

JOSHUA ... and his prophetic symbolism
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(JOSHUA 4: 3-20)

Joshua and Paul had much in common, and their discussions concerning spiritual life would have delighted the hearts of all Christians. They studied in the same theological seminary, only Joshua belonged to an earlier generation of students! Yet each in his own way wrote a thesis on the same subject, and both efforts gained a degree in heaven's university. Joshua bequeathed to us his treatise on spiritual warfare, and Paul did likewise. Either one could have written the other's book ; and apart from a few historical details, the respective writings would have remained the same. Joshua took his people through Jordan, and then led them into Canaan. Paul spoke of identification with Christ in His death, and then expounded the secrets of spiritual triumphs in heavenly places. The epistle to the Ephesians is the revised version of the book of Joshua!

Buried with Christ

"And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day" (Josh. 4:9). Israel had been redeemed from Egypt, and after spending lamentable years wandering in the wilderness, were about to realize their deepest longings. Ahead lay the promised land, with all its glorious possibilities. Yet the path to victory was an ordered path. Certain ritual had to be observed, for this experience was destined to instruct men in all ages. Solemnly, Joshua commanded his men to lift twelve stones from the bed of the river ; and when this had been done, he took another twelve stones from the bank, and deliberately set them up in the river-bed-probably in the very holes from which the first twelve had been taken. Then with dignified tread he climbed the bank, and turned to watch the waters of the river covering the stones of witness. There is something strangely suggestive about all this, and we remember Paul's words, " Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6: 3-7).

Raised with Christ

Joshua commanded, " Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan . . . twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. . . . And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month . . . and those twelve stones . . . did Joshua pitch in Gilgal " (vv. 3, 20). The sun shone down on the rugged memorial, and every onlooker remembered the identical erection in the Jordan. There, the symbols of the old Israel had been buried ; but here, at Gilgal, stood the emblems of the new Israel. The people had crossed to Canaan, and with God as their Leader, anything was possible. Paul would have appreciated that scene, for in after days, with similar truths in his mind, he wrote "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in

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heavenly places in Christ Jesus " (Ephes. 2: 6). Although
Israel had been brought safely from Egypt, their redemption
could not be perfected while they remained wandering in
the wilderness. Even so, a Christian may rejoice in deliverance
from the bondage of sin, but while carnality keeps his feet in
paths of the self-life, the greatest features of God's provision
will be unrealized.

Enthroned with Christ

Led by their new captain (Josh. 5: 15) Israel marched
against Jericho, and the prospects of a glorious future thrilled
their souls. Nothing but sin could interfere with their onward
march of triumph. We can almost hear Joshua borrowing
the words of his New Testament brother, and saying to Israel,
"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the
power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that
ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For
we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities,
against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this
world, against spiritual wickedness in high places " (Ephes.
6: 10-12).

Yet he who would conquer in Canaan, must first die in
Jordan. The man who said, " I die daily " was able to say
also, " I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth
me " (Phil. 4:13).

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