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Joshua, The Faithful Commander

Josh. 1:1-9

Joshua is God's soldier, called and commissioned by God to bravely lead the people of God into Canaan, the promise land.

It is a place of fierce opposition that can only be won by faith in God and obedience to His word.

Leaders as well as Christians that lead by faith and example are much needed in the church today!

One, H. Gordon Selfridge built one of the world's largest department stores in London. He achieved success by being a leader, not a boss. Here is his own comparison of the two types of executives:

The boss drives his men; the leader coaches them.

The boss depends upon authority; the leader on good will.

The boss inspires fear; the leader inspires enthusiasm.

The boss says, "I"; the leader, "we".

The boss fixes the blame for the breakdown; the leader fixes the breakdown.

The boss knows how it is done; the leader shows how.

The boss says, "Go"; the leader says "Let's go!" #3012

For this reason, it was of the utmost importance that Joshua pay heed to his battle orders and that is why the book opens up with the commissioning of Joshua by God consisting of: Josh. 1:1-9

I. The general orders. Vs. 1-2

II. The specific orders. Vs. 3-7

III. The secret to accomplish the orders. Vs. 8-9

I. The general orders at the commissioning of Joshua. Vs. 1-2

A. The background for the commission of Joshua took place When Moses was still alive.

1. The Lord told Moses to view the land before his death. Nun. 27:12-14

a. The Lord told Moses, to go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which He had given to Israel. Vs. 12

b. The Lord told Moses that once he had seen the land, he would be gathered to his people, as Aaron his brother was gathered. Vs. 13

c. The Lord told Moses the reason, the fact that in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, he rebelled against God's command to

hallow Him, before the people's eyes, at the waters of Maribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin. before their eyes. Num. 20:1-6, 11-12

* The request for water was not wrong, only the response of Moses.

2. The man Moses requested for a capable man to lead the people into the promised land. Num. 27:15-17
 - a. The petition of Moses is addressed to the One who knows and is responsible for the spirits of all men, God. Vs. 15-16a-b
 - b. The petition was for his replacement, "Set as a man over the congregation". Vs. 16c
 - c. The petition is specific. Vs. 17
 - 1) One who may go out before them and go in before them, one who is looked up to a the leader. Vs. 17a
 - 2) One who may lead them out and bring them in, one to guide and direct. Vs. 17b
 - d. The petition was motivated by love for the people, evidence of God's love. Vs. 17c
 - 1) That the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd. Jer. 23, Ezk. 34

2) The description was for one who would defend and protect the congregation against all enemies over his own life.

* Jesus in contrast is the "Good Shepherd" to the hireling. Jn. 10

3. The Lord Chose the man to lead the people as the answer to the petition of Moses. Num. 27:18-23
 - a. God declared to take Joshua, the son of Nun with him. Vs. 18a-b
 - b. God declared the key for Joshua's leadership, "A man in whom is the Spirit". Vs. 18c
 - c. The Lord declared to Moses exactly what to do. Vs. 18d-20
 - 1) Moses was to lay his hands on Joshua, symbolic of confirming God's choosing and transferring the leadership of Israel. Vs. 18d
 - 2) Moses was to set Joshua before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. Vs. 19

* The word inaugurate means to commission.
 - 3) Moses was to give some of his authority to Joshua, in order that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. Vs. 20

- * This would avoid divisions, backbiting and dissension among the people of God!
- d. The Lord declared the dependency of the man on God to lead him. Vs. 21
- 1) God declared that he would stand before Eleazar the priest, who would inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim. Vs. 21a
 - 2) God was reveling and reminding the leader that this was the only way he would be able to lead the people of God out and back in effectively. Vs. 21c-e
- e. The obedience of Moses was followed to the very word. Vs. 22-23, Deut. 31:23
- 1) The choices of God are due to His wisdom and sovereignty, without partiality.
 - 2) The choices of God are always confirmed by His anointing and the enabling by the necessary gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 - a) Now Joshua the son of Nun was *full of the spirit of wisdom*, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses. Deut. 34:9

