

# Heirs of Promises, Prisoners of Hope

**Sabbath Afternoon, November 22**

After the death of Moses the reins of government were placed in the hands of Joshua. As the servant of the Lord he was given a special work to do. His office carried with it great honor and responsibility, and the instruction given to Moses was transferred to him in a marked manner. "Now therefore," the Lord said, "arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." . . .

As Joshua viewed the city of Jericho, and viewed its fortifications, he lifted up his heart in prayer to God, for appearances seemed against him. "And, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand." This was no vision, but Christ in person, His glory hidden by the garb of humanity. . . .

Had the eyes of Joshua been opened he would have seen the heavenly host present to take down the walls of Jericho and place the city in the hands of God's people. Now with all confidence Joshua could follow the instruction and leave his burden, so great and perplexing, with the Lord! . . .

The Lord favored His chosen people with prosperity. . . . God declared this people to be a holy people unto Himself, and He promised that if they would keep their covenant with Him, He would supply them with every necessity for their happiness.

Very definite was the instruction that Christ gave when He made known to Moses the terms of their prosperity, and their freedom from disease. "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself," He said, "above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." . . .

This assurance comes to the people of God through their earthly pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan, where an abundant inheritance is prepared for all who love God and keep His commandments. —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 133.

Sunday, November 23

# Eden and Canaan

If they would keep His commandments, God promised to give them the finest of the wheat, and bring them honey out of the rock. With long life would He satisfy them, and show them His salvation.

Through disobedience to God, Adam and Eve had lost Eden, and because of sin the whole earth was cursed. But if God's people followed His instruction, their land would be restored to fertility and beauty. God Himself gave them directions in regard to the culture of the soil, and they were to co-operate with Him in its restoration. Thus the whole land, under God's control, would become an object lesson of spiritual truth. As in obedience to His natural laws the earth should produce its treasures, so in obedience to His moral law the hearts of the people were to reflect the attributes of His character. Even the heathen would recognize the superiority of those who served and worshiped the living God.

"Behold," said Moses, "I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" Deuteronomy 4:5-8.

The children of Israel were to occupy all the territory which God appointed them. Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God were to be dispossessed. But it was God's purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him. To all the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teaching of the sacrificial service Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite, and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world.

God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above. —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 289, 290.

Monday, November 24

# The Land as a Gift

Our Lord is cognizant of the conflict of His people in these last days with the satanic agencies combined with evil people who neglect and refuse this great salvation. With the greatest simplicity and candor, our Saviour, the mighty General of the armies of heaven, does not conceal the stern conflict that they will experience. He points out the dangers, He shows us the plan of the battle and the hard and hazardous work to be done, and then lifts His voice before entering the conflict, [telling us] to count the cost while at the same time [encouraging] all to take up the weapons of their warfare and expect the heavenly host to compose the armies to war in defense of truth and righteousness.

Human weakness shall find supernatural strength and help in every stern conflict to do the deeds of Omnipotence, and perseverance in faith and perfect trust in God will ensure success. While the vast confederacy of evil is arrayed against His people He bids them to be brave and strong and fight valiantly, for they have a heaven to win, and they have more than an angel in their ranks—the mighty General of armies leads on the armies of heaven. As on the occasion of the taking of Jericho, not one of the armies of Israel could boast of exercising their finite strength to overthrow the walls of this city, but the Captain of the Lord’s host planned that battle in the greatest simplicity, that the Lord God alone should receive the glory and mortals should not be exalted. God has promised us all power.

It is not great talent that we want now, it is humble hearts and direct, consecrated, personal effort, watching, praying, working with all perseverance. . . . Christ has sent His representative, the Holy Spirit, surrounding His living agents who are employed to pierce the ignorance with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. His voice will give assurance, “Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” The fact is to be ever kept before us that we are carrying forward the warfare in the presence of an invisible world.

We are all to calmly depend upon God as we look upon the obstacles and stubborn unbelief and consider all the risks that must be ventured, and then listen to the voice of Jesus: “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Yes, Christ is conqueror. He is our Leader, our Captain, and we can advance to the victory. Because He lives, we shall live also. —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 136.

Tuesday, November 25  
The Challenge of the Land

Throughout life we will have our conflicts with the powers of darkness and will be obtaining precious victories. Our eyes must be kept fixed upon the mark of the prize. When Joshua went up from the Jordan to take Jericho, he met a majestic Being, and at once challenged Him: "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" The answer was "As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. . . . Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." Not Joshua, the leader of Israel, but Christ Himself, accomplished the work of taking Jericho.

These were the lessons continually given the children of Israel. By directing their attention to the God of heaven, Christ taught them not to take the glory to themselves. Let us not cherish self-exaltation. When we begin to think we are something, let us remember that we have nothing different from or better than other mortals, except what God has given us.

