

Joshua 1 - 13

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the spiritual journey of crossing the Jordan, emphasizing obedience, faith, and the implications of spiritual death in the life of a believer.

Scripture: Joshua 1:3-9, Joshua 2:8-11, Joshua 3:4, Joshua 5:9-12, Joshua 6:20, Joshua 7:1-12, Joshua 8:30-35, Joshua 9:14, Joshua 10:7, Joshua 12:1-6

Topics: "Faith and Obedience", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

John Nelson Darby explores the themes of faith, obedience, and the spiritual journey of the Israelites as they prepare to cross the Jordan into Canaan. He emphasizes the importance of God's promises and the necessity of obedience to experience their fulfillment, highlighting the connection between spiritual death and entering into the heavenly places. The sermon illustrates how the Israelites' victories and struggles reflect the Christian walk, where faith must precede action, and the need for holiness is paramount. Darby also draws parallels between the experiences of Joshua and the church today, stressing the importance of reliance on God amidst challenges. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding of spiritual warfare and the blessings that come from obedience to God's commands.

Transcript

Joshua 1. The first thought is to cross the Jordan.

Verses 3, 4. The principles come in afterwards, namely, all the extent of the promises of God; but realization by the fact that one takes possession of them. There is a connection between the moral state of man down here, and the glory of man above.

Verses 7, 8. Herein is the strength - all my power is with thee, Joshua; but there must be obedience.

Verse 9. Again, another principle; the starting-point is that we have the authority of God to walk with Christ. Then there is energy, It is the certitude of God's will.

The "single eye" does not mean only that we have an eye, but that there is nothing in the eye to prevent our seeing.

Verses 12-18. If the testimony is sufficiently powerful to go forward, all is in movement among God's people. Those who seek their rest without the conflict in the heavenly places must equally go to the war.

Joshua 2:8-11. One sees here that dread seizes upon God's enemies, as soon as there is a testimony of the Spirit.

Verse 11. One character of Rahab's faith is, that she identified herself with the people of God before their victories, The faith of Abraham was in God absolutely, whilst the faith of Rahab identified itself with the people of God.

Joshua 3. The great principles having been laid down, it is now a question of crossing the Jordan.

The Red Sea is death in redemption (Rom. 5; Ex. 14, 15); Jordan is the application of death to the individual - spiritual death with Christ. Redemption brings into the wilderness; but when one is dead and risen (in spirit), one enters into the heavenly places (in spirit). For us, death is life. Jordan is not the sign of natural death, because afterwards they meet with fighting. It is death practically, death in us spiritually.

Paul (2 Cor. 4) goes farther. He was dying for others. But, indeed, had he not been dead as to himself, he could not have suffered thus for others.

In the Epistle to the Galatians there are three things - death to the law; death to the flesh; death to the world.

Verse 4. It is a new way. One may have religion; but when it is a question of dying, it is quite a new thing. In the flesh, a man may try to do works; but in the presence of God the flesh is destroyed. If we have passed through death, the power of Satan is annulled.

306 Verse 13. Although it is only with respect to Canaan, God takes possession as "Lord of all the earth." It is His title for the millennium.

Joshua 4. Then Joshua calls to mind the word of the Lord, and takes out of the midst of Jordan twelve stones, to put them in the place where they were to pass the night.

Verse 9. They also set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan. There is this double effect, that having passed through death, we find in heaven the trophies of death, which is overcome, and the Lamb who was slain. Passing through death oneself, one values the death of Jesus. But one must be spiritual and heavenly for that.

To sum up, then, we have - the memorial, the trophy of Jordan, and the Jordan. Having passed over, they set up the camp in Gilgal.

Joshua 5. But here we have all the Canaanites afraid. In the resurrection of Jesus, Satan was shaken to the very foundations of his empire. Then, in Christ risen, we find ourselves in Gilgal.

Verses 2-8. There is first of all this - that the true circumcision does not take place until one is in the heavenly places. This we see every day. It is the application of the heavenly things to the flesh.

Verse 9. "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt." If I have got hold of the thought of the church, and I see it worldly, it is indeed a reproach.

Verse 10. "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal." One must be in heaven in order to endure the circumcision it is not being circumcised in order to get to heaven.

Verses 11, 12. They enjoy all their privileges before giving one single battle. The passover they celebrate in the presence of their enemies. As to the sense of it, it is somewhat more than the passover in Egypt. They have now the old corn of the land. Now we have the heavenly Christ; for as to the manna, it is Christ in the wilderness. Here it is the old corn of the land - the enjoyment of Christ in heaven; then the manna ceased. As walking through the world, we have Christ to sustain us in our weakness day by day (the manna). We also have Christ for our joy and the enjoyment of the heavenly things.

