Joshua - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Joshua Arresting the Sun and Moon

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Next, as regards the miracle of the sun and moon being arrested in Joshua 10, Mr. N. says, "It has long been felt as too violent a derangement of the whole globe, to be used by the Most High as a means of discomfiting an army."1 Long felt by whom? It is a very, stale objection of infidels, like most, for they generally copy one another, so that, in the sense of its repetition usque ad nauseam, it has been long felt. But the object was not simply a means of discomfiting the army; it was a public testimony before the world that God interfered for His people, and would answer and put honor upon Joshua. And the sacred writer speaks of it in this way; "The like was never known," he says, "that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel." The miracle is as plainly stated as physically true. But Mr. ., who always shuts God out of everything, forgets that it was as easy for Him who created the world to stop it as to make it go- to hold it in equipoise for a moment in its place, as to create the laws which kept it in its course. Joshua thought much more of God and His power; Mr. . (as if there were neither) much more of the earth and its ordinary course, because it went naturally on. It seems to me that Joshua's was a higher, truer, nobler thought than that of Mr. . The thought that counted on God's goodness to His people and 1-us almighty power was nobler and truer than that which excludes Him out of His own creation, and forgets that, if God did make these admirable general laws, He must sustain their power every moment, and can never abrogate His own rights for a mass of earth. The earth was stopped turning round, and the sun and moon are spoken of just as we do, and as Joshua must have done. We know well it is the earth which turns round, and yet we say, the sun rises, sets, &c.

As to Jasher's being a poet,2 it is a mere copying anther's notions without any proof. There is not the remotest semblance of proof that Jasher was a person at all. All this is taken for granted by Mr. .; yet his whole argument depends upon it. There is no proof of Jasher's being a poet, nor of the word meaning a person. Mr. N.'s prosaic commentator speaks of the moon3 as well as the supposed poet. If one stopped, the other must too. But in afterward stating the effect, the historian speaks of the sun, because it was of course the sun which gave its continuous light for the task which Israel had to accomplish. It is Joshua, not Jasher, which gives the order to the sun and moon to stop; and it is the plain prosaic fact recorded by the commentator, as Mr. N. calls him, which is said to be found in the book of Jasher. It is not said of the elevated poetical appeal. In every particular, what Mr. N. says is totally unfounded. Moreover, it can hardly be doubted, that Joshua was ignorant of the rotation of the earth; and it is remarkable that he should have claimed not the stopping of the sun, but of sun and moon, the necessary effect of that which 'was wholly unknown to him, and yet he asks for that which, unless indeed God had disturbed the whole creation by unnecessary miracle, must have been the effect of the intervention of His power. Untaught by God, Joshua would have said, Sun, stand still. Taught of God, he asks for sun and moon to do so, which is just what God's power acting in the simplest way would do. He could not have answered precisely as to a man fully taught of God, if Joshua had asked for the sun to stop and not the moon, without a very extraordinary derangement of the celestial system. To make the moon go on in its just apparent course, when the earth was stopped, would have put the moon really out of its place. To have stopped the moon, unasked, as well as the sun, would not have been the same testimony to Joshua, though a wonder. But Joshua is taught to ask both. The rotation of the earth is arrested, and all is done at his word, though Joshua never knew the earth turned round, and that sun and moon would thus stop together.

Christian Treasury: Volume 11, Metropolitanism

Joshua 11:10-13

"And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any kit to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire. And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded. But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn" (Joshua 11:10-13).

In the beginning of the chapter we find that Israel's victories bring fresh war upon them, but the

confederation of their enemies only serves to deliver them all together into their hands. If God will

not have peace, it is because He will have victory.

In verses 10-13, a new principle is set before us. God Will in no way allow the world's seat of power to become that of His people, for His people must depend exclusively on Him. The natural consequence of taking Hazor would have been to make it the seat of government and a center of influence in the government of God. Then this city could be that for God which it had before been for the world: "For Hazor before!' me was the head of all those kingdoms."

But it was just the contrary. Hazor is totally destroyed. God will not leave a vestige of former power; He will make all things new. The center and the source of power must be His, entirely and exclusively His. 'This is a very important lesson for His children, if they would preserve their integrity.

The Remembrancer: 1910, Metropolitanism, A Solemn Lesson as to the Principle of

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Notes and Comments 2, Joshua Chapter 4

20-24. Note that not merely is circumcision in Gilgal within Jordan in the land, but the stones out of the bottom of Jordan are pitched there—we carry the witness and power of death there. We are dead and risen with Christ, not merely circumcised in heart—Christ's power is in it as well as the humbling though profitable end of self.

