

A JOB WELL DONE Sunday School- June 5, 2011

Unifying Topic: GOD'S PROMISES FULFILLED

Lesson Text

I. Joshua's Call To Service (Joshua 1:1-6)

II. Joshua's Conquest (Joshua 11:16-19)

III. Joshua's Success (Joshua 11:21-23)

The Main Thought: As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. (Joshua 11:15, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People make promises in good faith, but they do not always fulfill them. Why is it so difficult to keep a promise? God makes promises that may seem to be unfulfilled, but in time, we can be confident that God stands behind the promises.

Lesson Aim: To teach your students about Joshua's faithfulness in leading the Israelites into the Promised Land.

Life Aim: To help Christians understand how God gives us an assignment and empowers us to carry it out to achieve His purposes, just as He did with Joshua and the Israelites.

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- 1:1 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,
- 1:2 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.
- 1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.
- 1:4 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.
- 1:5 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.
- 1:6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.
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- 11:16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;
- 11:17 Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.
- 11:18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.
- 11:19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle.
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- 11:21 And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.
- 11:22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.
- 11:23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

HISTORY:

Moses, as the chosen leader of God had led the Israelites from Egyptian bondage to the very brink of the Promised Land. God¹ kept them out of the Promised Land for the span of a generation. He converted them within that time span, raising up a new generation that knew nothing but complete reliance on Him for their survival. After wandering for forty years in the wilderness, a new generation is ready to enter Canaan however, without their great emancipator. He now climbs Mount Nebo, going to the peak of Pisgah. The Lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan which He had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What a joy it must have been for Moses to look out over the dream of a lifetime but a disappointment as to not enter in with the people because he had not obeyed God in one instance (Numbers 20:1-13). Moses died according to the Word of the Lord. He was 120 years old, having not his eyes dim nor his natural forces abated when the Lord buried him. The eulogy issued upon his death, recorded in the last verse of Deuteronomy includes the remarks: "*And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face*" Deut.34:10.

¹ <http://www.essortment.com/book-old-testament-lessons-bible-44018.html>

Moses would be the outstanding leader of Israel until a person with a greater Law than the Mosaic Law enters the scene. And that is what happened when Jesus Christ came to fulfill that Law that was given to Moses by God. Jesus was the founder and Mediator of a New and better Covenant (Heb.8:6; 9:15; 12:24). But before Jesus Christ, Joshua comes.

LESSON:

Joshua 1:1-6 Joshua's Call To Service

1:1 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: The death of Moses is like a picture that shows new opportunities. This is a stark reminder that no servant of God, however large or small, is indispensable. The Lord's workers may die, but God's work moves on. We are told that God spoke to Joshua, but we are not told in what manner, whether it was face to face, or from the pillar of cloud at the tabernacle or whether by the priest through the Urim and Thummim, or by just revelation. It was clear to all of Israel that God had appointed Joshua to succeed Moses.

A distinction must be drawn in this first verse between "*Moses the servant*" and "*Joshua, Moses' minister.*"

- The word "*servant*": a title of honor and authority; this title is used more often to refer to Moses than to any other individual in OT.
- "*Moses' minister*" means an aide or assistant; one who gives personal service to a leader. Until now, Joshua had only been a helper. He was the assistant to Moses. Now he had new responsibilities. It was important that he accepted these responsibilities.

God's work could not continue until Joshua accepted his new responsibilities. God could not bless His people until Joshua led them into the Promised Land. Therefore, his transition to be leader after the death of Moses occurred without any written controversy. God knew who He wanted! What qualifications did he have to become the leader of a nation?

1. God appointed him (Num.27:18-23).
2. He was one of the only two living eyewitnesses to the Egyptian plagues and the Exodus from Egypt.
3. He had been Moses' personal assistant for forty years. He was loyal.
4. Of the twelve spies, only he and Caleb showed complete confidence that God would help them conquer the land.
5. He never sought his own glory.

Therefore, he was well qualified to take on the task! This is the kind of leader that can take the people into the Promised Land of victorious, spirit-filled living. If we sow loyalty to our leaders, we shall have loyalty from our followers. If we sow faithfulness and humility to our leaders, then God will give us faithful and humble followers. If we work hard for those who lead us, God will give us folks who will work hard and will follow us.

1:2 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: As I said, Moses was a servant, yet God had another to replace him when he died and the work Moses was committed to, now Joshua was committed to and it shows that God's promise will not die.

The nation had mourned Moses' death for 30 days. It was now time to arise and go over to Jordan; get out of the wilderness and go to Canaan. This is the first mention of Jordan. Jordan was the obstacle which stood before them, before crossing into the Promised Land; the first mission for Joshua. The crossing of the Jordan River does not compare to the Red Sea crossing, but it was a difficult task before them. Although normally small, the Jordan can become torrential in the rainy season, as it was when the Israelites crossed. God had made a promise to the people to give them the land, even the children of Israel. The doubters had died out; the believers were a new generation to walk in and possess it. God was then in the process of bringing to pass, that which had been theirs all along. The land had virtually been theirs for 40 years. It was just waiting to be possessed. His promise is always sure!



