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LESSONS

Joshua

Entering God's Rest



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Meet the Principal Contributor to This Quarter's Lessons

Richard M. Davidson is professor of Old Testament Exegesis and chairman of the Old Testament Department at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. He has been with the Andrews faculty since 1979.

Born in California, Davidson attended Loma Linda University, Riverside, California, graduating in 1968 with a bachelor of arts degree in theology. Two years later he earned his master of divinity degree summa cum laude from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. He received his doctorate in biblical studies at Andrews in 1981. His doctoral dissertation was titled "Typological Structures in the Old and New Testaments." It is now published under the title *Typology in Scripture*.

Before coming to Andrews, Davidson served as an associate pastor of a Seventh-day Adventist church in Phoenix, Arizona, and as pastor of the Flagstaff Seventh-day Adventist Church for more than five years. He was ordained as a minister in Prescott, Arizona, in 1974.

Davidson is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, the Evangelical Theological Society, the Chicago Society of Biblical Research, and the Adventist Theological Society.

Davidson has written a number of articles for journals and Adventist denominational papers. His most recent book is entitled *A Love Song for the Sabbath* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988).

He is married to Jo Ann Mazat Davidson. They have a daughter Rahel, and a son Jonathan.



Check with your local Adventist Book Center for the companion book to this quarter's lessons.



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*Help God's love to be felt in a real
way by thousands of people in the
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Southern Unions
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this 13th Sabbath
June 24, 1995*

Sabbath School Action Units

Imagine a Sabbath School where there is optimum participation, fellowship, and learning. Each class of six to eight people has an outreach leader, an outreach plan, and twenty minutes to talk about it every Sabbath morning. This is the Sabbath School Action Unit plan—a simple plan whose ultimate goal is to organize, equip, and mobilize the church to complete the task of Global Mission. As this dynamic program of nurture and outreach has spread around the world, it has met with tremendous success. We thought you would enjoy a few comments from members and world leaders who share, with excitement, their experiences with Action Units:

"The Sabbath School Action Unit plan is God's plan for a finished work in the African-Indian Ocean Division and in all the world."—Janice Emanuel, Sabbath School director, African-Indian Ocean Division.

"I couldn't see . . . church without it [the Sabbath School Action Unit plan]."—George Sova, pastor, Richland, Washington.

"Everything new brings resistance. But this was not the case with Sabbath School Action Units. . . . Sabbath School seems to be more dynamic, more enthusiastic, and participation is great. It has brought a breath of fresh air into the whole church program."—Jose Silva, youth director, South American Division.

"This is the best plan I've seen to revitalize the church in many years."—Letter sent to Jose Silva, youth director, South American Division.

"Realizing that the work will not be finished unless the majority of our members work together with our ministers, . . . Sabbath School Action Units provide the method to involve everybody—adult and youth—in reaching our goal. We want Sabbath School Action Units in every church in the Far East."—Dr. Jonathan Kuntaraf, Church Ministries, Far Eastern Division.

"After 13 years in Sabbath School, only now has it become meaningful to me."—Church member, Durban, South Africa.

"Now our Sabbath School has come alive. Our members have become active."—Church member, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

"For the first time old and young are teamed up, talking, listening to, and praying for one another."—Church member, Johannesburg, South Africa.

"It is the most efficient means of spiritual revival in the church."—Church member, Yaounde Center, Camaroun.

Information on Sabbath School Action Units is available from Elder Calvin Smith, Church Ministries Department, General Conference.

Introduction to Joshua

Entering God's Rest

The book of Joshua is pivotal in the flow of Old Testament history. On the one hand, it provides the capstone to the Pentateuch. Coming at the end of the forty years' wilderness wandering, it describes the fulfillment of the promises God made to the patriarchs in Genesis that Israel would enter and inherit the land of Canaan. On the other hand, the book of Joshua is the foundation for the rest of the biblical story. It is the first book of the former prophets (in the Hebrew Bible) or the historical books (in the English order of the canon). It provides the action-packed account of Israel's first twenty-five years in Canaan (about 1410 B.C. to 1385 B.C.), including the conquest of Canaan (lasting about seven years), and the dividing of the inheritance. The book climaxes with Joshua's farewell addresses, delivered near the end of his life, in which Israel's covenant with God was renewed.

The title of the book derives from its chief human character, Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' successor and God's man to lead Israel into Canaan. Joshua authored all of the book that bears his name, except for the report of his death (Joshua 24:29-32). That was written probably by Eleazar son of Aaron. The report of Eleazar's death (verse 33) probably was written by Phinehas.

The life and experience of Joshua provides a model of powerful spiritual leadership. Joshua's life prefigured the Greater Joshua, who would lead His people to experience God's spiritual rest and ultimately bring them physically to the heavenly Canaan. This book gives profound insights into the principles of Christian spiritual warfare—with Jesus the New Joshua at our head. The major focus of the book, however, (whether as history or as type) is not the conquest itself. The conquest and dividing of the inheritance produce the promised end—the experience of God's rest in the land. (See Deut. 3:20; 12:10; Joshua 1:13, 15; 11:23; 23:1.) This quarter, let us hear the resonating invitation of this book. Let us also enter into God's rest!

Overview of Joshua

Joshua 1:1–12:24	Joshua 13:1–21:45	Joshua 22:1–24:33
The Conquest of Canaan	Dividing the Inheritance	Joshua's Farewell Addresses

Joshua, God's Man



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Ex. 17:8-14; Num. 13:1-14:38; 27:12-23.

MEMORY TEXT: "And the Lord said to Moses: 'Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him' " (Numbers 27:18, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: The life of Joshua before the conquest of Canaan reveals the experience and depth of character that prepared this great leader of Israel.

A BIBLICAL HALL OF FAME. Here is a list of some of the most powerful leaders in biblical history: Shammua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, Geuel. Are you familiar with these figures? Probably not. But now let us add the last two names of the list in Numbers 13: Caleb and Joshua. It is astounding—twelve princes, each governing thousands of people. Yet the names of ten are lost in obscurity, while two men rose to greatness. Ten failed dismally, dragging down a whole generation with them. But two immortalize victory, faith, and success. What made the difference?

Later in the quarter we will study about Caleb. But this week we will focus on Joshua. We will examine the incidents in his life that occurred as a prelude to the events described in the book of Joshua. From these accounts emerges the portrait of an extraordinary man—Joshua, a spiritual giant.

JOSHUA THE GENERAL (Ex. 17:8-14).

Joshua first appears in the Bible rather abruptly (Ex. 17:9, 10). Nothing is said of his ancestry, tribe, or history. However, Moses knows him well, and is confident in his ability as leader and soldier. From the first, Joshua is a successful warrior-general fighting the battles of the Lord. Verse 14 also hints at the work God had in store for him. God's promise to destroy utterly the Amalekites was to be written in a book and recounted in the hearing, not of all Israel, but of Joshua. God's hand was already upon him.

What qualities of leadership do you detect in Joshua as a general? Ex. 17:8-16; Joshua 6-8. How did Joshua show compassion? Joshua 6:22, 23.

In God's warfare, mercy takes precedence. The citizens of Jericho had heard of the plagues against Egypt, the Red Sea crossing, and the judgments that befell Israel as a result of their participation in the religion of Baalpeor. For 40 years (the time between Israel's departure from Egypt and their entrance into Canaan) these citizens had time to consider the nature of the true God and commit their lives to Him. But only one family did so. Joshua's act of compassion tells us that God delights more in salvation than in destruction. (See Eze. 18:21-23, 32.)

What was Joshua's ultimate source of power in battle? What can we learn about the balance of faith and works in this account of the battle against the Amalekites? Ex. 17:11-15 (compare Joshua 5:13-15).

"As the Hebrews triumphed when Moses was reaching his hands toward heaven and interceding in their behalf, so the Israel of God prevail when they by faith take hold upon the strength of their mighty Helper. Yet divine strength is to be combined with human effort. Moses did not believe that God would overcome their foes while Israel remained inactive. While the great leader was pleading with the Lord, Joshua and his brave followers were putting forth their utmost efforts to repulse the enemies of Israel and of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 299.

How are the qualities of leadership displayed by Joshua helpful to have in the fight against sin? By what means can we obtain these qualities?

JOSHUA THE PRIME MINISTER (Ex. 24:12-14; 33:11; Num. 11:28).

What term best describes Joshua's office as Moses' personal assistant? Ex. 24:13; 33:11.

The modern English equivalent of the Hebrew word used to describe Joshua's office is "minister," here probably "prime minister." The Hebrew word implies service, but in the sense of "ministerial service," in contrast to another Hebrew word, which often implies "menial service."

List Joshua's responsibilities in his position as prime minister to Moses. Ex. 24:12, 13; 33:7-11.

What character qualities of Joshua are evident from these incidents? How did these traits qualify him for his later responsibilities?

The high honor that attended Joshua as Moses' personal minister is apparent in the duties this position required of him. In Numbers 11:27-29, we glimpse the sterling character of Joshua. Moses sums up the spirit of Joshua as he replies to his aide, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them" (NIV). Indeed, Joshua stands in sharp contrast to the rest of Israel as they cavort and sing around the golden calf.

"During the sojourn in the wilderness he [Joshua] had acted as prime minister to Moses, and by his quiet, unpretending fidelity, his steadfastness when others wavered, his firmness to maintain the truth in the midst of danger, he had given evidence of his fitness to succeed Moses, even before he was called to the position by the voice of God.

"It was with great anxiety and self-distrust that Joshua had looked forward to the work before him; but his fears were removed by the assurance of God, 'As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.' "—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 481, 482.

What can we learn about "servant leadership" in the church today from the example of Joshua? What kind of "ministry" has God given to every Christian? 2 Cor. 5:18.

Tuesday

March 28

JOSHUA THE SCOUT (Num. 13:1–14:38; 32:11, 12).

What does the account of the twelve spies tell us about Joshua? Num. 13:1–14:38; 32:11, 12. To contrast the spirit and characteristics of Joshua and Caleb with those of the other ten spies, fill in the blanks of the chart below.

Caleb/Joshua	The Remaining 10 Spies
_____	cowardliness
hopefulness	_____
_____	pessimism
truthfulness	_____
_____	rebelliousness

"Caleb and Joshua attempted to quiet the tumult. With their garments rent in token of grief and indignation, they rushed in among the people, and their ringing voices were heard above the tempest of lamentation and rebellious grief. . . .

"The unfaithful spies were loud in denunciation of Caleb and Joshua, and the cry was raised to stone them."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 389, 390.

What lesson can we learn from Joshua about the safety of trusting in the voice of the majority?

"For Joshua the lesson was quite clear: the majority is not always right. In fact, it is very often wrong. The men and women God uses have always stood against the flow. . . . We need to remember this. Ours is a day when truth is determined by consensus, when justice is struck by a five-four vote, when 'everybody is doing it' has become the pervasive rationale for behavior."—R. Kent Hughes, *Living on the Cutting Edge: Joshua and the Challenge of Spiritual Leadership* (copyright ©, 1987), pp. 16, 17. (Used by permission of Good News Publishers, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Ill. 60187.)

What evidence of truth being determined by consensus do you see in the world? How can you successfully resist doing something because everyone else is doing it?

Wednesday

March 29

JOSHUA THE SPIRIT-FILLED LEADER (Num. 27:12-23).

Summarize the events leading to God's command for Moses to appoint a successor. Num. 20:10-13; 27:12-17.

What distinguishing characteristic qualified Joshua to be Moses' successor? Num. 27:18.

List other Bible worthies who were distinguished by this same quality.

Gen. 41:38, 39 _____

Judges 6:34 _____

Ps. 51:11, 12 _____

Luke 1:35, 41, 42 _____

Acts 2:1-4 _____

"From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His 'good Spirit to instruct them.' And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 53.

How essential is the Holy Spirit for effective spiritual leadership today? How may we be sure of His presence? Zech. 4:6; John 14:12-18; 16:5-15.

The Holy Spirit brings with Him all of heaven's wealth and assets. But we cannot receive these resources if we are not willing to invite Him into our hearts. He will not force Himself upon anyone who does not welcome Him. (See *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 419.)

Thursday

March 30

JOSHUA THE TWICE-COMMISSIONED SUCCESSOR OF MOSES (Deut. 31:1-6, 14, 23).

What did the “laying on of hands” signify in the commissioning of Joshua by Moses? Num. 27:18-23. Does this same significance apply in the ordaining of ministers and gospel workers today? See Acts 6:6; 13:3; 2 Tim. 1:6.

In Old Testament times the laying on of hands is associated with a special ceremony of blessing and consecration for full-time ministry (Gen. 48:14; Num. 8:10). When Moses laid his hands on Joshua at his inauguration, he gave him some of his authority (Num. 27:19, 20), and this inauguration was attended by the filling of the Holy Spirit (Deut. 34:9).

“Before being sent forth as missionaries to the heathen world, these apostles [Paul and Barnabas] were solemnly dedicated to God by fasting and prayer and the laying on of hands. Thus they were authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to perform the rite of baptism and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority. . . . Their ordination was a public recognition of their divine appointment to bear to the Gentiles the glad tidings of the gospel.

“Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God Himself, and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office and a recognition of one’s authority in that office. By it the seal of the church was set upon the work of God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 161, 162.

Joshua received not only a human commission at the hand of Moses, but a divine commission. What was the procedure for the divine commission? Deut. 31:14-23.

In both the human and divine commission, what was the main point of emphasis of the charge given by Moses and the Lord? Deut. 31:6-8, 23.

Consider how the same “words of holy cheer” spoken by God to Joshua apply to your own spiritual warfare. (Note how the New Testament makes this application in Hebrews 13:5.)

FURTHER STUDY: The many facets of Joshua's life teach us that when we trust God, we can do wonderful things for Him. Read the following Bible stories. How did the characters in each story trust God? What was the result of that trust? Ex. 1:22-2:9; Matt. 8:5-10. Pray that God will help you to have such trust.

Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 297-300, 313, 314, 319, 320, 387-394; *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 148-154; *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 376-380.

"If men will walk in the path that God has marked out for them, they will have a counselor whose wisdom is far above any human wisdom. Joshua was a wise general because God was his guide. The first sword that Joshua used was the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. . . .

"There is no greater deception than for man to suppose that in any difficulty he can find a better guide than God, a wiser counselor in any emergency, a stronger defense under any circumstance."

—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 993.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you agree with the following assessment? "We have many professing Christians in our day. . . . But we do not seem to have many Joshuas. We do not have many who, without trying to be novel or spectacular, determine to obey the law of God in every particular and then actually do obey it throughout a long lifetime of faithful service." —James M. Boice, *Joshua: We Will Serve the Lord* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, a division of Baker Book House Company, 1989), p. 11.
2. What is the result when the church lacks Joshuas?
3. What lies at the foundation of our failure to be like Joshua? What practical steps can we as individuals take to become spiritual giants like Joshua?
4. How would you summarize the lessons that Joshua learned in his years of preparation for leadership as Moses' successor? Which of these leadership characteristics are still vital in the making of spiritual leaders today?

SUMMARY: Through his experiences as a wise general, loyal prime minister, faithful scout, and spiritual leader, God prepared Joshua for his ultimate commission as Moses' successor and Israel's leader. God needs the same kind of spiritual leaders in His church today.



VBS Opens Way in Iraq

Sven Jensen

Vacation Bible Schools are opening the way for evangelism in the Middle Eastern country of Iraq. Recently two VBS programs were conducted, one of them in Baghdad.

Because of limited facilities, enrollment at the Baghdad VBS program was limited to 130 children. One woman who wanted her children to be enrolled, insisted on bringing chairs for her six children if they were allowed to attend the program.

All the parents were invited to attend the closing activities of Vacation Bible School. More than 300 attended this program, and after the meeting many expressed their appreciation to the church and its staff members for conducting the program.

The second VBS program was conducted in Kirkuk, in an area where no Adventist minister lives. Fifty children attended the VBS program which was conducted by the pastor of the Ninivah church along with his wife and a volunteer from the Baghdad church.

Following the VBS program the pastor visited the families of children who attended VBS. As a result, 17 parents attended the church in one week. The Ninivah pastor visits Kirkuk every two weeks to follow up the interests that the VBS program has developed.

Vacation Bible School materials are being translated and prepared for Arab cultures throughout the Middle East, according to Sven Jensen, church ministries director for the Middle East Union.

Through the Vacation Bible School program, workers in Iraq and other Arab countries are making progress in reaching people that otherwise would be difficult to reach.

Please pray for the work in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, where our members have faced many difficulties.

Sven Jensen is director of church ministries for the Middle East Union. He received this report from our workers in Iraq.

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The Two Joshuas



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Num. 13:16; Joshua 1:2-5; 3:7; Deut. 18:15-19; 34:10-12; Hebrews 3 and 4.

MEMORY TEXT: "For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:8, 9, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: Joshua is a type of the New Testament Joshua, Jesus Christ, who provides victory and rest to spiritual Israel.

JOSHUA TYPOLOGY. The experience of Joshua provides more than an exemplary life for us to follow. We will learn this week how Scripture presents Joshua as a type of Christ, the New Joshua. Joshua's conquest of Canaan and his leading of Israel into rest in the Promised Land is a divine prefiguration of Jesus' personal conquest of the powers of evil. Joshua's work foreshadowed Christ's provision of spiritual victory, the rest of grace for all who are in Him, and the ultimate conquest and eternal inheritance of the Christian's Promised Land—heaven. The book of Joshua is nothing less than an Old Testament type showing us how to possess victoriously the Promised Land with our New Joshua at the lead; indeed, how we can all conquer in the spirit of Joshua.

WHAT'S IN A NAME (Num. 13:16; Matt. 1:21; Heb. 4:8).

What is the significance of the change of Joshua's name? Num. 13:8, 16. Compare the changing of Joshua's name with other biblical figures who received a change of name. Gen. 17:1-8, 15-19; 32:22-32.

Joshua's original name, Oshea, means "salvation." Under direction from God, Moses changed his name to Joshua, which means "The Lord [Yahweh] is salvation." The name Joshua is distinctive in that it is the first name in Scripture in which the divine name (*Yahweh*) is included as part of an individual's name. Is it only accidental that the divine name is given to Joshua? Or does this signify a special mission for the one (or One) holding the name that connects humanity and God?

In Scripture, a divinely ordained change of name comes at critical junctures in the flow of salvation history, as with Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, and Jacob to Israel. Such a change emphasizes the character of the individual, and destines that person to a special divinely appointed work.

"In view of the importance people themselves attached to names, God changed the names of certain men to make them harmonize with their experiences, past or future."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 321.

How would Joshua's name change affect the people's view of him as their new leader?

Allow the full force of Joshua's name to sink in. Read the promise of the Messiah in Matthew 1:21, and substitute "Joshua" for "Jesus." Why was the Saviour of the world given the name "Joshua"? Compare Acts 7:45 with Hebrews 4:8 in the King James Version.

The name Joshua (Hebrew *Yehoshua* or *Yeshua*) in Greek is *Iesous*, in English, Jesus. Jesus and Joshua are the same name! Is it only coincidental that the prophet Moses, under divine inspiration, entrusted to his minister the name that God from eternity had reserved for the Messiah? Our scriptural study in succeeding days this week should enable us to answer this question more surely.

Monday

April 3

THE SECOND MOSES (Joshua 1:2-5; 3:7; Deut. 18:15-17; 34:10-12).

How does Scripture compare the life and work of Moses with that of Joshua? Joshua 1:2-5; 3:7; 4:14.

Moses _____

Joshua _____

To whom does Moses refer in his prediction about the future prophet like himself? How does Joshua fit into this picture? Deut. 18:15-19; 34:10-12; John 1:21; Acts 3:22-26; 7:37.

From reading the parallels between the lives of Moses and Joshua, it appears on the surface that Joshua is the prophet like Moses who was to come. Deuteronomy 34:10-12 makes it explicit that although Joshua was Moses' successor, he was not in the fullest sense that "prophet like Moses" who was to arise. Joshua partially fulfilled the prophecy. But the ultimate fulfillment was in the person of the Messiah. Thus the lives of both Joshua and Moses foreshadowed the coming Messiah.

What is the nature of typology in Scripture? Study the following Scriptures that refer to types, and write a definition of typology. Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Heb. 8:5; 9:23.

Typology is the study of persons, events, or institutions through which God prefigures Jesus or the gospel realities brought about by Him. Because a type points forward, it is essentially predictive in nature (although the prediction may not be spelled out). Tomorrow we will discover more clearly how Joshua is a type of Christ.

THE NEW JOSHUA (Isa. 49:10).

The Old Testament control for typology. An often-overlooked aspect of typology is that the Old Testament itself provides the key for identifying the types in Scripture. Scripture does not let us make types of anyone or anything. It guides us to understand who and what God intends us to use as types. In the chart of examples below, the middle column lists Old Testament indicators of certain persons, events, or institutions divinely designed to be types:

Old Testament Type (Person/Event/ Institution)	Old Testament Verbal Indicator of Typology	New Testament Announcement of Antitype
1. Exodus: Book of Exodus; Hosea 11:1; etc.	New Exodus Hosea 2:14, 15; 12:9, 13; 13:4, 5; Jer. 16:14, 15; 31:32; Isa. 42:14-16; 43:1-3, 14-21; 48:20, 21.	Antitypical Exodus Matt. 1-5; 2:19; Luke 9:31; etc.
2. Sanctuary Ex. 25-40; etc.	Heavenly Original Ex. 25:40; Ps. 11:4; 68:35; 96:6; 150:1; Isa. 6:1-5; Jonah 2:7; Micah 1:2.	Heavenly Original Heb. 8:5; 9:24; Rev. 8:5; 11:19; 16:1; etc.
3. David The Psalms (for example, Ps. 22)	New David Eze. 37:24; Isa. 9:6; 11:1-5; etc.	Antitypical David Matt. 27:35; John 19:24, etc.
4. Elijah 1 Kings 17-19	New Elijah Mal. 4:5, 6	Antitypical Elijah Matt. 11:14; Mark 9:11; Luke 1:17
5. Moses Gen.; Ex.; Lev.; Num.; Deut.	New Moses Deut. 18:15-19	Antitypical Moses John 1:17, 21; 6:14, 30-58; etc.

