

# Joshua Series #1

## “Possessing The Promise” - Joshua 1:1-9

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Last Week

1. Paul's final exhortations to the Corinthians, 16:13-14
  - a. “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong!”
  - b. sounds like a general addressing the troops as they prepare to enter battle
2. As we studied, realized that the Bible reveals we are indeed engaged in battle
  - a. spiritual battle
  - b. we wrestle, not against flesh and blood
  - c. but against principalities and powers of evil in the spiritual realm
3. The weapons of our warfare are not guns and bombs
4. The chief weapon of spiritual battle is faith: Faith in God!

#### B. Joshua

1. The OT book of Joshua is a marvelous picture of the kind of faith that overcomes
2. From start to finish it reveals vital principles for living a victorious Christian life
3. You see, the book of Joshua not only relates the story of Israel entering the promised land -
4. It presents a powerful picture of the Christian life

#### C. The Picture

1. Bible teachers have long understood that Israel's exodus from Egypt and entrance into Canaan is a type of the Christian life
2. In Rom 15: 4 we read, “Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”
3. In 1 Cor. 10:6, of the exodus and all that happened to Israel Paul says those things serve as an example to us
4. God intends us to understand the parallels between Israel and our walk with Him
5. Egypt was a place of slavery, of bondage to Pharaoh
  - a. he was a cruel tyrant

- b. demanded the Jews serve him and build his kingdom
- 6. Egypt serves as a picture of this world, whose master is Satan
  - a. he is a heavy handed tyrant
  - b. who enslaves the lost in bondage to sin and death
- 7. Just as Israel was delivered from slavery in Egypt by the blood of the Passover lamb, so we are delivered from bondage to sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God
- 8. Then Israel turned it's back on Egypt and passed through the Red Sea, which is a fitting picture of water baptism in which the Christian turns his/her back on he world
- 9. Next, the Jews traveled to Mt. Sinai where they received the 10 Commandments and for the first time learned about this God who had saved them
- 10. In like manner, when we were first saved, we found the bible to be a new book.
  - a. His word was opened to us
  - b. we began to see God, ourselves and others in a new light
- 11. Then an interesting thing happened . . .
- 12. Not only did God want to bring Israel OUT of bondage - he wanted to bring her IN to a place of blessing and promise
  - a. the land of Canaan
  - b. a land flowing with milk and honey
- 13. Sure it was a land of great blessing, but when the Israelites heard it also was the home of giants and strong walled cities, they became fearful and refused to enter
- 14. As a result, they were destined to wander around the wilderness until the entire generation of adults that had seen the exodus died off
- 15. Because they refused to believe God could bring them in and fulfill His promise, they were destined to wander aimlessly for the rest of their days
  - a. they went around in circles for 38 years!
  - b. all because of unbelief, of a lack of faith in God
- 16. What an apt illustration of so many Christians,
  - a. they are only living half the Christian life
  - b. they have left Egypt
  - c. they have been cleansed of sin by faith in the death of Christ
  - d. but they have not entered into the fullness of the

- e. new life God wants to bring them in to so they seem to wander in circles in a dry spiritual wilderness
  - f. they see other Christians entering in to the promise
    - they know the promise is real
    - but because of a lack of faith, they balk at entering in themselves
17. If this is where you are today, take heart
- a. Joshua is a book for you!
  - b. these words today are for you!
18. In old spirituals and some of the hymns, Canaan is presented as a type of heaven
- a. crossing Jordan is pictured as death
  - b. and the land of promise as our final resting place in glory
  - c. but wait a minute;
  - d. Israel had battles to fight in Canaan
    - giants
    - armies of enemies
    - cities to conquer
    - territory to be taken
  - e. not the picture of heaven the bible reveals
19. Canaan is not a type of heaven
20. Rather, it is a picture of the Spirit-filled life and crossing the Jordan is a picture of the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- a. as any spirit-filled believer knows
  - b. just because you're filled with the Spirit, it doesn't mean you are free from troubles
  - c. oh no!
  - d. there are still battles to fight
    - enemies to be defeated
    - fortifications of evil to be overcome
    - territory to be taken
21. As we come to the opening vs. of Joshua, Israel stands poised to enter the Promised Land
22. I hope you are ready to enter in to the fullness of God's promise as well

