

Jos02 – Meet Joshua – Exodus 17:8-13

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Open your Bibles. Title of the message today, “Meet Joshua.” We are going to Exodus 17, verses 8-13, the important first mention of Joshua.

Last message we introduced the Book of Joshua and we said along with being an historical book of God giving the Promised Land to Israel, Joshua is also a *type* – a picture or illustration – of us living the Christian life. God has freely given us all the blessings of “The Promised Life” in Christ. However “Taking Possession of The Promised Life (making it real, making it our own) requires *courage* and *action* and *warfare* on our part because we face enemies in our Promised Life just like Israel did in their Promised Land.

But before we can move into all that, we first have to “meet” our main character. Let’s pray and then we will meet Joshua.

Heavenly Father, please, as we introduce Joshua today we pray that you would give us a knowledge of him, that we would relate to him. Lord, that he would be a real person in our hearts and our minds, that we would place ourselves in his shoes, and in the People of Israel’s shoes. And that thereby you would teach us lessons that we can’t learn any other way. Teach us by illustration, by type what you would have us learn about taking possession of the promised life, today. For your sake and for your glory and in your name Jesus, amen.

Joshua led the People of God into the Promised Land and Joshua is a *type* (picture) of Jesus Christ who leads us into the Promised Life. Joshua was born into slavery in Egypt. He was originally given the name “*Ho-shea*” which means “*salvation.*” Moses later changed his name to “*Jeho-shua*” which means “*Jehovah is salvation.*”

Later that name was shortened in Hebrew from “*Jeho-shua*” to “*Ye-shua*” still meaning “*Jehovah (Yaweh) is Salvation.*”

In **GREEK** – *Ye-shua* is *Ie (e-a)-sous*

In **LATIN** - *Ie-sous* is *Iesus (e-sus)*

In **ENGLISH** - *Iesus* became *Jesus*

When we say **JESUS** – we are using the **English Equivalent** of *Ye-shua* meaning “*Yah-Weh (The Lord) is Salvation.*”

Ye-Shua (Joshua)

led the people of God into *The Promised LAND*

OUR Ye-shua (Jesus)

leads the people of God into *The Promised LIFE*

So let's start with Joshua's early life. Joshua was the firstborn son of Nun when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. This means Joshua's life was literally saved by the blood of the lamb because the blood of the lamb had to be put on the doorposts of the home in order for the angel of death to Passover the firstborn in that home.

And so (being there) Joshua would have seen the miracles of God in the Ten Plagues that led to the Exodus from Egypt. He witnessed the *Pillar of Cloud* and the *Pillar of Fire* that led them out of Egypt and Joshua saw God part the Red Sea for Israel and then close the waters down and swallow up the enemy.

And then we formally meet Joshua in Exodus 17, (turn there in your Bibles) this occurred not long – maybe just months – after the Exodus.

This is the first mention of Joshua. There is an interpretation principle of the Bible called “The Law of First Mention” which says often the first time a person is introduced in Scripture we can see the “theme” of that person's life laid out. So watch carefully for the theme of Joshua's life in this “first mention” of him.

Exodus 17:8–13 (NLT)

8 While the people of Israel were still at Rephidim (near the Red Sea), the warriors of Amalek attacked them.

9 Moses commanded Joshua (there's the 1st mention), “Choose some men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my hand.” (The staff was a symbol of God's leadership and his power)

10 So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army of Amalek. Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of a nearby hill.

11 As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand, the Amalekites gained the advantage.

12 Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset.

13 As a result, (notice that) Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

This is the “first mention” of Joshua and it absolutely sets the theme for his life. Joshua was fighting a *physical* battle on the ground but his victory was guaranteed *spiritually* by Moses holding up the staff.

And *THAT* is the theme of Joshua’s life and the Book of Joshua.

Joshua had to be fighting the battle *physically on the ground* but his victory was guaranteed *spiritually* on the mountain top – by *God*.

If we can grasp this we can see both sides of this truth and I believe this is the most important lesson we can learn from studying Joshua.

We fight the *good fight of faith* on the ground, but our victory is already *guaranteed* on the mountaintop of Calvary – by God.

By the way, this event in Exodus is also where the Lord reveals himself to Moses as “*Jehovah Nissi*” which means “*The Lord is my Banner of Victory.*”

And the Lord tells Moses here to remind Joshua later of his first victory. This is important. We forget so easily how we’ve won battles in the past and we forget so easily how we’ve lost battles in the past. And so we tend not to do what we did to win and instead to do what we did to lose. So God tells Moses “Remind Joshua how this battle was won.”

Joshua had to fight the battle *physically* but the victory was guaranteed *spiritually*.

Moving on – we get to the “Giving of the Law” in Exodus 24.

Exodus 24:12–18 (NLT)

12 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain. Stay there, and I will give you the tablets of stone on which I have inscribed the instructions and commands so you can teach the people (the 10 Commandments).”

