

A Man Called Joshua
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Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
November 15, 2020

Diaspora XXXV – The Church Scattered, Thirty-fifth Sunday

Text: Joshua 1:1-9

Purpose: God called Joshua to a task to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. God calls us to occupy the land in which we live. We need to be strong and of good courage to face the trials and tribulations of the day. God may be calling out others to stand in the place of those that are no longer with us. God's work still needs workmen.

Introduction

If you have listened to BBN Radio (Bible Broadcast Network) for very long, you will be familiar with a man by the name of J. Vernon McGee. Dr. McGee has a program that comes on every day at 12:30 that carries you on a five year "Bible Bus" tour of the Bible. I remember when I was a route delivery driver 30 years ago, I would pack my lunch and stop every day to listen to him. Dr. McGee in his commentary on the Book of Joshua has the following to say about Joshua in his introductory comments.¹

J Vernon McGee
1904 - 1988

Pastor
Theologian
Radio Broadcast Pioneer

Thru the Bible
www.TTB.org

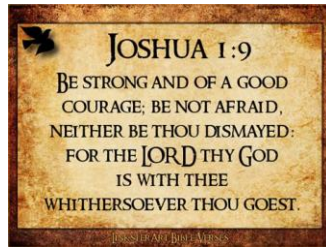


“In the Book of Genesis Israel was born. In the book of Exodus Israel was chosen. In the Book of Leviticus, Israel was brought to God justified through the blood. In Deuteronomy it was

¹ Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, Vol. 2, page 1.

instructed. But in the Book of Joshua, the children of Israel face conflict and conquest.

“The Book of Joshua completes the redemption of Israel that was begun in Exodus. While Exodus is the book of redemption out of Egypt; Joshua is the book of redemption into the Promised Land.



“The key word in the Book of Joshua is *possession*. God had given the children of Israel their land in an unconditional covenant. To Abraham He had said, “*And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God*” (Gen. 17:8).

However, Israel’s possession of the land was conditional. There was to be conflict and there was to be conquest. They had to fight battles and lay hold of their possessions. And as Joshua reminded them in his final message before his death, their obedience to the Word of God would determine continued possession of the land.

As we move through the remainder of the Old Testament, you will find in your studies, evidence of a pattern in Israel’s defiance of obeying God’s word, law, instruction, precepts, and ordinances. The result was their eventual removal from the Promised Land. Joshua’s word given here was true. If the people of God will be obedient to what God teaches, then the people of God would be a blessed people. Failure to follow what God teaches resulted in judgment and death. God has not changed the way in which he works with a nation.

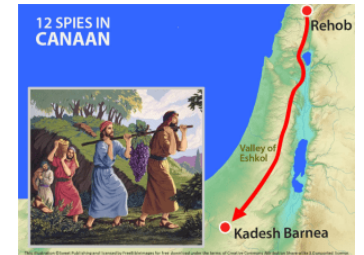


A nation that lives in rebellion to the clear teaching of God’s word will face judgment. I did not say that, God did.

Overview of the Life of Joshua

The Talmud (which is a collection of teaching from various rabbis’ explanations of the Old Testament) says that Joshua wrote all but the concluding five verses of the book of Joshua. Joshua was chosen as the successor to Moses.

Joshua was one of the twelve spies that were chosen to spy out the Promised Land. If you remember last week, we discussed how the ten spies rejected the promise of God and how they failed to trust God. The two spies, Joshua and Caleb, were immediately ready to trust God and conquer the land. The people accepted the report of the ten and reaped judgment from God. They were sentenced to 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.



Joshua was born as a slave in Egypt. At the time of their departure from there, he was 40 years old. During those 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, Joshua served as assistant to Moses during the wanderings in the desert. While in the desert, Joshua even organized the men into an army that fought off the enemy Amalek. Just prior to Moses death, Joshua was commissioned and ordained by Moses to serve as Israel’s new leader. That story can be found in Numbers 27:18-23.

At the age of 80, Joshua led the people into the Promised Land. Joshua led the people to rededicate themselves to God. Three supernatural events occur as Joshua begins to lead the people.

1) They crossed the Jordan River on dry ground (during the flood season) similar to what occurred when they crossed the Red Sea. The Priests led the people across the Jordan River.

2) The angel of the Lord appears to Joshua and gives him direction as to how they were to defeat the people of Jericho. They were to march around the city for seven days. On the seventh day, they marched around seven times, and with a loud shout:

3) The walls of the city of Jericho fell down just as God told them they would, thereby opening the way for the people of Israel to defeat the city.

I have been to the ancient city of Jericho. They are still excavating the city and finding out how large it really was.

Over the next 30 years, Joshua only met with one defeat, and that was at Ai. One man disobeyed the Lord concerning taking the spoils from their defeated enemy.



God judged the nation and the family of the man who sinned. Until that sin was put away from the people, God's disfavor continued. Once that sin was removed, God blessed all of their activities.

