

JOSHUA'S VICARIOUS MARCH OVER CANAAN

Talmage Reviews an Old Bible Campaign That Is Analogous to Lord Roberts' Invasion of South Africa.

A Washington report: In his discourse Dr. Talmage follows Joshua on his triumphal march and speaks encouraging words to all who are engaged in the battles of this life. Text, Joshua 1, 5: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." "Moses was dead. A beautiful tradition says the Lord kissed him and in that act drew forth the soul of the dying law-giver. He had been buried, only one person at the funeral, the same one who kissed him. But God never takes a man away from any place of usefulness until he has someone ready to replace him. The Lord does not go looking around amid a great variety of candidates to find someone especially fitted for the vacated position. He makes a man for that place. Moses has passed off the stage, and Joshua, the hero, puts his foot on the platform of history so solidly that all the ages echo with the tread. He was a magnificent fighter, but he always fought on the right side, and he never fought unless God told him to fight. He got his military equipment from God, who gave him the promise at the start. "Thou shalt not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." God fulfilled this promise, although Joshua's first battle was with the spring freshet, the next with a stone wall, the next leading on a regiment of whipped cowards, and the next battling against darkness, with the sun and the moon into his battalion, and the last against the king of terrors, death—five great victories.

As a rule when the general of an army starts out in a war he would like to have a small battle in order that he may get his own courage up and rally his troops and get them drilled for greater conflicts, but the first undertaking of Joshua was greater than the leveling of Fort Pulaski, or the assault on Gibraltar, or the overthrow of the Bastille. It was the crossing of the Jordan at the time of the spring freshet. The snows of Mount Lebanon had just been melting, and they poured down the valley, and the whole valley was a raging torrent. So the Canaanites stand on one bank, and they look across and see Joshua and the Israelites, and they laugh and say: "Aha, they cannot disturb us until the freshets fall." It is impossible for them to reach us." But after awhile they look across the water, and they see a movement in the army of Joshua. They say: "What is the matter now? Why, there must be a panic among those troops, and they are going to fly, or perhaps they are going to try to march across the river Jordan." Joshua is a looker at the water, the chieflain, looks at his army and cries: "Forward, march!" and they start for the bank of the Jordan. One mile ahead go two priests, carrying a glittering box four feet long and two feet wide. It is the ark of the covenant. And they come down, and no sooner do they reach the bottom of the river, a path of chalk and broken shells and pebbles, until they get to the other bank. Then they lay hold of the slender reeds, the reeds and willows and pull themselves up a bank 30 or 40 feet high, and having gained the other bank they clap their shields and their cymbals and sing the praises of the God of Joshua. But no sooner have they reached the bank than the water begins to dash and roar, and with a terrible rush they break loose from their strange anchorage.

As the hand of the Lord God is taken away from the thus uplifted waters—waters perhaps uplifted half a mile—they rush down, and some of the unbelieving Israelites say: "Aha, alas, what a mistake! Why could not those waters have stayed parted? Because perhaps we may want to go back. O Lord, we are engaged in a risky business. Those Canaanites may eat us up. How if we want to go back? Would it not have been more complete if the Lord had parted the waters to let us come through and kept them parted to let us go back if we are defeated?" My friends, God makes no provision for a Christian retreat. He clears the path all the way to Canaan. To go back is to die. The same gatekeepers that swung back the amethystine and crystalline gate of the Jordan to let Israel pass through now swing shut the amethystine and crystalline gate of the Jordan to keep the Israelites from going back. Victory ahead, but water 30 feet deep behind, surging to death and darkness and woe. But you say, "Why did not these Canaanites, when they had their splendid chance, standing on the top of the bank 30 or 40 feet high, completely demolish those poor Israelites down in the river?" I will tell you why. God had made a promise, and he was going to keep it. "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