13 So Moses and his assistant Joshua set out, and Moses climbed up the mountain of God.

... (& Joshua was with him)

Then – skip down to verse 16

Exodus 24:16–18 (NLT)

16 And the glory of the Lord settled down on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from inside the cloud.

17 To the Israelites at the foot of the mountain, the glory of the Lord appeared at the

summit like a consuming fire.

18 Then Moses disappeared into the cloud as he climbed higher up the mountain. He remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

What an awesome scene this was. What an awesome scene this was. The glory of the Lord – covering the top of Mt. Sinai and the people looking up – at a consuming fire. But... where was Joshua?

Joshua was on the mountain for forty days *between* the presence of God above him and the people below him. That is the place of a mediator *who takes the hand of God and the hand of man and connects them.*

And in Galatians 4:4-5 (ESV) says,

Galatians 4:4–5 (ESV)

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son . . . born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law . . .

Even at Mt. Sinai Joshua is a physical picture of Jesus Christ as he was “under” the Giving of the Law yet being prepared to redeem God’s people *into* the Promised Land.

That’s kinda cool, right?

Next, in Exodus 33 there is an amazing mention that we can only briefly look at (flip over there). Moses had a special “Tent of Meeting” where he would talk face-to-face with the Lord.

And so we read in Exodus 33:8-11,

Exodus 33:8–11 (NLT)

8 Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and stand in the entrances of their own tents. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside.

9 As he went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at its entrance while the Lord spoke with Moses.

...

11 Inside the Tent of Meeting, the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting.

From the very first mention of Joshua he is *immersed* in the presence of God alongside Moses. That is some intense preparation for Joshua to take over the leadership of God's people.

This is also a great example of true biblical leadership. If you are serving the Lord today at any level of leadership your replacement should be "by your side" being *immersed* in what God is doing in your ministry because all ministers are ultimately relieved of their service but all ministries must continue for the Lord.

So, if you are in any level of ministry leadership you should be able to point to the person who is "by your side" and who is assisting you and who can be ready at God's word to replace you.

And if you are a leader who struggles with the "this is my ministry" possessive dysfunction, then I pray God would gently humble you, by gently crushing your pride to smithereens so that you can be truly useful to him.

And so Joshua was immersed in the *presence of the Lord* alongside Moses – in preparation for his calling.

And so now we get to the most familiar passage of us "meeting Joshua." But first...

There are three geographical locations (in our study of Joshua) that represent the Christian life.

1) **EGYPT** is a picture of us in bondage to sin – *before* we were saved through our faith in Jesus Christ.

2) **THE WILDERNESS** – where Israel ended up wandering aimlessly for forty years – is a picture of believers who are wandering in unbelief and disobedience. They've been saved from the results of sin but they refuse to act in the *faith and obedience* necessary in order to live in the Promised Life God has for them. And so, God allows them to wander in the no-man's land *until they die*.

3) **THE PROMISED LAND** – This is the Christian life as it was meant to be lived. The Promised Land is the life of *faith and trusting Jesus* (our greater Joshua) to lead us from victory to victory over the enemy as we take possession more and more of the Promised Life *all to the glory of God*.

EGYPT – THE WILDERNESS – THE PROMISED LAND

Each of us is in one of those three places.

Turn over to Numbers Chapter 13.

So it had been maybe only two years or so since God had freed Israel from their bondage in Egypt and now they were standing on the edge of the Promised Land at a place called *Kadesh-Barnea* the gateway to the Promised Land. All of Israel knew *this* was the land God had promised to give them.

They had seen so many awesome miracles bringing them up to this point God had proven himself to Israel – again and again – proving that he would bring them into the life he had promised them. All they had to do was have the *faith* and the *courage* to follow him into the land. All they had to do was *trust God* and *obey God* and God would deliver the Promised Life to them.

And please hear me when I say, *Kadesh-Barnea* – the gateway to the Promised Land – is a type (picture) of a *crisis of belief* moment that each one of us will come to in our walk with God. And when we come to our personal “*Kadesh-Barnea*” (our personal gateway to the Promised Life) at that point each one of us must decide *will we* have the faith and the courage to trust God and obey God – ENOUGH... that we will be able to enter the Promised Life that God has for us.

Let’s see how the Israelites did.

In Numbers 13 Moses had brought the Children of Israel right up to the edge of the Promised Land and the Lord told Moses to pick one leader from each of the twelve Tribes. They are often called the twelve spies but they were actually leaders from each of the Tribes.

One of those leaders – from the Tribe of Ephraim – was Joshua. Another of those twelve leaders – from the Tribe of Judah – was Caleb, and Caleb will become a great example of faith and courage as we get into this study.

So Moses picks these twelve leaders and gives them instructions for spying out the land.

