



Joshua 3-5

Tape #7064
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By Chuck Smith
CHAPTER 3

Let's turn to Joshua, chapter 3. Chapter 1: God commissions Joshua to take over the job vacated by Moses' death: "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, and go over this Jordan. Be strong, be of good courage. I will be with you wherever you go. Every place that you put the sole of your foot, I have given to you: and as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. Keep the law." So in chapter 2 he sent the two spies who went to the house of Rahab, and the covenant was made with Rahab concerning the protection and safety of her family if they would remain in the house from which the scarlet cord hung from the window. Now we come to chapter 3:

Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from the Acacia grove, and they came to the Jordan, he and all of the children of Israel, and they lodged there before they crossed over.

So they had broken camp, and now they are moving. They are now ready to cross the Jordan and begin the conquest of the land that God had promised to Abraham.

And so it was after three days, that the officers went through the camp; And they commanded the people, saying, When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests and the Levites bearing it, then you shall set out from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, of about two thousand cubits: (or 3,000 yards, about three fifths of a mile) do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go: for you have not passed this way before.

New territory: they're going to gain new ground. "You haven't come this way before ." They are going to be led, now, by the ark of the covenant. Up to this point in their wilderness experiences, they had been led by the pillar of fire and by the cloud. And now there's a change, they will not see the cloud or the pillar of fire any longer. They are to be led by the ark of the covenant. Within that ark, of course, are the tables of stone upon which the laws inscribed the covenant that God made with these people. "If you will keep the law and the statutes: then I will be a God unto you, and you shall be my people." And they are now to begin their march into the promised land being led by the priests who bear the ark of the covenant.

So Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and cross over before the people. So they took up the ark of the covenant, and they went before the people. And the LORD said to Joshua, This day I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

So, "Joshua, this is the day that I'm going to begin to demonstrate to Israel that you are an ordained, chosen, anointed leader. The people will realize and recognize your leadership authority. And they will know that, even as I was with Moses, so I'm going to be with you."

You shall command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When you come to the edge of the water of Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan. So Joshua said to the children of Israel, Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God. Joshua said, By this you shall know

that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. Now therefore take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from upstream; and they shall stand as a heap.

So this is going to take a real exercise of faith. As far as the Red Sea was concerned, God said, "Stretch out your rod over the Red Sea," and the Red Sea parted before they ever got to it. And so they went through the Red Sea as on dry ground. This is a little different, it's going to take a little more of an exercise of faith because they're going to have to stand in the water before the water stops. They're going to have to step on in, and as they are standing there in the water, then God will cause the Jordan to cease flowing at this flood time.

Now, "the Jordan," it says, "always overflows its banks at harvest time." We know the crossing took place in April because, as soon as they crossed, one of the first things they did was to observe the Passover: which of course was on the 14th day of the first month, which is usually equivalent to our April. The harvest that is referred to is the barley harvest that comes some 60 days or so before the wheat harvest. The barley and the flax are harvested in April. And so, it is this time of the year that the waters of the Jordan river are usually at their highest, at the flood stage. As the snow on the mountains of Hermon are melting, and the waters of the Jordan rise, it usually crests in the month of April.

The fact that the flax was already harvested is evidenced by the fact that the woman, Rahab, hid the spies under the flax on the roof of her home. So the flax had already been harvested. And the flax and the barley were harvested at the same time of the year.

There are always critics who are looking to find some mistake in the Bible: and they read, 'Well, it said the Jordan always overflows its bank at the time of the harvest, and we know that they celebrated Passover at this time, and therefore, there's a mistake here in the Bible because it's harvest time.' Well, they had several crops that they harvested: and it so happens that flax and barley are harvested at the time of the Passover. Wheat, for sure, is harvested in June; and of course, the apricots, and the peaches, the other fruits, and so forth, are usually harvested through the summer and the early fall. But this was the time of the barley and flax harvest.

