

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

I. ENTERING THE LAND (1-5)

- A. Joshua Charged--** the warrant of faith. (1)
- B. Jericho Spied--** the prudence of faith. (2)
- C. Jordan Crossed--** the crisis of faith. (3)
- D. Memorials Built--** the witness of faith. (4)
- E. Gilgal Occupied--** the pruning of faith. (5)

II. OVERCOMING THE LAND (6-12)

- A. Fall of Jericho--** faith triumphant. (6)
- B. Sin of Achan--** faith disabled. (7)
- C. Sack of Ai--** faith re-empowered. (8)
- D. Guile of Gibeon--** faith endangered. (9)
- E. Rout of all Foes--** faith all-victorious. (10-12)

III. OCCUPYING THE LAND (13-24)

- A. Division of Canaan--** faith rewarded. (13-19)
- B. Cities of Refuge--** faith protected. (20)
- C. Portion of Levites--** faith preserved. (21)
- D. Altar of Witness--** faith unifying. (22)
- E. Farewell of Joshua--** faith continuing. (23-24)

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

We come now to the Book of Joshua. It will be helpful to us if we review just briefly before we begin our consideration of this exciting book.

There are seventeen historical books in the Old Testament. They fall into a natural subdivision of five and twelve. And there is a further sub-division in the twelve of nine and three. Up to this point, we have considered the first group of five (Genesis to Deuteronomy). All were written by Moses and are known as the Pentateuch.

Joshua is complementary to the five Books of Moses and introductory to the new historical group of twelve (Joshua to Esther). The five Books of Moses lead Israel up to Canaan; and Joshua complements these by leading Israel into Canaan. The further twelve books cover Israel's history inside Canaan. It is then, the link book between the two historical groups in the Old Testament. It covers a period of about twenty-five years, and describes one of the most memorable conquests in history. The occupation of this small strip of territory has to a great extent molded the moral and religious history of the world.

Authorship

It would seem that the book of Joshua is so named because Joshua is its focal figure and not necessarily, as implying, that Joshua himself was its author. Jewish tradition does indeed ascribe the authorship to him, and there has been raised no solid reason for categorically rejecting it. We, therefore, feel quite safe ascribing authorship to him.

Structure

Joshua is a book of graphic movement, of campaign, conquest, and subjugation. Here we see Israel going up, winning through, and settling in. The account is distributed in three phases.

- (1) Entering the Land (Chapters 1-5)**
- (2) Overcoming the Land (Chapters 6-12)**
- (3) Occupying the Land (Chapters 13-24)**

Key Thought

If these are the three movements recorded in Joshua, then there can be no doubt as to what is the key thought, or central message. Clearly it is “THE VICTORY OF FAITH”. Spiritually interpreted the exploits of Israel under Joshua proclaim the New Testament truth recorded in I John 5:4, *“For everyone born of God overcomes the world this is the victory that has overcome the world even our Faith.”*

Each of the victories in the program of this conquest was ordered so as to exhibit that victory was due to Faith in God, not to the arm of man. The key thought or central message of this book of Joshua then is without a doubt, THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

Typical Significance

We have already discovered in the five books of Moses the presence of types in the Old Testament scriptures- typical persons, events, and objects, such as Joseph, the Exodus, and the Tabernacle. Now in the case of Joshua, the whole story is one grand type. It is the Old Testament type picture of a great spiritual reality revealed in the New Testament, as we shall see. What then is the main typical significance of Joshua? This question is not easily answered, because the answer to the question depends upon the answer to the further question as to what Canaan typifies.

Quite often (as in some of our hymns) the river Jordan is taken as representing death and the land of Canaan as representing Heaven. This however, is surely a misrepresentation of these types. If Jordan is taken as representing death and the land of Canaan heaven, and then it follows that the whole of the Christian life right up to the hour of death corresponds to the wilderness experience of Israel. This is not exactly an enamoring picture. Moreover, Canaan cannot very well be a type of Heaven for two reasons.

First: Canaan was a place of conquest through conflict. There had been little fighting during the wilderness years, but as soon as Canaan was entered, Israel must draw the sword, enemies must be destroyed, Israel must fight. How then can Canaan typify the calm restfulness of the ultimate inheritance in Heaven?

