

Joshua's Four Miracles (Part One)

God's Providence in Our Christian Fight

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We tend to think of the wilderness journey of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to crossing the Jordan as a complete event. It is all the way from Rameses to the crossing of the Jordan. That was one long series of events, one long journey for the children of Israel. And further, we consider it spiritually as an extended metaphor for our Christian lives, from our calling and redemption by God to entering the Kingdom of God.

Now, I see nothing wrong with that. It has been our template for many decades, and it has inspired a great deal of very sound teaching. I think we have used that metaphor throughout this Feast a time or two. But then you are sitting there on the eastern side of the Jordan River, and you cross the Jordan with the children of Israel, and you spend years—seven years at least—conquering the land. So, what is that?

Like the exodus, it begins with a miraculous crossing of a body of water, and events, both good and bad, unfold from there all the way to the full possession of the land. Maybe I should take out the word full there because they did not actually conquer everything that they were supposed to conquer. But they did a fairly good job. I will just say they could have done more; they could have cast out the inhabitants of Canaan more, as they were supposed to do, but they did not. And there is probably a good lesson in that as well. And if you think about what I am about to say in the next few minutes, you will see why. I will not explain it, but it is something that you might want to think through.

So, what is the extended metaphor for us spiritually of the conquest? Have you ever thought about that? Does it typify what will happen in the Kingdom of God? Thinking about that, it seems kind of doubtful.

Does Jesus Christ not conquer, and the world is His? I guess you can maybe get some lessons out of it that way. Is it a precursor for the second exodus

and this is what the children of Israel will do once Christ calls them back to their own land. Maybe.

I have got another idea, and I would like to present it to you today. For this sermon, I will be considering it as a better do-over or a part two of the wilderness journey or spiritually, the journey that we make from baptism to the Kingdom of God. It is a different journey to the Promised Land. The first journey with the ones who came out of Egypt arrived there, arrived at the Promised Land, while the second took possession of it.

There is a pretty material difference between the two. The participants along this journey are still the children of Israel, still the same people generally overall. And they are still, I believe, a type of spiritual Israel.

But think about it. Those who entered the Promised Land after crossing the Jordan are members of a new generation. They are not like the ones that came out of Egypt. They are actually quite a bit more faithful than the ones who were slaves in Egypt. They had not refused God's instruction. They had not rebelled against Him.

That was their fathers, and that generation which God said, "You shall not enter the Promised Land; you're all going to die out here in the wilderness." The new generation is by no means perfect. They were human just as we are. But they are quite an improved group in comparison to their fathers that trudged across the wilderness for 40 years.

Let us begin in Joshua the twenty-fourth chapter, and just see a little bit of this. We are going to be reading verses 29 through 31. This is the end of that period. But I want you to see what the Bible says about them and Joshua.

Joshua 24:29-31 Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. [Let us see what it says here.] Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.

So the Bible actually says nice things about this generation under the leadership of Joshua. They were pretty good. They served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the next generation, and then their children started to basically fall apart and descended in what we see in the Judges. But this generation that the Bible is talking about was not too bad.

Let us go to Judges 2, starting in verse 7, something similar.

Judges 2:7-10 So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. [That is exact same thing that was said in Joshua 24:41.] Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres [they gave it a different name this time] in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.

In two consecutive books, God inspired these writers to actually pump up this generation, give them good marks because it says they served the Lord. We know they did not do perfectly; they did not complete things totally. But maybe four stars, right? They did most of what God wanted them to do, and He was satisfied with them.

Let us see this in a New Testament context a little bit in Hebrews 3. We will start in verse 7 and we will read through the rest of the chapter.

Hebrews 3:7-9 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years.

Already we see the very clear difference between the two groups. He is talking here about the ones that came out of Egypt, and these ones do not know His ways. And if they do not know His ways, they are certainly not following them.