Besides the hints we have already noted, how does the Old Testament indicate that Joshua is a type of the Messiah? Isa. 49:8 (compare Deut. 1:38; 3:28; 31:7; Joshua 1:6).

The specific task given to Joshua—allotting the inheritance to Israel—Isaiah says will be the work of the Messiah. Thus Isaiah indicates that the Messiah will be the antitypical Joshua, recapping in His life, but on a much greater scale, the work of Joshua son of Nun.

ENTERING GOD'S REST (Hebrews 3, 4; 12:2, 22; Eph. 2:6).

How does the New Testament verify that Joshua is a type of Christ? Heb. 3:7-4:11 (note especially 4:1-3, 8).

Hebrews 4:8 in the KJV reads "Jesus," because in Greek the words Jesus and Joshua are alternative translations of *Iesous*. The context makes clear that this verse is speaking about the "Old Testament Jesus," namely, Joshua. Most modern versions (including the NKJV) have cleared up the potential confusion by translating *Iesous* here as "Joshua" and not "Jesus."

The comparison and contrast between Joshua and Jesus in Hebrews 3 and 4 demonstrate how Jesus is the antitypical Joshua, accomplishing in antitype what never was completely fulfilled in type.

In the typology of Joshua, what does entry into rest in the Land of Promise prefigure? Heb. 4:1-11 (compare Heb. 12:2, 22 with Eph. 2:6).

We often consider Israel's entry into the Promised Land as a type of our entry into the heavenly Canaan at the Second Advent. We will find this is true. But when ancient Israel entered into Canaan, the battles of conquest had just begun. Though the people were in the Promised Land, they still needed to subdue and possess by faith what was already theirs by divine promise.

As in the type, so in the antitype. According to Hebrews 3 and 4, antitypical Canaan is the place of spiritual "rest of grace" with victory available to every believer *now*. (See Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 928 [MS42, 1901].) Our New Joshua has already brought us by faith to the heavenly Canaan. We are already with Jesus/Joshua "in heavenly places." By faith, we have *already* come to Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem. When we become Christians, we enter the Promised Land of Blessing. And yet the conquest lies ahead. We have yet to gain the victory over seemingly insurmountable enemies. We are still to vanquish the giants before the final apportionment of the eternal inheritance and the ultimate rest in heaven.

Hebrews 4 captures these "already" and "not yet" aspects of biblical typology. Verse 3 states that the rest is present ("we who have believed do enter that rest"), yet verse 11 describes it as still future ("Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest").

*Thursday**April 6***JOSHUA IN TYPE AND ANTITYPE.**

The types of Scripture have one New Testament fulfillment, but with three different component aspects:

1. The basic fulfillment is in Jesus at His first advent. 2. All who are "in Jesus" (the church) partake in that fulfillment. 3. The final consummation comes with the second advent of Christ and beyond.

TYPOLOGY			
Old Testament Types	New Testament Antitypes		
Persons, Events, Institutions	Christ (Christological)	Church (Ecclesiological)	Final Climax (Apocalyptic)
Exodus	Christ's Exodus (Matt. 1-5; Luke 9:31)	Spiritual Exodus (Heb. 4; 2 Cor. 6:17)	Apocalyptic Exodus (Rev. 15:1-3)
Sanctuary/Temple	Christ as Temple (John 1:14; 2:21; Matt. 12:6)	Church as Temple (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 6:16)	Heavenly Temple/Ultimate Temple (Rev. 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 21:3, 22)

Now finish the chart below.

THREEFOLD TYPOLOGY OF JOSHUA			
Old Testament Joshua	Jesus	Church	End Time
1. Leads Israel to Canaan after 40 years (Joshua 1-5)	Ascended to heavenly Canaan after 40 days (Acts 1:3, 9-11; Heb. 1, 2)	To Mt. Zion by faith (Heb. 12:22-24)	Entry into Promised Land after millennium (Rev. 20:9; 21:2, 3)
2. Conducts conquest of Israel's enemies (Joshua 6-12)	Conducts conquest of Israel's enemies (Col. 2:15)	Spiritual warfare	Final battle against the enemies of God
3. Leads Israel into God's rest (Joshua 1:13-15; 14:15; 21:44)	(Matt. 11:28; Heb. 4)	Spiritual rest of grace (Heb. 4)	
4. Appoints the inheritance (Joshua 1:6; 13-21)	(Heb. 1:4; 9:15)	Receive spiritual inheritance (Acts 20:32; Eph. 1:11, 14, 18)	(Matt. 25:34)

FURTHER STUDY: Study the following types in Scripture: the Flood (Gen. 6; 7; Matt. 24:38, 39; 1 Thess. 5:3; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 101-104) and Elijah (1 Kings 17-19; Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 11:14; Mark 9:11; Luke 1:17). If you have time, enhance this study by charting these types as shown in Tuesday's and Thursday's lessons.

For further study of Bible typology, see Richard M. Davidson, "Sanctuary Typology," in *Symposium in Revelation*—book I, ed. Frank Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 6 (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), pp. 100-102, 106-108, 129, 130.

"The course of God's people should be upward and onward to victory. A greater than Joshua is leading on the armies of Israel. One is in our midst, even the Captain of our salvation, who has said for our encouragement: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' He will lead us on to certain victory."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 122.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the importance of biblical typology in general? Of seeing Joshua as a type of Christ, in particular?
2. Why does the Old Testament point out the typology of Joshua? Would typology be truly predictive if we could identify it only after the New Testament fulfillment?
3. How is Joshua a type for victorious Christian living?

SUMMARY: The book of Joshua gives the type for experiencing "victorious living" and the "rest of grace." The preparation, the battle strategies for conquering spiritual enemies, the source of strength and success, the causes of setbacks, and the divine remedy, the allotment of the spiritual inheritance, and the experience of "possessing our possessions"—this book has them all! It has the basic principles of "kingdom living," especially in this time when we are literally about to enter heavenly Canaan. In this book we find illustrated how we may become "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37)!



The Woman Who Built a Church, part 1

Maye Porter

Arime is a joyful Christian who lives in a village in the coffee-growing section of Papua New Guinea. But it was not always so.

One day while performing some "magic" to help kill her husband, Arime broke her leg and was hospitalized. While she was recuperating, an Adventist layman, a pastor, and some Dorcas women visited her. She was impressed with their sincerity, so when she returned home, she decided to attend the nearest Adventist women's welfare meeting.

When Arime returned from the hospital she found that her husband had fled the village, fearing for his life. Arime was all alone in her very small house. She joined the women's Dorcas group, and eventually the church's baptismal class. As she studied the Bible with them she began to feel a burden for the tribal members of her village.

Armed with only an old Picture Roll, Arime and her high-school-aged sister, Naomi, began a Branch Sabbath School that eventually numbered 30 people. After some months, Arime and a jovial old man from the village were baptized. The two decided to build a church for their Branch Sabbath School, but they found that getting suitable land was a problem.

One day Arime noticed a young man named Jack building a fence along the highway. As she watched, she realized that the land inside his fence would be just right for a church. Acting braver than she felt, Arime approached Jack and expressed her desire to build a church on that land.

"No way!" he responded. "I am fencing this land so I can plant a garden here. You go somewhere else to look for land. I don't want to have anything to do with your church!"

A very subdued Arime walked sadly away, but Jack felt uncomfortable. He began thinking that if God wanted *His* land on which to build a church, he had better not stand in God's way or maybe something bad might happen to him!

(continued)

Maye Porter works with children's ministries in Papua New Guinea.

Battle Strategy



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Joshua 1:6-18; Deut. 31:1-8.

MEMORY TEXT: "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: At the beginning of Joshua's task as Israel's leader, God revealed the secrets of success in the conquest and beyond.

STRATEGY FOR SUCCESS. In many ways, the opening chapter of Joshua sums up the whole message of the book. Here God Himself gives to Joshua, and to us, the strategy for success in our spiritual warfare. God outlines four clear, practical components in the battle strategy, and adds His guarantee of success for the one who is willing to follow His blueprint. "Joshua models a faith that is more than intellectual. He is willing to turn his back to the past, claim the promises, meet the conditions, and give all that it will take to complete the lifelong tasks entrusted to him."—John A. Huffman, Jr., *The Communicator's Commentary: Joshua* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Inc., 1986), p. 38. Thus, Joshua becomes a model not only for the Israelites but for us as well. Pray for God to live in your heart so that you too may have a faith like Joshua's.

UNDAUNTED COURAGE (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18).

As Israel's new leader, Joshua assumed tasks that included helping the people cross the Jordan and assisting them in subduing the land and taking possession of it. (See Deut. 31:1-8; Joshua 1:2-5.)

How can we identify with these tasks in our own spiritual lives? How do the Christian's spiritual objectives compare with Joshua's and Israel's? Eph. 6:12; Heb. 4:8-11.

Our spiritual goals are antitypes of Joshua's goals. We are charged to enter the Promised Land, the rest of grace, to engage in spiritual warfare against our spiritual enemies in order to possess our spiritual inheritance and to experience victory in the Christian life!

What is the first component in the divine battle strategy? How many times is this command repeated as Joshua takes over the reins of leadership? Why is there this repetition? Deut. 31:7, 23; Joshua 1:5, 7, 9, 18.

Joshua's new responsibilities as leader of Israel almost overwhelmed him. How could he lead Israel across the swollen Jordan, conquer the walled cities, and slay the giants? How could he successfully subdue the land?

"It was with great anxiety and self-distrust that Joshua had looked forward to the work before him."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 482. Then came the charge, "Be strong and of good courage!" The Hebrew here may be translated by several English terms: "Be firm, courageous, confident! Be bold!" Twice from Moses, three times from the Lord Himself, and once more from the people, Joshua heard the challenge: "Be strong and of good courage."

This is one of the divine prerequisites for spiritual victory. But these words from the Lord are also a promise of help and a command to trust Him. Whenever He asks us to be something or do something, He will always give us His power to accomplish the task.

When has the following proven true in your life? "A discouraged soul is filled with darkness, shutting out the light of God from his own soul and casting a shadow upon the pathway of others."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 117. Consider sharing with your Sabbath School class how the Lord enabled you to overcome this discouragement.

**UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE IN DIVINE PROMISES
(Joshua 1:3-6, 9).**

What is the secret of obtaining and maintaining undaunted courage? Joshua 1:3-6, 9; Deut. 31:6-8, 23.

The second ingredient in the divine battle strategy focuses on God's promises. Every time God commands Joshua to be courageous, He couples the command with a divine promise! God does not ask us to be bold simply by the power of positive thinking. Our courage comes from accepting God's unfailing promises.

Armed with the promises of God, Joshua could experience undaunted courage. The river Jordan parted before Israel. The walls of Jericho collapsed at the sound of their shout. The enemies melted in fear and defeat while the Lord fought for Israel as He had promised.

At the end of Joshua's victorious campaigns, he could testify to God's unfailing promises. (See Joshua 21:43-45.) Ellen White repeatedly connects courage with the claiming of God's promises: "Again I say: Be of good courage. Trust in the Lord. Let not the enemy rob you of the promises."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 593.

**How can we apply God's promise to Joshua to our lives?
Joshua 1:5; Heb. 13:5, 6.**

As a sure antidote for discouragement, begin to collect and claim the precious promises of God found in His Holy Word. (See 2 Peter 1:2-4.) Someone has counted more than 3,500 specific Bible promises—suited to all our needs!

How do we claim Bible promises? Are you regularly claiming God's promises?

Ellen White summarizes three crucial biblical steps in claiming God's promises:

1. For any gift He has promised, we may ask (Matt 21:22).
2. Then we are to believe that we receive (Mark 11:24).
3. Return thanks to God that we have received (John 11:41; 1 Thess. 5:18; see *Education*, p. 258).

Find one of God's promises now that can be of special benefit to your life. Then claim that promise using the three steps above. Continue to do so throughout the week.

Tuesday

April 11

UNSWERVING COMMITMENT TO GOD'S WILL (Joshua 1:7, last part).

What is the third ingredient in God's formula for success in spiritual warfare? Joshua 1:7.

The book of Joshua testifies to the way God blesses when there is total consecration to His revealed will.

"Joshua, the commander of Israel, searched the books diligently in which Moses has faithfully chronicled the directions given by God—His requirements, reproofs, and restrictions—lest he should move unadvisedly. Joshua was afraid to trust his own impulses, or his own wisdom."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 993, 994.

Survey the following events recorded in the book of Joshua. What happened when the people obeyed God's will? When they did not?

Joshua 6 _____

Joshua 7 _____

Joshua 17:13 _____

"Achan's sin brought disaster upon the whole nation. For one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon His church till the transgression is searched out and put away. The influence most to be feared by the church is not that of open opposers, infidels, and blasphemers, but of inconsistent professors of Christ. These are the ones that keep back the blessing of the God of Israel and bring weakness upon His people."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 497.

The climax of the book (Joshua 24:15) is the eloquent appeal "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

What alluring "Babylonish garments" or giants of sin threaten to stand between you and total commitment to God?

Wednesday

April 12

UNINTERRUPTED COMMUNION (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1).

What is the fourth component of the battle strategy for success in spiritual warfare? Joshua 1:8.

We cannot obey God on our own. Note the intimate connection between meditation on God's Word and obedience.

Explore the various dimensions of truly Christian meditation by answering the following questions. These texts will help you: Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1; Joshua 24:1-8.

What is the meaning of meditation? _____

What is its subject matter? _____

What mental attitude is involved? _____

How do we most effectively personalize our meditation? _____

The word *meditate* used in Joshua 1:8 means "to give forth sighs." We can imagine Joshua poring over God's word until the sighs of contentment begin to come forth spontaneously: "Ahhh!" This is to be a continual experience. We should memorize Scripture so that we can constantly ruminate on it even as we lie down and rise up. The meditation the Bible calls for is not the mysticism of Eastern religions, which looks within oneself. We must meditate on the Bible and Christ. Notice that Joshua looked to the written Word.

Begin to explore the powerful principle of personalizing Scripture as illustrated in Joshua 24. Put your own name in the story. Consider that the events in the biblical narratives happened to you personally!

How willing are you to have intense personal communion with God based on His written Word? Do you have a time every day for Bible study? What methods of Bible study have you found most beneficial to your spiritual life?

GOOD SUCCESS (Joshua 1:9-18).

Review the fourfold strategy for success that we learned about this week. For those who follow this strategy, the promise is fantastic: "Then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8, NKJV). Does God mean what He says? Shall we take Him at His word?

"The Lord has a great work to be done in our world. To every man He has given *His* work for man to do. But man is not to make man his guide, lest he be led astray; this is always unsafe. While Bible religion embodies the principles of activity in service, at the same time there is the necessity of asking for wisdom daily from the Source of all wisdom."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 993.

What evidence do we have that Joshua immediately implemented the divine battle strategy? Joshua 1:10-18 (compare 5:13-15).

As soon as Joshua receives the guarantee of God's presence, he acts. He accepts God's will for his life as final without debate or question; he puts plans into effect that will accomplish God's goal. Joshua obviously has encountered the living God. And as a result, he is ready to assist Israel in realizing God's plan for them.

"So often when God calls men to some specific task they are apt to question it. . . . Too many times we have dealt with these summonses of God as a juggler deals with ivory balls—keeping them suspended in the air. . . . When once a vision has been given, action must follow if we are to be worthy. We are commanded to live not in our visions, but by them."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 2, p. 557.

List ways we can apply this battle strategy in the uplifting of one another.

In light of Joshua 1, how would you define success? Is this the working definition of success in your life?

What situations are you facing right now that remind you of what Joshua faced at the Jordan River? How would you relate the four steps that God revealed to Joshua to your situation? If you have seen God work on your behalf in special ways, plan to share your experience with others in the class.

FURTHER STUDY: Use a Bible concordance to discover what else God's Word has to say about the words *courage*, *promise*, and *meditate*. Which verses are your favorites and why? Memorize one or two of these verses this coming Sabbath. If you have the *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* available, you also might look up references to these words in her writings.

Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 481, 482.

"Walk continually in the light of God. Meditate day and night upon His character. Then you will see His beauty and rejoice in His goodness. Your heart will glow with a sense of His love. You will be uplifted, as if borne by everlasting arms. With the power and light that God imparts, you can comprehend more and accomplish more than you ever before deemed possible."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 514.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss how the four components of God's battle strategy for success affect one another. Which one of the four is primary, leading to the others?
2. How would you apply God's strategy for success to your everyday struggles and temptations? In what ways can a 3500-year-old guide to success still be relevant to our modern situations in which we long for success?
3. How far are you prepared to go in obeying God's Word? How much tangible evidence do you require before you are willing to obey divine instructions?
4. Which of the commands God gave to Joshua seem to be the most difficult for you to follow? Which of the promises are the most encouraging?

SUMMARY: God's unfailing battle strategy for success in spiritual warfare involves four crucial elements: (1) undaunted courage, based upon (2) unwavering confidence in the promises of God; (3) unswerving obedience to God's will, made possible by (4) daily communion with Him, in meditation upon His Word.



Arime Builds a Church, part 2

Maye Porter

Arime had wanted to build a church, and had found a good location. Bravely she asked Jack, the owner, whether they could have the land for a church, but he had refused. Arime prayed, and asked God what she should do. Her little Branch Sabbath School band needed a place to worship.

Soon Arime had a visitor. It was Jack. Rather grudgingly he told her she could build a church on the land. Her smile and gratitude made him feel he had made a worthwhile sacrifice.

Jack watched the church slowly take shape at the hands of Arime's little band. Jack had an interest in that piece of land, and he developed a deeper interest in the church. He began to suggest ways to build and helped the group collect materials. He picked coffee beans to buy nails and timber. And when each member of the group paid for a sheet of iron for the roof, Jack bought one too.

Soon Jack began meeting with the Bible study group that Arime taught, and he began to find the source of her inner joy.

Services were held in the church long before the roof was in place, and Jack, though as yet unbaptized, volunteered to teach the Sabbath School lesson and lead the singing. Soon Jack was baptized, bringing to 32 the number of members. But they still do not have a minister. Members lead out as they can, and together they solve their problems and work toward a mature Christianity.

"Next harvest," says Arime, "we will replace the dirt floor of the church with a concrete one, and we will add a room for the children to meet in."

Now we want to see where God wants us to grow the next church. We have started a youth group to help us with our outreach."

"Arime is like Ellen White," Jack said while standing outside the little church. "She is our faithful leader." The impact of his words of praise was all the more forceful because in that part of the world women have little status.

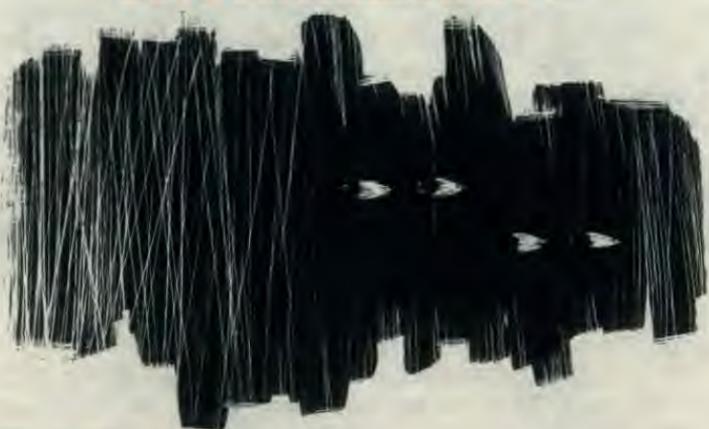
God is blessing the dedication and good works of Arime, and of the women of Papua New Guinea as they labor for Him.

Maye Porter works with children's ministries in Papua New Guinea.

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Reconnaissance



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 2.

MEMORY TEXT: "By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given friendly welcome to the spies" (**Hebrews 11:31, RSV**).

KEY THOUGHT: Before embarking on the conquest of Canaan, Joshua wisely launches a military fact-finding mission. From his strategy we may learn lessons of spiritual reconnaissance in our Christian warfare against our enemy, Satan.

FAITH, ACTION, SALVATION, AND MESSIAH. Joshua coupled his life of communion with God with the preparations of a wise general. Faith and action always go together in the Christian life. As Joshua had been one of two faithful spies (Numbers 13), so now he sends two faithful spies on another reconnaissance mission. In the enemy stronghold of Jericho, help comes to the scouts from a most unexpected source—a person who had four things against her: (1) This person was a woman. (2) She was a Canaanite. (3) She earned a living as a prostitute. (4) She did not flinch at lying. This person, Rahab, became one of the most singular examples of living, active faith in all of Scripture. Salvation comes to her house, and through her house comes the Messiah!

What remarkable evidence this story provides of God's willingness to work through ordinary and unlikely people! (Compare Matt. 21:31.)

RAHAB HIDES THE SCOUTS (Joshua 2:1-14).

What wise action did Joshua take before launching an invasion of Canaan? Joshua 2:1.

"Jericho controlled the way of ascent into the mountains. At the head of the ascent was another fortress, Ai. The descents and ascents were made by old river beds which had carried the torrents down these steep hills. . . . If the Israelites were going to capture the hill country from which they could control the rest of the land, they would have to press past Jericho, which controlled the lowest part, go up the ascent and take Ai. Then they would be on top of the hill country, able to expand their wedge and control the various parts of the country from there."—Francis A. Schaeffer, *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), p. 93.

What was the goal of the scouts' mission, and how did they escape detection by the enemy? Was it appropriate for them to go to the house of a prostitute? Joshua 2:1-7.

Josephus and other interpreters have sought to justify the visit of the spies to Rahab's house by insisting that she was really an innkeeper instead of a prostitute. But the force of the Hebrew word *zonah* is clear—throughout Scripture it means a prostitute. Of course, she may also have been an innkeeper, but this is not implied in the Hebrew word. The context of this story makes plain that the purpose of the spies' visit was not to purchase sexual favors. Rahab's house was a place of anonymity and security, while its location in the wall afforded an escape route. God guided the scouts.

Does Scripture condone Rahab's lie to protect the Israelite scouts? Find other texts that deal with lying. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 130.)

