

Unfolding Unveiling: Studies of Christ Revealed in the Types of Joshua, David, and Solomon

Part Two: Joshua

Chapter Five: Living in the Land

A Change of Direction

We have been studying the different characteristics of our time under Joshua. Under His lead we cross the Jordan, and He is magnified in our eyes. In the Jordan we have our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. We begin to see clearly, and He becomes all-surpassing in our understanding.

The result of our identification is the manifestation of the man of war. We have looked at who the man of war is, what the warfare is, and who the inhabitants are.

After six chapters of nothing but battles, chapter 12 records the list of conquered cities and their kings. Chapter 13:1-6 shows us that Israel has not finished driving out all of the inhabitants. In fact, there were many they had yet to meet on a battlefield at all, such as the Sidonians and the Philistines, but they were about to change their direction somewhat. When they first entered the Land, they did nothing but fight. They were still living in tents, as they had in the wilderness, while operating their campaigns from their headquarters in Gilgal up until chapter 13.

Even though there was much land yet to take, apparently the Lord was satisfied with the degree to which they were living in victory, for it is here that we see next characteristic of life under Joshua, which is the settling of the Land. Israel had been fighting for a long time, but at this point their energies begin to be directed away from battle to becoming established. We, too, should begin walking in victory to such a degree that constant fighting is no longer necessary. The wars do not cease entirely, but at a certain point the Lord's dealing with us should change. Israel went from war to dividing the Land. Joshua 11:21-23 reads,

“And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakim from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained some. So Joshua took the whole land according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.”

The Israelites did not have to dispossess all of the inhabitants to live in the Land. Of course, the job would have to be completed sooner or later – preferably sooner, as we

shall see in the Book of the Judges. But initially, to take enough of a hold to set up house was all God expected. The rest of the enemies could be driven out “by little and little, thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee,” (Deut. 7:22).

This is how God deals with us. There must be a certain amount of dispossessing the enemies, but we must at some point start settling in there – getting established in Christ – before we can finish driving out all of the inhabitants. Now according to Joshua 11:23, Joshua took the whole Land. But according to Joshua 13:1, the people had yet to possess much of the Land.

We can abide in Christ and still have enemies to dispossess. We can take the Land to such a degree that we are abiding in Christ overall, and from that place of being established, we can then continue to dispossess the remaining inhabitants.

Joshua 6:13 says that the Lord would continue to drive out the inhabitants but that Israel was to divide the Land by lot. They were ready. They had come to the point of consistent living in Christ that could work victory on a regular basis, and they were now established, not perfectly, but enough to be rooted and grounded there.

To live in a place that is not entirely secured is not a comforting prospect for the carnal mind, but God’s encouragement to us to be strong and courageous has not changed. We have nothing to fear, for though we may have much Land yet to possess, our Joshua has already taken the Land in the completed work of the Cross. We can trust the Word of the Lord – that Joshua has taken the Land – even though we may have much yet to possess and may yet be living in the midst of our mortal enemies. All that is required of us is what has been required of us up to this point: to be strong and courageous, and to let the Word of God have place in our hearts and mouths. He will complete the work that He started.

There is a time period of intense fighting initially. But after a certain point, we should be in tune with the Lord enough and be confident enough of His keeping grace in the Cross and the message of Christ that we can remain there even if we still have to do battle on a regular basis. The Lord is not expecting us to take care of all the problems, figure out everything that is wrong, and change it all to prove that we have attained to a certain spiritual level. He wants us to enter into Christ, dispossess what is necessary, and then live there. From that place, we will continue to expand our borders in Christ.

It is a subtle form of unbelief to think we will be fighting and taking the Land forever, as if Land is not really ours! The initial war was a transition period until Israel could get established. Yes, battles will have to be fought until David’s kingdom comes into existence, and even well into His rule. And when he was too old to go out to war, Israel would still be fighting the Philistines. Eventually, however, all war would cease, and a kingdom of peace would be ushered in.

