



POSSESSING THE LAND OF PROMISE

(with 3 Lessons on the Cross)

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INTRODUCTION

The book of Joshua has a relevant message for today's Christian. It is a history of the battles fought by Israel in their quest to possess the land of Canaan which had been promised them since the time of Abraham. They won some remarkable victories and suffered some unnecessary setbacks. Eventually, they approximated the possession God intended; but they never fully annihilated their enemies. The book of Hebrews reveals that Joshua never fully succeeded in leading Israel into the rest that was intended for God's people. Later, their lack of persistent and total conquest returned to haunt them; especially during the era of the "Judges".

The promised land for the present day Christian is his life in the Holy Spirit. Exceeding great and precious promises are given us, offering us the possession of "the Diving Nature" (see II Peter 1:4). The enemies and giants we face are in the self-life and of the world. Anything less than total annihilation of these enemies of the Christ-life will return to haunt us. God is anxious that we should enter fully into the rest of total conquest, for the "works are finished from the foundation of the world" (see Heb.4:3).

The three lessons on the cross included in this quarter are appropriate for two reasons. First, the life in the Spirit is vitally connected to the crucifixion of the self-life and of our becoming dead to the world by the cross. Seeing that the Holy Spirit has seen fit to describe the Christian life as a warfare and provided us with the whole armor of God, let us take courage to stand against the wiles of the enemy and to fight the good fight of faith until we possess absolutely all that God has promised for us.

These lessons were written for the Emmanuel Pentecostal Sunday School by the pastor, Robert D. Kalis. This is the ninth in a series of twenty quarterlies (5 years) covering the greater part of the historical portion of the Bible. Now available are:

The Men and Women of Genesis	The Parables of Jesus
The Personal Ministry of Jesus	The Miracles of Jesus
Lessons From Exodus	Wilderness Examples

Matthew: The King and His Kingdom-I

Matthew: The King and His Kingdom-II

Possessing the Land of Promise

(with 3 lessons on the Cross)

GOD APPOINTS A NEW LEADER

Read: Deuteronomy 34:7-12; Joshua 1:1-18

Memory Work: Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isaiah 53:1

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *God prepared a leader to carry on the work of Moses.*
2. *Joshua, whose name means "Savior" is a very clear type of Christ.*
3. *Joshua was admonished to be courageous. Fear and unbelief had shut the last generation out of the promised land. Faith, proven by strength and courage, would bring this generation in.*
4. *Crossing Jordan, and entering into the promised land, is a figure of death to the self life and entering into the life in the Spirit.*
5. *Faith is generated by meditating day and night in the word of God.*

I As I Was With Moses: Moses was by far the greatest spiritual giant in the history of the world up to his time. He had delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt and brought them up to the promised land of inheritance. On the way, the great law of God was given to the people through Moses. For God to promise Joshua that just as He had been with Moses, so He would be with him, was no small promise.

Joshua had been in God's school for many years and had learned much from Moses. Joshua and Caleb were the only two, from amongst the twelve spies, who viewed the land of Canaan and reported that the Israelites could go in at once and possess it. Joshua was a courageous man of faith at that early stage of his life. Overruled by the other ten spies and the fearful and unbelieving children of Israel, he wandered in the wilderness and served as Moses' assistant while that entire genera-

tion died away prematurely. Just before Moses died, the faithful old leader, at God's command, set Joshua before the people and put some of his honor upon him. Moses laid his hands upon Joshua who became filled with the spirit of wisdom. It is God's highest will to prepare new leaders to carry on the work of God when the older leaders are taken to their reward. The transition from Moses to Joshua was smooth. Although Joshua was not the leader that Moses was, by any means, yet he accomplished what Moses could not: he brought Israel into their promised land. This was possible because as the Lord had been with Moses so He manifested Himself to be with Joshua.

Let us have faith that God will raise up young workers full of the spirit of wisdom who will carry on the ministry in our fellowship and lead God's people into the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

II Go Over This Jordan: Bunyan pictures the river Jordan as the river of death. It is the only place where the wonderful allegory does not give a scripture reference to confirm the type. But Jordan is not a type of death, unless you understand it to be that "death to self" which opens up the whole new realm of life in the Holy Spirit. The figure of death does not fit Jordan, for when we get to heaven we will not have to dispossess wicked inhabitants and fight constant battles. There is nothing in the scriptures about a river of death, but there is much about the river of life (see Rev.22:1 & Ezek.47:9).

The book of Joshua is a wonderfully inspiring type of the Christian's conquest over every enemy through the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. Joshua is a type of Christ. What Joshua was to the children of Israel, our Lord Jesus is to us. The exceeding great and precious promises of God have declared that we are to be partakers of His Divine nature. To obtain this inheritance, the various giants of the self life must be met in spiritual battle and overcome. Failure to utterly destroy the inward enemies of the self life will result in shameful loss and defeat somewhere down the road. We are not expected to fight these great spiritual battles in our own strength or by our own wisdom. "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee," God promised Joshua; and the promise is good for us also. We have the promise of His abiding presence and the provision of the whole armor of God to fight the battles of the Lord. Peaceful coexistence with the enemy of self-life is impossible. To compromise is to lose all. There are very important lessons for Christians to be learned from the history of Israel,

and especially in the conquest of Canaan. Unbelief shut Israel out for forty years, and many never entered in. We must believe that God will give us the victory and quickly believe Him and claim our inheritance. It need not take 40 years or a lifetime to become like Christ. Unbelief hinders us from getting the victory soon enough. Those who go over this Jordan in their youth, and get the victory early over lust and pride and covetousness will be most effective in the warfare against the powers of darkness. We don't get the victories young enough. "Every place the sole of your foot shall tread upon in faith shall be yours. Now therefore arise and go over this Jordan." Enter into this life in the Spirit, claim your inheritance of the Divine nature. Utterly destroy the inhabitants of the land. Get the victory over Satan and self. Let self be crucified and reckoned dead indeed, and cause Satan to be put off the earth by God's people who hear His call to be strong and of a good courage, for He hath said, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee" (Josh.1:5).

III Courage to Obey God's Word: Three times Moses commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous. Thrice again the Lord spoke to Joshua Himself, repeating the same charge to fear not but to be strong and very courageous. Fear and unbelief had shut Israel out for forty years. Faith and confidence would open wide the gates to the fulfillment of the promises of God. Here is a lesson for us to learn. Fear and unbelief will prevent us from obtaining our inheritance. We must arise in confidence and claim the victory. How shall we overcome fear and unbelief? By meditating continually in the word of God. The Lord instructed Joshua to do all that was written in the law of Moses. He was not to deviate one bit to the right or to the left. His obedience was his insurance of prosperity and success in the great venture of faith. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh.1:8). Now the same recipe works for us today. If we know God's commandments and obey them, our confidence rises. Faith is the natural result of pleasing God. The more completely we fulfill His commandments the greater our confidence will become, that He hears our prayers and grants our petitions. Faith cometh by hearing the word of God. Let us then do as Joshua was bidden; meditate in the word of God day and night and expect

the Lord to be with us always, causing us always to triumph until we awake in His likeness.

IV Prepare, In Three Days: Joshua responded to the Lord's instruction. Without delay he gave the orders that set in motion the preparations to cross Jordan and begin the invasion and possession of the land which had so long been the land of promise. At last it was to be the land of possession. For us, also, the great Gospel promises are not to remain always promises, but they are to become our very own possession. Jordan was in flood stage, yet Joshua announced that within three days they would pass over it. Surely Joshua was acting in real faith. The Lord had said to Joshua, "Now therefore arise and go over this Jordan" and Joshua had boldly declared to the people that "within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan" (vss.2,11). Joshua also ordered the men of the two tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, who had their possession on the east bank of Jordan, to prepare to cross over and fight with and for their brethren until all the tribes had their own possessions. Years before they had promised to do just that when they applied to Moses for possession of the east bank. Now they fulfilled their pledge and vowed allegiance to Joshua.

In the fellowship of the Gospel, we help one another in prayer and faith. Those who have experienced the great victories of the Gospel, and have entered into the rest of the life of God within, help those who are still laboring to enter into this rest. The biographies and writings of God's victorious saints are an inspiration and practical help to those who are entering into the life in the Spirit. Let us arouse ourselves and claim a full inheritance in our land of promise. Then let us utterly slay and drive out the self life inhabitants that we may enjoy the rest of God. He hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Let us go over this Jordan!

RAHAB: FROM SCARLET TO PURPLE

Read: Joshua 2; 6:25 Matthew 1:5
 James 2:20-26 Hebrews 11:31

Memory Work: For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. Isaiah 53:2

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *It is important for the believer to know that as he fights to obtain the real possession of the promises of God, God is for him; success is assured.*
2. *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"*
3. *If God is able to take a harlot woman, and so transform that life as to fit her for a place in the royal lineage of Christ, He is surely able also to transform us to His likeness.*
4. *Faith is shown to be true faith by our works of obedience to God. Faith without works is dead!*

I Spying the Land: While still on the east side of the Jordan river, Joshua sent spies into the land, and especially to Jericho, to view the land. Jericho was a great walled city. It would be no easy task to breach those walls by customary means of warfare. Two unnamed spies were sent. Joshua, himself, had once spied out the land as one of twelve sent out by Moses some thirty-eight years before. He and Caleb were the only two who advised the children of Israel to enter in. He and Caleb saw the same great and walled strongholds which the ten fearful spies saw. But Joshua and Caleb also saw the Lord and reckoned on His faithful intervention on behalf of Israel. Now the other ten spies had perished. Only Joshua and Caleb remained alive of that entire generation of stiffnecked, and stubborn, unbelieving Israelites. Those preparing to enter the promised land now, were a nation of young people, all under sixty.

The two spies found their way to the house of Rahab, a harlot. This house was located on the great wall of Jericho. The inhabitants of Canaan were exceedingly wicked. They had been given ample time to repent. When God promised possession of the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, He explained that they would be strangers in another land for four generations until the cup of iniquity, of the Amorite inhabitants of Canaan, was full. The great sins which filled that cup of iniquity were idolatry and immorality. By the great flood God had once destroyed the entire world population because of violence and immorality. He had promised never to destroy the earth again by flood. But just as the wicked inhabitants of the earth were finally destroyed by the judgment of God in the days of Noah, so the wicked people of Canaan faced the judgment of God by the sword of Joshua and Israel. The annihilation of the inhabitants of Canaan is to be understood in the context of their judgment day. They had ample time to repent. News of the glory of the God of Israel had reached them. They were fully aware of the exodus and the Red Sea miracle. Yet they chose not to repent but rather to persist in their evil ways.