God seeks to develop a depth of our relationship with Him. And God wants to bring us into a walk of faith. Now we rebel against that walk of faith, we don't like it when we can't understand what God is doing. I want to know why this happened to me, I want to know why God allowed this. And to say to me, "Well, you just have to trust the LORD. All things are working for good to those who love God," doesn't always satisfy me. I want to know, "what good is this?" I can't see any good. And we don't really like this position of faith: of just having to say, "Well, I know God is working. I know it's going to be for the good." And just that commitment and rest: I find that difficult. I want to understand.

And so often, in my prayer, the question "why" is being asked. "God, why? Explain to me, Lord, why You did this, or what You are doing, or what You are working out, Lord. If You will just explain it to me, I'll be satisfied." But He wants to bring you to a greater depth of relationship, that commitment to Him even though you don't understand that. Just that complete commitment.

Now it is not until you come to this place of complete commitment that you really have real rest and peace in your heart. It's the highest faith being manifested when you can accept as from God, the

circumstances of your life, without having to have an understanding or an explanation. Just the fact that my life is committed to God, He is in control, He has said, "All things are working together for good for those who love God." If I can just accept that, and just be committed to that, then I have peace, then I have rest. I can't be disturbed. But if I always have to have the answer, then I'm going to find myself constantly searching, seeking, restless: as I am trying to rest in my intellect, in my understanding rather than in the word, and in the promise of God.

Now God is honored when I rest in His word, and rest in His declarations. It doesn't mean anything for me to rest in intellect or understanding: "Oh, I see now. Oh, okay God. Forgive me all the things that I said about You, I see what You're doing, now. That's fine. That's pretty sharp, LORD. But LORD, I didn't realize what You were doing, and I'm sorry I said all those things." And we always find ourselves in this place of complaining and charging God foolishly because I don't know what He is doing until the thing begins to unfold. Well, God is pleased only when we, by faith, trust in Him: "Without faith, it is impossible to please God."

There are people who are constantly insisting that God work, say, in the miraculous, or in healing. And if the healing doesn't come, then they're completely shattered: "How can I trust God? He doesn't answer my prayers. I've been praying for six months, and nothing's happened. God hasn't answered." I believe He has. I think He said, "No," but you don't want to hear it.

Commitment: that is a step, a level, that God wants to bring you to. And so God is teaching them now, the lessons of faith. "The waters won't part before you get there. You're going to have to stand there. Your feet are going to have to get wet. But as you step into the water, as you are standing there in the water, then I will stop the flow of the Jordan."

And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan will be cut off from the waters that come down from upstream; and they shall stand as a heap. And so it was, when the people set out from their camp, to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; And as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water, (for Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest,) That the waters which came down from upstream stood still and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan: (now, we have no idea where this area is: Zaretan, Adam have not been located by the archaeologists. And so the place where the Jordan river was stopped is still a mystery) but the waters that went down into the sea of the Alaba, the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people crossed over opposite the city of Jericho. then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

So, what happened is that the priests went into the Jordan river. As they went in and started wading into the Jordan, the Jordan river ceased flowing. And they stood in the middle of the Jordan river, holding the ark of the covenant as all of the people passed by, until they all were over on the other side.

CHAPTER 4

Now it came to pass, when all the people had completely passed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, Command them, saying, Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, and from the place where the priests' feet stood firm, you shall carry them over with

you, and leave them in the lodging place, where you lodge tonight. Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe: And Joshua said to them, Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a sign among you, when your children ask in time to come, saying, What do these stones mean to you? Then you shall answer them, That the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, and the waters of the Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel for ever.

So, where the priests were standing, in the middle of the river, one man from each tribe was to take a large stone, carry it on his shoulder. (They made camp that night that they later called Gilgal, and it became an important city in the history of Israel, or in the early days of the history of Israel. We find them coming to Gilgal to offer sacrifice, and to worship the LORD.) But they set up these piles of stones: twelve large stones, and put them in a pile in an area that is, really, without stones. It's just very flat, sandy dessert area there, between the Jordan river and Jericho.