The full and entire deliverance of the sinner is associated, and indeed the only ground on which it can subsist, with the mortification of the flesh. The stones brought up from the bottom of Jordan were placed in Gilgal, saying, " Ye are risen, mortify therefore "; and in Col. 2 we find the true circumcision of Christ identified with the complete deliverance by His triumph over Satan, and that in death and resurrection; see Col. 2:11-15, and indeed to the end. Indeed without this deliverance in power, the mortification of the flesh would be impossible; it needs power—its only principle is death, for the flesh is unchanged.

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Expository 1, Joshua 5: Christ as Our Food

Joshua 5

I would say a word as to the way in which Christ may be considered as our food. He may be looked at as the food of the Christian in three ways.

Firstly, as a redeemed sinner; secondly, in connection with sitting in heavenly places in Christ; and thirdly, as a pilgrim and stranger down here. But this last is merely accessory and not the proper portion of the Christian. The Lord said to Israel that He had come down to deliver them from Egypt and bring them into the land of Canaan. He did not say a word about the wilderness when He came to deliver them from Egypt, because His interference for them there was in the power of redemption and for the accomplishment of His promises. However, there was the wilderness as well as redemption from Egypt and the entrance into Canaan; and Christ answers as our food to these three things. Two of them are permanent; for we are nourished by Christ in two ways permanently, that is, in redemption and glory. The third way is as the manna which we have all along the road. It is in these three ways that Christ meets His people and nourishes them all the way. Two of them remain, as we have seen, but the third ceases when the circumstances it was to meet have passed away. They did eat the passover and the manna until they got into the land, then the manna ceased; but they continued to eat of the passover.

Now there are two ways in which it is proper for us ever to be feeding on Christ. First, as the passover, for they ate the paschal lamb when the wilderness had ceased and Egypt had been long left behind. When in Egypt the blood was on the lintel and the door-posts, and the Israelite ate of the lamb inside the house. The thought they had while they were eating it was, that God was going through the land as an avenging judge; and the effect of the blood on the doorposts was to keep God out, which was a great thing to do, for if brought into God's presence as a judge, woe be to him in whom sin is found.

The state of the one that now eats of Christ is just according as he estimates the value of the cross, through fear of what sin actually merits. When we have got into the effect of the blood of the paschal lamb, we have got into Canaan, and enjoy the peace of the land as a delivered people, having crossed the Jordan-not only the Red Sea. That is, we have passed through death and resurrection; not as knowing Christ dead and risen for us merely, as presented in the Red Sea, but as being dead with Him and entered into heavenly places with Him, as in Jordan. Then the character of God is known as their God, that is, the accomplisher of all that which He purposed towards them. It is not keeping God out now, but it is enjoying His love; not looking at God as in the cross pouring out wrath in judgment against sin. In Jesus on the cross there was perfect justice and perfect love. What devotedness to the Father, and what tender love to us! And this is the way the saint who is in peace feeds on the cross. It is not feeding on it as knowing that he is safe; for Israel's keeping the passover after they got into Canaan was very different from their keeping it when judgment was passing over. In Canaan they were in peace, and they were able to glorify God in this way, in the remembrance of their redemption from Egypt.

In this type we see presented, not the sinner that feels he is safe, but the saint that can glorify God in his affections; his heart confidently flowing out to Him, and feeding on Christ as the old corn of the land-the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. We see Christ now by faith at the right hand of God as the glorified man, not merely as Son of God, but as Son of man; as Stephen, when the heavens were opened to him, beheld Jesus at the right hand of God. We also see Him up there. We do not see Him as He is represented in the Revelation, seated on a white horse, coming forth out of heaven. He will indeed come forth and receive us up where He is, and we shall be like Him and be forever with Him. But we shall feed on Him as the old corn of the land when we are there, and this is our proper portion now: manna is not our portion, though it

is our provision by the way.

Joshua sees Jehovah as the Captain of Jehovah's host, and Israel feeds in the land before they fight. And our portion is to sit down in it before we fight, because God has given it to us. They do not eat the manna in Canaan, because it is for the wilderness. The manna is not Christ in the heavens! it is Christ down here. It is not our portion; our portion is the old corn of the land. That is, the whole thing, according to God's counsels, is redemption and glory. But all our life is exercise down here, or sin (excepting that God does give us moments of joy), because, while here, there is nothing but what acts on the flesh, or gives occasion for service to God. We may fail, and then Christ comes and feeds us with manna, that is, His sympathy with us down here, and shows how His grace is applied to all the circumstances of our daily life: and that is a happy thing. For most of our time, the far greater part of our life, we are occupied in these things, necessary and lawful things no doubt, but not occupied with heavenly joy in Christ. And these things are apt to turn away the heart from the Lord and hinder our joy. But if we would have our appetites feed on Him as the old corn of the land, we must have the habit of feeding on Him as the manna.