## II. TEXT

### A. Vs. 1-2

**1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that**

**the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying:  
2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you  
and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them; the  
children of Israel.**

1. Moses, that great leader of Israel, that one whom God chose to give His law to, could not bring the people in to the fullness of God's promise
2. Moses stands as a picture of the law, and the law could never bring the people in to the promise: It could only help bring them out of the curse of slavery
3. In like manner, you and I can never enter in to the place of blessing by our own works
3. No, we need a Joshua, the Hebrew spelling of the same name as our Savior, Jesus
  - a. yes, it was Jesus who led the Jews in to the land of Promise
  - b. just as it is Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation who leads us in to the fullness of God's promise of the spirit filled life today

B. Vs. 3-4

**3 "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.**

**4 "From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.**

1. God lays out the borders of the promised land
  - a. south = wilderness of the Negev
  - b. north = mountains of Lebanon
  - c. east = Euphrates River
  - d. west = Med. Sea
2. A vast area
  - a. much larger than Israel today
  - b. even more than the area taken by David and Solomon
3. The promise of God was much bigger than they ever realized
4. Why?
5. Because as it says in v. 3, they had to put their foot down on it
6. In other words, God gave them the boundaries of the

Promised land, but they had to take possession of it to make it their own.

7. The total promise was vast, but Israel only possessed a small part of it
8. Even so, God has made hundreds and hundreds of promises to us
  - a. the boundaries of His promise are vast
  - b. the place of blessing is immense
  - c. but you and I must move in and take possession of those promises
9. How much of the spiritual land of promise do you possess?
  - a. how many of the promises of God have you taken hold of?
  - b.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of them?;  $\frac{1}{4}$ , 10%
10. Story: Over 10 years ago, gave love checks to Lynn
  - a. back rub, do dishes, night out
  - b. has only used 2, 8 still remain
  - c. I gave them out of love
    - wanted to demonstrate it
    - have given a promise that when she redeems one,  
I will do whatever it says
    - I am just waiting for her to redeem them
11. Appl: God has given us a checkbook filled with hundreds of love checks
  - a. they read "love, peace, joy"
  - b. they promise power, a sound mind
  - c. He is just waiting to fulfill them
  - d. we must take them, we must possess them
12. V. 3 = "Every place the sole of your foot will tread I have already given you."
  - a. Christian - put your foot down on the promises of God
  - b. stand in faith and possess His grace
13. It has always been - those who are the most mightily blessed by God are the ones who have learned the secret of simply receiving from God.
  - a. they were men and women of a simple faith
  - b. they saw the promises of God and simply took possession of them
  - c. Ex.: George Mueller
    - read every day; if he saw a promise, he expected  
God to fulfill it
    - ran several orphanages in England

- it was his policy to never advertise the needs of the ministry
  - he only let God know about them
  - story: one night at dinner, no food; said grace and thanked God for food; truck broke down in front of house
  - d. Ex.: DL Moody
    - realized it was God's will to save sinners
    - would ask, then start rejoicing
    - would pray, "Thank you Lord for the sinners you have saved later tonight."
14. We think that what pleases God is our holiness; our deeply felt religion
- a. these do not please Him so much as simple trust in Him to fulfill His promises
  - b. Heb 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
15. So there the nation of Israel stood
- a. on the eastern bank of the Jordan
  - b. ready to cross over and enter the Promise
  - c. but there were fierce enemies waiting for them
  - d. in fact, just across from them was the formidable fortress of Jericho
16. God knew all about these problems: He also knew about the people's tendency to fear
17. So He said . . .

C. Vs. 5-7,9

- 5 "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.**
- 6 "Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.**
- 7 "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.**

Jump on down to v. 9 . . .