From that time forward, Joshua defeated 31 kings and defeated a large portion of the land. One source of future troubles resulted when they signed a peace treaty



with the Gibeonites – without consulting the Lord - which would later become a thorn in their flesh.

Once the land was subdued, it was divided among the twelve tribes. This geographic distribution continued throughout the life of Israel. Even today you can find evidences of the influence in this first distribution of land.

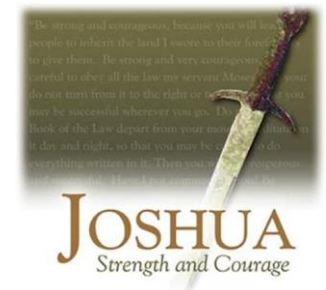
The Characteristics of a Heaven-Sent Leader²

We could spend hours discussing the various battles that the children of Israel faced. We could pull out a map and trace their conquests and struggles. But there are some great lessons that can be found in the midst of this passage concerning a heaven-sent leader.

Joshua's name means, "Jehovah saves." The same word in the New Testament is Jesus. Joshua was a man of courage, dependence upon God, faithful leadership, enthusiasm, and fidelity. He is a type of Christ in his name and in his work. Dr. J. Vernon McGee has said, "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."³

A heaven-sent leader is ...

1. Called by the Lord. The Lord said concerning Joshua, "*Take thee Joshua, and lay thine hand upon him.*" (27:18) This passion was not his choosing, but God chose him. It is God's will to push us out of our place of comfort and hiding and into positions of leadership in the work of God.



² Outline – Handfuls on Purpose, Vol. 3, page 122-124.

³ Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, Vol. 2, page 1.

We need to pray that God would send forth laborers into the field. God will send us those he wants in our midst.

A heaven-sent leader is ...

2. Filled with the Spirit. Joshua was one of the ones that was counted in the seventy who shared the Spirit of power that rested upon Moses. (Num. 11:17) All Christians have a measure of the spirit of God in their lives, but they may not be filled with the spirit. Ephesians 5:18 encourages Christians to *“Be ye filled with the Spirit.”*

A heaven-sent leader is ...

3. Honored by the Lord’s representative. Moses shared the honor that God gave to him. In Num. 27:20, it says, *“Thou shall put some of thine honor upon him.”* As we go, we need to recognize that we are the Lord’s representatives.

A heaven-sent leader is ...

4. Accepted by the Lord’s People. In Joshua 1:16, we see the children of Israel saying, *“According as we harkened unto Moses, so will we hearken unto you.”* A leader is loved and accepted by the people. When a person speaks in the power of the Holy Spirit, others will recognize that in their conscience and hear that person’s words as if they are from God.

A heaven-sent leader is ...

5. Guided by Divine Light. When Joshua sought a word from the Lord, he went to the priest Eleazar and the priest consulted the Urim. No one today knows exactly what that is. But it was a way of obtaining a sure word from God. Today we have God’s written word which we can turn to and hear from God how we should live our lives. A heaven-sent man will not depend upon the wisdom of man, but will depend upon the wisdom of God’s word.

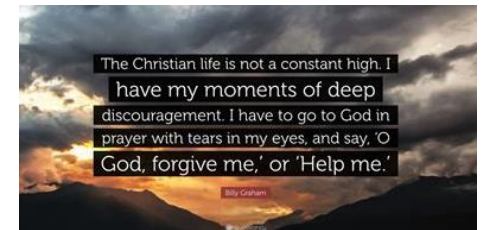
A heaven-sent leader is ...

6. Successful in His work. God told Joshua that *“They shall come in, both he and all the children with him.”* He was called and empowered to bring the people into the land of promise, and he brought them in without fail. In Joshua 3:7 God said, *“As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee.”*

If God is to work in us and through us to do what is pleasing in His sight, then we must in spirit, soul, and body be perfectly yielded up to Him. The secret of true and lasting success lies in His will being done in us.

The Higher Christian Life⁴

The book of Joshua is not just about the leader – it is also about the Higher Christian Life we are all called to live. The Book of Joshua has a very practical application to the believer today. The Promised Land cannot be a type of heaven since heaven is not a place of conflict and conquest. Heaven is received as a gift of grace from God.



Rather, the Promised Land represents the place where believers are called to be here in this world today. The book of Joshua corresponds to the epistle of Ephesians in the New Testament where we see that the believer is blessed with all spiritual blessings. The practical possession and experience of them depends upon conflict and conquest. These are never attained thorough the energy of the flesh, but through the power of the Holy Spirit in the yielded life of the believer. The Book of Joshua is the pattern, and it illustrates the method by which the believer can possess what God has given to him.⁵

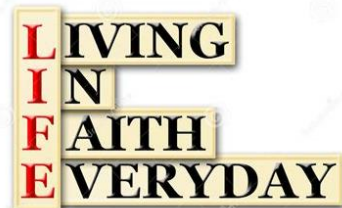
⁴ Outline – Handfuls on Purpose, Vol. 3, page 237-240.

⁵ Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, Vol. 2, page 1.