1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses: God continues to give the same promise as in Deut.11:24 until it is theirs. Joshua had big shoes to fill but the sole of his feet were well able. This meant that they must go there, overcome the obstacles with the help and by the power of God, and take actual possession. Of course, having the title deed to the land (or our blessings in Christ) does not mean our lives will be without testing, conflict, struggles, and pressures. It indeed will, but since the battle is the

Lord's, since God has done the most for us in Christ, tests and temptations come and God's deliverance through faith and the application of the Word will come.

1:4 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: This began the physical act of stepping out by faith. God defined the precise boundaries of territory of the Promised Land. Borders foretold by the Lord:

1. **The wilderness** - the *southern border*—below the Salt Sea or Sea of the Arabah, which is now called the Dead Sea. This area included the Wilderness of Zin or the Negeb (also spelled Negev) (Num.34:3-5).
2. **Lebanon** - the *northern border* which is today northwest of Israel near the ancient city of Dan (Num.34:7-9).
3. **The River Euphrates** – the *eastern border* which is modern Iraq (Num.34:10-12).
4. **The Great Sea** - the *western border* which is the **Mediterranean Sea** (Num.34:6).

The areas described here include all that God promised to Abraham and the other patriarchs. God has already given them the land, but it is their responsibility now to put one foot in front of the other and start taking the territory. The Israelites, like so many of us, only inherited a small portion of the Promised Land. But even at the height of their possession, they only set foot on a tenth of what was available to them. It was a land filled with inhabitants who would not give up that land without a fierce fight. It was a big job; an enormous undertaking. ²The land of the Hittites' is not found in the original passage in Deuteronomy. But these wide boundaries were not attained till late in the history, and were not long retained. Did the promise, then, fail? No, for it, like all the promises, was contingent on conditions and Israel's unfaithfulness cut short its extent of territory. The "*going down of the sun*" meant as far west as they could go.

1:5 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: Joshua's new job consisted of leading more than a million people into a strange new land and conquering it. Every new job is a challenge. Without God it can be frightening. Here God promised Joshua His unfailing power and presence as He did with Moses: to counsel and advise, guide and direct, protect and defend, prosper and succeed. No man will be able to stand up against Joshua because the Lord would be with him, would not fail him, or forsake him. The assurance of God's presence is still essential to spiritual success.

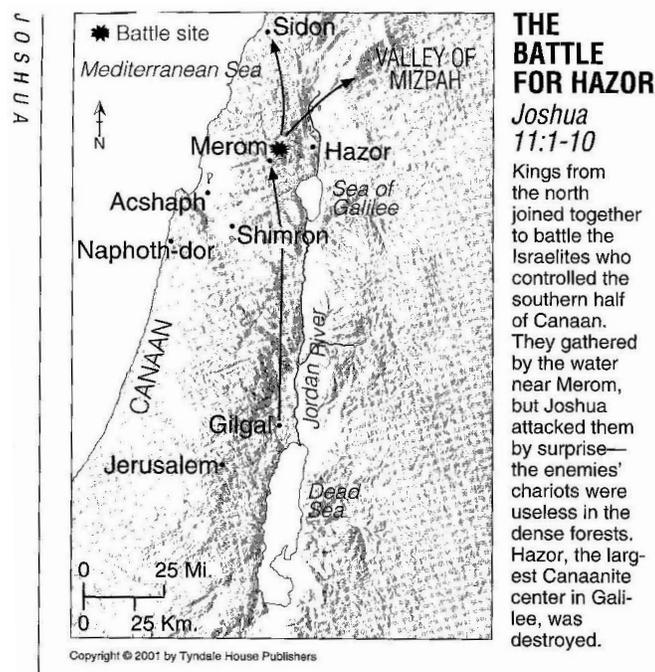
1:6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them: Joshua was strengthened by the past and now he is strengthened by the future. Three times God tells Joshua, "*be strong and courageous*" (1:6, 7, 9). Ownership of the land depended on God's faithfulness, but occupation of the land also depended on Israel's faithfulness. For the people land would be divided. There were many challenges for Moses and there would be many challenges for Joshua and he needed to be strong and courageous to lead. People often run from ministry or difficult situations because of fear or because of the obstacles. But you have to realize that God's promise of inheritance is waiting for you and me. A call to service certainly grows us up!

Joshua 11:16-19 Joshua's Conquest

Chapter eleven covers the victories won over the kings in the North. The leaders of the northern Canaanite cities also decided to unite to withstand the threat of Israel's expansion. This section will include many of Joshua's conquests.

11:16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same:

This is a general view of the conquest. The division into five parts of the country:



² http://www.preceptaustin.org/maclaren_on_joshua.htm#tnlc
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

1. the hills
2. the land of Goshen, that is, a pastoral land near Gibeon (Josh.10:41)
3. the valley
4. the plains and
5. the mountains of Israel.

Both mountains and valleys were captured by Israel.

