

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

"Be Strong and Courageous!"

-Joshua in the Old Testament

-Jesus in the New Testament

Date: 2-15-15 Lesson: 3

A. TEXT – Chapter 1:



(1) After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, **the Lord** said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, (2) "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel. (3) Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon **I have given** to you, just as **I promised** to Moses. (4) From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. (5) No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as **I was with Moses**, so **I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you**.

(6) Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that **I swore** to their fathers to give them. (7) Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. (8) **This Book of the Law** shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful 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 courageous**. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for **the Lord your God is with you wherever you go**."

(10) And Joshua commanded the officers of the people, (11) "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, 'Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that **the Lord your God is giving you** to possess.'" (12) And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said,

(13) "Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, '**The Lord your God is providing you** a place of rest and will give you this land.' (14) Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but all the men of valor among you shall pass over armed before your brothers and shall help them, (15) until **the Lord** gives rest to your brothers as **he has** to you, and they also take possession of the land that **the Lord your God is giving them**. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."

(16) And they answered Joshua, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. (17) Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only **may the Lord your God be with you**, as **he was with Moses!** (18) Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous."

B. STUDY NOTES

1. Rest – Sabbath – for the land and the people

Dt 3:18-20

2 Sam 7:1,11

1 Ki 5:4

Hebrews 4:1-11

2. Strong and courageous

Dt 1:19-25; 31:1-6

2 Sam 2:7

1 Ki 2:2-4

Is 41:6,8-10

2 Cor 5:1-9

Philippians 1:17-24

C. LIFE APPLICATION

1. Describe how our lives are filled with doubts in God's Promise and disobedience of God's Law.
2. How then can we heed God's exhortation to instead, be strong and courageous?

The Life of Joshua

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

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 his friend Caleb were ready to follow God's will and take immediate possession of the land (see Nu 14:26-34). The rest 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).

Joshua proved to be not only a military strategist in the battles that followed, but also a statesman in the way he governed the tribes. Above all, he 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. In that role he was a striking OT type (foreshadowing) of Christ (see notes on Heb 4:1,6-8).

Historical Setting

At the time of the Israelite migration into Canaan the superpowers of the ancient Near East were relatively weak. The Hittites had faded from the scene. Neither Babylon nor Egypt could maintain a military presence in Canaan, and the Assyrians would not send in their armies until centuries later.

As the tribes circled east of the Dead Sea, only the stronghold of Edom offered any resistance. Moab was forced to let Israel pass through her territory and camp in her plains. When Og and Sihon, two regional Amorite kings of Transjordan, tried to stop the Israelites, they were easily defeated and their lands occupied.

Biblical archaeologists call this period the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.). Today thousands of artifacts give testimony to the richness of the Canaanite material culture, which was in many ways superior to that of the Israelites. When the ruins of the ancient kingdom of Ugarit were discovered at modern Ras Shamra on the northern coast of Syria (see chart on "Ancient Texts Relating to the OT," p. 5), a wealth of new information came to light concerning the domestic, commercial and religious life of the Canaanites. From a language close to Hebrew came stories of ancient kings and gods that revealed their immoral behavior and cruelty. In addition, pagan temples, altars, tombs and ritual vessels have been uncovered, throwing more light on the culture and customs of the peoples surrounding Israel.

Excavations at the ancient sites of Megiddo, Beth Shan and Gezer show how powerfully fortified these cities were and why they were not captured and occupied by Israel in Joshua's day. Many other fortified towns were taken, however, so that Israel became firmly established in the land as the dominant power. Apart from Jericho and Ai, Joshua is reported to have burned only Hazor (11:13), so attempts to date these events by destruction levels in the mounds of Canaan's ancient cities are questionable undertakings. It must also be remembered that other groups were involved in campaigns in the region about this time, among whom were Egyptian rulers and the Sea Peoples (including the

Philistines). There had also been much intercity warfare among the Canaanites, and afterward the period of the judges was marked by general turbulence.

Much of the data from archaeology appears to support a date for Joshua's invasion c. 1250 B.C. This fits well with an exodus that would then have taken place 40 years earlier under the famous Rameses II, who ruled from the Nile delta at a city with the same name (Ex 1:11). It also places Joseph in Egypt in a favorable situation. Four hundred years before Rameses II the pharaohs were the Semitic Hyksos, who also ruled from the delta near the land of Goshen.

On the other hand, a good case can be made for the traditional viewpoint that the invasion occurred c. 1406 B.C. The oppression would have taken place under Amunhotep II after the death of his father Thutmose III, who is known to have used slave labor in his building projects. The earlier date also fits better with the two numbers found in Jdg 11:26 and 1Ki 6:1, since it allows for an additional 150 years between Moses and the monarchy. See also the Introductions to Genesis: Author and Date of