

Joshua - 2 - Joshua's Life as Leader of Israel

The book of Joshua begins at the moment of Moses' death. God appeared to Joshua to inform him that Moses was now dead.

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: 2 "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. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. Josh 1:1-4

God Prepares His new Leader

God gave Joshua some precious promises and also some very important commands concerning his personal life and consecration. It is amazing to see that God always opens with promises to motivate then conditions to make the promise sure. .

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. Josh 1:5

God has never asked anyone to do anything for Him without giving them the assurance that He would help them accomplish it. Moses' was given similar promises for his work in delivering Israel(Ex 3-4). God had already fulfilled His promises to Moses and Joshua could now look back on "as I was with Moses" and use it to see just how God would be with him. Joshua had both a promise and an example of the fulfillment of that promise.

The only variable in his success or failure would be his own trust and obedience. God asked Joshua to trust Him to fulfill the oath he had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

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. Josh 1:6

But for God to accomplish what He has the power to do, He needs Joshua's courage and strength. When God's power works through man, God needs that individual to trust and be confident. Like the ten spies forty years earlier, if Joshua grows discouraged or fearful, then God will be unable to work through him.

The second variable was obedience. The same strength and courage that was needed for his trust in God's promises was also needed for him to be obedient to God's Law.

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. Josh 1:7

Lack of submission and disobedience always leads to failure. God cannot work through rebellious people. That is what happened with the spies and what would happen through all the Judges and Kings. God has never compromised. Even in the garden of Eden, his promises only lasted until disobedience occurred. At that moment, all was lost for Adam and Eve. It was also lost for Cain and later for King Saul and Solomon.

God instruct Joshua on the specific things he must do.

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. Josh 1:8

Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth	Don't ever stop talking about God's Word!
You shall meditate in it day and night	Don't ever stop thinking about God's Word!
That you may observe to do all that is written	...You will then never stop doing God's Word!

The first two seem to be the conditions that will bring about the third. It takes courage, mind control and mouth control to become a faithful servant of God. God then concludes with the most comforting promise of all. When He gives a command and His servant fulfills that command, He will do everything in His power to be certain that whoever is doing this will be successful.

If Joshua will comply with this, then God promises to be with him wherever he goes.

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. Josh 1:9

This ought to be obvious to all of God's servants, but it is always good to be reminded that whatever God commands His servants to do He will always give the power to accomplish it. All God needs is faith and submission from His servants, with that He can do everything else. But over and over again in the Scriptures when God's chosen vessel becomes wicked, or doesn't have the faith to complete the task, God's hands are tied because God never violates the freewill of His people.

The Two Spies and Rahab the Harlot

Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. Josh 2:1

The providence of God is often the underlying theme of many of the events in the Scriptures. Since God knows that hearts of all men, wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, and is longsuffering toward all not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance, it is obvious that He would always guide the feet of his people to those who would be most benefitted. So it was with Rahab, the one person in the entire town who had the faith to be saved.

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. Heb 11:31

Whether they knew this as they entered that home is not recorded, only that after they arrived, an emergency arose that allowed Rahab's faith to save the day.

And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." 3 So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country." 4 Then the woman took the two men and hid them. Josh 2:2-4

At that moment, Rahab had the choice of turning them over or protecting them. Like Moses before and the opposite of Delilah later, she chose to stand with the people of God.

Rahab told a Lie

Many have looked carefully at her words to the servants of the king. Seeking for a way to justify her words is futile. She told a lie. None of what she said happened, and there is no way to justify or rationalize it away. It was a lie.

So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. 5 And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." 6 (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) Josh 2:4-7

Some even among our brethren have concluded that this was not a sinful lie, but a simple omission. They then seek to use her place in Hebrews 11 as the reason why it was not a sin. But it just won't work. She was also a harlot, so can that be justified as well. The Holy Spirit records things as they happen and often leaves unspoken the moral consequences. Thus Abraham's lies about Sarah are not condemned, nor is Judah's fornication with Tamar, or Saul's suicide. God simply records the events and leaves it to His people to assess the moral consequences of each action. In this case there is not wiggle room. First, it is impossible for God to lie and the devil is the father of all lies/liars. Second because all lies and all liars will be cast into the lake of fire.

*that by two immutable things, in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. Heb 6:18*

*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, **for he is a liar and the father of it.** John 8:44-45*

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and **all***

liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."
Rev 21:8

But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or **a lie**, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Rev 21:27

But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and **whoever loves and practices a lie**. Rev 22:15

So Rahab was a harlot and a liar, but later repented of both and having sought forgiveness and being restored, she has been placed among the great people of Heb 11.