Hebrews 3:10-19 Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest." [So, the author here says] Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The truth of the matter is that the generation of the exodus failed abysmally. They never really came out of their slavery. They were brought out, but they had, I guess you would call it, a slave mentality to the end. They never became free, if you will, inside. They never grasped on to what God was trying to teach them. And so the result of that was continual rebellion against God.

They wanted to go their own way and do their own thing. And so God said, "Okay, I've had enough of you guys; you're all going to die in the wilderness. I mean, we'll have burial parties every day as we bury everybody in that generation." You could probably follow a trail of graves from the Red Sea. There are graves from that point on all the way to the Jordan River. I cannot remember the math, but it was like a couple hundred a day had to die for all of that to happen. "OK, you're on burial crew today. We've got these two hundred bodies; go to it."

That is kind of grim, right, that there were so many that died in the wilderness. But it was all because of sin. The wages of sin is death. God made His judgment, and that whole generation but Joshua and Caleb, died in the wilderness.

Now, it says here that God was angry with them for forty years. That is a long time to hold anger, and God does not hold His anger like that. But can you imagine all the rebellion that was continually going on and stoking God's anger, His wrath against sin? Contrast that to what Jesus says about the faithful servant, to whom God says, "Well done," and calls him good and faithful.

That is what He wants to see, but the Israelites of that generation, He could not do anything with them. So we want Him to be pleased, not angry. And what we get from the end of Joshua and the beginning of Judges was that He was actually pleased with the next generation because they knew the Lord and they did what the Lord said.

But the earlier generation, God refused them entry into the land, which is a symbol of His rest. And they did not make it. They failed. They died in their sins.

Let us move on here to chapter 4 of Hebrews. We will read the first eleven verses. The author here continues with the idea of God's rest.

Hebrews 4:1-2 Therefore [a concluding statement], since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

That was one of their big problems. They had no faith, no trust in God to take the information that was revealed to them and use it for good. So he is saying, "Look, we have to have faith in what God has called us to and the knowledge He has given us."

Hebrews 4:3-11 For we who have believed do enter that rest [We are on the way. It is not that we have come to it fully yet but we are on the way.], as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest," although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. [So he gives us some marching orders.] Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

The original Israelites failed through lack of faith and through disobedience. Then he mentions Joshua and the fact that even this new generation of Israelites that God commended may have entered the land, but they did not enter God's rest because the psalm speaks of another day in which the rest would be entered, the day in the future.

The author here says it is still out there. You can still enter God's rest. You are on the road already, and make sure you enter God's rest, and you can do this by being diligent, by obeying, by being faithful, or as Jesus says, by enduring to the end in your calling.

So speaking of the generation that Joshua led, though their conquest in the end was incomplete, they did far better than their parents. But the author implies that those events that occurred back then are to us only types. We are not to take them in terms of the reality of their incompleteness, but we are

supposed to think of them as typical, as metaphorical, as symbolic of the journey that we make in order to enter His rest in a spiritual way, in the only way that really matters.

And he then says that the Sabbath is a type of the rest of God, and that in itself is a foreshadowing of the Kingdom. Just so we get all our ducks in a row here. So we can say God's real rest, the one that He has been shooting for all this time, giving us all these examples from the Old Testament and elsewhere, even in the New, that is still future. The rest of God is still future and it is now open to God's elect. And it is still Israel that is journeying to God's rest, but as Galatians 6:16 says, it is the Israel of God.

It is a different group. It is a spiritual group. We call it just generally spiritual Israel. And it is the church, the Body of Christ. Lots of different names, but the same people. God's people whom He has called to take up this journey.

And so we will enter it only if we remain obedient and faithful, unlike ancient Israel.

This has all been a big, long explanation of why I think the conquest constitutes a second type of our spiritual journey toward God's Kingdom. This time, in the second type, it is concentrating on a faithful, obedient people dealing with and overcoming the obstacles in the way. Just as we endeavor to come into full possession of our inheritance, they were trying to come into the possession of their physical inheritance, the land of Canaan. But we in the antitype are coming into our inheritance in the Kingdom of God. And then having done that, at the return of Jesus Christ, we will enter God's rest.

