

A Practical Study of JOSHUA

“The Path of Obedience Leads to Victory”

Study Number One – Joshua 1:1-18

There are some wonderful passages of scripture that speak of heaven.

1 Corinthians 2:9

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things which the Lord hath prepared for them that love Him.”

Jesus in John 14, just before He went home to glory, said don't be worrying about it:

John 14:1-3

In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you;...

In Hebrews chapter 11 it is described that Abraham was looking for a city whose builder and maker was God. (see Hebrews 11:8-10, 16)

The children of Israel had a promise from the Abrahamic Covenant that they were going to have a land which was going

to be theirs, a land flowing with milk and honey, a rich land. And after spending over 400 years in the land of Egypt, Moses is charged with the responsibility of taking these people to the land.

When they get to the land they make the mistake that most of us do, and that's when we can't solve a problem we form a committee. That's just the way it is. There's a statement that says, "God so loved the world that He didn't send a committee." If we want to foul it up, get yourself a committee.

Moses chose twelve—one from each tribe—and sent them into the land. When they came back there was a majority and a minority report. It's recorded in Numbers 13

First of all this is the report: "We went into the land into which you sent us and it does flow with milk and honey. Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large."

Now Caleb the son of Jephunneh doesn't go along with that, and this is what he says: "We should go up and take possession of the land for we can certainly do it. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes and we looked the same to them."

So what do the people do? Well basically it's TEN AGAINST TWO as far as the spies are concerned. Joshua and Caleb are the only two on the minority plank. The people in Numbers chapter 14 sound like this: "That night all the people of the

community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly said to them, ‘If only we’d died in Egypt or in this desert. Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?’ And they said to each other, ‘We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.’”

Now what do we do in that kind of a situation when God has made a promise that He’s going to do something and the people aren’t responding and they aren’t listening to what’s being said?

Caleb takes one last shot and it’s beautiful. Listen in the latter part of chapter 14:

“The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into that land—a land flowing with milk and honey—and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord and do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us; do not be afraid of them.”

What did the assembly do as a result of that? They took steps to stone Joshua and Caleb. What was the Lord’s response? The Lord says, “not one of these men who saw My glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert, but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times, not one of

them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers.”

That tells us there comes a time when we quit fooling around and it's too late. Those people immediately listened to that and they thought, “Hey he's serious!” And so they come running to Moses and they say, “We'll go in! Yes! Honest, we will! We want the land! We made a mistake! We'll go in!”

So they're all ready to go in. Big dramatic turnaround. What does the text say? Moses tells the people, “Why are you disobeying the Lord's command? This will not succeed. Do not go up because the Lord is not with you. You'll be defeated by your enemies.”

They went up and they got whipped. And for 40 years they've been wandering the wilderness and they're back at the place where they should have been 40 years ago, now ready once again to go into the land.

But none of these people are the same except Joshua and Caleb. The other two and a half million of them are strewn corpses in the wilderness—evidence of divine disqualification because they wouldn't believe what God had said.

So as we approach the book of Joshua, there's some excitement and some thrill! Some anticipation about what's going to happen. But there's also a little bit of sorrow and grief in our minds because it's taken them 40 years to get here—longer than God had originally intended.

Now before we can ever study a book, we need to know a little bit about the person involved. It carries the name JOSHUA—that means “Jehovah is salvation.” That is the Hebrew for Jesus in the New Testament—and he is a TYPE OF PERSON OF CHRIST.

Let’s talk about Joshua for just a minute. He’s from the tribe of Ephraim—they are the tribe charged with taking Joseph’s bones out of Egypt and bringing them up to the land. His grandfather was Elishama who was the head of that tribe, and his father was Nun who was also very prominent. So we obviously assume that Joshua was one of the leaders of the tribe of Ephraim.

Joshua remains in seclusion almost. He was born in Egypt and for the last 40 years of the bondage he lived there. If we can imagine what that would have been like working for those Egyptian task-masters. So it was very hard.

Not only that, he’s had 40 years wandering in the wilderness waiting for the promise that God has given him. So he has had 80 years of tough stuff. He all of a sudden comes on the page of scripture when they’re coming up to the land the first time at Rephidim. He’s a man filled with the Spirit and he is a man who is charged with the responsibility of fighting the Amalekites while Moses takes Aaron and Hur up on the mountain to pray and hold up the staff. And the victory is in the battle as Moses hands are held heavenward with the staff.