- b) “Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, “Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.” Deut. 31:23
- B. The commissioning of Joshua took place now after the death of Moses. Vs. 1-2
1. The changing of leaders ended an epoch and began a new one. Vs. 1a, d
 - a. Moses was the servant of the Lord. Vs. 1a
 - 1) The word servant “ebed” means menial serving and is used the highest officials of a king and for all of God’s chosen men, it is used so often for Moses that it almost becomes his official title says Keil.
 - 2) It will be used thirteen times for Joshua.
 - b. Joshua was the assistant of Moses. Vs. 1d
 - 1) Joshua had served Moses faithfully as his assistant throughout the forty years. Ex. 17:8-9, 24:13, 33, 32:17, Num. 11:28, etc.
 - 2) The word “sharath” is used for a royal household workers, public servants and court officials and the

most frequent for service in worship of the Levitical priests. 2Sam. 13:17, 1Chron. 27:1, 28:1, Esther 1:10, 1Kings 19:21, Is. 60:10, Num. 16:9

* The first times it is used is for Joseph as he served Potiphar and served him. Gen. 39:4

- 3) The transition would not be easy, for forty years Moses led the people as the religious, domestic, judicial, military and civil head.

* God is never disadvantaged by the loss of men. Vs. 1a

2. The charge came from the Lord as He spoke to Joshua. Vs. 1b, d
- a. How the charge of God came to Joshua is not disclosed.
 - 1) By the Urim and Thummin.
 - 2) By a vision or a dream.
 - 3) By inward prompting.
 - b. Joshua was the son of Nun.

* Appearing ten times in the book. Josh. 2:1, 23, 6:6, 14:1, 17:4, 19:49, 51, 21:1, 24:29
 - c. Joshua had been chosen by God, sovereignly and clearly, so as to leave no doubt to Joshua or the people!
3. The Lord charged Joshua with the responsibility of taking the people over the Jordan. Vs. 2a-e

- a. Moses had failed to represent God properly before the people and could not enter the promise land. Num. 27:12-14
- b. Joshua a type of Christ would cross the Jordan River with all the people, the very river where Jesus was baptized to enter His public ministry.
- c. Joshua was called to prompt obedience and integrity as a servant of God.
 - 1) He would do this despite knowing that the people would rebel against God.

* “Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.” Deut. 31:28-29, 1-8
 - 2) Joshua had learned through his forty years of service to God as the assistant to Moses that to question

- Gods words is to fail and bring
folly on the people!
4. The charge to Joshua was as God's representative to possess the land He had given to the children of Israel. Vs. 2f-g
 - a. The land the Bible tells us belongs to God.
 - b. God was bequeathing the land as a gift to the people of Israel, stated over and over. Josh. 1:3, 6, 11, 15, etc
 - c. The high position of Joshua brought upon him greater responsibility!

Illustration

There have been men in the past and the present who serve our nation in the military who have received order that they knew would not allow them to return home alive, and they have done so, courageously, honorably and willingly! These men inspired other rather than discouraging them!

* Should the Christian soldier do any less

Application

1. The death of godly men, whom God has used in the past or in the present, should never cause us to think that the work of God will cease.

* Isaiah had to be reminded of this truth, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple." Is. 6:1

- a. God is never at a disadvantage over the loss of any man.
 - b. But people disadvantage themselves, having their eyes and dependency on the man, so they no longer serve the Lord or are always saying, "Oh it is not like it used to be".
 - c. The man or woman of God takes courage and great benefit from the life of the old soldier and carried on the torch and battle!
2. The person who calls himself to lead God's people is destined for failure.
- * "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables." 2Tim. 4:3-4
- a. It is the highest of presumptuousness.
 - b. It is treasuring up for self greater judgment.
 - c. It is a setting up of self for all the traps of mans' sinful nature, the devices of the world and the deception of Satan.
3. The person who is called by God is to fulfill his ministry.
- * "And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." Col 4:17
- a. This is despite the difficulties and obstacles.
 - b. The difficult people and opposition.

- c. The obedience is prompt and complete weather the people obey or rebel.

The general orders at the commissioning of Joshua was a great day!