Second: It was possible for Israel to be ejected from Canaan by powerful foes. And eventually they actually were ejected, as we know. How then, can this typify that Heaven of uninterrupted bliss, which is pledged to the justified in Christ? But to settle the question conclusively, we are expressly taught in Hebrews, chapters three and four, what the typical meaning of Canaan really is. (Read these two chapters carefully). They make it quite clear that Canaan pictures the believer’s present position and possession in Christ. A few verses from one of those chapters will be enough to certify this.

“For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did His. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.” (Heb. 4:8-11). Also in this same chapter, verse three says, *“Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said.”*

The meaning of Canaan as a type then is a deeper union of our hearts with Christ where by we become completely separated unto Him, and introduced into the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. This is fixed both by circumstances and the New Testament explanation.

What then is the main typical significance of this Book of Joshua? In answering this, let’s consider three characteristics of Canaan.

Characteristics of Canaan

First: Canaan was Israel’s promised *“Rest”* itinerancy (or nomadic lifestyle) was to give place to settled dwelling. The promised rest had been wonderfully prepared for them. (Duet. 6:10 - 11; Lev. 36:6)

Second: Canaan was a place of *“Bounty.”* This was the land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. 3:3; Duet. 33:28). It was a land God cared for. His eyes were always upon it (Duet. 11:10 - 12).

Third: Canaan was a place of *“Triumph”*. There were enemies in Canaan yes, but they were defeated before Israel ever struck the first blow. For God said in (Duet. 7:1 - 2) *“When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many Nations. . . And when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them.”* God was calling Israel not merely to conflict but to assured victory. To faithful Israel, Canaan was to be the place of triumph.

Characteristically speaking, Canaan was for Israel the place of Rest, Bounty, and Triumph.

In all this the spirit of God is pictorially exhibiting to us that life in the Heavenly places spoken of by the Apostle Paul in (Eph. 1:3 *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.”*) Resting, abounding, and triumphing is our rich inheritance in Christ. And the book of Joshua is in type that *full Christian life in which we truly possess our possessions.*

It teaches us that Holiness and its benefits are not attained by self-effort but, may be attained in Christ and may be ours in actual experience. God will not fail us let us go up and possess the rest, bounty, and triumph of Holiness (I Thes. 5:24 *“The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it”*). See altogether the three parts, key thought and typical significance. We would do well to commit these to memory.

Part One: Entering the Land (1-5)
Part Two: Overcoming the Land (6-12)
Part Three: Occupying the Land (13- 24)

Key Thought: The Victory of Faith

Typical Significance: The Fuller Christian Life

THREE MAIN PARTS

Now let’s glance over the three main parts. As you will see, there is much we can learn.

PART ONE: Entering the Land (1 -5)

The five chapters of part one run in an orderly sequence as follows:

Chapter 1- Joshua charged
Chapter 2- Jericho spied
Chapter 3- Jordan crossed
Chapter 4- Memorials raised
Chapter 5- Gilgal occupied

If we bear in mind that the key idea in Joshua is the Victory of Faith; we shall quickly see how expressive these chapters are.

Chapter (1) Joshua Charged

The emphasis in this first chapter is upon the fact that Joshua’s assumption of leadership originated in a commission from God Himself.

It was grounded in the word of God (see verse 9). The going up into Canaan also was based upon a clear divine authorization (verses 2-5). This is the very beginning of things where faith is concerned - that God has spoken.

True faith refuses to act on the basis of mere human reasoning: but once it is satisfied that God has spoken, it asks nothing more. For there can be no higher authority than that, and no higher reason to obey. In other words, one who possesses true faith acts only on the authority of God's word, which always guaranties correct actions. Here in chapter one we have the warrant (or guarantee) of faith, namely the Word of God.

Chapter (2) Jericho Spied

Having received divine assurance of certain victory (1:5-6), Joshua might easily have felt it was unnecessary to exercise cautiousness or to resort to military strategy. But this second chapter shows us that the reaction of true faith is, in fact, the opposite of any such carelessness. True faith does not despise a method or plan. We need to clearly understand that there is a wide difference between "believing" and "presuming". Believing is to trust in God's promises. Presuming is to make the promises of God an excuse for not taking a reasonable precaution. To do so is to tempt God, which is forbidden (Matt. 4:7). Faith is not presuming it is prudent; using wise caution and discipline in conduct. In this second chapter of Joshua, we have the prudence of faith.

Chapter (3) Jordan Crossed

The crossing of the Jordan river was to Israel a major crisis of Faith. The same major crisis had come to the former generation of Israel some 40 years earlier, but under somewhat different circumstances, and they had failed in their reaction to it. It was bound to repeat itself to the new generation.

