

Joshua's Servant Academy Part 3

Numbers 13-14; 27:18-19

Deuteronomy 34

Introduction

We have been looking at the mentions of Joshua in the writings of Moses. We discovered that Joshua was Moses' servant before he became Moses's successor.

Prayer

Vision

Devotion

Loyalty

And now

Faith

Filling (with the Holy Spirit)

Available

Joshua The Man Of Faith Numbers 13-14

You will recall that Joshua was one of the twelve spies tasked with the scouting out the Promised Land. After 40 days of infiltrating the Land, evaluating its occupants and resources the team returned to provide a report to Moses and the people. Joshua and Caleb returned with a good report and the other 10 spies put forth an evil report. Everyone believed the Land was bountiful. But 10 said the occupants were powerful, too powerful both in size and number to overcome. Their cities or strongholds were well fortified. In the minds of these faithless spies—it was a suicide mission. Joshua and Caleb said just the opposite; do not fear the people of the Land—they are our bread—sweet bread—in other words this is a cake walk. All Israel had to do is trust the Lord and move in! Clearly it would be a battle—but it would be a winnable war. The people refused to believe Joshua and Caleb and some attempted to stone Joshua and Caleb (see 14:1-10). The people resisted and then rejected Caleb and Joshua's report and would come under the judgment of God. **Rejection of God's Word and will results in judgment.** The tragic consequences included 40 years of wilderness wanderings. That generation would perish and a new generation would be raised up to occupy the Land.

Everyone died in the wilderness—except Joshua and Caleb. God raised up a new generation.

The Servant Leader must lead in faith. The Servant Leader cannot make decisions based on other people's unbelief. We are called to be people of faith.

Israel's refusal to enter the Land became a type and picture of the believer's refusal to lay hold of the promises of Christ and our inheritance in Christ (see Hebrews 3-4). Instead of believing God's promises and trusting Him—some people opt for doubt and disobedience—excuses why this thing called the Christian life is unrealistic or impossible. Unbelief sees the obstacles and faith sees the opportunities.

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Numbers 13 provides us with the names of the men (1-16) and the nature of the mission (vv. 17-25). We then read about the lamentation of the people and the faithless report; *"The people living there are powerful, and their cities and towns are fortified and very large. . . We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. We felt like grasshoppers next to them, and that's what we looked like to them!"*

We then hear the faithful report of the two—faithful spies (Numbers 14:6-10); *"The land we explored is a wonderful land! And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land, and give it to us. . . Do not rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people in the land. . . They have no protection, but the LORD is with us!"*

Moses recorded the reaction of the people in the opening verses (14:1-5) and the people's plans to return to Egypt. The Lord became angry and told Moses "I will disown them and destroy them with plague. Then I will make you into a nation far greater and mightier than they are!" But Moses pleaded with the Lord to pardon Israel lest the pagans say, 'The LORD was not able to bring them into the land he swore to give them, so he killed them in the wilderness' (vv. 13-19). We then read of the Lord's pardon (vv.20-21); He forgives the people but there still remains consequences for their unbelief and their rebellion. No one over the age of 20 years (with the exception of Joshua and Caleb) will be able to enter the Promised Land. They will wander and die in the wilderness for the next 40 years until a new generation is born. The 10 faithfulness scouts die immediately from a plague.

Pastor Chuck Smith was fond of reminding us that any dead fish can float down stream. It will take courage and faith to swim against the tide of popular opinion or flagrant unbelief. We must be people of faith. We can cite leaders who had to go it alone; Martin Luther, William Wilberforce, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Great faith sometimes requires that we stand alone. Moral courage is just that—the courage to say and do what is right even though the popular sentiment remains trapped by darkness or doubt or disbelief.

Elton Trueblood said, "Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation."

God had proven Himself faithful and trustworthy in the deliverance of the people and protection from the Egyptian army.

Evelyn Underhill wrote; "Faith is not refuge from reality. It is a demand that we face reality, with all its difficulties, opportunities, and implications."

Doubt see the obstacles
Faith sees the way.
Doubt sees the darkest night
Faith sees the day.

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Doubt dreads to take a step
Faith soars on high.
Doubt questions, "Who believes?"
Faith answers, "I".

Numbers 14 is one of the saddest chapters in all the Bible. It tells the story of a people who had chosen to forget all of God's wonders, powers, and deliverance. The children of Israel were beneficiaries of God's power and glory but now were testing Him by their sinful attitude of rebellion and unbelief. The Lord waited until the people expressed their desire to replace Moses and return to Egypt before He would act. Caleb and Joshua realized the people's response was pure rebellion (14:9). Moses declined God's offer to start all over again with a different group of people. Would the descendants of Moses behave any differently? Moses prays (vv.13-19) and reminds God (!!) of His promises and His mercies and His forgiveness. Moses offers his own life and in His grace God pardons their sin but in His government allows that sin to produce bitter fruit. The people will die in the wilderness. Only Caleb and Joshua were excluded from judgment because of their **faith and faithfulness**.

Our faith is in Christ. Jesus has redeemed us by His sacrifice on Calvary's cross. The sacrifice of Jesus pays for the penalty of our sin and provides for us spiritual riches. We are new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:1-5; 16-19). We have been given a total makeover on the inside! We are born of God (John 1:12-13); adopted by God (Ephesians 1:5); we are children of the promise (see Rom.9:8 and Galatians 4:23). We are children of Abraham and grafted into Israel; we are spiritual descendants of the father of faith and we are called to carry this spiritual heritage to the world. We are friends of Jesus (John 15:15) and citizens of heaven (Eph.2:19; Phil. 3:20).

