

## Joshua Introduction and Chapter 1- John Karmelich

1. OK, everyone it's time to prepare for warfare. There's a great way to start a bible study. ☺ The good news is that I'm not talking about the kind of warfare where we put on uniforms and go kill people. The bad news is this is more difficult type of warfare, one in which we battle sin.
  - a) If that scares you, it should. That "battle against sin" is an underlying theme of Joshua.
2. We are beginning a study of the book of Joshua. It is the first book in the Old Testament after "The five books of Moses". It continues "pretty much" where Moses left off. Let me talk a little about who is Joshua, and then I'll come back to the lesson theme.
  - a) Joshua was the second leader of the nation of Israel after Moses.
  - b) Joshua was not related to Moses.
  - c) In Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, you can find lots of references to Joshua. He was Moses' personal assistant. It wasn't until near the end of Moses' life where God told Moses to make Joshua the next leader of Israel. (See Deuteronomy 34:7).
  - d) If you study the times when Moses went to go speak to God, Joshua often went with him. When the Israelites were guilty of turning from God and worshipping a calf-god, Joshua was not with the Israelites at that time as he was with Moses. (See Exodus 32:17).
  - e) Another thing Joshua was famous for is that he was one of the 12 spies, sent to spy out the land of Israel prior to the Israelites actually entering the land. (See Numbers 13:16).
    - i) Getting off topic a little, if God wanted the Israelites to conquer the land of Israel, why were spies sent out? Why not just march in and start conquering?
    - ii) The answer is not given in the bible, but I suspect it had a lot to do with the Israelites facing their fears and learning to trust God more.
    - iii) The important thing is that 10 of the 12 spies brought back "bad reports" that the Israelites were no match for the residents of the land. Only two spies brought back a good report. One of those two spies was Joshua. (Numbers 14:6).
  - f) This leads us back to the issue of the Israelites that came out of Egypt. That generation did not trust in God in that they believed the report of the 10 spies who thought it was a bad idea to enter the land. Why do you think that generation didn't trust God after all the miracles they saw? It was because they got their focus off of God and on their enemies.
    - i) Due to their lack of trust in God, He said to the them, You will be in the desert for 40 years until the entire generation that came out of Egypt dies. (Numbers 14:33). Only the descendants of that generation actually entered the Promised Land. There were only two people allowed to live past this time frame. One was Joshua.
    - ii) Do you know what did the Israelites do for those 40 years? It was estimated that roughly one to two million Jewish people came out of Egypt. Let's assume half of them were old enough that they had to die for that lack of trust in God. Therefore, about three-quarters of a million people died in that 40-year period. If one does the math, that means that over 15-20,000 people died every year. My point is not the math, but to show what the Israelites did for 40 years: A lot of body burying.
  - g) Another question to ask is "Why wasn't Moses himself allowed to enter the land?"
    - i) Moses actual sin had to do with striking a rock that produced water. (See Numbers 20:11). God told Moses to speak to the rock and not to strike it a second time. Why was that so bad? Because it "blew the model of Jesus". In other words, Jesus only had to die for our sins once, not over and over again. By striking the rock again, Moses "blew the model" of what Jesus the Messiah did for our sins.
      - a) If you think I'm out in left field on this one, know that Paul compares the "water-stone" that followed the Israelites in the desert to Jesus Himself in (1st Corinthians 10:4).

- h) OK John, this is all very interesting. What does it have to do with the book of Joshua?
    - i) For starters, it gives us Joshua's background prior to his leadership.
    - ii) There is another point to be made here: The word "Joshua" means, "God is salvation". The name Joshua is the exact same word as "Jesus".
      - a) It is sort of like how "John, Juan and Ivan" are all the same root name with the difference between the root-language".
    - iii) Here's my point: Moses, more than anything else, is associated with the "laws" of God. The laws show us God's standard for right and wrong. "Symbolically speaking" the law cannot get us into the Promised Land. It takes "God Himself" to lead us into that land. That is the symbol of "Jesus or Joshua" entering the land.
3. This actually leads me back to my theme for the book of Joshua.
- a) There is an important aspect to understand about the symbolic idea of the "Promised Land". It does not represent heaven itself. There are a lot of wonderful old Christian hymns that symbolize "The Promised Land" as being heaven. They maybe wonderful songs, but I am convinced they miss the point.