At this point it is necessary to remember that the conflict that occurs while taking the Land is not the full realization of God's plan for us; it is simply one more step in the plan upon which others will be built. It is too easy to get caught up in circumstances and fail to see past the fight to the purpose, as if war were the status quo. This mentality harbors unbelief that will keep us in a state of flux and will hinder us from becoming established in the Land. At a certain point, the Land is taken. Joshua 11:23 says, "So Joshua took the whole Land." There may remain much yet to be possessed (cf. Josh. 13:1), but we need to be established enough to be able to live in Christ.

There is a progression in the Lord. After a time of fighting, we get established, and we move on. This is good news. No one can fight forever. We must see His intention for bringing us into the Land, so that we can continue to progress to His goal, which is the glory of God being seen in the earth through His people. This happens during the reign of Solomon. Until that time, we must continue to take steps; we are not to stay in one step forever.

Finally, the promise of the Lord was coming to pass! Israel will now be able to live in houses they have not built and drink from wells they did not dig. When people live in houses and eat from their crops, they are established. They have moved from a nomadic lifestyle to an established lifestyle. War is not mentioned again in the book of Joshua. The remainder of the book is dedicated to settling Israel in the Land, dividing out the boundaries for the different tribes, and providing out of those boundaries cities for the Levites.

Caleb: A Picture of Whosoever Will

Starting with the east side of the Jordan, Joshua begins to divide the Land into suitable portions for the tribes to inherit. Chapters 13-19 are filled with lists of cities, borders, and landmarks that make the divisions of the Land clear for each tribe. It is a corporate pursuit, as has been all of Israel's activities up to this point.

In chapter 15, right in the middle of all of Joshua's organizing, is the account of Caleb's possession in the Land. When he was sent from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the Land forty years before, he was one of only two who brought back a good report. For following the Lord fully, he was promised the Land that he had spied out (cf. Deut. 1:36), and he was given the entire city of Hebron for his inheritance.

What is remarkable about Caleb receiving his inheritance among the children of Judah (cf. Josh. 15:13) was that he was not a full-blooded Hebrew; according to 14:6, Caleb was a descendant of the Kenizzites, which were one of the nations that the Lord had commanded Israel to drive out of the Land (cf. Gen. 15:18-21). Here we have a man with the blood of God's enemies flowing in his veins partaking of the inheritance of Judah!

It seems almost blasphemous, and it would be, were it not for the Cross of Christ. For what Caleb did is what every single believer must do if we are to possess the Land: we are to identify with our spiritual heritage, and not our natural heritage. We can choose to

identify with our spiritual lineage and receive Christ as our life, our land, our portion, or we can identify with our Irish tempers, German efficiency, or Native American benefits. To embrace the one is to reject the other. The Cross will not permit us to have both. Caleb chose wisely. He rejected the heritage of his earthly father and embraced the covenant relationship with his Heavenly Father and therefore all the blessing it entailed.

That God would permit Caleb to possess the Land shows us that His plan has never been concerned with types, shadows, and bloodlines. It wasn't during Israel's time, and it isn't for us today. God's plan has always been that we forsake our natural history for our new identity in Christ. What a perfect example Caleb is to us of how God's gift of His Son is free for whosoever will receive Him!

The Tabernacle

*“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.”
Joshua 18:1*

It is interesting to note that this little verse is inserted in the middle of the records of the tribes' inheritance. Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Judah are given their inheritance, then Joshua 18:1 mentions the tabernacle being erected at Shiloh, and finally Simeon's, Zebulun's, Issachar's, Asher's, Naphtali's, and Dan's inheritances are recorded. The writer of the book of Joshua placed the account of the erection of the tabernacle in the middle of the list of the tribes' inheritance. It looks as though the tabernacle was set up before the rest of the tribes received their inheritance. It happened in the middle of dividing the Land. The tabernacle was in the center of Israel, not only geographically, but also in the order of the dividing of the inheritance.

Enough of the Land had to be taken before the tabernacle could be set up. That the tabernacle was set up indicated a certain amount of establishing was taking place as Israel possessed the Land. They were by no means finished, as we can see by Joshua 13:1 and 18:2-19:51, but after a certain amount of the Land was possessed, they could set up the tabernacle, and they did.

