

Lesson for November 23, 2008

Old Testament Survey

The Book of Joshua

The book of Joshua covers a period of approximately twenty-six years from the time Israel entered the Promised Land until the death of Joshua. Chapters 1 –12 of Joshua cover the period of Israel's conquest of the land. Chapters 13-21 of Joshua cover the allotment of land to the twelve tribes of Israel. Chapter 22 records the discord among the tribes. Chapters 22 – 24 records the farewell message of Joshua and his death.

In Joshua 2:1-24 we have a story of the spies who were sent into the land (specifically the city of Jericho) to investigate and report what they found. We also have the story of Rahab who found favor in the sight of God because of her faithfulness. She is listed in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 with such men as Abraham, as a person of great faith. James 2:24 refers to being justified before people, not God. We know how we are justified before God and that is through faith alone in Christ alone. So this is an obvious reference to being justified before men.

The second illustration that James uses is that of Rahab. Though not as dramatic as Abraham's story, it is nevertheless an illustration of how divine production demonstrates your inner faith. This story, once again, is about the spies sent to check out Jericho before God gave it into the hands of the Israelites. The king of Jericho attempted to capture the spies, but Rahab hid them and helped them escape. Therefore, Rahab and her household were spared when the city of Jericho was destroyed. Rahab was showing her faith by her outward deeds.

This entire concept is what we have studied as the Faith-Rest Technique. It is taking our faith and mixing it with the promises of God. This is what Abraham and Rahab did. They first believed God and then acted upon their faith. This was the spiritual life of the believer in the Old Testament. Only on occasion, and for special purposes, was the Holy Spirit given to people in the Old Testament. They did not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to empower them to live their spiritual lives as we do.

The rather unique thing about Rahab is that she was a prostitute and yet God used her to deliver the spies who Joshua had sent into the land. We are assured by the verse in James that she was a believer. Whether she remained a prostitute is doubtful, but unknown. The lesson to be learned from this story is that God uses faithful people, not "perfect" people.

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Remember, God had instructed Joshua to form an army of young men and be prepared to fight, if necessary, once they entered the land. After crossing the Jordan River, which they did on dry land as God performed another miracle of parting the water for them, their enemies were very fearful of them. This, however, did not stop Israel's enemies from wanting to defeat them. We must also remember that the nations within the land of Canaan were corrupt societies who had rejected the true God and were worshipping pagan gods. God did not want the nation of Israel to become infiltrated with these pagans and their anti-God ideas.

With this in mind, we read about the fall of Jericho to the Israelites when they followed God's instructions. Joshua 6:1-27 tells the story of how God instructed them to surround the city everyday for six days and seven times on the seventh day. The priests were to carry the Ark of the Covenant and seven trumpets. On the seventh pass around the city on the seventh day they were to blow the horns and all the people were to shout. When the children of Israel did as God instructed, the walls of the city came crashing down and they were able to enter the city and defeat the enemy.

The remaining chapters of Joshua describe various battles as the Israelites conquered their enemies throughout the land of Canaan. There are also several chapters devoted to the parceling of the land to the various tribes. The priestly tribe of Levi did not receive an allotment of land, but each tribe was to designate a portion of their land for the priests to raise their livestock.

Joshua 24:31 tells us that the nation of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who were appointed overseers of each tribe. The reason they served the Lord is they had known of all the miraculous works that God had done on behalf of the nation.

One of the lessons that we are taught in the book of Joshua is that God fights our battles for us. We see this in Joshua 5:13-15 where the Lord Jesus Christ appears to Joshua, which we call in theology a theophany. A theophany is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. We see a lot of these in the Old Testament. In this appearance Christ appears as the Captain of the Host meaning He will lead the army into battle. Another story in the book of Exodus reinforces the fact that God always fights on our behalf, as one of His names indicates.

Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord our Banner
(Exodus 17:8-16)

- I. The Attack of Amalek - v.8
 - A. Grandson of Esau
 - B. Type of the sin nature
 - C. Israel is a type of the spiritual nature

- II. The Army Assembled - v.9
 - A. Joshua appointed general
 - B. The rod of God as the standard

- III. The Battle - v.10-13
 - A. Joshua takes the battle to Amalek
 - B. The battle is the Lord's
 - C. Moses as the standard-bearer, a type of Christ
 - D. Joshua and Israel win the battle

- IV. The War Memorial - v.14-16
 - A. The memorial recorded
 - B. The altar to the Lord
 - C. The promise

- V. Jesus Christ, the Christian's Standard-bearer - Philippians 3:7-21
 - A. Stage 1 – Salvation - v.7-9
 - B. Stage 2 – Childhood - v.10-11
 - C. Stage 3 – Adolescence - v. 12-14
 - D. Stage 4 – Maturity - v.15-19
 - E. Stage 5 - Ultimate Sanctification - v.20-21

Translation of Philippians 3:7-21

7. But whatsoever things were profitable to me, those things I judged to be forfeited for the sake of Christ. 8. More than that, I judge all things to be forfeited in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and judge them all to be rubbish in order that I may gain Christ. 9. And be found in Him not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. 10. That I may know and understand Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being a partaker of His death by faith. 11. In order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12. Not that I have already attained to the resurrection from the dead nor have I reached a state of perfection (ultimate sanctification), but I press on in order that I may possess as mine, that which I am possessed of by Christ Jesus. 13. Brethren, I do not judge myself to have already possessed it but this one thing I do, forgetting the past I reach forward to the things in the future. 14. I pursue, as if I was in a foot race, the goal of the reward, which is in my heavenly destination from God in Christ Jesus. 15. Let us, therefore, as many as are spiritually mature, think in reference to this attitude of reaching this goal and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal it to you. 16. However, let us keep pursuing that standard to which we have attained. 17. Brethren, join in following my example and observe those who pursue the same pattern that you have seen in us. 18. (For many pursue a course, of whom I have told you and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the Cross of Christ. 19. Whose end is a loss of spiritual well-being, whose god is their emotions and whose self-praise is what they should be ashamed of, who set their minds on earthly things). 20. For our citizenship is in Heaven from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21. Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory by the exertion of the power that He has, even to subject all things to Himself.