

Readings on Joshua 1

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the transition from the wilderness experience to the victorious life in Canaan, emphasizing obedience and faithfulness in spiritual warfare.

Scripture: Joshua 1:6

Topics: "Victory in Christ", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the distinction between the wilderness experience in Numbers and the victorious life in Joshua, illustrating that while Numbers tests the state of believers in the wilderness, Joshua represents divine power overcoming the enemies of God. He explains that entering Canaan signifies a transition to a life of victory and spiritual warfare, where faithfulness and obedience are crucial for success. The sermon highlights that God's purpose was always to bring His people into Canaan, and that the wilderness was not part of His ultimate plan. Darby encourages believers to recognize their identity as part of God's host, empowered to fight spiritual battles, and to understand the importance of being spiritually alive and obedient to God's commands.

Transcript

There is a difference between Numbers and Joshua. Numbers is, in its principle, the testing of man down here in the wilderness; we are viewed typically as redeemed Christians, but still in the wilderness, and tested. Joshua is, in figure, divine energy getting rid of Satan; while at the same time everything depended upon the state in which Israel was. It is not, in itself, the testing of man's state, though that did get tested, too. If they were not in a faithful state they did not obtain the victory.

But the point in Joshua was not their testing; that was the business of the desert. In Joshua, having passed over Jordan, Israel is the Lord's host connected with Canaan, i.e., with the heavenly places.

To shew the distinction, look at Deuteronomy 8 for the character of the wilderness: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee" (vv. 1-5). And again, "Who led thee through

that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end" (vv. 15, 16). All that was a process going on on God's part with the people, but in Joshua it was a conflict engaged with the enemies of God, only, of course, we must remember that, collaterally, it did try the people also.

401 Ques. Would you say that the wilderness was the special test of having life, or not?

No, not that; but it tested the state of those who had life.

Ques. Whether there was life or not?

Well, if there was not life, they would tumble down.

Ques. But I mean with reference to their carcasses falling in the wilderness. Any person who makes a profession and has not life would fall there?

That would be tested, of course, but that is not all that is tested. When we have life, the whole state of the soul is tested; whereas, in Joshua, it is neither the one nor the other, but it is fighting the Lord's battles.

Observe, too, that this first chapter is a preface to the book proper.

Ques. But the people get into trouble in the land?

Just so; if I am not in a spiritual state, I can neither work well nor fight well.

Ques. I am not clear; would you say that the wilderness is the test whether we have life, or not?

No, though that might come out there.

Notice that the wilderness was no part of God's purpose at all; Canaan was, and the very object of God's purpose was to bring the people into the land of Canaan. Quite true, enemies were there, and that so far tested the faithfulness of the people when they reached the land; but in the wilderness God tested the faithfulness of the people; while in Canaan they are God's host, they are looked at as dead and risen again and in the heavenly places. In Colossians, we are not yet out of the wilderness; in Ephesians, we are in Canaan. But it is a great thing to see that the wilderness forms no part of God's purpose at all. Of course, God knew what He was going to do, but in the wilderness we have the ways of God, not His purpose. His purpose was first of all redemption, but this redemption was complete when they had passed the Red Sea. The whole thing was then settled: "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed."

There was also the judgment of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. The Lord could thus take the poor thief straight to Paradise without any wilderness at all. In Colossians 1 it is, "Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." But then, in the wilderness, redeemed, there is a great deal to correct and learn, even if there is life. We are brought there, and we depend there upon God for manna, and for water, and for everything, and our hearts go through all these experiences notwithstanding we are already redeemed.

402 Look at chapters 3, 6 and 15 of Exodus, and you will see that there is no wilderness at all in God's purpose." The LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites."

That was God's purpose, that was what He had come down for; there is here no hint of the wilderness. It is the same in chapter 6, "I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for an heritage; I am the LORD" (vv. 6-8). That is out of Egypt into the land of Canaan, and no thought of the wilderness. That was God's purpose, and He tells them He is going to do as He had said.

In chapter 15 faith takes up all this, like a soul often does now when redeemed and full of joy, but not knowing what lies before it; "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.* Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed," and so on. There is no wilderness at all.

{*NOTE. This should read, Philistia. See New Translation in loco.}

The Lord shews us the completeness of redemption in taking the thief beside Him on the cross and carrying Him straight to Paradise, fit to be Christ's companion; for that, the work was all complete in him as well as for him. And he owns Christ when the disciples ran away.

403 Ques. If the Red Sea be redemption complete, what is there further at Jordan?

There is a difference, but the Red Sea and Jordan coalesce; the first is the passage out, the second is the passage in.

Ques. In Hebrews 11 there is no wilderness?

I beg your pardon, we have nothing else in Hebrews.

Ques. In chapter 11?

Oh yes; it is the life of faith there, and so the narrative cannot notice the wilderness.

Ques. Could a soul now be sheltered by the blood without having passed the Red Sea?

