

Joshua 1 - Thursday, February 16th, 2012

- By way of introduction, I want to point out a few things about the book of Joshua as we now round a corner having completed the Pentateuch.
- First, the book of Joshua marks the beginning of a new division in the canon of Old Testament scripture in that we enter the historical books.
- The first five books of Moses are known as the books of the law, and the next twelve books through to Esther are known as the historical books.

- For the benefit of those interested in these kinds of things, you'll be happy to know that the Old Testament can be organized into four sections.
- I suppose this is as good of a place as any, in our study through the entire Bible, to give you a synopsis of the how all 39 books are organized.

#1. The Pentateuch - 5 books - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

#2. Historical Books - 12 books - Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First Samuel, Second Samuel, First Kings, Second Kings, First Chronicles, Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

#3. Poetic books - 5 books - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

#4. Prophetic books - 17 books –

- Major Prophets - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

- Minor Prophets - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

- If you were to divide the book of Joshua, the first of the historic books, you could create two parts, the first of which would cover seven years.
- Actually, the first half of Joshua describes the seven-year conquest of the Promised Land, while the last half deals with partitioning of the land.
- It's important to note that the Promised Land does not represent heaven to us as believers rather, it speaks to our entering God's promises.

- Perhaps better said, the Promised Land for us is that abundant, and blessed life that promised to us. However, this doesn't mean it's automatic.
- In other words, just because God has promised it, doesn't mean that we have entered into it. It's for this reason that this book is so fascinating.
- Just the typology alone, with Moses being a type of the Law and Joshua being a type of the Christ, is enough to have profound application to us.

F.B. Meyer - "The Law of God can never bring the soul of man into the land of Promise, not because there is any defect in it, but because of human infirmity and sin!"

- In addition to that powerful typology concerning Moses and Joshua, we have even more references in Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 KJV (1) Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; (2) And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; (3) And did all eat the same spiritual meat; (4) And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

- Here, the Apostle Paul points out the scripture picture in how that the crossing of the Red Sea was a type of our being baptized with water.
- He even takes it further saying that the rock that the Israelites drank from was a type of Jesus Christ, Who is the spiritual rock of our salvation.
- One commentator has suggested that the crossing of the Jordan River, as we see in Joshua, is a type of being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

- Be that as it may, we're in store for, what should be, a most exciting study in this amazing book of Joshua, as we see how it applies to our lives.
- There's one last thing that I wish to mention before we commence with the study, and it's that I will be borrowing heavily from F.B. Meyer.
- One of the reasons for choosing his commentary is that he draws an intriguing parallel between the book of Joshua, and the book of Ephesians.

F.B. Meyer – "The Book of Joshua is to the Old Testament what the Epistle to the Ephesians is to the New. ...[It] rises above all its kin as the soaring cathedral tower rises above the maze of architecture beneath on which it rests indeed, but which it crowns, and carries within its heart bells that ring out the wedding peal. Already in that epistle we can detect notes which are to announce the consummation of creation in the marriage of the Lamb. ...The characteristic word of the Ephesians is "in heavenly places" (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). Of course it does not stand for Heaven; but for that spiritual experience of oneness with the risen Saviour in his resurrection and exaltation which is the privilege of all the saints, to which, indeed, they have been called, and which is theirs in him.

- In the interest of time, I won't take the time to go into all of it, at least not at this juncture anyway, as it is woven throughout the fabric of the book.
- Having said that, perhaps you'll indulge me and also forgive me for one more introductory quote from F.B. Meyer before we jump into verse one.

F.B. Meyer – "THE best way to vindicate the Bible is to preach it. Each book contains within itself, sometimes in cipher, the autograph of the Holy Spirit. Every page has the water-mark of Heaven. And a patient consideration of the contents of Scripture, as of the book before us, will leave a stronger impression of GOD's authority and authorship than any number of external evidences." –

(1) 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.

- Right out of the shoot I want to point out some interesting details in these first two verses, because they could be easily missed at first glance.
- First, it's believed that Joshua could be as old as eighty years of age at this time when he succeeds Moses, leading the children of Israel.
- Secondly, I find it interesting that God waits until after the death of Moses, "the servant of the Lord," before He comes and speaks to Joshua.

- The reason I find that interesting is because it sort of gives us a snapshot of the heart of God in His encouraging and even comforting of Joshua.
- You've got to know that Joshua is experiencing unspeakable sorrow in grieving the loss of his mentor, and God is right there to console him.
- It's as if God is saying; "Joshua, Moses was your mentor, and he was my servant, but he's not coming back, so now therefore, arise and go!