Rahab was a harlot. Perhaps the fear of Israel and their God had caused her to renounce her evil occupation. At least we do have the information that she was working with flax. This material was and is used in the manufacturing of linen. At any rate, we should understand that the inhabitants were wicked idolaters and an extremely immoral people. There were, no doubt, many harlots, and the worship connected with their idol gods was filled with vile unclean rituals. Of this we can be absolutely sure, that Rahab never pursued her former trade after the victory of Israel at Jericho, for she married Salmon, an Israelite of Judah and found her way into the lineage of David, and of Christ.

We will put the best construction upon the situation and hope that the two spies chose to stop at the house of Rahab because of its situation on the wall and easy access to both the inner city and the area outside the wall. What they learned from her is of primary importance in the story of the conquest of the promised land. They learned from Rahab that the people of Jericho, despite their apparently secure position within the wall, were in a state of fear and anxiety. They had heard detailed reports of how the Lord God of Israel had opened the Red Sea to allow escape for Israel from Egypt, and how the army of Egypt was destroyed attempting to follow them. They had also heard of what Israel had done to two

great and powerful kings on the east of Jordan. Both Zihon and Og, giant kings, had been completely defeated and their lands occupied by the children of Israel. Rahab revealed to the spies that when the people of Jericho heard these reports, their hearts melted and no courage for fighting remained in any of them (Josh.2:11). This was what Joshua needed to know. The fear of God and of Israel had fallen on the inhabitants of Canaan. It was an omen of victory.

II By Faith Rahab: Rahab acted toward the spies in faith that their God would accept her. No sooner had the two spies arrived, when police from the king of Jericho traced them to Rahab's house. She renounced her affiliation with Jericho by taking the side of the spies. She hurriedly sent them to the roof of the house where she had bundles of flax drying for future use in spinning and weaving. She told the search party that the men had indeed been there, though she denied knowing that they were spies from Israel. She told the searchers that about the time of sunset they had left. She advised them that if they would pursue them quickly they could probably overtake them. By this clever stratagem she got rid of the searchers quickly. Of course, her lying is not to be condoned or used as an example to follow in similar circumstances. It was her faith and works of obedience which are to be commended and emulated.

With the searchers hastily pursuing the phantom spies, Rahab called them down from the roof and bargained with them for her safety and for that of her loved ones. Her actions had alienated her from the inhabitants of Jericho and now she sought to be identified with Israel. Even so, unbelievers must renounce the world and identify themselves with the people of God. The spies promised to preserve her life and the lives of her loved ones if they stayed within her house. This was promised on the condition that she not reveal their business and follow the instructions given. She let them down on the outside of the great wall by means of a scarlet cord. The spies then instructed her to bind that red cord in the window from which they had been let down so that her house could be identified by Israel. She told them to hide in the mountains for three days and then return to their camp. As soon as they were gone she fastened the red cord in the window. They did as she advised, hiding three days in the mountains before returning to camp and giving their report to Joshua. That report was a great encouragement to the leader of Israel and

he rejoiced exclaiming, "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land: for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us" (Josh. 2:24).

III From Scarlet to Purple: Not only was Rahab, the harlot, spared the fate of the rest of the inhabitants of Jericho (see Josh.6:25), but she was adopted into the family of Israel; and according to the genealogy of Matthew one, she married Salmon and became the mother of Boaz who begat Obed by Ruth the Moabitess, and Obed begat Jesse who was the father of David, the king. So this harlot Gentile woman, through faith, (see Heb.11:31) not only saved her life and the lives of her loved ones, but also became a child of God and a forbear of David the king and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rahab progressed from the disgraceful place of a scarlet woman to the honored place of the mother of royalty; from scarlet to purple, by faith. Rahab is one of only four women listed in the genealogy of Christ in the first chapter of Matthew. Note also that three of the four are Gentiles. According to the genealogy of Matthew, three of the four grandparents of Obed, the son of Ruth and Boaz, were Gentiles. Boaz's mother was Rahab, and of course, Ruth's parents were Moabites. The grace of God can lift the beggar from the dunghill and set him among the princes of the kingdom of God.

IV Faith and Works: James the just, the brother of Jesus, used Rahab as an illustration of faith in action. His point was that faith which is in theology and abstract ideas, is worthless until it is used to accomplish something. Abraham's faith enabled him to obey God and offer Isaac on the altar. Rahab's faith moved her to renounce allegiance to the people of Jericho and cast her lot with the people of God. It was her willingness to act which proved the reality of her faith that the God of Israel would cause Israel to vanquish the city of Jericho and possess the land. Our faith, too, if it is real faith, must move us to renounce the world and all it offers, and cast our lot once and for all with the Lord and His people. "Faith without works (of obedience) is dead" (James 2:17-26).

ENTERING INTO CANAAN

Read: Joshua 3 & 4

Memory Work: He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Isaiah 53:3

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Jesus is our surety, as the ark of the covenant was to Israel.*
2. *The great glory and power of God does not pass away with the homegoing of His great servants.*
3. *Obedience to God's directions brings about the manifestation of His miraculous power.*
4. *It is important for us to remember how the Lord brought us into the life in the Spirit.*
5. *The testimony of one generation should spur on the next to enter into the fullness of the promises of God.*

I Sanctify Yourselves: The report of the two spies, who had visited Jericho and learned from Rahab of the fear that city had of Israel, encouraged Joshua and the host of Israel. Joshua had promised the people that in three days they would pass over Jordan and begin the long awaited possession of the promised land (ch.1:11). Now Joshua rose early in the morning (note how often he did this) and led Israel to the brink of Jordan. The river was in flood stage (see ch.3:15). The word was given to the people by the officers of the host, that when they saw the ark of the covenant being carried by the priests and Levites, they should remove from their resting place and follow after it. Up to this time the children of Israel had followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The ark itself with its blessed mercy seat and golden cherubims had remained in holy obscurity for the eyes of the

High Priest only. Now the sacred symbol of the Divine Presence was brought out in the sight of all Israel. They were told to sanctify themselves for such an unusual event. The instructions given the people for sanctifying themselves at Mount Sinai were that the people should wash their clothing and abstain from sexual activity (see Ex.19:10,14-15). To enjoy and experience the great power of God there is the need for holiness and sanctification. God was about to do great wonders in the sight of all Israel.

The instruction to follow the ark was accompanied by a caution. They were to keep a respectful distance of 2000 cubits from the ark itself. This was about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. There is a lesson here for us. We enjoy the manifestation of the Presence of God. The way has been opened by our Redeemer for us to enter "within the veil" to the Holiest of all: the place of His manifested Presence. There is the very great need to take heed that we sanctify ourselves and remember the reverence due to our thrice holy God. It is unfortunate that often in churches where the Lord has revealed Himself very greatly, that the people become so accustomed to His Presence that they become careless, loud and boisterous and irreverent in the House of God. Loud laughing and talking and social visiting should be done elsewhere if we desire the mighty power of God to work in our midst.

II Hereby Ye Shall Know: At last the command was given that the ark should go forward. The Lord spoke clearly to Joshua, as He had to Moses. The Lord promised Joshua that on this day He would begin to magnify him in the eyes of all Israel. Now it is always so, that when an old faithful leader is taken to his reward, that some of the people despise the new younger leader. That is human nature. But God will help the younger to win the respect and confidence of the people by glorifying his ministry. Now once again the Lord promised Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee." He instructed Joshua to have the priests bearing the ark wade into the brink of the overflowing waters and then to stand still.

Now Joshua called the people to listen to the word of the Lord. He assured them that when the priests stood in the water bearing the ark that the water of Jordan would be cut off from flowing down from the north. This was to be a proof and a sign to all Israel that the campaign to drive out all the inhabitants of Canaan would succeed. "Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizites, and the Girgashites, and the Amor-

ites, and the Jebusites." Even so the entering into the life in the Spirit is to us the seal of ultimate victory over every vestige of the self life, till we come to be partakers of the Divine nature.

So when the priests waded into the overflowing waters and stood still, far to the north near to the city Adam, about 20 miles upstream, the water flow was cut off. The water below that point drained off toward the Dead Sea until the riverbed was dry. Then the priests bare the ark to the middle of the riverbed and stood still there while all the people passed over the river Jordan. This was surely a sign to all the people that God was indeed with Joshua as He had been with Moses. Most of the Israelites had only heard of the Red Sea crossing. The great majority of those who had crossed it before the Egyptians, had died during the forty years in the wilderness. Now the younger generation experienced the same miraculous manifestation of the power of God. May the young generation of Christians in our fellowship experience for themselves the mighty baptismal power of the Holy Spirit. So on that day the Lord God magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they honored him as they had Moses, all the days that Joshua lived (ch.4:14).

III The People Hasted: The priests and Levites with the ark stood in the river about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile upstream from the place where Israel crossed. They were forbidden to come closer than that to the ark. The narrative reveals that "the people hasted and passed over" (ch.4:10). This haste was not the result of fear that the waters would return and wash them away. The ark, the symbol of the Presence of God, stood between them and the restrained water. Their haste more likely was the result of joyous anticipation. No doubt, there was many a contest to see which member of the family would be first to set foot in the promised land. For forty years, because of unbelief, the promised land had remained a promise. Now, at last, the promise was to become a possession. No wonder they hastened to go over. And should not we hasten to claim the fulness of the Holy Spirit? The promise of the Father is not to remain a promise, but it is to be our own possession. Come, let us hasten to enter into the Holy Ghost life. That is the life of victory.

IV A Memorial and Testimony: When all the people had passed through Jordan the Lord spoke to Joshua, advising him to send twelve men, one from every tribe, back to the riverbed to fetch twelve stones to be used to build a memorial to the miraculous

events of the day. So twelve great stones were brought up out of the riverbed on the shoulders of these chosen men. These were to be built into a memorial to remind Israel of its miraculous entrance into the land of promise. We, too, are to remember and testify to how the Lord brought us into the life in the Spirit. The testimony of our Baptism in the Spirit may encourage some young seeker to enter in also. We are not to forget the pit from whence we were dug, nor are we to neglect giving glory to God again and again for the marvelous way in which He brought us out of the flesh and into the Spirit.