Yes, but it will not know its deliverance. You are taking us back into Egypt; but in Egypt the blood is as upon the mercy-seat.

In contrast, the character of the book of Joshua is that they are typically dead and risen with Christ and are led into Canaan. The Red Sea, instead of shutting them in, delivered them; but the Jordan overflowed all its banks, and yet let them in.

Ques. Then does Joshua describe Colossians, i.e., as dead and risen with Christ?

Yes, but there is much more in Joshua, for there is combat with spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places, and that is Ephesians.

Ques. "Moses my servant is dead," what is that?

In Joshua, they start from that point; all that which connected itself with the flesh was done with, though it might still be detected; the wilderness, and Moses, and all that was done with.

Ques. Does that include the law also?

Yes; dead to it, mind that.

Ques. Then, Moses being dead, Colossians takes up the people entering the land?

Only we do not find the conflict there, that is in Ephesians. The difference is that, as a figure, Joshua is Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost, carrying on the warfare for God; it is for us, no doubt, but still for God, as the Lord's host. Joshua is specifically that, always Christ in the power of the Spirit, but in Colossians, save "love in the Spirit," we never get the Spirit at all. Colossians gives us life in itself; it is spiritual life, divine life. And only that once do we find the word "Spirit" used in the epistle.

404 Ques. The Spirit would be power in anticipation?

Yes, that is what it is. They might have power in the wilderness, but here it is the positive warfare that took possession of the place. And they were acting for God; no doubt for themselves also, but still it was for God. They sat down and did eat of the old corn of the land, and there was no more manna. It was no longer typically Christ suited to what we are down here; the manna was that, and the water was that, but here, in Joshua, it is God's power in us, Christ's power with us fighting the Lord's battles. In Colossians, we are risen but not sitting in the heavenly places; it is a risen man in the wilderness. In Romans, it is a man alive down here with the life of Christ.

Ques. In this chapter they are on the wilderness side of the Jordan?

Ques. But Moses is dead, and Joshua takes it up?

It is only preface here, and we have the Lord telling him the way he will go when he crosses Jordan. But in Colossians we are not viewed as across Jordan, nor yet as settled in the land - that would be Ephesians. Colossians is peculiar in that way, it is a risen man in this world.

Ques. But what about the manna?

There is no more manna. If I am across Jordan, I do not want to be so fed. In this world I do; say, in business, I have to be obliging and kind, and I want Christ as grace suited to this world. But if I am risen with Christ, I do not belong to this world at all, though I may be in it. So in Romans, it is a Christian dead to the law, but living in this world; in Ephesians, he sits in the heavenly places, not in this world at all as to his standing and spirit; but in Colossians, he is risen though not yet gone to heaven. So it says, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." What a man's mind is set on, that he is whatever he may be.

In Joshua 5 we have three characters of food, namely, the passover, the manna, and the old corn.

Ques. Do we not now feed on these three characters of food in John 6?

That does not take us up to heaven though. We do not find the old corn of the land in John's gospel, but we have Christ come down from heaven. It is incarnation, and flesh and blood, and death.

405 Ques. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Is not that heavenly?

No, that is only going up.

The character of John's gospel all through is the revelation of the Father down here, not the taking of us up there. There is not the forgiveness of sins in his gospel, except administratively in the hands of the apostles.

The position of Colossians is very instructive; it seems strange because the Christian is there viewed as a risen man not gone up to heaven, a thing which in itself will never take place; but my being still here, it raises this question: Where is my heart? How far am I living a risen life down here while I am in the body?

Ques. Does Gilgal answer to Colossians?

Colossians is, as it were, the passage from the one place into another. "Mortify therefore," is the effect of Gilgal, life being in exercise. Colossians will not allow any life in a Christian down here. If dead, set your affections on things above; it is a kind of anomaly that way. We have not Christ as manna in Colossians. One has, of course, to take up all the parts of it to get the entire thought of the epistle. And to learn the whole truth about ourselves, we must also know the different portions of the different epistles. The divers aspects in which we may be viewed are to be found in these various books in Scripture, and that is the reason why we have them. And then, poor feeble creatures though we are, we have to take them up and put them all together. But it is God's mercy and condescension to us to let us have them.

Ques. Does not "dead and risen" in Colossians include Gilgal?

If I may so speak, Colossians just passes over Jordan and stops there without seating us down in heavenly places. We may just get to Gilgal in it, but that is status, not place. It is not the fact of our taking possession of Canaan, but more what is preliminary to setting about to do so.

Ques. Joshua is clearly Ephesians?

In Joshua it is not, 'I have led you into the wilderness and I am going to see what kind of people you are,' but it is typically the heavenly places, and "every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." This is a very important principle. All the land as far as to the Euphrates had been given to them, but wherever they tried to put down the sole of their foot, there was a Canaanite. That is Satan hindering us, and that is where the true Joshua work comes in. I am going to realise the spiritual power of Christ now so as to take possession of the things that God has given me in His testimony. Go and put your foot on any one of them, and there stands Satan to hinder you!