Now Rephidim in Exodus 17—but when we come to Exodus chapter 20 Moses chooses one man to go with him as his attendant up to Mt. Sinai with the giving of the Law. Who is it? Joshua is chosen.

And the next time we see Joshua is when they get to Kadesh-Barnea and he's chosen as the one representative from the tribe of Ephraim to go as one of the spies.

So that's basically all we know of the man before now. He's one of those men who has to play second fiddle. That's the hardest instrument in the orchestra to play. And he plays it well. He is a real servant to Moses for all of these years.

And now we're coming to the time of great transition for Joshua, because Moses is not going to be the one who takes the people into their inheritance. Moses couldn't. Moses represents a Law and the Law will never give us an inheritance. It'll only come through our Joshua—through our Jesus.

If we were saved today and going to heaven, it's not because we're keeping the Law, it's because we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We have invited Him into our life, we've experienced forgiveness of sin on the basis of His shed blood on Calvary. If there's anything that's confusing or short of that, we're probably not going.

We must know in our hearts and our lives that we have received our Joshua. He is the only one who can take us to our

inheritance.

Now let's say just a couple of three things here of an introductory nature.

Who is the author? Now we can get critics saying all kinds of things about who wrote this book. Let's just say Joshua wrote it. It solves so many problems. It has his name on it. It's his military log and his diary. The only problem we have with that is the last five verses record his death. Why not let Phinehas the high priest write the last five verses and go for it?

We spend so much time criticizing and picking on the Word of God when the simple thing to do would be to turn it loose and let it work. And so we're going to accept the authorship of Joshua for the book of Joshua.

Now we need to outline the book, and the way we do this is just take a quick little overview and then we'll jump down into chapter 1 and we'll get busy.

First of all, we have the **INVASION OF THE LAND** in the first five chapters—chapters 1-5.

Then we progress to the **SUBJECTION OF THE LAND**—chapters 6-12.

Then the **DIVISION OF THE LAND**—chapters 13-22.

And then finally the FAREWELL OF JOSHUA—chapters 23 and 24—and he’s going to give two messages at the end—one in chapter 23 and one in chapter 24.

And that’s the way the book divides itself up:

1. INVASION of the land,
2. SUBJECTION of the land,
3. DIVISION of the land, and
4. then wraps it up in the CONCLUSION.

Our KEY VERSE is Joshua 1:3.

Now what do we have to paint the picture for us before we get into the text? We have about two and a half million people who are at a campsite at Shittim and they’re 8 miles from the river as the scene of our study opens.

Who lives in the land of Canaan right now? Living in the land of Canaan are descendants of Cain. They’re called Canaanites.

Actually they are descendants of Noah’s cursed son Ham, whose son’s name was Canaan. And so they are called the Canaanites.

Now there are SEVEN DIFFERENT GROUPS of these Canaanites in the land. There’s:

1. the HITTITES,
2. the GIRGASHITES,
3. the AMORITES,
4. the CANAANITES,
5. the PERIZZITES,
6. the HIVITES, and
7. the JEBUSITES,

And the TERMITES. Just realize that the only reason we have all those funny names is it's because of LOCATION where they live in the land.

There's a common denominator among every one of them. They are worshipping satanically-inspired religion. They believe in sex and prostitution as part of their worship, along with child sacrifice. They are worshippers of the god, Baal.

Now when we get to chapter 6 we're going to have a hard time with that.

Don't form any wrong opinions against God because He tells them to wipe them out. This is God's battle. Just like the children of Israel had their chance to go into the land and they

chose not to do it, time ran out.

Way back in Genesis 15 it says “the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full.” They’ve had 400 years to respond and they haven’t so its drop the curtain, the party’s over—and it’s time for judgment.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

There comes a time when God says, “Baby that’s it. You’ve had your chance. You’ve had your opportunity. No more.”

And to believers it’s the same way. If you will not come unto Him all ye who are weary and heavy-laden and take His yoke upon you and learn of Him, who is meek and lowly of heart; there will come a day when He’ll say, “That’s it! You’ll never enter into My rest! You’ll never know My adequacy! You’ll never know the joy of the Lord that could have been yours in an exceedingly abundant life because you just wouldn’t trust Me.”