Joshua The Man Filled With The Holy Spirit Numbers 27:18-19

Numbers 27:18–19 (NKJV) 18 And the Lord said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;

19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight.

Moses is given by the Lord a plan of succession. Joshua is to be placed in a position of authority (lay your hand on him) and then **publicly bring Joshua to Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation and inaugurate him in their sight**.

Joshua is described by God as a man "in whom is the Spirit". I know you are shocked! Joshua was a Spirit filled man! Here 'a man in whom is the Spirit' means—he reflects the character of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit—that Joshua is both filled and led by the Spirit of God.

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We need Spirit filled Servant leaders.

Spiritual leadership is not simply a matter of personal power but spiritual power by the Holy Spirit. The New Testament confirms this;

Acts 6:3, 5; "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

"And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmesan, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch."

Do you want to serve in the Church? In your family? In this world? You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit?

When a person receives Christ that person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Paul commands believers to live under the ongoing influence of the Holy Spirit by allowing the Word of God to control their thoughts and actions (see Colossians 3:16). We are to pursue pure lives, confess sin, die to self, surrender to God's will and depend on His power for all things. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? It must mean—at least—an awareness of the Spirit's presence and allowing the Mind of Christ to inform our thinking. Being filled with the Spirit and walking in the Spirit are the same thing (see Galatians 5:16-23). In Galatians 5:19-21—we see the immediate consequences of obeying the command to be filled with the Spirit; singing, giving thanks, in humility submitting to one another—we say and do things that are not selfish—but self-less.

Erwin Lutzer the former Pastor of Moody Church says, "To be controlled by the Spirit means that we are not controlled by what happens on the outside but by what is happening on the inside."

"The Spirit's control will replace sin's control. His power is greater than the power of all your sin."

The Lord Jesus told His disciples (Acts 1:8 GNB); "When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

V. Raymond Edmond: "The Spirit-filled life is no mystery revealed to a select few, no goal difficult of attainment. To trust and obey is the substance of the whole matter."

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We are called 'temples' of the Holy Spirit. We have the living Spirit of God inside of us (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16).

Joshua The Man Available Deuteronomy 34:9

"Deuteronomy 34:9 (NKJV) "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."

Joshua was Moses' servant before he was Moses' successor. Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom—evidenced by God and the people. Moses dies on Mount Nebo (34:5-9). We learn that Moses was buried in a valley near Beth-peor in Moab (modern Jordan); but no one knows where. 'Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was clear, and he was as strong as ever' (34:7). The people of Israel mourned 30 days for Moses on the plains of Moab and Joshua assumes the leadership role formerly assigned to Moses.

You can imagine the void left by Moses' death. Now Joshua is confirmed as Moses successor in accordance with the Word of the Lord (Numbers 27:18-19). Joshua assumes the military and administrative duties. You will note that Joshua possessed the spirit of wisdom—or spiritual wisdom to accomplish these military and administrative tasks.

Joshua was prepared, qualified, wise and available. This was in part some of the reasons the children of Israel were willing to 'heed him' or were prepared to follow Joshua's lead! Joshua was appointed by God—filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom. Moses had made a public acknowledgement of his successor and confirmed this through the prayers of the High Priest.

How important is wisdom and integrity in leadership?

You will recall that in Deuteronomy 1:13 Moses was told "Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men, from among the tribes and I will make them heads over you."

Oswald Chambers wrote; "Self-chosen authority is an impertinence. Jesus said that the great ones in this world exercise authority but that in his kingdom it is not so; no one exercises authority over another because in his kingdom the king is servant of all. If a saint tries to exercise authority, it is proof that he is not rightly related to Jesus Christ."

Lord Acton rightly said, "No authority has the power to impose error, and if it resists the truth, the truth must be upheld until it is admitted."

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What does it mean for the servant leader to be available? We all have schedules and priorities. The Lord Jesus made God's plan and God's will the highest priority. Joshua's priority would become serving the Lord God of Israel and the people that God called him to serve.

When your car sits silent in the garage it is still available to you when you need it. Unless it is broken. Availability is both an attitude and an action. In order to be available you have to have your priorities straight. **What is at the top of your "TO DO" list? What is at the top of your list of who you are in Christ?**

Are you available to the Lord? Will you put others ahead of yourself? Will you find a way to help or will you find a place to hide? Will you be ready when the time comes and you are called? Will you delight to serve?

Conclusion

God was at work preparing Joshua. Part of that preparation included understanding the power of prayer; cultivating a vision of God; devotion to the Lord; a God honoring loyalty; an ever increasing faith, empowered by the Holy Spirit—and available at just the right time.

Joshua will prepare the children of Israel to conquer and occupy a land. The preparation is both military (chapters 2-5) and spiritual (chapters 5:2-12). Joshua will employ the divine strategy—divide and conquer.

God had called Joshua and the children of Israel to occupy a land—a land occupied by people who did not want to leave. Christians are called to occupy Christ. But there are things in our lives that do not want to leave—that want to retain control of our thinking and feeling and future.

God in Christ has reconciled us to Himself. We are ransomed—Jesus has paid the price for our release. We were held hostage to sin, death and the Devil. We are redeemed—bought back—Jesus has paid our voucher—and cancelled the sin debt we owed.

Are you ready to leave Egypt? Are you done wandering in the wilderness? Are you willing to occupy that place promised by the Lord Jesus? Are you ready to enjoy victorious Christian living?