406 Ques. But it was theirs?

Of course it was.

Ques. And they were themselves tested?

Yes, but that is only what I have called a collateral consequence. There is perfect security in the Lord's power, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life"; that is being "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," and then no man is able to stand before me. Immediately after Achan had sinned, Joshua was found lying upon his face and the Lord saying to him, "The children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." There was in result this testing as to whether they could go on. But then we have another thing, "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them." This is God's purpose, and He is going to carry out His purpose, but He tells us to be strong and of a good courage. Divine power is ours, but faith must lay hold of it.

Ques. Can chapter 7:10 have any reference to the state of gatherings?

I have nothing about gatherings here.

Ques. But when sin comes in?

Well, God cannot be with what is evil. And if strength was not there, God was not there, but evil in some shape or other.

Another thing we find in chapter 1:7, "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." Strength and courage were to be shewn, coupled with obedience, for it is in obedience that strength is shewn; and thus, in obeying, they would beat their enemies. The Lord's power would be there, but their strength was to be shewn in obedience. Now the world is all against us, and says, 'you are fools for your pains,' that is to say, if we are consistent in simple obedience to the word, and we do not follow the plain good sense of the world! There is no wisdom like faith; it is not fanatical imagination, but taking God's word as the true light upon our path. "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 shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

407 Anything that is not according to God's mind will not do, for God cannot go with that which He disapproves of. There may be tenderness and compassion still, but disobedience and evil will not be allowed. Again, in verse 9, we read, "Have not I commanded thee?" Practically, that is an immense thing for strength; if I have the certainty of God's will, if I can say, 'Has not He commanded me?' then I have no hesitation. "Be strong and of a good courage" is what the apostle says to Timothy when things were going to the bad.

Ques. The 'law' takes in more than the moral code?

Yes, everything that God commands. That which God commanded they had, of course, to obey, no matter what it might be, such as, for instance, when they were told not to eat the passover if they were not circumcised.

Ques. The book of the law, was that "Moses"?

Yes; they had not yet the "Psalms," nor the "Prophets."

Ques. Is "do wisely," in the margin, the right reading instead of "good success" (v. 8)?

Well, to do it wisely was the way to success. That is the force of the expression. The word means that you must follow up the good road; it involves success.

Ques. Should it not rather be, "prudently"?

Yes, prudently, wisely, but if I do a thing wisely that would carry success. It is intelligently.

Ques. Then is the law viewed as complete with no thought of anything to be added to it hereafter?

Yes, quite so.

In verse 13, the command of Moses is again mentioned; the authority of the word is everything to us in this day when men are asserting their own judgment. If this word is not by inspiration, what is it by? And if they have not authority in it, what have they got at all?

408 Who gave us the history of the creation? How do we know what passed between God and Adam in the garden? The attempt to account for the creation, or the deluge, or anything else, in any other way than by inspiration is simply nonsense. I can quite understand man's heart believing nothing, but it is simply folly. With all that has been objected to the Old Testament, we have the Lord and the apostles quoting it as divine.

Ques. What is the special force of repeating this command to the Reubenites?

Only that Joshua was now about to start to carry it out.

Ques. Whom do these Reubenites represent?

I believe they are those who have God's will, Christians, but who have not entered into the perfection of Christian privileges, they are not what the apostle calls "perfect." "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

It is only those who are across Jordan that could be spoken of as "perfect." And remember this, when a Christian will not cross Jordan to take up the place that Christ has, as risen and passed into the heavenlies, such an one falls all the more readily and the sooner into the hands of enemies; such was the case with these two and a half tribes. Their place is worldly Christianity on this side of death and resurrection. The sure mercies of David in the millennium are secured and will be made good only by death and resurrection. Where Christians take up Christianity without resurrection, it breaks down with them.

Ques. But were they not all in the promised land?

Yes, but they were not all past Jordan. It is a very definite thing, and it is written down for us; if a Christian is not across Jordan, he is still connected with the world's power. And so it was with these tribes, they were the first to be carried away.

Ques. Is there anything to be learnt from our Lord's going into the land of the Gadarenes?

Not so much in connection with the two and a half tribes, but He is there with the poor of the flock in the midst of Israel who were rushing down to destruction like the swine, in a figure, though again the poor demoniac is rescued and sent back to his friends to be a witness. But the Christ who had delivered him, the world would not have, and came and sent Him away.

Ques. But the east of Jordan was not Canaan?

No; it was Moab, and Edom, and Og the king of Bashan.

No doubt Jordan was a very distinct line of boundary, but the land east of it had been promised to Israel. Yet, except in Solomon's time, they never possessed the land right up to the Euphrates. However, their settling there without crossing Jordan has nothing to do with us, except that if we have not accepted death and resurrection, we are not Christians "full grown," i.e., "perfect," and this is of immense moment. In God's sight, there is a Man raised and sitting in heaven, and that is the basis of Christianity.

