

JOSHUA

1. Introduction and the New Leader

2/22/2007

In the Book of Genesis Israel was born. In the Book of Exodus she was chosen. In the Book of Leviticus she was brought near to God by the sacrificial blood. In the Book of Numbers she was proven. In Deuteronomy she was instructed. Now in the Book of Joshua she faces conflict and conquest in the Promised Land.

The Book of Joshua completes the redemption of Israel that was begun in Exodus. Exodus is the Book of redemption out of Egypt, but Joshua is the Book of redemption into the Promised Land.

A. KEY WORD

The key word in the Book of Joshua is 'possession'.

B. AUTHOR

According to the Talmud which is the collection of ancient Rabbinic writings of Orthodox Judaism, Joshua wrote all but the concluding five verses, which were written by Phinehas.

Joshua was the successor to Moses. He was a great general. Born a slave in Egypt, he was forty years old at the time of the Exodus out of Egypt. He was eighty years old when he received his commission as Moses' successor and one hundred ten years old at his death.

Joshua had a yearning heart for God's presence. We find him lingering at the tabernacle after Moses went back to his tent.

Exodus 33:11 So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

Joshua's name means "Jehovah saves." The same word in the New Testament is 'Jesus'. Joshua was a man of courage, dependence upon God, faith, leadership, enthusiasm and integrity. He is a type of Christ in his name and in his work. Joshua shows that a man of average ability may become a leader in the church. Joshua received his call not in flaming letters written across the sky, but from an older man who knew God and knew Joshua, and saw that he was fitted by God to be a leader.

C. THE BOOK

Some Bible scholars connect the Book of Joshua with the Book of Ephesians. Both describe a spiritual walk of promise, wealth and victory that are ours with Jesus.

As we see the children of Israel crossing over the Jordan River and entering and taking the land God promised, we can learn many lessons that relate to our lives. There are those who would see the Promised Land as a type of heaven and the Jordan River as a symbol of death, but they just don't fit. Because when the children of Israel crossed the Jordan, they entered a life of warfare, and there won't be any fighting in heaven.

But I believe crossing over the Jordan River is the process of sanctification from the old carnal life before Christ to a new life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

As we study this book, we will find encouragement, challenges and disappointment because Joshua acted upon his own confidence instead of relying on the Spirit of God.

I believe that this book gives us a abundance of lessons that we will learn to conquer those areas of the world and flesh. We'll begin to see God's Spirit working in our lives, bringing us victory where in the past we only knew defeat.

D. THE NEW LEADER

Joshua 1:1-5 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

Moses was not the man to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land – “Moses My servant is dead.” In fact, he could not bring them into the Land of Promise. Moses represented the Law and the Law cannot save us. The Law is a revealer and not a redeemer. It shows us that we are sinners. The Law was never a savior.

Moses could not lead Israel into the land because of his own failure. The problem was not with the Law but with Moses just as the problem is with us. The Law reveals that we have fallen short of the glory of God. Only Jesus our Savior, our Joshua, can lead us into the place of blessing He has for us.

God certainly could have simply eliminated all their enemies with a mere thought. But He calls Israel into partnership with Himself to see His will done. Just like that, being a born-again Christian is anything but easy. The things what we have to do and the thoughts we have to maintain are against our old nature. We have to be alert and prepare for any assault that come from our enemies by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God gave Israel 300,000 square miles of land and the most they ever claimed was 30,000 square miles. God had given the children of Israel their land in an unconditional covenant. But they chose not to receive God' full potential blessings. They did not do very well, did they? They took possession of about one-tenth of what God had given them.

That is about the same percentage of spiritual possessions claimed by believers today. How often do we miss out God's blessings for us because of our unbelief and disobedience to Him?

What a comfort to know that the Lord is with us no matter how bad the situation can get! God may be invisible, but He is in touch. We may not be able to see Him, but He is in control. And that includes the awful situation in the past, not-on-wonderful present situation and nail biting situation in the future.

E. BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

Joshua 1:6-9 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Before God could fulfill His promises, however, Joshua had to exercise faith and "be strong and of good courage". The Lord repeats this command to Joshua for four times in this chapter. Divine sovereignty is not a substitute for human responsibility. God's sovereign Word is an encouragement to God's servants to believe Him and obey His commands.

I haven't yet to see anyone who is in the Lord with strong faith, but does not spend time in the Word. They go side by side. Without meditating in God's Word, no one, I mean no one, can have a good foundation to stand on when the enemy's onslaught or temptation comes against him.

During the years of his leadership, Moses kept a written record of God's words and acts and committed this record to the care of the priests. We have a reason to believe the entire five Books of Moses – Genesis through Deuteronomy – comprised "the Book of the Law," the greatest legacy Moses could leave to his successor Joshua.

It is not enough for us to carry our Bible back and forth. We have to take time to read it daily and make it a part of our inner person by meditating on it.

F. THE MARCHING ORDER

Joshua 1:10-15 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess.' " 12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, 15 until the Lord has given your brethren rest, as He gave you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

I don't know about you I hate to wait for anything and anyone including God. That is the precise reason why the Lord often puts me in that awful waiting room to make me to be more like Jesus who waited upon the Father for everything.

Waiting for God is often the most difficult part for us, but days of waiting can be days of preparation in God's work. There is no such thing as wasted time with God.

The Reubenites, the Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh did not cross over the river to settle there, and we find their defection very early. Moses was still alive when they came to the east bank of the Jordan, and you will find that they made a request recorded in Numbers 32:1-5. They asked for land on the wrong side of the Jordan River.

Joshua reminded them their promise to Moses and the tribes agreed to follow through.

G. THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO JOSHUA

Joshua 1:16-18 So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the Lord your God be with you, as He was with Moses. 18 Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."

They encouraged him by assuring him of their complete obedience. We could use that kind of commitment in the church today.

If God's people today saw obedience to Christ as a matter of life or death, it would make a significant difference in the quality of our ministry to a lost world and also to one another. We often obey the Lord's orders if we feel like it, if it's convenient, and if we can get something out of it. We ought to be shamed of ourselves for that kind of spiritual attitude. We need to be obedient to the Lord consistently and completely.

H. APPLICATIONS

- 1) The things we have to do and the thoughts we have to maintain are against our old nature. We have to be alert and prepared for any assault that comes from our enemies by tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) We often miss out on God's blessings for us because of our own spiritual blindness, selfishness and short-sightedness.
- 3) We need to remember God's promise to be with us, so that we don't panic about an uncertain future.
- 4) Without meditating in God's Word, no one can have a good foundation to stand on when the enemy's onslaught or temptation comes against him.