

ISRAEL UNDER A NEW LEADER

– *NOVEMBER 23. – JOSHUA 1:1-9. –*

"Be strong and of a good courage." – V.9.

ISRAEL spent thirty days in mourning for their great leader, Moses, yet with one accord accepted Joshua as their new leader by Divine appointment through Moses. Like other Bible heroes, Joshua was renowned for his faith and his loyalty to God. At the time of taking Moses' place he was in his eighty-third year, yet full of vigor, and evidently the best qualified man for the position. He and Caleb only had been of mature years when the Israelites left Egypt. They only had been witnesses of God's marvelous dealings with His people. They two had been the spies who brought an encouraging report of Canaan, which the people refused and on account of which refusal the adults died during the succeeding forty years of wilderness journeying.

The fact that Moses was vigorous at one hundred and twenty, and Joshua at eighty-three, speaks loudly to us in confirmation of the Bible's teaching that Adam was created perfect, and that the entire race has since been fallen in sin and death – sharing Adam's penalty, "Dying, thou shalt die." The intelligence of these men, as well as their vigor, quite contradict the Evolution theory; for this very Joshua had been one of the slaves in Egypt.

ISRAEL'S REAL LEADER – GOD

Not for a moment are we to lose sight of the fact that God had adopted the nation of Israel and entered into a special Covenant with them; and that, therefore, He was their real Captain and Leader – Moses, Joshua and others being merely His representatives and mouthpieces. We have already referred to the reasons for the

adoption of Israel by the Almighty, and in a subsequent lesson will consider them more fully.

THE NEW LEADER'S NAME

Joshua's name was originally Hoshea, the same as that of the Prophet Hosea, signifying salvation. To this was prefixed (Numbers 13:16) *Je*, an abbreviation representing the word Jehovah. Thus the name became Jehoshua, signifying Jehovah's salvation. This was shortened to Joshua and Jeshua. (Nehemiah 8:17.) The Greek form of this word in the Septuagint is *Jesous* – Jesus.

For twenty-seven years Joshua was the leader of Israel, faithful to God and to the people. He not only led them through Jordan and directed in the conquering of city after city, but he divided the land amongst the tribes and governed the people with great acceptance, dying at the age of one hundred and ten.

It would not do for us to contrast Joshua with Moses as a leader; for they were men of totally different types. Indeed, any one contrasted with Moses would be disadvantaged, so high did that great statesman tower above the average of humanity then or since. But while Joshua could not be Moses, the leader, commander, law-giver, he was faithful as a follower of Moses, as one who obeyed the Divine Law, and whose faith and influence with the people were helpful to them. He was just what God wished him to be, and whoever is worthy of such a testimony is truly great.

The Lord's command to Joshua was, "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel....There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee....Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest."

THE LAND OF PROMISE

That Joshua and Israel in conquering Canaan should take forcible possession of it is called in question by some. They ask, By what right might one branch of the human family destroy another and seize their land? Where is the justice of such a course, not to mention the absence of love? How could the Golden Rule be applied to such a course – do unto others as you would be done by?

There is but one answer to this query; and, rightfully seen, it is a satisfactory answer. The Lord declares that the earth is His, that He gave it to the children of men, as represented by Father Adam. (Psalm 115:16.) But the gift was conditioned upon obedience and loyalty – disobedience, disloyalty, being punishable by death. Adam incurred this penalty; and his children, under the laws of heredity, shared it with him, because born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Thus all human right in the earth was abrogated by the death sentence upon the sinner.

God purposed in Himself the recovery of Adam and his family from the curse of death – through Messiah – through His death and by the power of His Messianic Kingdom, not yet established. In preparation for these blessings to come, God laid hold upon the nation of Israel and blessed them by making a Covenant with them. Although they could not fulfil the terms of the Covenant and obtain the choicest blessing of God, nevertheless the Israelites were greatly blessed by their Law Covenant, and many of them were fitted and prepared by it for cooperation with Messiah in His Kingdom in due time. Meantime, the experiences of Israel were overruled by the Almighty, to make of them types and symbols illustrative of the Divine Plan as it will be finally outworked on a higher plane. – I Corinthians 10:11.

In carrying out this arrangement with Israel, God promised them and gave them Palestine. He explained to them, nevertheless, that this gift was not because of their worthiness, but because of His

favor toward them in pursuit of His own great plans previously outlined to Abraham. He further explained that the people of Canaan were not making progress, and that their further continuance would be neither for their good nor for the **[R5336 : page 317]** Lord's glory – as with the Sodomites, whom God took away as He saw good. – Ezekiel 16:49,50.

TO SHEOL, NOT TO TORMENT

It is well that we should remember that the Bible hell, to which the Canaanites went when they were slaughtered, is not the hell of torment pictured to us in the creeds. Their destruction by the Israelites sent them to Sheol, to Hades, to the tomb, where "there is neither wisdom nor knowledge nor device." (Eccles. 9:10.) There they sleep with their forefathers – just as we read of all the good as well as of all the evil ones of that time. Abraham slept with his fathers, who were heathen men.

All through Bible history we read that both good and bad, dying, were gathered to their fathers – slept with their fathers. There they are still, waiting for the glorious resurrection Morning, when Messiah's Kingdom, having inaugurated a reign of righteousness, will bring the earth to its Edenic condition and bring back eventually every man in his own order – all that sleep in Hades, in Sheol, in the tomb. – I Corinthians 15:21-29.

Death with humanity is totally different from death with the brute, because of the Divine promise that there shall be a resurrection of the human dead, the just and **[R5336 : page 318]** the unjust; and because in fulfilment of that promise God has already sent His Son. Jesus already has died for human sin, thus opening up the way for the resurrection – that God might be just and yet be the Justifier of those accepting Jesus.

True, few have accepted Him as yet, because few have come to a knowledge of the Truth. The great masses of the world are still

blind and deaf, and know not. The glorious promise is that in Messiah's Day not only shall all be awakened from the tomb, but the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth. Then all the blind eyes will be opened and all the deaf ears will be unstopped. All will have the opportunity of returning to Divine favor under Messiah's Kingdom. Those refusing to come into harmony will be classed as wilful rebels, and will die the Second Death.

The nation of Canaan, like all other nations, will have a share in that glorious time when Jesus, the Light of the world, will lighten every man which shall come into the world. – John 1:9.

From this viewpoint, the taking of Palestine from the people who were using it to no profit themselves, and the giving of it to Israel for the enactment of types of good things to come, was not injustice, but wisdom. And taking away by the sword the people already condemned to death was just as proper as if they had been taken away by famine and pestilence. In any event, the Divine provision for them all through Christ is a blessing, which will reach them in Messiah's Day, when the earth shall be free from the curse. Then the curse will be rolled away and the blessing of the Lord shall be rolled upon them, when the enlightened will love righteousness and hate iniquity. To all such there will be no more sighing, no more dying, no more crying. Wilful evil-doers will be destroyed; and all the earth having been brought to perfection, God's will shall be done on earth as perfectly as it is done in Heaven.

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