When the stones had been brought out and twelve stones from the promised land set in the riverbed, the Lord instructed Joshua to call the priests who bare the ark out of the river. As soon as the sole of their feet trod upon the dry ground of Canaan, the waters were released and rushed once again in flood stage past the children of Israel, now encamped at Gilgal, to their terminus in the Dead Sea. At Gilgal, just east of Jericho, the children of Israel pitched their camp. There they erected the memorial with the twelve stones from the riverbed. Joshua instructed the people, that when in time to come, their children born in the new land should ask what this memorial stood for, they should let them know how Israel crossed Jordan on dry ground just as they had crossed the Red Sea forty years before. It was God's desire that all the earth should know and recognize that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that all might fear Him forever.

May the testimony of our deliverance from the Egypt of worldliness and entrance into the land of life in the Spirit bring glory to the name of the Lord and inspire the next generation to claim their inheritance in the kingdom of our Lord. For those who have begun to follow Jesus, but have not yet entered into the precious experiences of death to self and the life in the Holy Spirit, let each one be encouraged to claim this portion by faith. It is where the real Christian life is! Every one that asks and seeks and knocks, must ultimately obtain. No sacrifice can be too great to make, when compared with the fulfillment and glory and peace of this life in the Spirit. The promise is to you, just as surely (and more so) as the promise of Canaan was to Israel.

For those who have already begun this life, there is the necessity to remind ourselves that we must daily follow our Captain and obey His commands. If we would enter fully into the rest of God, we must fight the battles of the Lord. Yet even this need not be done in our own strength but with the great help of our indwelling Lord.

VICTORY AT JERICHO

Read: Joshua 5 & 6

Memory Work: Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. In the believer's life in the Spirit, all the old reproach of the world and the flesh is to be crucified.

2. Just as the Captain of the host of the Lord appeared to Joshua, so the Lord Himself by His Spirit manifests Himself to the believer to lead in the fight against every stronghold of self and the world.

3. The weapons of our warfare such as prayer, praise, and obedience are mighty through God to pull down spiritual strongholds comparable to Jericho in the natural realm.

I Gilgal: The news of the miraculous crossing of Jordan spread quickly among the inhabitants of Canaan. The report struck terror into their hearts. No spirit was left in them any more (Josh.5:1). But before the Lord unleashed the sword against the Canaanites, he turned His knife on the children of Israel. For forty years the Israelites had neglected to circumcise their male children. Now, since the older generation had passed away, the entire population of Israel's men were uncircumcised: they were like the rest of the world. There is in this, of course, a spiritual lesson for us. These men had come out of Egypt, the type of the world; but Egypt had not entirely come out of them. With this mass circumcision, the Lord "rolled away the reproach of Egypt," from Israel (vs.9). The name Gilgal means "rolling." There, before the Lord allowed them to attack the doomed inhabitants of the land, He turned His knife on His people in order that they might be totally separated from the world and the flesh. Even so the believer who would claim the

fulness of his inheritance must mortify the members of his body and yield them up in total consecration to the Lord.

II The Passover: Gilgal became the home base for Israel. It was there that the stones from Jordan were erected to memorialize the miracle of the passage over Jordan. There the tabernacle was set up. After the rolling away of the reproach of Egypt by the circumcision of the men, God called His people to observe the Passover feast. It was only the third observance in history. The first, of course, was when Israel was brought out of Egypt by the mighty hand of God. Then they ate it in haste, ready to flee. The blood was sprinkled for protection and the lamb eaten to give strength for the wilderness journey.

At Sinai, when the tabernacle was set up according to the pattern showed to Moses on the mount, once again the Passover feast was observed. But after that for thirty-eight years the Passover was neglected. There is no record of its observance until Israel crossed over Jordan and entered the promised land.

Once in the promised land the observance changed somewhat from the original manner. The need for haste was removed. The drinking of juice of the fruit of the vine probably replaced the sprinkling of blood on the doorposts. The original observance spared them from death, but the celebration in the promised land imparted strength for life. In an even greater way the Christians' partaking of the Lord's Supper brings the life of the Son of God to him.

Immediately after the first Passover in the promised land, the manna ceased. Their fathers had eaten manna in the wilderness but were all dead. Now the children partook of the Passover as they prepared to possess the land of promise.

Not only is the old life of the flesh to be crucified with the love of the world, but the believer who will claim the promise of becoming a partaker of the Divine nature, has the provision made for him that the life of Jesus shall become his portion. The life is in the blood. Therefore as we partake of the body and blood of Christ at the communion supper, we may expect the life of the conquering Son of God to enter into us. This is our most important preparation for the conflict against the strongholds of Satan in the self-life. Let us feed upon our Lamb by saturating ourselves with the word of God and by abandoning ourselves to His Spirit continually.

III Captain of the Host of the Lord: As Joshua examined the stronghold of Jericho one day, suddenly an armed man appeared

facing Joshua. The leader of Israel did not flee from before him but met him and enquired, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" The visitor responded and said, "Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." Joshua fell to the ground and asked for instruction. The remarkable visitor commanded Joshua to remove his shoes because the place where he stood was holy. The incident calls to mind the burning bush where Moses met the Lord. Usually, when angelic messengers appeared to people they did not accept worship. But this messenger not only accepted worship but commanded further reverence. The Lord Jesus Himself is called "the captain of our salvation." This visitor was a manifestation of God Himself. What an encouragement to Joshua. That sword could never be defeated. Joshua's worries were over. The responsibility could be fully given over to this "captain." It remained for Joshua to follow every instruction and to inspire Israel also to do so.

As the Spirit-filled believer wages his holy war against all that is not Christ-like in his life, he is not left alone to battle either. The Lord manifests Himself and fights with and for us. Only unbelief and disobedience can prevent the victory of possessing the very Divine nature of Christ. God is for us. Who can be against us? We, too, may turn over the responsibility for waging this holy war, to the Lord, our Captain, who has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. Victory is sure if we but follow Him and do His bidding. We shall be like Him! Let us put our feet down upon everything in our lives that is not like Jesus. Claim the Christlife. He wants you to be as pure as He is pure. He calls you to be as meek and humble as He is meek and humble. He desires us to be just as forgiving, patient and loving as He is. All of this is our inheritance in the "land of promise." This is His Divine nature. Let us be circumcised in heart and spirit so that we are cut off from the world and the flesh and let us claim the life of the Son of God manifested within by His Spirit so that we may utterly defeat every foe and enter into the great rest of God; ceasing from our own works to allow Christ to live out His life within us.

IV The First Great Triumph: Now Israel was ready. They had been fully prepared. The Lord instructed Joshua exactly what to do. Seven priests with ram's horn trumpets were to march before the ark of the covenant. They were to march completely around the city of Jericho, blowing the trumpets as they went. The armed soldiers of Israel were to march before the horns, and the ark and the rest of Israel were to follow the priests

with the horns. They were not to shout until the command was given. The instructions were followed perfectly on the first day. How foolish these actions must have seemed in the eyes of the people of Jericho. No doubt, the people of Israel felt very foolish also as they carried out their instructions. Obedience to the Lord is never foolish no matter how strange it may seem at the time.

The children of Israel repeated this ritual for six days. On the seventh day, however, they rose early and circled the city seven times. It was after the seventh time that the Lord bade Joshua to command the people to shout. "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city!" he cried. The shout that rent the air must have astonished the inhabitants of Jericho. This was a shout of faith. We ought not to be surprised should the Lord instruct us somewhere along the way to "shout for the Lord hath given you the victory." As the echo of that great shout died away, a new sound began. The walls of the city fell down flat. Only the house of Rahab was spared. She and her loved ones were brought safely to the outer parts of the camp of Israel.

the city of Jericho was the firstfruits of the victory in the promised land. No spoil was to be taken by Israel. All the inhabitants and cattle were to be destroyed. The city itself was to be burned with fire and never rebuilt. Any silver and gold or vessels of iron or brass were to be consecrated to the service of the Lord in the tabernacle. The people were commanded to take nothing from that city for themselves for it was accursed. So the city was burned with fire. Rahab, her parents and brethren escaped and were assimilated into Israel and Joshua cursed the city in general and anyone who would attempt to rebuild it in particular. God intends that our victories shall be permanent.

A TRESPASS AND A MISTAKE

Read: Joshua 7, 8, & 9

Memory Work: But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *When we fail to consecrate to the Lord what He asks of us, we bring wrath upon ourselves.*
2. *There is a very real danger for the believer after he has won a great spiritual blessing; that he becomes self-confident.*
3. *Our sins not only damage our own lives, but also may cost others severe loss. We do not live unto ourselves.*
4. *Failure to seek guidance from the Lord can cause great regrets later. We must acknowledge Him in all our ways.*

I The Accursed Thing: Joshua had instructed the warriors of Israel to keep themselves at all costs from taking any spoil for themselves from the city of Jericho. Every living thing was to be utterly slain and all the gold and silver and brass and iron was to be devoted to the Lord for the tabernacle. The city was cursed and was burned with fire. Secretly, one Israelite took for himself some of the accursed spoil. Achan, of the tribe of Judah, secretly committed this trespass and disobedience. The results were disastrous to himself and for all Israel.

II Defeat At Ai: The miraculous victory at Jericho filled Israel with confidence. The next city in their path was a small town named Ai. The men whom Joshua sent to view the area returned with the advice to send just two or three thousand troops to capture Ai. Without instruction from the Lord, Joshua dispatched about three thousand men to wipe out Ai. To their surprise and dismay the men of Ai charged out of the gate and chased them

slaying 36 choice men of Israel. They turned and fled before the men of Ai. Then the hearts of the people of Israel melted and they became weak. Joshua rent his clothing and fell on his face before the ark. The elders of Israel joined him in lamenting this disheartening defeat. "Alas, O Lord God," Joshua bitterly cried, "wherefore hast thou brought this people over Jordan?" He feared that such a defeat would encourage the other inhabitants to band together and resist Israel. "And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" he asked.

But the Lord quickly told Joshua the cause of the disaster. "Get thee up...Israel hath sinned...taken of the accursed thing ...and stolen...and dissembled." Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs. "Up, sanctify the people...take away the accursed thing from among you." The secret sin of Achan had brought disaster upon all of God's people.

How many defeats amongst God's people might be caused by some secret sin of a believer. If Achan's sin had only cost him his own life it would have been bad enough. But this cost 36 men their lives. Probably 36 women were made widows and many children became fatherless. Could it be that some secret sin of mine has prevented a victory for the church of Christ? God forbid!