It was one thing to be brought out of Egypt, but it was quite another thing altogether to go over this Jordan river and thus be committed (without possibility of retreat) to the struggle against the super powers of Canaan. To do so was to hazard everything on the chance of the battle.

This same crisis of Faith comes, in one way or another, to all the redeemed. At some Divinely appointed time, we are forced to the supreme choice to either abandon ourselves once and for all to the will of God, or take what seems to be the easier way; that is continuing in the Christian life, but with reservation in our love to God. It was one thing for Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldeans to go out in Faith at God's request but, it was quite another thing for him to climb Moriah and lift the knife to slay his beloved Isaac.

Abraham's Moriah and Israel's Jordan river are the same crisis under different names. There is an Isaac to be sacrificed and a Jordan river to be crossed in the experience of every redeemed soul. Abraham yielded his Isaac; Israel (the new generation) crossed their Jordan. What about you and me? In chapter three we have crisis of Faith.

Chapter (4) Memorials Raised

A faith that goes all the way with God leaves a beautiful memorial (or witness) in its wake. The Jordan memorial stones were Faith's witness to the power and Faithfulness of God.

There were two of these memorial piles, each consisting of twelve great stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The pile on the Canaan side of the Jordan river witnessed to the Faithfulness of God in bringing Israel at last into the promise land. The pile in the river itself witnessed the Power of God in holding back the swollen flood and making a pathway across the riverbed for the great host. In this fourth chapter, then, we have the Witness of Faith.

Those two memorial piles are symbolic. They witness to God's bringing His people right through the river and into the place of blessing. Israel actually went down into that river basin; otherwise, how do we explain that submerged pillar of great stones in the middle of the stream? Israel actually came out on Canaan's side. Here is a symbolic witness to a great truth; never does a soul go down into that other Jordan, the death and burial of "*selfism*", to find itself deserted. As surely as there is an "into" there is an "out of". God brings the now sanctified soul right through to the resurrection ground of "*The heavenly realms in Christ*". Praise His Name!!!

Chapter (5) Gilgal Occupied

Here we see the sealing and discipline of Faith. As strange as it may seem, the first experience in the land of blessing is one of pain. Israel has at last crossed the dividing line and is now entering - (in a new way) into the purpose of God. Therefore, that which has been neglected during the forty years' wondering now becomes imperative. Circumcision is re-enjoined, as the seal of the covenant between God and Israel. Israel's sons were to carry in their very person this mark of their separateness, and the Israelites themselves were left in no doubt as to the moral and spiritual significance of circumcision. Moses himself had exhorted them.

"Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer" (Deut. 10:16).

"The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts... that you may love Him with all your hearts" (Deut. 30:6).

Passages like (Colossians 2:11 - 13) make it quite clear that the New Testament interpretation is *“that putting off of the flesh.”* That sharp pruning of the natural desires which accompanies God’s chastening in the soul. (Please read the Colossian passage carefully at this time). Jordan must be followed by Gilgal. That soul crisis of death and burial to selfism - of which Jordan is a type, must be perpetuated (or caused to continue or endure) it may well bring some pain and difficulty at first, just as circumcision did for the sons of Israel. But, the sharp pang of dying daily to the flesh is quickly lost in the thrill of new fellowship with God. In this fifth chapter we have the pruning of faith.

So then, in the first five chapters which make up part one: Entering the Land, we have

Chapter 1- Joshua Charged - The Warrant of Faith (Guarantee)

Chapter 2- Jericho Spied - The Prudence of Faith

Chapter 3- Jordan Crossed - The Crisis of Faith

Chapter 4- Memorials Raised - The Witness of Faith

Chapter 5- Gilgal Occupied - The Pruning of Faith

PART TWO: Overcoming the Land (6- 12)

In this second group of chapters we see faith’s warfare and victory. Israel is now in the place of blessing and goes forth “Conquering and to Conquer” in the might of their invisible leader. There are vital spiritual lessons pictured in these chapters.

Chapter 6- The Fall of Jericho

Chapter 7- The Sin of Achan

Chapter 8- The Sack of Ai

Chapter 9- The Guile of Gibeon

Chapter 10-12- The Rout of the Kings

Chapter (6) The Fall of Jericho

This is a remarkable chapter. Here in graphic type we see the principles by which faith works and wars and waits and wins. Here we find faith’s three rules of action.

#1 (verses 1-3) Faith always ascertains (or finds out) the will and word of God.

