

JOSHUA'S APPOINTMENT AS LEADER OF ISRAEL

BIBLE TEXT : Numbers 27:15-23 ; Deuteronomy 34 :9 ; Joshua 1 :1-18

LESSON 152 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid. neither he thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God s with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Numbers 27:15-23

¹⁵ And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,

¹⁶ Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

¹⁷ Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

¹⁸ And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom *is* the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

¹⁹ And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

²⁰ And thou shalt put *some* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

²¹ And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

²² And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation:

²³ And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Deuteronomy 34:9

⁹ And Joshua the son of Nun was

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Joshua's Promotion to Leadership

1 Moses was not permitted to go into the Promised Land, Numbers 27:15-17;

Deuteronomy 31:14

¹⁴ And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

2 God directed Moses to give Joshua the commission of leadership, Numbers 27:18, 19;

Deuteronomy 31:7

⁷ And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

Deuteronomy 31:23

²³ And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee.

3 A greater measure of the Spirit of God, wisdom, and honor came to Joshua, and the Children of Israel hearkened unto him, Numbers 27:20-23; Deuteronomy 34:9;

Acts 6:6

⁶ Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

1 Timothy 4:14

¹⁴ Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

II God's Promises to Joshua

1 After Moses' death, the Lord commanded Joshua to lead the people over Jordan into the Promised Land, Joshua 1:1, 2

2 God promised to give the Children of Israel every place that the sole of their foot should tread upon, Joshua 1:3, 4;

Joshua 14:9

⁹ And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

Deuteronomy 11:24

²⁴ Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be.

3 Joshua was encouraged to be strong and of good courage, Joshua 1:5, 6;

Romans 8:31

³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

Romans 8:37

³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Hebrews 13:5

⁵ *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be*

full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Joshua 1:1-18

¹ Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

² Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel.

³ Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

⁵ There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

⁶ Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

⁷ Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

⁸ This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written

content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

4 Joshua's prosperous way and good success came as he kept God's law and meditated therein, Joshua 1:7-9;

Deuteronomy 29:9

⁹ Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

Psalms 1:1-3

¹ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

² But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

III The Preparation to Cross Jordan

1 Within three days after Joshua received God's instructions, the Children of Israel were prepared for Jordan's crossing, Joshua 1:10, 11;

Joshua 3:2

² And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

2 The Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh were reminded of their pledge, Joshua 1:12-15;

Numbers 32:20-22

²⁰ And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

²¹ And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

²² And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.

3 These tribes subscribed the same loyalty to Joshua as to Moses, Joshua 1:16-18;

Romans 13:1-5

¹ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

² Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

⁴ For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

⁵ Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

NOTES:

As we read the final chapter of Moses' life, the Bible gives us one more glimpse of the spiritual greatness of that man of God. Moses knew that Israel would soon go into the Promised Land and that he could not go with them. As a true shepherd of the people, Moses' last concern was that God would set a man over the congregation, "Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (Numbers 27:17). The

therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

⁹ Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

¹⁰ Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

¹¹ Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

¹² And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying,

¹³ Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

¹⁴ Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;

¹⁵ Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as *he hath given* you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.

¹⁶ And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

¹⁷ According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was

thought of Israel wandering about with no one to lead and instruct them was more than Moses could bear.

God's Choice

To lead the Children of Israel and to conquer Canaan were both difficult tasks; therefore a man was needed to replace Moses — a man who knew God and who would follow His directions absolutely. There was such a man in the camp — a man who had long before shown his courage in the war with Amalek, had shown his humility as a ministering servant to Moses, had shown his spiritual fidelity in his opposition to the evil report of the ten spies — the man Joshua. As we read the history of Joshua it appears that the Lord had long designed that this man should fill Moses' position whenever the choice of a successor became necessary.

Approximately 40 years of teaching and training went into the education that enabled Joshua to lead Israel after Moses' death. This education was not a formal education; it was not observed by the rank and file of the people, and was not restricted to Joshua alone but was open to all Israel. Joshua, however, was the one who took God's lessons to heart and profited thereby. He had the highest honors in the school of experience because he was humble enough to do the lowliest of services, yet he had the heart and spirit to carry through the great assignments that came his way. Therefore when God's people needed a new leader to carry on the work, Joshua was God's choice.

Joshua's Appointment

As soon as God's will in the matter was made known, Moses proceeded to carry out the instructions. Joshua was placed before Eleazar the priest and before the whole congregation of Israel. There Moses placed his hands upon Joshua and gave him the commission to govern the people.

The Lord said to Moses, "And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him." Joshua already had the Spirit of God within himself, and now some of Moses' honor, the honor of being leader of God's people, was added. Moses publicly proclaimed Joshua as his successor, and the people heard and recognized the appointment; but that was as far as Moses could go. When Joshua received that appointment, he was not equal to Moses in many ways; but through the help of God Joshua profited by his opportunities until he, too, was recognized as one of Israel's great leaders.