III Sanctify Yourselves: In order to sanctify themselves the children of Israel had to purge the sin from their midst. God worked with Joshua to accomplish the discovery and punishment of the culprit. Early the next morning representatives of the tribes appeared before Joshua in the presence of the Lord, and Judah was taken. Then the families of Judah passed before Joshua and the family of the Zarahites was taken. Next Zabdi was taken and his household was made to pass one by one before the God-led leader, and Achan was taken and admonished to give glory to God by full confession. This he did and explained the progress of his temptation and sin. "I saw," he confessed, "then I coveted...and took...and hid." A colorful garment that should have been burned, and a wedge of gold and two hundred shekels of silver which should have been dedicated to the Lord in the tabernacle, were taken by Achan and hidden in the ground in his tent. Messengers were sent to Achan's tent and found the accursed spoil. Sentence was passed on Achan and he and all his family and possessions were stoned and then burned with fire. If the sentence seems harsh we must remember that Achan's action made 36 women widows and

many children fatherless. It brought shame and disgrace on Israel and on the name of the Lord. He had "troubled Israel," and so a great heap of stones was raised over his remains and the place was called the valley of Achor (trouble).

IV God's Military Strategy: Now Joshua received instruction from the Lord. How important it is that we learn not to lean on our own understanding, but wait for guidance from the Lord. Israel had won such a great victory at Jericho, that the flush of success made them presumptuous to proceed against the small town of Ai in self-confidence. How differently David acted in his battles with the Philistines. The "man after God's own heart" always enquired of the Lord and received instruction from Him. We cannot fight the battles of the Lord any way we please. We must win in God's way.

The Lord told Joshua to send some of his army around to the other side of Ai where they would lie wait in ambush against the city. Meanwhile the main force would march boldly on Ai once more. When the men of Ai charged out of the city they were to purposely flee before them to draw them away from the city. The plan then was that a signal should be given to the ambushers and they should take and burn the unprotected city while simultaneously the main force of Israel turned to fight. Of course, the plan worked perfectly and defeat was turned into victory. A costly lesson was learned through this experience. If we learn the lessons taught by this incident, we may save ourselves and others needless affliction and spiritual defeat.

This time the Lord allowed Israel to take the cattle for spoil unto themselves but all the inhabitants were utterly destroyed. The king of Ai was hanged and his body covered by a heap of stones. Joshua built an altar and made sacrifices to the Lord. A copy of the law of Moses was engraved on stone and the entire law read aloud to the whole congregation, including the women and children.

V An Unfortunate Mistake: The kings of the inhabitants of Canaan now joined forces and determined to fight against Israel together, rather than one by one. But one of the larger cities did not join this confederation. The people of Gibeon tried a different tactic. They posed as travellers from a far country. They presented themselves to Joshua and the elders of Israel with a carefully contrived story. They said they had come from a very far off country because of the fame of the God of Israel

who had done great things. In support of their story they showed their old and battered shoes. As evidence they also produced old and mouldy bread which they claimed to have taken fresh from the oven for their journey. "We are thy servants," they said, "now therefore make a league with us." Moses had specifically warned Israel several times to beware that they make no league or covenant with any of the inhabitants of the land (see Deut.7:2 and Ex.23:32). The thought must have crossed the elders' minds, for they questioned, "Peradventure, ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you?" (Josh.9:7).

Instead of enquiring of the Lord, the elders of Israel and Joshua took the evidence of the Gibeonites at face value and agreed to peace with them and made a league. The princes of the congregation swore unto them. The oath brought God into the bargain so that when Israel found out that these "travelers" were indeed inhabitants of the land which they should have destroyed, they could not because of the oath! The great mistake of Joshua and of Israel was that they considered the evidence these conspirators presented and "asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord."

Despite this terrible blunder, God worked the situation for good to Israel, for He allowed these crafty people to live, but only to become hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God. Our merciful Lord often makes our blunders to work out for good to us. Yet, far better to ask counsel of the Lord in every situation in life and not fall into the traps of the enemies. Let us not be deceived by the evidence of the popularity and prosperity of the lovers of this world. Let us ask counsel of the Lord and then follow it. "Love not the world; neither the things that are in the world." Let us claim total victory over every work of the flesh. Make no peace with the enemy. Take complete possession of your inheritance!

GREAT VICTORIES

Read: Joshua 10, 11, & 12

Memory Work: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The Christian believer has an obligation to keep his word and to fulfill his promises.*
2. *Great battles present the opportunity for great victories.*
3. *In response to real faith nothing is impossible for our God. The very laws of the natural created world may be superceded by the higher laws of the kingdom of God.*
4. *By faith, we may claim great victories over the self life. God fights for us and will, by His Spirit, quickly grant triumph to those who believe.*

I Come...and Save Us: When the kings of Canaan heard that the Gibeonites had made a covenant with Israel and Joshua, they were distressed. Gibeon was a great city and its men were mighty and renowned warriors. Adoni-zedec, the king of Jerusalem, sent word to four other kings of major cities, to join him in an attack on the Gibeonites. Hesitant to attack Israel directly, they thought to remove any help Israel may have received from these inhabitants of the land. So the armies of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon joined forces and marched on Gibeon.

The men of Gibeon were aware of the attack and sent a hurried plea to Joshua at Gilgal to come and save them. Israel, because of their covenant with Gibeon, was bound to help it. In a later era, David responded to the question; "Who shall abide in thy tabernacle?" with the condition (among others), "He that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not" (see Psalm 15). As for the modern Christian, our word is our bond.

We must acknowledge our obligation as Christians to keep our word and carefully fulfill our promises.

Joshua did not delay to respond to this plea for help. Quickly, he gathered his warriors at Gilgal and prepared to march to the aid of Gibeon. The Lord spoke to Joshua at this point, and an encouraging word it was: "Fear them not for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee" (ch.10:8). Such a promise made Joshua anxious to proceed. He led his men quickly to Gibeon marching all night taking the five kings and their hosts by surprise.

The promises of God to us ought to make us confident to battle against every manifestation of the self-life in us. His Spirit is the seal of victory for us. We can, and must, be partakers of His Divine nature. Let us mortify every inordinate desire and yield our members as instruments of obedience. He will fight with and for us.

II The Lord Fought For Israel: Surprised and discomfited, the armies of the five kings fell before Joshua and his men. There was a great slaughter at Gibeon, and when the armies of the five kings fled, Israel pursued them. Now the Lord joined in the battle and sent great hailstones down upon the fleeing hosts of the five kings. So large were these hailstones that they caused the death of a large part of the fleeing army. More were killed by the hailstones than by the sword on that day.

Joshua realized that darkness would allow the enemy to escape from the annihilation ordered by the Lord. Boldly, in the sight of his men, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still in the west; and the moon also to stop in its course in the east. For "about a whole day" the sun and moon stopped in their courses while Israel continued to eradicate their enemies. Nothing shall be impossible to those who know and believe our God, the creator and redeemer.

Many years later in the days of Isaiah, the Lord gave a sign to Hezekiah that he would recover from his serious illness. At that time God caused the shadow on the sun-dial to go back ten degrees. This was equal to 40 minutes and together with this miracle in Joshua's time of "about a whole day," make up one day of 24 hours. Ancient traditions have been discovered in the far east of a long night, "when the sun forgot to come up." In response to Joshua's simple faith this great miracle took place.

If God was willing, in response to Joshua's faith, to stop

the rotation of the earth, or whatever He did to cause the sun to stand still, will He not come to our aid in our battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil? God desires to dwell in us and the world must be driven out. God wants us to be filled with His Holy Spirit and the flesh must be denied and put to death. God wants our bodies as His temple and if we respond in faith, and crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and reckon ourselves as dead indeed to the world and the world to us, the Lord will go to miracle lengths to give us total victory in this fight of faith.

III The Five Kings: The five kings who had joined forces against Gibeon fled and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. But they were discovered and Joshua was advised of their whereabouts. Rather than take time to deal with them at once, Joshua commanded that they be sealed in the cave by rolling a great stone over the opening to the cave. The slaughter of the enemy armies then could continue and the kings would be dealt with later. When the slaughter was ended and the few remaining troops had regained refuge in their fenced cities, the men of Israel returned to Makkedah in peace.

Then Joshua commanded that the five kings be brought out of the cave. He told the captains of Israel to come near and put their feet on the necks of these kings. "Be strong and of a good courage," Joshua admonished his men, "for this shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight." Then Joshua slew the five kings and hung their bodies upon five trees.

We, too, may put our feet on the necks of every king of the self-life. One by one or five at a time, God is ready and anxious to give us total victory. Unfortunately, because of faulty teaching, many "believers" are content to remain under the yoke of some fleshly or worldly king. Presuming that the "grace of God" is an adequate substitute for real victory over an evil nature, they fail to do battle against these "kings" which God desires us to defeat and hang up for all to see. Real victory over self and the world is not for some unusual "mystics" or spiritual giants. It is for you! Victory was promised for all Israel. The works were finished from the foundation of the world. It remained for Israel to believe and to fight. If they fell short it was because of unbelief and laziness. If we do not claim the victory over self and the resultant Christlife within as our inheritance, it will be because of unbelief and indifference on our part. Let there be no peaceful coexistence with these enemies. Deal with them specifically. Name the enemy

enemy in the Presence of God. Put your feet upon the neck of this enemy claiming the promise of God for total victory. Press the battle now. Get the victory as young as possible. Life will be more fruitful.

When the kings were dead Joshua attacked their cities. One by one these cities were possessed. Only Jerusalem was not taken. Not until David won the city almost five hundred years later, was this strong city won. But now Israel slew the inhabitants of these cities and took the spoil of them unto themselves. Libnah, Lachish, Hebron, and Eglon, along with Makedah and Debir! Great victories were won in all the hilly region of the south. Then Joshua returned with his army to Gilgal where the tabernacle was set up.

IV More Kings: The news of the defeat of the five great kings drove the remaining kings together to make a confederation of their armies. Jabin, the king of Hazor organized these forces. When put together their forces made a formidable army. Their forces included horses and chariots. But the Lord reassured Joshua that He would deliver up this host of enemies to Israel. And so He did. They houghed their horses and burned the chariots with fire. The cities were not burned but they were taken intact for Israel to dwell in. Joshua left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. In all, thirty-one kings were subdued by Israel under Moses and Joshua (see ch.12). And the land rested from war.

