

Week 23

Key Verse: Joshua 1:8 NIV “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

Joshua 1:1 -- 6:37

Background on Joshua

Joshua was born as a slave in Egypt about 40 years before the Exodus. He was the son of Nun (Noon) from the tribe of Ephraim (1 Chronicles 7:20,27). The first appearance of Joshua in the Bible is in Exodus 17, where he is called Hosea (ho-shay-ah). When the Israelites are attacked by the Amalekites not long after their crossing of the Red Sea, it is Hosea who leads the counter-attack. He defeats the enemy, proving his military skills. Soon he becomes Moses' assistant. He is next mentioned at Sinai, when he was permitted to go with Moses part way up the mountain where he waited diligently for Moses to descend; thus, unlike the other members of his tribe, Hosea was not involved in the sin of the Golden Calf. Hosea also accompanied Moses when he went to the Tent of Meeting for the remaining years in the desert.

What most people remember about Hosea (Joshua) is when he was chosen to represent the tribe of Ephraim among the 12 men chosen to spy out the land of Canaan. It was at this time that Moses changed his name from Hosea (meaning saves or salvation) to Joshua (meaning God saves or the Lord is Salvation) (Numbers 13:16). Joshua and Caleb were the only two who gave an optimistic report; the other 10 men thought of their own abilities and knew they could not defeat the giants. Caleb and Joshua believed God's promise that the land of Canaan would belong to the Israelites and they had faith that He would give them victory. As we learned in the spring study, due to their sin of unbelief, the Israelites spent the next 40 years wandering in the wilderness.

In Deuteronomy 31:23, we read that God appointed Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land. This brings us to the book of Joshua, the first book of the Prophets. The people are camped near the Jordan River with the Land of Canaan on the other side. The book of Joshua emphasizes the role that God played in Israel's victories. Joshua had to learn obedience as a servant before God was able to make him a commander. It is the same for us.

Introduction:

The book of Joshua tells how God fulfilled His promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. You will read how Joshua fulfilled the instructions given by Moses that are found in the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. In the book of Joshua, God's omnipotent power is revealed in the methods He used to give the Israelites victory over the wicked people in the land. The book begins with the voice of God.

Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Redemption:

The book of Joshua is much more than a history book. It is the story of redemption. God redeems the land by purging it and bringing holy judgment on its inhabitants. God rescued this

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portion of land from the powers of this world that had a claim on it. It wasn't theirs and it still isn't theirs, and one day God will reclaim the entire world for Himself.

Life Lessons:

The book of Joshua contains many lessons that are applicable today. Joshua 1:5-9 provides words of encouragement and a source of strength for Joshua as well as for us. God brought the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. God brings us out of slavery to sin and into His presence. God has promised us “every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 1:3). Like the Israelites, many people today have not realized all the good things God has done and will do for us.

Promises Kept:

The book of Joshua is a record of how God kept His promise that He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. “The Lord has kept every one of the promises that He gave to you. You know that deep in yourselves. He has not failed to keep one of them. The Lord has kept every good promise” (Joshua 23:14, 15). The Lord also keeps His promises to us.

Victory in the Lord:

Of course, there are people living in the land who have to be destroyed before the Israelites can occupy the land. The book of Joshua records how God provided the victory in battle. In fact, the battle of Ai was the only battle lost by the Israelites. Romans 8:27 *NLT*-- “No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.” God never changes. He is still the Victor and we can have victory through Him.

Day One: Joshua Chapter 1: 1 – 18, God Prepares the Leader

Psalm 105 A Review of Israel's History:

This first chapter of Joshua details God's preparation of Joshua and gives verses of encouragement to him. This chapter lays the foundation for Joshua's success, and we can apply these principles to our lives so we can have success in the tasks God has prepared for us.

1. What were the instructions and promises God gave Joshua?

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2. Read these scriptures and list how these same instructions apply to us today. Ephesians 6:10 & 11; Phil. 4:8; Romans 10:8-11; 2 Tim. 1:7

3. Read Joshua 1:17. In view of the Israelites’ history in the desert, how do you think this made Joshua feel?

4. Think of a temptation you struggle with which causes you to disobey the commands of God. What can help you gain victory over that temptation?

