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The Crossing Of The Jordan - Part 2

Introduction

In a previous consideration of this topic there was consideration given to the contrasts and the significance of the Jordan. It was observed that when the children stood at the Jordan, it was a major obstacle to the developing of the purposes God had for them. They were to go into and possess the land yet this river blocked the way. We face the same dark reality when:

- a) A loved one dies and the stark emptiness shouts in the silence, "They will never be back again". Life prevents us from being with them and death prevents them from being with us. Death blocks the way to their companionship and love and yet we must believe that this is also in the plan of God for our development. My mother lay in a hospice bed for multiple years. She did not know me, why did she and so many others linger on in life unable to speak, or know anything? It seems to me it is not for their blessing but (if exercised) as a lesson to us. Although we may live to be eighty or ninety years of age, it does not mean we will be able to function for God until the end of life.
- b) At times one gets hopes built up as David did when he desired to build the temple. He had all the material goods, the plans from God, and then Nathan came and told him not to build it (1 Chron. 28:11). It was an obstacle which seemed to terminate a hope in life. So often one has all the qualifications, but the door just does not open. A friend of mine who is a brilliant gospel preacher, when in early days wanted to go to the mission field. Due to bias among the elders, they commended one of their own sons who was scarcely ever known to lead a soul to Christ. This brother felt all his hopes dashed, however, he became one of the greatest overseers to hundreds of saints in several assemblies I have known.
- c) The truth of the stones and ark together in the Jordan prefigure the ultimate uniting of Christ with His own in death and in resurrection, hence, eternal security. This paper will consider eternal security and the uniting of the believer with the Lord.

While it is true that the first seven books of the Bible have a certain chronological order, yet the truths presented by the experiences of the children of Israel foreshadow our spiritual experiences. That which they experienced chronologically we experience spiritually. They were redeemed and then came under the moral government of God and then given the privilege of being able to approach Him as priests until sin brought that to an end. We also are redeemed and under the moral government of God, and by the eternal efficacious sufficiency of the sacrifice of the Lord, will always be able to approach God in prayer and worship.

- a) There is another aspect of their experiences which is similar to ours. The Holy Spirit records their going from Egypt and through the Red Sea into a wilderness, then as it were, doubles back on a certain truth by bringing them to the Jordan. If we see these two experiences as related to salvation, then that which is presented is two aspects of salvation related to the present life.
 - i) The Red Sea foreshadows our deliverance from the power of the great King (Pharaoh symbolizing Satan) via death (Rom. 6). Following this, the children of Israel learnt the holiness of God and His condescending grace in dwelling among them.
 - ii) The Jordan foreshows our entrance into our inheritance, and in it we see the power of God not only over Satan, the prince of the world as Colossians teaches, but His power in overcoming every opposition to our spiritual entrance and blessedness of that inheritance now.

Eternal Security

The twelve stones representing all of Israel signified two truths:

- a) Every Israelite, irrespective of their natural sin born behaviour, entered the promised inheritance. Not one individual failed to reach the promised land. How wonderful to grasp the wondrous truth of eternal security. It does not give license to live life as a sinner, or even a carnal believer, for Romans 6:1 answers that wicked imagination.

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- b) In reading the Biblical narrative, it is observed that the Ark went in first and stayed there until every Israelite was safely across. In the mercy and grace of God, I have been in a local church for fifty-eight years, during which I have heard multiple preachers tell of eternal security. Unfortunately, it was left there with little or no evidence of it. I have since found that at the moment of salvation God did some forty-one different activities which can never be nullified. Concerning this theme, the leading question is, "Does God save without consideration of His Holiness?" The unchanging answer is a resounding "No". Holiness is the beauty of God. It is the moral balancer that equates every attribute and action without detracting from any other. It balances His patience and nonchalantness, His firmness with gentleness, His truth with mercy. Holiness of God's character and unswearing righteousness cannot be changed, and being such, there is created a tension on at least five avenues which are all bound up with my justification. The questions are:
- i) Is God an idealist in viewing us ideally but not in reality, pronouncing us as righteous when we are far from it? The scriptures say: "let God be true" (Rom. 3:4), and "True and righteous are Thy judgments" (Psa. 19:9; Rev. 16:7) therefore, all He does is in light and there is never the slightest iota of covertness or deceptiveness in Him. If God were to do such a thing (and that is an impossibility) He would no longer be the God of the Bible.
 - iii) Am I declared justified by applying the righteousness of Christ to me as a clinical positioning?
 - iv) How can the righteous God righteously declare the sinner righteous?
 - v) How can the righteous God ignore the sins of the past?
 - vi) How can the righteous God be completely free from all respect of persons?
 1. The Biblical foundation answering the above questions is found in Paul's words (Rom. 3:21-28). There it is taught twice over that God is righteous (Rom. 3:21, 25) because He has put all humanity on the one footing, guilty before God (Rom. 3:19, 23). On that foundation He can righteously offer righteousness to the whosoever will, and cover the sins of the past by, "His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). One of the forty-one happenings at conversion is, He saved us.

Saved Us

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. 1:9)

The Holy Spirit caused the clause "Saved us" to be written and read, not in isolation, but within its context. That immediate context is the "power of God" (v.8), and the "calling" was "not according to our works, but according to His own purpose" (v.9). Several observations must be seen:

- a) God has saved us. It is God who saved us as verse eight indicates, therefore, salvation in its entirety is a work of God as further shown by references in Timothy and Titus to "God our Saviour" (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4)
 - i) Called us with an holy calling.
 - ii) Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace. God is working out His own purposes for: "The praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:4-6); "that we should be a kind of firstfruits" (Jam. 1:18); who works "according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself (Eph. 1:9). The purposes, decrees, and plans of God must be brought to fruition.
 - iii) Which was given us in (through) Christ Jesus.
 - iv) Before the world began. What glorious things happened before the world began. It was then God promised eternal life (Titus 1:2), and God chose us in Him (Eph. 1:4). As I read this, it can seem to refer to possibly two interlocking truths:
 1. The grace of salvation was given to us in eternity past.
 2. The calling and purpose of God for saving us was centered in Christ before the world began.
 - iii) It was a work done by the power of God. The word translated "power" is "dunamis" and it is the "dunamis" imbedded in the gospel which gives salvation (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18). The

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individual who is saved is, “kept by the power of God” (1 Pet. 1:5). The power (dunamis) which keeps is the “dunamis” of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13), and is the power that raised Christ from the dead (Phil. 3:10). Such is the power of God that it is impossible to break.

Through His salvation we are changed:

- a) From being an enemy to being reconciled (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21)
- b) From death to life (1 Jn. 3:14)
- c) From slavery to liberty (Jn. 8:34; Gal. 5:1)
- d) From no peace to peace (Isa. 48:22; Rom. 5:1)
- e) This is the gift God offers, and irrespective of what happens, this, nor any other gift, can never be taken from us (Rom. 11:29). It is all through Christ. Well may we sing:

Full atonement! Can it be?
Praise be to God! What a Saviour!

The stones which were in the place of death are now made a memorial for the glory of God, demonstrating His power (Eph. 1:19-2:1) and purposes (Eph. 2:6, 14-22; 3:10-11, 16-19).

. . . . *Rowan Jennings*