

Josh01 – Taking Possession of The Promised Life – Joshua 1:7-9  
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Open your Bibles. We will be starting a new series today. Title of the message, “Taking Possession of The Life.” This series will be in the Book of Joshua.

You are really going to love studying the Book of Joshua. The Book of Joshua paints an incredible picture for us of what is required for us to “Take Possession of The Promised Life” in Jesus Christ.

Along with being an historical book, Joshua is a book of huge “typology”. Joshua comes alive with analogies and metaphors and types that teach us the great truths of the Christian life.

When we say something is a “type” in the Old Testament we mean that it is a picture (a foreshadowing) of the real thing that is often yet to come. Joshua is a book of massive pictures of the spiritual truths we need to live in today. Because “Every picture tells a story... doesn’t it?” and the picture that the Book of Joshua paints tells one of the greatest stories there is about how we “Take Possession of The Promised Life.”

I want to give credit right up front to a book titled “**Victorious Christian Living**” by Alan Redpath. Alan Redpath is one of my favorite authors and I encourage you to read *anything* he has written.

His book on Joshua **Victorious Christian Living** made such an impact on me the first time I taught Joshua fifteen years ago that God significantly used both the Book of Joshua *and* Alan Redpath’s teachings on it to sustain me during the single most difficult spiritual that my family and I have ever experienced in ministry. It was during the first few years of birthing this church and we endured a spiritual attack that I can only compare to the intense battles that we’ll see in the Book of Joshua.

Joshua is about victory in the battles of the Christian life and even more so, Joshua is about “Taking Possession of The Promised Life”.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, you are our YAHSHUA. You are YAHWEH SAVES. You are our Mighty Leader, our Captain, the Pioneer of Our Salvation. And you go before us into the Promised Life, Lord. And you lead us in great victory, and you empower us and inspire us. And you shield us and hem us in on all sides. You go before and behind us, Lord. Your hand is upon us. But Lord, we are in the battle. As much as the victory is promised, we pray as we begin to unfold the Book of Joshua that we would sense our role in the victory. That we would sense our requirement in taking possession of the Promised Life.*

*Lord, begin to open this up to us today, and inspire us to be transformed by your living and active and powerful Word, for your glory in our lives and in your name, amen.*

Today, I need to take the entire message to introduce this concept of “Taking Possession of The Promised Life”. If you’re visiting today we (most often) teach the Bible “verse-by-verse” here on Sundays. But at the beginning of a series, like today, I have to take the time to lay out the background and set the direction of the series. So we won’t be looking at too many verses in Joshua today. But if you will grasp (today) the background and direction that we’ll be taking in Joshua, then when we do get to those verses they will speak volumes to you.

Joshua is about the people of Israel taking possession of the Promised Land. So first, let’s talk about the actual “Promised Land” which is (in essence) the land we call Israel today. Although the full “Promised Land” given to Israel by God was much, much larger than Israel is today.

**Warren Wiersbe** says: *God chose the land of Israel to be the “stage” on which the great drama of redemption would be presented.*

The stage where the Great Drama of Redemption unfolds is the actual Promised Land – that we call Israel today.

**In Ezekiel – The Bible calls the land of Israel**

*“The center of the nations”* (Ch 5) - &  
*“The center (literally navel) of the World”* (Ch 38)

And all of the Bible – right through Revelation 22 – refers to Jerusalem and the Land of Israel *in the same way*. Since God’s first promise to Abraham (Genesis 12) that geographical land was promised to Israel and given to Israel by God.

**So - FIRST – Joshua is the Historical Account of;**

The **ACTUAL People** of Israel  
taking **ACTUAL Possession**  
of the **ACTUAL Land** that today is Israel.

Which is important in light of the recent United Nations resolution – in October 2016 issued through its UNESCO Agency – in that the U.N. resolution regarding the Temple Mount in Jerusalem all verbiage regarding the historical connection between Israel and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem was *removed*. And **ONLY** verbiage regarding the historical connection of *ISLAM* to Jerusalem was written into that resolution. The

resolution (of course) was to say that Israel has *no right* to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Which is interesting since Jerusalem became Israel's capital in 1,000 BC under King David and Solomon built the first Temple there during that same time period. And Jerusalem only became the *third* most important city to Islam 1,600 years later in AD 638 when the Arabs conquered Jerusalem and built the current Islamic Mosques.

