

CHAPTER XII
Joshua
The Book of Joshua

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While the Israelites were encamped in the wilderness of Paran, Moses decided to send spies into the land of the Canaanite. These people were farther advanced in agriculture and the arts of civilization than were the Israelites at this time, but their moral and religious life was so vicious and demoralizing that affiliation with them was impossible, and the great Hebrew nation builders uncompromisingly destroyed them.

The question asked by the earnest Truth seeker is, Did God give the order to Moses to send spies into the country of Canaan that the Israelites might measure the strength of the inhabitants against their own, and thus go forward to exterminate the people and possess the land? Always bear in mind that, in the Bible, we are studying the evolution of the race and the unfoldment of the concept of God in the consciousness of man. God is intelligence, and if we will but take this intelligence with us as we study, we can readily see that God already knew the strength of both the Israelites and the Canaanites. If He was talking to Moses in the sense that one man talks to another, He would give the required information and there would be no need of sending spies.

Each man's God is his highest concept of Him. In the history of the race we do not come to a perfect concept of God until the revelation of Christianity. Moses lived thirteen hundred years before Jesus, and a comparison of his teachings with Christianity is unfair. To appreciate the great Law-giver, comparison must be made with the nations of his time. Inherent in the universe is a law called by Darwin "the law of the survival of the fittest." Certainly the Hebrews were more fit to survive than the nations which they conquered.

Man must progress, and he who does not, by inevitable law, recedes and finally is annihilated. No power can hold us on life's highway except as we unfold from within our own consciousness. Evolution is the continuous progressive unfoldment of power within our own consciousness. Moses saw natural law and founded a nation and a religion upon this. A knowledge of law is absolutely necessary to its fulfillment; and until this idea is established in man's consciousness we cannot rise into Christianity, which takes us into the realm of spiritual Reality which controls every natural law.

Moses sends from each of the twelve tribes of Israel one of their princes, over into Canaan. Conspicuous among these princes are two--Joshua from the tribe of Ephraim, true descendant of Joseph, and Caleb from the tribe of Judah, "the lion's whelp." The spies go forward into the land, and return with the fruits of the country and their report

of it. "We came unto the land that thou sentest us and surely it floweth with milk and honey, nevertheless, the people be strong, and the cities are walled and very great. And there we saw giants, the sons of Anak; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so were we in theirs." But Caleb said: "Let us go up at once, for we be well able to overcome it." Of all the spies sent out only those who felt their ability to conquer actually went over into the land of Promise, Joshua and Caleb. No man ever yet conquered a condition or a nation who did not first believe in his own ability to do it. To depreciate our own power is to limit God's power.

Moses had founded a unique form of government, a Theocracy. Jehovah was the real Ruler who spoke to His prophets direct, who in turn gave those commands to the people. After the death of Moses the divine command came to Joshua. "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. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life; as I was with Moses so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand nor to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart from thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein; for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success. Have I not commanded thee? The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Joshua is not great because Jehovah spoke those words to him; he is great because he heard them. The infinite God is never silent, He is speaking those words to the whole human race all of the time; and the measure of the stature of each is the measure of his ability to hear and obey. Under Moses, Joshua had learned to listen to the Voice and to obey it unhesitatingly, and only he who can be obedient can command. Joshua is the prototype of Jesus, whose name is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua. What Joshua did for the Israelites on the material plane, Jesus does for mankind on the spiritual plane. In his unswerving faith; his obedience to the call; in his definite clear-cut choice between good and evil; he merits the name bestowed on him by Moses, Joshua (Salvation).

Even in the Land of Promise, there are difficulties to overcome. There is no plateau in life on which we shall not have to put forth effort. To cease to do this is to cease to progress and life is eternal progression. After crossing the Jordan a big work still confronts the Israelites. Jericho is on the way to all of the passes of the interior, it must be taken. As we pass from the mortal to the spiritual life, do we not find that we in our interior experience repeat this whole drama?

The spies sent into Jericho find but one woman favorable to them, and she of that class which the great Master asserted should enter the kingdom of Heaven before the self-righteous member of society. Man is acted upon by Spirit, and everyone who has accomplished a deed or a work worth while will readily admit that a Power and Intelligence beyond that which he knows as his own possessed him while he did it.

It is only as we yield ourselves to the Spirit that we come into Spiritual power and knowledge. Jericho, the city of mortal thought, must it not be encamped around about by the armies of Israel? Must we not, with the ark of the covenant, march around it once each day for six days, thus gaining strength and enthusiasm to complete the work on the seventh day; when, shouting the name of our God and blowing the trumpet of Truth, the walls of mortal limitation fall away and give to us the citadel of our own soul power?

Must we not learn too the great lesson of leaving all belief of mortal life absolutely behind, and of not taking any of the accursed things over into our spiritual life? In the new life there is a new language, a new scale of values, a learning that sets at naught all of our boasted earthly knowledge. Provision has been made for all of our needs; there can be only trouble with all that we try to smuggle over, and in the valley of Achor must we finally leave it to destruction.

Joshua led by the "Captain of the host of the Lord," is invincible and irresistible in his march forward. What besieged city can stand under this invisible pressure? Have not we, when working in the great Presence, and knowing that our work must be finished before the setting of the sun, have we not done that which could not be done except we had invoked the Power?

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
And thou, moon in the valley of Ajalon.
And the sun stood still,
And the moon stayed,
Until the nation avenged themselves on
their enemies.

The division of the territory of the Promised Land among the twelve tribes occupies from the thirteenth to the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Joshua; and it consequently has been called the "Doomsday book of the Old Testament." In this division we find Joshua is more than a great general, he is an impartial judge, and the spur of action, "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given unto you?" Joshua is pre-eminently a man of positive action.

Caleb comes for his portion of the land; and he asks characteristically for that part inhabited by the Anakim (giants), which he will have for his inheritance. It is the directed strength of you that makes the hale old age; and the one who believes his

powers equal to his tasks who finds that they do not wane. "Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me to Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart, and lo, I am this day four-score and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the days that Moses sent me; as my strength was then even so is my strength now, both to go out and to come in. Now, therefore, give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spoke in that day; for thou hearest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced; if so be that the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out."

The strong soul asks not for the easiest inheritance, he is equipped to meet the hardest. Then why not leave the easier to another, and in the strength of Jehovah take upon himself the greater task? We shall find at least one blessing as we assume the greater work as our share of the inheritance; less competition and plenty of room. Thus do we come to Shiloh (tranquility) and set up our tabernacle there. From this eminence alone can we found cities of refuge to which the transgressor may flee and find safety and redemption.

Joshua, true son of man, comes conquering and to conquer; according to the divine promise made him, there was not any man [who] could stand before him all the days of his life. Faithful in service, true in command, leader of a nation in its march onward, he reveals the power of Man, child of infinite Promise, as he comes to believe in God and himself. To each of us the Spirit says as it did to Joshua: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have I given you." All that we understand stands under us in our consciousness, and what is rooted there can never be severed from us.