  - b) Think of it this way: When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they still had to fight wars. We will read of lost battles in the Promised Land. They also failed to be obedient to God at times. Does that "read like" heaven to you? I don't think so.
  - c) So if the Promised Land does not symbolize heaven, what does it symbolize?
    - i) It is the "rich full life" of learning to trust God with every aspect of our lives.
    - ii) It is the difference between life "after the cross" versus "life after Pentecost". I know way too many people who believe Jesus died for their sins, but never move on from there to enter the rich, wonderful life that comes from trusting Jesus with every aspect of their lives. I see far too many Christians who are on the "right side of the cross, but the wrong side of Pentecost".
      - a) Pentecost was the day in which the church "officially began". "Tongues of Fire" came down on the apostles and they started praising God in different languages. (Ref: Acts 2:3). I am not in anyway implying that one has to speak in tongues. What I am saying is one has to learn to depend upon the Spirit of God ruling over our lives to appreciate Pentecost.
      - b) In other words, when one starts to "live for God" with their lives, then they have crossed over the "other side of Pentecost".
  - d) This leads us back to Joshua and my "book theme". What this book is about, more than anything else is about understanding how to live in the Promised Land. The Israelites had to conquer enemies and learn to fully trust God with their lives.
    - i) Note that learning to trust God is always a "moment by moment" process. In other words, the Israelites did not conquer the Promised Land is "one big swoop". They had to do it one step at a time and learn from their mistakes when they failed.
    - ii) In other words, the Israelites conquering the Promised Land is a lot like our victories over sin as we learn to trust God a little at a time.
4. Before I start Chapter 1, let me summarize the "who what when's and why's of a book:
- a) The who are Joshua and all the Israelites. Joshua is the second leader of the Israelites after Moses. The book was written by Joshua, except for an added ending after he dies.
  - b) The "where" is just outside of Israel (at the start) and mostly inside the land itself.
  - c) The "when" is estimated at 1406 BC" as of the start of this book.
  - d) The why, is to conquer the land and symbolically speaking, conquer our sins.
  - e) Joshua was probably about 85 years old at the start of the book. Joshua 24:29 says he was 110 when he died. That means he lived as a slave in Egypt for over 40 years and was part of group that wandering in the desert for 40 years. His original name was "Hoshea" which means "salvation" and Moses renames him "Joshua", which means "God is salvation". (Numbers 13:16).

5. OK, after over two pages summarizing the book and giving background notes, let me discuss what is happening in Chapter 1. This chapter is about preparing Joshua for his new career.
  - a) In the five books written by Moses, we only know of Joshua as being an assistant to Moses. Joshua must now prepare for his new career as the leader of Israel.
  - b) That leads to my title for this chapter, which is "preparing for leadership".
  - c) Chapter 1 is actually one of my favorite chapters in the bible. I studied it prior to God calling me into this bible study ministry.
  - d) Whenever I read or hear of someone entering a position of leadership in any way, shape or form, my prayer for them is that they read and study Joshua Chapter 1.
    - i) Now let's suppose that we are not in any great leadership role right now. Think of Joshua Chapter 1 as a preparation manual for a possible future assignment.
    - ii) Think about Joshua's age for a moment. He was a servant of Moses most of his adult life. He didn't get this vision from God and assumed leadership until he was about 85 years of age. My point is we never know what God has planned for our future. We may live as a servant for most of our lives and then, just when we think life is about over for us, God calls us into a new role. If it was true for Joshua, it can be true for any of us as well.
  - e) Finally, know all of us will be leaders if we are disciples of Christ. The Book of Revelation (5:10) says that Christians will reign over the earth with Jesus. If we rule and reign one day, that means that God is preparing us for some sort of leadership role. Who we rule over is a separate topic: In short, it is over those who repopulate the world after the great tribulation. My point right now is that even if we never have any sort of leadership role in this lifetime, we are all in training for some sort of leadership role in the next lifetime.
    - i) The key to our leadership training depends upon learning to be obedient "now".
  - f) With that intriguing introduction out of the way, let's start Verse 1. ☺
6. Verse 1: After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide:
  - a) The first verse starts off with a key point. Moses is now dead. We know that God called Joshua to be the next leader and Moses prayed over Joshua near the end of Deuteronomy.
