

Spiritual Leadership

Joshua 1:10-18

Introduction

In the Book of Joshua we learn about the commission to Joshua (chapter 1) and later we learn about the conquest of the land (chapters 6-12) and then the inheritance and the division of the land (chapters 13-21). The book ends with a final exhortation to live a full and free life in the land promised to God's people (chapter 22-24).

We would do well to remember that Moses led the people out of Egypt and through the Red Sea—leaving behind a life of slavery and bondage. Joshua will lead the people through the Jordan and give the people a new beginning and new life. Moses led the people through a grueling generation of wilderness wanderings; and now Joshua will lead God's people throughout the promised land, laying claim to their inheritance and give them repeated victories over their enemies. In his book *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*; Norman Geisler writes;

“Moses led Israel out of bondage, but it was Joshua who took them into blessing. Moses brought them through the Red Sea, but Joshua took them over the Jordan. Moses is the symbol of deliverance and Joshua the emblem of victory. It is one thing to be redeemed from Egypt (the world) but quite another thing to be victorious over the world. Joshua teaches us the lesson that faith is “the victory that overcomes the world” (1 John 5:4)”(p.93).”

God has spoken to Joshua (vv.1-9) and now Joshua will speak to the leaders (vv.10-15). His message—be prepared to move in three days! He then gives another message to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe Manasseh. Joshua remembers the tribes' promises to assist the remaining tribes (9 and 1/2) to assist them in conquering Canaan before settling on the east side of the Jordan River. The tribes reaffirm their commitment to assist the other tribes. In short, God speaks to Joshua (v.9); Joshua speaks to the people (vv.10-15) and the people speak to Joshua (vv.16-18).

Spiritual leadership requires a leader who will hear from God and depend on the Lord and then communicate those instructions! Joshua simply told the people what God told him.

Remember the promises you made in the past (vv.12-13).

Joshua Speaks To The People (vv.10-15)

Joshua 1:10(NKJV)10Then 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.’”

Later Joshua will send two scouts to check out the land (see 2:22).

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Joshua now prepares the people. He commands the officers (leaders) to secure food; in three days they will cross the Jordan and take possession of the land.

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.'

The three tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh had chosen to live on the east side of the Jordan. In Numbers 32:16-24 the tribes sought and obtained permission from Moses to stay in that region. Moses asked, "Do you mean you want to stay back here while your brothers go across and do all the fighting? Are you trying to discourage the rest of the people of Israel from going across to the land the LORD has given them?" The two tribes gave their solemn promise to fully support the other 9 and one half tribes in conquering Canaan.

In one sense those tribes become a type and picture of the worldly believer who has a deep and rich spiritual heritage but never fully experience the abundant spiritual life and rest that can only be found in the borders of God's inheritance.

Joshua would still hold them accountable for the promise made to Moses and the Lord—to assist the other tribes in the invasion and occupation of the 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,

Joshua orders the men to mobilize and march across the Jordan (v.14). Leave their wives, children and livestock east of Jordan (v.15).

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."

There are several things we should note:

The first is Joshua's emphasis on the *rest* (Hebrew word *shaqat*). There are many great themes in the Book of Joshua including the land; God's promises; the covenant; obedience; purity in worship (read holiness); godly leadership and rest.

Joshua says "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you saying, "The Lord Your God is giving you rest" (v.13) and "until the Lord has given your brethren rest as

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He gave you” (v.15). Rest includes several important things; it means secure borders, peace from enemies, success and prosperity, fruitfulness in the land, trade, economic well being. Again rest means the freedom for people to go about their daily business in peace living full and productive lives!

But the Bible allows us to consider our spiritual rest. In Christ Jesus we find rest. Rest in our deliverance and salvation from sin; peace of mind in heart and hand; assurance and confidence, purpose and meaning and significance, fulfillment and satisfaction.

We quote Matthew 11:28-29; “Come to Me, all you who labor and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

In the Old Testament the Lord promised His people (Exodus 33:14); “And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” “Return to thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.” (Psalm 116:7).

The People Respond (vv.16-18)

16So they answered Joshua, saying, “All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.

How do the people respond? With a pledge of loyalty and allegiance that was intended to boost the confidence of Joshua in both his call and affirm his ability to lead the people.

17Just 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.

18Whoever 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.”

Praise God for people willing to honor God’s leaders.

In Corinth the Church divided into groups and created unwelcome divisions. The temptation existed for the tribes to segregate into warring factions—some in following the memory of Moses and some in honoring Moses by following Moses’ successor—Joshua. The tribes did not divide—but rather united to follow Joshua. Note their prayer in verse 17; “we listened to Moses in all things, and so now we will listen to you—the implication—all things. Only the Lord your God be with you, as He was with Moses.”

What a recipe for success! The people agree to obey Joshua as they obeyed Moses (red flag). They demonstrate faith and hope by a willingness to pray (v.17). Commitment to the

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commander (v.18). The people go so far as to pronounce the death penalty for disobedience and disloyalty. **The people declare—unconditional obedience on pain of death. The people reiterate the command of the Lord; be strong and courageous.**

We would do well to remember in brief—what that means. In what way was God with Moses? Moses will overcome great obstacles in order to be the leader of his people. You will remember that Pharaoh ordered the execution of Jewish baby boys and Moses managed to escape and was raised in Pharaoh's sister's household. We are reminded in the New Testament "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Three things; Moses refused—Moses was willing to say "NO"—no to Egypt—no to slavery and oppression—no to identity in Egypt. Moses 'chose"—it was not good enough to turn his back on his past—he chose—to identify with God's people. He chose—affliction with the people of God rather than the pleasures of sin. Faith that chooses God—His promises—His will—faith that despises natural pleasures and affections—Moses forsook—Egypt—for what? Seclusion in the desert? Obscurity in the flocks of Median? Wilderness wanderings with a group of rebels? Moses will overcome fear of failure and fear of Man!

Joshua was a personal witness to the people's rebellion, division, unbelief and murmuring!

How wonderful to hear the people's willingness to promote harmony and unity in the singular task of obeying God!

The officers pledge loyalty, allegiance, obedience, commitment. If Joshua commands—they obey—if he sent them—they go.

Conclusion