For instance, something may make me impatient during the day, well then, Christ is my patience, and thus He is the manna to sustain me in patience. He is the source of grace; not merely the example which I am to copy. He is more than this, for I am to draw strength from Him, to feed upon Him daily: for we need Him, and it is impossible to enjoy Him as the paschal lamb unless we are also feeding on Him as the manna.

We know that God delights in Christ and He gives us a capacity to enjoy Him too. To have such affections is the highest possible privilege, but to enjoy Him, we must feed on Him every day. It is to know Christ come down to bring the needed grace and turn the dangerous circumstances with which we are surrounded to the occasion of our feeding on Himself as the manna to sustain us and strengthen us in our trial.

Miscellaneous 4, Philippians, The Epistle to the

In Philippians we get the experience of the Christian, 1 but no allusion to sin. All the out-goings of the heart- Christ. There is no " if " as to being in Christ, but plenty of " ifs " the moment we get Christ in us. Caleb and Joshua were sustained as examples of the power of faith in the wilderness; that is Philippians, God sustaining in grace where there was only weakness. The wilderness is the production of Christ's life in the circumstances of this life. Canaan is the power of Christ introducing us into spiritual conflict with the power of Satan. Holiness is as needed for one as the other, for the words said to Moses at the bush are repeated to Joshua in the Land (cf Ex. 3:5, and Josh. 5:15).

The epistle to the Philippians is a pattern of christian experience as it ought to be: the power of the Spirit of God leading in the path of God amid the manifold trials of the path-heavy trials of Christians getting on badly-all seeking their own. But faith cannot be hindered by circumstances in its link with God, nor, therefore, in thoughtful service for men, suited though it might be to the need around. The character of Christ, giving up self, is just what is needed for this.

Chapter 3, presents the energy of divine life connected with a Christ gone up as Man on high. Chapter ii., presents what forms our character down here-Christ came down. The two together give us the display of divine life in us. In one, Paul is on the way to glory and all else is dross and dung-there is no difficulty in giving that up. I may have a very good cloak in a race, but if I want to run I throw it off. What I get in the other gives me Christ as the object, imparting the mind of Christ, giving up self. If not given up-judged and got rid of-it impedes. The grace without the energy would be human sentiment; the energy without the grace would be stoicism.

The terms of the exhortation in chapter 2:14-16, tell us that what Christ was, we are to be. It is the power in the midst of the reign of evil. It is not the reign of good now. The failure of man was always uniform and immediate, but no failure can break the link of faith with the power of God. The darkest circumstances brighten the light; a candle is nothing in the day, it is seen for miles in the night. Dark times become the times for the manifestation of faith.

It is a great thing to have the right thing, but it is blessed and needed to have the mind of God to carry out the right. Now, if self is at work, this is hindered. See the Apostle's grace in chapter 2. 1 and 2, the mind of Christ is the perfect model of this. Does our energy take the form of a servant? It may be of faith, and with a true heart, but does it take the place of service?

The blessedness in glory is not simply blessedness, but Christ ministering to it. By abiding in Him we get His mind-self nowhere. The man that is walking in Christ is occupied with Him, and sees Christ in his brother, and all the ugliness of self in himself, so he finds it easy to esteem each better than himself. Just because of love the parent sees all the good qualities of his child. The power of good in the midst of evil is learned in the coming down of Christ from the glory to the cross.

Mark another character of the life-obedience (2:8). There is nothing so humble and unselfish as obedience, because self does not work at all. The Word forms this: we live by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. There is no truth in the world, but in the Word of God. Christian obedience is not being stopped in a will of our own, but in having no will-God in His Word guiding the new nature.

Chapter 2:12. The contrast is between Paul's work and God's work in the Christian. No deprivation of Apostolic power will stop obedience by God's working in us-only then there is called for more earnestness and seriousness, for Paul was a mighty warrior.

Salvation is the result in glory. Salvation is never looked at as simple redemption, but as the result in glory and blessing. We are subjects of the conflict between God and Satan. What a serious position! Which would you like, Christ's place, i.e., no place; or honor and position in the world?

Verses 15 and 16 describe exactly what Christ was-that is the Christian.

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