Now when we get to some of those things we’ll have some fun talking about it and going into it. What an exciting project! What a great book to study! And some fabulous lessons will come out of it.

It would be well for us, for just a moment, to make this even

more meaningful, to listen to Moses in his farewell address speak to the people in Deuteronomy 8:7-20. Listen to this:

Deuteronomy 8:7-20

The Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs flowing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; a land where you shall eat food without scarcity; in which you shall not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you've eaten and you are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his ordinances and his statutes which I'm commanding you today. Lest when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them, and when you have your herds and your flocks multiply and your silver and gold multiply and all that you have multiplies, then your heart becomes proud and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. He led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water. He brought water from out of the rock of flint. In the wilderness he fed you manna, which your fathers did not know that he might humble you and that he might test you to do good for you in the end. Otherwise you may say in your heart, "My power and the strength of my hand made me this power and this wealth." But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it

is he who has given you power to make wealth, that he may confirm his covenant, which he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. And it shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you shall surely perish.

Joshua chapter 1—write the word COMMISSION over chapter 1.

Joshua chapter 1 is a lot like Acts chapter 1. Joshua chapter 1 is the beginning. There's a change of leadership. Acts chapter 1 is preliminary preparations for the big event of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. Everything's getting lined up and getting ready, and that's what chapter 1 is about.

Once Pizarro, that great explorer of South America, had to challenge his tired and discouraged companions and he drew a line in the sand. And pointing south where lay unexplored regions, Pizarro said:

“On that side are toil, hunger, nakedness, the drenching storm, desertion, and death. On this side are ease and pleasure. Choose each man what becomes a brave Castilian. For my part I go to the south.”

His men responded to the challenge and ventured south with him.

(source unknown)

Joshua's going to come with a message, “There's going to be a

war, there's going to be fighting, but we're going to go in and take what God has given us!" And the test and the challenge of leadership is before this man who's been an understudy of Moses for these 40 years in the wilderness and has also served as a slave for 40 years in the land of Egypt. Now his hour has come.

Chapter 1 is easy to divide. We have three people talking:

1. the LORD talks in verses 1-9.
2. JOSHUA talks in verses 10-15.
3. the PEOPLE talk in verses 16-18.

So that's real easy isn't it?

First of all the Lord's going to talk in verses 1-9.

How does Joshua feel? As a result of the change of leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary some years ago, the new president of the school made reference to the book of Joshua and how he felt:

(Dallas Insider, June, 1986. Vol. 9, No. 3.)

The book of Joshua is one of my favorite Biblical books because I can relate to Joshua and his career change. After many years as an understudy, Joshua was appointed to replace Moses as Israel's leader. God said, "Now, Joshua, the

transition is over. Your time has come.” Many people have asked me how I feel about assuming the presidency of Dallas Seminary. I have told them I feel challenged, excited, and awed. Joshua felt the same challenge as Israel’s new leader. As Joshua faced the tremendous challenge of conquering Canaan, he relied on the promises of God to enable him. As we face life’s challenges, sometimes pleasant experiences, sometimes painful crises, we too must rest on God’s promises. (source unknown)

With the introduction behind us, now we get to the meat of the study.

v. 1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide:

“After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide:”

See the word “After”? That means that God buries His workmen, but the work goes on. After death He’s unaffected by His servant coming home. Things just keep going.

That’s hard for us to accept, isn’t it? We want to know how much we’ll be missed, just put our hand in a bucket of water and stir it all around. But when we pull it out, the hole that’s left is how much we’ll be missed.

Life’s going to go on without us. When we retire, somebody’s going to take our place at that job and at work. We’re going to

be forgotten.

One guy, speaking in Dobson's book said:

“All they had was 60 seconds of silence and a 20 second eulogy. And that's all it was for a life that was some 60 years.”
(source unknown)

“After the death of Moses”—life goes on. The Lord speaks to Joshua, the son of Nun.

But look at the title of this man: “After the death of Moses”—WHO?—“the servant of the Lord.”

There's no higher title than that. That's the greatest thing that could ever be said of a person. He's a “servant of the Lord.”

