

Joshua. a Man in whom is the Spirit

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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 (cf. 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 in store for him. Joshua is also a type of the Lord Jesus Himself, as is evident from their similar names. Jesus is the Greek form of Jeshua, or Joshua. These names express God's salvation. Joshua means "Yahweh saves," or "Yahweh is salvation." And in the New Testament the angel announcing the birth of Jesus linked His name with salvation from sin: "... and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall 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, leads His people into this heavenly land, our Canaan of rest (cf. Heb. 3 and 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 upon 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, but this does not mean that we are left without struggles in our pathway here on earth. The wilderness symbolises 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 (cf. 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 (Ex. 24:13-14). In Exodus 32:15ff we see them coming down from the mountain together, and Exodus 33:11 states that Joshua did not depart from the tabernacle 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 mountain, so to speak, and learn about God's thoughts—most of all those concerning His dwelling place in the midst of His people (cf. 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. Israel forgot about Moses, and turned their backs on God and on the apostle of their confession. Similarly, professing Christendom does not take into account the rights of the exalted Christ, the Lord of glory, and has fallen into idolatry (cf. Rev. 2:14, 20). Separation from this evil is a necessity, and 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 can be found 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 (in the "wilderness"), but also that we are engaged in a warfare in the heavenly places (in the "land").

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 armour 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. 1:3). 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 which 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 towards this point. In chapter 11:24-30 we see how he was zealous for Moses' sake in an unspiritual way, and therefore needed correction. We can compare this with the behaviour of some

believers in Corinth who wanted to make Christ the leader of a certain party (1 Cor. 1:10-13). In Numbers 13:16, in view of the spying out of Canaan, Joshua's name was changed: "And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua." The name *Oshea* points in a general sense to the help and salvation of the Lord, whereas the name *Jehoshua* 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 who lives in me. Our attention should not be focused on ourselves, but rather on the great salvation which *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 fulfil 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 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. Discour