

a lesson:

ON THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

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I. INTRODUCTION

The name Joshua means “JEHOVAH-Saviour.”¹ Under GOD’s Providence, and as the successor of Moses, the man Joshua led The ancient Israelites out of their years of wandering in The Sinai wilderness and into The Promised Land of Caanan. So JOSHUA 1:1 begins with The Almighty speaking directly to Joshua, “Moses’ minister,” and giving him his Divine commission.² Scofield calculates the years covered by The Book of JOSHUA as covering from 1451 BC to 1427 BC, “a period of 26 years.”³ The Book of JOSHUA is the beginning of the second phase of The LORD’s deliverance of ancient Israel. Dillard & Longman, noting JOSHUA begins with the death of Moses and ends with the death of Joshua, is “the literary bridge between Israel’s wilderness experience and the narrative of struggles in the early years of occupying The Land (JUDGES).”⁴

We may see JOSHUA as being divided into three general sections: 1) In chapters 1-12, we have “narrative accounts of Israel’s military conquest of The land... [which reveal miraculously] GOD’s power exercised in behalf of the nation [of Israel].”⁵ GOD fulfills His covenantal promise to bring Israel into possession of The Promised land! 2) In chapters 13-22, we have “the new reality of an Israel in its inheritance [in The Land]... portrayed through lists of the tribes and clans and their territorial allotments.”⁶ 3) In chapters 13-22 we end with “the renewal of Israel’s ancient Covenant with GOD, Joshua’s dismissing the people to enjoy their inheritance [now well established in The Promised Land], and the death of Joshua.”⁷

II. DIVINE REDEMPTION & DELIVERANCE IS TWOFOLD

We often forget the complete picture of Divine deliverance of the ancient Israelites in their days of trouble. The first half of that deliverance for the ancient Israelites was GOD’s rescuing them from the darkness, slavery, suffering and death in Egypt. The other half of that deliverance for the ancient Israelites was, after their purging and refining in forty years of wandering in The Sinai wilderness, taking possession of

¹ 1, KJV Scofield, note 1, page 259.

² 2, KJV, JOSHUA 1:1.

³ 1, KJV Scofield, introduction to JOSHUA, paragraph 5, page 259.

⁴ 3, Introduction To The Old Testament, JOSHUA, Literary Analysis, page 112.

⁵ 3, Ibid, paragraph 1, page 113.

⁶ 3, Ibid, paragraph 2, page 113.

⁷ 3, Ibid, paragraph 3, page 113.

The Promised Land! For there they dwelt with GOD in the light, freedom, joy and life of their promised earthly inheritance.

Thus Dillard and Longman thus state, “The great work of redemption from bondage in Egypt cannot be separated from the inheritance of the [Promised] land that GOD had promised. The Book of JOSHUA takes us into that inheritance: it describes the conquest and distribution of the land” as the second half of JEHOVAH’s deliverance of the ancient Israelites.”⁸ Thus we see in JOSHUA that, when GOD delivers men in His love and grace, He not only rescues them from suffering and death, but also then delivers them into joyous victory and life!

CHRIST JESUS does not merely redeem unto salvation our lives from sorrow and our souls from hell. He also delivers us in this life into joyous victory and our eternal souls to dwell with Him forever in Heaven. Even so, GOD The Father did not merely redeem ancient Israel from bondage and death in their slavery in Egypt, then to merely roam The Wilderness of Sinai for 40 years. He also delivered them into joyous victory in dwelling in The Land which He had promised to their forefathers, made Israel His Covenant nation to be a light unto the world and a glory to His Name, and gave His very Presence to dwell among them!

Scofield offers that “in a spiritual sense the Book of JOSHUA is the EPHESIANS of The Old Testament – a place of conflict, and therefore not a type of Heaven, but also a place of victory and blessing through Divine power.”⁹ EPHESIANS 1:3 states, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in CHRIST.”¹⁰ We may compare this with JOSHUA 21:43-45, which declares, “And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And The LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; The LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which The LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”¹¹

⁸ 3, Introduction To The Old Testament, JOSHUA, page 107.

⁹ 1, KJV Scofield, introduction to JOSHUA, paragraph 2, page 259.

¹⁰ 2, KJV, EPHESIANS 1:3.

¹¹ 2, KJV, JOSHUA 21:43-45.

III. DIVINE BLESSING & DELIVERANCE DEMANDS COVENANTAL OBEDIENCE

Another key theme of JOSHUA is that continual Covenantal obedience to The Almighty was a precondition for the Israelites to not only take possession of The Promised Land, but also to continue to possess it. JOSHUA is not only a fulfillment of this promise found throughout The Torah. It is also a reaffirmation of that Covenant relationship between JEHOVAH and the Israelites. Therefore JOSHUA opens in Chapter 1 with The LORD speaking to Joshua upon Moses' death. JOSHUA 2:1 records GOD's words to Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel."¹² GOD promises to be with Joshua and the people, vowing that He will give them victory over their enemies and peace in The Land.

Just as under The New Covenant, we see in The Old Covenant that men may not possess the deliverance, peace and life of GOD without covenantal obedience. Thus JOSHUA begins with the call to be obedient to The LORD, that the people might receive Divine blessing and deliverance. So we note next that GOD warns in JOSHUA 1:7-8, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all The Law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of The Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."¹³

In the same way, JOSHUA 24 ends with a call to the ancient Israelites to keep The Covenant with GOD and to be obedient to Him. Therefore as Joshua's earthly days come to a close, he recounts the myriads of miraculous interventions for Israel in both delivering them from the darkness and death in Egypt and into light and life in The Promised Land. But next note his warning to the people that their continued blessing and life – their very possession of The Promised Land – is still contingent upon their serving and worshipping only GOD. Thus JOSHUA 24:14-15 warns, "Now therefore fear The LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers

¹² 2, KJV, JOSHUA 1:2.

¹³ 2, KJV, JOSHUA 1:7-8.

served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye The LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve The LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve The LORD!”¹⁴

Even so, Joshua the “JEHOVAH-Saviour” of ancient Israel echoes the very command of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.¹⁵ For in JOHN 14:15, we read The Redeemer of, not just Israel, but of all mankind, “¹⁵ If ye love Me, keep My Commandments.”¹⁶ And just as in The Old Testament, even more so in The New Testament, for we read what CHRIST declares in JOHN 15:10, “If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My love.”¹⁷ Shall we desire to dwell in The earthly Promised Land of this life with The LORD by our side? And shall we desire to dwell in The heavenly Promised Land in the next life before The LORD face to face? If so, let us keep His Commandments! AMEN.

¹⁴ 2, Bible Works, KJV, JOSHUA 24:14-15.

¹⁵ 1, KJV Scofield, note 1, page 259.

¹⁶ 2, KJV, JOHN 14:15.

¹⁷ 2, KJV, JOHN 15:10.

IV. REFERENCES

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3. "An Introduction To the Old Testament." Raymond B. Dillard & Tremper Longman III. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1994.