409 Ques. Does Joshua typify the Lord Himself?

Yes; the Lord and the power of the Spirit. Joshua had been a fighter with the Amalekites even before the people were under the law, he then led in a fighting capacity. It is of all moment that we should get clear hold of what we have been saying, for it is a great question now as to whether Christianity is merely that which has come down into this world in goodness, or whether Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us out of this present evil world. Is Christianity based upon a glorified Christ, or is it merely a provision for sinful man down here? I believe that wherever a Christian has not a glorified Christ as the starting point of his Christianity, and so is what Paul calls "full grown," such an one will be saved so as by fire, if at all, from the infidelity which is coming in. Of course, I believe God will take care of His own, that is another thing. At their very start, these two and a half tribes had to set up an altar in Canaan, and there was a great hubbub about it, though it was only to be a witness that they belonged to Canaan, but it was the very expression of what they felt themselves, namely, that there was a danger lest they might be looked upon as outside of it.

Ques. What was the fighting in Exodus 17?

This took place before the law. All the way from the Red Sea to Sinai, it was the wilderness of grace, not properly the wilderness of testing, and in figure it goes right on to the millennium, where Moses and Aaron and the elders are found feasting with Jethro, i.e., with the Gentiles. It is really the whole history of grace to the millennium. In chapters 16, 17 and 18, the manna is given, that is, Christ come down from heaven; then the sabbath, i.e., God's rest is found; next, in Rephidim, the water comes from God; then, too, Amalek is conquered; and lastly, Jews and Gentiles are found eating together, and the government is all ordered through Jethro; yes, and Moses' wife - the bride - is brought back, too.

410 Ques. When the Lord brings all Israel back in the future, will not Jordan be the boundary of the land?

I do not know that they will have possession as far as to the Euphrates, that is, to their eastern border.

Ques. But in Ezekiel they are all across the Jordan though the ordering of the tribes is different?

They may have the land outside, only outside is not their fixed place of rest.

Ques. Ought the two and half tribes to have returned even when God had given the people rest?

Well, the district had been given to them, though at first Moses was extremely indignant, and they undertook to send their armed men over Jordan. Just so now, these people, who do not know a risen Christ, have still to fight infidelity and all else.

Ques. Does it not teach us the danger of asking for anything that we ourselves like?

Of course it does, and God may permit the thing to us as well as to them, and He often does, and it turns out a sorrow.

Ques. About one-third only of their effective strength went over, according to chapter 4:12, 13?*

{*Compare Numbers 26:7, 18, and 34.}

It was all that was needed, I suppose.

Ques. What of the people's threat, "Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death," chap. 1:18? Were they going beyond God's word in saying that?

Possibly so; but what was required was absolute obedience and submission to Joshua, so it was just a question of faithfulness.

Ques. But coming from such a people?

Well, if people do not go right, they are generally very strong in their professions. One often finds that the same will that will not take up God's promises in faith, goes beyond what God says, in a carnal way of energy, or some other point.

Ques. But it is well to see that here, at any rate, the people uphold Joshua's hands. And then, in verse 9, it is, "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed"?

We find just the same thing in Philippians: "In nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." Here comes, say, Satan, with all his power, but if the Lord is with me, it does not trouble me. And so far Israel was right. So with a Christian, in so far as he does not go with wickedness, he is right, but if he is with the world, he will not have the secret of the Lord with him.

411 Ques. In this connection, would you shut out Romans?

In Romans, we have Jordan as far as death, but not as far as resurrection. Neither in this chapter have we Jordan, it is only, "Ye shall pass over this Jordan."

Ques. But many there are who, as to their state and experience, are still in Egypt?

That may be; but that is a kind of inconsistent state. In Romans, we do get death, the "old man is crucified with him." But it does not go on to say that we are risen with Him. Again, we read, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead," but it does not say "raised." So that our realisation goes as far as being dead with Him in Romans, but it is not carried on to our being risen with Him. Now this touches the whole character of Christianity; because a man who is in a muddle in his mind is, in his sense of his standing, still connected with the first man, and that is not Christianity at all. Christ has died for us, and a

man may have the forgiveness of sins though still connected with the first man, but Christianity gives us another distinct thing, and that is, it puts us up in heaven in the second Man, the last Adam. Christ sitting in the heavenly places is the true starting point of Christianity.

In Colossians, we have, "Set your affection on things above"; in Ephesians, I am sitting there myself, and so the exhortation is, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." But Reubenites are content to take Christianity as something that has come down and brought blessing into this world where they live, and this does not take them out of this world.

Ques. Do the two and a half tribes fall short of the great truth of the death of Christ?

Of the great point of it, yes. But in Philippians, if a person believes in Christ dying for his sins, we are to go on with him, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." That is not, however, the "perfect" thing. Many have forgiveness in this world, who do not see deliverance in Christ's death and resurrection; a most blessed thing forgiveness is, but in their own minds such are still in Egypt.

