Joy-Trust Medley

Three Thousand-Year-Old Replica
Of King Solomon’s Temple (Jerusalem)
At Tel Arad, Israel
Just 11 days after the Israelites left Horeb (Mt. Sinai is in Horeb), they were at the direct entrance point, from the south (Hebrew: negev), into the Promised Land. When exhorted by God to go up at once, they shrank back and refused. They would not trust God.

After realizing that they had sinned grievously, they presumptuously went up, trusting in themselves (Nu. 14:44). At that moment, the King of Arad (Nu. 21:1), “the Canaanite, . . . heard that Israel came. . . ; then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners.” As a result of the Israelites’ unbelief, it was 40 years before they utterly destroyed Arad (an important, wealthy, and powerful Canaanite capital city) in the 10th century under Joshua’s leadership (Jos. 12:14).

Five thousand years ago, the Canaanite city covered 25 acres with residential houses made up of a large room with benches running along the walls, a small storage room or kitchen, and a walled courtyard, which was two or three steps higher than the living area. There were no windows, and the door pivoted to the left in a socket in the stone threshold.

This earlier (Canaanite) city was built on the southern slopes of the hillside in farming land, whereas the later 10th century B. C., Israelite fortress, from the time of King Solomon (965-928 B. C.), was set at the site’s highest point. Although far smaller than the Canaanite city, the Israelite enclosure contained a sanctuary modeled after the Temple in Jerusalem, with a court, wherein can be seen a large sacrificial altar of unhewn stones (Ex. 20:25), an outer chamber giving access to the Holy of Holies, and the Holy of Holies (to the right and behind the rear sign). It is probable that when Hezekiah (720-692 B. C.) trusted God and followed His Word, removing the high places and breaking the images (II Ch. 31:1), that this temple was destroyed according to the laws of Moses (De. 12:11-14; II Ki. 18:4, 22).

As we turn off of Highway 90 (running along the Dead Sea) onto the easterly Highway 31, winding through the mountains, climbing from below sea level up 3300 feet in less than 15 miles to the modern city of Arad (five miles east of Tel Arad), we can’t help but think of the joys that we forfeit by not trusting Christ. At an elevation of 2000 feet, with its mild, clean, pollen- and mold-free, dry air, especially healthy for respiratory sufferers, it is no wonder that the descendants of Moses’ father-in-law chose to dwell here (J’g. 1:16). It was a strategic location between the Judean Hills and the Negev Desert, guarding the roads to Edom and Eilat (Elath), and was situated at the crossroads of the north-south and east-west trade routes.

Every problem of living tests our faith and provides us with an opportunity to follow God, rather than self, circumstances, or Satan. May we turn to Christ and walk according to His Word, counting trials “all joy” (Jas. 1:2), because they accomplish so much, “working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Co. 4:17).