The land of Canaan is often referred to as “the land of rest.” If you read about the conquest of the land, you will see that in order for them to possess their land, they needed to overcome the local enemy. To obtain this, it would mean hardship, warfare, and victory. It simply meant to enter into the plans and purposes of God, and to quietly rest in Him alone.

This life of Faith includes ...

1. Living by faith in the promises of God. Accept God at His word and live out our lives in accordance to His written word. The only way to know God is to read, study, and apply his word in our lives.



This life of Faith includes ...

2. Consecration to the will of God. If we are to walk by faith, we need to yield our lives to the will of God. Are we doing what God would have us to do in our family, our work, and our relationships? You have to intentionally align your life to what God wants. It is so easy to follow the way of the world. *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”*

This life of Faith includes ...

3. Fellowship in the presence of God. The life of faith includes seeking the fellowship of God in our daily walk. In Joshua 1:5, we see that God was promising Joshua that He would be with Him and never forsake him. Joshua lived as if God was ever present with Him. On Joshua’s deathbed, he said, *“The Lord your God, He it is that fights for you, as He hath promised.”* (Joshua 23:10)

This life of Faith includes ...

4. Testimony to the honor of God. The whole life of Joshua was a testimony for God. When the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River, they gathered twelve stones and established a monument indicating their dedication to God. These stones became a testimony of the goodness and faithfulness of God.

This life of Faith includes ...

5. Warfare against the enemies of God. As soon as they passed over Jordan, they began to fight against their enemies. The enemies were great and they were many. The inhabitants of the land even bonded together to fight against the children of Israel. (Josh. 9:1)



But if we as Christians examined our enemies, we would find that there are enemies like King Lust, King Pride, King Fearful, King Please-all, King Fashion, King Hate-the-truth, King Worldly-minded, and King Unbelief. We are in warfare. We need to be on guard against these that war against the soul.

This life of Faith includes ...

6. Victory in the Name of Jesus. God told Joshua that *“No man would be able to stand against you all the days of your life.”* (Josh. 1:5) Our life should also be a life of victory. If there is a defeat like the one at Ai, it is because of sin in our life. Sure there will be trials and tribulations, but if we abide in Christ, and Christ abides in us, then we will bear fruit and ultimately be victorious.

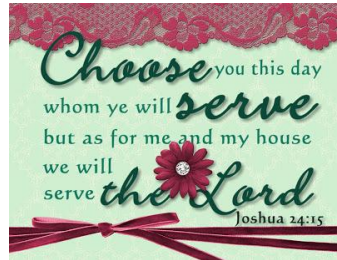
This life of Faith includes ...

7. Rest in the faithfulness of God. When we walk in this world, we need to walk by faith. When we walk by faith, we can rest in the faithfulness of God. Joshua and the children of

Israel divided up the land (14:15) and rested from their wars. They rested in the faithfulness of God. They lived in a land in which they did not purchase, received vineyards that they did not plant, and cities that they did not build. (24:13) It is true for us as well. We should rest in the provision of the Lord, but we must also be diligent when there is more land (blessing) to be possessed.

The same is true for this church. There may be a few people present here today that were here at the beginning of Spilman, but for most

of us gathered here, we are recipients of another person's work and vision. We worship in a building built on a lot we did not buy, in a building we did not build, in pews we did not pay for. We are recipients of the work of another person's faithfulness to God and likewise: what we do during our time on earth is a gift to the next generation.



The Death of Joshua

At the end of Joshua's life, he bid farewell to Israel. He counsels the people to be loyal to God and remain a separate people and remain as a separate nation. After his death, the nation began to be ruled by a series of Judges. Over time, these judges corrupted the word of God and through their faithlessness, Israel drifted away from God.

It was God's desire that He Himself be the King and ruler of the people. But the people wanted to have a king to rule over them. God warned the people that if they chose that path of a King, they would in essence sell themselves and their possessions to the king. The King that was chosen was Saul.

As I reflect upon the rise and fall of leaders, it causes me to realize that life is so very brief. That people come into our life, and then they are gone. Rev. Jack Sauls preached a sermon

years ago reminding me that there is a circle in which people seem to come and go in life. Many people we know have already gone ahead of us and are ever present with the Lord. Our circle down here is getting smaller while our circle in heaven is growing larger.

Life is but a vapor. Even in our church we see many of our key leaders and workers taken from us. Our church needs leaders to step forward and help bear the burden of ministry and proclamation. God's work continues on in this world even after we are gone. We need to be training up the next generation to pick up where we leave off. We will not be here for ever, but God's work continues to need willing workers.



Workman after workman dies,
This Thy Church, Lord, sorely tries,

As in tears she stricken stands,
Sadly missing "vanished hands."

Wills strenuous, and brave hearts
Ever ready to take their parts.

O God, wilt fresh trust us give?
Workmen die, but Thou doest live;

In deepest desolation
Thou thy work dost carry on.⁶

LET US PRAY

⁶ Poem - Handfuls on Purpose, Vol. 3, page 122.