412 Ques. Afterwards, these Reubenites do not fail to go on with their brethren?

Just so; and then they return to their families and possessions. As we have already said, a worldly Christian is troubled and horrified with infidelity just as much as those who are living in the heavenly places. They only fought with the others, but they never took up any of the land west of Jordan as their own portion. Their resting place and their homes were on the east of Jordan.

Ques. What would you say was the clear difference between the rest the two and a half tribes had, and the rest the others had?

The last-mentioned had their comfort and rest inside Jordan, but the two and a half tribes, outside Jordan.

Ques. But God gave it them?

Yes, surely.

Ques. But they did not lay hold of God's purpose?

No, they did not. Moses tells them: "Ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men," Num. 32:14.

Ques. Then was it faith falling short of the divine purpose?

Yes, or rather, unbelief.

It is a very serious thing which we are engaged with every day; only let brethren take care that they do not rest on this side of Jordan.

Ques. But if one knows he is crucified with Christ, is he not then over the Jordan?

But in that way, the figure of Jordan is only partially applied. And really we do not know the thing fully until we have got to the right side.

Ques. But a person must be miserable if he does not know it?

Yes, more or less. And he must cross the Jordan to be able to estimate what crossing the Jordan is.

Ques. Cannot you have Gilgal until you have crossed over?

No, you cannot.

Ques. What would keep people on the wrong side of Jordan?

Not having their affections on things above.

Ques. In the division of the land in Ezekiel is there no mention of Jordan?

To tell the honest truth, I do not know much about Ezekiel myself; the best thing is to look at it. In Ezekiel 47:18, it is just named, "And from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea." The east sea is the Dead Sea.

413 Ques. Might not the east sea be something still further off, say, the Persian Gulf?

No. The east sea is the Dead Sea. What was north of the east sea was not Israel proper at all, except, perhaps, in the general sense of prophecy, that the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, and so on.

In Daniel 11:45, there is an inaccurate rendering. It should read there, "And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the mountain of holy beauty."

Ques. In the measures in Ezekiel 45 the word "reeds" is in italics; is there anything to shew that it should be reeds?

He was to take a reed and measure, "cubits" would never do here. In chapter 47:3, it is a line in the man's hand.

Ques. Does Joshua at all shew what will be the state of the Jews when they are restored?

The sure mercies of David are founded upon resurrection. God has accepted the work of Christ, and resurrection is the proof of it. There will be both earthly and heavenly results from this, for God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on the earth; we have the heavenly, and they will have the earthly; but in the millennium they will have nothing to do with crossing the Jordan.

Ques. Do the two and a half tribes typify those who are sheltered by blood in Egypt, but who do not know the Red Sea in power?

The Red Sea and Jordan coalesce, though they may be spoken of and considered separately. It is in between these that the "ifs" come in. Across the Red Sea, they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. They are delivered from the power of darkness, and then we find, "And you . . . hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith," Col. 1:21, 22

The reconciliation is a present thing; the apostle first takes up the thought of God, that is to say, in His mind the saints are made meet or fit; but when he comes to the actual experimental state in their mind, then he says, "if."

So, too, in the epistle to the Hebrews. Wherever a man is falling away, or going into sin, it is all over with him; and this not merely in chapter 6, but elsewhere in the epistle; it is always positive.

414 Ques. Were the Colossians, then, inclined to give up?

They were in some danger of it.

Ques. In Israel's future, where does Rahab come in?

These chapters give us a kind of picture of the great principles of God. The sparing of a remnant is seen here.

There is power settling everything; then the walls of Jericho fall down; then at Ai God shews He will not go on with sin. The blowing of the horns just looked like so much folly, but God's power was manifested there. Only, at Ai, instead of consulting the Lord who would have told them His mind, they say, "Let not all the people go up . . . for they are but few"; so they send about two or three thousand only, and they are all beaten. Man's strength is no good even against a little bit of a city; if it is not the Lord's strength, it is no good at all. It only took a little maid to say to Peter, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" and that upset him altogether. When they go again to Ai, they set an ambush that nobody saw, and presently Joshua holds out his spear, and the ambush comes out, and the city is taken; but it gives them a great deal of trouble; Joshua has to bring all Israel with him, for they must all go together in practical recognition of their having failed altogether.

Ques. Will you say more about Rahab?

Rahab, the believer, is safe in the judgment, and out of the judgment; her house alone does not tumble down, though it was on the wall. "There shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." The Lord knows how to make the difference. Another point there is to notice which is very instructive for everyday toil, and that is that though the inhabitants of the land were a great deal the strongest, and Rahab knew that, yet despite their chariots of iron, their strength was departed from them, the counsellors of Zoan were become foolish. Rahab says, "I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you . . . as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you," etc. There was genuine faith with her.

Ques. Ought it to be 'trumpets of jubilee' or 'rams' horns' in chapter 6?