Some have sought to explain away Rahab's answer as not really lying, or to justify it as the lesser of two evils. But such attempts are not faithful to the text or to the rest of Scripture. Rahab clearly told a series of lies, but because these facts are *recorded* in the narrative does not imply that God *approved* of her response.

Consider your actions over the past few days. What do they tell you about how you view honesty?

RAHAB'S FAITH (Joshua 2:8-14).

What facts about Israel and the activity of Israel's God did Rahab know? How does her relating these facts reveal her attitude toward God? Joshua 2:8-11.

Rahab's recitation of the saving acts of the Lord is a surprising testimony of faith in the one true God.

This is the heart of the story—she believed! Just as Abraham “believed in the Lord; and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6), so this prostitute from Canaan, who was probably an Amorite, believed. “By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace” (Heb. 11:31, NKJV). James 2:25 cites Rahab as one whose works made her faith perfect.

“I know. The Hebrew reads, ‘I knew,’ or, ‘I have known.’ Here she uses the language of the prophets, expressing that which is promised as though it were already fulfilled. Her faith was equal to theirs. This was the encouragement that Joshua and the children of Israel needed.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 183.

How amazing is Rahab's faith in light of the prediction about the Amorites made more than 400 years before! Gen. 15:16-21.

God predicted to Abraham that “in the fourth generation [or lifetime]” the Amorites would be ripe for judgment. For 400 years they practiced depravity and debauchery. Most had completely extinguished any flicker of sensitivity to evil. But Rahab the prostitute responded to God's Spirit, and He in turn clasped her hand as she reached out to Him in faith.

What request does Rahab make of the spies, and what is their reply? Joshua 2:12-14.

There can be little question that the people and king of Jericho would have regarded Rahab's behavior as an act of high treason punishable by death. Rahab clearly risked not only her life but the lives of her entire family.

Her life blighted by the society in which she lived, Rahab was a victim of her culture's social ills. What does her story tell us about how we should relate to such people?

Tuesday

April 18

THE PROMISE OF THE SCARLET CORD (Joshua 2:15-21).

How were the spies able to escape? Joshua 2:15-17.

Archeologists have discovered evidence of houses built within the wall of ancient Jericho from the very time of Joshua, 1400 B.C. The mountain Rahab referred to was possibly Jebel Qarantal, an imposing height to the northwest of Jericho. This rugged territory at the edge of the Wilderness of Judea is full of caves and gullies that would serve well as hiding places.

What three further conditions did the spies and Rahab agree upon? Joshua 2:18-21.

What typological significance is there in the scarlet cord? Compare the language used by the spies here (verses 12, 18-21) with the description of the placement of the blood of the lamb in the first Passover service (Ex. 12:7, 13, 21-23).

Commentators have noted the "striking similarities to the Passover: compare the scarlet cord with the sprinkled blood and the requirement that Rahab's family remain in the house with the command that the Passover be eaten in family units and that no one was to leave the house (Exod. 12:21-23)."—Donald H. Madvig, "Joshua," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, copyright © 1992), vol. 3, p. 263. (Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.)

Both stories refer to a "sign" or "token" (Joshua 2:12; Ex. 12:13), and the spies use language almost parallel to the description of the Passover (compare Ex. 12:21, 22 with Joshua 2:19). The "blood" of the substitute lamb at the Passover contrasts with the blood upon the heads of those who did not remain in Rahab's house under the sign of the scarlet cord. All of this suggests the scarlet cord as a parallel to the blood on the doorposts.

The Hebrew word for *cord* is translated "cord" only in Joshua 2. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (31 times) the word always means "hope." Is there some play on the meaning of the word on the part of the narrator? Regardless of whether the writer intended any pun, other Bible authors clearly viewed Rahab as a model of hope!

If you had been an Israelite, how would you have reacted to the news that the spies took refuge with Rahab?

RAHAB, MODEL OF HOPE (Joshua 6:17, 22-25; Matt. 1:1, 5, 6; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25).

When Israel took Jericho, what happened to Rahab and her household? Joshua 6:17, 22-25. Why did they not enter the Israelite's camp immediately?

The later history of Rahab reveals that she married Salmon (one of the princes of Judah), gave birth to Boaz, and thus became one of the ancestors of the Messiah. (See Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chron. 2:11-12; Num. 7:12; Matt. 1:1, 5, 6.)

How do later biblical writers honor and recognize Rahab's living, active faith? Heb. 11:31; James 2:25.

As Francis Schaeffer points out, when we consider what Rahab actually did, we should not be amazed at the honor afforded her. "In the book of James, Rahab is the only person paralleled to Abraham. . . . Abraham had faith, but it was a faith open to demonstration. In fact, it was demonstrated at a tremendous cost: He was willing to trust God and to offer his son. Rahab, too, had faith that had teeth in it, structure to it, strength in it. She was willing to suffer loss to demonstrate that her faith was valid.

"This woman Rahab stood alone in faith against the *total* culture which surrounded her—something none of us today in the western world has ever yet had to do. For a period of time she stood for the unseen against the seen, standing in acute danger until Jericho fell." —*Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History*, p. 72.

How is the experience of Rahab in a sense like the experience of all of us?

In one sense we are all Rahabs. Before we came to Christ, we were all outside the family of God, sinners in a degenerate culture, victims of Satan. But God revealed His mighty acts in history to us, and awakened faith within us. In Christ, we have all chosen to lay our lives on the line as we repudiate our past and side with God's people. The blood of Jesus, as a scarlet cord, is a sign spread over our lives. Now we live as aliens in the midst of a godless culture, awaiting our final and full deliverance at the time of judgment.

How might your personal experience be like Rahab's?

THE RETURN OF THE SPIES (Joshua 2:22-24).

In what ways was the reconnaissance mission of the two scouts a success? Summarize their return adventure and their message to Joshua. Joshua 2:22-24.

Compare the story of the mission of the twelve spies (Numbers 14) with that of the two spies in Joshua 2. What elements of the “spy stories” are the same? What elements are different?

Why didn’t the two spies bring back “fruits” from the land as the twelve had done 40 years earlier? Or did they bring back the “fruit” of Canaan after all?

In a sense the two spies eventually did bring back fruit from their reconnaissance mission—Rahab and her family were the ultimate “fruit”! Ellen White mentions Rahab and her family as one of the examples of “fruit” from the heathen lands that was gathered into the garner of Israel. (See *Prophets and Kings*, p. 369.)

But the garner could have held more. That God saved such a person as Rahab and her family tells us much about His grace, even though the utter destruction of Jericho seems like cruelty at its worst. We must remember that “the Israelites acted strictly according to divine orders (Deut. 20:16, 17). . . . The Canaanites had reached the limit of their probation. God had given them an adequate opportunity for repentance, just as He gives to every person in this world (John 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9). At last mercy can go no further without interfering with the justice of God. At such a time God must act in order to be true to His character, which includes justice as well as mercy. It often becomes an act of love to cut off those who have had their opportunity, lest their evil example corrupt others. . . . Had the inhabitants of Jericho so desired, they might all have shared in the salvation that came to Rahab and her house.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 198, 199.

In a book full of judgment upon God’s enemies, before any people are destroyed there is first an illustration of God’s willingness to save rather than destroy. It is an illustration of the nature and power of saving faith in the life of a person whom most of us would never choose to be an ancestor of the Messiah.

FURTHER STUDY: Read all of Hebrews 11 and James 2 for the context of the New Testament references to Rahab and righteousness by faith.

Also read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 482, 483; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 369.

"We too are fighting the battles of the Lord under the heavenly 'Joshua.' All appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the forces of evil cringe before the manifest power of God. He is going before us, and the fear of us and of what the Lord has done for us is in the heart of His enemies. The kingdom of darkness is tottering to its fall, and Satan and his hosts know it. In view of this factor let us be strong; perfect faith and love cast out fear (1 John 4:18). The inhabitants of Jericho all heard and trembled; only Rahab passed from fear to faith and service."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 183.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does the story of Rahab and the spies tell us about keeping promises?
2. What other biblical examples can you cite where God or Christ honored an outcast of society? What do these stories tell you about the nature of grace?
3. Can you present a balanced view of righteousness by faith based on the life of Rahab?
4. Sabbath afternoon's lesson listed four things Rahab had against her. What qualities did she have in her favor? How can these qualities help us in our battle against Satan?
5. At first glance, it seems that Rahab and Joshua are opposites. Yet in some ways they are very much alike. Identify some of these ways.
6. Rahab most likely heard about God because of what He had done for the Israelites. What does this tell us about witnessing and the lives we lead?

SUMMARY: The reconnaissance mission of the two spies secured not only needed information but also the "fruit" of the land in the person of Rahab, a prostitute, yet a woman of faith, saved by divine grace. By that same grace, may we in our own lives seek to save those who seem unlikely candidates for God's kingdom.



Thank You!

Dear Believers,

Thank you for responding to requests for literature and Picture Rolls. We received some beautiful secondhand Picture Rolls for use in children's Sabbath School programs in Sudan. What a fine way to provide excellent materials that our members could not otherwise afford.

A big thank you to the children and teachers who so willingly share their Sabbath School materials with friends in the developing countries. It is much appreciated.

Sven H. Jensen
Church Ministries Director
Middle East Union



Christ becomes real to children in Sudan as they hear of God's love and Christ's sacrifice through pictures and stories. Literature requests appear from time to time in the *Adventist Review*. For a recent request list, write to *The Adventist Review*, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904.

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Crossing to Conquer



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 3:1-5:12.

MEMORY TEXT: "And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land" (Joshua 4:21, 22).

KEY THOUGHT: After consecrated Israel crossed the Jordan, they memorialized the miracle with two stone monuments. Reinstated as God's covenant people, they prepared for the conquest of Canaan by reinstating circumcision and the Passover.

CLIMAX AT THE COMMENCEMENT. The crossing of the Jordan culminates the great saving work of God for Israel that commenced at the Exodus. "Crossing the Jordan meant the *arrival*, toward which the Exodus *departure* and the wilderness experience of covenant and training had been the preparation. The crossing was the fulfillment of God's promise to the patriarchs at the very beginning.

"Now the word '*abar*'—meaning to 'cross over' or to 'pass over'—is used twenty-one times in the story of the crossing (3:1-5:1). This verb emphasizes the decisive nature of this moment in the history of the Hebrew people and distinguishes it from everything that had gone before."—*The Communicator's Commentary: Joshua*, p. 70.

The Israelites were crossing over the Jordan into a new type of life marked by the inheritance God had promised their ancestors.

PREPARATION FOR PASSAGE (Joshua 3:1-6).

What does Joshua's early rising imply? Joshua 3:1. How does Jesus, the antitypical Joshua, give us a similar example? Mark 1:35; Luke 4:42.

Why was the Jordan such a formidable obstacle? Joshua 3:15.

The text makes clear that it was springtime. At this season, the melting snows from Mt. Hermon in the north fill the Sea of Galilee, and the overflow into the Jordan causes the river to overflow its banks. Thus the usual fording places along the Jordan were unusable.

Before attempting such a dangerous crossing, Joshua instructed the people to sanctify themselves because the Lord was going to do great things for them (Joshua 3:5). Although the passage does not explicitly say what these preparations entailed, the work of "sanctifying themselves" probably was similar to the preparations of the people at Mt. Sinai, when God had given the same command. "They were to wash themselves and their garments, and to abstain from everything that might prevent them from fixing their attention on the great miracle soon to be wrought in their behalf."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 187.

External acts were no doubt accompanied and inspired by an inner work of heart consecration. As Keil suggests, "It consisted in spiritual purification also, . . . [that is] in turning the heart to God, in faith and trust in His promise, and in willing obedience to His commandments, that they should lay to heart in a proper way the miracle of grace which the Lord was about to work in the midst of them and on their behalf on the following day."—C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, "Joshua," *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), vol. 2, p. 41.

We also are to be sanctified. "If we would expect the blessing and leadership of God in our preparations for entering the heavenly Canaan, it is essential that we 'sanctify' ourselves by consecrating our lives to God that He may purify and make us holy. If this was necessary for entrance into the earthly Canaan, how much more necessary it is for admission to the heavenly Canaan."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 187.

How would you explain to another member of your Sabbath School class our part in preparing to enter the heavenly Canaan? (See 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 5:23.)

"THE ARK OF THE COVENANT" (Joshua 3:8-13).

How did the order of march change for Israel's entrance into the Promised Land? Num. 2:17; 10:33; Joshua 3:11.

The ark of the covenant is central to the entire story of crossing the Jordan. The author mentions it nine times in Joshua 3, seven times in Joshua 4, and indirectly four more times by the use of pronouns.

What did the ark of the covenant symbolize? Ex. 25:21, 22. What spiritual lesson is taught by the ark's going before Israel?

"The ark was the repository of His holy and immutable law. Above the ark was the mercy seat, reminding them of God's mercy, patience, forgiveness, and grace. Thus early in their national experience God said to them, in effect, Let My character, My justice, and My mercy be your guide. Let the Ten Commandments, My standard of right, show you how to live, and My grace help you to obey it. As long as they would follow these principles they would be safe." —*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 186.

As they marched into Canaan, the Israelites were to keep a distance of 2,000 cubits (2/3 mile or 1.2 kilometers) behind the ark. The reason for this highlights the centrality of the ark—it represented the presence of God. The ark went well ahead of the people so they would know that God was leading them.

The parting of the Jordan would be yet another sign (Joshua 3:13). Except for Joshua and Caleb, those who had passed through the Red Sea on dry ground had died in the wilderness (Deut. 1:19-38).

This event would be the inauguration of Joshua's career as the leader of God's people. "Crossing the Jordan was to do for Joshua what the giving of the law at Sinai did for Moses—'that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever' (Ex. 19:9)." —*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 187.

What names are given to God in this context? Joshua 3:10, 13. How do these divine names make God more precious to you?

The term *Lord* [Hebrew for 'ruler,' 'owner'] of all the earth emphasizes the universal sovereignty of Israel's God, in contrast to the local deities of Canaan. The term *living God* contrasts with the lifeless gods of wood and stone among the inhabitants of Canaan.

Tuesday

April 25

"ROLL, JORDAN, ROLL!" (Joshua 3:14-17; 4:10-18; 5:1).

Describe the great miracle of the parting of the Jordan. Joshua 3:14-17. Why did God have the people cross the Jordan at flood stage? Joshua 3:15.

Israel might have crossed the Jordan a month or two earlier, when the river was not yet at flood stage. No miraculous parting of the waters would then have been necessary. This timing would have been possible, since Israel had camped at Acacia Grove (Shittim) for two months. But it appears that God specifically planned for Israel to enter Canaan at a time when it was impossible to do so without a miracle. This would reveal the Lord's power to Israel and the inhabitants of the land, as it was revealed at the time of the Exodus (Joshua 5:1; compare Ex. 9:16). Furthermore, the inhabitants of Jericho would not be expecting a crossing at this time of year, and would not be guarding the fording places.

Where did the damming of the water take place? Joshua 3:16.

"At the appointed time began the onward movement, the ark, borne upon the shoulders of the priests, leading the van. . . . All watched with deep interest as the priests advanced down the bank of the Jordan. They saw them with the sacred ark move steadily forward toward the angry, surging stream, till the feet of the bearers were dipped into the waters. Then suddenly the tide above was swept back, while the current below flowed on, and the bed of the river was laid bare."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 484.

All of us at one time or another have stood before a raging torrent that prevented us from moving forward—a serious illness (your own or a loved one's); the death of a close friend or family member; the loss of an income; a major failure or disappointment. The list is as large as the number of people. But Israel's literal Jordan teaches us that God delivers us from our dilemmas.

"God ever calls upon His people not only to face difficulties but to march boldly forward in faith, at His command, confident that He will open a way. He has promised to turn the waters aside and to overcome all obstacles (Isa. 43:2)."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 188.

What was the effect of the miracle upon Israel and upon the surrounding nations? Joshua 4:14, 24; 5:1.

"WHAT MEAN THESE STONES?" (Joshua 4:1-24).

What did God ask Joshua to do immediately after they crossed the Jordan? Joshua 4:1-24.

Some modern translations smooth out the story to include only one set of stones. But the original Hebrew indicates that they piled one set of stones in the middle of the Jordan (Joshua 4:9) so people could see it when the river was low, and another at Gilgal, their first camping site on the western bank of the Jordan (Joshua 4:20).

What did the monuments of twelve stones mean? What two groups would benefit from these monuments? Joshua 4:5-7, 21-24.

First, the generation that was entering the land needed the memorials. Since the base of operations for the conquest of Palestine was Gilgal, they would be coming back to the place of the memorials on a regular basis, and would be reminded of God's mighty faithfulness. Second, the children of succeeding generations, when they asked, "What mean these stones?" would have opportunity to hear the story of God's great acts of deliverance.

Finally, the memorial stones existed so that "all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful" (Joshua 4:24, NIV). Israel could have spread the knowledge of the true and living God throughout the rest of the world.

Compare raising the stone memorial at Gilgal with the raising of other stone memorials. Joshua 24:26, 27; Gen. 28:18-22; 31:45-47; 1 Sam. 7:9-12. List ways we today can erect memorials to God's mighty acts in our lives?

"There are thousands of souls willing to work for the Master who have not had the privilege of hearing the truth as some have heard it, but they have been faithful readers of the Word of God, and they will be blessed in their humble efforts to impart light to others. Let such ones keep a diary, and when the Lord gives them an interesting experience, let them write it down, as Samuel did when the armies of Israel won a victory over the Philistines. He set up a monument of thankfulness, saying, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.' Brethren, where are the monuments by which you keep in view the love and goodness of God?"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1012.

Thursday

April 27

"ROLL, ROLL, YOUR BURDENS AWAY" (Joshua 5:1-12).

Why was it necessary to have a special circumcision service? What was the meaning of circumcision? Joshua 5:2-9 (compare Gen. 17:7-14; Deut. 10:12-16; Rom. 2:28, 29; Col. 2:10-13).

"The suspension of the rite of circumcision since the rebellion at Kadesh had been a constant witness to Israel that their covenant with God, of which it was the appointed symbol, had been broken. . . . Once more God acknowledged Israel as His people, and the sign of the covenant was restored. The rite of circumcision was performed upon all the people who had been born in the wilderness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 485.

God's instructions defy common sense. Human planning would suggest an immediate attack before the Canaanites could recover from their shock and demoralization at the miracle crossing. Instead, God commanded a three-day delay! To make matters worse, God called for the Israelite males to be circumcised, which virtually disabled the whole army, leaving it vulnerable to an attack from the enemy. This is all total foolishness from a human point of view. But God knew that Israel's spiritual preparation was far more vital than any immediate military advantage. He also knew He could provide a shield of safety for His people. Hadn't He just led them through the rushing Jordan?

What was the significance of the name "Gilgal"? Joshua 5:8, 9.

The word *Gilgal* comes from the Hebrew root *galal*, which means "to roll." The reproach of Israel was rolled away!

Also at Gilgal, God commanded His children to reinstate the Passover (Joshua 5:10-12), which the Israelites had not celebrated since the rebellion at Kadesh. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 485, 486.) This particular celebration would bond them to one another as a nation and tie them not only to their past but to their future. Passover regulations required the sacrificial lamb to be chosen on the tenth day of the first month (Exodus 12). The Israelites would eat the Passover meal on the evening of the fourteenth day. Notice God's timing: The Israelites crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the month!

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper to take the place of the Passover. How long has it been since you recommitted your life to God through this memorial of His sacrifice?

FURTHER STUDY: This week we learned about certain memorials the Israelites had to remind them of what God had done for them. The following verses describe other types of memorial. What did each memorial commemorate? What does each one mean to you personally? Gen. 9:12-17; Exodus 15; 16:31-35; Matt. 26:26-28.

Also read "Crossing the Jordan" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 481-486; *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 158, 159.

"In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord had led us, and His teaching in our past history."—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you suppose the people of Israel were thinking and feeling as they were waiting to cross over the Jordan? While they were crossing? After they all safely reached Gilgal?
2. Compare the two stone memorials raised at the Jordan with the two "living" memorials, circumcision and Passover. How were they similar? How were they different?
3. Besides a diary (see Wednesday's lesson), what other kinds of memorial can we establish in our lives to remind ourselves and to witness to others of God's love for us?
4. The presence of the ark assured the Israelites of God's presence, love, mercy, and justice. What reminds you of these things?
5. What personal Jordan might you be facing today? How can Israel's experience help you overcome your fear and doubt?

SUMMARY: As Israel consecrated themselves to God and stepped into the Jordan by faith, God worked wonders in their behalf, leading them on dry land through the Jordan. God longs to work just as mightily for us as we consecrate our lives to Him. Surely He has already worked mighty wonders for us through the sacrifice of His Son. So come, step into the Jordan as it swirls around your feet. Watch the waters part and see what the Lord can do for you.



3,000 Baptized In One Day

James H. Zachary

"We have a problem," said Rudolfo Yap, of the Western Mindanao Mission in the Philippines. "There will not be enough pastors present to baptize all the candidates who are ready. May we conduct a baptism before the meeting begins?"

I was curious. What was happening in this mission in the South Philippines?

Pastor Yap told me that, three months earlier, groundwork had been laid for a major evangelistic meeting in the city of General Santos. Some 350 lay teams went door to door to offer Bible studies. Then each team began conducting simultaneous lay-evangelism meetings all over the mission—350 lay teams holding 350 meetings!

Word came that 1,945 persons had been baptized before the evangelistic meetings even began. These lay evangelists brought the new members and interested people to the open-air meeting. More than 5,000 persons crowded into the city park to hear the gospel.

On the closing Sabbath afternoon baptismal candidates arrived in jeeps and busses for the mass baptism. By afternoon's end 32 pastors had baptized 3,000 persons!

One 70-year-old layman who had peddled a bicycle to conduct Bible classes in four different villages, said apologetically, "I am sorry. Five of my interests are not ready to be baptized today. I could bring only 90 people for baptism."

Laymen had done their part, and the Lord blessed their efforts. Several pastors reported baptizing more than 500 from their districts, all prepared by laymen. In the follow-up program in General Santos, another 2,000 new believers were baptized.

