

ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

Joshua 1

Introduction

Joshua is one of my favorite books, especially OT books. It is an amazing story of faith, of godly leadership, of victory, of God's faithfulness. The theme of the book of Joshua could be summarized in the words, "Faith is the Victory."

Background to Joshua:

Book –probably written by Joshua, apart from the final words, which record the death and burial of Joshua. It is almost like a journal of the events of Joshua's time as leader of the Israelite nation. It covers a time period of approximately 25 years.

History – The Israelites had been in Egypt for about 400 years. They were delivered miraculously—the Passover, the Red Sea...

Moses led them through the wilderness to the edge of the land God had promised. At Kadesh Barnea, they ran into a roadblock. Lack of faith kept them out of Canaan and resulted in another 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, while that entire generation died.

Now, as we come to the book of Joshua, Moses has also died, and God is appointing Joshua to lead his people. They are now once again poised at the gate, so to speak, ready to enter into that great land we call the Promised Land.

The book of Joshua is a story of conquest. It is the account of a people—the people of God—as they enter into a new land. They are about to begin a new era, a new life—a life of promise, of faith, of victory.

There are many parallels between the life of a believer and the life of faith and victory seen in the book of Joshua. I trust that some of these will become clear over the next few weeks as we look at some of the highlights of this book. Today we want to begin by looking at the first chapter and what we could call the commissioning of Joshua.

Begin by reading vv. 1-2 – comment briefly – "Moses...is dead" – this was a reminder to Joshua that he could no longer look to his mentor for leadership. He was now on his own.

The Promises vv. 3-5

Compare Deut. 11:24-25 – God's promises to Moses. In reality, these were promises to the people, given through Moses. Now, in Joshua chapter 1, he renews those promises to the people through Joshua.

A. I will give you the land – vv. 3-4.

The promise to Moses was renewed to Joshua

B. You will be victorious – v. 5a.

God's promise to Joshua was this: you do not have to be concerned about the enemy, or the size of the army, because I will fight your battles for you.

C. I will be with you – v. 5b.

This is a promise that is repeated over and over throughout this passage. See vv. 5,9, 17

These are the promises that God gave Joshua. Let's look for a moment at his instructions.

The Instructions vv. 6-8

There are 3 instructions given to Joshua in these verses.

A. Be strong and courageous v. 6-7a

Again this is a directive that is repeated several times. In fact I want you to see something interesting. This same command came to Joshua several times from different sources.

Look at these verses:

- Deut. 31:7-8 – Moses
- Deut. 31:23 – God
- Josh. 1:6,7,9 – God
- Josh. 1:17-18 – the people

Joshua could enter into the task at hand with confidence and courage because he knew that he was doing what the Lord commanded. He was doing God's will and he could do it in God's strength and with God's courage.

B. Obey my commands v. 7b

Be careful not to waver from the things you have been instructed. It is easy to get distracted and to wander from the center of the road. It's like walking a tightrope – you need to stay in the center.

Discuss the importance of obedience – to every detail of God's instructions. This is so important. It becomes obvious later on in the incident of Saul and the Amalekites – 1 Sam. 15 - *describe the incident*.

C. Meditate on the Word v. 8

Expand on the concept of meditation and the command in this verse – this book of the law – the books of Moses – the Pentateuch.

These are the Lord's instructions. Then a reminder...

The Reminder v. 9

God concludes Joshua's commissioning with a reminder of his presence. Joshua's task was to lead God's people into a great and abundant land – a land of prosperity. They were to enter into a life of rest, of faith and abundance. But he could do it because God would be with him all the way.

Conclusion

The same applies to us today. As I look at this passage of Scripture there are two areas of application that come to mind.

1. Just as Joshua faced a formidable task so do we. Sometimes the needs and responsibilities can be overwhelming. We have building projects we would like to see accomplished. There are questions about how to proceed with Sunday School. How can we effectively reach out to this community with the gospel? How do we care for our shut-in seniors? So many things that clamor for attention and so many questions about how to accomplish all that God has called us to do as a church—a local body of believers. Yet we can rest in the same promises as Joshua received; and we can go forward with the same instructions.
2. The second area is more personal – there is a tremendous parallel between the people of God in Joshua's day and us as believers today. Turn to Hebrews 4:1-11 (read selected verses and discuss briefly the Sabbath rest that is available for the people of God). We will

see this more as we go through the book of Joshua, but the point is that the Promised Land is a picture of the victorious Christian life that God wants for each one of us.

Let us not be satisfied with living in the wilderness. Let's live in the victory God has won for us, moving ahead in full confidence of his promises and his presence.

→ [From Illy]... THE COMPANIONSHIP OF CHRIST

The attitude of David Livingstone is seen in this account: "In 1896, Glasgow University conferred on the famous missionary the degree of Doctor of Laws. As Dr. Livingstone rose to speak, he was received in respectful silence. He was gaunt and haggard as a result of hardships in tropical Africa. His left arm crushed by a lion, hung helplessly at his side as he announced his resolve to return to Africa, without misgiving and with great gladness. He added, 'Would you like me to tell you what supported me through all the years of exile among a people whose language I could not understand, and whose attitude toward me was often uncertain and often hostile? It was this: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." On these words I staked everything, and they never failed!'"