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Moses And Joshua

"Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit".

Numbers 27:18 NKJV

Joshua And Jesus

From his youth, Joshua was the servant of Moses, the great man of God who led Israel out of Egypt and gave the people God's laws (see Ex. 24:13, 33:11; Num. 11:28; Deut. 1:38). His life is a good example of the spiritual growth that is experienced by every young believer who walks with the Lord. Something similar can be seen in the life of Elisha who, while walking with Elijah, was prepared for the task that God had prepared for him (1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 2).

Joshua is also a type of the Lord Jesus, as is evident from their similar names. Jesus is the Greek form of Yeshua, or Joshua. These names express God's salvation. Joshua means "Yahweh saves," or "Yahweh is salvation." In the New Testament the angel announcing the birth of Jesus linked His name with the salvation from sin: "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

We know that Joshua completed the work of his predecessor. While Moses delivered God's people from the land of slavery, Joshua led them into the Promised Land. The salvation of the Lord could be seen in the exodus out of Egypt (Ex. 14:13; 15:2), but its complete manifestation was only after the conquest of Canaan. This was the great goal of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Thus Moses and Joshua are a double type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who not only delivers His people from their slavery to sin and Satan, but also brings them into a heavenly land. God has made

us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ, and we have been blessed there with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3; 2:6).

Joshua is a special type of Christ who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, led His people into this heavenly land, our Canaan of rest (consider Heb. 3-4). He points to Christ as the One who, in and by the Spirit, is active now on behalf of His people. But there is also the individual application to ourselves as believers, who ought to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). We should follow Joshua’s example as a Spirit-filled man.

Joshua As A Warrior

Let us examine the course of Joshua’s life in order to see how he was prepared, step-by-step, for his great task, and also reflect on the spiritual lessons for ourselves. The first time his name is mentioned is in Exodus 17:8-16, in the battle against Amalek. Apparently Joshua was a good soldier, for he was charged with waging the battle, while Moses made intercession on the top of the hill.

The Israelites had been delivered from Egypt, but this did not mean there were no conflicts left for them in their journey through the wilderness. Similarly, we have been delivered from the power of the prince of this world (Eph. 2:2), but this does not mean that we are left without struggles in our pathway here on earth. The wilderness symbolizes this earthly scene with all its difficulties and worries, pains and struggles. The Lord has left us here to fight for the glory of His name, and He is in the glory to make intercession for us. We have to wage the good warfare and endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:3).

In this respect, Joshua is an important example for us. While Moses stood on the top of the mountain in order to intercede for his soldiers, Joshua was battling down in the valley. Due to Moses’ intercession, Joshua gained the victory over Amalek. In the same way, our Lord in heaven supports us in our battles here on earth, in our conflicts with Satan and the flesh. Through Him we are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:34-37). Amalek was a powerful and cunning adversary who attacked the rear ranks of Israel (Num. 24:20; Deut. 25:17-19; 1 Sam. 15:2). This enemy is a type of Satan as the one who knows our weak spots and tries to prevent us from serving the Lord as a redeemed people. We can gain the victory over this mighty adversary only when we receive strength from above.

On The Mountain Of The Lord

The battle with Amalek was only the beginning of Joshua's career. Later in the book of Exodus we meet him as Moses' servant and companion. In these capacities Joshua had tremendous experiences since he was the only one who was allowed to climb the mountain of God with Moses, while the elders of Israel had to wait for their return (Ex. 24:13-14). In Exodus 32:15-17 we see them coming down from the mountain together, and Exodus 33:11 states that Joshua did not depart from the tent of meeting that Moses had pitched outside the camp.

When we apply these things to ourselves we see that we can have various useful experiences in our walk with the Lord. He not only makes us more than conquerors in our conflicts here on earth, but He also gives us a deeper understanding of God's will and His ways with His people. We should be with Him on the top of the mountain, so to speak, and learn about God's thoughts – most of all those concerning His dwelling place in the midst of His people (consider Ex. 25-31).

He teaches us to discern the true condition of the people of God, and in spite of all our failures He still grants us a place where we can gather together in accordance with His will. The Israelites forgot about Moses and turned their backs on God and on the Apostle of their confession (Heb. 3:1). Similarly, professing Christendom does not take into account the rights of the exalted Christ, the Lord of glory, and has fallen into idolatry (Rev. 2:14,20). Separation from this evil is a necessity; we should go forth to Christ outside the camp (Ex. 33:7; Heb. 13:13). Let us, like Joshua, seek the Lord and not depart from His presence. Then, He will teach us and fit us for the task He wants us to accomplish.