11:17 Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them: These places were between Halak mountain (which was near Seir) and Baal Gad. "*Baal Gad*" was in the valley of Lebanon, below Hermon Mountain. He took all their kings and killed them all.

11:18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings: The conquest took approximately 7 years.

1. ³By protracting the war the Canaanites had time to repent, having sufficient opportunity to discern the hand of Jehovah.
2. Agriculture was carried on, and thus provision was made even for the support of the conquerors, for had the land been subdued and wasted at once, tillage must have stopped, and famine would have ensued.
3. Wild beasts would have multiplied upon them, and the land would have been desolated by their means.
4. Had these conquests been more rapid the people of Israel would have been less affected, and less instructed by miracles that had passed in such quick succession before their eyes; and, as in this case they would have obtained the dominion with comparatively little exertion, they might have felt themselves less interested in the preservation of an inheritance, to obtain which they had been but at little trouble and little expense.

What we labor under, the Divine blessing to acquire we are careful to retain; but what comes lightly generally goes lightly.

11:19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle: Only the Hivites who lived in Gibeon submitted without a fight. So, Joshua took all the other cities in battle.

NOT APART OF THE LESSON

11:20 For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses. The Lord God made the enemy kings want to fight the Israelites (harden their hearts) instead of asking for peace, so they were merciless killed, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

BACK TO THE LESSON

Joshua 11:21-23 Joshua's Success

11:21 And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities: The Anakims descended from Anak (long-necked), and were related to the giants who made Israel's spies feel small as grasshoppers by comparison. The children of Anak were subdued from the mountains and cut off from Hebron, from Debir, and from Anak, a town about ten miles southwest of Hebron. The Anakims were the enemies who dwelt in the southern area which Joshua had defeated, however, all were not, so now, Joshua goes in and destroys those left in any of Israel's territory. Their territory was later given to Caleb as a reward for his loyalty (14:6-15).

11:22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained: Here, the foes of 40 years ago fall. There was a remnant of these giant people who lasted even until the time of David, because Goliath was a giant, over 9 feet tall. There were just a handful of giants left. They were no match for an army that was blessed and directed by God. The Anakim remained only in these coastal cities occupied by the Philistines (in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod). Gaza was a stronghold of the Philistines. Gath and Ashdod were too. Why the Lord allowed this? We aren't told, however, God allows you to see that if your enemy is not destroyed completely, he will rear his ugly head up again for you to deal with. We do know that everything the Lord allows is for a purpose and reason.

³ <http://clarke.biblecommenter.com/joshua/11.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

11:23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war: ⁴They took the entire Promised Land as God had commanded them to do. Joshua divided it up among the tribes as God had told him to do. This does not mean that he had killed every single person in opposition to Israel. It just means they were in total control of the Land of Promise. They cast lots to determine who got what piece of land. We remember the Levites got cities instead of land. All the other tribes got their allotted land. There was no more war, because the few people left, greatly feared Israel's God. And so there was much success for Joshua and the people of Israel.

The secret of Joshua's remarkable success from the human viewpoint was his consistent obedience to the Lord. And Joshua left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded of him.

SUMMARY:

When the days of mourning for Moses had passed (Deut. 34:8-12) there was a call to service for Joshua, and he assumed active command of the Israelites. "*Joshua*" means "*Jehovah is salvation*." Joshua is the son of Nun, the son of Elishama, prince of the tribe of Ephraim. The Greek form of "*Joshua*" is "*Jesus*." Until the time of Moses' death, God spoke to Moses; now, He speaks to Joshua in the same manner. The first directive God spoke to Joshua about was to cross the Jordan into their Promised Land. God had shown Moses the land of promise. It was everything west of the Jordan, all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. He assured him that He would be with him in battle. He commanded him to be strong and courageous and adhere to the Law of Moses, and assured him that as He had been with Moses He would be with him. ⁵We know how courageous he was, because he wanted to go into the Promised Land the first time they spied it out. He was confident they could take it, even if there were giants in the land. Joshua's confidence was not in his own ability, but in God's ability. And God is just reassuring Joshua that he would win the battle, and indeed, divide the land. These are God's people, and He will protect them.

Joshua took all that land in obedience to the commands of God. Conquest after conquest led to Victory followed by many victories. Joshua took the entire land, hills, valleys, plains, and mountains. He waged war against all those kings for a long time. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon. The cities all had to be taken by force, except the Hivites, who tricked Joshua into accepting them as servants of Israel. Gibeon was the main city that was saved.

Joshua took the whole region. He did everything that God had told Moses and all that that was relayed to him. According to their tribal divisions Joshua portioned out the entire land as an inheritance to Israel. God had empowered him with success and Israel had rest from the war. This was truly a job well done; a job that depended on trust and obedience.

APPLICATION:

We know that the promise given to Moses was purposely fulfilled through Joshua. As we trust God to keep His promises, think about Joshua having such great success because of his obedience. Life is a battle which we must enter and win. God surely keeps His promises no matter how long it takes, even through another generation!

⁴ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/joshua/12.html>

⁵ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/joshua/01.html>