But this is no place for the host to stop. Joshua gives the command, "Forward, march!" In the distance there is a long grove of trees, and at the end of the grove is a city. It is Jericho. That city was afterward captured by Pompey and once by Herod the Great and once again by the Mohammedans, but this campaign the Lord plans. There shall be no swords, no shields, no battering ram. There shall be only one weapon of war and that a ram's horn. The horn of the slain rams is sometimes taken, and holes were punched in it, and then the musician would put the instrument to his lips, and he would run his fingers over this rude musical instrument and make a great deal of sweet harmony for the

people. That was the only kind of weapon. Seven priests were to take these rude, rustic musical instruments, and they were to go around the city every day for six days—and then on the seventh day they were to go around blowing those rude musical instruments seven times, and then at the close of the seventh blowing of the ram's horns on the seventh day the perforation of the whole scene was to be a shout, at which those great walls should tumble from capstone to base.

The seven priests with the rude musical instruments pass all around the city walls on the first day and score a failure. Not so much as a piece of plaster broke loose from the wall, not so much as a loosened rock, not so much as a piece of mortar lost from its place. "There," say the unbelieving Israelites, "did I not tell you so? Why, those ministers are fools. The idea of going around the city with those musical instruments and expecting in that way to destroy it. Joshua has been spoiled. He thinks because he has overthrown and conquered the spring freshet he can overthrow the stone wall. Why, it is not philosophic. Do you not see there is no relation between the blowing of these musical instruments and the knocking down of the wall? It is not philosophic." And I suppose there were many wiseacres who stood with their brow knitted and with the forefinger of the right hand to the forefinger of the left hand arguing it all out and showing that it was not possible that such a cause could produce such an effect. And I suppose that night in the campment there was plenty of caricature, and if Joshua had been nominated for any high military position he would not have received many votes. Joshua's stock was down. The second day the priests blowing the musical instruments go around the city and again a failure. The third day and a failure, fourth day and a failure, fifth day and a failure, sixth day and a failure. The seventh day comes, the climacteric day. Joshua is up early in the morning and examining the troops, walks all about, looks at the city wall. The priests start to make the circuit of the city. They go all around once, all around twice, three times, four times, five times, six times, seven times and a failure. There is only one more thing to do, and that is to utter a great shout. I see the Israelites army straightening themselves up, filling their lungs for a vociferation such as never was heard before and never heard after. Joshua feels that the hour has come, and he cries out to his host, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city." All together the troops shout: "Down, Jericho! Down, Jericho!" And the long line of solid masonry begins to quiver and to move and to rock. Stand firm under! She falls! Crash go the walls and towers, the towers, the palaces, the air blackened with the dust. The huzza of the victorious Israelites and the groan of the conquered Canaanites commingle, and Joshua, standing there in the debris of the walls, hears a voice saying, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

Only one house spared. Who lives there? Some great king? No. Some woman distinguished for great kindness? No. She had been conspicuous for her crimes. It is the house of Rahab. Why was her house spared? Because she had seen a great sinner? No, but because she repented, demonstrating to all the ages that there is mercy for the chief of sinners. The red cord of divine injunction reaching from her window to the ground, so that when the people saw the red cord they knew that it was the divine indication that they should not disturb the premises, making us think of the divine cord of a Savior's deliverance, the red cord of a Savior's mercy, the red cord of our rescue. Mercy for the chief of sinners. Put your trust in that God, and no damage shall befall you. But Joshua's troops may not halt here. The command is "Forward, march!" There is the city of Ai. It must be taken. How shall it be taken? A scouting party comes back and says: "Joshua, we can do that without you. It is going to be a very easy job. You must stay here while we go and capture it." They march with a small regiment in front of that city. The men of Ai look at them and give one yell, and the Israelites run like reindeer. The northern troops at Bull Run did not make such rapid time as these Israelites with the Canaanites after them. They never cut such a sorry figure as when they were on the retreat. Joshua falls on his face in chagrin. It is the only time you ever see the back of his head. He falls on his face and begins to whine, and he says: "O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content and dwelt on the other side of Jordan. For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it and shall environ us round and cut off our name from the earth." I am encouraged when I hear this cry of Joshua as he lies in the dust. God comes and rouses him. How does He rouse him? By complimentary apostrophe? No. He says, "Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face?" Joshua rises, and I warrant you, with a mortified look. But his old courage comes back. The fact was that was not his battle. If he had been in it he would have gone on to victory. He gathers his troops around him and says: "Now, let us go and capture the city of Ai. Let us go up right away." They march on. He puts the majority of the troops behind a ledge of rocks in the night, and then he sends comparatively small regiments up in front of the