#2 (verses 4-19) Faith always obeys the will and word of God.

#3 (verses 20-27) Faith reckons (or relies) on that word and counts the thing as good as done. (Giving God the glory in anticipation).

In verse 20, we find the Israelites gave their mighty shout of victory before the walls of Jericho had actually fallen. Faith's principles of action therefore, cut right across those of natural reason.

Now consider four things about the procedure of faith in this conquest. (1) The seeming folly of it: nothing could seem more useless to the natural eye than to march round and round those city walls to the blowing of ram's horns. (2) The utter wisdom of it: nothing could really be wiser than to do just what God Himself had directed, however strange it might seem. (3) The deeper meaning of it: nothing could be more significant than the fact that here we see God and man in cooperation for the pulling down of a satanic strong hold. (4) The utter triumph of it: nothing could be more marked, for with one blow the city was laid low, without a single Israelite casualty. Here is triumph indeed. This is the emphasis in this sixth chapter. The Triumph of Faith.

Chapter (7) The Sin of Achan

Unfortunately, there is a swift lapse, which though it is soon put right, is not without cost. It is not that Israel as a whole suffers a break down in their faith; but a secret compromise temporarily disables it. The men of Israel turned their backs on the foe; and thirty-six of them died. In the seven years of war this was the one loss.

The cause of failure is carefully exposed so that the lesson may be clearly learned. The electric wire of fellowship between God and Israel had been cut by "a trespass in the accursed thing"; and the current of power, therefore, ceased to flow. Israel's first inclination was to attribute blame to God instead of looking within. But soon the ugly deed was forced into the open; confession was made, and judgment executed upon it. Achan's smuggled loot was of little material value; but the taking of it was of deep spiritual seriousness. It was a grievous compromise, which was forbidden by God, and Israel learned by necessary pain that both for their own good and the sake of Jehovah's Holy name, sin must be judged and put away.

Any defeat which we sustain in the land of blessing is due entirely to some failure within ourselves. It never need be; and our great leader grieves over it more than we do ourselves. We must learn the lesson of this seventh chapter - that parleys with sin or permitted compromise, cuts the vital cord of communication and disables faith. Here in chapter seven is Faith Disabled.

Chapter (8) The Sack of Ai

In this eighth chapter, we see faith re-empowered and going forth in renewed triumph. Sin confessed and judged and put away restores the cord of communion and the Divine Power begins to flow again. Notice in verse one the Lord said to Joshua “. . . *do not be afraid do not be discouraged take your whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai for I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land*”.

The remainder of the chapter speaks for itself. It is the picture-lesson of Faith Re-empowered after self-judgment.

Chapter (9) The League (or Alliance) with Gibeon

It is very important that we fully grasp the valuable lesson found in this ninth chapter. (Please read chapter nine carefully at this time). The Gibeonites, realizing that they could not stand against such power as that which operated through Israel, resorted to a trick of deception. So clever the disguise, so reasonable the story, so reverential their reference to Jehovah, so pitiable their plight, that Israel's compassion overflowed. Believing that these men were not of the Canaanites who were under the curse and with whom no leagues (or alliances) were to be made. Israel made a covenant with Gibeon. Three days later the trickery was exposed. *Note: the most significant thing in this incident is that “Israel did not inquire of the Lord”* (verse 14). We need not only the Power of the Spirit against giants, but also the Wisdom of the Spirit against serpents. Satan is far easier to defeat as a giant in warrior's armor than as a disguised Gibeonite in some pity-evoking beggars' attire. Satan's subtle deception is always more dangerous than his open assaults. He is more dangerous as an “angel of light”, than a “roaring lion”.

The league with these Canaanites held evil possibilities. It endangered Israel's faith. Understand that the alliance was not made because of any breakdown of Israel's faith at the time: but faith has been thrown off guard. Here in chapter nine is “Faith Endangered” by the failure to refer everything to God.

Chapters (10 - 12) The Rout of all Foes

In these chapters Joshua's plan of campaign becomes clear. In first striking Jericho and Ai, he had driven a wedge into the center of Canaan. Now, in chapter ten he forks south then strikes north. Thus we have the central campaign (6 - 9), the southern campaign (10), the northern campaign (11). Chapter twelve completes the account by giving a summary of all the kings and major cities which fell to Israel.