II. The specific orders at the commission of Joshua. Vs. 3-7

- A. The charge to Joshua has some precise details regarding their inheritance. Vs. 3-5
 1. The condition was personal and individual to possess the land, “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon”. Vs. 3a
 - a. The children of Israel had limited the Lord in the wilderness by not entering the land by faith forty years earlier. Ps. 78:41
 - b. Believers can and do live sub-standard lives in Christ, limiting the Lord, as Israel did in the wilderness and promise land.
 2. The certainty of it being their inheritance is marked by the words, “I have given you as I said to Moses”. Vs. 3a-b
 - a. God had already given them the land.
 - b. God had told the same thing to Moses already. Deut. 11:23-32
 3. The complete territory had specific boundaries. Vs. 4

- a. “From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates”. Vs. 4-b
 - * The wilderness refers to the Negev in the south, the desert of Arabia and Lebanon to the Lebanese mountains.
- b. “All the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.” Vs. 4c-e
 - 1) The Egyptians and Babylonians referred to the area as “the Hittite country” even after their conquest.
 - 2) The Great Sea is the Mediterranean Sea.
- c. The entire land was never conquered completely, extending from Irak and over to the east side of the Jordan.
 - * Not even during David’s reign or Solomon was it ever occupied by Israel, this will take place in the Millennial kingdom!
- 4. The commitment of God to Joshua by a divine promise. Vs. 5
 - a. The promise of a victorious life, “No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life”. Vs. 5a
 - * The words of verse three to five are similar to those of Deuteronomy reminding us of the close relation

between the two books and that Joshua is the fulfillment of Deuteronomy!

- b.** The promise of a life directed by God, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.” Vs. 5b-c
* Joshua had witnessed the miracles and signs in Egypt by the hand of Moses.
- c.** The promise of a life of confident assurance about God’s companionship and faithfulness, “I will not leave you nor forsake you.” Vs. 5d
* Literally, “I will not abandon or drop you or leave you in the lurch”.

B. The charge to Joshua has a prompt three-fold exhortation regarding their inheritance. Vs. 6-7

- 1.** Be a faithful leader regarding the people and before the people in dangerous confrontations, the task will not be easy, “Be strong and of good courage”. Vs. 6a
 - a.** This is repeated three times. Vs. 6, 7, 9
 - b.** Two times “Be of good courage”. Vs. 6, 9
 - c.** On time “very courageous”. Vs. 7
- 2.** Be a faithful administrator to the people regarding their divine inheritance of the land. Vs. 6b

- a.** “For to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them”.
 - 1)** This is the second time God states He was giving the land as a gift. Vs. 2, 3
 - 2)** They did not deserve the land!
 - 3)** In fact in Deuteronomy Moses reminded them that when they went in to possess it, they would know they had not plowed, planted or reaped the harvest but God gave it to them, warning them not to forget God! Deut. 6:10-12
- b.** The promise of this divine inheritance had been given to Abraham. Gen. 15:16-21
* Joshua was merely replacing Moses as God servant and representative of His promises!
- 3.** Be a faithful servant of God regarding His word for life. Vs. 7
 - a.** The test would be to obey the word when intimidation or compromise presented itself, be it by the people, the enemy or self. Vs. 7a-b
* “Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you.” Vs. 7a-b

- 1) Some people think they know better than God.
 - 2) Others think they are the exception to the rule.
- b.** The tragic results of compromise and deviation would limit their lives. Vs. 7c-d
- * “Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.” Vs. 7b-c
- 1) The word prosperous “sakar” means to be prudent, be circumspect, wise in understanding, to live out life before God, not man!
 - 2) The location does not matter, “Wherever you go”, the word of God is valid for all ages and generations.

Illustration

“Courage is not the absence of fear; it is the mastery of it.” #880

“Courage is only genuine in the presence of fear”

“Oh, do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to our powers.

Pray for powers equal to your tasks.” #880

Application

1. The inheritance of the believer is by the grace of God, not works.
 - a. “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.” Eph 1:11
 - b. “Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Eph 1:14
 - c. “To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.” 1Pet. 1:4
2. The believers inheritance is appropriated by faith.
 - a. The blessings in Christ Jesus are appropriated in faith, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Eph. 1:3
 - b. Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His **rest**, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, `They shall not enter My rest,” although the works were

finished from the foundation of the world.
Heb. 4:1-3

- c. Faith is believing what God has said or recorded in the Scriptures, this is biblical faith. Heb. 11:1, 6
 - d. The enemy is always present to oppose the believer, be it as a roaring lion or impersonating an angel of light. 2Cor. 4:4, 1Pet. 5:8
 - e. Therefore the believer must learn to do good warfare, with the armor of God and the weapons of God. Eph. 6:10-18
3. The believer will prosper only in obedience to the word of God.
- a. It is the revelation of God. 2Tim. 3:16-17
 - b. It is the revelation of the will of God. Col. 1:9-12
- * Paul's prayer for the Colossians was, "For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may **be filled with the knowledge of His will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be

partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."