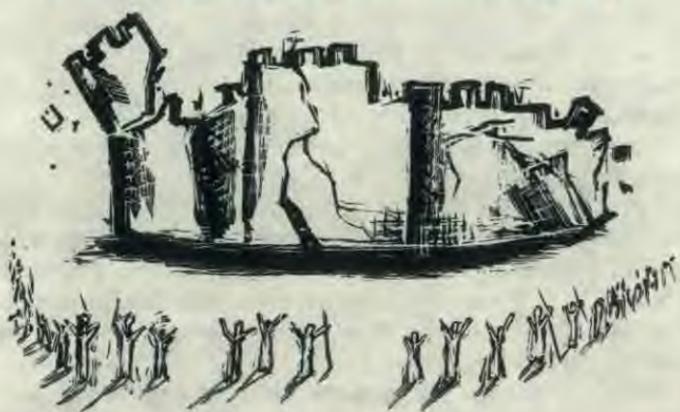
This is the spirit of the Philippines.

In the Global Mission outreach, God has a part for every person to play. Only as church members reach out to others can the Holy Spirit come in His mighty power to carry the gospel to all the world.



James H. Zachary is associate secretary of the Ministerial Association at the General Conference.

The Shout of Victory



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 5:13–6:27.

MEMORY TEXT: “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days” (Hebrews 11:30).

KEY THOUGHT: The account of God’s battle plan for the conquest of Jericho, carried out with implicit obedience and success by faithful Israel, is brimming with lessons for us as spiritual Israel.

JOSHUA FOUGHT THE BATTLE. The action-packed story of the fall of Jericho continues to enthrall young and old alike. Furthermore, fascinated archaeologists have corroborated the accuracy of the account on numerous points.

But the heart of the story is not actually the “battle of Jericho.” Scripture relates the story from a spiritual perspective, beginning with Joshua’s encounter with His divine Commander. The major elements of the story are, not physical armament or implements of war, but God’s concern for the salvation of humanity and for spiritual symbols relating to Israel’s worship: the ark, the priests, the signal horns of the sanctuary, the total consecration of all in the city, and the salvation of Rahab.

The story of the battle of Jericho is therefore primarily a *spiritual* event. In our encounters with sin, we may in principle repeat the spiritual dimensions of the battle under the same Commander who led the Israelites—the Captain of the Lord’s host.

THE COMMANDER MEETS HIS COMMANDER (Joshua 5:13-15).

What personal preparation did Joshua make before launching his campaign? Joshua 5:13.

Who was the Captain of the Lord's host? Joshua 5:13, 14; compare Dan. 8:11. Who are the "host" referred to in Joshua 5:14? 1 Kings 22:19; Ps. 148:2.

The phrase *Captain [or prince] of the host* is only found in one other place in Scripture: Dan 8:11. The context of both Joshua 5 and Daniel 8 points to a divine being as the Captain/Prince.

"It was Christ, the Exalted One, who stood before the leader of Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 488.

"If the eyes of Joshua had been opened as were the eyes of the servant of Elisha at Dothan, and he could have endured the sight, he would have seen the angels of the Lord encamped about the children of Israel; for the trained army of heaven had come to fight for the people of God, and the Captain of the Lord's host was there to command. When Jericho fell, no human hand touched the walls of the city, for the angels of the Lord overthrew the fortifications, and entered the fortress of the enemy."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 994.

What was Joshua's attitude as he met the Heavenly Commander? Joshua 5:14, 15. What does this teach us about our attitude toward God's presence in worship?

"When Joshua was placed in the highest position of honor, as commander of Israel, he bade defiance to all the enemies of God. His heart was filled with noble thoughts of his great mission. Yet upon the intimation of a message from Heaven he placed himself in the position of a little child to be directed. 'What saith my lord unto his servant?' (Joshua 5:14), was his response."—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 15.

Joshua's preparation for the battle of Jericho is an excellent illustration of the truth that even great leaders in God's cause are themselves led. And Joshua's question, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" contains the secret of success for all of God's children.

How do you prepare personally for the Jericho in your life?

THE BATTLE PLAN (Joshua 6:1-7).

In what way was the battle plan against Jericho so unusual? Joshua 6:1-5. What spiritual lessons can we learn from this?

After hearing about a God who had parted the Red Sea, sustained the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years, and who just now had stopped the flow of the Jordan at flood stage, the citizens of Jericho must have been preparing their defensive strategies and weapons of war. The people camped outside their city surely would fight offensively.

But God's plan was contrary to "typical" military strategy. Thus, no one person could possibly claim responsibility for it. Jericho's walls would fall not because of any strength on Israel's part, but because of God's divine act. The method outlined was a method of faith, not of war. (See Zech. 4:6; 2 Cor. 10:4.)

How did Joshua respond to God's command? Joshua 6:6, 7. How do you think Israel felt about such a strange procedure?

Joshua knew that for worship to be authentic, one must follow it with obedience. His behavior outlines for us the cadence of a believer's life—(1) worship, (2) listen, (3) obey.

Note that God spoke only to Joshua, not to the people. It remained for them to believe Joshua's words, and follow his commands. (See *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 162.)

How do you respond when God asks you to do that which does not seem to make any sense?

"Would those who today profess to be God's people conduct themselves thus, under similar circumstances? Doubtless many would wish to follow out their own plans, would suggest ways and means of accomplishing the desired end. They would be loth to submit to so simple an arrangement, and one that reflected no glory upon themselves, save the merit of obedience. They would also question the possibility of conquering a mighty city in that manner. But the law of duty is supreme. It should wield authority over human reason. Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy's camp."

—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 995.

THE SHOFAR AND THE SILENCE (Joshua 6:8-15).

What sound was heard as Israel marched around Jericho? Joshua 6:8-10. Why did God call for the people to remain silent? (Compare Ex. 14:13; Ps. 46:8-10.)

What does the shofar (ram's horn) symbolize in Scripture? Which of the following symbolic meanings fits the context of the circuits around Jericho?

Lev. 23:23-25; 25:9 _____

Judges 7:22 _____

Ps. 47:5; Isa. 27:13 _____

Ps. 98:6, 9 _____

Joel 2:12-17 _____

Surely God's instructions to repeat the circuit around Jericho seven times had an effect on both the Israelites and the inhabitants of the city. "But the very plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls afforded opportunity for the increase of faith among the Israelites. They were to become thoroughly impressed with the idea that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to putting themselves out of the question and relying wholly upon their divine Leader."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 163.

How unnerving it must have been to see the Israelites perform the same "bizarre" march again and again. What did it mean? When would it end? First these people walk through the Red Sea on dry ground, then through the Jordan River at flood stage. And now each day they file around the city.

Imagine you are an Israelite. Would you have been able to keep silent as you marched around Jericho? Why or why not? What might your silence or lack of it symbolize?

"As a people we lack faith. In these days few would follow the directions given through God's chosen servant as obediently as did the armies of Israel at the taking of Jericho."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 162.

THE SHOUT OF VICTORY (Joshua 6:1, 6-20).

Describe the miracle that took place when the people gave the shout of victory. Which details of the fall of Jericho might archaeological data corroborate? Joshua 6:16-20.

In a recent analysis of what archaeologists have found at Jericho, Dr. Bryant Wood (an authority in Canaanite Late Bronze Age pottery) has explored the extraordinary correlations between the biblical record and the archaeological data. First, four lines of evidence (pottery dating; stratigraphic considerations; Egyptian royal scarabs; and radiocarbon dating) combine to place the date of the major destruction of the city at exactly the same time as the Bible—around 1410 B.C. Second, the evidence points to a massive earthquake, in which the city wall literally “fell down flat” (Joshua 6:20) forming ramps all around the city so that the Israelites could go “up into the city, every man straight before him” (Joshua 6:20).

Third, evidence was found for the existence of many houses like Rahab’s, located between the lower revetment/parapet and upper mudbrick walls, thus being “in the wall” (Joshua 2:15, RSV). Fourth, there was also evidence for complete destruction by fire, as recorded in Joshua 6:24. Finally, many jars full of grain were found, indicating that (a) the attack came shortly after harvest in the spring (as indicated in Joshua 2:6; 3:15; 5:10), (b) there was not a long siege (only seven days according to Joshua 6:12-20), and (c) the city was not plundered before it was burned, contrary to common ancient Near-Eastern practice. (See Joshua 6:17, 18.) See Bryant Wood, “Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A New Look at the Archaeological Evidence,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 16 (March-April, 1990): 45-57.

What lesson can we learn from the fall of Jericho about the great things God wants to do for us?

“God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 493.

What personal evidence have you had of God’s intervention on your behalf when you have faced a crisis?

THE “HEREM,” THE “HARLOT,” AND THE “HERO” (Joshua 6:22-27).

Why did God forbid Israel from taking any spoil for themselves? Joshua 6:17, 18.

Why was it just for God to demand that everyone except Rahab and her family be killed? Joshua 6:17, 21, 24 (compare Gen. 15:16-21).

God declared the city of Jericho *herem* (Joshua 6:17-19). The Hebrew term means to be absolutely and irrevocably “devoted,” either to destruction or to sacred use. Both aspects are implicit here: fire destroyed the city and the unperishable metals went into God’s treasury.

The meaning “devotion to destruction” applies to people who had totally given themselves over to rebellion. That is, they had reached the close of their probation.

More than 400 years before the fall of Jericho, God had told Abraham that he could not yet inherit Canaan because “the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full” (Gen. 15:16). During the time of their probation, there were God-fearing witnesses to the Canaanites (Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18-24; Balaam, Numbers 22-24).

But the Canaanites had degenerated into the most vile practices. Twentieth-century excavation and the Ugaritic tablets from about the time of Joshua have revealed the gross sexual orgies practiced among the Canaanites as the very heart of their fertility cult religious rituals. Texts also reveal the insatiable thirst for blood and violence that characterized the Canaanite gods and goddesses. A people can rise no higher than their concepts of God and religion. With such conceptions of sex and violence at the core of Canaanite religion, it is not surprising that within a few centuries a whole civilization had lost the capacity to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It was as much mercy as justice that brought their existence to an end.

In Joshua 6:26 we read that anyone who tried to rebuild Jericho would lose both his oldest and youngest child. This prophecy was fulfilled when Hiel of Bethel lost his firstborn and his youngest when he “laid its [Jericho’s] foundation” and “set up its gates” (1 Kings 16:34, NKJV).

What kind of “hero” would blatantly defy God’s prohibition to rebuild Jericho? Compare such a person to Joshua.

FURTHER STUDY: The fall of Jericho is not the only instance in Scripture when God used strategy that did not make sense to human minds. As you read the following passages, pinpoint (1) what the unusual strategy was, (2) why God used it, (3) what we can learn from it. Judges 7:1-22; 2 Kings 5:1-15; Acts 2:1-12; 8:1-3; 9:1-22.

Also read any or all of the following: "The Fall of Jericho" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 487-498; "The Taking of Jericho" in *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 156-164; *Conflict and Courage*, pp. 117, 118; *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 199-204; *Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 425.

"The Captain of the Lord's host must go before us, if we meet with success. . . . The Captain of the Lord's host is just as ready to help us as he was to help Joshua. It is for us to obey orders, and it will be in our work as it was at Jericho. By obeying orders and marching round the city as the Lord had commanded, a mighty angel was sent to throw down the walls of Jericho, and the armies of Israel marched straight into the city. We must have much less self-confidence and much more of Jesus."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 12, 1887.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When is there a time for silence in the Christian's spiritual warfare? When is there a time to shout and blow the ram's horn?
2. What has this week's lesson taught you about God's concern for the salvation of humanity?
3. Compare the "battle of Jericho" with the New Testament instruction regarding the "pulling down of strong holds" (2 Cor. 10:4) and the weapons of spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18).

SUMMARY: The battle of Jericho teaches important lessons regarding our spiritual battles: (1) There are no obstacles too difficult for God to overcome. (2) Preparation begins on our knees, alone with our Captain. (3) God often uses the simplest and most unlikely means to bring victory over sin, so that our faith may rest totally in Him and not in our own wisdom. (4) We must cooperate with God by obeying every detail of His commands, even though we may not comprehend all the reasons. (5) The battle is the Lord's. If the conditions are met, He assures us of victory!



Slava Bogu! part 1

Michael Porter

Slava Bogu is Russian for "thank God." In spite of war and deprivation, it is heard often these days in Sukhumi, a seaport town on the Black Sea in the former Soviet Georgia. God's work is going forward in spite of severe difficulties.

The war in this area following independence from the former Soviet Union devastated large portions of Sukhumi and made life nearly impossible for local residents. But the Adventist congregation, along with ADRA, has been hard at work to ease the difficulties of their neighbors. And during the all-out fighting in September 1993, when thousands died in the fighting and as they fled across the mountains to safety, not one Seventh-day Adventist died in the conflict! *Slava Bogu!*

God's miracles are just now coming to light.

Valentina Dmitrienko, wife of the Adventist pastor in Sukhumi, had just purchased some corn in the market. She felt strangely compelled to move away from the shop. As she walked away, suddenly she was forcibly pushed by an unseen hand. Almost immediately a mortar shell exploded where she had stood, destroying the shop and killing those nearby. She thanks God, who saved her life that day. *Slava Bogu!*

Sergei Kerakosov has been a member of the Bible classes for some months. At the height of the fighting he went to visit a friend who was watching as fire spread toward his apartment. His friend feared that the fire would destroy his home. Sergei suggested they pray that God would protect the apartment. As the flames licked at the foundation of the building, Sergei and his friend knelt in the street, outside that five-story building, and prayed that God would somehow stop the flames. As they watched, the flames consumed several neighboring apartments, then turned back. Flames on the other side turned away from his friend's apartment, as well. That apartment was spared. When word of the story spread, people came to see the apartment that had not burned. Several said, "Surely God must have intervened." Sergei and his wife are among those planning to be baptized as soon as the weather warms. *Slava Bogu!*

Michael Porter is associate director for ADRA in the Euro-Asia Division.



*Bring hope to
thousands in
Euro-Asia
as you give
this 13th Sabbath
June 24, 1995*

Testimonials Regarding Sabbath School Action Units

[Information on how to organize Sabbath School action units is available from Elder Calvin Smith, Church Ministries Department, General Conference.]

"From the time we started this new way of small units, it [the Sabbath School Action Unit program] is getting better and better. It is becoming more vital and interesting for everybody, especially the youth who discuss in class their planned outreach activities. Sabbath School means much more to them than it used to. Nobody would like to go back to the classic Sabbath School."—Ladislav Krupa, pastor, Liberec, Czechoslovakia.

"Now the Adventist church has become a caring church, because they know that if one member misses [class], later that afternoon someone is going to be sent to visit with him."—L. K. Baya, lay activities director, Kenya.

"Almost the whole church is visiting their neighbors."—H. Mhando, lay activities director, Tanzania Union.

"One of the wonderful things we have found is that our members are so happy to share the experiences that they have had. . . . They are looking for experiences throughout the week that they can share. They come to Sabbath School on time, study their lessons and are very happy."—Vivian Raymond, superintendent, Cambridge church, England.

"We rejoice in the efficiency of the new method. Everyone can express themselves in liberty."—Bivunga Claude, superintendent, Nengong, Central Africa.

"We have seen ongoing increases in lesson study, fellowship, visitation, personal witnessing (ten times more people give Bible studies, and literature distribution is like the leaves of autumn), the return of many missing members, greater concern and care for missions, more baptisms, and a dramatic increase in membership."—Mike Fracker, superintendent, Ionia, Michigan (where the worldwide plan was started seven years ago).

"There is more participation; therefore we enjoy Sabbath School more and feel a lot closer to one another. The love developed through the closeness reduces the possibility of judging each other. As the love grows for one another, people are reaching out to see the love, and they want to be a part of that."—A young, new church member, Rock Hall, Maryland, USA.

Treachery in the Camp



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Joshua 7, 8.

MEMORY TEXT: "Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you' ' " (Joshua 7:13, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: Israel's treachery turned the victory of Jericho into defeat at Ai. Dealing with the transgression resulted in glorious victory and covenant renewal.

VICTORY...TREACHERY...DEFEAT. Thus far in the book of Joshua, Israel has enjoyed unqualified success—crossing the Jordan at flood stage and entering Canaan, the memorial ceremony, the rolling away of reproach at Gilgal, and the victory at Jericho. But Israel is defeated at Ai. And Joshua lies prostrate on his face before God in anguish and agony. The trustworthy and omnipotent character of Israel's God is brought into disrepute before the Canaanites.

God did not plan for Israel to suffer defeat at the hands of their enemies. He had provided for a series of uninterrupted victories. This week we will explore the reasons for Israel's failure at Ai. We will encounter valuable lessons about why we may fail in our Christian warfare against sin and how we can rectify these failures and avoid them in the future. We will end our study on a note of triumph, and even better, with a scene of dramatic covenant renewal.

TREACHERY BRINGS DEFEAT (Joshua 7:1-9).

What two sins laid the foundation for Israel's defeat at Ai? Joshua 7:1-3, 11.

The Hebrew word *ma-al*, used for "trespass" (verse 1) in Israel, literally means "to act under cover," thus "underhandedly," "treacherously," "secretly." Achan's "trespass" was in regard to the *herem* or "things devoted [to destruction or sacred use]." This sin involved transgression of the divine covenant, stealing, and deceit.

Describe the first battle of Ai, the military results, and the psychological effect on the people of Israel. Joshua 7:4-9.

How did Joshua's response to the defeat at Ai show another side of his character? Joshua 7:6-9.

"Joshua manifested a true zeal for the honor of God, yet his petitions were mingled with doubt and unbelief. The thought that God had brought His people over the Jordan to deliver them up to the power of the heathen was a sinful one, unworthy of a leader of Israel. Joshua's feelings of despondency and distrust were inexcusable in view of the mighty miracles which God had wrought for the deliverance of His people, and the repeated promise that He would be with them in driving out the wicked inhabitants of the land.

"But our merciful God did not visit His servant with wrath because of this error. He graciously accepted the humiliation and prayers of Joshua, and at the same time gently rebuked his unbelief, and then revealed to him the cause of their defeat."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 996.

What can we learn about the dangers that may threaten us when we experience victory in our Christian warfare?

Alan Redpath observes, "There is no experience in Christian living so full of danger as the flush of victory. . . . At such times we begin to take pride in ourselves, and to boast that our own arm has saved us."—Alan Redpath, *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, a division of Baker Book House, 1955), p. 116.

UNCOVERING THE COVETOR (Joshua 7:10-21; 1 Chron. 2:7).

How does the story of Achan teach the twin principles of individual accountability and corporate responsibility for sin? Joshua 7:10-12 (compare 2 Sam. 21:1; Dan. 9:4-11).

"The history of Achan teaches the solemn lesson that for one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon a people or a nation till the transgression is searched out and punished. Sin is corrupting in its nature. One man infected with its deadly leprosy may communicate the taint to thousands."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 996.

In what way was the sin of the "troubler of Israel" (1 Chron. 2:7) uncovered? Joshua 7:13-23. Why was it necessary for Achan to make a public confession and return the stolen goods?

How foolish coveting is. Because Achan had to keep hidden the items he stole, he could not even use them!

The last and perhaps most personal of all the Ten Commandments states, "You shall not covet" (Ex. 20:17, NIV). God knew that covetousness robs us of victory, because, instead of concentrating on Christ, we are concentrating on the object we covet.

The last six of the Ten Commandments deal with our love for others (Matt. 22:37-40). Desiring what someone else has makes us jealous of that person. It is difficult to love someone of whom we are jealous. And instead of developing Christlike characters through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we are trying to be like another human. Can you imagine what would have happened to Israel if there had been hundreds of "Achans" openly coveting the spoils of Jericho?

Study other biblical examples of coveting and warnings against covetousness. (See Col. 3:5; Matt. 6:24; Luke 12:15, Eph. 5:3.) Note how it was at the root of the first sin in the universe (Isa. 14:13, 14), at the root of the first sin when Israel entered Canaan (Joshua 7), and at the root of the first recorded sin at the beginning of the New Testament church (Acts 5:1-11). Ellen White states frankly that today "covetousness abounds. . . . Among church-members 'in good and regular standing' there are, alas! many Achans."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 497.

How prevalent is the sin of covetousness in your life?

TROUBLE VALLEY (Joshua 7:24-26).

How was Achan punished for his sin? Joshua 7:24-26. Why was Achan punished even after he confessed his sin?

Yes, Achan confessed his sin. But does the record show that he repented of it? Compare this to David's confession and repentance in Psalm 51. Confession without repentance (a turning away from sin) will not gain forgiveness.

"So confessions will be made by the guilty when they stand before the bar of God, after every case has been decided for life or death. The consequences to result to himself will draw from each an acknowledgment of his sin. It will be forced from the soul by the awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. But such confessions cannot save the sinner."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 498.

Was God just to ask for Achan's whole family to be stoned? Deut. 24:16.

Deuteronomy 24:16 states that children shall not be put to death because of their father's sins. Thus we can assume that Achan's family were accomplices in the crime. Either they helped pilfer the goods or hide them. It seems that all kept Achan's deed a secret.

Just as God in His mercy is able to save the most unlikely person (such as Rahab), so His sense of justice and holy character prevent Him from overlooking any cherished sin we harbor in our hearts.

"In the manner in which the Lord dealt with Achan, we can see how great is His displeasure against those who commit similar sins. The standard of the gospel today is no lower than it was in the days of Joshua."—Ellen G. White, *The Youth's Instructor*, February 1, 1894.

