

LESSON 1



GOD'S CALL TO JOSHUA

Scripture Text: Joshua 1:1-9

Forty years before the time of today's lesson, God chose Moses and gave him the task of leading Israel from Egypt to Canaan. Moses led them through many experiences to the very edge of the land. Then within sight of Canaan, He took Moses to Himself and set a new leader in his place. At this point we begin this quarter's study.

It was a tremendous task that was placed in Joshua's hands, far too much for a man alone to handle. But he was not alone. God promised Joshua to be with him as He was with Moses. The work of God is a divine and supernatural work. It can be done only by supernatural power. Joshua did not choose himself as leader. It was God's plan for Israel to possess Canaan, not Joshua's. God would give His wisdom and power in the leading. Joshua must rely on God in doing his assigned work. We

must do the same.

We should remember as we study these lessons that they are a type of God's work of salvation.

MEMORY VERSE: *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.* —Joshua 1:6

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—Joshua 1:10-18** Preparations for crossing the Jordan.
- Tue.—Numbers 13** Joshua and others to spy out Canaan.
- Wed.—Numbers 14:26-39** Promise to Caleb and Joshua.
- Thu.—Deuteronomy 31:1-23** The appointment of Joshua.
- Fri.—Hebrews 4:1-11** The promise of rest.
- Devotional Reading: Deuteronomy 34** The death of Moses.

God Speaks to Joshua

Joshua 1:1-2 After the death of Moses . . . the Lord spake unto Joshua . . . Moses' minister. The words *servant* and *minister* mean the same. God trained Joshua under the hand of Moses from the very early days of the journey (Exodus 17:13-14; 24:13; 32:17; 33:11). Now Joshua was ready to lead. The Lord said, **Go over this Jordan . . .** Crossing the Jordan was the immediate task, conquering the land was the overall one.

God chooses His workers and prepares them for the task. That is, if the person is attentive to His voice and obedient to His leading. Are we preparing ourselves for His call? Do we expect Him to call? Many workers are needed today. There are not enough pastors, evangelists, teachers, and helpers. God has not failed in choosing enough, but some have failed in obeying His leading.

God speaks only to those who are prepared to hear Him. Joshua had been faithful in little things; now God was ready to give him a greater work. As a boy, Joshua had endured slavery in Egypt. As a young man, he had represented his tribe to spy out the land. He and Caleb had taken positive action while the other ten were unwilling in spirit to move ahead. Faithfulness in life's daily duties and courage in the face of crisis had prepared Joshua for supreme command.

Jesus and Joshua Compared

Our Lord Jesus bore the name of this great leader. *Jesus* is the Greek adaptation of the Hebrew name *Joshua*. Joshua is spoken of as "Moses' minister." After the death of Moses, his work was to be carried out by a minister, or helper. After the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, His work was to be carried on by ministers—helpers. The word *minister* comes from the word *minor*, which means *less*. A minister is anybody who performs a useful task by making himself of no importance, gladly accepting in a spirit of humbleness any opportunity to serve.

Go in to Possess

The Jordan was to be crossed, and Joshua was the man to lead God's people over into the Promised Land. To him, God could speak, and only to such men does God commit His great work. God gave the land to Israel, but there was something for Israel to do. Their part was twofold: to believe the promise, and to work and fight to possess the land. This is FAITH and WORKS. We must also have both faith and works to possess our land, the Kingdom of God, which is our salvation (Philippians 2:12-13). Both faith and works are necessary to receive and to hold that which God has promised us.

Land of Promise

Joshua 1:3-4 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you. Not "will I give it," but "have I given unto you." Israel was to secure their Promised Land, but the nation was lacking in faith. God's promises are always conditional. We learn from this and other Bible passages that our effort and diligence are needed if we are to possess the prize. Israel was to gain only those places upon which the sole of their foot would tread. God could have driven the Canaanites from the land and allowed His people, Israel, to march in without effort. But He did not do it. He gave them a part to do, as He does us in our day. That part is to possess it.

The Promised Land which Israel was to possess extended between Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. It was a good land. It was a type of God's Promised Land to this dispensation, which is salvation. It is indeed a land flowing with milk and honey.

The Resources for the Task

Joshua 1:5-9 God promised perfect success, victory over all foes. But NOT in Joshua's power. **I will be with thee . . . not fail thee, nor forsake thee.** The promise of the land had been made long before to Abraham (Genesis 12:7), repeated to Jacob (Genesis 28:13), and to Moses (Exodus 3:8). Joshua's response to the promise must be expressed in COURAGE and STRENGTH—faith and action. God's presence with him would make it possible.

Joshua must **do according to all the law**, the Law God gave Moses. Exact, careful obedience—not turning **to the right hand or to the left**—would bring prosperity and success. God's Law was to be in his **mouth**, speaking of it continually; in his thoughts, to **meditate . . . day and night**; and in his doings, **to do according to all that is written**.

So the two great resources provided to Joshua were (1) the presence of God and (2) the Law of God. By these supernatural gifts, he was to do God's work. To **be strong and courageous** was COMMANDED, a duty. He could do it and he need not be **afraid**.

From our lesson we are assured that strength consists neither of might nor power, but of the Spirit of God. The strength of this people was in their obedience and faith in God. Moral law will always be necessary to get us through some of the hard places in life, but the walk through green pastures and beside the still waters of a righteous life will keep the life under constant and complete control.

JUST A THOUGHT

**There are two kinds of leaders in the world:
those who are interested in the fleece and
those who are interested in the flock.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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