Let us, too, expect an end to the fight against the self-life. We, too, may enter into rest. If we are thorough in the annihilation of every evil work in our hearts and lives, we shall indeed enjoy the wonderful rest of God. Let us labor to enter into this rest.

THE INHERITANCE OF CALEB

Read: Joshua 13, 14, & 15

Memory Work: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. Isaiah 53:7

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The Lord does not forget to reward those who are faithful to Him.*
2. *Even aged believers may win notable victories in the kingdom of our Lord.*
3. *The promises of God must be claimed. We must fight for them and expel the "giants" of fear, unbelief and difficulty.*
4. *"Hebron" means fellowship; and we must fight with the weapons God has provided for us until we possess constant fellowship with our Lord. His Presence is our portion.*

I He Wholly Followed the Lord: If there was a tombstone to mark the grave of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenezite, it surely would say, "He wholly followed the Lord." Although we have no such marker in a Judean graveyard, the sacred scriptures do record this epitaph of Caleb: "He wholly followed the Lord." Moses recognized the unusual faithfulness of this man of Judah (see Deut.1:36). The inspired record of Joshua records that same noble faithfulness to the Lord three more times (see Josh.14:3,9, & 14).

Caleb was one of the original twelve spies sent by Moses to search out the land of Canaan. This took place about a year and a half after the exodus from Egypt. Only Caleb and Joshua among the twelve spies advised Israel to enter in and possess the land. Ten regarded the land and its inhabitants as too formidable for Israel to conquer. There were great cities with protective walls and giant warriors which made the spies of

Israel feel like grasshoppers in comparison. The ten considered the obstacles and the giants, but Joshua and Caleb considered the advantage of having the Lord on their side. Unfortunately, the congregation of Israel listened to the majority and rebelled at the commandment of the Lord to go up and take the country. Joshua and Caleb were nearly stoned to death for their faithfulness at that time. It was for this rebellion of Israel, noted by God as the tenth great provocation since they came out of Egypt, that God sentenced that generation to die in the wilderness (see Num.14:22-24). There Caleb was singled out for reward and it is noted that he had a different spirit and had followed the Lord fully. Again in Numbers 32:12 we are reminded that Caleb and Joshua wholly followed the Lord.

Moses was moved of God to promise a reward to Caleb because of his unusual faithfulness. Joshua became the successor of Moses, but Caleb remained in obscurity until the possession of the promised land. But Moses promised Caleb that all the land that his feet had trodden upon when he went to spy out the land, would be his when Israel entered in at last. That portion which he searched out was in the hill country and included the town known as Hebron. This was indeed an historic and sacred place. There Abraham had his only possession in Canaan. The patriarch purchased a portion of ground and a cave there at Hebron to bury his beloved wife, Sarah. Later Abraham, too, was laid to rest there, and still later, Isaac and Rebecca and Jacob and Leah. This was the area promised to Caleb because of his faithfulness in following the Lord.

II Give Me This Mountain: After the defeat and destruction of thirty-one kings, Joshua began to divide the land for the inheritance of the twelve tribes. There still remained much land to be possessed and many inhabitants to be destroyed, but great progress had been made. Before Joshua parceled out the land, Caleb came with the elders of Judah to remind him of the promise of Moses concerning his possession in the land. "Now therefore give me this mountain," Caleb requested, "and Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance" (vs.13). But Caleb still had the formidable task of driving out the inhabitants of that place. He was not a young man any more. When Moses sent him to spy out the land he was forty years of age and now he was eighty-five years old. Despite this advanced age, his strength had not diminished. He was just as strong as ever and ready to

undertake to drive out the giants that dwelt at Hebron. Three sons of Anak; Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai (they sound like giants) were driven out of Hebron and Caleb claimed his possession. He also went up against Debir and promised to reward the man who would win that city for Judah with the hand of his daughter in marriage. Othniel, who later became the first judge in that era of Israel's history took the challenge and claimed his prize.

This story is an inspiration to the Lord's aged followers. Advanced years do not prevent God's saints from fighting the battles of the Lord and winning remarkable victories in His kingdom. This story was used by the Lord to confirm the leading given to Elizabeth Foth to go and minister to the San Blas Indians (off the coast of Panama) when she was eighty-five years of age. Not only did she indeed go, but remarkably survived a fierce hurricane in an open boat and brought much blessing to the people God had laid on her heart. Let every older saint take courage and expect to still win some victories for the kingdom of God.

III Claiming the Promises: The promise made forty-five years before was not automatically fulfilled for Caleb and his family. He had to come forward and remind Joshua of the pledge of Moses and claim that inheritance and then even fight for it. Even so the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel do not automatically become our portion. We must do as Caleb did. We must remind our Lord of His promises and stake our claim to them. We may be called upon to fight the giants of unbelief or fear or worldliness and materialism before we can enjoy the full blessing of possession. But ultimate victory is guaranteed if we but claim the promise and fight for it.

The fulness of the Holy Spirit is promised to us and for this we must stake our claim and fight. Of course, our battle is in the spiritual realm, but by prayer and praise and faith we may come to possess the fullness of this promise. We are specifically advised that the exceeding great and precious promises give us the right to become "partakers of the Divine nature." We may become Christ-like. If we do not live like Jesus Christ lived we are short comers; we are coming short of the glory of God. Where we are not Christ-like let us go to war. Drive out the "Ahiman" of pride. Let every vestige of the "Sheshai" of uncleanness be annihilated and the "Talmai" of materialism be utterly destroyed. Only when we have absolute victory can we truly enjoy the rest that God has for those who believe and obey.

IV Hebron: Fellowship: The constant manifestation of the Presence of God within our hearts is quite a prize for which to contend. The word Hebron means "fellowship," and this is the reward God seeks to bestow upon His people. Often we read of God's desire to dwell with us. He has promised to manifest Himself to such as show their love toward Him by obedience to His commandments. Further, the promise is specific, that Father and Son will make their abode with us if we keep His words (see John 14:21,23). This is Hebron! This fellowship with the Father and with the Son is an inheritance worth fighting for.

The city of Hebron had a remarkable history. As noted already, the Patriarchs were buried there. David, the king was anointed there, and it served as his capital for seven and a half years. Tradition says that it was to Hebron that Mary went to visit her cousin Elisabeth and that there at Hebron, the child Jesus was conceived. But as interesting and remarkable as the history of this natural city may be, the promises of God to dwell in us and to abide with us are far more remarkable.

Too many "believers" relegate the experience of the manifested Presence of the Lord to unusual "mystics." But this is God's provision for all of His people. Let us not lose the great promise by default. Caleb had to claim his inheritance and then fight for it. We, too, must claim our inheritance and fight for it. God has given us the weapons we need. Prayer and praise can win any battle and faith in our God renders all things possible. Let us bestir ourselves and join Caleb in his request, "Now therefore give me this mountain." Let us fight the good fight of faith until we possess in fact the fullness of the blessing of the exceeding great and precious promises.

THE INHERITANCE OF THE TRIBES

Read: Joshua 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, & 21

Memory Work: He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. Isaiah 53:8

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Victory and eternal possessions are promised to the Church of Jesus Christ, just as the land of Canaan was promised to Israel.*
2. *We must not be slack to claim all the victories God has for us.*
3. *The gifts of the Spirit are offered to the Church and we may claim these gifts as our inheritance.*
4. *Ambitious faith can claim even greater possessions of the Spirit-filled life.*

1 The Choice of the Natural Man: After Israel had defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites and Og, king of Bashan, some of the Israelites concluded that the land of these nations would be ideal for their cattle-raising people. At that time Moses still lived and led Israel. He protested that it would be unfair for these two and a half tribes, who requested this inheritance, to settle down comfortably while the remainder of the people had to fight for their possessions. But they promised not to settle the land until all the enemies were destroyed and until they had helped the rest of the tribes to gain their inheritance in the promised land. Moses had misgivings but finally agreed to their request. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh were those who desired the area on the east of Jordan. The river separated them from the Tabernacle and later from the Temple. It separated them from fellowship. They did keep their pledge and fought alongside their brethren until released by Joshua, (ch.22:1-3) but their choice was material-

istically motivated and became a snare to them. They became involved in idolatry quickly and fell prey to the invading armies before any of the other tribes.

This area east of Jordan was called Gilead. It was not God's choice for these two and a half tribes to live there. No mention of this land was made concerning the promised land. The other tribes received their portions by lot at the door of the tabernacle in the Presence of God. This choice of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh was based on materialism. Too many Christians follow this poor example today. They choose their own way and occupation and place to live. They choose with an eye to business and prosperity. They may decide to live far out in the suburbs far from their place of worship. They never even consider to let God choose for them. At first they remember their vows and continue in fellowship with their brethren, but soon the pressures of the world creep in and spiritual values are lost. Idolatry (materialism) and finally captivity results. Let us take warning! Let God choose for you. Keep close to God's people and the place of worship. Don't make decisions motivated by materialism. God's inheritance is best for you.

II The Inheritance of Judah and of Joseph: The conquest of the kings on the west of Jordan gave opportunity to Judah and Ephraim to claim their lots of inheritance. Joseph got a double inheritance. His two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh were numbered among the tribes. Judah's portion was marked out in the southern hill country of the promised land. Ephraim, the tribe of Joshua, the strongest and most populous of the other tribes had its portion to the north of Judah. Manasseh's half tribe that did not choose the east side of Jordan also received their inheritance with the tribe of Ephraim. Caleb claimed his promised inheritance by appealing to Joshua and then overcoming the giants which dwelt in Hebron.

We too, though we have our general inheritance with the people of God, may claim some special portion by applying to our Joshua and then battling by prayer and praise to possess our Hebron. Caleb's daughter, who was given to Othniel as a bride when he conquered the city of Debir, claimed a special portion. She asked for springs of water to go with her southland inheritance. Her father gave her more than she asked for. Our heavenly Father will surely give to us the water of life as our extra portion if we come to Him with confidence. In the heavenly kingdom the women have as much right as the men to ask for and claim a blessed spiritual portion. Let us come boldly to our Father and claim all that He has for us.