You might say, "Why would the United Nations do something as crazy as that?"

Well, in October 2015 (one year earlier) the Islam Mufti (legal expert) in Jerusalem said the Islam Mosque on the Temple Mount was built 3,000 years ago (1600 years before the beginning of the Religion) and, in fact, the Mosque was built 30,000 years ago as well (whatever that means). But that was good enough for the United Nations who decided that crazy statement was more accurate the "proven" historical accuracy of the Bible.

So Joshua is a very important historical book as the powers of this world continue to re-write history. And, by the way, as a hint to who the powers of this world truly are, their re-writing of history is always focused on removing the God of Israel and the Bible. And so maybe you can guess what "power" is actually behind all that historical revision.

So, first, the Book of Joshua is about the actual history of the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.

However, as I mentioned, Joshua is also chock full of types and illustrations that teach us the greatest truths of living victoriously in the Christian life and that is actually where most of our study will be focused.

Now in order to do that, we've first got to clear up the greatest misinterpretation regarding *what* the Promised Land illustrates (is a "type" of). Contrary to "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and other hymns, the Promised Land *cannot* be a "type" (picture) of heaven and "Crossing the Jordan" *cannot* be a "type" (picture) of death through which we enter heaven. This is because, as we will see, living the "Promised Life" in the "Promised Land" is all about *winning battles* against the enemy and that does not make a very good picture of heaven, right?

*And* because of the disobedience of God's people, Israel was (for a time) *exiled* (driven out) of the Promised Land, which again, is not a great picture of heaven – since that will definitely not happen to us in heaven.

The Book of Joshua is *not* about us “Crossing the Jordan” into *heaven*. The Book of Joshua is about us crossing over from the wilderness of disobedience into the *victorious Christian life*.

“Taking Possession of the Promised Life” is about winning the spiritual battles in *our lives* and these battles that are so dramatically illustrated in the Book of Joshua are the spiritual battles that are first and foremost in our *own hearts* and in our *own minds*. The “pictures” of the battles that Joshua paints for us are illustrations of the spiritual battles that each of us must *fight* and *win* – first in our *own hearts and minds*. And then winning these battles in our *own hearts and minds* will lead to us winning them in our actions. And that will lead us to “Taking Possession of The Promised Life.”

And when I say “Take Possession” (of the Promised Life) what I mean is “to make it your own” – to “take hold” of it – in a practical sense.

Paul expressed this same thought in [Philippians 3:12 \(NKJV\)](#)

**Philippians 3:12 (NKJV)**

*12 . . . but I press on, that I may lay hold (take possession) of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold (taken possession) of me.*

I want to “take hold” of all that Jesus Christ has “taken hold of me” for. I want to “take possession” of *all the life* that Jesus Christ has saved me for.

The Promised Life in Christ has been given to us feely as a gift of God’s grace and we have received it “positionally” by faith alone. However, we must still *apprehend* the Promised Life. We must still “make it our own.” It has been given to us positionally, but we must take possession of it – practically.

If I were to give you a Learjet, parked at LAX, give it to you *freely and completely* and you say, “No... I just really hate traffic. That traffic is just too much for me – I can’t get there.” you would still own the Learjet but you will never fly in it because you are not willing to *battle* the traffic in order to get to it.

In the same way [Ephesians 1:3 \(NLT\)](#) tells us,

**Ephesians 1:3 (NLT)**

*3 [God] has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.*

Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms is ours because we are *united* with Jesus Christ by faith. But – are we willing to *do* what it takes in order *to walk* in those spiritual blessings? Are we willing to battle the traffic in order to get to the Learjet at LAX?

Next message, we'll see that Egypt is a picture (type) of God's People "in bondage" to sin and we'll meet the generation of God's People who had been saved from their "bondage to sin" but who still died wandering outside the Promised Life. They wandered "in between" in the wilderness.

They were set free from their bondage to sin, but they never experienced any of the joy that comes from "Living in The Promised Life."

WHY?