He told them: (Num 13:18-20)

See what the **land** is like

Are the people **strong** or weak

Is it good land or bad

Are their towns protected, or **un-protected**

and How are the **crops** and **soil** for farming

The picture you see behind me is a carving given to me on one of our Israel trips. It portrays:

Numbers 13:23 (NLT)

23 . . . they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes so large that it took two of them to carry it on a pole between them! . . .

And so these “spies” who were actually leaders from each tribe went in and “scouted out” the land. And then they return in Numbers 13:25-33.

Numbers 13:25–33 (NLT)

25 After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned

26 to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land.

27 This was their report to Moses: “We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces.

28 But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak!

29 The Amalekites live in the Negev, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan Valley.”

30 But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. “Let’s go at once to take the land,” he said. “We can certainly conquer it!”

31 But the other men (other 10 leaders) who had explored the land with him disagreed. “We can’t go up against them! They are stronger than we are!”

32 So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: “The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge.

33 We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that’s what they thought, too!”

And then see how easy the faithlessness of the leaders spreads to the congregation of the people.

Numbers 14:1–12 (NLT)

1 Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night.

2 Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against Moses and Aaron. “If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!” they complained.

3 “Why is the Lord taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn’t it be better for us to return

to Egypt?”

4 Then they plotted among themselves, “Let’s choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!”

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the whole community of Israel.

6 Two of the men who had explored the land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their clothing.

7 They said to all the people of Israel, “The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land!

8 And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey.

9 Do not rebel against the Lord, and don’t be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the Lord is with us! Don’t be afraid of them!”

10 But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and Caleb.

(& so here, God decides to step in)

Then the glorious presence of the Lord appeared to all the Israelites at the Tabernacle (tent of meeting).

11 And the Lord said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among them?”

12 I will disown them and destroy them with a plague (God’s not happy). Then I will make you (Moses) into a nation greater and mightier than they are!”

Whhhaattt just happened?

Everything was great with the People of God when God was parting the Red Sea and when he was giving them manna from heaven and quail falling out of the sky for them. But now... this actually looks like *work*. This looks like it could actually be *difficult*. This doesn’t look like God *giving* us everything on a silver platter. This looks more like war!

We were happy when God was giving us everything – but to have to actually fight the enemy in order to live in the Promised Life...

Eh... We’d rather go back to Egypt where we were in bondage to sin.

Sadly we see this exact attitude in believers today.

And so God says, “*Hey Moses, Let’s destroy all of these people, and let’s you and me start over!*”

Then as Chapter 14 continues Moses pleads with God on behalf of the people. And so we read in Numbers 14:20-23.

Numbers 14:20–23 (NLT)

20 Then the Lord said, “I will pardon them as you have requested.

21 But as surely as I live, and as surely as the earth is filled with the Lord’s glory, 22 not one of these people will ever enter that land. They have all seen my glorious presence and the miraculous signs I performed both in Egypt and in the wilderness, but again and again they have tested me by refusing to listen to my voice.

23 They will never even see the land I swore to give their ancestors. None of those who have treated me with contempt will ever see it.

Whoa! Seriously God? What about that – you give us everything and we don’t have to do anything – what happened to that?

Yeah, that – that doesn’t actually EXIST in the Bible?

As we get ready to start the Book of Joshua, doesn’t it seem like God’s not messing around? And do you think that God has changed between the Old Testament and the New Testament? And do you think that now God has to give us everything and we don’t have to do anything?

I promise – if we had the time – I could read you a dozen scriptures from the New Testament that would confirm that *US* taking possession of the Promised Life requires *courageous faith* and *fearless obedient action*.

This generation of God’s People at *Kadesh-Barnea* refused to have either and so God allowed them to fall dead in the Wilderness. They were saved from their bondage to sin in Egypt but they never even experienced a *taste* of the Promised Life that God had for them.

We CANNOT be like them.

As we follow our Ye-Shua (our *Greater Joshua*) into the Promised Land, may we make a solid commitment to have the *courageous faith* and take the *fearless obedient action* required for us to be able to “*Take Possession of the Promised Life*” that God has *waiting for us*.

Let’s pray. *Lord, there’s nothing greater than standing in victory with you. And nothing worse, Lord, than just being absolutely taken out by the enemy over and over. God raise us up. Give us the courageous faith necessary and the fearless obedience necessary to follow you into the life that you’ve promised us, Lord. God, our battles are almost*

exclusively in our heart and in our own mind as we decide to follow after the world or our flesh or the enemy or to turn our backs on those things and follow after you. Show us, Lord, show us.

And if you would just tell God “I will have courageous faith and with your power I will have fearless obedience. I don’t have it myself, but Lord I will choose it and you fill me with your Spirit that I would see victory after victory after victory in my life. I’ll follow you, Ye-Shua, Jesus. I’ll follow you into the Promised Life you have for me. For your glory, and in your name, amen.”