Joshua in Command

"Moses my servant is dead." Moses' death must have seemed a severe loss to the Israelites. It was a severe loss; for a man of Moses' faith, integrity, and acquaintanceship with God, cannot be lost by God's church without that loss becoming deeply felt and mourned. What a comforting thought, that although the most capable persons in the Church are removed, God is still the Author and Designer of His work and will have someone to place in the vacant position. Moses, the servant, may be dead; but God, the Master of all creation and work, is not dead. He lives on, and forever takes note of His people's needs.

The thirty days of mourning for Moses were drawing to a close when the Lord spoke to Joshua and told him to take the Children of Israel over Jordan. God did not want Israel to mourn for Moses forever. God's plan for Israel had scarcely begun, and surely it would not be terminated because of one man's death.

with Moses.

¹⁸ Whosoever *he be* that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

The removal of God's servants from the scenes of their labors causes their fellow soldiers and comrades to weep, for the moment — and rightly so; but the weeping must not be permitted to hinder the sowing. There is much work to be done still. The Gospel must go onward and forward, always and evermore, until Jesus comes and calls His people to come up higher. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6).

Good Success

When the Lord gave instructions for Israel to go forward, God promised Joshua clear and continued success on one condition: "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:7).

What a wonderful rule for success that is to any of God's children! Joshua was to follow the Law of Moses, for that was all the Word of God that had been revealed at that time. Today, the Law of Moses has been fulfilled in Jesus, the Light of the world, who has shone forth in all His power and glory. The whole Bible, God's inspired Word, is before us; and to have good success in the Christian life, we must recognize that same rule — believe and follow the whole Book.

Observe to do what is written. A child of God finds true delight in doing his Father's will, and only distress if he comes short of it. In order to know God's will, one must read His Word — not once a week or once a month, but continually. Joshua was told that he must meditate on the Book of the Law day and night. He would be a very busy man, leading 600,000 soldiers and their families, and conquering the seven nations of Canaan; yet he was to find time to meditate on God's Word. Is God any less concerned about His soldiers' welfare today? Does not the same rule apply? It does if we desire good success in the Gospel.

Doing All

Good success depends also upon doing all that is written. It is not enough to read the Word and hear it, to admire the Word or even speak well of it; the Word must be performed in order for one to receive the blessing. "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

Four times in this chapter Joshua received the admonition to be strong and of a good courage. One might wonder that Joshua would need this counsel, for he was known to be a brave and courageous man already. However, in his own sight Joshua must have felt very weak and insufficient for the duty that lay before him, especially as he was coming after so great a man as Moses. God said, "Have not I commanded thee?" When God commissions a man for a certain work, He will never fail to bear up that man and help him until the work is accomplished, if the man keeps his faith and courage in God. All discouragements are the lack of faith in God and His promises. Therefore, to have good courage and to be strong in the Lord and have faith in Him is the proper way to dispel any discouragement.

Joshua had God's promise that no man would be able to stand before him; that every place the sole of his foot should tread upon would be his; that as God had been with Moses, so

would He be with Joshua. To renew his courage, all Joshua had to do was rehearse these precious promises and believe God who was back of the promises. God had commanded this work, and however invincible the obstacles might seem, they could not stand before His power.

A Winning Warfare

To win a war, an army must take the offensive side; it cannot always remain on the defensive and entertain much hope of winning the final battle. This is what the Lord wanted Joshua to do, to wage the offensive warfare, spiritually as well as physically. The Christian may not be called upon to war with weapons of carnal warfare today, but he must take the offensive toward his spiritual enemies. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . . Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:10, 11, 18). "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). The better time to resist the devil is when he first comes, not after he has firmly entrenched himself in your thoughts.

Type of Christ

In the life of Joshua can be seen a very wonderful type of Christ. Joshua was long associated with Moses as his minister before being promoted to the leadership of Israel. Jesus our Lord "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. . . . Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:7, 9).

Joshua bore the same name as our Savior. The name Jesus is the Greek derivation of the Hebrew name Joshua — a name which means "He shall save." Joshua saved God's people from their enemies: Jesus saves His people from their sins. Joshua was the leader and commander of the people in the conquest of Canaan that was to give Israel their Promised Land. Jesus is the Captain of our salvation and will tread Satan under foot, give us spiritual Canaan, and the rest that Joshua was not able to lead the Israelites into because of their unbelief (Hebrews 4:6, 8, 9). "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why was Moses concerned about who should govern Israel after his death?
- 2 Name some of the things that fitted Joshua to be Israel's next governor.
- 3 How did the people feel about Joshua? Had he ever led them out before in battle?
- 4 God gave Joshua some very wonderful promises. Name several of them.
- 5 How was Joshua to be guided in this new phase of his life?
- 6 How soon after Joshua took command of the Children of Israel were the people ready for Jordan's crossing?
- 7 Which tribes of Israel were already settled in their possessions? and what did Joshua say to them?
- 8 What was their answer?