Joseph Bayly is the one who wrote *The Gospel Blimp* and *The Christian's View from a Hearse*. He had three of his sons die of a blood disease—he and his wife Mary Lou. And when he died he left behind him a tremendous legacy. But it was said of his funeral service by an eyewitness the following words:

(Inside CMS: South Central Newsletter, Fall/September 1986)

When I attended his memorial service in Wheaton on July 20, a simple tapestry hung over the pulpit; the words, “A servant gone home” embroidered on the side facing the congregation. Joe would have liked that. He saw himself as a

servant. “Thank you, Joe, for sharing your life with us...”
(source unknown)

When Moses died he heard:

“Enter into the joys I’ve prepared for you. Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

In talking on the business of learning how to be a servant Ron Lee Davis says this:

(The Healing Choice by Ron Lee Davis)

In the aftermath of a bloody battle during the Korean War, a war correspondent paused to watch a young Army nurse who was caring for some of the wounded. Standing over her shoulder, he leaned forward for a closer look just as she was removing the bandage from the leg of a badly injured soldier. He was caught off-guard by a glimpse of the gaping, oozing wound and the stench of blood and infection. He had to turn away to avoid becoming sick.

Thinking no one could hear him, the newsman muttered under his breath, “I wouldn’t do that for a million bucks!”

[And the young nurse turned toward him and said, “I wouldn’t either... looking kindly up at him. “I do it for Jesus Christ.”

Intrigued by her response, the correspondent began to talk with this nurse. He discovered she had lost her husband in an accident some months earlier. Her grief and loneliness seemed too much to bear. But during this time she made a

choice to offer her nursing experience to God. This led her to service in Korea, just a few miles from the battlefield. “Once, all I cared about was financial security, a nice car, a nice house. Now I’m surrounded by all this blood, pain, and devastation—but I’ve never been more fulfilled. If I was home right now, I’d be clean and comfortable, but awash in self-pity. Here, my life has meaning.” This nurse had learned one of the most important lessons in life: Christlike servanthood is the healing choice for the hurt of loneliness.

p. 81 (source unknown)

Moses—was he ever lonely? Did he ever hurt? Did he get angry at the people? Yes! The only reason he’s not going into the land is because he got angry with them. He got to the place where he wanted to throw in the towel.

When it comes to writing the final chapter of his life—“Moses the servant of the Lord.”

Isn’t that good stuff? What a tremendous individual.

The Lord now turns to second fiddle—Joshua, the son of Nun—verse 2. The Lord starts to speak to Joshua—down to verse 9.

v. 2 “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.

“Moses, my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.”

“Moses, my servant is dead.” He’s finished his course, he’s kept the faith, he’s gone.

Someone said:

“The runner who puts the last ounce of effort into the race feels the glorious satisfaction of having given everything to the moment.”

(source unknown)

That should be the story of our life every day if we’re living it in a well-ordered disciplined fashion for the glory of God.

“Moses my servant is dead.”

What do we think the next phrase should have been?

“Moses my servant is dead so the work can’t go on.”

“Moses my servant is dead so everything’ll have to be on hold for a little while.”

“Moses my servant is dead and it sure has fouled up all my plans.”

Is that the way we look at it? No.

“Moses my servant is dead”—now the divine proclamation:

“you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.”

Get ready! We’re going into the land. Listen to Isaiah 43:

Isaiah 43:1-3

But now thus says the Lord your creator, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel:

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by my name; you are Mine!
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
And through the rivers, they will not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you will be scorched,
Nor will the flame burn you.
For I am the Lord your God,
The Holy One of Israel, your Saviour;

And then verses 18 and 19:

Isaiah 43:18, 19

Do not call to mind the former things,
Or ponder things of the past.
Behold, I will do something new,
Now it will spring forth;
Will you not be aware of it?

I will even make a roadway in the wilderness,
Rivers in the desert.

“get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to [you]”—that is “the Israelites.”

Oh there’s some great truth there. Why is God going to give them this land? Way back in the book of Genesis to Abraham he instituted a unilateral covenant.

A unilateral covenant is one person saying, “This is what I’m going to do and I commit myself to do it, and nobody else has to be involved in it.” God walked through the pieces of the sacrifice alone to say, “Abraham, you’re going to have a seed and you’re going to have a land. And I’m going to do it! I promise you I’m going to do it.”