- c. It is the revelation of the promises of God. 2Pet. 1:3-4
- * How are you doing with you anger, bitterness, resentments, gossip, etc, are you taking those territories by faith?

The specific orders at the commission of Joshua involved their inheritance, to be taken by faith and obedience!

III. The secret to accomplish the orders given to Joshua. Vs. 8-9

- A. The protection for Joshua against failure regarding his commission. Vs. 8
 - 1. Joshua was to Know and proclaim God's word, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth". Vs. 8a
 - a. The direct reference to the "Book of the Law" verifies that the first five book of the Bible were already written and acknowledged, called the Pentateuch.
 - b. The Torah was to be the foundational principle code for life and practice.
 - c. Though Joshua is a continuation from Deuteronomy, it was never united to the five books or recognized as part of

the Torah, as some teach, known as the Hexateuch.

2. Joshua was to contemplate the word to live it out, “But you shall **meditate** in it **day and night**, that you may **observe to do** according to all that is **written in it**”.

Vs. 8b-c

- a. The word meditate “Hagah” means to recite in an undertone, literally to mutter.

1) The LXX uses the word “meletao” indicating a meditative pondering and audible practice.

2) The word of God was and is to control ones thoughts and transform a person’s mind.

- b. The extent is night and day, to permeate our lives, if not, the world will!

3. Joshua was to understand that the word of God is the only basis for God’s blessings, “For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Vs. 8d-e

- a. Obedience to live right would yield great reward and peace in accomplishing his mission.

1) The word prosperous “tsalach” means to advance, make progress or be profitable in his mission.

- 2) The phrase good success “sakal” is the same word in verse seven “prosperous”, which means to be prudent, be circumspect, wise in understanding, to live out life before God, not man!

- 3) The combination of these two teach us that unless we are making progress and advances in what God has called us to do for the kingdom, then we won’t be making the most prudent and wisest choices for life!

- b. The king was to make a copy for himself and read it all the days of his life. Deut. 17:18-20

1) That he learn to fear God.

2) That he be careful to observe all the words of the Law.

3) That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren.

4) That he not turn to the left or the right.

5) That he might prolong his life in his kingdom and his children.

- B. The personal confidence of Joshua regarding victory in his commission. Vs. 9

1. To remember God had called him and spoken to him, “Have I not commanded you?” Vs. 9a

- a. God had ordered the occupation of the land.
 - b. Joshua was God's field general taking orders to be carried out.
 - c. God was about to bring righteous judgment on a God rejecting people.
2. To remember God warned him about the difficult times that awaited him, "Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed". Vs. 9b-d
- a. The implication every time these words appear implies the potential or presence of fear.
 - b. These are human responses as weak and fallen people, no one is exempt.
3. To remember Who was with him, "Yahweh Elohim" for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Vs. 9e

Illustration

Luther stated before the representatives of Rome, "Here I stand, I can do no other, for my mind is held captive to the Scripture"

Application

1. Our minds are to be transformed by the word of God. Rom. 12:1-2
2. The meditation of God's word will allow the Holy Spirit to convict, comfort or guide me.

- a. Peter was up in the roof top at Joppa in prayer and God spoke and guided him to the house of Cornelius. Acts 10
- b. The Psalmist in the first of many speaks of the benefit of the word. Ps. 1:1-4
 - * Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so...
- c. The protection of the word is incredible. Ps. 19:7-14
 - * The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping

them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.”

d. The word will always lead me to think on what is good. Phil. 4:8

* “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.”

3. When the difficult times come, and they will come the word will be the authority over my life.

- a. To remember what God has promised.
- b. To remember that I am to depend on Him.
- c. To remember that He is ever with me and will never leave me.

The secret to accomplish the orders given to Joshua was the word of God and God Himself!

This is the commissioning of Joshua by God consisting of:

- I. The general orders at the commissioning of Joshua was a great day!
- II. The specific orders at the commission of Joshua involved their inheritance to be taken by faith and obedience!
- III. The secret to accomplish the orders given to Joshua was the word of God and God Himself!

Conclusion