

LESSON 11



JOSHUA BECOMES LEADER

Scripture Text: Joshua 1:1-9

Today's lesson gives us the Word of the Lord given to Joshua, who is now the leader of the children of Israel in the place of Moses, who died on the mountain of Nebo.

Fear and victory do not go together. The presence of the Lord and His comforting words gave Joshua confidence and joy. It will do the same for us. No one can move forward into salvation, the land of our inheritance that God has promised, if fear is allowed to affect the spiritual decisions that we must make concerning the service of God. The love and joy of the Lord is the way to cast out fear. Read 1 John 4:18. Joshua leading Israel into Canaan is a type of Christ leading His people into His church.

MEMORY VERSE: *The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways.*

—Deuteronomy 28:9

The Lord Spoke to Joshua

Joshua 1:1-2 After the death of Moses . . . the Lord spake unto Joshua. God speaks to those who are prepared to hear Him. Joshua had been faithful in the smaller things; God was now ready to give him a great commission. Faithfulness in life's daily duties and great courage in the face of crisis had prepared Joshua for supreme command. The Lord said to Joshua, **Moses . . . is dead; now therefore**—because he could no longer lean on Moses, Joshua must himself take responsibility and **go over this Jordan**. God's Word drove away indecision and gave Joshua confidence to take the next step. Jordan was to be crossed, and Joshua was the man in whom God had entrusted the leading of Israel's host.

The Lord's Promise to Joshua

Joshua 1:3-4 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you . . . Not *will* I give it, but I *have* given it. Here we see how God's promises are always made. God had already given it, but Israel must take it by actual occupation. God's promises are always conditional on us doing our part. God described the boundaries of the land He had promised. **From the wilderness . . . unto . . . the river Euphrates . . . and unto the great sea**—the Mediterranean. We learn that our effort and diligence are needed if we are to possess the prize. Israel was to gain only those places upon which the sole of the warrior's foot would tread. God could have moved the Canaanites from the land and allowed His people to take it without effort. But He did not do this, nor does He do it today. This is a type of our salvation.

Joshua 1:5 As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. Joshua knew how God had been with Moses. He had been Moses' minister, or servant (verse 1). The Lord had prepared Joshua for his work. Now He would help him in it. **There shall not any man be able to stand before thee**. He would give him victory over enemies. This promise was not to strangers, but to God's own chosen nation, Israel. So, the Kingdom of God is given not to everyone but to

a certain few. Israel is a type of those redeemed by Christ's blood. No other can inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

The Lord's Command to Joshua

Joshua 1:6-9 After giving His promise, the Lord told Joshua what his part was to be. **Be strong and of a good courage . . . very courageous.** The work of the Lord is real, living, earnest work. It is not play. It is not for the fainthearted or fearful. It requires our best in moral strength and courage every day. Of what does strength consist? We are sure that strength consists neither of might nor of power. If it consists of arms and wealth, then Israel was not equipped for the path ahead of them. Walled cities and strong armies stood in her way of advancement. Power is in God's Spirit. The strength of this people was in their obedience to God through Joshua, their leader.

The part of the Bible that Joshua and the people had then was the Law God had given on Sinai. Joshua was to keep it close and use it continually. That was the only way he could have success in his life before God. We have a completed Bible today. Are we holding it close? Do we read it, know it, meditate in it, obey it, and talk of it? We cannot have success in our Christian life any other way (James 1:21-25). It is life eternal to know God (John 17:3). We cannot know Him without His Word (2 Timothy 3:15; John 6:63).

The Method to Prosperity

We desire to prosper. We wish our nation to be strong and successful. There are methods to follow which will ensure that a people will prosper. There were for Israel. God promised, **If ye walk in my statutes . . . I will give you rain in due season afraid . . . ye shall chase your enemies . . . I will walk among you . . .** (Leviticus 26:3-12). Is the Bible read in our homes? Are our children being taught it? We cannot succeed in shaping our personal lives without close and constant use of God's Word.

Consistent with the blessing for obedience was the curse for disobedience. **If ye will not hearken unto me . . . I will set my face against you . . .** (Leviticus 26:14-17). Israel was given practical lessons to serve as written lessons to us, and God has not changed His principles. What has been the history of other nations that built their strength on righteousness? And what of those who forgot God and let unrighteousness multiply?

We live in an age which detests moral law and which believes that morality can be cultivated by educating people, that righteousness is more honorable than sin. The need is greater than cultivation and education. The need is for an individual walk through green pastures and beside the still waters of a righteously controlled life of salvation.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Let prayer be the key of the morning
and the lock of the night.**

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