So what I am going to do as a kind of frame for talking about this group of people and how they apply to us in our walk to God's Kingdom, the sermon will focus on the four astounding miracles found in the book of Joshua. That is my frame; that is my organizational template here for this sermon. And my aim in giving these, talking about these four miracles, is to highlight what God is willing to do to aid us in our journey to His rest.

That is, what He is willing to do to aid us in our Christian fight over sin and Satan and this world. Because He accompanied them on their journey in the

conquest, just as He is accompanying us. And so the types pop out when you go through the book of Joshua.

Let us go back to the Old Testament. We are going to start in Deuteronomy the thirty-fourth chapter. We just want to pick up verse 9.

Deuteronomy 34:9 Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Flip over a page into the book of Joshua. We will start at the beginning and we will read the first nine verses here.

Joshua 1:1-9 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

One more verse in chapter 11. Joshua 11, verse 15.

Joshua 11:15 As the Lord had commanded Moses His servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses.

Notice those words here. He did everything. He left nothing undone of all that the Lord had commanded Moses.

Now, before we get to the miracles, I want to point out the obvious type of Jesus Christ in Joshua. They even have the same name. It is pretty easy. It is like God said, "I'll give you an easy one here. We'll call this guy Joshua, and we will call My Son Joshua" or Yeshua. And you get it?

Joshua is the God-appointed, anointed leader of the congregation of Israel. Joshua is full of the spirit of wisdom. God is always with him. He is strong and courageous. He does not turn to the right hand or to the left. He follows what is written in God's Word. He has no fear. He does whatever God commands him to do. He finishes what he starts.

Are you seeing the connections here? Joshua is an amazing type of Christ. And we have an even greater Leader in the true Jesus Christ than Joshua ever was to the children of Israel. And so we have to come into this study of this typical journey, the conquest, with the understanding that whenever you see Joshua, you see something about Jesus Christ.

Now, I want to say that Joshua did make a few mistakes, and that just highlights how human Joshua was. None of God's servants except Jesus ever did anything perfectly, and so the type breaks down a time or two. But we have to remember that in these big events, the leader on the scene is Joshua, and he is a type of Christ.

Now, I think this Joshua-Jesus correlation gives good support to my argument that the conquest under Joshua is a specific type of our Christian fight after conversion. And in particular, I think it is especially pointed to second-, third-, and fourth-generation Christians and on and on because their

parents have come out of the world and had to do all these things that the people, the Israelites who had come out of slavery in Egypt, should have done.

But then you have the second generation that comes, who have been taught by these faithful people who came out of the Egypt of this world, and they are set up for this journey in a better way, just like the Israelites that crossed the Jordan River should have been set up in a better way to do what they were commanded to do.

But it is not just for the second- or third- or fourth-generation Christians; it is for ones that came out of the world, first-generation Christians too. But being a second-generation Christian, I have to think that it is a good way for me to approach these things because, you know, I appreciate very much what my parents did, and they set me up for this, and now it is my responsibility to hold up my end of the board here and make sure I make it into the Kingdom. I do all those things that I need to do to enter into God's rest.

This typical conquest we have in the book of Joshua teaches us about preparing to possess the land fully or possess our inheritance fully. It teaches us how to act and grow into our inheritance under the leadership of Jesus Christ. It shows how we must face and overcome many challenges, many enemies on the road to full possession of the Kingdom of God.

Let us just flip to Revelation 21 just to see a kind of summary statement from God. We will go see verse 7.

Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

So this is what we have to do. We have to approach our Christian life as a kind of a battle where we must prevail over the enemies, cross over the roadblocks and the stumbling blocks and the pitfalls. All those things are adverse circumstances and temptations and sins that we have to overcome and grow and come to perfection.

And so God is telling us in the conquest narrative that we have to face something very similar in order to inherit the Kingdom of God. He has given

us as a guarantee some of the Holy Spirit to help us along the way. And He has given us a promise of eternal life but it is really not fully achieved until the resurrection. So that time in between, what we call the time of sanctification, is when we face all these battles and must overcome and grow.