Prayer: Praise God – Psalm 105:1 – 5

Day Two: Chapter 2: 1 – 24, Joshua Sends Two Spies into Jericho

This chapter reveals that in the Old Testament as well as now, salvation is by grace through faith. It reveals how God has detailed plans for His servants to fulfill His purposes.

5. Who was Rahab and why do you think the two spies went to her house?

6. What does Rahab know about God, how did she learn it, and what did that knowledge do for her? How did the other people in Jericho respond to the same information?

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7. What are some things you know about God that strengthens your faith?

8. Describe the covenant (arrangement) between the two spies and Rahab. Who else was Rahab concerned about?

Rahab is mentioned three times in the New Testament:

Matthew 1:5, She was an ancestor of Jesus.

Hebrews 11:31, Her faith was commended.

James 2:25, Rahab proved her faith by her deeds.

9. What was the “sure sign” in verse 12? See verse 17. What is significant about this? See Hebrews 9:22 and Exodus 12:7 & 13

10. What does the spies’ encounter with Rahab do for their faith and how does it affect their report to Joshua?

Prayer: Psalm 32:5, Thank the Lord for His forgiveness.

Day Three: Chapter 3:1 – 12, The Israelites Approach the Jordan River

This chapter mirrors the crossing of the Red Sea. God took the Israelites out of Egypt to bring them in to the Promised Land. God takes us out of bondage to sin and in to His presence.

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11. How does God validate Joshua’s leadership?

12. How does God validate our assignments?

13. How did Joshua encourage the people?

Prayer Focus: Psalm 25:4 & 5

Day Four: Chapter 4:1 – 5:15, The People Cross the Jordan and Reestablish Two Ordinances

This chapter tells of the Israelites completing the crossing of the Jordan River and their obedience in following God’s directions exactly as He commanded. It reveals the preparation of the people for the coming conquest of Jericho.

A suggestion for keeping a memorial of what God does for you--keep a journal or notebook to record each time you receive a special word from the Lord; those times when a verse just jumps off the page at you or any time God speaks to you in any way.

14. What is the significance of the memorial stones? Chapter 4

15. How does the church remember what God has done for us? 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25, & 26

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Read these verses: Genesis 17: 10, 11, & 12 & Deuteronomy 30:6

16. What two important events transpired at Gilgal? What was the significance of each?

17. Who did Joshua meet when he was near Jericho? What was the significance of this provision by God for Joshua? (Review Exodus 3:1 – 15, Moses’ encounter)

Prayer: Psalm 51:10

Day Five: Chapter 6: 1 – 27, God’s Plans Are Always Best

We see God winning the victory over the people of Jericho. Although the instructions seemed strange, the Israelites followed God’s directions obediently and He gave them success. This same principle applies to us.

The people of Canaan had heard of God’s deliverance of the Israelites and the miracles He did to bring them to the Promised Land. They were afraid of the God of Israel. In our day and time, not many people fear the Lord our God.

We also face the enemy and have walls (strongholds) to conquer in our lives. We need to know God’s promises, believe His promises, and have faith to stand firm on these promises as we face our enemy.

18. What were God’s instructions to Joshua and the people for conquering Jericho?

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19. How do you respond when God gives you an assignment that seems odd to you?

20. What were the results of God’s battle plan for Jericho?

21. How do you think Rahab and her family felt as the walls came tumbling down?

22. What were the Israelites to do with the treasures from the city?

Prayer: 1 Chronicles 29:10 & 11. Praise God

As you have learned in these first chapters in the book of Joshua, the people were obedient to God and He kept His promises to them. God’s definition of prosperous and successful did not mean that the Israelites would enter the Promised Land and sit back and be blessed with everything they needed or desired. They had to step out in faith, cross the river, destroy the people of Canaan, and as we will see in the remainder of the book, they had to fight a lot of battles. God gave them success in the battles and through their hard work, they would multiply and fill the land of Canaan. Our key verse applies to us today just as it did to the Israelites and just like them, we have to do our part. We may be called upon to do some difficult tasks as we serve the Lord. We have to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and willing to obey.