

## Joshua Chapter One

Read Joshua Chapter 1: v. 1-18.

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: <sup>2</sup> "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup> Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. <sup>4</sup> From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. <sup>5</sup> No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup> Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. <sup>7</sup> Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe 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. <sup>9</sup> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go." <sup>10</sup> Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'" <sup>12</sup> And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, <sup>13</sup> "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' <sup>14</sup> Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, <sup>15</sup> until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He *gave* you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise." <sup>16</sup> So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. <sup>17</sup> Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. <sup>18</sup> Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."

## Introduction

From now until the Christmas series starts in December we will be studying the book of Joshua. After Christmas until the Easter series begins, hopefully we will complete the book of Joshua.

Why should I be preaching and teaching through this book?

1. It is a fulfillment of a promise that God gave to Abraham in Genesis Chapter 12: v. 7. The book of Joshua records the period of Israel's establishing itself as a nation. The book highlights the faithfulness of God in keeping His promise.
2. The book speaks to us about the "Holiness of God". The book is about many things but it certainly includes the judgment of God upon peoples who rebelled against God's Holiness. With the discovery of the "Ugarit Tablets" in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we have discovered lots of things that were happening in the land before God used His people to bring judgments upon them. These included "child sacrifices" and Male and Female prostitutes as part of the Baal worship. There were many other things that were an offence to a Holy God.

(Deut. 20:16-18 )

<sup>16</sup> “But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you *as* an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, <sup>17</sup> but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, <sup>18</sup> lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

Christians who struggle with the book of Joshua do so for a number of reasons. However the main reason that they struggle is that many of us have so little knowledge of the Holiness of God. All “SIN” is against God personally.

God sees sin in all its wickedness. God must judge sin. God could do nothing else than to destroy the people in the land for their sins. Jesus, God’s own Son died on a cross to take the punishment for our personal sins. That is how serious sin is.

3. The book of Joshua has much to teach us about the Christian life today. There are many parallels between the history of the times of Joshua and the way in which we face spiritual obstacles and challenges in the Christian life.

Joshua faced “Giants” in the land and so do we, but of a different kind.

Joshua was called to do things by “Faith” and not by sight. He obeyed God’s word.

We are called also to do things by “Faith” in God’s word. The people struggled before “Victory” came and this will be our experience too. However victory comes to every believer as they believe God’s word in “Faith” and go forward to obtain God’s promises. There is much to compare the book of Joshua with the book of Ephesians in the New Testament. What Paul’s letter to the Ephesians explains doctrinally, the book of Joshua explains practically. It shows us how to claim our riches in Jesus Christ.

4. All scripture is written by the inspiration of God.

(2 Tim. 3:16 ) <sup>16</sup> All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

The book was written by God to teach us about God. The purpose of teaching and preaching through Joshua is that we might get to know God in a deeper way than we know Him at present.

It is a book that will help us to grow in our Christian life if we learn the lessons that God will teach us as we study the book. I do believe that this book will help us to move forward in our Christian life. Christians should always be growing in their spiritual lives. This book might be a “New Beginning” in your Christian life.

Before we start in chapter 1, it would be good if we knew a little about Joshua.

Joshua was born as a slave in Egypt. (Numbers 32: v. 11-12) He was of the tribe of Ephraim which was the most powerful tribe at the time.

Joshua and Caleb were the only two people above 20 years of age to leave Egypt and enter the promise land. (Canaan) (Numbers 1:10, 1 Chronicles 7:v. 26-27) They had “Faith” that God was able to conquer the land when all the others only feared the people.

Joshua was Moses’ assistant which was an honored position. He was also a soldier who fought his battles not just with physical effort but also on the basis of “Faith”.

Ex.17: v. 8-16

<sup>8</sup> Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. <sup>9</sup> And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.”

<sup>10</sup> So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the

top of the hill. <sup>11</sup> And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. <sup>12</sup> But Moses' hands *became* heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. <sup>13</sup> So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." <sup>15</sup> And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; <sup>16</sup> for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD *will have war* with Amalek from generation to generation."

Joshua was "Faithful" to his leader Moses. When the children of Israel complained about Moses, his leadership, and their lack of provisions, Joshua supported Moses. (Num.11:28)

Joshua was well prepared for the job that God was about to give him.

Moses was called by God to rescue His people from slavery in Egypt. Joshua was chosen by God to lead them into the Promised Land.