Now, the purpose of this pile of stones was a memorial. God knows that we have a tendency to forget even the glorious works of God in our lives in the past. I am amazed at how people can forget the wonderful things that God has done for them. I know people that have had marvelous miracles wrought by God in their lives, in their families, and yet, strangely, they forget what God has done and they turn away from God. I find that difficult to understand. But, really, what God was more interested in here is that the work of God be transmitted to the children. The purpose of the stones was for the children's sake, so that they would not forget to tell their children the greatness of God and the wonders of the God that they served. We, as parents, have a responsibility to pass on to our children the glories, and the wonders of God. These were to be the instrument, the tool. Children would naturally be curious about a pile of stones in this sandy dessert area: "What is that pile of stones, daddy?" "Those stones came out of the center of the Jordan river. For God stopped the Jordan river at floodtide in order that we might pass through to take the land." And it gave them the opportunity to share with their children the marvelous wonders of the God that they served. Passing on to our children the works of God is a very important thing.

When the children ask, What do they mean? You shall answer them, That the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be a memorial to the children of Israel for ever. (They are to be there forever.) Now the children of Israel did so just as Joshua commanded, they took up the twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, as the LORD had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and they laid them down there. Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan,...

So they took twelve more stones right into the middle of the river, and they piled up twelve stones in the middle in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood, and they are there to this day. Now, that, of course, was speaking of that day. There's probably been a change of the Jordan, as far as the river bed and all. They have a tendency to change as the years go by. But it would be interesting to find this pile of stones and see if they're still around. They were a memorial and were in the midst of the river, and set this other pile of stones where the priests had stood and the river stopped.

So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua: and the people hurried and crossed over. Then it came to pass, when all of the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the LORD, and the priests, crossed over, in

the presence of the people. And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, half the tribe of Manasseh, crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken: About forty thousand of them prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho. And on that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all of the days of his life.

Now, again, those men who love to criticize the Bible, and those men who love to explain away the miraculous by natural phenomena: (for those men do exist.) There are those men who really don't believe in miracles, and thus, there has to be some kind of a rationalistic explanation of everything that appears to be of a miracle in nature. And you are aware that they say that the 'Red Sea' is a mistranslation, it should be translated the "Sea of reeds." And say, "the 'Sea of reeds' is a very shallow little sea: it's only about 2 feet deep. And quite often, when there are strong winds, it blows the sea back and thus exposes an area of it that is easy to cross. And of course, we read that there was a strong wind that blew all night, and it sort of blew back the Sea of reeds at this little area where it is only 2 feet deep, and thus, they were able to cross. And it wasn't really that big of a deal." Well, pretty big deal that the whole army of Egypt drowned in 2 feet of water!"

And in explaining the Jordan river stopping; on up the Jordan river where near the Jabbok enters, the Jordan river has carved out, of course, as rivers do: erosion, in these banks, sandy limestone type of banks, and it has carved out its path, its bed especially at flood time when there is a great rush of water, they declare that "the eroded banks was sometimes caved in and formed a natural earthen dam. And this is, no doubt, what happened: is that, the waters eroding away at the banks, there was this great cave in of the banks, and it formed the earthen dam, and that's what stopped the Jordan river." They may be correct in that assessment, that is possible. But then you have got the glorious miracle of timing! How did Joshua know that 70 miles away at that precise moment, that when the priests put their feet in the water, that the thing was going to cave in, and form the earthen dam upstream? And isn't it fortunate that it didn't give way, and the water didn't come rushing down until the last one was across? My, what perfect timing of this whole issue! It's possible that's the way it was, and God is able to time things perfectly. It's possible that it's a natural explanation of the fact that the Jordan river stopped, but it's still a glorious miracle that even the timing of the whole incident would be the miraculous aspect. You can't take God out of it, no matter how hard you try. You can't take God out of it.

Through this miracle the people recognized Joshua as the divinely ordained leader, and the LORD fulfilled His promise, as Joshua was magnified in the sight of all of Israel.

And they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, Command the priests who bear the ark of the testimony, to come up from the Jordan. And Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come up from the Jordan. And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet touched the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and flowed over all of its banks, as before. (So, again: perfect timing. They just got out in time as the water returned in the flood stage.) Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped at Gilgal, on the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. And then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying, When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What are these stones? Then you shall let your children know, saying, Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry ground. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you, until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up before us until we had crossed over: That all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: and that you may fear the LORD your God for ever.