  - b) The book of Joshua starts with God speaking directly to Joshua. He is about to assume leadership. Joshua was prepared for this role, and now it is about to begin.
  - c) Imagine being assigned to be a leader and the previous leader was someone special.
    - i) Imagine how nervous Joshua was. He must have thought, "I will never be another Moses. I can never be as good as him. How can I possibly replace Him?"
    - ii) Now imagine how nervous any one "about to lead" person is, if they have had to follow in the footsteps of a great man or woman. That has to be intimidating.
    - iii) I remember the death of my own father hitting me hard as I thought I could never match things that he accomplished. For me, I had to accept the idea that God has a different path for me than He did for my father and I have to trust that God has a different path that He wants for me to take.
  - d) This leads to the main point of the first verse of Joshua. It is to assure Joshua that God is going to be with him the same way God was with Moses. Joshua cannot fill the footsteps of Moses, but Joshua can be a great leader with God's help.
    - i) That is what we have to say when we step into a leadership role. We cannot be exactly like that last great leader. What we can do is be ourselves and trust that God will lead us down the path He wants us to go. That path will be different from the path of the last leader and we have to accept that. The key is to trust that God is with us and God will lead us if we let Him.

7. Verse 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.
- a) The hard part for Joshua must have been to hear that line, "Moses my servant is dead".
  - b) Let me paraphrase that first line: It is time for you Joshua, to accept the fact that Moses is now dead. He was a great man and he will be with Me forever in heaven. Now you, Joshua are called to lead these people and you must accept the fact that Moses is dead.
  - c) The next line is God telling Joshua to get all the Israelites ready as they are all about to cross the Jordan into the land that God promised them.
    - i) Let me paraphrase some more. Joshua, it is time for you to stop brooding over the death of Moses. It is time for you to assume leadership and here is your first assignment as the leader of the Israelites. Prepare them to cross over the Jordan into the Promised Land.
    - ii) Now think about that line if "you" are appointed to some sort of leadership. The first thing we have to accept is the previous leader is no longer in charge. There may be a time to memorialize that past leader, but now is not that time. Now is the time to presume command and take over.
    - iii) The first thing one must do, is to realize that God is in charge, and that He wants to be in charge of our lives. We too, can be a great leader, if we are willing to let God lead us where He wants us to go. Being a leader involves being willing to be submissive to God's commands for our lives and following His will for us.
  - d) So back to the issue of being a great team leader of some sort. How do I specifically let God lead me? For starters, one should be in prayer regularly (try daily) to ask God to help us. Next, one should be in God's word regularly (daily!) to know "right from wrong". From that point, the key is to keep moving forward and trust that God is taking us down the path that He wants us to go.
  - e) With that said, let's get back to Joshua. His first assignment was to get everyone ready to cross over the Jordan River into the Promised Land. So how does Joshua do this?
    - i) First of all, Joshua is leading about a million people, more or less. Without the use of electronic mail or even a megaphone, ☺ it is going to take time to communicate that message to that large a group of people.
    - ii) One has to remember that the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years. It would take a little bit of time for that next generation, who was "busy" for 40 years burying bodies, to realize, "OK, that's it. No more funerals for a while. It's time to bring that chapter of our lives to an end and go into this land.
    - iii) One has to remember that Joshua was significantly older than everyone else. He and the other good spy, "Caleb", were the only ones older than 40 at this time.
  - f) The other idea I get is that it is not just a matter of physically getting ready to enter this land, but mentally ready. Yes, I'm sure they were tired of burying bodies and wandering through the desert. They didn't know what awaited them on the other side of the Jordan River. I suspect most of the Israelites of this generation heard the stories of the 10 "bad" spies and the reports they brought back.
    - i) Therefore, the job of Joshua the "leader" was to lead them. He had to get them mentally ready for this major change of lifestyle as well as the physical change.
    - ii) This leads me back to opening point that entering the Promised Land is sort of the equivalent of learning to trust God on a daily basis. I'm sure this next generation of Israelites understood their parents' generation was punished for their disobedience and this next generation didn't want to make the same mistake.
    - iii) After spending 40 years burying their parents and grandparents, I suspect this whole generation was nervous about "starting new" and they needed a strong leader much in the same manner that Joshua needed to be a strong leader.

8. Verse 3: I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.
- a) Here is the first promise that God is making to Joshua. In case you forgot, God is speaking directly to Joshua. The first 9 verses is God speaking to Joshua.
