

Life's Journey: beginning

Sunday, January 22

Joshua 1:1-18

This is a summary of the message. I hope it helps you.

Joshua – over two weeks we will look at the beginning and conclusion to his leadership ministry. This week he and all his people stand on the edge of the Jordan River. They have been wandering in circles for 40 years.

Joshua - Hoshea, salvation – Joshua, the Lord saves - given this name by Moses - in the Greek, Jesus - the servant of God

To plan ahead, we need to work out where we want to be at the end of the year and then set in place how we begin that 2012 journey now – as Cliff said last week, it should not primarily be about us, but about the Lord! Not self - addiction, but God - addiction!

As we begin the year, it is as though we stand between two time zones - the year that has gone (successes and failures) and the year that has just begun.

What have learnt from last year? What do we want to remember and what do we want to forget? What do we want to see happen this year? What do we want to avoid?

We stand on the edge of our own Jordan River! For some of us we have been here before and failed to cross, for others it is our first time or it is just another river that we to cross.

There are no bridges - God must open / provide the way, but we must take the steps of faith!

This takes place in the late bronze age, 1550 to 1200BC.

Joshua is taking over from Moses in leading the people. As he begins to take over, what has he learnt under Moses' leadership? What does he want to change to cement his own style? Remember, the hardest leader to take over from is one who has been very successful.

Change in leadership is always a very stressful time for any people. This is 40 years after leaving Egypt and a whole generation has died. Will the next generation follow the new leader? For some the old ways are safer - for others we way ahead is so exciting!

Joshua's remarkable life was filled with excitement, variety, success and honor.

He was known for his deep trust in God and as "a man in whom is the spirit" (Nu 27:18).

As a youth he lived through the bitter realities of slavery in Egypt, but he also witnessed the supernatural plagues and the miracle of Israel's escape from the army of the Egyptians when the waters of the sea opened before them.

In the Sinai peninsula it was Joshua who led the troops of Israel to victory over the Amalekites (Ex 17:8-13).



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He alone was allowed to accompany Moses up the holy mountain where the tablets of the law were received (Ex 24:13-14 [but see v. 18]). And it was he who stood watch at the temporary tent of meeting Moses set up before the tabernacle was erected (see Ex 33:11 and note).

Joshua was elected to represent his own tribe of Ephraim when the 12 spies were sent into Canaan to look over the land. Only Joshua and Caleb (who represents the tribe of Judah) were ready to follow God's will and take immediate possession of the land (see Nu 14:26-34 and note on 14:28).

The rest of the Israelites of that generation were condemned to die in the desert. Even Moses died short of the goal and was told to turn everything over to Joshua.

God promised to guide and strengthen Joshua, just as he had Moses (Dt 31:23 ; cf. Jos 1:5 and note).

Joshua was God's chosen servant (see 24:29 and note on Dt 34:5) to bring Moses' work to completion and establish Israel in the promised land.

To that special divine appointment he was faithful — as the leader of God's army, as the administrator of God's division of the land and as God's spokesman for promoting Israel's covenant faithfulness. In all this he was a striking OT type (foreshadowing) of Christ (see notes on Heb 4:1, 6-8).

Theme of the book is "victory through faith" - taking possession of all that God has promised. Some see this chapter as being prepared to enter - unless we make right preparations, we may fail to enter and succeed.

Look at the text.

1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. 3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

V1 Moses' assistant, aide – this has been his role throughout much of the past 40 years
"Moses is dead" - maybe immediately after his death or customary 30 days of mourning.
"I will give" - "you place your foot"

5 No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

V5 "leave" - abandon, let go, never take my hands off you.

"forsake" - leave behind, desert

V6 "strong" - as in building foundation.

Three times phrase is repeated

Ownership of the land was based on God's faithfulness, but occupation was based on the people's faithfulness,

7 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

V7 "law" - Torah, writings of Moses, guidelines - Joshua there on the mount

10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 11 “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.’”

Action time

16 Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. 18 Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, is to be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!”

How does the text impact us? Why?

What do you need to leave behind? What do you need strength and courage for this year? What is your Jordan that you need to cross? What breakthrough do I need? For many of us the only way forward is going to be through the river - no way around, but God will take us through! For Israel, under Joshua, it meant a baptism.

What are you going to do about it?