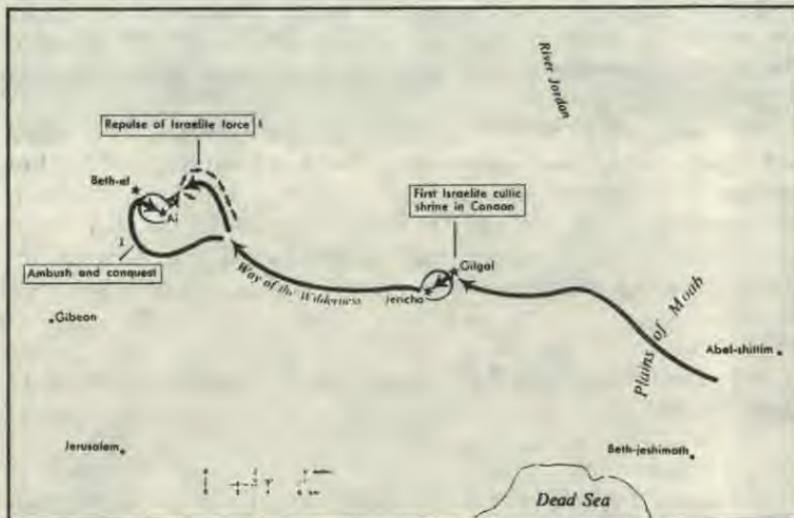
Achan's punishment may seem cruel. But would it not have been far worse to allow the cancer of covetousness to invade the entire nation? Sin is a disease that, if left unchecked, can race wildly through the body of believers.

Furthermore, God must eradicate anything at all that prevents the fulfillment of His commands. How soon Achan's sin would infect God's fledgling nation, only He could tell. Surely, He recalled with sorrow that covetousness had once destroyed peace in heaven and cost Him the companionship of a third of His angels.

Are you cherishing any sins in your heart today? Why not ask God now to help you overcome them?

DOOR OF HOPE AND VICTORY (Joshua 8:1-29; Hosea 2:15).

How did "Trouble Valley" give way to victory? What military tactics did God have Israel employ? Joshua 8:1-29. To visualize the military maneuvers of both sides, see the map below.



Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*, rev. ed. (Copyright © 1977), p. 43. (Reprinted with permission of Macmillan Publishing Company.)

Yigael Yadin writes concerning warfare in the time of Joshua: "The functioning of good intelligence service enabled small forces in particular to undertake ambush as a regular method of warfare. Tactically, the ambush is the most murderous form of battle, which exploits the principle of surprise to its maximum. . . . The darkness of night necessary to the laying of an ambush, was also required by irregular forces operating against a regular army, both to cover their advance and to launch their attack. The book of Joshua describes how at times Joshua would advance all through the night in order to surprise the enemy at dawn."—Yigael Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands in the Light of Archaeological Discovery* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), pp. 110, 111.

A door of hope. The prophet Hosea used Achsan's experience to illustrate the larger message of salvation. (See Hosea 2:15, NKJV.)

How has God turned your "Valley of Achor" experiences into "doors of hope"?

MOUNT OF BLESSINGS, MOUNT OF CURSES (Joshua 8:30-35).

Moses had given instruction for a religious service the Israelites were to hold upon their entrance into Canaan. Read these instructions in Deuteronomy 11:29; chapters 27, 28. Then read about their fulfillment in Joshua 8:30-35.

Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim were near Shechem. Why was Shechem chosen as the place for this special ceremony? Gen. 12:5, 6; 33:18-20; 35:4 (compare John 4:5, 6, 12).

This spot was also the center of travel. The altar of stones with the law carved upon it would speak of the true God to all who went by.

To get to Shechem, the Israelites traveled through enemy territory 20 miles north of Ai. Some historians are troubled by this and therefore suggest that this event occurred several years after the battle of Ai. But there is no evidence of a stronghold north of Bethel in that part of Canaan. Furthermore, Joshua 17:18 implies that a good portion of this area was forested and unsettled. And finally, even if these were not the case, quite possibly the inhabitants feared the Israelites because of what God did for them at the Jordan, and at the cities of Jericho and Ai. (Compare Gen. 35:5.)

Acoustics experts have recently conducted field experiments at Shechem using sophisticated acoustical test equipment, and their results "bear witness to the acoustical properties of the valley of Shechem, guarded by its mountain sentinels."—Cobbey Crisler, "The Acoustics and Crowd Capacity of Natural Theaters in Palestine," *Biblical Archaeologist* 39/4 (1976), p. 139.

Why was the altar built on Mt. Ebal, the mountain of the curses? Joshua 8:30, 31; Deut. 11:29; 27:13. What truth does this teach us about the gospel?

We see here the heart of the gospel! The sacrificial animal was offered on the Mountain of the Curses; the Lamb of God (John 1:29) takes the curse that we deserve (Gal 3:10-14), dies on the Altar of Calvary (Heb 13:10) that we might receive the blessings (of Gerizim) that He deserved! (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 500.)

Do we need "covenant renewal" ceremonies today? When and how might these take place?

FURTHER STUDY: Why is covetousness so offensive to God? Note that it was the commandment forbidding coveting that exposed the apostle Paul to his deep-rooted sinfulness (Rom. 7:7, 14, 25), when before this he had boasted of his righteousness (Phil. 3:4-6). How is the tenth commandment essentially different from the other nine? (Study Ex. 20:1-17.) What do these differences say about the importance of this last commandment?

Read any or all of the following: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 493-504 (the latter part of chapter 45); *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 263-272 (part of the chapter entitled "The Laodicean Church"); vol. 4, pp. 489-495 ("Dishonesty in the Church"); *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 996-998.

"There is need of earnest work to set things in order in the church of God, and it is fully as essential to do this work as it is to preach or to pray. If we would enjoy the favor of God, we must search our own hearts and lives to see if we are not cherishing that which God has cursed. Is there some unlawful gain placed with our own possessions? Have we robbed God by retaining the portion which should be appropriated to His treasury? Have we withheld from the poor the means which God has given us to supply their necessities?"—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 21, 1881.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How is covetousness demonstrated in the church today? Does the way I am living set up my church for defeat at Ai? (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 496, 497.)
2. How can we "ambush" the enemy in a spiritual sense in our Christian warfare?
3. What might be the modern equivalents of the Babylonish garment, the 50 shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold? How do these equivalents tempt you personally?

SUMMARY: The experience of Achan illustrates the results of unchecked covetousness in the life of an individual or congregation. But repentance and confession can turn everything around before it is too late! Would you like to pray: "Dear Lord, I surrender to You my 'goodly Babylonish garment' of _____, my 'shekels of silver' of _____, and my 'wedge of gold' of _____. Thank You for taking them out of the tent of my life and for dying in my place. Amen."



Slava Bogu! part 2

Michael Porter

In times of peace life goes on as usual, and people do not search for God. But in times of trial and hardship, God shows Himself through His people, and hungry hearts turn to Him. The war in Sukhumi, a seaport town in the former Soviet Georgia, has brought forth its own miracles of faith and of redemption.

The Seventh-day Adventist church has existed in Sukhumi for several generations, with a steady membership of around 70. But war has caused many to rethink their priorities. Over the past several months 40 new members have joined the church. Ten others are waiting for warmer weather to be baptized, and many others attend Bible classes. *Slava Bogu!*

The church in Sukhumi, with the help of ADRA, has helped alleviate the suffering of people in that city. The members help run several soup kitchens and distribute food and clothes to those hardest hit in the city.

With cash donations from ADRA and neighboring Adventist churches, food is purchased and stored in various church members' homes to protect it from thieves. Some food is brought in by fishing boats on the Black Sea. Men and women in the church regularly walk 10-13 miles (15-20 kilometers) each way to bring food and clothes to those in need.

It seems especially touching to meet volunteers working in the soup kitchen under such difficult conditions. One young woman found wildflowers in the woods and made flower arrangements for the tables! In the chaos, in time of trouble, there can still be beauty! *Slava Bogu!*

At least two thirds of the city's buildings were damaged or destroyed in the war. Of the 12 medical institutions, only one or two are repairable. Whole blocks of the residential high-rise apartment buildings and private residences have been reduced to piles of blackened, broken concrete.

ADRA is looking for ways to fund delivery of medicine, food, and clothes to the hardest-hit sections of the city. The government has requested ADRA's assistance to rebuild a medical building and help restore medical services. *Slava Bogu!*

Michael Porter is associate director for ADRA in the Euro-Asia Division.

Enemy Stratagem



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 9.

MEMORY TEXT: "Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord" (Joshua 9:14, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: Israel failed to detect the Gibeonites' strategy, because they failed to stay in contact with Command Headquarters. Yet the Commander of the Hebrew host brought military advantage out of an apparently no-win situation.

ENEMY STRATEGY . . . DIVINE COUNTER-STRATEGY. The destruction of Jericho and Ai struck fear in the hearts of nearby Canaanite citizens. Who would be next? What could they do to preserve their cities and lives? Self-preservation can at times be an overpowering force, driving people to take drastic action.

In this week's lesson, we encounter more of the enemy's strategy against God's people: frontal attack by a coalition consisting of most of Canaan's inhabitants, and a deceptive alliance by the Gibeonites.

At the same time, we find examples of how this strategy caught God's people off-guard. What happened to ancient Israel is instructive for our spiritual warfare. We find (1) insights into the tactics of Satan, the master strategist for evil; (2) the causes of further setbacks among spiritual Israel; and (3) principles for a divine counter-strategy.

THE INTERNATIONAL ENEMY COALITION (Joshua 9:1, 2).

What was the reaction among the inhabitants of Canaan to the military successes of the Israelites? Joshua 9:1, 2.

The text speaks of “all the kings which were on this side Jordan” [literally, “beyond the Jordan”—the eyewitness account is probably written so soon after the event that Canaan is still not considered Israel’s home]. This includes the hills, valleys, and coasts. The “hills” refer to the central mountains of Palestine; the “valleys” indicate the Shephelah, or foothills, to the west of the central highlands; and the “coasts” have reference to the plains of Philistia and Sharon farther west, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Shephelah.

No doubt the kings had heard about the Israelites’ holy convocation at Mt. Ebal, where they declared that God’s law was the law of the land. They would naturally view such a declaration as a usurpation of their power.

What does the uniting “with one accord” teach us about the “unity” of evil forces against the cause of God? What can God’s people inevitably expect from the enemies of God when He acts for them and they respond in covenant loyalty? Ps. 2:1-3; 83:1-8; Rev. 12:17.

The phrase “with one accord” (Ps. 83:5, RSV) is literally “of one mouth.” The six nations that united against Israel came from different clans and had different interests and agendas. But they made common cause against the people of God. Their shared hatred of righteousness motivated them to work together.

“Every victory that the Christian wins in his own personal life is an invitation for a full-scale attack by the enemy of his soul. Every time a child of God steps into an experience of blessing he is on the verge of another assault by the enemy. Our blessings and battles go side by side. If you are being pressed on every front and are in the thick of the fight, praise God! . . . If you are being tempted right and left it is because you are going right through with the will of God in blessing.”—Alan Redpath, *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua*, p. 137.

Recount episodes in your experience when, after signal victories, Satan mustered his forces against you. Be prepared to share one of these episodes with your class.

THE GIBEONITE STRATAGEM (Joshua 9:3-7).

Who were the Gibeonites? Summarize their strategy against Israel. Joshua 9:3-7; 10:2; 11:19.

The name *Gibeon* literally means "hill." The city of ancient Gibeon has been conclusively identified with modern el-Jib, situated on a steep hill in a broad valley some six miles northwest of Jerusalem on the road through the central mountain range toward Joppa. Excavations by J. B. Pritchard have uncovered an imposing water works in the city, with a well shaft 38 feet in diameter and 82 feet deep (recalling the story in 2 Samuel 2 and the reference to the pool of "great waters" in Jeremiah 41:12), and an impressive winding staircase of 79 steps leading to the bottom. Found in the debris from the shaft were many jar handles inscribed with the ancient Hebrew name of Gibeon.

The Gibeonites are identified as "Hivites." This is perhaps the same as the "Horites" or "Hurrians" (see Gen. 36:2, 20; the Septuagint designation of the Hivites is *Chorrhaim*), in which case they probably came originally from mountains north of Mesopotamia, the region of Armenia (southwest of Lake Van). They inhabited not only the city of Gibeon but its satellite cities Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim (Joshua 9:17).

Like Rahab earlier in the book of Joshua, they were aware of Israel's history. But unlike Rahab, they did not exercise a faith that would lead them to salvation in God. They trusted instead in their own resources.

How does the Gibeonites' stratagem illustrate a common ploy of the devil in his attempts to gain victory over humanity? In what other ways does Scripture describe this strategy? Gen. 3:1-6; Matt. 24:5, 11, 24 (compare Eph. 4:14; 2 Tim 3:13; Rev. 12:9).

The Hebrew noun for "craftiness," used of the Gibeonites (see Joshua 9:4, NKJV) comes from the same root (*ārom*) as the adjective employed by Moses to describe the "crafty" serpent in Eden who deceived Eve (Gen. 3:1).

Such craftiness could only temporarily deter the Israelites. It took only three days for the truth to rise to the top.

Has Satan used the "Gibeonite stratagem" on you? How did God help you to meet it?

Tuesday

May 16

ISRAEL'S ERROR (Joshua 9:6-14).

Israel's error in dealing with the Gibeonites was the same error they made at Ai—they failed to consult the Lord.

Joshua could have done so by inquiring through the high priest's ministry of the Urim and Thummim (Num. 27:15-23). But perhaps their recent successes had made him overconfident.

Consider other passages that deal with trusting in appearances or human judgment. Prov. 12:15; 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:7.

Israel's gullibility regarding the Gibeonites' charade is a good illustration of how our senses can betray the truth. The Greek word for sight means "external appearance." To walk by faith and not by sight thus implies that we do not trust what our eyes tell us. We believe in Christ without having seen Him. And until the time when we can see Him, our way of life as Christians depends on our confidence in what we cannot see.

Have you ever made an important decision in your life in which you "did not ask counsel of the Lord" (Joshua 9:14, NKJV)? How did it turn out?

In what ways are we in danger as individuals, and as a church, of "walking by sight"? How may we overcome this danger? Prov. 3:5, 6.

"Never, never, NEVER trust your own judgment in anything. When common sense says that a course is right, lift your heart to God, for the path of faith and the path of blessing may be in a direction completely opposite to that which you call common sense. When voices tell you that action is urgent, that something must be done immediately, refer everything to the tribunal of heaven. Then if you are still in doubt, dare to stand still. If you are called on to act and you have not time to pray, don't act. If you are called on to move in a certain direction and cannot wait until you have peace with God about it, don't move. Be strong enough and brave enough to dare to stand and wait on God, for none of them that wait on Him shall ever be ashamed. That is the only way to outmatch the devil."—Alan Redpath, *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua*, pp. 142, 143.

THE HAZARDOUS COVENANT (Joshua 9:15-20).

After the Israelites found out the Gibeonites had deceived them, do you think the rulers were correct in insisting that Israel could not go back on their oath and covenant? Why or why not? Joshua 9:15-20 (compare 2 Sam. 21).

What does Israel's covenant with the Gibeonites have to say about being "unequally yoked with unbelievers"? Is it ever appropriate to break a contract made with someone? What biblical principles apply in making such decisions? See Prov. 12:22; Matt. 5:33-37; 2 Cor. 6:14.

"The obligation to which one's word is pledged—if it does not bind him to perform a wrong act—should be held sacred. No consideration of gain, of revenge, or of self-interest can in any way affect the inviolability of an oath or pledge."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 506.

Psalm 15:4, NKJV states the basic principle: "He who swears to his own hurt and does not change." The most obvious, and perhaps most frequently disregarded, application of this principle is with regard to marriage. When a married couple find themselves incompatible (perhaps after one spouse becomes a Christian) the most natural inclination (the answer the world favors) is to get a divorce. But Scripture disagrees (1 Cor. 7:10, 11; Mark 10:11, 12). Will we follow the practice of the world, our own inclinations, or will we be true to the marriage vow, Till death do us part? (One should note that Ellen White counsels *engaged* couples who find that they "have made a promise contrary to the Scriptures" to break the unscriptural engagement rather than to be unequally yoked in marriage. See *The Adventist Home*, pp. 48, 49.)

In the book of Joshua, the Gibeonites themselves are a good example of a people who, once they made a covenant, kept their word, even though it was to their own hurt. They pulled out of the Canaanite confederacy and broke blood ties with the other Hivites who later fought against Israel.

The greatest example of remaining true to one's word is that of God Himself! (See Heb. 6:17, 18.)

A highly respected person or a valuable friend breaks an important agreement with you. How does it make you feel? How should you treat this person?

Thursday

May 18

"HEWERS OF WOOD AND DRAWERS OF WATER" (Joshua 9:21-27).

How did the Gibeonites' punishment fit their crime? Joshua 9:21-27; Deut. 29:10, 11.

"It was no light humiliation to those citizens of a 'royal city,' 'all the men whereof were mighty,' to be made hewers of wood and drawers of water throughout their generations. But they had adopted the garb of poverty for the purpose of deception, and it was fastened on them as a badge of perpetual servitude. Thus through all their generations their servile condition would testify to God's hatred of falsehood."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 507.

How was their punishment shown in their later history to be a blessing? Joshua 21:13, 17; 1 Kings 3:3-15; 1 Chron. 12:1-4; 21:29.

The Gibeonites could have escaped both bondage and destruction if they had followed a truthful, faithful course. God had given counsel regarding Israel's kind and equal treatment of the strangers who might sojourn among them (Lev. 19:33, 34; Num. 15:15), and "such was the footing on which the Gibeonites might have been received, but for the deception to which they had resorted."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 507.

But what about God's command for Israel to exterminate all the wicked inhabitants of Canaan? The salvation of Rahab and her family, described earlier in Joshua, indicates that God desired the people of Canaan to repent. If they had, He would have spared them.

How is our experience as Christians parallel to that of the Gibeonites?

"They were liars, deceivers. They were under judgment and exposed to the severe wrath of God. So also have we been. We heard of the true God, as they did. True, at the beginning we did not know very much about him. Yet God used that small beginning to draw us into the company of his people, where we learned more and were eventually fully identified with those who have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ. We, too, believed. This is a great marvel, a tribute to God's grace."—James M. Boice, *Joshua: We Will Serve the Lord*, p. 106.

FURTHER STUDY: Consider events referred to in prophecy when evil forces will unite "with one accord" as the kings of Canaan did: Rev. 13:16, 17; 17:12-17. What did you learn from this week's lesson that gives you hope and encouragement despite these united forces?

Also read "League With the Gibeonites," in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 505-509.

"It would have fared better with the Gibeonites had they dealt honestly with Israel. While their submission to Jehovah secured the preservation of their lives, their deception brought them only disgrace and servitude. God had made provision that all who would renounce heathenism, and connect themselves with Israel, should share the blessings of the covenant. They were included under the term, 'the stranger that sojourneth among you,' and with few exceptions this class were to enjoy equal favors and privileges with Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 507.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How could Israel have avoided being deceived by the Gibeonites?
2. Are there any circumstances when it would be appropriate to gain some objective through deception?
3. Have you ever made a promise to someone that was difficult for you to keep? If so, how did you deal with the situation?
4. What does the Gibeonite acceptance of the Lord indicate regarding the "salvation of the heathen"?

SUMMARY: The ninth chapter of Joshua shows further enemy tactics against God's people in the form of frontal attack and deceptive subterfuge. It also reveals both how vulnerable God's people are when they neglect to ask His counsel and how crucial it is to be faithful to one's word. God can bring good even out of apparent failure and disaster as His people learn to trust in Him.



Pho Kheng, A Good Teacher

Kenneth Wade

I met a teacher recently and learned some important lessons from him. Pho Kheng lives in Cambodia. His qualifications include his ready smile, his love of people, and his faith in God.

The prophet Isaiah exclaimed, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings" (Isa. 52:7). But Pho Kheng doesn't have feet. He lost them when he stepped on a land mine several years ago. Still he spreads the good news of salvation through Jesus to everyone he meets.

Pho Kheng was sitting beside the road in his wheel chair, waiting for us. He greeted us and had someone push him along a path to the house where he teaches English and Bible to the people of his village. The house belongs to relatives who let him use it as a school. Using his strong arms, he scoots across the porch and settles beside a chalkboard that has the letters of the English alphabet on it, written with clay, because he has no chalk. He also teaches Bible using the Way of Life Bible Course.

It is harvest season in Cambodia, and many people are working in the fields. But a large group soon gathers in Pho Kheng's "schoolroom." Some of the young people are members of the Pathfinder Club that he has started.

Someone distributes song books to the congregation, and they begin to sing. They all seem to enjoy singing. On Sabbath mornings about 50 of his students come to the schoolroom to worship God. So far 23 have been baptized.

Pho Kheng's students come from a Buddhist background. But through their teacher's witness, they are learning to know and love Jesus.

Here is a man who has many excuses for not sharing his faith. He has limited education; he can't get around without help from friends; he doesn't even have his own home. But he has hope in Jesus. And focusing on the talents and gifts he *does* have, Pho Kheng teaches the people of his village to know Jesus as their Saviour.

If Mr. Pho Kheng can be a witness for Christ, so can you!

Kenneth Wade is secretary of the SAUM Mission.

Canaan's Conquest Completed



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 10-12.

MEMORY TEXT: "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war" (Joshua 11:23, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: This week we observe the divine battle strategy executed by Joshua in completing the conquest of Canaan, and we will apply the principles of that strategy to our daily spiritual warfare.

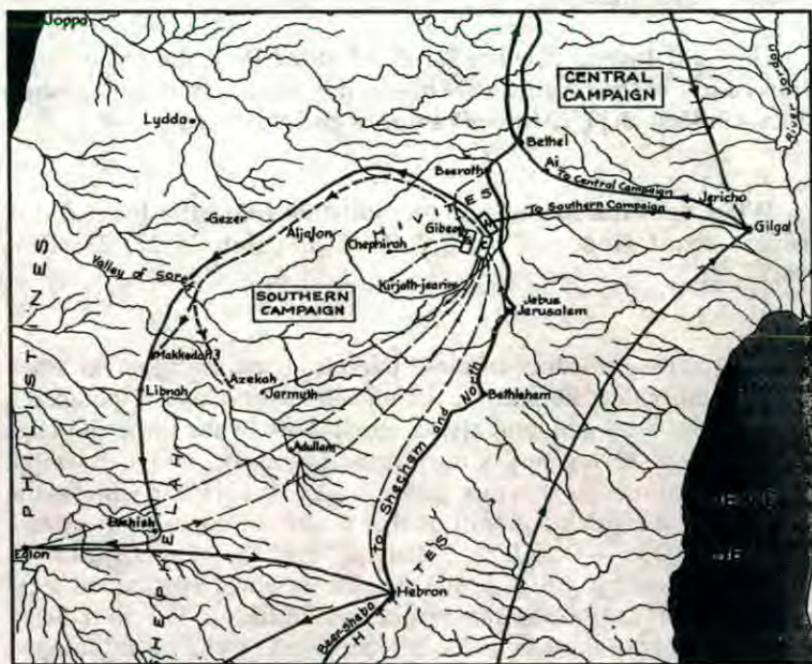
WHY WAS JOSHUA SUCCESSFUL? "Once his plan of campaign was completed, Joshua went forward in faith. He expected to win. He was convinced that God was with him and he could not fail. As long as he followed God's leadership he did not fail."