So a memorial: 'You will always remember the power of God.' Now you remember, when the spies had come to the house of Rahab, she said, "We have heard about your God, how he dried up the Red sea, and how he destroyed the two kings on the other side of the river; and fear has gripped our hearts, and our strength has gone from us." Imagine the effect that this miracle had on the men of Jericho as they were watching from the walls. They had heard about how God had dried up the Red sea, there may have been skeptics among them. But when they saw the Jordan river stop, and they saw these three million people come crossing over the Jordan, and then as soon as they were across, they saw the Jordan begin to flow again: the fear, the terror that must have gripped the inhabitants of Jericho. At that point, they knew that they were had. They knew it was just a matter of time. It was all over for them.

CHAPTER 5

And so it was, when all the kings of the Amorites, who were on the west side of the Jordan, kings of the Canaanites, who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were crossed over, that their heart melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer, because of the children of Israel. They, at that point, just sort of capitulated. They just sort of figured, 'Hey, it's all over.'

Interesting when you get into the whole typology: because as we pointed out earlier, the Jordan river is a type of the death of our old nature, the reckoning of our old nature to be dead, crucified with Christ. It is wrong to make it a type of physical death and entering into heaven. That it is a symbol of this death of the old man, as I am identifying in the crucifixion, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet, not I, but Christ is living in me." Where I no longer am ruled by my flesh. Paul said that the old man was crucified, that the body of sin might be put out of business, thrown down. That is, that you should not be ruled by your body appetites any longer.

Now, this is the mark of the natural man: he's ruled by his body appetites. Jesus, speaking of the natural man, said, "He is only concerned in 'what shall I eat, what shall I drink, what shall I wear.' After all these things, -he said, "the heathen seek. But you're different. You're to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." You have been born again by the Spirit of God, and thus, now ruled by the Spirit, and not by your body appetites.

But I have to take a position of faith and reckon my old man to be dead, crucified with Christ. The fact that I have to reckon it to be so is indicative of the fact that it is a position of faith. "I take this position of faith," so that when my body appetites are making their demands, I can say, "that is dead. I don't have to be ruled by that any longer, I don't have to live under the tyranny of my flesh. I have been freed from the power that the flesh had over me that I might live unto God in righteousness. And I reckon that to be dead, that's a part of the old life. And there's a lot of territory that we are coming in to conquer here.

There are a lot of attitudes: and Jesus spoke about some of these in the Sermon on the Mount. My attitude towards "mine." Isn't it interesting how that is one of the first things that a little child picks up as a part of his Adamic nature? Look at them, how territorial they become, and how possessive of their toys: grabbing them when another child wants it, and says, "No, it's mine." And I have this attitude: 'that's mine.' And it's a very strong kind of a feeling. Jesus, in expressing what our attitude really should be, said, "If a man sues you at law to take your coat, throw him your cloak also." Don't be possessed by your possessions. Don't let them rule over you. And it is so easy to be ruled and governed by your possessions.

So many of our attitudes spring out of pride, or spring out of the self life. "That makes me mad." Great expression of the old man. He's always getting angry, he's always getting hurt, he's always getting

upset, there's always a chip on his shoulder ready to be knocked off. The old nature, the old man. And it is there in all of us: that wretched old man, that self life, that self centered life. And yet that is exactly what we have to reckon to be dead. That's exactly what we have to deal with, that we not be governed and ruled by the life of the flesh any longer, but that we would be governed and ruled by the life of the Spirit whose chief characteristic is 'agape:' this giving love which seeks not its own. Now that's what God is wanting to work in each of our lives, and that's why He brings us to the Jordan river.

Now, too many people are like the tribe of Gad, and Reuben, who say, 'Hey, we like it on this side of the Jordan. I don't need to go in there and take that land, I'm not interested. I like living over here. This pleases and satisfies me.' And there are many Christians who are still in bondage to the flesh, to the life of the flesh. And as such, your Christian experience is a yo-yo experience: you're up and down, up and down, and up and down. Moments of glorious spiritual ecstasy, moments of tremendous spiritual despondency. Over the top: victorious. Underneath: defeated. And you know, it's a roller coaster. It's because you don't want to give up the old life, it's because you don't want to reckon the old man to be dead, it's because you don't want to enter into that full life of the Spirit that God has for you, because you don't understand the glory and the blessing of being freed from the bondage of the flesh. You don't realize what a tyrant it is, you don't realize what hold it has upon you, and you don't realize the effect of the hold upon your flesh, or of your flesh over you.