Now what happened when they came to Kadesh-Barnea? Did God nullify the promises because they failed to go in?

God’s promises are never affected by our failures!

God, if He obligates Himself to do this, He’s going to do it! And it’s now time to do it.

The covenant of our salvation is a unilateral covenant. God is going to save some people who will come to faith in Jesus Christ. And when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, we are under a unilateral covenant. And God’s promises are not affected by our failures or our successes—lest we want to put

works in our salvation.

John 10:28, 29

I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone take them out of My hand. My Father which gave them to Me is greater than all; and no one is able to take them out of My Father's hand.

And then we can put Numbers 23:19 right beside it:

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man that He should repent;
Has He said, and will he not do it?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

One thing for sure, when we stand in heaven we will never find one promise that God did not fulfill. Every jot and tittle—every little punctuation mark and period will be fulfilled! When God has said it, we can count on it.

So it's altogether fitting that He would say to Joshua, "Get ready, you're going into the land that I'm going to give you!"

Now let's take another little look—verse 3.

v. 3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

“I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.”

Now isn't that strange? God's making a promise that He's going to give them a land, but they're only going to get what they possess by walking over it.

There are no crash courses in godliness. Godliness is the result of a daily denial and discipline of being in the Book. Genuine godliness is nothing else but the daily intake of the Word of God affecting the way we live our life.

Who feels that we have possessed all the land that God has given us by spending the time adequate in His Word to say that we are a godly person? So we don't want to get too tough on the Israelites here.

How much land God promised them? Three hundred thousand square miles. How much did they possess? Thirty thousand square miles. One tenth of it! That isn't too bad considering the way we act sometimes.

Godliness only comes as a daily denial and taking up our cross and getting after it—and spending time in the Word of God.

It's building and possessing what God has given each of us. And that's exactly what He's saying to them. “I'm not just going to hand this to you as a blank check. You're going to have to go in there and possess it, drive out the enemy and

take it as a gift from My hand. I'll be faithful to you. But it's where the sole of your foot shall tread."

Notice the last page on the study guide is a map. We're going to look at that during the time when we get to some of these geographical locations. But that's kind of a little capsule of the land there.

v. 4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west.

"Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west."

Three hundred thousand square miles—that's their land. But they don't possess all that. That's the tragic story of it.

v. 5 No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

"No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Why does he all of a sudden stop talking about the wonderful promises and what he's going to do and he **TURNS** now to

Joshua?

Well Joshua's overwhelmed by this deal. And God knows he needs to have his confidence rebuilt. And so God starts to speak to him. He tells him, "I'm going to protect you. I'm going to provide for you. My presence is going to be with you."

"No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life."

Isn't that a great promise? "You're not going to lose any."

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you."

"When I'm on your side you're going to win."

"If God be for us, who can be against us?"

The five-year-old's phrase of that: "If God be for us, you're up against it." Us and God make the majority here.

Nobody's going to "be able to stand up against you all the days of your life." They're going to win.

And just like "I was with Moses"— put Exodus 33:14. That's when Moses heard from the Lord these words:

Exodus 33:14

“My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.”

“As I was with Moses, so I am going to be with you.” That had to be a great source of encouragement to Joshua—just in that one verse.

Now look at verse 6.

v. 6 “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.”

“Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.”

Now see that little phrase “Be strong and courageous”? Before we get through, that’s going to occur **FOUR TIMES**.

Remember, when it occurs once we pay attention, twice cast it in concrete, three it’s the gospel truth, and four we can’t violate it. Four times it says it. It’s obvious that this is what’s needed? Doesn’t it?

“Be strong and courageous, because”—REASON—“you will be leading the people to inherit the land that I promised to their forefathers to give them.”

Now how are we “strong and courageous”?

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong [WHERE?] in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

Isaiah 40:31

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength....

We don't have it in ourselves either. We're weak!

“But His strength is made perfect in our weakness,” so we can glory in our weakness because He takes weak things and makes them strong. (ref. 2 Corinthians 12:9)

Paul says:

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

“I'm going to be all you need so 'be strong and courageous.’”

Now look at verse 7. Evidently he didn't get the last half of the message because he puts a “very” in there.

v. 7 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.”

“Be strong and very courageous.”