Despite the preeminence of the tribe of Judah, they did not dispossess the Jebusites from their city, Jebus (later Jerusalem) at this time. Not until the days of David was this conquest finally completed. May there be no area in our lives where the life of the Spirit does not conquer. Sad to say, many Christians do not gain the victory in one area or another of their lives. Let no unclean desire keep its residence in our hearts. Allow no city of covetousness to maintain its capitol in our lives. Cast down the towers of pride that the enemy may have no place in us at all. God will fight for us. Let us aim to be like Jesus. Why should we not seek until we have found the fulness of the life of the Spirit?

Ephraim was not satisfied with the area allotted to them. They applied to Joshua for more. He instructed them to clear the forest and drive out the Perizzites and the giants who dwelt there. They recognized the difficulties because the Perizzites had chariots of iron, but Joshua reassured them that it would be done and the extra portion would be theirs. Let us not hesitate to claim greater portions of the promises of God. Nothing shall be impossible to those who have faith in God.

Most notable in the portion that was given to Manasseh was the portion promised by Moses to the daughters of Zelophehad. This descendant of Joseph had no sons, but his daughters did not allow the inheritance of their father to be lost by default. Though unheard of before, the Lord approved their claim and they set a precedent for women in Israel to maintain the inheritance of their fathers. The rights of women were recognized by the Lord and Joshua and Eleazar granted their request and gave them a portion with the men of their tribe. Today, also, no one need draw back from a personal portion in the realm of the Spirit. God has a portion for every one. Those discriminated against in other areas of society find equal opportunity in the kingdom of God to be filled with, and used by, the Holy Spirit.

III The Lots of the Seven Tribes: Seven tribes had not received their portions in the land of promise. They seemed content with things as they were. Joshua had to stir them up. "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?" he prodded. Three men from each of the seven tribes were sent out to map the land. Then it was divided into seven portions and lots were cast before the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle which had been set up at Shiloh. The portion which fell to the tribe of Benjamin was between

Judah and Ephraim. Simeon's portion was within the territory of Judah toward the south. Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan had their portion by lot in that order in the northern part of Canaan. Of these tribes two are especially interesting. Simeon was such a weak tribe that they did not obtain a defined geographic area as their possession. Instead, an area and certain towns within Judah were allotted to them. To the north the area allotted to Dan though considerable was not enough for them and they launched out and took additional territory. They renamed the annexed town of Leshem, Dan, after the father of their tribe.

There is a portion for all in the kingdom of our Lord. But each one must rouse himself to claim the portion of their lot. Let us claim our personal inheritance and also let us claim, as a congregation, the souls, and the influence, and the outreach, that can be ours by faith. Let us ask ourselves, "How long will we be slack to possess all that God has appointed for us?" Up, let us claim and possess our mountain for God and His kingdom!

IV The Levites' Portion: This tribe was chosen by the Lord to serve Him. The priests were of the tribe of Levi. The rest of the families of the Levites were occupied with the care of the Tabernacle and its appointments and its service. They did not get a portion like the other tribes. The Lord declared that He was their inheritance. Care was taken for their necessities. Forty-eight towns and their suburbs throughout all Israel were designated for the Levites. These were all prominent towns. Hebron was set aside for the families of the priests. The great point about the Levites is that since they were given no material possession like the other tribes, God promised them a unique and invaluable substitute. He, Himself, was their inheritance. Even so today, for those choice souls who consecrate their all to Jesus, choosing to forfeit all personal choices in this life for His sake, the Lord rewards these with His own life manifested within. May many hear the call of the king and choose Him.

JOSHUA'S LAST CHARGE

Read: Joshua 23 & 24

Memory Work: And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Isaiah 53:9

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The Lord desires His people to be faithful to Him and to love Him to the end.*
2. *The enemy will do all in his power to turn our love to something or anything other than our Lord Himself.*
3. *Our love for the Lord is manifested in our obedience to Him and our total faith in Him.*
4. *We have the privilege to choose to serve the Lord. Our choices determine our eternal destiny.*

I Not One Thing Hath Failed: With the distribution of the land of Canaan to the last seven tribes of Israel, and the designation of 48 cities with their suburbs for the Levites, the conquest of Canaan was approximated. The children of Israel had conquered in every place where they fought. They entered into rest from their struggle. The narrative notes that all the land God had promised them was now their own. Not an enemy could stand before them in the battles; "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Joshua 22:45; see vss.43, 44 also).

The tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh were released from their obligation to fight with their brethren. They returned to the other side of Jordan where they had chosen to live. The first thing they did was to build a great altar at the river Jordan. When the other tribes heard of this they were disturbed. All Israel had been commanded to worship at the one Tabernacle. They were instructed to offer their sacrifices at the one altar only. Israel was ready to fight and punish the two tribes and the half for their trans-

gression, but they explained the altar to the satisfaction of Israel. Nevertheless it was the beginning of a slow but sure decline from faithful obedience to the Lord. We may be able to rationalize our transgressions for a time, but it is a sure sign of backsliding when we do so.

Joshua had become old and realized that soon he would go to his reward. He called for all Israel with their elders and heads to assemble. They gathered at Shechem where the venerable old leader reminded them of all that God had done for Israel. He spoke of his approaching death and testified to them that "not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof" (ch.23:14).

II Take Heed That Ye Love the Lord: It was true that the land had been conquered and divided and that no enemy had been able to overcome Israel. But still there remained inhabitants that had not been utterly destroyed. There were cities that were yet unconquered. Refugees of the dispossessed inhabitants remained in hiding places. The major victories had been won. Still there remained mopping up operations for Israel. In his last charge to Israel, Joshua exhorted the people to continue and finish the conquest of the land. He warned them that if they did not utterly destroy these remaining enemies there would be in the time to come, temptation to recognize and bow down to the gods of the inhabitants of the land. There would also be the temptation to intermarry. If this would happen and Israel sin in these ways, Joshua assured them that they would ultimately perish from off the land. As surely as the Lord had brought good upon Israel in helping them to possess the land, so surely would He bring evil upon them, if they transgressed by serving other gods. "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God" (Joshua 23:11).

Now surely this is an important lesson for those who have begun the life in the Spirit. We have experienced the wonderful baptism of the Holy Spirit. Using the weapons of prayer and praise with faith, enemies of unbelief and pride and lust have been defeated. Our hearts have become the abode of our Lord. We have become possessors of our inheritance. There is the very real danger of complacency. We must stay watchful and continue to press the battle against each enemy, however small they may seem. We must take heed that we maintain our love for the Lord. The enemy of our souls will do anything to turn our love aside from our Lord who created us and redeemed us

by His blood. The material things of this world contend for our affection. It is easy to understand that when the families of Israel finally received their individual possessions in the promised land, that they were interested in their new homes and crops, etc. But there were still enemies to be destroyed. Even so in the Christian life, the wonderful salvation and baptism of the Holy Spirit bring us such glorious blessing that it is easy to forget that there are still enemies to be subdued. We cannot serve God and mammon! We are commanded to set our affection on things above and not on the material things of earth. Balaam, Judas, Demas, the rich young ruler and many others lost the eternal inheritance because of love for the material things of this life.

The fleshly lusts also contend for the first place in the hearts of humanity. The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink but in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The flesh is to be mercilessly denied and crucified with its affections and lusts. Many who have begun well and won many victories in the spiritual realm have later become presumptuous of their spirituality and have fallen easy prey to the temptations of the flesh.

Young F. B. Meyer had the aged missionary C. T. Studd as his guest in his London parsonage. In the wee hours of the morning the young pastor noticed the light burning in the missionary's room. Through the door which was ajar he discovered the old man paging through his Bible while on his knees at his bedside. In the morning he tactfully inquired the reason for the light at such a late hour. The old warrior explained that since the Lord had said that if we love Him we would keep His commandments, he was just going over the commands of Jesus to be sure that he still loved the Lord as he should. The incident so spoke to the young pastor that he was never the same. To love the work of the Lord is not the same as loving Him, Himself. The enemy will try even this wily strategy: to get us to love our service for the Lord so much that we neglect to love Him. Take heed,...that ye love the Lord your God!

III Choose You Whom Ye Will Serve: The children of Israel were warned especially against idolatry. Abraham's parents on the other side of the flood (Euphrates river) had worshipped other gods. In Egypt also there were a multitude of gods. The inhabitants of Canaan and the surrounding nations worshipped idols. At the end of his faithful career of leadership, Joshua called

on Israel to choose whom they would serve, all these other gods, or the Lord God Almighty. Joshua spoke for himself and his household, that they would serve the Lord. The people responded that they would not forsake the Lord but that they would serve Him. Joshua reminded them of their weaknesses, but they reaffirmed that they would follow the Lord and serve Him. The old leader had a memorial pillar erected there at Shechem bearing witness to their solemn oath to serve the Lord.

In this modern enlightened age we are not very likely to be tempted to bow before Baal or worship Ashteroth or sacrifice our babies in the fire to Molech; nor are we so foolish to worship created things; sun, moon stars, or a river. Yet the same tendency which was prevalent in the Jews of old, sticks in the human nature today. We bow, not to Baal, but to the standard of living. How we strive to reach a higher plateau in this material realm. How zealously do many serve this God of Gold. The worship of self is every bit the equal in evil of the worship of Asteroth. For pride, for reputation, for honor, what enthusiastic, untiring service we render. The god of knowledge has been worshipped since the garden of Eden. If we would seek to know Jesus and through Him the one and only true God in the same manner in which we seek to learn all the arts and sciences of this natural world, we would experience the unspeakable glories of eternal life. What is really important to you? Choose you this day whom or what you will serve. May these lessons from the life and history of Joshua serve to make us more aware of the eternal values of the life in the Spirit, and conscious, too, of the transient nature of all earthly things and joys. The Lord knows those who choose Jesus, and they will have Him!

THE CROSS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Read: Exodus 12:1-10, 43-51; Numbers 21:1-9;
Psalm 22; Psalm 69:1-21; Isaiah 53

Memory Work: Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Isaiah 53:10

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The sufferings of Christ were foretold in Old Testament times.*
2. *The passover lamb and the lifting up of the brazen serpent were types of the atonement of Christ.*
3. *The detailed prophecies of the sufferings of Christ in the Psalms and Prophets should inspire our complete trust in Christ's atoning work.*

I The Passover Lamb: The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth: "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor.5:7). The Passover lamb was clearly a type of the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. The first type of the sacrifice of Christ is probably in the sacrifice of some animal life to make skins to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen.3:21). Another early type is found in the ram caught in the thicket which took Isaac's place on the altar of sacrifice. When Isaac had asked his Father, Abraham, where the sacrifice was for the altar, the old patriarch had responded with inspiration, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen.22:8). His words had a double fulfillment: first the natural ram, which was entangled in the brush near Abraham's altar; and then the spiritual Lamb of God, Jesus, provided for the redemption of humanity. The sin offering (see Lev.4) also is a type of the Lord Jesus who took our place even as the lamb or bullock of Old Testament times took the place of the sinner of Israel and died in his place.