415 I do not know.

Ques. You have put "blast-trumpets"* in the German translation?

{* See New Translation in loco.}

Have I? I forget.

Ques. In the Hebrew, the word "horn" is only found in verse 5, and nowhere is it said "rams"?

But if it were a brass horn, it would make no difference to the walls tumbling down.

Ques. What answers to the trumpet?

No particular thing in us that I know of. But all goes on the ground of confidence in the Lord before there is any display of strength.

Ques. Would you say more about Gilgal?

The reproach of Egypt was not rolled away until they had got to Gilgal. Before this, it was man looked at as belonging to this world, though redeemed; he was in the desert, and the reproach of Egypt was not gone. But when they have passed the Jordan, they take possession; in a certain sense they have the earnest of it all before they begin to fight. At Gilgal, too, they have got into what is heavenly, and they are eating the old corn of the land. Now we ought to know what that is, and also that no matter in what form we may have to meet evil, infidelity or anything else, their defence is departed from them. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; as for the defences of the enemy, they will fall into ruin.

In Ephesians 2, we are put into the heavenly places, and in chapter 6 we find the armour for our warfare. It is a striking thing to make a man sit down in heaven, and then put armour upon him, for that is where he wants it. If you were to put this armour upon him in the desert, you would put it on him against God, but it is wanted in the heavenlies against spiritual wickedness.

Ques. What is the "armour of light" in Romans 13?

It is the same thing. In Romans, it is armour that belongs to the light; because there they have been brought into the light, and that shews us our danger.

Ques. Is 1 Thessalonians 5 the same?

It is all the same thing; I mean that the armour is the same. Sometimes people talk about the breastplate of righteousness in Ephesians 6 as divine righteousness, but I do not want that for armour. Divine righteousness is a question of my standing with God; but if I have to fight evil, I want practical righteousness, or Satan will get hold of me readily.

416 There is intelligence in Rahab; she can tell the spies how to behave themselves, to go to the mountain, and hide three days, and so on.

Ques. What about her falsehood?

We find plenty of that sort of thing in the Old Testament. Not that I defend the falsehood, I do not, though many do. Truth had not then come out. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. So in Colossians, we have the injunction, "Lie not one to another," and the ground for this is, "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." No such thing was true or known in the Old Testament. Again, in the same way in Ephesians, we have, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour," and the ground given for this is, "For we are members one of another"; that too was not true in the Old Testament. Lying is one of the three characters of sin; but the full light had not shone forth in Rahab's time. And in the law it is not truth that is enjoined, but "false witness against" which is forbidden. Still, it is wrong enough now, though you will find many a Christian thinking it right to do so.

Ques. Was there not special beauty in Rahab's recognition of God in chapter 2:11?

Yes. Her faith was faith in Jehovah, but it was shewn in recognising His people. Both Paul and James speak of it. And her faith was honoured, too - "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not." We see in her case

how God will defend His own. Her faith also it was that gave strength to Israel: "And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."

All this is preface and preparatory; now we come to the process. In the third chapter, it is not only "the LORD your God," but also "the Lord of all the earth." As such it was that He took them over the Jordan, though, of course, He was specially the God of Israel.

Ques. Is not this a type of the return of Israel hereafter?

Then, it was a provisional rest dependent upon their obedience, but it foreshadowed their full deliverance in the future. We have also the declaration that these are figures and types that belong to us.

417 Ques. Then Jordan overflowing all its banks figures the surging power of the nations?

Yes, though it is equally true that death, when Christ entered into it, displayed all its power.

The Ark here is Christ Himself who went into the Jordan in all its energy - the fullest judgment. And here it is more emphatically true of Him than in any other application of it.

Ques. Why "harvest"?

Bringing them into the land was giving them rest. Still it was rest dependent upon their responsibility, and therefore it failed. The only one who did not fail was Christ. But everything was made and given to man in the place of responsibility, that is to say, where man was set. Take Adam, Noah, the law, Canaan, priesthood, royalty, David and Solomon, or Nebuchadnezzar afterwards, and now the church; each one has been put on the ground of responsibility, and each one has failed, and each one of these things has since been taken up in the second Man, the last Adam.

Ques. How does the action of the priests, in carrying the Ark, come in here?

Nobody could carry the Ark but priests (Levites), and in doing it they are identified with Christ in spirit and in heart. Yet there was to be "a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore." There could be no passing the Jordan unless the Ark went first into it, because death is the judgment for sin; it is that in Christ, and then it is salvation to us; but the Ark goes first and does the whole thing, i.e., Christ really dries up the whole way across, and that makes Jordan entrance into Canaan, instead of shutting the people out of it. It is a blessed thing to see that we have passed the Jordan, that our place in Christ is beyond all - beyond sin, beyond death, beyond the devil's power, beyond judgment, and in a way, beyond the world of which Satan is the prince.