  - b) Verse 3 states the promise that God will give Joshua and the Israelites "everywhere they set their feet" in the Promised Land. That means the whole land belongs to them.
    - i) Note that the Promised Land (i.e., the land of Israel) was not empty of people.
    - ii) Over four hundred years earlier, God told Abraham that his descendants would inherit this land. Therefore, the promise to Joshua is really a fulfillment of an unconditional promise God made to Abraham over 400 years earlier.
    - iii) There is an interesting "side-note" to that promise. God told Abraham that one of the reasons it is going to take over 400 years is in effect, "the sins of those currently living in Promised Land are not complete yet." (A paraphrase of Genesis 15:16).
      - a) God wants the Israelites to specifically wipe out the people who lived in the land of Israel at that time.
      - b) That order is not to kill all people of all lands. It is specifically to kill the inhabitants who lived there at that time and "that was it". That is what God meant by the idea that "their sins are not yet complete".
      - c) It is God's way of saying I'm going to give the people living in the land up to 400 years to repent of their sins. When that time is up, that is it for them. So what was the sin of these people that God would want to wipe them out? This is the culture that introduced the concept of sacrificing their young babies to their god in exchange for blessings on their lives.
  - c) As I like to say, this leads us back to Joshua. ☺ He may or may not be aware of that promise to Abraham and of the 400-year prediction. All Joshua knew for sure was that he was now in charge and He was going to lead the Israelites into battle against whoever was living in the land of Israel at this time.
  - d) There is a predictive line in Exodus about this event bears repeating at this point. God said in effect, "I will drive them out little by little". (Source Exodus 23:30). The point is God knew that if the Israelites conquered the land "all at once", they would 1) have a big ego and 2) would not appreciate how God wants to rule over their lives. Therefore, God makes the promise that He will drive out the inhabitants a little at a time.
    - i) Note that Joshua was around when that promise was made to Moses.
    - ii) Now Joshua must assume the role of leadership to fulfill that mission.
  - e) The final thing I want you to catch out of Verse 3 is that "Joshua can't lose". As long as Joshua was trusting in God, the war is guaranteed to be victorious.
    - i) Yet, in a manner of a few chapters, we will read of defeats by the Israelites. If God promised Joshua that He (God) will be with Joshua, how can defeats happen?
      - a) It gets back to the idea that we must learn to trust God a little at a time. There are no short cuts to living a life pleasing to God. Every time we try to do things in our own strength and not rely on God's strength, we will fail. That is a lesson Joshua will have to learn over the course of this book.
    - ii) A related point is that in the end, Joshua can't lose. As long as Joshua (or us) are trusting in God (and the fact that Jesus paid the price for our sins), no matter how many times we fail, our victory is guaranteed. We may slip up and do things in our power. If we are still trusting in God, then "sooner or later" we have to ask God why are we messing up and then God usually directs us back to doing things His way versus "our" way. The point is, in the end, we are still forgiven of our sins and in that aspect we cannot lose.
    - iii) That's a good point when we assume leadership. We may lose "battles" along the way, but the ultimate victory is guaranteed as long as we are trusting in God.

9. Verse 4: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates--all the Hittite country--to the Great Sea on the west.
- a) The land that God promised Abraham extended from Lebanon in the north, to the desert between Israel and Egypt on the south, to the Euphrates River on the east, and to the Great (Mediterranean) sea on the west.
  - b) If one knows their ancient history, Israel has never controlled the land from these borders.
  - c) There is a joke among bible scholars when the modern Nation of Israel argues that the land on the west bank of the river belongs to them, the scholars will argue, "Well, that depends upon which river you are talking about, the Jordan or the Euphrates River!"
  - d) Because the nation of Israel, never fully conquered all of this land (not under Joshua, or David or anyone else), the fulfillment of that promise to Abraham is a future event.
    - i) For those of you who were with me through the Ezekiel study, the last nine chapters speak of a future time period where all of Israel will know God (i.e., His Spirit will be upon them) and they will inherit the land. That future time period establishes the borders of Israel as promised to Abraham. In other words, there will be a day when the borders of the nation of Israel will extend east to the Euphrates River (which is in Iraq).