city. The men of Ai come out with a shout. The small regiment of Israelites in stratagem, and when the men of Ai have left the city and are in pursuit of these scattered, or seemingly scattered regiments, Joshua stands on a rock—I see his locks flying in the wind as he points his spear towards the doomed city, and then the signal. The men rush out from behind the rocks and take the city, and it is put to the torch, and then these Israelites in the city march down, and the flying Israelites return, and between these two waves of Israelites press the men of Ai are destroyed.

But this is no place for the host of Joshua to stop. "Forward, march!" cries Joshua to the troops. There is the city of Gibeon. It has put itself under the protection of Joshua. They send word: "There are five kings after us. They are going to destroy us. Send troops quick. Send us help right away." Joshua has a three days' march, more than double quick. On the morning of the third day he is before the enemy. There are two long lines of battle. The battle opens with great slaughter, but the Canaanites soon discover something. They say: "That is Joshua. That is the man who conquered the spring freshet and knocked down the stone walls of Jericho and destroyed the city of Ai. There is no use fighting." They sound a retreat, and they begin to retreat. Joshua and his host spring upon them like a panther, pursuing them over the rocks, while the catapults of the sky pour a volley of hailstones into the valley, and all the artillery of the heavens, with bullets of iron, pound the Canaanites against the ledges of Bethoron. "Oh," says Joshua, "this is surely a victory!" But do you not see the sun is going down? Those Amorites are going to get away after all, and then they will come up some other time and bother us, and perhaps destroy us. See the sun is going down. Oh, for a longer day than has ever been seen in this climate! What is the matter with Joshua? Has he fallen in an apoplectic fit? No. He is in prayer.

Look out when a good man makes the Lord his ally. Joshua raises his hand, radiant with prayer, and looks at the descending sun over Gibeon and at the faint crescent of the moon, for you know the queen of the night sometimes will linger around the palaces of the day. Pointing one hand at the descending sun and the other hand at the faint crescent of the moon, in the name of that God who shaped the worlds and move the worlds, he cries: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Aijalon." They halted. Whether it was by refraction of the sun's rays or by the stopping of the whole planetary system I do not know, and do not care. I leave it to the Christian Scientists and the infidel scientists to settle that question, while I tell you I have seen the same thing. "What is that to utter a sun standing still?" Yes. The same miracle is performed nowadays. The wicked do not live out half their day, and their sun sets at noon. But let a man start out in a battle for God and the truth and against sin, and the day of his usefulness is prolonged and prolonged and prolonged. But Joshua was not quite through. There was time for five funerals before the sun of that prolonged day set. Who will preach the funeral sermon? Massillon preached the funeral sermon over Louis XVI. Who will preach the funeral sermon of those five dead kings?—King of Jerusalem, King of Hebron, King of Jarmuth, King of Lachish, King of Eglon? Let it be by Joshua. What is his text? What shall be the epitaph put on the door of the tomb? "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

But it is time for Joshua to go home. He is 110 years old. Washington went down the Potomac and at Mount Vernon closed his days. Wellington died peacefully at Apsley house. Now, where shall Joshua rest? Why, he is to have his greatest battle now. After 110 years he has to meet a king who has more subjects than all the present population of the earth, his throne a pyramid of skulls, his graveyards the grave yards and the cemeteries of the world, his chariot the world's hearse—the king of terrors. But if this is Joshua's greatest battle, it is going to be Joshua's greatest victory. He gathers his friends around him and gives his valedictory and it is all of eminence. As he lies there he tells the story two or three times—you have heard old people tell a story two or three times over—and he answers: "I go the way of all the earth, and not one word of the promise has failed. All has come to pass; not one word thereof has failed." And then he turns to his family, as a dying parent will, and says: "Choose now whom you will serve, the God of Israel or the God of the Amorites. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