"Israel's leader relied on God to keep His promises. He knew by experience that God had never failed him in the past. . . .

"Joshua's experience is a challenge to all who profess the name of Christ. . . . We look above the 'giants' in the land because, taller than the giants, greater than the giants, is the Spirit of God. We must know by our own experience and by the experience of all God's leaders as revealed in the Bible that God will keep every promise He ever made."—William L. Barclay, *By His Spirit* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1940), p. 100.

THE AMORITE CONFEDERATION (Joshua 10:1-5).

On the map below, locate the five cities that entered into coalition against Gibeon. Joshua 10:3, 4.



What was the immediate twofold reaction of the five kings south of Gibeon when the Gibeonites made peace (*shalom*) with Israel? Joshua 10:1-5. Why do you think the southern confederation was so disturbed about the action of Gibeon?

The king of Jerusalem brought together a group of rulers who were not naturally friendly with one another. But feeling threatened by Israel's advances and the Gibeonites' covenant with Israel, these rulers banded together. If Joshua had not been so committed to fulfilling God's command concerning Canaan, there would have been no need for opposing them. With this in mind, what can we learn regarding Satan's further tactics in our spiritual warfare?

Monday

May 22

**"WHEN GOD FOUGHT FOR ISRAEL": THE LONGEST DAY
(Joshua 10:6-15).**

It was crucial for Israel to hold Gibeon against the attack of the five enemy kings because Gibeon controlled the passes to central and southern Palestine.

How did Joshua prepare for this battle? Describe the miraculous course of the conflict. (See the map in Sunday's lesson.) Joshua 10:6-15; Hab. 3:11-13. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 508.)

What does the miracle of the hailstones and the longest day reveal about God as Creator? Ps. 148:8; Job 38:22, 23; Rev. 16:17, 21.

A further significance of these miracles becomes apparent when we remember that the gods of the inhabitants of Canaan included a storm god, a sun god, and also a moon deity. Thus these miracles showed the powerlessness of the Canaanite gods before the true God.

"The final statement in this verse [Joshua 10:13] clearly favors the notion that the sun stood still or that it slowed down in its course across the sky."—Donald H. Madvig, "Joshua," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 303. The Hebrew word for "stood still" in Joshua 10:12, 13 is the same word used in Joshua 3:16 to indicate that the waters of the Jordan River "stood still" (NKJV) or "stopped flowing" (NIV).

"The inspired writer used the popular language of the day in describing matters of science. Actually it is not the sun that moves in the heavens but the earth turning on its axis that marks off the day. But even in our modern age of scientific enlightenment we speak of the sun rising or setting. Some, whose limited concept of God leaves Him powerless to interfere with natural law, feel that a halt in the rotation of the earth would have disastrous effects upon the earth itself and possibly upon the entire solar system, if not the universe. Whether the phenomenon was produced in this fashion or by the refraction of light or in some other way, the fact remains that a miracle of some kind occurred. If we believe in an omnipotent God, who, as Creator and Sustainer, controls the works of His creation, there is no problem."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 226.

How do the miracles of this battle remind us of the final battle in this world's history? How can these miracles encourage you as you face daily skirmishes with Satan?

Tuesday

May 23

THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN (Joshua 10:16-43).

Consult the map in Sunday's lesson to follow the course of Joshua's southern campaign. Joshua 10:16-43. How many casualties did Israel suffer in the battle? Joshua 10:21.

The captains of the Israelite army placed their feet on the necks of the conquered kings. What did this symbolize? How is this imagery applied to Jesus? Joshua 10:24, 25; 1 Cor. 15:25.

This common procedure in the ancient Near East (see Gen. 49:8; 2 Sam. 22:41) symbolized complete victory (for those placing their feet) and total subjugation (of those on whose necks feet were placed). Scripture employs the same imagery to describe the victory of the Messiah over His foes. (See also 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:22.)

It is our human nature to feel sorry for these kings, to wonder why it was necessary to kill them. But at the same time, we must remember that "they would have come back to conquer at some future date. . . .

"It was not enough to leave those five kings lurking in a cave; they had to be slain. In a similar way, we are to put to death that sin that so easily besets us. I have to ask myself what sinister thoughts and actions are hidden within the cave of my life. What are they, empowered by Satan, planning to do to me? Empowered by the Holy Spirit, I am privileged to rip those stones away from the front of that cave, grab those demons by their throats, and crucify them in the name of Jesus Christ, confessing my need of His forgiveness and my power to live with Christ as Victor in my life. What a privilege we have of communicating this spiritual truth to our people."—*The Communicator's Commentary: Joshua*, p. 184.

Home Base. After completing the southern campaign, Joshua and the army returned to Gilgal. You will recall that this is the place where they erected a monument commemorating the Jordan crossing. How refreshing it must have been for the exhausted soldiers to return to this place, to gaze upon God's law of love inscribed upon the monument.

What Gilgals do Christians have to which they can retreat for spiritual renewal in the struggle against evil?

What words of the Lord did Joshua repeat to his army? Joshua 10:25. How can these words assist you today?

THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGN (Joshua 11:1-15).

If the SDA Bible Commentary is available to you, consult the map in Volume 2, page 230, as you read the narrative in Joshua 11:1-15.

Which three cities of Canaan were burned? Why only these three and no others? Joshua 11:11-13; 6:2, 24; 8:28.

Note that Jericho was the “first fruits” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 491) of the *herem*, the things totally given over to God. Ai was the only city that initially defeated Israel. Its total destruction by fire revealed God’s supreme power over the enemy while Israel was faithful to Him. Hazor was “the head of this confederacy,” “the stronghold of the confederacy” (Joshua 11:10; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 510).

The excavation strata at both Jericho and Hazor reveal a destruction-by-fire layer. The pottery in this layer can be dated to c. 1400 B.C., the very time of Joshua’s conquest. The location of Ai has not yet been positively verified.

Some archaeologists have expressed skepticism regarding the historicity of the conquest because there appear to be no destruction layers in other cities of Canaan at this period. However, a close look at the biblical account indicates that this is precisely what one should expect, since Joshua and the Israelite armies are said to have destroyed the inhabitants of these other cities. Furthermore, Joshua 11:13, NKJV, explicitly states: “As for the cities that stood on their mounds [tels], Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, which Joshua burned.”

How does this archaeological evidence help to strengthen your faith in the biblical record?

The Anakim that the Israelites defeated (Joshua 11:21) were giants. What spiritual giants can your faith in God help to defeat?

SUMMARY OF CONQUEST (Joshua 11:15–12:24).

How long did Joshua's military campaigns last? Joshua 11:17, 18; compare Joshua 14:6–10. How much land did Joshua conquer? Joshua 10:40–42; 11:16–23.

Caleb was 40 years old at Kadesh Barnea. Israel wandered in the wilderness 38 more years before entering Canaan. Caleb was now 85 years old.

What can we learn about the character of Joshua from his thoroughness in carrying out God's instructions? Joshua 11:15. How can we apply this lesson to our personal lives?

"This text is a noble commentary on the character of Joshua. He obeyed implicitly every command of God. He had a simplicity of character that took God at His word, and then acted on that word, whether the future was all understood or not. Some men are faithful only in the things that are pleasant to them, or in things they can fully understand and are in full agreement with. But true fidelity to God aims at full compliance with His will. Personal wishes and desires may conflict with known duty, but the surrendered soul chooses the will of God no matter how crucifying the experience may be to natural inclinations."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 233.

James M. Boice (*Joshua: We Will Serve the Lord*, pp. 123–127) elaborates on the qualities of an effective leader illustrated in this account. These are paraphrased below:

1. Short-term gains did not divert Joshua's attention from God's long-range objectives. (See Joshua 10:16–19.)
2. He understood the need people have to be encouraged. (See Joshua 10:25.)
3. Joshua did not take shortcuts. He executed the campaign in a sensible, consistent manner. (Recall that the campaign took seven years.)
4. He did not let his early mistakes discourage him to the point of defeat.
5. Joshua trusted God and proved that trust through obedience. (See Joshua 11:15.)

In what sense are we all spiritual leaders? Which of the above do you need help with? Pray for God's power to help you be an effective spiritual leader to someone today.

FURTHER STUDY: Review the following verses carefully to pinpoint how the conquest of Canaan symbolizes the Christian's fight against "principalities and powers" on the battlefield of the heart: 1 Tim. 6:3-16; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8; Eph. 6:10-18. Now consider the lives of some of your favorite people in the Bible. How did they exemplify "fighting the good fight of faith"?

Also read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 507-511.

"Joshua had received the promise that God would surely overthrow these enemies of Israel, yet he put forth as earnest effort as though success depended upon the armies of Israel alone. He did all that human energy could do, and then he cried in faith for divine aid. The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm. The man who commanded, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon,' is the man who for hours lay prostrate upon the earth in prayer in the camp at Gilgal. The men of prayer are the men of power."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can you be sure that the "Gilgal experience" of Joshua (see quotation above) does not get crowded out of your life? Have you had a "Gilgal experience" today in preparation for the "Ajalon" victories God has promised?
2. Share how God has intervened to give you victory in spiritual battles you have been fighting.
3. What are the "chariots" (Ps. 20:7) in your life that you are tempted to depend upon instead of upon God? How can you free yourself from these false powers? What spiritual chariots can we depend upon instead?
4. Why is the Christian life often times a struggle? What is the most important for you personally to remember about these struggles?

SUMMARY: By implicitly following God's battle strategy and asking God to empower their human effort, the armies of Israel were able to succeed in the conquest of Canaan. The same abundant victory is available for the Israel of God today in their spiritual warfare.



New Church in Bulgaria

A Global Mission Report

Smolyan is a beautiful town high in the Rhodope Mountains in southern Bulgaria where no Adventists lived. An Adventist pastor and his wife went to Smolyan to conduct evangelistic meetings. It was during a time of economic crisis in the area. Food was scarce; it was bitter cold, and power shortages were frequent. The pastor and his wife lived in a hotel, often with no heat and with very little food. But their faith was strong, and they began working for Christ.

When the evangelistic meetings began, about 160 people attended each night. One Friday evening the pastor invited everyone present at the evangelistic meetings to a special service on Sabbath. He wondered how many would come out, for Saturday is a work day for many people. To his joy, about 40 people came on Sabbath morning.

The pastor wondered whether this would continue as he organized a Bible-study class. Several kept coming, and that summer, 19 persons were baptized. A few weeks later more were baptized, and in only a few months a church was organized. Now there are about 50 members. The average age of members of this new church is 25 years; the youngest member is 17 years old.

When the meetings began, one mother invited her teenage son to attend the lectures with her, but he refused to go. She brought home a tape of the first sermon and asked him to make a copy of it on his tape recorder. As he was recording the sermon he had to listen to it, and he became so interested that he decided to go to the meeting the following evening. He was the first among the group of 19 to be baptized.

The pastor and his wife and many of the new members in this church suffered from hunger and cold during their meetings, but their joy was great when a new Adventist church was founded. This Bible verse applies to them:

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. 126:5, 6).

Inside Story

Dividing the Inheritance

Stage I



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 13–17.

MEMORY TEXT: “Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day” (Joshua 14:12, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: The initial conquest of Canaan was complete. Now it was time for Joshua to divide the inheritance among the tribes.

THE TWO MATCHING HALVES OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA. Not only is the book of Joshua an accurate historical record but the events of the first half of the book (Joshua 1–12) precisely match those of the second half of the book (Joshua 13–24).

Conquest (Stage I)	Dividing the Inheritance (Stage I)
A. God to Joshua: “Conquer the land” (1:1–11)	A. God to Joshua: “Divide and possess the land” (13:1–7)
B. Joshua to 2 1/2 tribes (1:12–18)	B. Joshua to 2 1/2 tribes (13:8–32)
C. Cross to Gilgal—Passover/circumcision (2–5)	C. Gilgal—Inheritance for Caleb (14:1–15)
D. Central campaign (6:1–8:29)	D. Central inheritance (chapters 15–17)

DIVIDE THE LAND! (Joshua 13; 14:1-5).

How can we resolve the apparent contradiction that Joshua “took” all the land (Joshua 11:16, 23), and yet there remained much land to be “possessed”? (Joshua 13:1).

We must look carefully at the Hebrew terminology used by the author. Joshua 11:16, 23 indicates that Joshua “took” (*lāqah*) the land, whereas Joshua 13:1 points out that there was much land yet to be possessed (*yārash*). The first Hebrew word (*lāqah*) implies that Joshua had broken the back of the resistance and taken control of the region, even though they had not conquered or occupied every city. The second Hebrew word (*yārash*) implied that they still needed to take complete possession of the land by dispossessing all its inhabitants.

The use of two words for “rest” in Joshua strengthens this distinction between “taking” and “possessing.” In Joshua 11:23, we read that “the land rested [*shāqat*] from war.” This Hebrew word means simply “to be quiet.” But in Joshua 21:44, at the end of Joshua’s life, we read that “the Lord gave them rest [*nuah*] all around” (NKJV). This word means “to rest, settle down and remain, repose.” At the end of the northern campaign, the land “was quiet” (*shāqat*) because the decisive battles were over. But by the end of Joshua’s life, God had given the people “settled rest and repose” (*nuah*) because “the Lord had delivered all their enemies into their hand” (Joshua 21:44, NKJV).

How does this paradox parallel the Christian life? Rev. 12:9-11; Rom. 8:37-39 (compare Heb. 4:3, 8-11; 1 John 5:4, 5).

In Joshua 13:1-14:5, God gave Joshua instructions on how to divide the land among the Israelites. In Hebrew thinking, the inheritance of the land was a deeply spiritual experience. The land belonged ultimately to the Lord, and the people of Israel were to be “strangers and sojourners” with God in the land (Lev. 25:23). Yet, in fulfillment of His covenant promises, God “gave” the land to Israel as a perpetual inheritance. Therefore, no land was to be sold permanently from one family to another (Lev. 25:23). Israel’s inheritance involved the material possessions of land, vegetation, and houses. But the inheritance was also a spiritual concept representing the believing Israelite’s happiness and joy (Ps. 16:6).

How is Joshua a type of the Messiah in His work of dividing Israel’s inheritance? Isa. 49:10.

"GIVE ME THIS MOUNTAIN!" (Joshua 14:6-13).

What character portrait emerges from Caleb's inheritance request? Review the background of Caleb's request. Joshua 14:6-13 (compare Numbers 13, 14, especially 14:24; Deut. 1:36).

What was Caleb's age and state of health at the time of this request? Joshua 14:10, 11. Do you think the character qualities of Caleb had any bearing upon his vigorous health in old age? How is this an incentive to temperate living?

"Behold, the Lord has kept me alive" (Joshua 14:10, NKJV). What a testimony from one of the spiritual greats of Scripture! And what an example to the Israelites! Verse 6 informs us that Caleb was not originally one of them: "Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite" (NKJV). The Kenizzites were a tribe of Canaan. (See Gen. 15:19; Num. 32:12.)

"Special consideration was given to Caleb for special service rendered. He received therefore the first assignment of the land. . . . When the twelve spies were sent to survey the land, ten came back with a negative report. They declared that the land was full of giants and the country was impregnable because of its fortified cities. They saw no chance for the adventure which was being planned by Moses. Their conclusions were based upon fear. They took into consideration only human values. But Caleb, with Joshua, presented a minority report (Num. 14:7). . . .

"His constant assurance of the presence and power of God gave him such perspective and equanimity that he never frittered away his physical well-being through tension and stress."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 625, 626.

Other men of Judah accompanied Caleb when he made his request of Joshua (Joshua 14:6). They supported his request. "Caleb himself being the one appointed from this tribe to apportion the land, he had chosen to unite these men with him in presenting his claim, that there might be no appearance of having employed his authority for selfish advantage."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 512.

Caleb said, "Give me this mountain!" (Joshua 14:12). What "mountain" looms ahead of you in possessing your spiritual inheritance? Would you like to choose this day to step out by faith like Caleb, and say to God: "Give me this mountain"?

CALEB'S INHERITANCE AND CONQUEST (Joshua 14:13-15; 15:13-19).

How did Joshua receive Caleb's request? Joshua 14:13-15; 15:13.

How did Caleb follow through on "possessing his possessions"? How did he even go far beyond the call of duty? Joshua 15:13-19.

"Caleb obtained the inheritance upon which his heart had been set for forty years, and trusting in God to be with him, he 'drove thence the three sons of Anak.' Having thus secured a possession for himself and his house, his zeal did not abate; he did not settle down to enjoy his inheritance, but pushed on to further conquests for the benefit of the nation and the glory of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 513.

Caleb dealt with others in the same caring, generous way God had dealt with him. When his daughter asked him for a choice piece of land, he readily complied, not desiring to keep all of the best only for himself (Joshua 15:16-19).

Such examples from Caleb's life tell us that there is a need for good people in subordinate positions. Caleb was not in charge. But he did not covet a higher position than that of a faithful follower. Instead, he performed with zeal the work that was before him.

How did Caleb's relative Othniel exhibit the same courageous faith as Caleb? Joshua 15:16, 17; Judges 3:7-11.

The Hebrew construction of Judges 1:13 is ambiguous, allowing for Othniel to be either Caleb's brother or his nephew. The Massoretes (6th–9th century A.D. preservers of the Hebrew text) favored the former view. By marriage Othniel was also Caleb's son-in-law. The Old Testament law did not forbid marriage with one's niece.

Othniel's exploits extended beyond the book of Joshua, as he became the first of the Judges used by the Holy Spirit to deliver Israel from the king of Upper Mesopotamia, Chushan-rishathaim (whose name meant "Cushan of double wickedness"). (See also Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1002.)

Compare Caleb's experience with the descriptions of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11:33, 34. Claim this kind of victory by faith! (See 1 John 5:4.)

THE INHERITANCE OF JUDAH AND JOSEPH (Joshua 15:1-17:13).

Why did God appoint the inheritance of Judah and Joseph before the other tribes on the west bank of the Jordan? See Gen. 49:8-10, 22-26.

In the blessing of the twelve tribes, Jacob provides his most lengthy blessings for Judah and Joseph, and both of these blessings are couched in Messianic terms. These tribes dominate the later history of Israel, so much so that when the northern and southern kingdoms were divided, they also became known as Ephraim and Judah. Already in the time of Joshua, these tribes are specially set apart in the apportioning process.

In what way did God honor the rights of the daughters of Zelophehad? What does this tell us about the divine perspective on the value of womanhood? Joshua 17:3, 4 (compare Num. 26:33, 34; 27:1-11).

How thoroughly did the Israelites follow through on their task of completing the plan for possessing the land of Canaan? Joshua 13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12, 13; 18:3 (compare Judges 1:30-36).

Thus the Israelites provide us with a picture of how easy it is to become content with past success. Joshua 18:3 is a summons for the Israelites to escape their apathy and rise up to fulfill their mission.

"The Lord assured them that they must dispossess the land of those who were a snare to them, who would be thorns in their side. This was the word of the Lord, and His plan was that under His guardianship His people should have larger and still larger territory. . . . But they stopped halfway. They consulted their own convenience, and the very work God could have done for them by placing them where the knowledge of God should be made known and the abominable practices of the heathen banished from the land, was not done."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 998 (MS 126, 1899).

What can we learn about "stopping halfway" in possessing our spiritual inheritance as individuals and as a church? Are there still some spiritual "Canaanites" in your life that have not been dispossessed?

THE COMPLAINT OF THE TRIBE OF JOSEPH (Joshua 17:14-18).

Trace the complaint of the tribe of Joseph from the problem they mention to the underlying cause of their complaining. Joshua 17:14-16.

"Their reply showed the real cause of complaint. They lacked faith and courage to drive out the Canaanites."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 514.

By what means did Joshua, the wise diplomat, turn their arguments against them? Joshua 17:17, 18.

The tribe of Joseph claimed to be a great people (verse 14), therefore needing more land. Joshua turns their own argument against them, indicating that if they were so great, then they would surely be able to drive out the Canaanites and possess their land. We have here a hint of Joshua's quick wit and negotiating skills.

This incident also illustrates the role of personal responsibility in the Christian life. The tribe of Joseph wanted their desires handed to them without working for them. But God gave them their greatness. Now they were to use that greatness to meet their own request.

In what ways may we today be tempted to have an attitude like that of the tribe of Joseph? How can we deal with such an attitude?

Alan Redpath makes a pointed application: "How often is this situation with which the children of Joseph were faced repeated in lives today! The children of Joseph were not satisfied with their lot; there was not enough scope for their gifts they thought; they wanted a larger sphere of service. . . . [Yet in the territory] which God had given them the enemy was still deeply entrenched."

"Your complaint may be the same—that you do not have enough scope for your own abilities. Are you constantly discontented with your present lot? Do you often pine for a greater opportunity to serve the Lord? Is your heart set on some mission field? For it may be that the searchlight of God's Word will disclose that the enemy is still deeply entrenched in your soul. May the Spirit of God point out to you that perhaps you have not really possessed the lot which God has given you."—Alan Redpath, *Victorious Christian Living: Studies in the Book of Joshua*, p. 207.

FURTHER STUDY: Caleb did not save all the best for himself, but he shared with others (review Tuesday's lesson). Read the following stories about other people who did the same. How can such unselfishness banish the spiritual Canaanites from our human nature? Gen. 13:8-11; 1 Kings 17:8-24; Mark 12:41-44; 14:3-9; John 6:1-14.

