

Commission, Conquest and Covenant

Studies in Joshua [An Overview]

I. THE LORD COMMISSIONS JOSHUA [Chapters 1-5]

- A. **Context:** The book of Joshua continues the history of Israel after forty years of wandering through the Sinai wilderness following their dramatic Exodus from Egypt as they finally cross over into the land promised to Abraham to possess it. What would have only been about an eleven day walk from Egypt became a forty year journey because of Israel's unbelief and disobedience (Josh. 5:6). Now, after all the men of that first generation had passed (except for Caleb and Joshua), Joshua is commissioned by the Lord to lead the next generation into battle to take hold of what He had already given them.

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. (Josh. 1:1-2)

- B. **God's Promise:** Moses' death marked a season of transition for Israel, and now they needed to arise and go over the Jordan River to put their faith into action and receive God's promise. Before crossing over, they needed to recognize the shift **from Moses to Joshua** which can represent the Old and New Covenants (Gal. 3; 4:22-24; Matt. 17:1-7; Heb. 3:1-6; Acts 13:38-39).

Joshua, whose name means, "Yahweh Saves or the Lord is Salvation," is the same name from which we later get the name, "Jesus" (translated into Aramaic→Greek→Latin→English). The Law of Moses, which reveals our sin, can bring us to the river, but it's only by coming behind Jesus Christ that we find the way into new life. It's only in Him that we find freedom from the penalty, power and presence of sin.

The Lord gives us grace and promises victory before the battle, but **we must step forward with our own personal faith.**

3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. (Josh. 1:3)

This physical promise was given to Israel, but it applies now to those who believe in Christ under the New Covenant who are called to “cross over” from death to life and enter His rest by faith (Heb. 3:16-4:16).

By faith, we repent of our sins (put to death our old way of life), are baptized in His name (bury our old self) and receive the promise of the Holy Spirit (sealed in covenant and raised with Christ). Still, our faith does not stop here.

Co-mmission, Co-nquest and Co-venant in the context of our relationship with the Lord are all words that communicate that we aren’t expected to do anything apart from Him. He promises to be with us on the condition that we obey Him.

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. (Josh. 1:5)

***Read: John 14:15-18; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Eph. 1:13-14**

Too many Christians have said yes to leaving their old life of bondage, but because of fear, they are still wandering somewhere between deliverance and destiny. The Lord has given an **inheritance** for us to claim that **requires our unswerving obedience and courage**.

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. (Josh. 1:6-7)**

It is interesting that even after the land was under Israelite control, there were still **seven tribes who delayed to go** and actually possess their inheritance (Josh. 18:1-3). Although many believers today have experienced and understood that sin has been subdued by the

conquest of Christ, many still neglect to actually walk in the inheritance that He has won for us. God has subdued sin, thus it no longer has property rights over us. Still, He gives us the dignity to make conscious life choices that allow us and the enemy to know that our lives are under new ownership. It is possible to own land, yet never claim it. Thus due to being uninhabited, it becomes vulnerable.

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. 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. (Josh. 1:8-9)

Learning from his own experience, Joshua sent men to survey and spy out the land they were to inherit before they went out to possess it. **Our faith is strengthened to take ground when we learn to survey the Word of God—to hear, trust and obey what it says for ourselves.** We must discover daily our inheritance in Christ and His inheritance in us. Milk from the Word is what we get when someone else digests it for you. Meat is what we get when we digest it for ourselves.

- C. **Rahab & Two Spies:** Rahab was a prostitute whose house sat on the wall of Jericho who chose to risk her own life by hiding the two Israelite spies whom Joshua sent out to spy out the city. She is not only mentioned later in *Hebrews 11* and *James 2* for her faith, but she also went on to become an ancestor of Jesus. Her story demonstrates faith in action and how her trust in the God of Israel overrode her disqualifications.

1 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. (Josh. 2:1)

31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. (Heb. 11:31)

*25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith without works is dead** also. (James 2:25-26)*

We are commissioned to bring the gospel even to the Rahabs who have made their home on the enemy's walls, to show them that His love is enough. God includes anyone who will genuinely come to Him for redemption, and He is looking for those today who would bind the scarlet rope of the blood of Jesus to their house—those who would live in covenant with Him by faith, holding on to the protection and redemption that is in Him alone.

- D. **Israel Crosses the River:** Of the many encounters that the Israelites had and would have at the Jordan River, this event was especially significant because unlike their crossing at the Red Sea where they buried their old life of slavery behind, they were now ready to cross into the land God had promised them and **walk in the newness of life**.

17 Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan. (Josh. 3:17)

I believe this crossing represents a type of second baptism, not one of repentance but of **receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit** (Matt. 3:11; Lk. 24:46-49).

- E. **Encounter with the Commander of the Army of the Lord:**

*13 And it came to pass, when **Joshua** was by **Jericho**, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and **behold, a Man** stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" 14 So He said, **"No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."** And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" 15 Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so. (Josh. 5:13-15)*

II. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN [Chapters 6-13]

- A. Jericho:
- B. Ai:
- C. Gibeonites:
- D. Amorites:
- E. Southern Conquest:
- F. Northern Conquest:

III. JOSHUA MAKES A COVENANT TO SERVE THE LORD [Chapters 16-24]

- A. Land Divided to Twelve Tribes:

13 'I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.' (Josh. 24:13)

- B. As for Me and My House:

15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15)

24 And the people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!" 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. 26 Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. (Josh. 24:24-26)