Christ has passed through and beyond all, and we in Him, though of course we have our bodies yet; Christ has gone, sinless, into all, most blessedly; He was made sin, and came into the judgment: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" and, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness."

This was death indeed! But now He is out of it, having passed beyond all. And His place is made ours. (Our bodies not there, of course, I need not say.) This is an immense thing, and it is what the apostle means by "perfect." There was a failing man, who fell into sin, and Satan's power, and death. But Christ came down in grace, and He went into all; now, having passed through all, He is risen, and He is our life;

we are in Him and He is in us; and we shall be with Him for ever. This is what souls need to get hold of.

418 Ques. It includes forgiveness?

The first thing is forgiveness for what we have done in our old state; but there is more. It is an immense thing for a poor sinner to say, 'I am past sin, and past death, and past judgment, and past Satan's power.' Yet this is our standing, however much we may have to be tried in the wilderness. And the sense of such a standing is the first thing necessary to get conduct suited to it.

Ques. But may not preaching truth like this lead to carelessness?

Well, an awakening from God takes place, and then they say you have been preaching grace too much! This is an entire mistake. It is only by bringing out the power of what does practically change us that we get the change. And another thing, it is not only that what I am I live, but also that I must have an object. If I am a risen man, I have nothing in this world at all; we have to go through it, but we have no portion in it at all, for our portion is altogether and entirely in the heavenly places. And so it says, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" I am not alive in the world, in Colossians, but by faith I am risen with Christ; then let us seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth. If we know deliverance from the things of this world which have power over the flesh, we have also an object, for "they that are after the Spirit [do mind] the things of the Spirit." That is what will meet all the errors that are current. It is not Christ joined to man in the state man is in, for Christ came to deliver him out of that state. Then people say, that is perfection in the flesh. God forbid: if I could have that, I would not. On the contrary, that which produces in me the desired practice here is the Christ who is not here. I am connected with the Christ who is not here, in order to be delivered from the influence of the things that are here. So that I would not in the least weaken the truth and testimony of the place we are brought into. The first thing is the forgiveness of sins. I would not weaken that in the least, but our objects are given us in Canaan, and that is what is taken up in Philippians: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," I need no calling down here at all. "Be followers together of me . . . for our conversation [living associations] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour . . . who shall change our vile body," etc. Thus we have an object. Remember, holiness is an objective thing, as well as a new nature, "Christ is all, and in all." He is in all, and that is as new life; but He is all, and that is as object.

419 Thus we see that Jordan brings us at once to Gilgal. There was no circumcision in the wilderness - none at all. In the wilderness we do not find that our hearts get weaned and that we are dead; nor can there be any Gilgal for us until we have crossed the Jordan.

And if we want this accomplished in souls, it will not do to lower the tone of our message; in our preaching, we must keep up the standing at its full height, and we must lift up the Object, too, in order to deliver hearts out of this world.

Ques. What if many will not have this, and will not go with you?

They will go on with you pretty much until you seek to take them up to heaven.

In Scripture, there is no such thought as that of the union of Christ with men, be it Christian or worldling, but we find that believers are united to a Christ in glory, otherwise it would be bringing down the new thing which is to replace the old, it would be lowering it to the old. The corn of wheat must die, or else it abideth

alone, only through death can it bear fruit; and it was to deliver us out of this present evil world that Christ gave Himself.

The world is a judged world, but those who are united to Christ are with Him in heavenly places. We belong, then, to Christ in heaven, and so we must walk like Him down here. The danger is of getting hold of the truth of this position in Christ, and the world still being gone on with.

There are things all around us which come in in an ensnaring way. They do not come and say, 'I am the devil, will you have me?' If we see the danger of the world creeping in amongst those where these truths are held, it is important then to give them an object in heaven. Sometimes they may want a good rap on their consciences, that will be a question for spiritual wisdom; but where we see the danger, we must present to them an object in heaven. It is of moment to remember that, as a matter of fact, we are living in the world, and only faith it is that lifts us up out of it.

420 Ques. It is not so much, 'this is wrong,' and 'that is right,' as, 'this is not Christ,' and 'that is Christ'?

Yes; it is put simply enough for us, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." When one comes to the ordinary run of everyday life, such as buying and selling, etc., if a Christian be honest, and cannot buy and sell in the name of the Lord Jesus, he will not do it at all; that is, where there is any conscience.

God has called us to His own kingdom and glory, and if I lose the thought of that, I lose my standard. But if a Christian is growing careless, we may perhaps have to use a hammer to get at his conscience.

I do not believe we can be worldly if we are keeping God's glory before us as our own portion. And further, there is positive progress in knowing more and more of Christ; while he "that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." But if I lose that hope, I have lost my spring. Paul says, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God"; there he is, cleared out from the law, and he has God to live to.

We must have an object before us. Again, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" - there we have the life; "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" - there we have the Object, the Son of God. All the influence of His love comes in.

This is a great thing, but sometimes it makes one's heart groan to see the lack of this amongst Christians; and then worldliness gets more and more hold of them.