Words to inspire Confidence

Rahab's faith was based on the reputation that had preceded the children of Israel's arrival. They had heard about the Red Sea and previous victories that the Lord had given to Israel. It had led the people to be very afraid. This must have emboldened the spies and even Joshua when they recounted it to him. No longer did they appear to be grasshoppers in the sight of those living in the land of Canaan.

"I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, Josh 2:9-11

And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us." Josh 2:24

Rahab's "Good Confession" and Plea

Rahab then made a "good confession" regarding her faith in God and her hope that she and her house could be saved.

for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. 12 Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, 13 and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." Josh 2:11-13

Whether the men should have agreed to her proposal without consulting Joshua and hearing from God in the matter is passed over in silence. They did agree and it turned out to the glory of God. They then give her three specific instructions that would lead to her salvation. First, unless she tied a scarlet cord to her window, the oath would no longer be binding. Second, all she wanted to be saved must be in her house at the time of the battle. Third, If she tells anyone about this business they will be free of the oath.

*We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, 18 unless, when we come into the land, **you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down**, and unless **you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home**. 19 So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. 20 And if **you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath** which you made us swear." Josh 2:17-20*

She agreed to all their words and immediately tied the scarlet cord to the window.

Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window. Josh 2:21

God exalts Joshua when Israel Crosses the Jordan

The people are given specific instructions by "officers" to allow 2,000 cubits between the ark of the covenant borne by the priests and Levites and the nearest tribes. This would be about 3,000' or a little over half a mile. This was to allow the priests to show them the right path and be certain the people did not stray. Joshua then specifically addresses them commanding that they sanctify

themselves(in some manner similar to when they stood before Mt Sinai(Ex 19:10-14).

God then promised that the events of that day would exalt Joshua and elevate him to a position similar to that of Moses.

And the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. Josh 3:7

Joshua then goes to the people to encourage them and help them make the proper application of what they are about to see. In a manner very similar to the parting of the Red Sea, Israel will pass over the Jordan River on dry ground and the water will stop flowing and heap itself up higher and higher as the waters are held back.

So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God." 10 And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. 12 Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. 13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap." Josh 3:9-13

The priests stood in the water while all the people crossed over. There must have been some interesting and conflicting emotions surging in the hearts of those men as they stood in river bed and watched that water surge higher and higher in the distance.

Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan. Josh 3:17

Memorial Stones

After everyone has safely passed over the Jordan, God commands that a man from every tribe go back into the river bed and collect 12 stones to carry with them to make a memorial that night at their camp.

Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, 3 and command them, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.'" Josh 4:2-3

God then gives specific instructions about how they are to teach their children in the generations to come about the reason those stones were there and what significance was to be seen by looking at them.

that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' 7 Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever." Josh 4:6-7

When the children of Israel saw all these events, they realized that God had given him the same power as Moses had possessed and they respected him, and when the nations of Canaan heard about it, their confidence evaporated and they were demoralized.

*On that day **the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him**, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life. Josh 4:14*

*So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, **that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer** because of the children of Israel. Josh 5:1*

Israel on the Other Side of the Jordan

It is interesting to note that Israel crossed the Jordan the same day they had been told to select that Passover lamb when they left Egypt some forty years earlier.

Now the people came up from the Jordan on **the tenth day of the first month**, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20 And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. 21 Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?' 22 then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land'; Josh 4:19-23

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "**This month** shall be your beginning of months; it **shall be the first month of the year to you**. 3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ... 6 Now you shall **keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month**. Then **the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight**.
Ex 12:1-3, 6

Circumcision

After they crossed the Jordan, in the three day period before the Passover, they circumcised the entire nation since it had not been done the entire time they had wandered in the wilderness.

At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time." 3 So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. 4 And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. 5 For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. Josh 5:2-5

All attempts to understand why they did not circumcise these children in the wilderness. Two possibilities exist. First, the children of Israel refused to fulfill the command, and God remained silent. Second, God abrogated the covenant after their refusal to enter the promised land after the evil report of the spies. Neither is expressed, although the latter may be inferred from God's words.

*For the **children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed**, ... 7 Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom **He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way**. 8 So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. 9 **Then the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.** Josh 5:6-9*

From these words it is difficult not to see the Lord's hand in this. Why would Moses allow them to rebel against such an important command if it had not been God's will?

*He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And **the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.**" Gen 7:13-14*

After this circumcision, God rolled away the reproach of Egypt and they stood sanctified and prepared to be the true nation of God.

The Passover and End of the Manna

Again, during the three day period from passing over the Jordan they were first circumcised and then prepared and ate the Passover. They also ate the produce of the land and the Manna ceased.

Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. 12 Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year. Josh 5:10-12

Israel is now in Canaan, circumcised, in covenant relationship with God and prepared to be God's instrument to pour out wrath on the seven nations of Canaan.