The tabernacle was the place where God met with His corporate people – where the two became One. This was the first sign that the Lord's people were beginning to be “rooted and grounded in [Christ], and established in the faith as [they had] been taught...” (cf. Col. 2:7). They had taken enough ground that there was, for the first time, a corporate manifestation of God's presence established in a place. For the first time, the place where God and man meet was not out in front leading the people; it was established in the middle of the people.

As important as this was, setting up the tabernacle was only the first stage of being established. Israel still had a long way to go before the time would be right to build a permanent structure. Their place of worship was still a portable tabernacle because the people had yet to be established entirely. And yet, though they were not entirely

established, as long as they would meet at the tabernacle, they would continue to have victory in the Land. They were not entirely established, but they had a living, vibrant relationship with the Lord. As long as this was the case, the Land would continue to be subdued.

As long as Israel identified as a group, as a nation, as a people, and not as a bunch of individuals, the Lord would continue to bring them into this ever unfolding revelation of Himself. As long as the ark of the covenant was recognized and related to by God's people as the heart and mind of God set in a people, their knowledge and understanding of Himself would continue to grow and expand, until in full comprehension of all that God had made them to be would simply explode in glorious manifestation as a testimony of God's glory to the nations during Solomon's reign. If the ark of the covenant, however, were to be relegated to doctrine and sense knowledge, they would cease to dominate their enemies. We will see this to be the case at the time of Eli.

For now, considerable progress had been made, and it was commendable. Let us stop and remind ourselves here that though the Lord may yet have much to establish in His people's comprehension, the reality is still as stable and as established as can be in the heart of God and in the person of His Son. It is only in our unfinished view that the Lord has yet to establish His work, for the new creation that was brought into existence at the resurrection is an established and completed work.

How the author of Joshua chooses to describe Israel is significant, I believe. He calls them the "whole congregation". It is the entire group of people. They came before the Lord as a group. They were "assembled together". The present case of Israel is revealed in these two phrases, and there are two aspects of their condition. First of all, they are moving as a group, as we can see by the words "whole" and "together" (cf. Rom. 6). This was probably a lesson well learned, both in the wilderness, and during their campaigns under Joshua, for to act as an individual in battle spells certain death. How much further along in her relationship with the Lord would the church be if we didn't have so many "lone rangers" for Jesus going it alone!

The words "whole" and "together" show a certain level of maturity in the Lord. It is no easy thing to lose one's identity as an individual to become one of the group. Yet there is evidence of some needed growth, which can be seen in the two words, "congregation" and "assembled". A congregation is a group of people. There is no order, no structure, no pattern. It is just a whole lot of people. No one was straggling, it is true, but on the other hand, no one was being "built together" (Eph. 2:22), no one was "knit together" (Col. 2:2), no one was "gathered...together" (I Chron. 13:5). They were just "assembled together". The "together" was coming together in Christ, the way God sees together. But they were still "without form and void" (Gen. 1:2). But their purpose in type, as ours is in reality, is to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). They are together, it is true, but there is yet to be a shaping, a forming, and a conforming.

I entreat the reader who thinks it is enough to be assembled to look again at the Scriptures, this time more closely. Assembling, though it is to be commended, is not

enough. Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures declare that both a gathering and a building must follow. We will be pursuing this theme as we move into the reigns of David and Solomon.

Let us now turn our attention to the second half of the verse: “And the Land was subdued before them.” The inhabitants were in no mood for a fight. Up to this point, the inhabitants of the Land would often initiate battle with Israel (cf. 11:1-5). But after the congregation set up the tabernacle, it seemed as though the inhabitants were no longer antagonized as they were when Israel first entered the Land. They weren’t conquered yet, but they were convinced that picking a fight with God’s people was getting them nowhere fast.

The children of Israel were of one mind, and when they assembled together, the setting up of the tabernacle was the result, or manifestation of their one mind. Both the tabernacle’s placement in the order of Israel receiving their inheritance and its geographical location simply reflect the spiritual state of Israel at the time. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the subduing of the Land is mentioned in conjunction with the event. When we congregate in Christ, the enemies are subdued.