307 Verses 13-15. Having given all that, now God says, You must fight.

Verse 13. In the affairs of this life I can say of a man, even of a Christian, How much I like that man's character! but when it is a question of heaven and of warfare, I say,

"Art thou for us or for our adversaries?"

Verse 15. Again there is this warning: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot." I bear all the charges of thy battles; but as for thee thy business is to walk in holiness. The Lord insists upon the holiness of the camp. God in His church will have holiness that there may be blessing, as He would have it for redemption (Exod. 3). "Loose thy shoes." The shoe may have contracted defilement, but it is no longer on the foot.

Joshua 6. Faith and obedience; but in the eyes of men, it is in a way which appears ridiculous that Jericho falls. The curse is pronounced on the enemies of God.

Joshua 7. Achan, by the accursed thing, defiles the whole camp. The effect of the blessing becomes for Joshua the occasion of leaving the place of dependence. He forgot to loose his shoe before the captain of the host of the Lord. He gives himself up to a vain confidence. If, in the conflict in the heavenly places, one is not with God, one only falls in a more terrible manner. It was more serious to be beaten in Canaan than in the wilderness.

Verse 2. It was prudent according to man to send spies, but it is not so very good thus to go out for exploring the land.

Verses 6-9. The heart of Joshua melts also like that of the people.

Verses 10-12. It is not a question of talking about the Canaanites: Israel had sinned.

It is necessary to be decided, when it is a question of purifying oneself from the accursed thing.

Joshua 8. What we see here is that it is quite an affair to take this small city. In this manner of proceeding there was a double motive: first, to put an end to the discouragement; secondly, to make all the people feel what the question was.

Verse 18. Nevertheless, when the accursed thing is removed; and though the whole army is there, Joshua (the Spirit of Christ) stretches out his spear, and the ambush (which could not see it) enters into the city. It was the proof that God was still with them that they had more trouble; but at the same time the principle was recovered - the presence of God. It is beautiful to see how the faults committed at Ai and at Jericho were entirely repaired by the goodness of the Lord.

308 Verses 30-35. Although the land is not altogether conquered, Joshua treats it as being the land of Jehovah. Read Deuteronomy 21-23. Having once entered into the real position, we may consider everything as ours. Joshua shews this in two ways. First, he commands the dead body to be taken down

(v. 29): otherwise the land would have been defiled, and that could not suit the inheritance of Jehovah. Second, having taken possession, Joshua builds an altar, and owns all the consequences in blessings and curses. It was placing the enjoyment of the law under the responsibility of the people to obey Jehovah.

The altar was on mount Ebal. The meaning of it is in truth this: thou shalt worship if thou canst, for the sign of relationship was connected with responsibility.

In Deuteronomy one sees the thing in its details.

Deuteronomy 26. The people acknowledge that the land was given in grace. They offer to Jehovah. It was the proper state of a Jew.

Deuteronomy 27 is another principle - the complete curse resulting from their having taken this inheritance on the ground of the law. From Gerizim there is no blessing pronounced.

Deuteronomy 28 is the blessings and the curses with respect to God's government. We have the things as facts in the history of Israel.

Deuteronomy 29 is only saying that, according to these words, God had made a covenant with Israel.

Deuteronomy 30. The consequence is indeed set forth; but then God adds, If thou shalt obey and return unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, after all these things have come upon thee, I will bring thee back. This is the secret thing (Deut. 29:29). When they were driven out of Canaan they could not attain to righteousness by the law,

Joshua 9. The effect of this victory and of these blessings is to stir up the rest of the Canaanites against them. Here they are now leagued together. Here again there is a snare: namely, that when one has resisted a confederacy, one is tempted also to form a confederacy. This is in one sense the place which the Gibeonites took here. As Joshua had been deceived by the sin, he is so now by their artifice, and in a rather gross way. It was a question of being an Israelite and nothing but an Israelite. The Gibeonites only bring fresh attacks upon Joshua and upon Israel.

309 The camp was always in Gilgal.

Verse 14. The men of Israel judged, alas! by their provisions: "The men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." (See v. 6, 7).

Joshua 10. Joshua goes up from Gilgal and comes back to Gilgal. This is an important thing to notice.

Joshua 11. Here we have another principle. Hazor was the capital; and it is the only city that Joshua burns. That which is the seat of strength and energy according to the world cannot become the centre of power according to the Spirit.

Joshua 12. In one sense Joshua had conquered all: but when it is a question of taking possession, there is scarcely anything. In the time of Paul the church had before its eyes all the promises; then, when Paul is dead, one again sees Canaanites appearing.

Joshua 13. Finally, Joshua only put two tribes and a half in possession. Something similar has taken place with respect to the church.

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