When in need, bear in mind our relation to the children of Israel. Their history is clearly traced by the pen of inspiration. We are not to imitate their example of murmuring and repining. God placed upon the lips of Moses no words of condemnation. In this respect they were separate and distinct from other nations.

In accepting the religion of Jesus Christ, many seem to think that they are taking a downward step. These are in need of stepping down from their self-esteem and self-righteousness, and humbling themselves before God. But those who place themselves in connection with the living God, as His sons and daughters, are taking steps upward. . . .

We are to talk of heaven and heavenly things, keeping ourselves in a position of supplication before God. It is not safe for any of us to feel that we are where our feet cannot slip, but we should feel that the ground whereon we stand is holy. Cleanse the soul temple of its defilement, that Christ may come in and reign supreme. By beholding Jesus Christ, we shall grow up into His likeness. The more closely we are connected with Him, the more clearly we shall see our imperfections. . . . In order to know the power and strength of true godliness, we must hide in Jesus, dedicating ourselves to Him without reserve. . . . Fully dedicate your strength, your mind, all your abilities, to God. Wherever He places you, however humble may be your position, work with fidelity. —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 135.

# The Jubilee

Obedience to God's commandments would surely result in prosperity. "Thou shalt lend unto many nations," He said, "but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee." Deuteronomy 15:6.

After "seven sabbaths of years," "seven times seven years," came that great year of release—the jubilee. "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound . . . throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." Leviticus 25:9, 10.

"On the tenth day of the seventh month, in the Day of Atonement," the trumpet of the jubilee was sounded. Throughout the land, wherever the Jewish people dwelt, the sound was heard, calling upon all the children of Jacob to welcome the year of release. On the great Day of Atonement satisfaction was made for the sins of Israel, and with gladness of heart the people would welcome the jubilee.

As in the sabbatical year, the land was not to be sown or reaped, and all that it produced was to be regarded as the rightful property of the poor. Certain classes of Hebrew slaves—all who did not receive their liberty in the sabbatical year—were now set free. But that which especially distinguished the year of jubilee was the reversion of all landed property to the family of the original possessor. By the special direction of God the land had been divided by lot. After the division was made no one was at liberty to trade his estate. Neither was he to sell his land unless poverty compelled him to do so, and then, whenever he or any of his kindred might desire to redeem it, the purchaser must not refuse to sell it; and if unredeemed, it would revert to its first possessor or his heirs in the year of jubilee.

The Lord declared to Israel: "The land shall not be sold forever: for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." Leviticus 25:23. The people were to be impressed with the fact that it was God's land which they were permitted to possess for a time; that He was the rightful owner, the original proprietor, and that He would have special consideration made for the poor and unfortunate. It was to be impressed upon the minds of all that the poor have as much right to a place in God's world as have the more wealthy.

Such were the provisions made by our merciful Creator, to lessen suffering, to bring some ray of hope, to flash some gleam of sunshine, into the life of the destitute and distressed. —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 533, 534.

Thursday, November 27

# The Land Restored

If those who are still on the stage of action, who have had an experience in the dealings of God in the rise and progress of the work, would stand as did Joshua to strengthen the faith of the people of God by reviewing past blessings and mercies, they themselves would be blessed and they would prove a blessing to those who have not had this experience. If they would recount the sacrifices made by those who led out in the work, and would keep before the people the simplicity of the early workers and the power of God that was manifested to keep the work free from error, delusion, and extravagance, they would have a molding influence upon the workers at this time.

When we lose sight of what the Lord has done in the past for His people, we lose sight of His present working in their behalf. Those who enter the work now know comparatively nothing of the self-denial and self-sacrifice of those upon whom the Lord laid the burden of the work at its commencement. This should be told them again and again. . . .

A stern conflict is in progress between the Prince of life and the prince of darkness, and this battle calls for constant vigilance on the part of devoted workers. . . . If men and women refuse to accept the ways of the Lord, if they resist for any cause the light sent them by heaven, they will be found among the workers of iniquity. . . . When these see the error they have made and realize that they have not had a right spirit, that they have tried to kill that which the Lord would have live, let them honestly and frankly acknowledge their error. . . . When they humble their hearts before God as did David, confessing that they have erred, they have the sure Word of God that they will find pardon. . . .

Satan has been encouraged in his special work for this time. Those who have erred in the past, and have not humbled themselves to fully confess their wrongs and make them right, will continue to move in their own spirit. They will call truth error and error truth. These workers will eventually be found on Satan's side of the controversy. . . .

As God is faithful in His promise, so also will He be faithful in His threatenings. Brethren and sisters, I may be silent in the grave before these warnings from God may have the desired effect upon your minds and hearts; but in the words of Paul I say to you, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" everywhere to repent. —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 140.

Friday, November 28

## For Further Reading

*Christ Triumphant*, "The Controversy Between Christ and Satan Is Ended," December 31, p. 372.

*Christ Triumphant*, "God Faithfully Fulfills His Promises," May 12, p. 139.