The Conquest Of Canaan

Step by step Joshua was prepared for the great task of leading the people into the Promised Land and being their commander-in-chief in the ensuing conflict. He was a warrior, but he had to learn that there were enemies, not only in the wilderness, but also in the Promised Land. His preparation for the conflict in Canaan started in the book of Numbers. He was one of the spies sent to spy out the land. Similarly, we have to learn that there is not only conflict in our pilgrim lives, pictured by the wilderness, but also that we are engaged in a warfare in the heavenly places, as in the land during Joshua's time.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. These evil powers can only be defeated as we take the

whole armor of God and use divine weapons (Eph. 6:10-20). Our blessings are of a spiritual nature, in the heavenly places, and they can only be known and enjoyed through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14). It is the Spirit's work to make them known to us, connected as they all are with Christ's present position at the right hand of God. Joshua presents a picture of a Spirit-filled believer whose attention is focused on the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1).

It is not until Numbers 27:18, when the entry into Canaan is before him, that Joshua is described as a man filled with God's Spirit. In the book of Numbers we find several experiences that mark Joshua's spiritual growth toward this point. In chapter 11, for example, we see how he was zealous for Moses' sake in an unspiritual way and therefore needed correction (vv. 24-30). We can compare this with the behavior of some believers in Corinth who wanted to make Christ the leader of a certain party (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

In Numbers 13, in view of the spying out of Canaan, Joshua's name was changed: "And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua" (v. 16). The name Hoshea points in a general sense to the help and salvation of the Lord, whereas the name Joshua is more clearly linked with the name of Yahweh Himself. Salvation and redemption can be found only in Yahweh, the great I AM. So by this change of name Joshua's attention was focused on the Lord, who would show Israel His full salvation by their entry into Canaan. The same applies to believers in the present New Testament dispensation – "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Our attention should not be focused on ourselves but rather on the great salvation that God has accomplished in Christ.

Perhaps we can compare the change of Joshua's name with the transition from Romans 7 to Romans 8, the central issue of which is no longer our own selves, but Christ and the Spirit. Romans 8 shows us a Spirit-filled believer. A Christian is not only born of the Spirit; he is also sealed and anointed with the Spirit. For this reason he should be continually filled with the Spirit and be guided by Him in order to be able to fulfill his God-given task. Joshua is a good example of this.

As we have seen, the change of Joshua's name was related to his spying out the land of Canaan. In doing so he saw the rich blessings connected with it – the fruit of the land. It was a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Full of enthusiasm, he returned with Caleb and the other ten spies. But when they showed the Israelites the fruit they had collected, the ten spoke about the great difficulties that the conquest of Canaan would involve in their eyes. Discouraged by these words, the people flatly refused to take possession of it. The only ones who spoke

the language of faith were Joshua and Caleb. They had a different spirit compared with the Israelites who did not believe God's promises and despised the pleasant land (Num. 14:24). For this reason these two men were spared, while all the others perished in the wilderness. Hebrews 3:19 mentions that the people could not enter in because of unbelief.

Similarly, we are to honor our God by faith, believing the promises of His Word and trusting in His power in our spiritual battles. The spiritual blessings in heavenly places that we possess in Christ can only be enjoyed by faith. And it is in the strength of our faith and by the guidance of the Spirit that we can take possession of our portion in the land. This is shown in the typical teaching of the book of Joshua. Every place that we tread upon is ours (Josh. 1:3). This involves conflict, but time and again God grants the victory so that all the land will be conquered and become our portion (11:16-23).

The story of the spies shows us that the fruit of the Promised Land can even be enjoyed in the wilderness (Num. 13:26-27). However, God's intention for us is that we should enjoy the blessings of the land continuously because we have taken possession of it and dwell in it. We should move beyond simply enjoying a foretaste of the land! Every believer who is filled with God's Spirit is capable of this and can enjoy the salvation of the Lord to its full extent. And when, like Joshua, we are "full of the spirit of wisdom" (Deut. 34:9), God will surely use us to lead others into the rich inheritance that has been prepared for God's children.
