim (vv. 29-30).

IV. ISRAEL SERVING JEHOVAH THROUGHOUT ALL THE DAYS OF JOSHUA AND ALL THE DAYS OF THE ELDERS AFTER JOSHUA

Israel served Jehovah throughout all the days of Joshua and throughout all the days of the elders whose days extended after Joshua's and who knew all the work of Jehovah that He had done for Israel (v. 31).

V. JOSEPH'S BONES BEING BURIED IN SHECHEM

Joseph's bones, which the children of Israel had brought up from Egypt, were buried in Shechem (v. 32). They were buried in the portion of the field that Jacob had bought from the children of Hamor the father of Shechem (Gen. 33:18-19), which became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

VI. THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ELEAZAR THE SON OF AARON

The book of Joshua concludes with a word concerning the death and burial of Eleazar the son of Aaron (24:33). Eleazar was buried in the hill of Phinehas his son, which had been given to him in the hill country of Ephraim.