But God wants you to come in to the life of the Spirit. He doesn't want you to be living in Romans 7, He wants you to move on in to chapter 8: where you begin to experience the power, and the victory of God's Spirit within your life as He takes over, and as He brings you victory. And by the Spirit you begin to mortify, then, the deeds of the flesh.

Now, the interesting thing: "Every place that you put the sole of your foot," God said, "I have given to you;" but it wasn't theirs until they went in and took it. You can have victory over those areas of your flesh life, over your temper, over your nasty attitudes, over all of these things: over your jealousies, you can have victory over these, but you've got to go in and take them. But the glorious thing is, as the people of the land, when they saw the power of God, that their hearts melted, and their spirits were just defeated: so you have really victory. You just go in and take it, you go in and claim it. You come against the power of the enemy, the power of the flesh through the greater power of Jesus Christ. And as we were studying Thursday night in Luke's gospel, when a strong man is holding on to the things in his household, there is that peace within, until a stronger man comes and rips away his defenses, his armor. And Jesus, the stronger man, has ripped away the defenses of Satan, and you can have the victory of Christ over the life of the flesh: you don't have to be subject to your flesh any longer. And that's the beautiful symbolism of Joshua: coming in and taking the land that God had promised, the territory that God had promised to give to them.

But notice the first thing that they did in coming into the land, was to renew their rite of circumcision which had been neglected during their wilderness journeys. At that time, the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourselves, and circumcise the sons of Israel again, the second time." The first time was when they first came out of Egypt. It was a rite that had been neglected while they were in Egypt. And when they first came out of Egypt, they went through this rite of circumcision after crossing the Red sea. But again, during the wilderness wanderings, after Kadesh Barnea, the rite ceased because God had said, 'Hey, this whole generation is going to die off. I'm not going to bring them into the land.' They had broken covenant with God and this was the sign of the covenant relationship.

It, again, is a very symbolic rite because it is symbolic of cutting off the life of the flesh. Cutting away the flesh. And that's exactly what God meant when He gave the ritual to Abraham and commanded him this rite of circumcision: it is because Abraham was to be a man of the Spirit, and after the Spirit; and the cutting away of the flesh was symbolic of not being governed or ruled by the flesh any longer. And so,

Paul tells us in Romans that we are to “circumcise our hearts.” In other words, cut away the flesh from your heart; how that your heart is longing and desiring after these fleshly things. “Be circumcised in your heart.” But the true circumcision is not really a physical rite, but it is a spiritual thing that goes on in a person’s heart when he decides no longer to give in to the flesh, or to live after the flesh, but he decides that he is going to live now after the Spirit and not be ruled by the flesh any longer. And so it was important that this rite be re instituted because the people were now coming back into this covenant relationship with God. And having neglected this during the wilderness wanderings, it is now time to renew your covenant with God and to determine that you are going to be a spiritual people, walking after God, and walking after the Spirit.

And so here is where the reproach of Egypt, which is the life of the flesh; you remember the mixed multitudes that were lusting after the things of Egypt: the onions, and garlic, and leaks, and so forth, and that they were desiring after the things of the flesh. This is rolling away the reproach, now, of Egypt. And thus, they were “Gilgal,” which in Hebrew is ‘rolling.’ And that’s why they called the name of the place “Rolling” (Gilgal): is because the reproach of Egypt rolled away, at this point, when they renewed their covenant relationship with God, and they were to be a spiritual people following after God and not living any longer after the flesh. So the death of the old nature, the first affect of the death of the old man and the old nature is the cutting away of the life of the flesh; not to be ruled or governed by it anymore. And so the first thing they did was, of course, have the rite of circumcision.