Well, Hebrews Chapter 3 is talking about this exact same event when we read [Ephesians 3:19](#) (in the Amplified Bible)

**Hebrews 3:19 (AMP)**

***19 So we see that they were not able to enter [into His rest] (The Promised Land), because of their unwillingness to adhere to and trust in and rely on God [unbelief had shut them out].***

They believed enough to be saved but they *didn't believe enough* to enter into the Promised Land of joy and rest with the Lord.

God desires *every* believer to "Take Possession of The Promised Life" and he has given us all that we need in order to do that. But there is still required – on our part – *faith* and *action* and *warfare*!

*That* is what the Book of Joshua is about!

Back in Ephesians – after spending three chapters on our "*position* in Christ" and after two chapters on our "*walk* in Christ" Ephesians ends with our "*warfare* in Christ." [Ephesians 6:10-12 \(NLT\)](#)

**Ephesians 6:10–12 (NLT)**

***10 . . . Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.***

***11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.***

***12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but (we are fighting) against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.***

The truth is living victoriously in the Christian life is a genuine, real (spiritual life or death) battle. And anyone who tells you anything different than *that* is selling something.

We must get *battle-ready* in order to “Take Possession of The Promised Life.” Then, when the battle does come, it won’t catch us off guard and take us out so easily.

We have battles to win *in the spiritual realm*.

We have battles to win *against the world around us*.

And the biggest battle we must learn to win is the battle with *the flesh inside of us*.

The Book of Joshua will teach us *how to win* these battles. And winning these battles is what allows us to “Take Possession of The Promised Life” in Jesus Christ.

Let’s just look in the first few verses of Joshua at the principle by which we begin to “Take Possession of The Promised Life.”

The principle that leads us to victorious Christian living is *courageous faith and obedience*. And if we drop in at [Joshua 1:7-9 \(NLT\)](#) we see it very clearly.

### **Joshua 1:7-9 (NLT)**

***7 Be strong and very courageous*** (there’s the courageous faith). ***Be careful to obey*** (there’s the obedience) ***all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do.***

***8 Study this Book of Instruction*** (The Word of God) ***continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.***

***9 This is my command—be strong and courageous!*** (there’s the courageous faith again) ***Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.***”

“Taking Possession of The Promised Life” – is a *battle*  
with the *spiritual realm*  
with *the world*  
and most of all with *our own flesh*.

And to win these battles and to *live* in the Promised Life requires *courageous faith* and *obedience*.

And Jesus Christ has given us all we need to live in *the Promised Life*. But we still must choose to have the *courageous faith* and to act in the *obedience* that is necessary for us to “Take Possession of The Promised Life” that Jesus Christ died to give us.

*Be strong and very courageous  
Be careful to obey  
Meditate on God's Word day and night  
and DO what it says.  
Be strong and courageous  
Do not be afraid or discouraged  
For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go*

Guys, deep in the Book of Joshua, in Joshua Chapter 18, seven of the Tribes of Israel had still NOT taken possession of the Promised Land that God had given them. And so we read in [Joshua 18:3 \(NKJV\)](#),

**Joshua 18:3 (NKJV)**

***3 Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: “How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?”***

In some way – to some extent – in some area of our lives the Lord may be saying to each one of us today, “***How long will you neglect to go and possess the [life] which the Lord God has given you?***”

Let's make a commitment today to “Take Possession of The Promised Life.”

Let's pray. *Lord Jesus, you've won the victory. You've given us the power. You've given us your Spirit. You are the Captain, the Pioneer. You go before us. You've already conquered the enemy. And yet, Lord, there's some area in our life where we haven't taken possession of what you've purchased for us with your own blood. Some area where the enemy is still got us pinned down and in bondage. Some area, Lord, that we need to possess the Promised Life. Inspire us, Lord. As we go through the Book of Joshua, inspire us to be strongly courageous, to be continually obedient. Trusting that you've won the victory but knowing that we still must lean forward into the battle. We choose to obey. We choose to fight the good fight of faith. We choose to stand firm in the armor that you've given us. Be our Strength, be our Power, be our YAHSHUA, be our Salvation. For your glory and in your name, Jesus, amen.*