  - e) Meanwhile, back to Joshua. (Get used to that tag line. ☺) God tells Joshua in this verse just how much land there is to conquer. Joshua dies before this is fulfilled, but near the end of the book, Joshua does encourage the people to "go on" with God's plan for them.
    - i) In other words, God told his plans to Joshua. This plan was to go conquer all of the land described in Verse 4. God is saying in effect, "you won't be able to lose".
10. Verse 5: No one will be able to stand up 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.
- a) When one is a leader, one has to worry about two types of challenges to one's leadership. One challenge is the enemy one faces and worrying about losing to that enemy. The other type of challenge is a rival on one's own side. The point is God is assuring Joshua that no one, (either from the inside or the outside) will ever be able to stand up against him during his life.
  - b) Now one may say, "Well yes, that would be an easy way to be a leader. The God of the Universe tells you personally that no one will stand up against you all of your life." I would have a lot less fear of leadership if God reassured me of that promise.
    - i) One has to understand this carefully. It does not mean that Joshua will win every battle. What it does mean is that as long as Joshua is putting his faith in God, the "outcome is certain" no matter how the actual battle takes place.
    - ii) If one is about to be a leader, this is one verse to take to heart. As a leader, we may lose individual contests or others may challenge your leadership, but if you or I are trusting in God, in the end "we win" no matter what happens in between.
  - c) The second line says, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you." In Moses time, he was challenged from both "the inside and the outside". The Israelites faced enemies and at other times, other Israelites challenged Moses' leadership role. God is using that point to tell Joshua, "Don't worry, Moses never lost his command, despite his mistakes and as long as you are trusting in Me, you will not lose your position as well.
  - d) The line from Verse 5 we have to take personally is "God will never leave us or forsake us". That is a paraphrase of the final sentence of that verse. God may, or may not call us to a leadership role. We may win or lose individual battles. The good news is no matter what happens, God promises never to leave or forsake us. In other words, if we have committed our lives to serving Him, God enters into us and if God makes His home in us, He promises never to leave no matter how bad we screw up. We can always and at any time "make a U-turn" in life and turn to the way God wants us to go.

11. Verse 6 "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.
- a) There is a phrase repeated a bunch of times in this chapter. The first time it is used is here in Verse 6. That phrase is "Be strong and courageous". If I could encourage anyone going into a leadership role to learn something, it is that line right there.
  - b) Every time God tells Joshua to "be strong and courageous" it is followed up with a reason for Joshua to be strong and courageous.
  - c) The point here is that Joshua should not be strong in his own ability, but be strong in God's ability to lead him. If we are willing to trust in God, then He will provide the strength and courage to lead no matter what our personality is like. In other words, we are not depending on any natural ability to lead, but on God working through us.
    - i) God is not saying to Joshua, "I know you are strong and courageous, so I want you to "buckle up" and use your natural abilities to lead." God is saying to trust in Him as I (God) have the power to make you strong and courageous.
  - d) OK, we are now ready for the rest of the verse. In other words, we should be strong and courageous so that, "You (Joshua) will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them".
    - i) Remember that Joshua is not the only one who was nervous. You have a whole generation of Israelites who know they are about to enter a new phase of their lives and they need someone to be brave and lead them.
    - ii) This verse is not saying, "Go wipe out the inhabitants of this land and then you will have peace and happiness the rest of your life on earth". Winning a war all unto itself does not give one a permanent sense of happiness. The real idea is "Go out and do what I tell you and once you learn to trust in Me (God), you will know greater happiness than anything else you experience in this lifetime."
12. Verse 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. <sup>8</sup> Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; 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.
- a) Verse 7 begins with almost the exact same phrase as Verse 6.
    - i) Verse 6 started with (The English translation) of "Be strong and courageous".
    - ii) Verse 7 starts with (The English translation) of "Be strong and very courageous".
    - iii) So why is that repeated? Did Joshua not hear God the first time? ☺ The phrase is not repeated so it will stick in Joshua's ear. The second use of that phrase ties with the next sentence of Verse 7.
  - b) The second sentence is God telling Joshua to obey all the laws that God gave to Moses.
    - i) One bit of evidence that the book of Joshua was written after the first five books of Moses is that God commands Joshua to study Moses' writing. Joshua could not do that unless the books of Moses were completed and written at this point in time.
    - ii) God is saying in effect that Joshua will be successful if he pays attention to what is written in those five books as penned by Moses.