- Can you imagine all the memories of all the experiences that Joshua had with Moses. He had been through so much over so many years.
- Joshua was the recipient of Moses' prayers with Aaron and Hur holding up his hands as he fought on the battlefield against the Amalekites.
- Joshua was the one who accompanied Moses when he went up to Mt. Sinai. It was Joshua who was one of the twelve spies sent into the land.

- It was Joshua who was there by the side of Moses and saw first hand how difficult it was to lead the children of Israel through the wilderness.
- I'm of the belief that Joshua knew that God was grooming him for this day when he would, after the death of Moses, become their new leader.
- The problem is, he is still hurting and grieving in his heart, yet, God is saying that it's time to get up, and cross over the Jordan into the land.

- That's not to say there's anything wrong with continuing to grieve a loved one's death but I am learning a thing or two about the whole process.
- Chiefly, that the harder you grieve the sooner you heal, and that you will never get over the death of a loved one, but God will get you through it.
- Those who bury their emotions, or worse yet, drown them in alcohol or numb them with drugs, do so to their own peril, and delay the inevitable.

- This explains why God says, what He says, and when He says it to Joshua. God wants to console Joshua, and encourage him in his grieving.
- Sometimes the best thing we can do after the loss of a close family member is to get back into the routine of life, as it were, so as to stay busy.
- However, there needs to be a sufficient amount of time, which is different for everyone, before one takes on the daily pressures of a busy life.

- One last detail before we move on to verse three, and it has to do with Joshua's name. As you are well aware by now, the name is the nature.
- You may remember in our study of Numbers chapter 13 that Moses changed his name, which was originally Hoshea, to his new name, Joshua.
- Hoshea means salvation, but Joshua means Jehovah is Salvation. Why? Because the name of Jesus is the only name by which one is saved.

(3) Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.

- I may not be the sharpest knife in the kitchen drawer, but this pretty much sounds like it's a done deal, in that God has already given it to them.
- In other words, the jury is no longer out. The verdict is already in by virtue of God saying; "I "have" given you." Notice it's not I will be giving you.
- I wonder how many of God's promises, in the pages of God's Word, we treat as if they are not yet certain, when all along God has given it to us.

- Certain promises of God have already been given to us, and the only thing that stands in the way of us possessing them, is us possessing them.
- I'm convinced mainly because of what I've experienced in my own life, that we unnecessarily miss out on all that God has for us because of this.
- How many promises could I possess were I to simply step out in faith, and set my foot upon it, get my mind around it, and put my hands in it?

- Why are we like that? I believe its fear, which is the antithesis of faith. We fear failure, we shun hardship, and we're unwilling to take the risk.
- The end result is that we resign ourselves to a Christianity of mediocrity, settling for the measly, because we're more comfortable playing it safe.
- I like how one pastor poignantly put it; "Isn't this just like us? We settle for peanuts when the Lord has grapes for us the size of bowling balls."

(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.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is, it's a valid documentation of the nation of Israel's actual pre 1967 borders.
- By the way, if the truth be known, the Promised Land would have included many of the modern day Arab nations which are today against Israel.
- The fact of the matter is, in part or whole, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and even parts of Egypt, God had given to Israel.

(6) 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.

- This verse begs the question of why God would tell Joshua be strong and of good courage. I'm of the opinion that it's because he was neither.
- While it would certainly stand to reason that as Moses' right hand man, he would have had to be both, this would indicate that he was lacking.
- Let me hasten to say, what God is saying is here is that Joshua's courage would come vis-à-vis being strong in the Lord, not in and of himself.

(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."

- Woven into the fabric of these verses are three ways that I can know whether or not my strength and courage are found in the Lord and not me.
- It will be evidenced when the Word of God is regularly in my conversation, constantly in my thoughts, and manifested continually in my actions.
- Conversely, I can know that I'm relying on my own strength and courage, when my conversations, thoughts, and actions are always about me.

(10) 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.' "

- Verses ten and eleven prove Joshua got the point in the previous verses, namely, that his strength and courage was truly, and only in the Lord.
- The reason I believe this is Joshua doesn't tell them to prepare lifejackets for themselves he tells them to prepare provisions for themselves.
- In that day and at that time of year the Jordan River was at flood levels making it impossible to cross. I suppose they'll just have to trust God.

(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."

- These verses are a matter of record in the sense that Joshua reminds the two and a half tribes that they will still go to battle with the other tribes.
- In a way, it's Joshua making sure that they keep their commitment to Moses and the Lord and follow through in doing what they promised to do.

(16) 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."

- Here we're told of their commitment to Joshua and how that they would do everything they'd promised to do. They even take it a step further.
- I've got to believe that this would have been a tremendous encouragement to Joshua, given that he may have been concerned about them.
- Anytime a leader has those he leads say something like this it's always such a blessing, because leading people can be weighty and messy.