In the presence of the one foe common to all (Israel) the peoples of Canaan come together hastily forming military alliances and offering unified resistance. But it was all to no avail. The most formidable coalitions were no match for that supernatural power which operated through Israel. Down they went one after another. Cities, kings, giants, confederacies, until it could be written, *“So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions.*

The campaigns summarily described in these three chapters show us in a spiritual sense Faith all Victorious. Enemies are vanquished, Israel is victor, Canaan is won. *“And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

In part two: Overcoming the Land (6 - 12) we have:

Chapter 6- Fall of Jericho- Faith Triumphant

Chapter 7- Sin of Achan-Faith Disabled

Chapter 8- Sack of Ai-Faith Re-empowered

Chapter 9- Guile of Gibeon-Faith Endangered

Chapters 10-12- Rout of all Kings-Faith all Victorious

PART THREE: Occupying the Land (13 - 24)

This final group of chapters will yield precious little to casual reading; for since it deals mainly with names and places and boundary lines, it requires to be studied with map in hand. But there are two or three guiding factors, which we ought to note carefully.

FIRST: It requires little imagination to see that the division of the land among the nine and a half tribes and the Levites was no simple task, but a complicated one which took considerable time.

SECOND: The dividing of the land was by, *“casting of lots before the Lord”* (18:6). A procedure, which would commend itself because of its impartiality, while at the same time, it left the sovereign Lord Himself to settle the tribes in areas best suited to them.

The same blend of impartiality and sovereignty is seen in the administration of the gifts by the Holy Spirit in the church of Christ (I Corinthians 12:4- 11).

THIRD: We should mark well the principle which governed Israel's occupation of the land, because the same principle operates in our own appropriation (or taking for our own) of the inheritance in Christ. This principle is seen if we bring together two seemingly contradictory verses. In (11:23) we read, "*so Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses*". Yet now in (13:1) God says, ". . . *there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.*" These two statements in reality are not contradictory but complimentary. They are two aspects of the one situation, and both are true. There was a real sense in which "the whole land" had been taken. The decisive blow had been struck. The key cities had been sacked. All opposing alliances had been crushed. Any remaining enemies were well within the power of Israel's individual tribes to destroy. It only remained for them now to complete the victory to the last detail.

It is the same with us. The decisive blow has been struck at sin and Satan and the powers of darkness by our heavenly captain; as a result "*all the blessings in the heavenly realms in Christ*" are ours, but we must now apply that victory, carrying it through the whole realm of our thought and life. Completing it to the last detail. The powers of darkness can never recover from the mortal blow inflicted at Calvary; they still quail (or shrink) before the believer who presses forward in the power of the cross.

There is a difference between the "inheritance" and the "possession". The "inheritance" is the whole land given by God, whereas the "possession" is only that part of it which is appropriated by faith. Our inheritance in Christ is what he is to us potentially. Our possession in Christ is what he is to us actually, according to the measure of our appropriation by faith. The ideal is for the possession to measure up to the full inheritance.

Now let's quickly consider the chapters in this section; they run as follows:

Chapters 13-19- The Dividing of Canaan
Chapter 20- The Cities of Refuge
Chapter 21- The Portion of Levi
Chapter 22- The Alter of Witness
Chapters 23-24- The Farewell of Joshua

Chapters (13 - 19) The Dividing of Canaan

In these chapters we have the distribution of the land among the tribes. This dividing of the land as an inheritance for the individual tribes spiritually interpreted is The Appropriations of Faith.

Chapter (20) The Cities of Refuge

Here we have the six “Cities of Refuge”. Kedesh, Shechem, and Hebron, on the west side of the Jordan, and Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan on the east. These six were among the forty-eight cities given to the Levites (Numbers 35:6 - 7). Their purpose is clearly explained in Numbers chapter thirty-five, and this twentieth chapter of Joshua. They were merciful provisions to protect those who had committed certain wrongs unintentionally or by mistake. Many a man of sincere intent and godly faith might have perished if it were not for those cities of refuge.

Thus we have here the Divine recognition of the difference between sins and mistakes. The holiest of men are fallible, and can make mistakes, but mistakes are not sins, and they therefore, do not disqualify us for the faith life or deprive us of our inheritance in Christ. A man may have a perfect heart without having a perfect head. Sanctification can dwell with a defective memory. We need to be quick to perceive such distinctions and compatibilities.

Even when we are “in the land” we may do many things that are wrong without realizing they are wrong. In strict Justice the law of God must pursue us as guilty. Yet there is provision made for this in the blood of Christ. Mistakes “sins of ignorance”, unintentional wrongs, are provided for in the atonement. Christ Himself is our “City of Refuge”. And by holding to Him we are protected and covered so that the maintaining of the faith-life in our spiritual Canaan is made possible. In this we see the protection of faith.