The Passover lamb is a striking type of the Lamb of God. Israel had been in bondage in Egypt. Moses had been called and used of God to unify the people of Israel and to lead them out of that bondage. Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to allow Israel to leave his country where they performed their slave labor. Nine plagues had fallen upon Egypt and devastated the land. Still Pharaoh hardened his heart. One final judgment was threatened. The firstborn of every family was to die in one night. Protection from this final judgment was promised to Israel by means of the Passover lamb. Each household was to take a lamb and slay it, saving the blood in a basin. That blood was then to be sprinkled upon the door posts and above the door of their houses. Then they were to eat the flesh of the lamb roasted with fire, and leave none till the morning. Then they were to be all packed and ready to go out of Egypt.

God sent his destroying angel out on that night. The angel of death went throughout the land and visited untimely death upon the firstborn of every household. But when the angel came to a house where the blood of the lamb had been applied as directed, he passed over that house. The name "Passover" comes from this act, "and when I see the blood I will pass over you." Thus by the sacrifice of a lamb the firstborn of each household of Israel was redeemed and the household spared the anguish of the death of the heir.

The instructions concerning the choice of the lamb were significant. It was to be a male of the first year and without blemish (Ex.12:5). It is clearly seen that this description fits our Lord Jesus well. Isaac Watts recognized this when he wrote:

When I survey the wondrous cross

On which the young Prince of glory died,

Yes, Jesus was that young Prince, and He was without blemish. Satan could find nothing in Him (John 14:30). The Passover lamb was to be roasted and eaten but care was to be taken that none of its bones were broken. So when Jesus was crucified, He expired much sooner than usual for victims of that cruel execution. Because the Jews did not want the bodies of the three victims to remain on the crosses during their holiday, they requested the hastening of their deaths. The legs of the two thieves were broken to accomplish this but when the soldiers came to break Jesus' legs they found that He had already expired. John records that this quick release was accomplished to fulfill the prophecy that, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (John 19:36). Every time the children of Israel kept the Passover they looked back to the deliverance from bondage

in Egypt, and if enlightened, forward to the deliverance from the bondage of Satan by the Lamb of God at Calvary.

II The Son of Man Lifted Up: Jesus told Nicodemus that just as Moses had raised the brazen serpent in the wilderness so He must be lifted up. The incident recorded in Numbers 21 would probably not be likened to our Lord's sacrificial death were it not for Jesus' own application of it. The people had been plagued with hordes of venomous vipers. Many died. When the people began to repent the Lord instructed Moses to raise a brazen likeness of the serpents on a pole. Whoever then looked upon this likeness was spared the agonizing death from the poison. The emphasis of this type is in the fact that Jesus redeemed us from the curse by being made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). In the Garden of Eden the serpent was cursed and the law stated that whoever was hung on a tree was cursed. The likeness of the serpent on a tree thus bore a double likeness of the curse. But Jesus became a curse for us so that we might be blessed.

He comes to make His blessing flow
Far as the curse is found.

III All Things Must Be Fulfilled: After Jesus rose from the dead, He explained to His disciples that His sufferings, death, and resurrection, were all foretold in type and prophetic word in the Old Testament scriptures. The Lord specifically included the Psalms in this regard (Luke 24:44). Psalms 22 and 69 contain many references to the sufferings of Jesus. No doubt the Lord Himself was meditating and drawing comfort and support from these Psalms as He was nailed to the cross. He used the first verse of Psalm 22 as His own prayer. The mocking of the mob is also described. The bulls of Bashan represent the chief Priests and Sanhedrin of the Jews (vs.12) and the dogs of verse 16 describe the Roman soldiers. The sufferings of a victim of crucifixion are exactly described (vs.14) and the prophetic revelation regarding the distribution of Christ's clothing and the casting of lots for His cloak was fulfilled minutely (John 19:24). There is also the hope of resurrection in the last portion of the inspired Psalm.

Psalm 69 explicitly foretells of the gall they offered Jesus to deaden His pain, and of the direct cause of His death: "Reproach hath broken my heart" (vs.20). The water and blood which flowed from Jesus' pierced side indicate (according to medical interpretation) that Jesus' heart burst within Him. So

the inspired songs spoke of the cross and the atonement to be accomplished there by our Lord.

IV The Atonement Chapter: The last 27 chapters of Isaiah (40-66) are a great Hebrew poem about the Messiah. This poem is divided into three large sections (approx. 9 chapters in each). In turn these large sections contain three smaller sections each. The smaller sections each contain three chapters (approximately). It is tremendously interesting to note that the passage which falls exactly in the center of the entire poem is the portion from Isaiah 52:13-53:12. The single verse which falls in the very center of this center section is verse 5. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Could there be a more appropriate verse in the center of the poem of the Messiah? The Divine inspiration is obvious!

So perfectly does this chapter foretell the sufferings of Christ and the glory which would follow, that Satan has directed some of his most vehement attacks upon the authenticity of this section of scripture. It is noteworthy also that healing for the body is included in the atonement and that healing stands on exactly the same foundation as the forgiveness of our sins. The griefs and sorrows of verse four are applied by Matthew to infirmities and sicknesses which Jesus healed (see Matt.8:16-17).

The refusal of Jesus to defend Himself is foretold in this chapter as well as His death with the wicked (thieves) and His burial with the rich (Joseph of Arimathaea). The chapter ends with the wonderful words, "he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

There are, of course, many more foregleams of Calvary and our redemption in the Old Testament. Some of the Israelites were awake to these truths. Anna spoke of Jesus, the Christ, to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. May we be inspired to claim the fulness of our redemption since the price is paid in full. May we not lose by default the greatest prize in the universe: full redemption through the atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord.

AT THE CROSS

Read: Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19

Memory Work: He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Isaiah 53:11

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *Even during the torments of the cross Jesus thought of others.*
2. *The sign of the accusation against Jesus written in three languages indicates the universal scope of the atonement.*
3. *The many minute prophecies which were fulfilled during the crucifixion prove indeed that God was working out exactly what He had planned for the salvation of the world.*
4. *The ultimate sacrifice of the body and life of Jesus ended the necessity for any further animal sacrifices. His sacrifice was "once for all."*

I The Way of the Cross: Only Luke tells of how Pilate sent Jesus to appear before Herod. He thought he had found a way out of the dilemma of judging Jesus. But Herod quickly sent Jesus back to Pilate because Jesus would not so much as speak a word to him. Herod's soldiers mocked Jesus by dressing Him in a gorgeous robe. Pilate and Herod, who had been angry with each other were reconciled that day at the expense of Jesus.

Pilate's soldiers also tortured Jesus. They made the terrible crown of thorns. The governor caused Jesus to appear before the mob of Jews with the thorny crown upon His head, but they were not moved with any pity and cried out for His crucifixion.

Finally, Pilate capitulated and with a last protest, delivered Jesus to be crucified. The cruel scourge was applied to Jesus' back. The wicked Barabbas was released and Jesus was condemned. The judgment and justice in this world is often perverted, but the day is coming when all will stand before a righteous judge.

The cross was made of rough hewn timber. The steeple crosses, and the golden jewelry crosses which we see today are very unlike that terrible instrument of excruciating pain and inevitable death. The horrible thing was placed upon Jesus' back and He went forth from Pilate's judgment hall bearing His cross. The all-night trial and the ordeal of Gethsemane together with the scourging had taken its toll and soon they compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross for Jesus.

Luke also tells of a great throng who followed Jesus weeping and lamenting Him (Luke 23:27). Jesus advised them to weep for themselves because of the terrible judgment which would soon break upon Jerusalem. Two thieves were also to be executed with Jesus. The grim procession finally reached the place of execution.

II Golgotha: The Place of a Skull: The way of the cross led outside the city gate to the place of a skull, Golgotha. The crosses were erected on a small hill. The executioners offered Jesus wine mixed with myrrh to lessen the pain he would have to endure, but He refused it. The holy Son of God was stripped of His clothing. The executioners divided it between them; but for His robe they cast lots since it was without seam. The incidents that occurred at this time were prophesied in great detail. The inspired Psalmist wrote, "They gave me also gall for my meat" (Ps.69:21); and also, "they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." The crucifixion did not just happen. The rulers of the Jews as well as Pilate and Herod with their men of war did whatsoever the hand of God and His counsel had determined before to be done (see Acts 4:27-28). Jesus could have called twelve legions of angels, but He remarked: "How then would the scriptures be fulfilled?" (Matt.26:54).

Meekly Jesus submitted to be nailed to the cross. He magnanimously prayed for His tormentors, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Seven times Jesus spoke from the cross. The first three times He spoke it was out of concern for others. The crucifixion took place at about 9 a.m. It was customary to place a sign on each cross designating the crime for which the victim was executed. On Jesus' cross Pilate wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth The King of the Jews" (John 19:19). The sign was written in three languages: Hebrew, Latin and Greek. Hebrew, of course, was the language of the Jews, and Latin was the official language of the Roman empire, while Greek was the accepted language of the intellectual

world. The sacrificial death of our Lord was not for the Jews alone, but for the whole world. Even Pilate's sign was opposed. The Jews wanted it changed to read, "He said he was king of the Jews," but Pilate overruled their objection.

It must have been beyond description to witness the horror of a man nailed to a cross and then lifted up with poles and ropes until the cross fell into the hole dug for its base. As it fell to the bottom of the hole the shock of the sudden jar must have torn the flesh of the victim where the nails were fastened. The crowd mocked Jesus. They taunted Him to come down off the cross. The chief priests also loudly jeered, "He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Mark 15:31).

At first the thieves also railed on Jesus. One, however, became repentant. He rebuked the other thief reminding him that their own punishment was well deserved but that Jesus had done "nothing amiss" (Luke 23:41). "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," he said, and the Lord assured him that indeed on that same day he would be with Him "in Paradise." Jesus was indeed saving others to His last breath. The Lord also gave the care of His mother, Mary, to John the beloved disciple. Joseph must have died sometime before this and the other brothers were no doubt married and raising families. In this hour of great suffering, Jesus was still caring for others around Him.