As I mentioned, there are four major miracles in Joshua, and I will list them right now just so you know what they are.

The first, of course, is crossing the Jordan River. The second is the fall of Jericho. The third comes a little bit later; it is hailstones falling from heaven. And fourth, there is the famous one and the one that often is most argued about, Joshua's Long Day.

Each one of these has typical symbolic significance for us as we progress through the sanctification process, facing our trials and those stumbling blocks I talked about, and overcoming overwhelming odds to defeat our enemies.

And in each miracle, we witness what God does. I want to emphasize that, *what God does for us* to have the victory. And we are reminded of two things in these: *that we are not alone in our fight*, and secondly, *that we cannot prevail without Him*.

Let us go to the first one, the crossing of the Jordan River. That is back in Joshua 3. We will read verses 1 through 6 and then 14 through 17. I am not going to read the whole narrative, we would be here till 8. But I just want to pick out a few things.

Joshua 3:1-6 Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over. 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, 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, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before." And

Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." Then 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 went before the people.

Let us just drop down to verse 14.

Joshua 3:14-17 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 the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose up in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea [now called the Dead Sea], failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite 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 all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

Now we cannot get too detailed in all this. Each one could probably be a sermon. But we will see some highlights here.

We have to understand that the Israelites arrived at the Jordan at the height of the spring flood. The waters, the snow and such had come off Mount Hermon way to the north and had come down; it drained into what we call the Sea of Galilee and down the Jordan River, all the way into the Dead Sea.

And as it says here, it overflows its banks at that time. And so people come to the edge of the water here, and they see it as an impassable barrier. They cannot get across. It is impossible. It is maybe twice or however many times the amount of water that is normally there. And God brought them at a time so that they could understand that even when the height of the Jordan was at its highest, He could still work with it and bring them across.

Now this is the next generation's Red Sea. And according to the record here in Joshua 3, to their credit, they obeyed Joshua without complaint. You know, the other generation: "We need to go back to Egypt. Pharaoh's going to kill us!" This generation though, it is kind of like, "Yes, sir, Joshua. We'll go."

And the instructions are fairly simple. We have to understand that this is early in their journey. Think of it early in our journey; the simple instructions are helpful to get us started and get us moving in the right direction. So, likewise, Joshua gives some simple instructions. They must follow the ark of the covenant, which is a symbol of God's presence among them. Pretty simple. Just follow the ark.

But it is a little bit more. God will open the way through the waters because He is there with them. But they have to understand that the ark of the covenant is holy and the ark of the covenant typifies, symbolizes God's presence. God is there. He is sitting on His throne, the mercy seat is His throne. That is where He makes His judgments, from the mercy seat. And so the priests are bearing God—think of it as bearers of a portable throne or a portable seat. Porters, yeah, bearing a person of great eminence, and that is what they are supposed to think: that their God is right there being borne across the river, and they stop in the middle and they know, if they are up on the symbolism, that that is their God doing this.

Like I said, they are to respect that, to honor that, to honor its sanctity, honor God's holiness by staying more than a half mile away. That is two thousand cubits by measure. A cubit is about eighteen inches; you can do the math.

So they are supposed to stay about a half a mile away from the ark because that is God. Do not get too close in terms of, you can understand the symbolism there. He is a holy God. He is a strong and powerful God.

So the people sanctified themselves for this, probably by washing themselves and washing their clothes. They did this; their fathers did that in Exodus 19 when they made the Old Covenant with God.

And then they go through the waters or cross over Jordan as a type of baptism, just like going over the Red Sea was a type of baptism for the

earlier generation. We can plug in Romans 6 here. Paul says that baptism is imitating Christ, imitating His death and resurrection. He rose to newness of life, and so do we when we are baptized.

And also in this case, they came out on the other side of Jordan as a new people. So Yahweh goes into the water before them, and they follow, just like we go into the water after the example of Jesus Christ who was baptized Himself to make sure that we understood what righteousness is or what the righteous doing of that symbol is.