It is not merely a question of open sin that everybody can judge, but it is a slippery thing.

A straw shews which way the wind blows; they used to put up texts on the walls, and at first they were in black and white, but now they have all kinds of beautiful things, and so on. We ought to be careful about such things. Though only a personal matter, I name it to shew what I mean: I had slipped in Canada and broken my spectacles, and someone kindly gave me a gold pair of glasses. I took them and thought no more about them, for one does not look a gift horse in the mouth, as the saying is. But in Barbados the brethren meet in rather a dark place, and I used my glasses there. Well, the other day, I got a letter from dear S - telling me he had spoken to a brother about the rings on his fingers - as they are apt to wear them, for they are naturally full of vanity - and at once he answered, 'Oh, they are not a bit worse than Mr. Darby's spectacles.' Got another pair since! This is very practical truth. There is a young woman, say, in a

family, and her parents insist on her wearing a certain kind of dress, but others see it, and to them it becomes a snare. All this, however, is not like an open kind of sin that everybody can judge. "Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you."

421 Ques. Why does it say "the priests the Levites"?

Ques. Are not the priests identified with the Ark?

Nobody but priests could touch the Ark. The Levites carried it, but priests only had to first cover it up for them to carry. For us, of course, the Ark is Christ.

Ques. Are there not four occasions on which the Ark was carried by the priests; first, here at Jordan; second, at the taking of Jericho; third, at the reading of the law at Mount Ebal; and fourth, when the Ark was carried into Solomon's temple; the Ark typifying Christ, with whom the people pass the Jordan; by whom the stronghold of the enemy falls; in whose name they take formal possession of the land; and lastly, when He enters into His millennial rest?

Having met the whole power of the enemy, Christ has annulled it. He had met it at the Red Sea, at the beginning; but now it is its whole power in the overflowed banks, and so He has delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Joshua says, "Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you [your enemies]. Behold, the ark of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan." The fulness of Satan's power being thus annulled, it is for us now to "resist the devil, and he will flee from you," not, and you shall overcome him. Power against us, Satan has none, if we are walking in the power of Christ.

422 Ques. What is the force to us of this title, "Lord of all the earth"?

It is more to Israel; in Genesis 2, "Jehovah" is used, though it is the name of God to Israel. He was not a mere national God, though He was indeed their God. He was the Lord of all the earth, and He will shew that out too; He is the Sovereign God. Two things there are, namely, God's government of this world of which Israel is the centre; and then the Sovereign grace which puts poor sinners in the same place as the Son of God, and that is the Lord of all the earth. After all, He who is the God of the Jews, is God over all, blessed for evermore. A national deity was a common enough thing, and so was the ascribing to it of things that were done. Jephthah says, "Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess?"

In Ephesians, God is the God of all, and Father to us.

Ques. Of whom is Rahab the distinct type?

Any poor sinner saved by faith, only it is a Gentile.

Ques. I suppose "Jehovah" in the Old Testament is Christ?

Yes. In Isaiah 6, the prophet says, "Mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD [Jehovah] of Hosts," and in John 12:41, after quoting Isaiah's words, we read, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him"; the quotation is applied to Christ, shewing thus that He is the One whose glory Isaiah saw. Again, in Hebrews 12, it says, "Whose voice then shook the earth," but that is the One that "speaketh from heaven." And the name "Jesus" is "Jehovah-Saviour" contracted.

Ques. It says, the "living God"?

Yes, and a great thing, too, to believe in a living God, it is the very thing infidelity will not have. Every person believes in general laws, like the law of gravity and so on, but resurrection clearly is no general law. That death should produce life - one cannot get a cause and a consequence out of that! And God has founded salvation on that which is contrary to all general laws.

Ques. Is Joshua 3 Christ's death for us?

It is His death, but ours also with Him, and more besides.

Ques. There is no water there?

No. Christ destroys the power of death. And that is clearly seen the moment the priests' feet touch the water.

423 Ques. All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me? Yes, but that is atoning; here we have not so much that thought, it is not atoning work. The death and resurrection of Christ are quite distinct from His dying and meeting God in judgment. Death and resurrection give me God's deliverance and power as Saviour. If I only take the blood-shedding of Christ, I find in this the first thing I want, but there is very much more than that in His death. The different parts of this history in Israel make one whole, it all runs together. There is the blood of the passover in Egypt - forgiveness; the Red Sea gives us redemption; and at the Jordan, we are risen with Christ, and going into the heavenly places. In God's mind it is all one thing. In Romans, we have the blood meeting God's eye; in Colossians, a redeemed people; in Ephesians, we are sitting in the heavenly places; in Galatians we find all three.

Ques. Would it be right to say that our nature is atoned for, or that Christ died for it?

Well, you must not let your mind work on that exactly. The burnt-offering, which was not for any actual sin committed, had blood shed in it, and atonement is there.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/readings-on-joshua-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net