Read "The Division of Canaan" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 510-520; *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 998.

"It was Caleb's faith in God that gave him courage; that kept him from the fear of man, even the mighty giants, the sons of Anak, and enabled him to stand boldly and unflinchingly in defense of the right. From the same exalted source, the mighty General of the armies of Heaven, every true soldier of the cross of Christ must receive strength and courage to overcome obstacles that often seem insurmountable."

"While the doubting ones talk of impossibilities, while they tremble at the thought of high walls and strong giants, let the faithful Caleb's, who have 'another spirit,' come to the front."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 378, 380.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do the "already" and "not yet" aspects of the Christian life affect your assurance of salvation? Your witness, talents, and service?
2. What does Caleb's experience tell us about the usefulness of "senior citizens" in the church? If you are "retired," do you say, "Give me my pension and my reclining chair," or "Give me this mountain"? If you are not yet in the "golden years," how have active senior citizens inspired you?
3. What talent or gift do you consider to be a spiritual inheritance from God? What use have you made of this spiritual inheritance?
4. What does the experience of Zelophehad's daughters have to teach us about the role and rights of women today in society and in the church?
5. In the matter of your knowledge of God, how much "land" still remains unpossessed? How many promises of the Bible have you yet to claim?

SUMMARY: Just as God divided the land among ancient Israel, so He wants us to claim by faith our spiritual inheritance in Christ, and to dispossess fully the spiritual "Canaanites" in our lives.



Rats, Toilets and Evangelism

James H. Zachary

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It was Christmas vacation at Mountain View College in the Philippines. Students boarded busses for their trip home.

But several students had other plans. They were going to an unentered village to plant a church. Eight students jammed sacks of rice, sweet potatoes, dried beans, and a stem of bananas, plus their personal belongings onto an aging military jeep, and started out for the village. Mountain View College students have worked in more than 100 villages, and have counted more than 1,000 baptisms from their work.

The mayor had given permission to use the village social hall for meetings. After unloading the supplies, we gathered in a circle for prayer.

Team members visited each home and invited everyone to attend the health lectures and Bible studies for adults and a special program for children.

But the day after the first meeting a letter arrived from the mayor. "We do not like you Adventists. Do not invite our children to your meetings. You may still use our hall."

The students met to pray for guidance. Someone had noticed that rats were destroying the villagers' corn crop. Another said the village had no toilets. Almost every child was suffering from skin disease. As they prayed together they decided to do something to help solve these problems.

The college agriculture teacher spoke to villagers on rat control. Farmers got rid of the rats and saved their corn. The students built a model toilet with a water trap. Then they taught villagers how to build their own toilets. Other team members visited homes, offering simple medical treatments and remedies where needed. They treated the children's skin irritations and prayed that God would bless their efforts.

The mayor wrote another letter. "We didn't know much about you Adventists. You have helped us so much. We want you to continue your meetings. We will come and bring our children."

The meetings continued; attendance rose. Today there is a lovely new church in the village. When Christians meet peoples' needs, they open hearts.



James H. Zachary is associate secretary of the Ministerial Association at the General Conference.

Dividing the Inheritance

Stage II



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 18–21.

MEMORY TEXT: “Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass” (Joshua 21:45, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: The goal of the conquest has now been reached: the Lord has given the Israelites the land that He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All of God’s promises have come true; not one has failed!

CONQUEST AND INHERITANCE—MATCHING HALVES. Note the way God arranged the history of the conquest and dividing of the land so that the two parts of the story perfectly match:

Conquest (Stage II)	Dividing the Inheritance (Stage II)
A. Shechem—Build altar, covenant ceremony (8:30-35)	A. Shiloh—Erect tabernacle, ceremony of casting lots (18:1-10)
B. Southern campaign (chapters 9, 10)	B. Southern inheritance (18:11-19:9)
C. Northern campaign (11:1-15)	C. Northern inheritance (chapters 19-21)
D. Took land; land rest (11:16-23)	D. Gave land; rest (21:43-45)

AT SHILOH (Joshua 18:1-10).

What place was chosen for the permanent placement of the sanctuary? Why? Joshua 18:1. (Compare *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 514; *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 998.)

Shiloh means “place of rest.” Deuteronomy 12:10-12 tells us that God would choose a resting place for the ark once the Israelites were in the Promised Land. After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, the ark would finally have a permanent home.

God may have had several reasons in mind for this location: (1) Shiloh was near the geographical center of Palestine, and thus was accessible to all the tribes of Israel (the ark would still be in the middle of the “camp”); (2) the Israelites had thoroughly conquered this part of the land, so that pilgrims coming to the sanctuary would be safe; (3) in the center of the land the sanctuary would be a witness of the true God to the remaining Canaanites; and (4) the acoustics and “visual capacity” at Shiloh made an ideal spot for a large assembly.

Recent surveys at ancient Shiloh have determined the probable location of the tabernacle. And excavations have uncovered store-rooms adjoining where the tabernacle probably once stood during the time of Joshua and the judges.

What was the later history of Shiloh? What lesson did Jeremiah draw from its destruction? 1 Sam. 1:3, 9, 24; 3:21; 4:3, 4, 12; 1 Kings 2:27; Ps. 78:60; Jer. 7:12-14; 26:6-9.

“The ark remained at Shiloh for three hundred years, until, because of the sins of Eli’s house, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and Shiloh was ruined. The ark was never returned to the tabernacle here, the sanctuary service was finally transferred to the temple at Jerusalem, and Shiloh fell into insignificance. There are only ruins to mark the spot where it once stood. Long afterward its fate was made use of as a warning to Jerusalem. [Jer 7:12-14 cited].” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 514, 515.

Are ye slack? (Joshua 18:3). Israel’s nomadic life was over. But apparently they found it difficult to separate from one another and actually take up the business of making the land theirs. They were content to remain together and allow their spiritual vision to grow dim.

What lesson is there for modern Christians in Israel’s slackness in making the Promised Land theirs?

**INHERITANCE OF THE SEVEN REMAINING TRIBES
(Joshua 18:11–19:48).**

Why did God instruct that the inheritances be chosen by lot? Joshua 18:3-10. Is this the best method for making decisions today?

The word *lot* occurs 22 times in the last half of the book of Joshua. For Israel under the theocracy, the casting of lots left the choice in the hands of the Lord, and eliminated any possibility of manipulation.

But the church today is not under a direct theocracy. God asks us to go to Scripture for principles of decision-making. Ellen White wrote: "I have no faith in casting lots. We have in the Bible a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in regard to all church duties. . . . Read your Bibles with much prayer. Do not try to humble others, but humble yourselves before God, and deal gently with one another. To cast lots for the officers of the church is not in God's order."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1054.

Why was the inheritance of Simeon carved out from inside the tribe of Judah? Joshua 19:1-9.

Because of the heinous crime of Simeon and Levi (the mass murder of the men of Shechem, Gen. 34:25), Jacob prophesied, in his dying predictions about his twelve sons, that God would "divide them [the tribes of Levi and Simeon] in Jacob and scatter them in Israel" (Gen. 49:7). Levi, as we will see in Joshua 21, was scattered throughout Israel in 48 Levitical cities; and Simeon was "divided in Jacob," especially when after the reign of Solomon it united with the northern kingdom of Israel but had its territory within Judah. Probably the tribe of Simeon became largely absorbed into the tribe of Judah. Moses intimated as much in that he does not even mention the tribe of Simeon in his blessing of the tribes of Israel (Deuteronomy 33).

What inheritance has God given you and the church? Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:13, 14 (compare Col. 1:12; Rev. 22:14).

The Greek word for *right* (Rev. 22:14) might better be translated as "privilege," or "liberty." In the new earth we will be free from the bondage of sin. We will be at liberty to eat from the tree of life, to talk face-to-face with Jesus, and to live forever.

Tuesday

June 6

**"THE PORTION THAT REMAINS": TIMNATH-SERAH
(Joshua 19:49-51).**

When did Joshua receive his inheritance? How is the timing and the name of his inheritance significant in highlighting the character of Joshua? Joshua 19:49-51.

Joshua waited to the last to receive his inheritance, and "he asked for no extensive province, but only a single city. . . . The name given to the city was Timnath-serah, 'the portion that remains'—a standing testimony to the noble character and unselfish spirit of the conqueror, who, instead of being the first to appropriate the spoils of conquest, deferred his claim until the humblest of his people had been served."

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 515.

Here we have another aspect of the life of the Old Testament Joshua that typologically prefigures the New Testament Joshua (Jesus), who was the unmatched example of unselfish service. (See Rom. 15:3.) See Jesus feed thousands after He has spent the day healing the sick (Matt. 14:14-20); see Him dine with people whom the elite would not even talk with (Luke 15:1, 2); view His kind deeds toward the outcasts of society (John 4:5-30); observe Him doing the work of a servant (John 13:1-17); and finally, behold Him dying a criminal's death (Luke 23:26-46). For you!

What lessons can today's church leaders learn from Joshua's behavior?

Even though Joshua was the oldest man in Israel and the leader of Canaan's conquest, he waited until last to be served. What an example of unselfish servant-leadership for public and church officials!

Joshua's example teaches a lesson for the lay person, as well. This world is all too consumed with getting, its inhabitants all too concerned with being first. Nations seek to extend their boundaries; businesses their bank accounts; people their possessions. It rarely matters how—just so profits are made. All selfishness is cruel, and unscrupulous. Yet the spirit typified by Joshua fosters peace and neighborliness, Christian love and thoughtfulness.

We are by nature selfish. Pray that God will instill into your heart, through the Spirit's indwelling, the unselfish attitudes of Joshua and Christ.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE AND LEVITICAL CITIES (Joshua 20, 21).

What was the purpose of the cities of refuge? Joshua 20:1-9 (compare Ex. 21:13; Deut. 4:41-43).

Why did God not abolish the custom of private vengeance at this time? But "God leads men only as rapidly as they are able to comprehend divine truth. This principle was characteristic of the Hebrew legislation, given by God through Moses. It adapted itself to the condition of men, but always tended toward a perfection that the people were not at first capable of realizing. Thus slavery, polygamy, free divorce, were for a time tolerated, and laws were enacted regulating these practices, though these practices were neither ordained nor approved by God."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 277.

The condemned remained in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest because the life of a human being is so sacred that no animal sacrifice typified its atonement. The high priest's death typified the death of the antitypical High Priest, Jesus, whose blood is effectual for the forgiveness of all sins as they are confessed.

What do the cities of refuge symbolize in the plan of salvation? Consider the points of comparison between symbol and reality. See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 515-517.

The Levite cities. Along with the list of the 48 cities set aside for the Levites, note the three expressions describing their inheritance: "the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance" (Joshua 13:14); "the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance" (Joshua 13:33); "the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance" (Joshua 18:7). The "inheritance" of the Levites came from the portion of the sacrifices that was their due (Num. 18:8-20), and from the tithes of the people of Israel (Num. 18:21-24). The Levites were committed to full-time service in connection with the sanctuary, and thus they also had the spiritual inheritance of the Lord Himself.

Full-time gospel ministers likewise are supported by the tithe so that they can put their full energies into the work of the ministry.

How does the New Testament describe our refuge in Christ?
Heb. 6:18; Phil. 3:9. Have you fled to Christ, your spiritual city of refuge?

ENTERING GOD'S REST: FULFILLMENT OF THE DIVINE PROMISE (Joshua 21:43-45).

Review the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua concerning the inheritance of the land of Canaan. Gen. 12:7; 26:3; 28:13; Deut. 7:1, 2, 17-26; Joshua 1:2-6.

To what extent were these promises fulfilled? Joshua 21:43-45.

Two aspects of the promise of land these verses emphasize are themes of the book of Joshua. First, God had promised that He would give Israel the land (Joshua 1:2, 3, 6; 21:43). Second, the Lord promised to give them *rest* in the land (Joshua 1:13, 15; compare Ex. 33:14). Both of these promises continue throughout the Scriptures in ever deepening dimensions.

All the land (Joshua 21:43). This verse may seem like a contradiction, because we know that Israel did not possess all the land until David and Solomon. The verse is simply saying, "the Lord gave unto Israel all the land." It never was God's plan to give Israel all Canaan at once (Ex. 23:30). There were not enough of them to do so. Until there were, some Canaanites would remain (Deut. 7:22; Ex. 23:29; see *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 629).

Rest round about (Joshua 21:44). The Hebrew reads, "rest from around about," meaning rest from the surrounding nations. But God had more in mind than merely a physical rest. "The settlement in Canaan was preliminary to a great missionary program that God was planning to accomplish through Israel. Such a program could be carried forward only by individuals who in their own lives were representatives of that plan. The writer of the book Hebrews was referring to the attainment of this spiritual objective in the soul and the accomplishment of the missionary objective in the world when he said, 'For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day' (Heb. 4:8). When Israel miserably failed to fulfill her high destiny and enter into her 'rest,' God called upon the Christian church to fulfill the divine purpose. Therefore we should 'fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should come short of it' (Heb. 4:1)." —*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 284.

Have you experienced the fulfillment of God's promises of rest in spiritual Canaan? (See Heb. 4:1-11.) Why not claim these promises today?

FURTHER STUDY: God is just as willing to fulfill the promises He has made to us as He was to fulfill the promises He made to Israel. Review this week's memory text. Then study 2 Peter 1:4 and 2 Corinthians 1:20. What are some of the "exceeding great and precious promises" that mean the most to you? What is the purpose of these promises? Consider the magnitude of what it means to be "partakers of the divine nature." In 2 Corinthians 1:20, we read that all the promises of God in Christ are "Amen." Here *Amen* means "true," "faithful," "certain."

Read "The Division of Canaan" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 514-517; *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1881 ("The Cities of Refuge").

"The cities of refuge appointed for God's ancient people were a symbol of the refuge provided in Christ. The same merciful Saviour who appointed those temporal cities of refuge, has by the shedding of his own blood provided for the transgressors of God's law a sure retreat, into which they may flee for safety from the second death. No power can take out of His hands the souls that go to Him for pardon."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 516.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you accepted God's "lot" for your life, or are you seeking to settle somewhere more to your liking?
2. Why do you think God recorded all those names of cities and boundary lines in Scripture? What relevance does Bible geography have for us today? What does it tell us about the nature of God's plan of salvation?
3. Does the law regarding the murderer who flees to a city of refuge provide guidance today regarding capital punishment for premeditated murder? (See Joshua 20:5; Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12, 14; Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1881.)
4. In what ways is your church like a city of refuge? How about your home?

SUMMARY: As Israel experienced the fulfillment of all God's promises and received God's rest in the land of Canaan, so we may take possession of our spiritual inheritance and find rest in Christ, our New Joshua.



God Still Works Miracles, part 1

Larry Colburn

It was midnight; the residents of the mission compound were awoken by the creak of the gate and excited voices below their windows. A knock on the door brought the union president,* to investigate.

As he opened the door a desperate-looking woman began chattering in the local dialect, asking for the union president's wife, "Auntie Marilyn."

Marilyn, a nurse, recognized the woman as a widow, a member of a group of women with whom she worked. She learned that the woman's 20-year-old daughter, Marida, was desperately ill. Rather than take her to the hospital, the woman had brought her to the missionaries for help.

Marida was obviously quite ill. Quickly Marilyn located a bed in the compound for the young woman. Marida's mother watched as Marilyn ministered to her daughter.

By morning Marida had not improved; her life was in danger. The situation was becoming more and more desperate. One of the mission workers whispered to Marilyn, "Take Marida to the hospital. If a Muslim woman dies in our compound, they'll blame us!" Distressed, Marilyn asked a Muslim worker on the compound, "What shall I do?"

The man answered, "Don't send Marida away; God will help." Marilyn took courage and kept Marida on the compound for the rest of the day. That afternoon Marida regained consciousness and asked for her friends. They came and sang and prayed for her.

Marilyn stayed with Marida late into the night. Finally, she turned to Marida's mother and said, "I'm going to get some sleep now. If there is a change, call me."

Early the next morning a knock at the door awoke Marilyn. It was Marida's mother. "Auntie Marilyn, Marida wants to see you."

On the front lawn Marilyn found Marida, with a smile on her face, walking and smiling. "Auntie," Marida said, "may I go to worship this morning?"

"It was a miracle," Marilyn said. God had saved her life for a purpose.

(Continued)



Larry R. Colburn is an associate secretary of the General Conference. *To protect our work with Muslims, names and location have been altered or omitted.

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Passing the Torch



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 22-23.

MEMORY TEXT: “One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He has promised you” (Joshua 23:10, NKJV).

KEY THOUGHT: God shares His amazing promises of total victory with Israel, and He poignantly sets forth the conditions of their fulfillment.

TWO FAREWELL SPEECHES. This week's lesson looks at the first two farewell speeches Joshua made at the end of the book that bears his name. The first speech he gave to the two and one-half tribes after the seven years of conquest were over and they were ready to return to their inheritance east of the Jordan. The second speech Joshua gave “a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel” (Joshua 23:1, NKJV). Joshua called Israel together, encouraging them with God's promises, admonishing them to possess their inheritance, and exhorting them to remain faithful to God and His law.

“According to available information, Joshua was about 83 years old when Israel entered Canaan. Being 5 years older than Caleb, he was 90 at the end of the conquest of the land. According to ch. 24:29 he was 110 years old when he died. If our reckoning is correct, and if the events of this chapter [23] occurred during the last year of Joshua's life, 20 years must have passed since the Lord gave Israel rest.”—SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 291.

JOSHUA BLESSES THE EASTERN TRIBES (Joshua 22:1-9).

The special work of the eastern tribes was completed, and with Joshua's blessing they would now return home. Quite possibly this special work involved the establishing of Israel's headquarters at Shiloh, for verse 9 states that they departed out of Shiloh.

What charge did Joshua give to the eastern tribes as they prepared to return to their inheritance east of the Jordan? Joshua 22:1-5. Compare this charge with the language used by Moses in his farewell address to Israel. (See Deut. 4:4, 29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; etc.) How does this charge apply to your own covenant relationship with the Lord?

Many of the terms in this charge are technical terms in a covenant relationship. For example, the call to "cleave" or "cling" to the Lord (Joshua 22:5); the Hebrew word occurs in the context of a covenant-bonding relationship. (Compare Gen. 2:24; Deut. 10:20; 11:22.)

What blessing did Joshua give to the two and one-half tribes? Explore the biblical significance of blessing by consulting other scriptural passages such as Genesis 1:28; 9:1; 12:2; Numbers 6:23, 24; and Deuteronomy 1:11.

"Blessing is not a magical conferment of potency, yet it is more than the mere utterance of a pious wish. It is done in the name of the Lord, who is the source of all power and prosperity, both material and spiritual."—Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. R. K. Harrison (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1981), p. 230.

What would happen in our homes and churches if there were more blessing of our brothers and sisters? What example did Jesus give and why? Matt. 19:13-15.

"In the children who were brought in contact with Him, Jesus saw the men and women who should be heirs of His grace and subjects of His kingdom, and some of whom would become martyrs for His sake. He knew that these children would . . . accept Him as their Redeemer far more readily than would grown-up people, many of whom were the worldly-wise and hardhearted."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 514, 515.

THE ALLEGED TREACHERY (Joshua 22:10-20).

In Joshua 22:1-9, Joshua charges the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to remember God and keep His commandments. In their zeal to do so, they built an altar on the east bank of the Jordan River. This altar resembled the one at Shiloh (Joshua 22:28). The builders did not desire it for sacrifices, but as a reminder of who their God was. They were concerned that their separation by the Jordan River from the other tribes might possibly alienate them from their religion, as well.

Summarize the accusations that the rest of Israel made against the two and one-half tribes east of the Jordan. Joshua 22:16. Who was at fault in this situation?

The major part of their work in conquering the land is over, and the Israelites no longer seem to be united in a common cause. This lack of a common goal makes it easier for them to "fight" amongst themselves. If you have ever been affected by a negative rumor, then you know how the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh felt.

What was the "sin of Peor"? Joshua 22:17 (compare Numbers 25). What do you think led Israel to choose Phineas as leader of the delegation that went to see the two and one-half tribes? Do you consider this a wise choice?

Compare this incident with the account of dealing with Achan (Joshua 7). How can we maintain a balance between overlaxness and overharshness in dealing with sin? See Jude 22, 23.

"While it is important on the one hand that laxness in dealing with sin be avoided, it is equally important on the other to shun harsh judgment and groundless suspicion.

"While very sensitive to the least blame in regard to their own course, many are too severe in dealing with those whom they suppose to be in error. No one was ever reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many are thus driven further from the right path and led to harden their hearts against conviction. A spirit of kindness, a courteous, forbearing deportment may save the erring, and hide a multitude of sins."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 519, 520.

THE ALTAR OF WITNESS: HANDLING FALSE ACCUSATIONS (Joshua 22:21-32).

Summarize the response of the Reubenites. What principles of dealing with false accusations emerge from their reply? Joshua 22:21-32.

What application can you draw from the response of the Reubenites for conflict resolution? How well do you take false accusation?

"How much of evil would be averted, if all, when falsely accused, would avoid recrimination, and in its stead employ mild, conciliating words. And at the same time, those who in their zeal to oppose sin have indulged unjust suspicions, should ever seek to take the most favorable view of their brethren, and should rejoice when they are found guiltless."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 999.

The Lord God of gods (Joshua 22:22). Twice the two and one-half tribes repeat God's three names—"El, 'Elohim, and Yahweh. This phrase also means "God of gods, Jehovah." These tribes were appalled at the accusation made against them, and the repetition on their part demonstrated their fervor and sincerity.

Both groups of Israelites acted from similar motives. The Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh built the altar because of their desire to make sure they never forgot their God. The remaining tribes were also concerned that God not be forgotten. Their concern, however, led them to believe the worst of their fellow Israelites. Yet we can admire them, for when they discovered they were mistaken they did not defend themselves by blaming the eastern tribes for using poor judgment.

How does this incident illustrate the principle of seeking unity among fellow believers? See Psalm 133; John 17:20-23; 1 Peter 3:8, 9.