So, when they get out on the other side, they are truly sanctified people. They have been ritually cleansed and are ready to do God's work.

Now, the miracle occurs in that section we read from verse 14 to verse 17. The waters rose up in a heap at Adam. And we go over that, "Yeah, it was at Adam. That's where it happened." Well, that was *19 miles* upstream. It was a long way, almost 20 miles north of where they were God cut off the flow of the Jordan River. If you want to look at it on a map, it is modern Damiya. You can see Dam in there, A-dam, Damiya. Long way up the river.

The water below that point drained south to the Dead Sea. And in no time at all, the riverbed was dry because the water was being held up north at Adam, and that left all the Jordan River south of that area dry. That is a wide, wide, wide stretch of the river bottom to cross over. Of course, they had to stay a half mile away. So there was one mile of that river bottom that they could not use. They had to go half a mile north or a half mile south so that they would not approach to the ark of the covenant within that 2,000 cubits.

They had, or we think they had, a couple million plus people. You would need that long a stretch of the river to get them across in fairly short order. Seems like they just took part of a day to do it. But they had all that area where they could cross over the Jordan to camp near Jericho. I guess they camped around Gilgal.

So we need to understand why God did this, why God made this miracle happen. And actually, it tells us very specifically in Scripture here why.

Let us go back into chapter 3. We are going to read verses 7 through 10. I want you to try to pick out the reasons here.

Joshua 3:7-10 The Lord said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the 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." And 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 and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites."

Let us go on to chapter 4, verse 14.

Joshua 4:14 On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.

Drop down to verse 21.

Joshua 4:21 Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?'

The command had been that each tribe picked up a stone and place them in the Jordan, and they also placed stones on the bank and they were set up in Gilgal.

Joshua 4:21-24 "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 land'; 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, that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

Did you catch the four reasons? Reason number one: to exalt Joshua as their leader, as God's choice, just as Moses was. Remember, this is a type of Christ and the miracle was made to impress the Israelites that this was the leader. It was his word that one obeyed, and it was his directions that you took. Just put the name of Jesus in there, and you have your spiritual antitype.

The second reason: to assure Israel that God was with them and would drive out their enemies. This was all the -ites, you know, all the Hittites, Canaanites, Hivites, Perizzites, and all the rest of the -ites. He would do that.

Reason number three: to witness God's might to the world, that He was strong. He was making a witness of His power. And of course, we find out that Rahab the harlot told the men there, the spies that came in, pretty much immediately, "Hey, we've heard all the things that have happened since you guys left Egypt." And God had just done a fantastic miracle right on their doorstep, and they were all quaking in their shoes or sandals or whatever they were wearing and did not want to face Israel because they had a God that did awesome works for them.

And the fourth reason: to teach Israel to fear God forever. It is not a one-off thing. He wanted them to be so impressed by what God could do that they would remember this all the days of their life. And this would compel them to do God's will because He had shown, He had proven to them without a doubt that He is the great God of this universe and He has all power and all authority. So who else would you want to obey? So treat Him with great reverence all the days of their lives.

And all of these apply in very similar ways to us in our Christian lives, especially we need to understand these things at the beginning of our conversion. We have to know, be thoroughly convicted and accept and exalt Christ as our Savior, our God, and our King. We are assured of God's promises of divine help to overcome and enter into the Kingdom, that this is not a thing to be done alone, but God will be with us every step of the way.

And through baptism, we publicly declare our allegiance to God. That is why it needs to be done before others, even just a few witnesses, to say, "I'm with Him." And it makes a witness, makes a witness of God's power—to think that He could take someone as wicked as you and make you into one of His sons.

And we, in making this decision and covenanting with God, pledge to fear God forever for His awesome work in our behalf.

So these are the same reasons that we do what we do as we start our journey toward the Kingdom of God. Such a miracle of God's calling and leading us to repentance and to baptism gets our Christian lives started with a bang.