Joshua made the flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel there at the hill. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All of the people who came out of Egypt, who were males, all of the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. For the people who came out had been circumcised: (that is, before Sinai) but all of the people who were born in the wilderness on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all of the people who were the men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD: to whom the LORD swore that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that he would give us, a land that was flowing with milk and honey. (So that whole crew died.) So Joshua circumcised their sons: whom he raised up in their place, for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their place in the camp, till they were healed. (Three days as a general rule.) And then the LORD said to Joshua, This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you. Therefore the name of the place is called Rolling Gilgal to this day. So the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, kept the Passover..

So the second thing they did was keep the Passover. Now, during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, they had not observed this Passover. It was the celebration of God delivering them out of the bondage of Egypt through the sacrifice.

And so, the second thing is to realize God’s deliverance from the life of the flesh, from the bondage of Egypt through the work of God, and not through our own power. And we need to realize that we can only master over the flesh through the power of the Spirit. I can’t do it. And this is one of our problems: there are many things about your flesh that you hate. There are many things that you love. You’ll come to hate them in time.

But those things of your flesh that you don’t like: try to quit, try to conquer it. Let’s say that you’re a very ill tempered person, you have a way of just losing your temper, and blowing off. Stop it. Try to. Let’s say that there’s someone that you just can’t stand, you hate them, they cause your flesh to curl: love them, try loving them. Now you can try. You can start thinking good things about them and sort of thinking on the good side instead of the negative side, those things that irritate you so. Their tone of voice, their

attitude, their haughty spirit, those things that just make you upset: don't think about those things, think about, 'well, they have pretty eyes, or there's something good about them if you look hard enough.' And start thinking about the good aspects of them, and you think, "well, you know, that poor person. They have their problems, but after all,..." And start thinking good. And think, "Well, yeah. I think I can love them. Sure, I love them. Yes. Isn't that nice? I love them.."

And that will work fine until you meet them. And as soon as you meet them, that other side comes out. So dominant that you walk away, and you say, "I hate them, I can't stand them. I wish they were dead," you know? I can't conquer my flesh in my own power. It takes the work of God for me to have victory.

The Passover is recognizing that it was God's deliverance. He was the one that delivered us; and thus, it is important, as I come in to take, now, this lamb: to realize it isn't my battle, it's God's work that I need. I can't do it myself. I have to rely upon God and the power of the Spirit. And we're going to find this as we move into the land.

We're going to find that when Jericho, the first city, the first giant, the first obstacle in the land; when Jericho fell, it was God who did the work. It was God who flattened the walls. It was God that brought them the victory.

Having seen the work of God and the destruction of Jericho, the next little town they came to was Ai': not nearly as big as Jericho, not nearly as formidable. And "they're flushed with victory." After all, "didn't we wipe out Jericho? --Joshua, don't send the whole army. We'll just go down there, and wipe it out, and bring back the trophies of war." How quickly we can revert from the Spirit to the flesh. Paul said to the Galatians, "Oh, foolish Galatians. Who has bewitched you that you should so soon turn from the truth? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now going to be made perfect in your flesh?" And it's something we are going to have to learn, and something that we are going to have to deal with; our crazy old nature that somehow thinks, "well, I can do it. Now that I have learned the secret. I found the answers, you know. And I can do it. Just let me go, God. Let me show You what I can do", and we head for Ai. And we come back with our tail between our legs as we experience the defeat.

And so we'll be moving in to the conquering over the old nature, over the old man; as God sets us free from the bondage of our flesh and brings us into that glorious liberty of the children in light. As we become free to walk after the Spirit and no longer in subjection to those fleshly chains that are holding us down, and driving us down, and keeping us from that life of victory, and joy, and blessing that God wants us to have as we walk in the Spirit.

So they reckoned the old man to be dead. They, by faith, crossed over the Jordan river. Then they cut off the flesh. They're going to be a people of God, living after the Spirit. And then they recognized that it was God that brought them this far, God that gave them the victory as they celebrated the Passover: remembering how God delivered them out of the hand of Egypt and out of the bondage that they had experienced there. And now we read, as a matter of note:

They ate the produce of the land on the day after the passover, of the unleavened bread, and the parched grain the very same day. Now the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; Those experiences of the wilderness are over. No more manna. "Now, you're going to live off the land." And they ate the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Now, Joshua is still a little concerned. As they come closer to Jericho, he realizes that those walls were actually higher than he thought. And he goes out in the evening, sort of a reckon ordering type of a

mission: study the city to look at the walls, look at the defenses. Trying to figure out, now, how “we might make a breach in the walls, and take this first city.”