**9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."**

1. God gave Joshua the promise of victory
2. And the victory would come, not because of the military might or prowess of Israel
3. It would come because God would fight for them
4. In light of the promise of victory, what could Joshua do but be strengthened and courageous?
5. God does not waste words
  - a. says one - important
  - b. twice - pay special attention
  - c. three times? - Drop whatever you're doing and pay complete attention!
6. 3 times, in vs. 6,7,9, God tells Joshua to be strong and courageous
7. Probably because Joshua was not naturally inclined to strength and courage
  - a. he may have been anxious and fearful
  - b. he was the new leader, trying to fill some pretty big shoes
  - c. because he had spied out Canaan 40 years before, he knew about the problems there
    - the giants
    - the walled cities
    - the mighty armies
  - d. he knew the task before him was much bigger than he could possibly accomplish
8. So God encourages Him by reminding him he is not alone
  - a. his courage and strength were to be based, not on trust in himself
  - b. but on the presence of God who would go with him
9. Jesus has made you the same promise
  - a. In Matthew 28:20 Jesus said He would be with us always, even to the end of the age
  - b. we have a heavenly Joshua who leads us in to the Promise of God
  - c. and while the path ahead may be fraught with difficulty and perils of all kinds
  - d. greater is He who is in us, than He who is in the

- world.
10. What God said to Joshua, He says to you and I today . . .
    - a. “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”
    - b. “Be courageous” No, even more, be VERY courageous
      - it is not enough merely to be strong
      - we must also be aware of our strength in Christ
      - ex.: could never understand professional body-builders
        - / spend hours pumping iron
        - / diet, practice in front of a mirror
        - / all just to stand before people and flex
        - / all that strength is wasted cause they never really accomplish anything meaningful with it
        - / they look good, but the God didn’t give us muscles for looks
        - / He gave them so we could work
      - even so, in Christ we are indeed strong
        - / “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
      - but what good is that strength if we never put it to use?
      - church shouldn’t be a spiritual flex convention
      - it’s people who have put the strength of Christ to work!
  11. We need some strong and courageous believers today
    - a. people willing to shuck convention and comfort and enter in to the fullness of the Spirit
    - b. people who are not afraid to conquer new territory in the faith because they know Jesus is with them!
    - c. may we be those people!!!!!!
  12. Now: Notice about church being sold!

D. V. 8

**8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**



1. Joshua's key to success was daily devotion to God
2. This devotion manifested itself in the reading and study of His word
3. Here is the key to our possessing the promises of God!
4. We must be diligent students of God's word!
5. How can we possess the promises of God if we do not even know what they are?
6. How can we overcome our enemy if we have never handled a sword?
7. Alexander MacLaren once said,

“Not only is there courage needed for the application of the principles of conduct which God has given us, but you will never have them handy for swift application unless, in many a quiet hour of silent, solitary, patient meditation you have become familiar with them. The recruit that has to learn on the battlefield how to use his rifle has a good chance of being dead before he has mastered the mysteries of firing. And Christian people that have their Christians principles to dig out of the Bible when the necessity comes, will likely find that the necessity is past before they have completed the excavation. The actual battlefield is no place to learn drill. If a soldier does not know how his sword hangs, and cannot get at it in a moment, he will probably draw it too late.”

8. Notice the command here in v. 8 . . .
  - a. “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth”
    - we are to feast upon it and talk about it
    - we are to be gospel gluttons and gospel gossips
  - b. “You shall meditate in it day and night”
    - many Christians wary of meditation [elaborate]
    - the word means “to chew the cud”
    - just as a cow grazes on the sweet grass of the field, swallows, and then later brings it up to work on it again
    - so we are to take in the word by diligent study
    - then, later in the day, when we are at our jobs and duties, the HS will recall it to memory and we can work on it again
  - c. “That you may observe to do all that is written in it.”
    - not only must we study
    - we must also put it in to practice

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. The Promise

1. "Then will you make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."
2. True success and prosperity are not found in the accumulation of things
3. Nor is it found in amassing wealth & power
4. True success is found in discovering and possessing the promises of God

#### B. Be Strong & Courageous

1. Christian - lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of you
2. Don't be content to live only half the Christian life
  - a. Jesus didn't JUST die to deliver you from sin and death
  - b. he also rose from the dead to bring you in to all the blessing and fullness of God
3. Enter in to the spirit filled life and possess the promises of God,
4. Every last single one of them!