A Phonograph Clock. Another very interesting horological novelty at the same exposition was a clock in which the hours were announced by a phonograph, instead of being struck on chimes. The clock exclaims, "Attention! Listen well! It is 3 o'clock," or whatever the hour may be. While this idea has been suggested before, the actual construction of such a clock is worthy special notice. On a moving cylinder of wax there is registered at intervals, and at suitable distances the words to be repeated. These are articulated in a strong voice without any nasal twang. Any character of phrase can be substituted in the clockwork. It remains usual, except that the bell movement is replaced by a phonograph, put in movement by the aid of a weight, which is wound up at any time desired. A stem, actuated by the minute wheel, receives into its groove every half hour, to be transmitted to a catch, on which depends the stoppage of the movement of the cylinder.

Woman Hunting the Kangaroo. Among the black hunters of kangaroos in Western Australia are 27 women. It is a professional business, and there are about 125 persons who make it their regular business to hunt and capture the animals.

SUNDAY SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL LESSON NO. X. DECEMBER 9, 1900.

Barthimeus Healed.—Mark 10, 46-52. Commentary.—They came—Jesus and his disciples were making their last journey to Jerusalem. They have crossed the river Jordan westward since our last lesson. Jericho—City of the moon, or place of fragrance. This was the largest city in the Jordan valley. It was about sixteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, and in Christ's time was wealthy and flourishing. Josephus called it "a little paradise." At present the place is a foul Arab town of only about 20 inhabitants. Blind Bartimeus—Matthew says there were two. If there were two there was one, and Mark mentioned Barthimeus by name, probably because he was well known. Blindness is very common in Palestine. While in this country there were, in 1870, one blind in 1,900 population, and in Europe one in 1,094 population; there were in China one in 400, and, according to Dr. Geikie, one in 100 in Egypt. "Blindness" is common in Palestine to a degree which we in Western lands can scarcely realize. There is probably no country in the world, except Egypt, where this affliction is so prevalent. At Gaza, for instance, it is said that one out of every 100 of the population have lost one or both eyes, and our observation would agree with the statement.—Tristram. "The causes are the sudden changes in temperature and light, the intense brightness of the sun, and the fine dust in the air of those sandy countries."—Peloubet. Begging—All the roads leading to Jerusalem, like the temple itself, were much frequented at the time of the feasts, by beggars, who reap a special harvest from the charity of the pilgrims.—Geikie.

47. That it was Jesus—He had evidently heard of the fame of Jesus, and how He could heal the blind. He had to cry out for the chance of a lifetime, there is no time to lose in a moment he will have passed. Opportunities lost are always to be regretted, but can never be recalled. Son of David—With the Jews this expression applied to the Messiah. Have mercy on me—The case of this blind man illustrates well the condition of a sinner and his efforts in coming to God. 48. Many cried out, but he alone rebuked him.—R. V. W. never a soul begins to cry after Jesus for light and salvation, the world and the devil join together to drown its cries. He who would be silent, but let all such remember, Jesus is now passing by, and if they are not saved by Him they must perish everlastingly. Hold his peace—Remain quiet! He called the more a great deal. He was in earnest, and his position only caused it to increase. 2. He persevered; hindrances did not stop him. He used his voice. It was not necessary to urge him to pray, he called out his night prayer to Christ. He was determined to overcome the rebukes of his friends and the confusion and noise of the crowd, and attract the attention of Jesus. 4. He cries to be silent. But let all such remember, Jesus is now passing by, and if they are not saved by Him they must perish everlastingly. Hold his peace—Remain quiet! He called the more a great deal. He was in earnest, and his position only caused it to increase. 2. He persevered; hindrances did not stop him. He used his voice. It was not necessary to urge him to pray, he called out his night prayer to Christ. He was determined to overcome the rebukes of his friends and the confusion and noise of the crowd, and attract the attention of Jesus. 4. He cries to be silent. But let all such remember, Jesus is now passing by, and if they are not saved by Him they must perish everlastingly. Hold his peace—Remain quiet! He called the more a great deal. 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