

Conquest of Canaan – God’s Command to Joshua Josh. 1:1-9

Introduction:

- A. Moses, the servant of the Lord, is dead (1:1-2).
 - 1. Moses had done a great deal for Israel; and if it were not for his one great mistake (Num. 20), he would have led Israel into Canaan.
 - 2. We even read of some of the kings that Moses conquered before Israel actually crossed the Jordan River.
 - 3. The name of Moses is mentioned 58 times in this book.
 - a. Only 4 times is his name mentioned in reference to the law of Moses.
 - b. The rest refer to the greatness of Moses.

- B. In this passage, there are three keys to the success of Joshua as the leader of the people of Israel.
 - I. Remember the promises of God (1:3-5).
 - II. Remember to be strong and courageous (1:6-9).
 - III. Remember the word of the Lord (1:7-8).

- C. These are the same keys for us today to live a successful life.

I. Remember the promises of God (1:3-5)

- A. There were three promises that God made to Joshua.
 - 1. God has given Joshua every place that they walked with Moses (1:3-4).
 - a. God had called Moses to go to Egypt and free the children of Israel (Ex. 3-4).
 - 1) God promised to give Moses the land “of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites” (Ex. 3:8).
 - 2) Moses had led the people of Israel up to the border of the Promised Land just before His death.
 - 3) He was not allowed to go into the land of Canaan because of his sin at Kadesh (Num. 20:1-13).
 - b. God wants Joshua to remember this promise and the great land that He is giving to Israel.
 - 2. No one would be able to stand before Joshua and Israel (1:5a).
 - a. On numerous occasions, God had promised to drive out the people of the land before Israel.
 - 1) Deut. 7:24 - And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

- 2) **Deut. 31:3** - The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said.
- 3) When God promised to drive out their enemies, it was based upon the obedience of Israel.
- b. Now God is reminding Joshua of this promise.
3. God will not leave nor forsake Joshua (**1:5b**).
 - a. Joshua was taking on a tremendous responsibility on leading the children of Israel.
 - b. The comparison that God makes is between Moses and Joshua.
 - 1) Joshua would have known how God was always with Moses.
 - a) Joshua was the assistant of Moses, and was constantly with him.
 - b) Joshua went with Moses to the mountain of God: Mt. Sinai (**Ex. 24:13**).
 - 2) Just as God promised to be with Moses, He is now promising to be with Joshua.
 - a) **Deut. 31:6** (Moses speaking to Joshua) - Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”
 - b) **Deut. 31:7-8** - Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. {8} And the LORD, He is the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”
 - c) **Deut. 31:23** - Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, “Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.”
 - 3) Knowing that God was with him would give Joshua great confidence.
- B. We, today, need to remember the promises of God.
 1. Physical necessities
 - a. **Mt. 6:33** - But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
 - b. **II Pet. 1:3** - as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,
 2. Answered prayer

- a. **I Jn. 5:14-15** - Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. {15} And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.
- 3. Help in temptation
 - a. **I Cor. 10:13** - No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.
- 4. Eternal life
 - a. **Acts 2:38-39** - Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. {39} For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”
 - b. **Js. 1:12** - Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.
 - c. **I Jn. 2:25** - And this is the promise that He has promised us-- eternal life.

II. Remember to be strong and courageous (1:6-9).

- A. Three times at the beginning of his time as leader of Israel, God commands Joshua to “be strong and courageous.”
 - 1. Be strong and courageous because Joshua will divide the land to Israel (1:6).
 - a. God had promised to give him this land.
 - b. God was going to fulfill the promise that He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - 2. Be strong and courageous to observe the law of God (1:7).
 - a. Joshua still had to obey the law of Moses.
 - b. All of the promises of God were based on Israel’s obedience to that law.
 - 3. Be strong and courageous because God is with Joshua (1:9).
 - a. Joshua could have strength and courage because he knew that God was with him.
 - b. There was great confidence knowing that there is none greater than God.
- B. This was the most difficult task that Joshua was going to undertake.
 - 1. He needed to be strong and courageous to fulfill the task that God had given him.
 - 2. Joshua, just as we do today, needed the encouragement from God to be strong and courageous.
- C. Today, we need to be strong and courageous.
 - 1. Living the Christian life is not easy.
 - a. It takes strong determination and great courage to live faithfully.

- b. There are many pressures in this world that we face.
 - 1) Sin is rampant throughout this world.
 - 2) **I Jn. 2:15-17** - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. {17} And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
 - 3) **Js. 4:4** - Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
- 2. Because of the importance of living a Christian life, we must be strong and courageous to live that life.
 - a. **I Cor. 16:13** - Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.
 - b. **Eph. 6:10-12** - Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. {11} Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. {12} For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

III. Remember the word of the Lord (1:7-8).

- A. The most important thing that Joshua could do as leader of Israel is to remember the word of the Lord.
 - 1. God wanted Joshua to obey His law (1:7a).
 - a. God tells Joshua not to depart to the right or to the left of what God has said.
 - b. Joshua is to follow this word completely.
 - c. He could not add to nor take away from it.
 - 2. The purpose of following this law is also given (1:7b).
 - a. "That you may prosper wherever you go."
 - b. God never promised Joshua a long life, just a prosperous one.
 - c. God's promise to be with Israel was based on their faithfulness to Him.
 - d. If they were not faithful, God would not be with them.
 - 3. God also tells Joshua to meditate on His law day and night (1:8).
 - a. God wanted His law to be driven into the heart of Joshua.
 - b. If it was in the heart of Joshua, then he would follow it more closely.
- B. This is exactly what Joshua does.
 - 1. After Israel defeats Ai, Joshua reads the entire law to the people of Israel (8:43-35).

2. As Joshua concludes his life, he encourages Israel to continue in the law of God (Josh. 23-24).
 3. He remembered the law of God.
- C. Today, as we go throughout our lives, we must not forget the word of the Lord.
1. God wants us to obey His law.
 - a. Mt. 28:19-20 - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.
 - b. Jn. 14:15 - If you love Me, keep My commandments.
 2. The purpose for following His law is the same: so that we may prosper.
 - a. Maybe not physically on this earth, but eternally.
 - b. God never promised us a long life, but He did promise us a long eternity.
 - c. If we are obedient to His word, we have eternal life.
 3. God also wants us to meditate upon His law.
 - a. Ps. 1:1-3 - Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; {2} But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. {3} He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.
 - b. When we meditate on the law of God, we all it to control our thoughts and actions.

Conclusion:

In order to help Joshua in his task of leading Israel into Canaan, God tells Joshua to remember.

- I. Remember the promises of God.
- II. Remember to be strong and of good courage.
- III. Remember the law of God.

These same things apply to us today.