With this introduction in mind, we will begin our study in Joshua starting with chapter one.

#### 1. God's Promise to Joshua v. 1-4.

God promised Joshua that He would give him a land for God's chosen people, the descendants of Abraham. The land is also mentioned in v. 6, 11, and 15. It is important to realize that the promise God made to Joshua had its roots in Genesis 12. Let us go back and read Genesis Chapter 12v. 1-3.

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father' s house, To a land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

To discover where the land is we need to go to Genesis 15: v. 18

<sup>18</sup> On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—

Today Israel only occupies a percentage of the land that God promised them and in their history they have never occupied the whole land.

I believe that the promise made by God to Abraham and here to Joshua still stands today concerning the land of Israel. God still has purposes for His people in His promised land. It is also the place where Jesus has promised to return one day. If you ever get a chance to visit Israel take it.

We also need to see the promise made by God to Joshua in its context. The context was "after the death of Moses...v. 1"

Moses had been the spiritual leader of God's people for 40 years. He had rescued them from slavery in Egypt and led them to the edge of the promise land.

Moses received his instructions directly from God.

Exodus 33:11

<sup>11</sup> So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

It would have been very difficult to replace Moses until he had died. People wouldn't have listened to Joshua, they would have wanted to follow Moses.

However the promises of God are not confined to people. God is able to raise up new people to continue His work and to fulfill His promises.

## 2. God's encouragement to Joshua – v. 5, 9,16-17.

There were three great encouragements given to Joshua before he entered the promise land.

Two of the encouragements were given by God Himself and one was given by God's people.

Let us look at these encouragements.

- a) V. 5 – God promises Joshua that nobody would be able to defeat him as long as he lived. This is an amazing promise for the leader of an army that was just about to start a military campaign. Joshua was sure of success. God promised to never leave or forsake Joshua.

You might be sitting here today thinking, well that is great for Joshua, but what about me, is there any promise for me today?

Well there is good news for you. This promise is repeated in Hebrews 13: v. 5-6.

Hebrews 13: v. 5-6

<sup>5</sup> *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.* For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

Here the promise of Joshua 1:5 is applied to a Christian Congregation and can be applied to us here at O.I.C. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ you can be assured that God will never leave you or forsake you.

- b) V. 9 - The second encouragement to Joshua was that God's presence was going to be with him wherever he went.

When Moses was called to rescue God's chosen people, he was concerned that God's presence went with him. There is nothing more encouraging than to know God's presence in your life. In Psalm 16: v. 11 it tells us that "In the presence of God, there is fullness of joy" There is no "Joy" greater than knowing God's presence.

- c) V. 16-17 - In these verses we discover that the people of God made promises. They promised to do everything that Joshua asked them to do and to go wherever Joshua commanded them to go.

This is a wonderful promise by God's people to a new leader. I wonder if they will keep this promise. We will find out later.

Whenever a Pastor is welcomed into a "New Church" the membership make promises. They usually promise to pray and support the Pastor 100%. However it doesn't take long before some of those people start to criticize and undermine the work of the Pastor. It is very sad when that happens, but God always honors people who support the leaders that God appoints.

Christian Leaders are always encouraged when God's people are faithful both in their service for Him and in the support of God's appointed leadership.

## 3. God's Instructions to Joshua – v. 7-8.

The big instruction to Joshua was to meditate on God's word day and night and to obey it.

Firstly I must stress that meditation of God's word is not just for spiritual leaders but is also for every believer. In Psalm 1: v. 2 it tells us also to meditate on God's word, day and night.

All that Joshua had was the first 5 books in the Bible, but we have the whole Bible to meditate upon.

Colin Peckham in his commentary on Joshua says this about meditation on God's word.

"Biblical meditation is a divinely appointed way of coming closer to God, through meditation on the word of God, the Holy Spirit of God interprets the word of God and we are strengthened by His indwelling sweetness"

The question we need to ask is what is Biblical meditation and how do we do it.?

Biblical meditation is focused thinking about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth in my own life. When we meditate we ponder, consider and reflect on verses in the Bible, depending on the Holy Spirit to give us revelation of truth and meaning.

Someone once said that meditation is the devotional practice of pondering the words of scripture with a receptive heart, allowing the Holy Spirit to take the written word and apply it as the living word to our inner life.

Meditation has the purpose of healing, cleansing and transforming our minds.