Can we be courageous if we have God’s promise and we know we’re going to win every time? And He’s going to give us the victory? You bet!

Acts 27 is great. Paul’s in the shipwreck and he’s standing there. He’s been knocked around on the sea for two weeks and everybody’s given up hope of being saved. He stands up and says:

Acts 27:25

Wherefore sirs, be of good courage, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

In other words, “nothing’s going to happen. Everything’s going to be fine. God’s already given it to me!”

That is courage with 273 other people that are already convinced that they’re going to die.

Now what is it that the Lord introduces here that’s critical to the end of His message? See it?

“Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do

not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.”

PRINCIPLE:

Success in the project is dependent upon obedience to the Word of God.

If we want some more on that, read 1 John 2. It talks about God blessing the obedient heart. Let's put it this way:

The key to victory is one's relationship to the Word of God.

Isn't it interesting to note the centrality of the Word of God in the Lord's thoughts here as He prepares for them to go into the land? And isn't it incredible that this is the day when everybody is denying the Word of God?

The pastor who is very successful and has a very large church wrote an article in the paper saying that he does not believe in the inerrancy of scripture.

There are three I's:

1. the INSPIRATION,
2. the INFALLIBILITY, and
3. the INERRANCY of Scripture.

They're inviolable. We don't have time to sit around and try to pick flaws in something that God told us to turn loose on people and let Him use it.

And why is it that we are caught up with sophisticated scholars who are running around telling us they found errors in our text and the men for two thousand years before that have found it's totally reliable and authoritative?

All that does is provide a person with an excuse to live his own lifestyle, because he doesn't have to be obedient to something that isn't accurate. We don't have any right to an opinion until all the facts are in. And they aren't going to be in until we get there because we only know in part, and then we're going to know even as we're known, when we see Him face to face. (see 1 Corinthians 13:12)

And some scribe happened to drop one little "t" or one little "i" to change one word, it didn't change the doctrine—and He'll tell us about that when we get there. We just hang onto the truth and go for it.

That needs to be sounded loud and clear. We get a straight furrow and hang in there with the Word of God and don't ever lose confidence in it. And that's what the Lord says to Joshua: "You want to win in this thing and you want victory. Listen, don't turn to the right and don't turn to the left. You keep a straight course and let the Word of God be dominant."

Now, God is in the business of blessing the obedient heart.

And He does that when we are doers of the word and not hearers only. (see James 1:22)

Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount by saying if we want to build our house on the sand, then listen to the word and don't do it. But if we want to build it on the rock, when the storms come then we are a doer of the word and not just a hearer only of it. (see Matthew 7:24-27)

See verse 8—He comes on even stronger.

v. 8 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.

“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.”

Psalm 1:1-5

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the way of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth his fruit in his season,

Do we want to be prosperous and successful? Then keep the Word of God uppermost in our mind and our heart, and meditate on its precepts, and feed on it.

Jeremiah 15:16

Thy word were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart...

Now He ends His little talk in verse 9.

v. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Roger, over and out. That’s it.

“Didn’t I command you? Be strong and courageous and don’t be terrified and don’t be discouraged.”—There’s a POSITIVE and a NEGATIVE.

“Be strong and courageous”—POSITIVE.

NEGATIVE—“don’t get discouraged” and “terrified”—negatively.

The Lord our God is with us wherever we go.

Joshua, is a CHOLERIC MELANCHOLY. He is a perfect General Patton. He’s a perfect general to bring order out of chaos. That’s the kind of man we have. It’s a man who can bark orders and see to it that things are done.

We’re going to be amazed. As soon as the Lord gets through talking to him, watch what happens in these next verses. He just blows us away with his organization and the detail. The message is over and now it’s time for Joshua to get things going. Watch what he does.

The Lord speaks in verses 2-9.

Joshua now speaks in 11-15.

v. 10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people:

“So Joshua ordered the officers of the people:”

v. 11 “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.’”

“Go through the camp and tell the people, “Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.””

Now there are going to be some more THREEs mentioned in these next couple of chapters. And some people get the idea that there’s an error here. They are eight miles from the river and it takes the women a while to get things packed. So Joshua sends the officers around and says, “Y’all get stuff packed. We’re leaving in three days.”