And as he was there by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and he looked, and, behold, a man stood opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went to him, and said to him, Are you for us, or for our adversaries?

Awesome man standing there. Awesome demeanor. His sword is drawn, he’s ready for battle. And Joshua went over and asked the pertinent question, “Are you for us, or are you against us? Are you for our adversaries?”

And he said, No; not for your adversaries but as the commander of the host of the LORD I have come.

This man that Joshua met was Jesus Christ. This is what they call a theophany; which word means, “the manifestation of God.” “Theo”-- being God. And the “--phanies”, is the manifestation: theophany. One of the manifestations of God in the Old Testament, which of course, are the manifestations of Jesus Christ: “No man has seen God at any time.” On several other occasions God had manifested Himself in a bodily form. Of course the final manifestation came through Jesus Christ who came to the earth when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. But you remember when the three Hebrew children were in the fiery furnace, and Nebuchadnezzar looked in, and he said, “How many did we throw in that thing?” And they said, “Three.” He said, “That’s what I thought; but I see four walking around in the fire. And the fourth one looks like the Son of God.” Jesus came to walk in the fire with these guys. Jacob wrestled all night with the angel of the LORD, who of course, was Jesus.

Now, God had promised to Joshua and to Moses, “I will send my angel before you”, there in Exodus: and this is the fulfillment of God’s promise to send His angel before them. “Listen to him, obey his voice, hearken unto him: because he’s going to be tough. He’s not going to forgive transgressions.”

And so this is the fulfillment of that promise: the angel of the LORD coming to lead the army of God; none other than Jesus Christ -- because when Joshua fell down and worshipped him, he received the worship. Now in the book of Revelation, twice, when John fell before the angel who was giving him the Revelation and sought to worship him, the angel said, “Stand up. I also am a servant of God, and worship God.” In Deuteronomy the command was, “Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” So angels were not to be worshipped. The fact that Joshua fell down and worshipped, and the worship was received, indicates the divinity of this man with the drawn sword. Not only did he fall down and worship, but he immediately surrendered.

What does my lord say to his servant?

He immediately recognized his authority, and surrendered, and submitted to Him; as they were commanding in Exodus: “obey his voice. Follow him and obey his commands.” And so Joshua submitted immediately, waiting now for orders. Now, I think that Joshua was tremendously relieved. I think that he was really reluctant to take the responsibility that God had placed on him, and he was frightened. It was awesome to lead three million people into a land to conquer the land. You’ve got years of fighting in front of you, some fierce wars: awesome responsibility; and Joshua was afraid. God said, “Be strong, be courageous. Don’t be afraid.” Tremendously relieved when he finds out that he’s not responsible, that there is One that is higher than he that is responsible for the victories. ‘It’s not on my shoulders to do it, it’s up to Him to do it.’

And oh, what a relief it is when we discover that same truth: it isn't my responsibility, it isn't up to me. I can't do it. But the LORD has come to help me, and to give me the strength, and the power, and to lead me into victory. And He leads me all the way. The important thing is that I just obey, and I follow Him, that I heed His voice, that I keep His commands.

So the LORD said to Joshua, just take your sandals off; the place where you're standing is holy. And Joshua did so.

Next week we have the fascinating lessons of the destruction of Jericho and the defeat at Ai. And, oh, what lessons there are to be learned in these stories.

May the LORD bless you, and watch over you, and keep you. And may God help you to begin to conquer, and to begin to be more than a conqueror through His power, and by His Spirit: that you might, indeed, be free from the flesh, from its demands, from its reigning over you. That the body of sin might be destroyed, that you might begin to live after the Spirit; seeing the old nature, the old man drop off as the new man in Christ assumes control. And you begin to live a Spirit governed life. That is, of course, the mark of the life of Jesus: He was governed by the Spirit. May that become so in our lives, in Jesus' name.