The Bible says it is the key to becoming like Christ, it is the key to answered prayer, and the key to successful living.

(Proverbs 4:23, Rom 12:2, 1 Cor. 3:18, John 15:7,)

Meditation is like the digestive system of a cow.

All day long a cow eats grass and stores it in its large stomach. When evening comes the cow lies down to chew the cud (grass in its stomach) Lumps of grass are brought up from its stomach and are chewed and swallowed again. This is then absorbed and digested in its other stomachs.

The black and white cow eats green grass and produces white milk.

The grass has been absorbed into her system, and has become part of her life and results in the fruit of producing milk. People eat and drink the milk and are strengthened by what the cow gives away.

Every growing Christian should be like the cow. Meditate on God's word to get strength and to give away to benefit other people.

(Jeremiah 15:16)

Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

Jesus was steeped in scripture and used it to defend himself in all situations.

(John 6: v. 63)

<sup>63</sup> It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.

The text does tell us actually how to meditate on God's word, but there are some helpful suggestions on the day retreat next Saturday, so I won't repeat myself.

The main thing for Joshua was to meditate and Obey God's word. Obedience to this command was going to give Joshua success and it will give us success in our spiritual lives too.

#### 4. Joshua unites God's people – v. 12-18.

On the first reading of verses 12-18 it would appear not to be very interesting. However if we read it in the light of Numbers chapter 32 it takes on a whole new significance.

We now need to turn back further in the Old Testament and read Numbers 32: v 1-23.

Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region *was* a place for livestock, <sup>2</sup> the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, <sup>3</sup> “Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, <sup>4</sup> the country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.” <sup>5</sup> Therefore they said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan.” <sup>6</sup> And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: “Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? <sup>7</sup> Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? <sup>8</sup> Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. <sup>9</sup> For when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them. <sup>10</sup> So the LORD’s anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, <sup>11</sup> ‘Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, <sup>12</sup> except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.’ <sup>13</sup> So the LORD’s anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone. <sup>14</sup> And look! You have risen in your fathers’ place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. <sup>15</sup> For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people.” <sup>16</sup> Then they came near to him and said: “We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, <sup>17</sup> but we ourselves will be armed, ready *to go* before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. <sup>18</sup> We will not return to our homes until every one of the children of Israel has received his inheritance. <sup>19</sup> For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this eastern side of the Jordan.” <sup>20</sup> Then Moses said to them: “If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, <sup>21</sup> and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, <sup>22</sup> and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the LORD and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD. <sup>23</sup> But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.

Joshua reminds the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half the tribe of Manasseh about what they had promised Moses while he was alive. Initially when they made their request to Moses it seemed as if it would bring discouragement and disunity to God’s people. Moses was angry and warned them about what happened when the people refused to follow Joshua and Caleb. Therefore they made a promise at that time to leave their wives and children on this side of the Jordan and the men would cross over and fight with all others to take possession of the land.

They promised that they would not return until the land was subdued before the Lord.

If they had changed their mind it would have had serious consequences for God’s people as a nation. However they kept to their promise and it united God’s people.

There is a great concern throughout the book of Joshua for “All Israel” and this teaches us clearly the importance God places on the unity of His chosen people.

(Chapters 3-4, 7-8, 10:29, 22:12, 23:2, 24:1)

Last week in John chapter 17 we learnt how important it is for the true people of God to stay united both to Jesus and to each other.

There are two things we need to realize about the unity of God's people.

Firstly unity is NOT UNIFORMITY. We are not all the same, we dress differently, and we have different backgrounds and different secondary theological convictions based upon our denominational or Christian background. It is not possible to get everybody to agree in unity on these secondary subjects or ways of doing Church.

Secondly unity can ONLY be UNITY IN THE GOSPEL. It is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that UNITES the people of God. We can't be united on the basis of anything else. There are many professing so called Christian groups that proclaim a different gospel, but appear to group themselves under the Christian banner. It is not possible to unite with these people because they have a different gospel.

Summary

1. God promised Joshua a land, which had previously been promised to Abraham the founder of God's chosen people.
2. God encouraged Joshua by promising that he would be successful in conquering the land and nobody would be able to defeat him. He also promised that His presence would be with him wherever he went. Joshua was also encouraged by the obedience of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh.
3. God's instructions to Joshua were to meditate on God's word day and night and to OBEY it.
4. The unity of God's people is important but it is only a unity in the Gospel and not a unity in anything else either theology or good works.