III Darkness: Isaac Watts wrote well,

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut its glories in
When Christ, the mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin.

From noon till 3 p.m. the sun was blotted out. During this time the fierce sufferings and agony of death laid hold of our dear Savior. The four times He spoke during this period reveal the intense suffering He endured. First He cried out, quoting the Psalmist, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps.22:1). Those who heard Him thought He called for Elijah and they wanted to see if Elijah would come. When Jesus cried out again, "I thirst," someone ran and filled a sponge with vinegar and lifted it to Him upon a reed. When Jesus had received the vinegar He said, "It is finished." Careful observation of the accounts of Jesus' death reveal that these three words were spoken with a loud voice. They were not the last gasp of an expiring victim, but the triumphant shout of a victorious conqueror! "IT IS FINISHED!" Hallelujah! It is fin-

ished! Our salvation is complete! We are redeemed! Jesus paid it all! Then He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and bowed His head and "gave up the ghost."

Immediately, in the temple, the curtain before the "holy of holies" was rent from the top to the bottom. There was also an earthquake. The centurion in charge of the execution was convinced that Jesus was indeed the son of God (Mark 15:40). A heathen soldier was convinced by what he saw, but the Jewish religious leaders remained adamant in unbelief.

Medical experts explain that death was caused, in those who were crucified, by suffocation. Because of all the weight hanging on the suspended and nailed hands, the victim sank down and could not breathe, except for short gasps. With great effort the victim could raise himself with his legs and catch an occasional deeper breath. These victims usually lived for 48-72 hours. Some even lasted for five days of agony. When no strength was left to lift the body to catch a breath, the victim would suffocate for lack of breath. This slow suffocation is a most horrible death.

Now the chief priests of the Jews did not care to have their Passover holiday marred by the sight of 3 victims agonizing on their crosses, so they requested the hastening of their deaths. This was done by breaking the legs of the victim. The broken legs prevented the lifting of the body for the occasional deep breath that prolonged the life of the victim. So the Roman executioners came to break the legs of the three dying men. They broke the legs of the two thieves and thus hastened their death, but they found Jesus to be already expired. Therefore they did not break His legs. Instead, they pierced His side with a spear. At once a mixture of blood and water gushed out. The medical authorities explain that this stream of blood and water indicates that the cause of death in Jesus was a ruptured or broken heart. All these things which occurred in such a natural way fulfilled minutely the types and prophecies of Christ. Jesus told the repentant thief that he would be with Him "today--in Paradise." Normally, death would not have come that quickly, yet both Jesus and the thieves died that very day. When the soldiers found it unnecessary to break Jesus' legs, that also fulfilled the type of the passover lamb: "a bone of it shall not be broken," (Ex.12:46) and the prophetic Psalm, "He telleth all his bones; not one of them is broken" (Ps.34:20). Even the impulsive action of the Roman soldier who pierced the expired Savior's side, was foretold: "They shall look on him whom they pierced" (Zech.12:10).

So before sunset the precious body of our Lord was removed from the cross and tenderly prepared for burial by Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus. The word of Isaiah is illuminated by these deeds: "He made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death" (Isaiah 53:9).

The ultimate sacrifice was accomplished! Once and for all the perfect Lamb of God laid down His life that we might experience the full forgiveness of sins and be reconciled to God. "We are redeemed not with corruptible things like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: who was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you" (see I Peter 1:18-20).

NOTES:

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

Read: Romans 6:1-14 1 Cor.1:17-2:5
 Gal.2:20 Gal.5:16-26; 6:14
 Eph.2:13-22 Phil.2:5-11
 Col.1:19-22 Col.2:13-15
 Hebrews 13:11-14

Memory Work: Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. Isaiah 53:12

What we should learn from this Lesson

1. *The supernatural power of God accompanies the preaching of the cross.*
2. *In going to the cross, Jesus set an example of humility and obedience which we should follow.*
3. *We are to consider ourselves crucified to our old natural life.*
4. *We are to be crucified to the world, and also to the flesh.*
5. *Spiritual crucifixion opens the door to the glory of the resurrection life.*

I The Power and Wisdom of the Cross: To the unbelievers the preaching of the cross in Paul's day was foolishness. The cross was for criminals. To the intellectuals of that day, nothing could be more ridiculous than to preach salvation and eternal life through faith in someone who had been crucified. To the Jews the cross was a stumbling block because they looked for a military conqueror as their Messiah. They were much more interested in overthrowing the Romans than in conquering sin, sickness, and death. In spite of the attitudes of both Jews and Greeks against the cross and Christ who laid down His life, the preaching of the cross won disciples in

great numbers from both groups. How could such amazing results take place when there were such strong attitudes against the cross? There can be only one answer to that question and that is, that the power of God accompanied the preaching of the cross.

The sophisticated philosophies of this world jeered at the preaching of the cross. But the philosophies have all become obsolete while the preaching of the cross continues on a greater scale than ever before. The world with its thirst for knowledge apart from God has never been able to learn to know God through that knowledge. Through the foolish medium of preaching the cross of Christ, those who believe have come to know God and enjoy fellowship with Him. That is the power of the cross. Certainly it seemed that the Son of God submitted weakly to that ignominious death, but now we recognize the power that emanates from the cross and from the blood of the Lord who suffered there for us. There are those among us today who would, with great show of worldly wisdom, divorce the teachings of Jesus from His Divinity and from the cross. These are the modern Greeks. This "Christian" philosophy denies that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God and ridicules the cross and the shedding of the blood of Christ as unnecessary. But such a philosophy is without the power to regenerate. There is power in the blood! There is power in the preaching of the cross.

II Crucified With Christ: The apostle Paul uses this theme to teach the necessity of ceasing to live in the natural material realm and becoming alive to the life of the Spirit. His powerful teaching is the natural result of his own experience. "I am crucified with Christ," Paul wrote, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal.2:20). When Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus a real revolution took place in his life. What things were gain before, he counted loss. Gladly he suffered the loss of all he formerly gloried in. He was absolutely dead to his former life. In its place the life of the Spirit took over. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

The experience of the Apostle was not a unique occurrence for him alone. He wrote to the Christians at Rome: "Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom.6:6-7).

Clearly, he expected that Christians should become as good as dead to their former sinful life. We know that dead men not only do not tell tales, but they can no longer sin. So we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin; crucified with Christ. In another place the Apostle calls on the believers to mortify their members and declares that they are in a sense dead, and their lives hidden with Christ in God (see Col.3:5-6).

So we may consider our old sinful, fleshly life crucified with Christ. This helpful comparison enables us to overcome the power of temptation and gives us another reason to glory in the cross of Christ.

III Crucified to the World: The personal crucifixion is specifically applied to the Christian's relationship with the world. James, the Lord's brother wrote that whoever was the friend of the world was the enemy of God. John commanded the believers to "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world." Paul glories in the cross of Christ by which he is become dead to the world and the world dead to him (see Gal. 6:14). As believers, we are to be led and controlled by the Holy Spirit. The enemy of our souls attempts in any way possible to keep believers from being controlled by the Holy Spirit. The world offers material things and power and popularity and pleasures to lure the believer. How many of our decisions are based on materialism! What we can get and call our own seems very important to the natural man. We despise politicians for making choices on the basis of what will get them votes. We must make our choices based on the will and pleasure of God. The social drinking customs and the frivolous entertainment of movies and plays is of the world. The pride of knowledge and of academic honors are just two of a thousand lures of the world to control the decisions of the Christian. But thank God there is one simple remedy to the whole mess: the cross of Christ by which I, as well as Paul, may be crucified to the world and the world to me.

IV Crucified to the Flesh: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," Paul wrote to the Galatians (see Gal.5:24). Our fleshly bodies have appetites and desires. These are not sinful in themselves. The appetite for food is necessary for our nutrition. The sexual desires are expedient for the reproduction process. The enjoyment of rest is necessary for the renewal of mental alertness and physical strength. But these legitimate appetites are not to control our

actions over and beyond the leading of the Holy Spirit. The fleshly desires without moderation or self-control become sinful. Overeating is harmful. Fasting is taught in the scriptures. If the appetite for food controls our actions then it is wrong. Sexual perversion is the gratification of sexual desires in ways other than that intended by God to reproduce life. To be controlled by the sexual desires and make decisions and choices on the basis of these lusts is sinful. If believers are really and truly controlled by the Holy Spirit, every question regarding sexual activity will be solved. Sleep and rest are necessary, but laziness and indolence are to be crucified if we are to truly belong to Christ. The death of these natural fleshly appetites opens the door for the heavenly Christ-like desires to take their place.

V The Example of the Cross: To the Philippians Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus---he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross" (Phil.3:5,8). Our Lord was humble enough to take the attitude of a servant and do all that He was asked to do. His obedience went so far as to cost Him his life. If this same mind is in us we will not find it difficult to humble ourselves and obey the Lord and those who are our guides. To those who take this pathway of submission, there comes the day of exaltation. Jesus was highly exalted after His submission to the death of the cross.

VI The Reconciliation of the Cross: It is expressed in several different ways that the cross of Christ is the means of our reconciliation with God. How many carry the depressing burden of guilt. Though it is often unrecognized and unnamed this guilt depresses with a dull uncertain fear of retribution. Only those who come in reality to the cross of Christ know the wonderful relief of this reconciliation. To the Gentiles of Ephesus, Paul wrote that they, with the Jewish converts, were made one and reconciled by the cross (Eph.2:16). The Colossians were advised that by the blood of the cross all things were reconciled to God (Col.1:20). The charges or indictment of the law against believers is removed having been nailed to the cross.

VII The Reproach of the Cross: Some disciples who had professed faith in Christ became enemies of the cross (Phil.3:18). Like many modern believers they wanted all the blessings of Christianity without any cost to themselves. Note that Paul does not

call them the enemies of Christ, but the enemies of the cross of Christ. Jesus suffered reproach from men as a result of His absolute submission to God. He suffered without the gate like the animals whose blood was offered for atonement in Old Testament times. We, too, are to bear the reproach of Christ. It should cost us something to belong to the kingdom of God.

Without death there could be no resurrection. Without the humble submission there could have been no great high exaltation. Let us then glory in the cross and claim all the benefits and release and reconciliation and victory that emanates from it. God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of Christ.

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