I think we all remember that time. We remember our baptism. We remember all the heavy study we went into and how God was beginning to change our lives, and there is a certain amount of fear there. Can I do this? Is this the right thing? And then God clears all that doubt away, and you become convicted that this is the way to go. And I know as you probably understood, that He was real, and He would help you.

So we are ready at that point to follow Christ wherever He may lead us, knowing that He and the Father are with us and will act mightily for us to bring us into His Kingdom. He is all in on us, and when we begin, He wants us to be all in on Him, in His way, and to maintain that.

Let us go on to the fall of Jericho. I will tell you right now, this is the last one we will do today because I talk too much. No, I had originally planned this as a two-parter. I will be giving Part Two on next Sabbath on the 18th. But I think by the end of this next one, you should be beginning to understand where I am going with all this and the links between this generation under Joshua and the church of God under Jesus Christ.

Joshua 6. We will go to verse 12. This is the fall of Jericho. I am going to read a bit here through verse 21. But I want to tell you that the text (something just to keep in mind) of this miracle tells us about three times what happened or it tells us what is going to happen, and Joshua gives the command to make it happen, and then it tells us what happened. So that is an integral part of this particular miracle.

Joshua 6:12-21 Then Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord. Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the Lord, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets. And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city! Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things [the dedicated things, the doomed things], lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

This particular miracle—another astounding miracle—all they do is march and shout and play trumpets. And everything was done for them. The defenses of the city—they were completely obliterated. They were wide open for conquering, for Israel to conquer the people there in Jericho.

Now, this miracle, it is about obeying the voice of the Lord. That is what this miracle emphasizes. That is why it is repeated. The instructions are repeated several times, and then we find out through the course of the story that the

people did exactly what God asked them to do. They followed the instructions. And when they followed the instructions, God responded and did exactly what He said He would do, which was to completely conquer Jericho. He made it easy. He did most of the work.

There are a few interesting little details about like they were supposed to march in silence. It is an interesting detail. How does that apply to our walk, our marching with our Leader? It shows a measure of trust and respect and of course obedience as well, that the people did exactly what He said.

And finally, the whole city and everything in it was devoted to destruction—is another big principle here. Those things except for some of the things here. What does it say? The silver and the gold was for God to put in the treasury, but everything else, everything organic, everything alive in the city was destroyed. They were to take nothing for themselves during this miracle or during the conquest of the city.

Now, I want to bring in II Corinthians 10 here because I think this will help us to understand what is going on here just a little better in terms of a spiritual application.

II Corinthians 10:3-6 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds [sounds very much like what we just read in Joshua the sixth chapter], casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Like I said, I think this really helps us to understand what we are getting into here in terms of the miracle at Jericho. I think it makes this commentary, if you will, by Paul, applied to what happened at Jericho, really clarifies things.

Now remember, Christ is represented here by Joshua himself, but also by the ark of the covenant that is being carried around the city and the priests' trumpets blowing announce His presence.

We saw that in "Jesus in the Feasts, Part Three," and the Day of Trumpets. What do trumpets signify in terms of the Feast of Trumpets and that is, that God is King, and He is here. He is our present divine King.

Now it is interesting to understand too that the Israelite warriors are there. There is a guard out front, and there is a guard at the back. So the warriors are there, marching, I almost want to call them an honor guard because they are present. They are equipped to fight. But they do not eventually do a whole lot of it because God does most of the work.

So the advance guard is there, the rear guard is there, but they say and do little but march and shout. They march; they follow the ark. They follow the directions. And they shout. What are they shouting? Well, shout of a shofar, shout of praise and honor to their King. They are not doing fighting; they are marching, and they are praising their God and their King.

The whole story, I feel, is designed to impress on a person reading it that God's agency and power in delivering enemy strongholds into our hands is awesome! How much do we have to do? We have to march along following God and praising Him for all His wonderful acts and all the gifts that He gives us and the grace that He gives us, our forgiveness, and all the wonderful things that He does.