Is there anyone with whom you need to be united? What can you do to effect a reconciliation?

"It is the will of God that union and brotherly love should exist among His people. . . . While we are not to sacrifice one principle of truth, it should be our constant aim to reach this state of unity."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 520.

PASSING THE TORCH (Joshua 23:1-13).

Survey the first farewell message of Joshua to Israel. Joshua 23:1-13. Note the similarity of these words to God's message at the beginning of the conquest of Canaan. Joshua 1:2-9.

In Joshua 23:6, NKJV, Joshua picks up the same themes that had brought him encouragement as he took the reins of leadership from Moses: "Be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left"; this is a virtual paraphrase of Joshua 1:7.

List the two intimate terms Joshua used to depict a deep personal relationship between Israel and the Lord. Joshua 23:8, 11.

Joshua's advice is part of a warning against associating with and marrying idol worshipers. (See Joshua 23:6-8, 12, 13.) Such a warning is applicable to our day as well. (See 2 Cor. 6:14, 15; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; Eph. 5:7, 11.)

"We are in as great danger from contact with infidelity as were the Israelites from intercourse with idolaters. The productions of genius and talent too often conceal the deadly poison. Under an attractive guise, themes are presented and thoughts expressed that attract, interest, and corrupt the mind and heart. Thus, in our Christian land, piety wanes, and skepticism and ungodliness are triumphant. . . .

"One of the greatest dangers that besets the people of God today, is that of association with the ungodly; especially in uniting themselves in marriage with unbelievers. . . . We should ever feel a deep interest in the salvation of the impenitent, and should manifest toward them a spirit of kindness and courtesy; but we can safely choose for our friends only those who are the friends of God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 999, 1000.

Contemplate the promise Joshua made to Israel in Joshua 23:10, and claim this promise for victory today in your spiritual warfare.

BENEVOLENCE AND JUSTICE (Joshua 23:14-16).

In verse 14, Joshua reminds the Israelites that all the good things the Lord promised came to pass. Review the various occasions in the book of Joshua where God exhibited His unfailing faithfulness to His covenant promises.

Joshua states that as surely as the good things happened that the Lord promised, so would the bad if they failed to cling to God.

When ye have transgressed (Joshua 23:16). Or "if you transgress." God kindly assumes that Israel will be faithful. Therefore, He does not withhold blessings until they have proven themselves worthy.

How literally are we to take the descriptions of God's wrath and retributive justice in Joshua (23:15, 16) and elsewhere in Scripture (for example, Num. 11:33; 2 Chron. 36:16; Rev. 14:10, 19; 15:1)?

"Satan deceives many with the plausible theory that God's love for His people is so great that He will excuse sin in them; he represents that while the threatenings of Gods' word are to serve a certain purpose in His moral government, they are never to be literally fulfilled. But in all His dealings with His creatures God has maintained the principles of righteousness by revealing sin in its true character—by demonstrating that its sure result is misery and death. The unconditional pardon of sin never has been, and never will be. Such pardon would show the abandonment of the principles of righteousness, which are the very foundation of the government of God. It would fill the un fallen universe with consternation. God has faithfully pointed out the results of sin, and if these warnings were not true, how could we be sure that His promises would be fulfilled? That so-called benevolence which would set aside justice is not benevolence but weakness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 522.

To warn without any intention of enforcing is *deceitful*, a characteristic totally against God's nature. It is also cruel, something a merciful God cannot be.

Join Joshua in affirming God's faithfulness in fulfilling His abundant promises (Joshua 23:14). Determine not to fall into Satan's trap by downplaying either God's justice or His mercy. Contemplate these two attributes blending in ultimate balance on the cross (Ps. 85:10).

FURTHER STUDY: Study Acts 6:1-7 and 15:1-35 to see how the early church settled some of their problems and disputes. How were these problems similar to the problem the Israelites had in Joshua 22:10-32? How were they different? What principles of conflict resolution are the same in all of the situations?

Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 517-522; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 87-96; 188-200.

"The difficulties and misunderstandings that still arise among the people of God are often similar in their nature and results to those that threatened to prove so disastrous to Israel [Joshua 22:10-32]. The ten tribes were filled with fear lest the people whom God had accepted as His own, should become divided in interest and worship, hence their promptness in rebuking at once the supposed defection of their brethren. Yet in that very effort to maintain the honor of God and the purity of Israel, we see what serious and even fatal results might have followed from a simple misunderstanding.

"Men who were honestly seeking to promote the cause of true religion were misjudged and severely reprimanded. The wisdom manifested in their course under these trying circumstances is worthy of imitation."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 12, 1881.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do you have a greater problem with laxness or harshness in dealing with others' faults?
2. If someone had told you that "you have no part in the Lord" (Joshua 22:25), how would you have reacted?
3. Is there a situation similar to what Israel faced in Joshua 22:10-32 in your congregation? How could this week's lesson help your church deal with the situation?
4. What principles can you glean from this week's lesson governing association with unbelievers? In what way have such associations been snares, traps, scourges, and thorns in your own past or in the life of a family member or acquaintance?
5. What modern idols might prevent you from loving the Lord and cleaving to Him only?

SUMMARY: At the end of his life, Joshua passes on the torch to the next generation. His charge is of special relevance for our end-time generation.



God Still Works Miracles, part 2

Larry Colburn

Some months after Marida's miraculous healing, a young woman dashed into the mission compound, shouting, "Auntie Marilyn, my brother is sick. He needs help. Come! Come quickly!"

Nurse Marilyn grabbed her little bag and followed the young woman out of the compound. As she passed the compound gate, she met Marida, just coming in. "Where are you going?" Marida asked. Marilyn quickly told her, then hurried on.

As Marilyn entered the room where the sick man lay, she saw instantly that he was nearly dead. "I leaned over him," she said. "His eyes were dead. I shook him gently to see whether there was any response whatsoever." He had all the symptoms of cholera, had been vomiting for 18 hours, and had other symptoms of that terrible sickness.

She turned to the man's sister and said, "We must pray to God in heaven." They knelt beside the man's cot, and through tears they prayed for this man's healing. They rose to their feet and Marilyn went out to see whether the taxi had arrived to take them to the cholera hospital.

Marilyn saw a familiar figure running toward her. It was Marida! As she entered the room and looked at the man, she turned to Marilyn and said, "Auntie Marilyn, pray, pray!"

Marilyn told her, "Marida, I have prayed already."

Marida answered, "Then I will pray!" She rushed to the man's side, fell to her knees, took his hands in hers, and that little 20-year-old Muslim girl opened her heart to God, asking for the same healing that she had experienced.

While Marida was still praying, Marilyn noticed a slight movement. Then the man's eyes fluttered open. Those eyes that were dead a few minutes before were now a shiny black. They were alive! He was alive! In a few days, that man was back on his feet again. In the middle of this large city God is working miracles to strengthen the faith of Christian and seeker alike.



Larry Colburn is an associate secretary at the General Conference. Marilyn is a nurse and the wife of the union president in an Asian country.

"We Will Serve the Lord"



Sabbath Afternoon

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Joshua 24.

MEMORY TEXT: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

KEY THOUGHT: In Joshua's final farewell address to Israel, he leads them through a covenant-renewal ceremony so they might make a full and unreserved commitment to serve the Lord.

THE SACRED COVENANT-RENEWAL CEREMONY. There are a number of examples of covenant-renewal ceremonies in Scripture (for example, the whole book of Deuteronomy) and in the international politics of the ancient Near East in Joshua's time (especially the Hittite treaties). Several elements are usually present in such a ceremony, and these occur in Joshua 24: (1) a preamble, in which the overlord or suzerain identifies himself (verse 2); (2) an historical prologue, in which the overlord reviews the past benefactions with regard to his subjects (verses 2-13); (3) a call to obey the covenant stipulations or commandments, because of what the overlord has done for his subjects (verses 14, 15); (4) reference to the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience (implicit in verses 19, 20); (5) a list of witnesses to the covenant renewal (verse 27); and (6) the deposition of the covenant-renewal document for future periodic reading by the subjects (verse 26).

Experience with ancient Israel a covenant renewal this week!

THE WARRIOR'S FAREWELL ADDRESS: GOD'S PAST DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL (Joshua 24:1-13).

Where did Joshua choose to give His final farewell address to Israel? What was so special about this location? Joshua 24:1. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 522, 523.)

Why did Joshua speak in the name of the Lord ("Thus says the Lord God of Israel," verse 2)?

This is the first element of a covenant-renewal ceremony. The overlord identifies himself and his title in relationship to the subject—here the Lord God of Israel—and His human messenger speaks for the divine Overlord. (Compare Deut. 1:5, 6.)

In his farewell address, Joshua reviewed Israel's history (Joshua 24:2-13). This review of God's blessings toward Israel followed the accepted format of international covenant-making and covenant-renewal ceremonies in the Near East at that time. This historical prologue formed the basis and motivation for the obedience called for later in the covenant-renewal ceremony. Obedience in Scripture is always based upon the prior grace of God. (Compare Deuteronomy 1-4 for the historical prologue in Deuteronomy.)

Very few of the generation that heard these words spoken by Joshua had actually come out of Egypt. But God indicates in Joshua 24:5-7 that the later generation was to personalize the story, to consider as if it had happened to them personally. "There is a unity between past and present generations of believers. That which was experienced in the past was in effect experienced by all."—Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. R. K. Harrison, pp. 346, 347.

This "You are there!" principle makes the Bible come alive, as the great events in salvation history become our personal diary! Many other scriptural references illustrate this principle (see for example, Ex. 12:26, 27; 13:8, 9, 14-16; Deut. 5:2-4; 6:20, 21). But the most powerful application is at the heart of the gospel: when Jesus died, He died for our sins. By faith He knew that His death was for each and every one of us. What would an entry in your diary say about that? (See 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 21; Rom. 6:3-6.)

Have you experienced the Bible as a living book by "personalizing" Scripture? You are there!

COVENANT STIPULATIONS: CHALLENGE TO LOYAL COMMITMENT (Joshua 24:14, 15).

This section of Joshua's farewell address refers to the covenant stipulations or commandments that describe the relationship between the overlord and his subject. Although the language is one of free choice, there is a definite call to commit to these stipulations. This commitment is based upon the past benefactions of the Lord. (Compare Deuteronomy 5-26.)

Why does Joshua call for Israel to decide between the gods of the surrounding nations and the Lord? Were the Israelites practicing idolatry already? Joshua 24:14, 15.

"Among the multitudes that came up out of Egypt were many who had been worshipers of idols; and such is the power of habit that the practice was secretly continued, to some extent, even after the settlement in Canaan. Joshua was sensible of this evil among the Israelites, and he clearly perceived the dangers that would result. He earnestly desired to see a thorough reformation among the Hebrew host. He knew that unless the people took a decided stand to serve the Lord with all their hearts, they would continue to separate themselves farther and farther from Him. . . .

"While a portion of the Hebrew host were spiritual worshipers, many were mere formalists; no zeal or earnestness characterized their service. Some were idolators at heart, who would be ashamed to acknowledge themselves as such."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1881.

Choose you this day (Joshua 24:15). The charge to serve God does not eliminate choice, for anything we do for Him that is not voluntary on our part is useless.

Idolatry is still a problem today. "Our dangers are similar to those which threatened the prosperity of ancient Israel. The oft-repeated warnings against idolatry addressed to the Hebrew host, are no less applicable to us. Everything which leads the affections away from God is an idol, and betrays us into sin."—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1881.

How did Joshua remember his family responsibilities, as well as his national duties? Joshua 24:15.

How do you respond to Joshua's challenge to "choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve"?

**BLESSINGS AND CURSES: ISRAEL CHOOSES THE LORD
(Joshua 24:16-21).**

In this section of his farewell address, Joshua is reminding Israel of the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (which he had earlier elaborated on in Joshua 23:9-16). This element is an essential part of the covenant-renewal ceremony. (See Deuteronomy 27, 28; Joshua 8:30-35.)

**What was Israel's response to Joshua's call to commitment?
Joshua 24:16-18.**

What God had done for them in the past became the basis for their decision.

Why did Joshua respond as he did? Joshua 24:19, 20. What can we learn about the gospel of righteousness by faith from Joshua's statement?

"Before there could be any permanent reformation, the people must be led to feel their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God. They had broken His law, it condemned them as transgressors, and it provided no way of escape. While they trusted in their own strength and righteousness, it was impossible for them to secure the pardon of their sins; they could not meet the claims of God's perfect law, and it was in vain that they pledged themselves to serve God. It was only by faith in Christ that they could secure pardon of sin and receive strength to obey God's law. They must cease to rely upon their own efforts for salvation, they must trust wholly in the merits of the promised Saviour, if they would be accepted of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 524.

He is an holy God (Joshua 24:19). The term *holy* refers to something that is sacred or set apart from the common and from anything that defiles. Meditate on God's holiness.

He is a jealous God (Joshua 24:19). God is not jealous in the human sense of the term. God's jealousy is as follows: (1) He will not share His glory with other gods (Isa. 42:8; 48:11); (2) He cannot accept the worship and service of a heart that is divided (Ex. 34:12-15; Matt. 6:24).

What quality of decision did Joshua seek to draw out of the people? Have you experienced this quality of decision?

COVENANT RATIFICATION AND WITNESSES (Joshua 24:22-28).

When Joshua formalized the covenant with Israel, who and what did he designate as witnesses in the covenant-renewal ceremony? Joshua 24:22-28.

In the covenant-renewal ceremonies of this time it was common to designate as witnesses some enduring objects that will testify to succeeding generations about the covenant. (See Deuteronomy 32:1 where Moses considers the heavens and earth as the witnesses; in Joshua 8:30-35, and the covenant lawsuit of Micah 6, the witnesses are the mountains.) Here the witnesses are the people and the stone.

What was the purpose of the stone of witness? How important is it for us today to have “stones of witness” in our experience?

“This great stone would stand to testify to succeeding generations of the event which it was set up to commemorate, and would be a witness against the people, should they ever again degenerate into idolatry. . . . The great stone set up by Joshua was to stand as a constant reminder to Israel of the covenant which they had made with God, and a silent witness of their faithfulness or apostasy. . . . If it was necessary for God’s ancient people to often call to mind His dealings with them in mercy and judgment, in counsel and reproof, it is equally important that we contemplate the truths delivered to us in His word—truth which, if heeded, will lead us to humility and submission, and obedience to God.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 26, 1881.

Joshua “wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God” (verse 26, NKJV). Contemplate the significance of this act in the understanding of the way Scripture has come down to us.

“This is the second ‘signature’ among the sacred writers of the OT. The first is that of Moses, in Deut. 31:9. The next after Joshua’s is that of Samuel (1 Sam. 10:25). These men did not think of themselves as writers of distinct books, but as authorized to add their part to the book already written, to write what was assigned to them ‘in the book of the law of God.’ The unity of Holy Scripture is thus seen to have been an essential feature of the Bible from the very first.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 297.

FOUGHT THE FIGHT—FINISHED THE COURSE (Joshua 24:29-33).

What title is given to Joshua as the book and his life come to an end? How is this title different from the title given to Joshua earlier in Scripture? Joshua 24:29 (compare Joshua 1:1; Ex. 24:13; 33:11; Num. 11:28).

At the beginning of Joshua's career as leader of Israel, he is called "Moses' minister," and Moses is titled "servant of the Lord." Now at the end of his life, Joshua is called "servant of the Lord."

"Joshua's work for Israel was done. He 'had wholly followed the Lord'; and in the book of God he is written, 'The servant of Jehovah.'"
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 524.

What was the result of the covenant ceremony? Was the revival genuine? Joshua 24:29-31.

"The revival was genuine. It wrought a reformation among the people. They remained true to the covenant they had made."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1001.

The bones of Joseph (Joshua 24:32). Burying Joseph's bones vindicated his faith in God's promises. He was so certain that God would give his descendants the Promised Land that he made the sons of Israel promise that they would bring up his bones with them (Gen. 50:24, 25).

The epilogue to the book of Joshua, written some time after his death at the age of 110, gives a most fitting tribute to the character of this man of God (Joshua 24:31). "The noblest testimony to his character as a public leader is the history of the generation that had enjoyed his labors: 'Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua.'"
—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 524.

Joshua is an example for us in several ways: (1) his character exemplifies faithfulness, courage, strength, and unselfishness; (2) his mission teaches us that God calls us, as Christians, to possess an inheritance, to win others to Christ, to overcome sin; (3) his career shows us how to be faithful and true, not just in moments of crisis, but also when things are going well.

Joshua became all this through his dependence on God. Have you also experienced a covenant renewal with your Saviour? How do you perceive that this renewal will affect your relationship with Christ and with others?

FURTHER STUDY: From Joshua's words in Joshua 24:19, 20, we learn about righteousness by faith. Read Paul's words on this subject in Romans 3:21-6:22; 8:1-17. How would you explain righteousness by faith to a non-Christian?

Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 522-524.

"As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will, and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1070.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can the church have "covenant-renewal" ceremonies today?
2. If you die before the Lord comes or if you have to say farewell to your friends, for what would you like to be remembered?
3. Summarize the character qualities in the life of Joshua that you would like to have God help you emulate.
4. Complete the list, started at the beginning of the quarter, indicating the ways Joshua is a type of Christ, and how the experiences of Israel in the book of Joshua are a type of the Christian's spiritual warfare and inheritance in Him.

SUMMARY: Today, this very day, I choose to:

- renew my covenant with God,
- to serve the Lord without reservation,
- to "enter God's rest,"
- to experience the victorious Christian life,
- to possess my spiritual inheritance in Christ.

My signature of commitment

Date



Faithful Under Persecution

James H. Zachary

Hannah Ramatu stood in the shadows, a safe distance from the evangelist's tent. A good Muslim would not be seen here, but she wanted to hear the health lectures, and she enjoyed the music.

She stayed to hear the pastor's message and found she knew some of the Bible characters mentioned--Abraham and the prophet Jesus. One evening, as the pastor described the death of Jesus, the Holy Spirit convicted her heart. "Jesus died for me!" The thought overwhelmed her; she *had* to learn more about Jesus! Before the meetings ended, Hannah decided to follow Christ.

Hannah's father was outraged. How could his daughter commit this great sin by becoming a Christian? A struggle ensued. First he burned her Bible to bring Hannah to her senses. Then he had her hair cut off to remove the evil that "infected" her soul. But she remained faithful to her new friend, Jesus.

Then he sent Hannah to her Muslim uncle's home with instructions to confine her to his house. He hoped that, away from her Adventist friends, she would forget her new faith. However, another Adventist preacher was conducting evangelistic meetings near her uncle's home, and Hannah listened from her window! She thanked God for strengthening her this way.

When she returned home, more sure of her faith than ever, Hannah's father threatened to kill her. This was no idle threat. He was the village butcher! Hannah fled to the mission headquarters. Church leaders went to visit Hannah's father. On their way, villagers tried to stone their car.

When Hannah returned home, her father beat her with a horse whip. Her arms and back were covered with blood. Desperate, Hannah ran to the local police for protection. The police told Hannah's father, "Your daughter is an adult now, free to choose her own religion. You will be in trouble if you harm her."

Hannah is living at home, learning to become a seamstress. Her parents no longer force her to deny her faith. Hannah knows that there is no greater freedom than living in the presence of Jesus, who freed her from sin. Hannah is free indeed!



Hannah Ramatu witnesses for Christ in her homeland of Ghana. James H. Zachary is associate secretary of the Ministerial Association at the General Conference.

Lessons for Third Quarter, 1995

The third quarter Sabbath School lessons, entitled "Enlightened by the Spirit," focus on the work of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON 1: WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: John 14:15-26; 1 Cor. 12:11; Heb. 9:14; Deut. 6:4.

MEMORY TEXT: Acts 10:38.

KEY THOUGHT: The presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian believer is the presence of the Deity.

OUTLINE:

- The Holy Spirit Has Infinite Intellect (John 14:26).
- The Holy Spirit Feels, Wills, and Acts (1 Cor. 12:11).
- The Holy Spirit Has Divine Characteristics (Heb. 9:14).
- The Holy Spirit Represents the Father and the Son (John 14:15-18, 23).
- There Is Only One God (Deut. 6:4).

LESSON 2: EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT.

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: John 3:5, 36; 16:8-11; Rom. 7:1-8:10; 1 John 3:3-10; Micah 7:18.

MEMORY TEXT: John 16:8, 9.

KEY THOUGHT: The Holy Spirit convicts of sin because He wants sinners to believe in Christ.

OUTLINE:

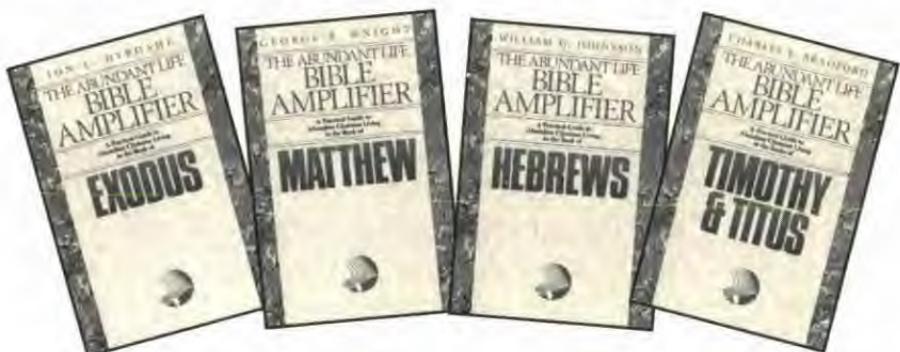
- The Convicting Work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11).
- Power Over the Demands of Fallen Nature (Rom. 7:1-8:10).
- Power Over Acts of Sin (1 John 3:3-10).
- God's Mercy for the Sinner (Micah 7:18).
- The Holy Spirit Qualifies Believers for Eternal Life (John 3:5, 36).

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Unions	Churches	Membership	Population
Moldova	79	6,901	4,394,100
Russian	196	32,063	149,283,000
Southern	67	4,920	69,500,000
Ukrainian	363	31,401	51,900,000
Belarus	18	2,177	10,322,980
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