They have three days to put it together. Then they’re going to take an eight mile trip down to the river before they go across. And so this is kind of the picture we have in our mind.

Now he says do this. Tell all the people, “Get your supplies ready,” we’re going to go. “Three days from now we’ll cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your very own.”

“It’s going to be yours and yours alone. I promised it. It’s going to be yours.”

v. 12 But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said,

“But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said,”

Now ever wonder where in the world that came from and who they are? These are two and a half of the twelve tribes of Israel. There's a little story that's attached to this to make us understand, so let's just say it just as briefly as possible.

When the children of Israel came up here to Camp Shittim, which is eight miles from the river, the Ammorites had the whole area. It was their territory. And they asked for permission to stay there and the Ammorites said no. And the Lord said wipe them out. They leveled the Ammorites, cleaned up the whole eastern side of the land.

Now Reuben and Gad and a half-tribe of Manasseh came and said, "Moses, this is great land. Pasture land—perfect! Why should we have to cross the river and go into the land on the west side? Why can't we just live here on the east side?"

Moses said, "Over my dead body. You're taking a bird nest on the ground. The rest of them are going to have to fight for theirs, and you'd have yours already. No, we're not going to do that!"

And then they came back with a counter proposal. That's always their option. They said, "Well Moses, what if we go in and help our brothers possess their land, can we have our land over here?" Moses says, "That sounds like a good deal. You can have it."

Now Joshua knows that if he doesn't remind those two-and-a-half tribes they're going to settle down east and let the other

nine-and-a-half go over and do their thing, because now they have a change in leadership. But this general isn't going to let anything pass him on the agenda.

So he tells the officers to go get everybody ready, but he turns to the two-and-a-half tribes because he has to have unity when he crosses the river. And he needs those 45,000 armed soldiers going ahead of him when he goes across the river, because he doesn't know what he's going to find on the other side. So right away he takes hold and he confronts these two-and-a-half tribes.

v. 13 “Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: ‘The Lord your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.’”

“Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: “The Lord your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.””

“You see you've already got your inheritance here and you're at rest.”

v. 14 Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers

“Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the

land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers”

v. 15 until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

“until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

Lest we get the idea that these people really got a good deal, they paid a horrendous price for it. Every time somebody came to attack the land they always hit the east side first. And they’re the first ones that were taken off into captivity by the Syrians.

When we always fall short of what God originally intended, we’re always going to pay for it later on. And they thought they really had a good deal going staying on the east side of the river. But man they had a bitter cup to drink, even though it looked good on the surface. We talk a lot about the well-watered plains of Jordan and he’ll give us the same song, second verse—if we’re looking for something else.

And if we're contemplating the possibility of arranging a compromise with God and settling far short of what He intended for us, friend we're the loser not God. He intended for us to have an abundant life.

The Lord speaks, Joshua speaks and the people speak. How do these two-and-a-half tribes respond to this? Three words—“whatever,” “wherever,” and “whoever.”

“Whatever you say, general we'll do. Wherever you send, we will go. And whoever doesn't, we'll give him the ax.”

That's a quick way of putting it isn't it?

v. 16 Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.

“Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.”

v. 17 Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses.

“Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses.”

And that's already been taken care of.

v. 18 Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!”

“Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!”

They end it in the same way— “be strong and courageous!” Hang in there and keep going.

What are the lessons we got out of that?

Lesson #1: God’s work is not affected by the death of His servants.

Buries the workman and goes on with the work.

Lesson #2: Past failure doesn’t affect the promise made by God to His children.

He told them they were going to have the land and they’re going in now. It has been 40 years later than it should have happened.

Lesson #3: The Lord promises Joshua PROVISION, PROTECTION, and PRESENCE.

“I’m going to be with you just like I was with Moses. Nobody’ll stand against you.”

Lesson #4: The key to success is obedience to His Word.

Lesson #5: Meditation upon the Word day and night is critical in this campaign.

Do we do that? Do we love to just chew on it? Meditate on its concepts and its principles? Sweeter than honey out of the honeycomb—we delight to feed upon His Word.

Lesson #6: Be strong and courageous; not scared and discouraged.

Lesson #7: Joshua immediately gets things organized for the project of possessing their inheritance.

Are we possessing our inheritance in Jesus Christ? Have we been here before?