And we watch Him work. We do almost nothing but obediently go along for the ride and cheer His presence and His absolute power over the opposition.

You know, we get ourselves into a lot of trouble when we try to interfere with God and the way He is working. How many times do we get out ahead of God and do something that makes it worse because we are not actually overcoming the problem, the obstacle or whatever it is, the temptation the way He wants to?

Usually we take charge, and it is not necessarily an act of faith but an act of desperation. We want out of this problem so badly; we want it solved and behind us. And if we just waited a little bit more, if we had marched a few more steps, if we would had a slight bit more faith in God's ability to do something, then it would have really worked out. But we stick our nose in, and we do something, and we only prolong the problem.

What did God say? March silently. Give thanks and praise to Me. I am your King. I will solve the problem. I will defeat the enemy. Just watch and the answer will become apparent. How did the answer become apparent? The walls fell down flat! The enemy no longer had any defenses. And then the warriors were able to go in and do the job.

This is a human problem because really we are just learning; we are just coming into our journey. We do not know a lot about how things work. But God gives us a clue here that if we just trust Him, He will find us a way of escape, a way to get out of the problem, the way to solve the problem.

Now we need to be obedient. We need to keep going forward and growing, but just wait on God and He will give the victory.

Let us move on a little bit. I really want to emphasize here that God will fight our battles for us.

We sometimes take too much on ourselves. If we really trust God, then we better trust Him to clear out the Canaanites before us. Let Him do His job. He has made those promises. You can ask Him to fulfill those promises for you, but then wait—wait for His answer. It will be very clear if you trust in Him.

Now, what about these devoted things, these doomed things, all the things that God said had to be absolutely destroyed? In the analogy, they represent the so-called valuable things of this world. Those are the things that Satan desires or wants us to desire. They are things like a lot of money or a fine garment or whatever it was that in the story was there in Jericho, free for the taking.

But God said, "Don't. I'm going to conquer before you. Don't take any of your conquered people's things. They're to be destroyed. They're not for you." Jesus in Matthew 6:19 calls them treasures on earth. Or in verse 24 He calls them mammon, in that same chapter.

The overall picture of the fall of Jericho is that God will ultimately destroy everything that opposes Him. And He wants us to have nothing to do with

the sinful things of the world that He has put under a curse. Do not touch them. Do not use your journey to the Kingdom of God for selfish reasons. Do not touch the things of this world that He says not to touch.

We could say, do not be a hypocrite and say you are following God, but all you are trying to do is accumulate things. I mean, we all want to be successful, or we want to have plenty so that we will have easier lives, have something for our retirement or have something for our grandchildren when we die. That is fine; that is fine. But He is talking here about living our Christian lives with one foot in the world and one in the church. And we are going against God even though He has made all of these things possible for us.

And so He makes a very big statement here at the beginning of this conquest that the world and its things are off limits. You do not want them. You do not want to bring them into your tent.

Now we are not going to go through Joshua 7. That is where Achan is found out that he had taken a few things from Jericho. And what we learn from that is that he did it out of lust. He did it out of covetousness. And the end result was condemnation and death.

What is most sad about all of this, about Achan's sin, is that it was not just the covetous person who died. Everyone around Achan died. God cut off the family of Achan for Achan's covetousness. What He is saying here, if we transfer this then to spiritual Israel, is that the sins we bring in from the world into our families and into the church contaminates the body of Christ. We do not want that because we all have connections here. And ideas like that and sins like that cause additional destruction.

And so we take a lesson out of this that when God gives us a victory, we are not supposed to take the spoils of that victory—worldly spoils—and bring it into the church because it is going to cause problems. That sin will begin to multiply. And so we have to protect the Body of Christ by leaving the cursed things in the world. Let them be destroyed.

So there is a two-fold lesson here in the fall of Jericho. 1) obey God carefully and exactly as possible. Follow His footsteps, march behind Him, and He

will fight your battles for you. And 2) do not secretly, hypocritically, take to yourself the things, the ideas, the behaviors of the enemy which God has already doomed to destruction.