

*(For us or for Our Adversaries)*

*Joshua 4:18 – 5:15*

~ The Ark of the Covenant speaks spiritually of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, and we saw the Ark carried down into the Jordan River in the last leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. If you haven't read our previous report, I highly suggest you go back and read it before reading this one. The children of Israel passed over into the Promised Land because of the leading of the Ark. There was no smiting of the waters with the rod, as Moses had done in that episode. What Joshua did was very meaningful for the nation Israel, and it is very meaningful for us today, too.

We saw the priests remove twelve stones from the bed of the River Jordan and place them on the west bank as a memorial for the coming generations to know what had happened. Then, they took twelve stones from the bank and placed them down in the water. The twelve stones placed in the water speak of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are the unseen stones; unseen to us but God sees them. They speak of the law that you and I cannot keep, and the waters speak of death passing over. Of course, the law was a ministration of death, and death is the conclusion law brought the offender. Christ bore that judgment of death on the cross.

Christ has now come forth and the other stones speak of the grace of God; and Christ is at the right hand of God the Father today. That is how we are able to enter into Canaan – into the spiritual Heavens – and live for God in these terrible days we find ourselves in right now. Paul said, “.... know ye not that so many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death.” That means when we entered into His death we were identified and placed into the body of Christ. That means we were buried with Jesus in death and when He died – we died, too. Further, that means we are

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raised with Him, and should walk in newness of life, newness of mind and a regeneration by the washing of the Spirit of God.

Paul made it clear there is only one way for us to enter into death with Christ when he said, "... I beseech you as a prisoner of the Lord that you walk worthy of the high calling wherewith ye are called." We are to walk humbly and in the unity of the Holy Spirit; esteeming others better than ourselves and considering the welfare of others above our own. When a child of God meets the demands of the True and Living holy God, spiritual blessings can be attained. However, as we have said before, crossing Jordan is not indicative of the death of the believer standing on stormy banks and all that fluffy theological stuff. Christ crossed over – not us; that should carry a remarkable spiritual message for Christians today....

#### **IV**

***18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.***

***19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.***

***20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.***

***21 And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?***

***22 Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.***

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~ If you want to carry this spiritual message on through, you'll have to teach your children the Gospel of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. According to the Word of God, the primary mission for parents is to give their children the message of salvation. There is no better privilege than leading your child or children to a saving faith in Christ as their Savior from sins. God did all of this for your benefit and mine and for all people of the earth....

***23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:***

***24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.***

v

***1 And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.***

~ So, Israel finally crossed over Jordan out of that terrible and dreadful wilderness and into the Promised Land, but they didn't realize it would happen at this particular time. They could not understand how passing over during the flood stage in spring could be possible. The latter rains were coming down hard, which rendered crossing physically impossible; and impossible it was. Impossible without the leading of God, that is. As we read on, we see Israel reinstitute the rite of circumcision. They had abandoned their badge of the Abrahamic covenant long ago; but Joshua is bringing it back. Apparently, circumcision had been forgotten all the way back in Egypt - because this says the reproach of Egypt was to be rolled

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away. This chapter also brings the ceasing of the manna and the children of Israel begin to eat the old corn of the land. We also have the unseen captain coming up and Joshua desperately needed this vision at this time. These are the three things that are prominent in this report, and we don't want to miss any of them....

***2 At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.***

***3 And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.***

***4 And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.***

***5 Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.***

***6 For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.***

***7 And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.***

***8 And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole.***

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***9 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.***

***10 And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.***

~ Our old nature is simply no good. The flesh is completely useless to God in His service. Our old nature can never inherit spiritual blessings; and it can never enjoy anything spiritual, either. Your old nature won't like it in Canaan, not by any means – and it sure won't appreciate entering into the Heavens. Paul tells us about this constant war being fought between our old sin nature and our new nature. The spirit wars against the flesh and the flesh wars against the spirit. Well, there's no good in the old nature, but there's no power in the new nature – according to Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans. The rite of circumcision was given so they could recognize these facts. Only God can bring the children of Israel the victory in the land, and they are being prepared for that at this time....

***11 And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day.***

***12 And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.***

~ We previously considered manna as a picture of Christ with Israel in the wilderness. We examined this extensively in the Gospel of John when Jesus was questioned about manna; and Jesus told us that He Himself is manna in chapter six verse forty-nine. The fathers of the children of Israel did eat manna; and they were now dead. Manna also represents Christ in His death in that He was the One Who came down from Heaven and gave His life a ransom for many. The Bread of Life is a very important spiritual and doctrinal aspect; but here we have the figure given as "old corn."

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One spiritual example of how this works out in our contemporary churches is where many people in them subsist wholly on a testimony. They have function after function in the form of church dinners and such where they can repeat their story. In those functions, they always find someone to support the most outlandish testimony, too. Well, a testimony is fine to give to unsaved people; but when the only thing Christians live on is testimony, that means they are living only on manna. Manna is a wonderful and exciting food; but if you ever enter into Canaan, spiritually speaking, the manna is going to cease - and you're going to start feeding on the old corn – that is, the Word of God.

From Genesis to Revelation – all sixty-six books – just happen to be the old corn of the Word of God. Well, that old corn is what we are dishing out here on this safari. Many people do not care for the old corn; and they constantly complain - just as the children of Israel complained. Somehow Christians, new and old, never seem to quite be satisfied. Now, I'll be honest, old corn can be rather monotonous when you've been eating manna all along. That's why the large majority of so-called Christians are not interested in Bible study. It doesn't take much for even the great Bible teachers to drift away from the Word of God and away from an educated Bible study.

Just as when Moses went up into the mountain, when the congregation sees the Bible teacher as gone, they immediately form a golden calf. Once they begin dancing around that idol, it's all over. The methods and programs follow, and they move farther and farther away from the Word of God. Even though old corn isn't as exciting as manna, God tells the children of Israel the manna is to cease. Further, if you're only living on manna, you can never grow and mature as a Christian – it's impossible. Manna will sustain us in the wilderness, but if we want to enter into our spiritual blessings, it is going to have to cease. Most Christians need a whole new diet today....

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**13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?**

**14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?**

**15 And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.**

~ This passage brings us the call and commission of Joshua. This is the same call Moses received out on the plain of Midian, too. Remember, at the burning bush, Moses was told to remove his shoes. I can just see Joshua come out of his tent one morning and look out over the very impressive scenery; realizing they were now in the land and viewing the twelve tribes camped round about. I think Joshua probably had a little pride in him at that moment, too. Joshua knew he was the commander in chief of all he could see. I think Joshua felt pretty good about all of this.

That would have been the same moment Joshua looked down the way and saw this other man with a drawn sword. That man was none other than the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the Captain of our salvation today. I think Joshua thought this man was questioning his authority. Joshua hadn't given any command for anyone to draw a sword. I'm sure Joshua felt like going down and showing him who the general in this army was.

Well, Joshua found out, as he fell down on his face, that he wasn't really in charge. Headquarters just wasn't in his tent after all; GHQ was above him in Heaven – at the Throne of God to be exact. This is where Joshua found out he was a nobody; God was, in fact, leading him in no uncertain terms. From

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here on out, Joshua realizes he takes orders and obeys Someone Else. Soldiers are always to obey commands from outranking authority.

Alright, we're going to see Joshua circle the city of Jericho seven times in the next leg of our safari. Most people, at the time in which we are studying, thought it was a rather silly thing to do. I think Joshua may have thought that, too; but Joshua is now taking commands from the Commander in Chief; and Joshua isn't about to question God about the orders given ~



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