Chapter (21) The Portion of Levi

Forty-eight good cities with their suburbs throughout the land were given to the Levites. This distribution of the Levites through the tribes is of obvious significance. They permeated the whole land with the hallowing influence of Shiloh (Shiloh was the location of the tabernacle). What sacred interest must have gathered round the man who was permitted to enter into the tabernacle and burn incense at the solemn hour of prayer! Then multiply this a thousand fold, and consider what a wide wholesome effect this must have produced throughout the country, especially when the men of Levi fulfilled the lofty prerogative of the Levites, who appear to have traveled through their apportioned districts to teach the Law of God (See Deut. 33:10). The distribution of the Levites was the Lord’s provision for the preservation of Israel’s faith in the land.

They had entered the land by faith. They had overcome the land by faith. That faith must now be maintained in the place of blessing by the teaching of God’s word. Maintained faith was the condition of maintained blessing. Faith’s food is God’s word. It always was and it always will be.

Chapter (22) The Altar of Witness

A Schismatic altar (or an altar that would cause division) in Israel. Had not the book of the covenant emphatically declared that there should be one national altar of sacrifice before the tabernacle at Shiloh? What then of this “great altar” erected by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh by the Jordan? Is it any wonder that the other tribes, shocked and angered, gathered together against them? But a new complexion is given to the apparent breach when the builders of the altar explain that it is meant to be not an altar of sacrifice but of witness- a witness to the unity of the two half tribes east of the Jordan with the rest of Israel. No doubt this altar was well meant but, was it not needless if the divine command was obeyed that three times each year all the males of Israel should appear before the Lord in Shiloh. And was it not presumptuous? No pattern for its shape had been given of God, and no direction for its construction. Nor, apparently, had the counsel of the Lord been as much as thought of.

Now here is a noteworthy lesson concerning the unity of the faith. Had Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh settled west of the Jordan with the other tribes in the promised place, no such artificial monument of their oneness with Israel would have been necessary. True unity is not outward but inward. It is not achieved, nor even preserved by external memorials (or witness). It consists in a oneness of inward and spiritual experience. The only true unity is that of a common inward life, a common spiritual experience, and a common heart-loyalty. And the nearer we get to Christ the more clearly we discern our unity with all who belong to Him. We cannot make spiritual unity. The unity of the sanctified in Christ is a spiritual reality wrought (or caused to be) by the Holy Spirit Himself. Let this twenty second chapter speak to us its message on the true unity of the faith.

Chapters (23 - 24) The Farewell of Joshua

In these final two chapters we have the parting counsel of the now aged Joshua. In this faithful leader’s words is unveiled the concern of his heart for the privileged nation. For some years now Israel had been enjoying the rest and plenty of Canaan. But, what about the future? All depended on whether or not Israel would continue to be faithful to the covenant. Joshua’s words did not conceal his apprehensiveness. Seven times he refers to the idolatrous nations still living in Canaan. He knew what a threat they posed to Israel. So in his parting counsels to them he prescribes three safeguards.

FIRST: there must be a brave adherence to God’s Word,

“Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses without turning aside to the right or the left”. (23:6)

SECOND: there must be vigilant continued separation from the Canaanite people, “Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them “. (23:7)

THIRD: there must be a cleaving (or holding) to the Lord with a real fervent love, “But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have until now. The Lord has driven out before you great and powerful nations. To this day no one has been able to withstand you. One of you routs a thousand, because the Lord your God fights for you just as He promised. So be careful to love the Lord your God.”

This is the gist of these closing chapters. And these are the three indispensable conditions (just as truly today as in Joshua’s day). For a continuing in the experience of the fullness of blessing, there must be (1) a living close to the word of God; (2) a consistent separation from all known wrong; (3) a cleaving (or holding) to God with the best love of the heart. Anyone who fulfills these, will indeed, continue in the life of faith and spiritual blessing. In these final two chapters we see Faith Continuing.

In part three- Occupying the Land (13 - 24)

Chapters 13-19- Partition of Canaan - Faith Rewarded

Chapter 20- The Cities of Refuge - Faith Protected

Chapter 21- The Levites Portion - Faith Preserved

Chapter 22- Altar of Witness - Faith Unifying

Chapters 23-24- Farewell of Joshua - Faith Continuing