

Joshua – God’s Charge to Joshua

Chapter 1

Introduction

- As we explore the Old Testament Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth it is important to realize two key themes:
 - o God’s people lived in a continuing cycle of sin and repentance, but God was always faithful.
- Read introduction from MacArthur to series (p. v)

Overview of the Book of Joshua

- The first of twelve historical books in Old Testament.
- Name after Joshua the successor leader of Israel after Moses.
- Joshua means “Jehovah saves” or “the LORD is salvation” – corresponds to New Testament name Jesus.
- Author was probably Joshua and written before David’s reign, so probably composed between c. 1405-1385 BC.
- Joshua was born in Egyptian slavery and journeyed with Israel forty years in the wilderness and crossed the Jordan into the promised land as Joshua would have been approaching 90 years of age when he took the lead.
- As the book begins, the Israelites are poised on the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River and the land that God has promised.
- They faced peoples on the western side who had become so wicked that God would cause the land to ‘spew them out’ (see Leviticus 18:24-25).
- God would give Israel the land by conquest for two reasons:
 - o First, to fulfill the covenant He had pledged to Abraham and his descendants,
 - o Second, to pass just judgment on the sinful inhabitants of the land.

God’s Charge to Joshua

- Read chapter 1.
- Notice that the land is not just any land, but the covenantal land that God is giving Israel (v. 2).

- The often-repeated phrase in chapter 1, 'be strong and courageous' is also written in Deuteronomy 31:6-8 and focused the warriors (and the entire nation) to place their trust, faith, and confidence in God who was with them and would never forsake them no matter the challenge or enemy confronted.
- Verse 8: To 'meditate' upon the 'law' was crucial for Joshua and the people – this meant that they would read and recite it thoughtfully and even 'linger' over God's words.
- Also, Verse 8: God's promise to prosperous success was a blessing predicated upon great responsibility given to Joshua – all spiritual effort and enterprise would stem from a deep understanding and application of God's word.
- Verses 13 to 18: A continuity in the leadership of Moses and Joshua is clarified with a strong emphasis on God's faithfulness and provision – for the LORD "will give you this land" (v. 13) a land toward the 'sunrise' (v.15).

Conclusion

- There is much adventure ahead as we explore Joshua's leadership of Israel and observe the faithfulness of God amid the conquest of Canaan.
- Walvoord describes the character and disposition of Joshua that is so important for us to realize, which is reminiscent of "the doer of the Word" we learned about in our study of the book of James: "Joshua's life demonstrates that in a practical way he lived according to the teachings of the Law of Moses... this alone explains the victories he achieved in battle and the success that marked his entire career"
- I pray that we can learn much from Joshua's practical living of God's Word and how he trusted God no matter what he (and Israel) faced after crossing the Jordan.
- Next week we will look at Chapter 2 and the investigation of the land across the Jordan.