We just don’t want to make a full surrender. We just don’t want to be that picky on obedience. So when we come to the river it’s, “Oh I just don’t want to do it! It’s just too hard!”

Can we ask you to do something? Would you trust Him? Would you turn it over to Him? Submission, surrender and obedience—would you let Him work?

Are you tired of wandering in a wilderness of your own

making? Spitting sand and feeling the hot warm dusty wind in your face, when God meant for you to have the oasis of His land—the center of His will.

Psalm 139:23

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
try me and know my thoughts.

Then take me and lead me where You want me to go! You know what's best for me.

“I’ll trust Him for my eternal life, but forget this business of trusting Him right now. He can’t handle it! I gave it to Him once. Look at the mess He put me in.”

Now that’s not true. We’re the ones that put us in the mess. God meant for us to be blessed beyond our fondest dreams.

Ron Lee Davis in *The Healing Choice*—and with this we close—cites an illustration from Josh McDowell:

(The Healing Choice by Ron Lee Davis)

Josh McDowell tells the story of a tightrope walker who came to town with the circus. Before an awed crowd of onlookers, he performed many daring feats—riding a bicycle, carrying chairs, walking on his hands, pushing a wheelbarrow—all on a tenuous span of rope hundreds of feet above a river. Finally, he came to his last feat. “I will now

push this wheelbarrow across that rope with another person in it! Do you think I can do it!”

“Yes!” answered the confident crowd. “You can do it!”

“That’s wonderful!” said the tightrope walker. “Then who among you wants to be first to volunteer as my passenger?”

Total silence.

“I’ll volunteer,” said a young woman, stepping confidently to the front. The crowd was amazed at her courage. The stuntman took her across the river in the wheelbarrow, then back again, all without a hitch.

Afterwards, someone ran to the young woman and asked, “Where on earth did you get the courage to do that? Weren’t you scared to death?”

“Not at all,” she smiled. “You see, the tightrope walker is my *father*—and I’ve been performing that feat with him all my life.”

And so it is with us. As we live according to our faith instead of according to our doubts, our faith and assurance grow. We come to know the Father *personally*, not just intellectually. Through our active daily reliance upon Him, we can finally reach a place where we can say, “I’m not afraid to trust my heavenly Father. I’ve been performing the feat of faith with Him all my life.”

pp. 123-124 (source unknown)

He can handle it. The problem is, you don’t want to give it. That’s the problem.

Would you come to victory tonight to find the joy of going into a land that flows with milk and honey?

Father, thank You for the richness of this. May we take the lessons from this study and be challenged afresh to become the kind of men and women that You want us to be for the glory of God. Please Father, make this time very sacred as we study your Word. Make these meetings with Yourself, shutting out the cares of the world and allowing us to see life from Your perspective. There are those without Jesus Christ. We pray that they'll avail themselves of the precious gift of Your Son. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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A Practical Study of JOSHUA

“The Path of Obedience Leads to Victory”

Study Number One – Joshua 1:1-18

NOTES

v. 1 After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide:

v. 2 “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.

v. 3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

v. 4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west.

v. 5 No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

v. 6 “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.

v. 7 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

v. 8 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.

v. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

v. 10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people:

v. 11 “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own.’”

v. 12 But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said,

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NOTES

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v. 15 until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”

v. 16 Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.

v. 17 Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses.

v. 18 Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!”

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Joshua 1:1-18 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What is the Lord’s command to Joshua in verse 2?

3. What is the Lord's promise to Joshua in verse 5?

4. What command does the Lord give to Joshua in verses 6-9?

5. How does Joshua respond to the Lord's commands, according to verses 10 & 11?

6. What special instructions does Joshua have for the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in verses 13-15?

7. How do these tribes respond to Joshua's instructions, according to verse 16?

8. What is their wish for Joshua as he assumes the leadership of the nation, according to verse 17?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: God's work is not affected by the death of His servants.

LESSON #2: Past failure doesn't affect the promise made by God to His children.

LESSON #3: The Lord promises Joshua a provision, His protection, and His presence.

LESSON #4: The key to success is obedience to His Word.

LESSON #5: Meditation upon the Word day and night is critical in the campaign.

LESSON #6: Be strong and courageous; not scared and discouraged.

LESSON #7: Joshua immediately gets things organized for the project of possessing their inheritance.