    - iii) Now let me tie that idea to "be strong and very courageous". If one is willing to trust in God, one can be "strong and courageous". If one is willing to meditate upon God's word on a regular basis, one can be strong and "very courageous".
    - iv) Verse 7 finishes with the "colorful point" of not turning from the right or the left from God's law. In other words, don't deviate from what it says.
  - c) Verse 8 says to not let the "Book of the Law" depart from one's mouth.
    - i) The "Book of the Law" refers to the first five books of the bible.
    - ii) Someone can think, "Well, Joshua had it easy. We have 66 bible books to learn and Joshua only had five. I would counter-argue that one could spend a lifetime just studying the first five books of the bible, let alone all of the bible.

- d) The next term to learn is the word "meditate" in Verse 8. To "meditate" does not mean to sit in the lotus position and recite a line from the bible over and over again. ☺
    - i) To mediate means to "think about" or "mull over" God's word.
    - ii) In other words, God wants us to think about His word. It is to ask oneself questions like, "Why does the bible say to do it "this way" and not "that way"? What is the reason behind "this command"? What is to be learned from this?
  - e) OK, John, I'm pretty sure the New Testament says somewhere the Christians are not under the "law". (OK, it's located in Romans 6:14). So, why should I study this stuff?
    - i) In other words, what is my motivation to study the Old Testament and in particular, the first five books of the bible if I'm not "under" the law?
    - ii) The answer is the Old Testament is full of word pictures for our lives. The stories involve real people and their lives. The key to study the Old Testament is not so much to learn history, but to learn the lessons that can be applied to our lives.
      - a) "Conquering the Promised Land as a model of battling sin" is a good example of this principal. Yes, the battles were real, but so is the principal.
    - iii) There is a Christian expression that goes, "The Old Testament is in the New Testament "revealed" and the New Testament is in the Old Testament "concealed".
      - a) That means every New Testament principal can be found somewhere in the Old Testament. That includes every aspect of Jesus' life and ministry. In fact, the only mystery not revealed in the Old Testament is the existence of the Christian church. (See Ephesians 5:32). Still, that leaves a lot of other principals and things to learn about through Old Testament pictures.
      - b) As an example, we get here a New Testament principal to submit our lives to God as a necessary first step prior to accepting a leadership role.
  - f) Getting back to meditation, the idea is we can meditate on Old Testament sections and learn through the Holy Spirit working in us, how they apply those sections to our lives.
  - g) Verse 8 ends with "Then you will be prosperous and successful". In other words, Joshua won't be successful just because God says so. Joshua will be successful as a leader if he is willing to obey God and that includes meditating on God's word on a regular basis.
    - i) There is a mistaken view a lot of Christians have that God will bless us if we just "sit there and do nothing". God wants to lead us. We can't follow unless we are moving. Joshua still had to go forward, lead and conquer the inhabitants in order for God to bless his life as the leader of the Israelites.
13. Verse 9: Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."
- a) Here is the final line of God's speech to Joshua.
  - b) Notice we have a third time where God says to "Be strong and courageous". We had that line already in Verse 6 and again in Verse 7. The first question is why is God repeating this line over and over again? If I had to guess, it is because Joshua still had fears of having to follow in Moses' footsteps. If we think our leadership role is hard, imagine what Joshua must have been thinking having to follow Moses.
  - c) I also hold the view that the key to reading this repeated expression is to read the text that follows that statement each time. Each time that phrase is used it is followed by some other statement. In other words, there are other points God is trying to make to Joshua and the statement of "be strong and courageous" means to trust that God will give him (and you and me) the power and ability to do whatever God has commanded us to do.
    - i) In other words, if God expects us to do anything for Him, accept the fact that God has already given us the ability to carry out those commands.
    - ii) That is the concept being reassured to Joshua in this chapter.
  - d) The last part of this verse is something we can "take with us". God promised to be with Joshua wherever he went and God makes that same promise to us in our lives.



14. Verse 10: So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: <sup>11</sup> "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your supplies 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.' "
- a) Here at Verse 10, God is no longer speaking to Joshua. Now we have Joshua speaking to the Israelites.
  - b) Notice the "chain of command" is already in place. The other Israelite leaders already knew that Joshua was to be the next leader. When Moses ordained Joshua back in Deuteronomy (See 34:9), it became public knowledge that Joshua would be the leader.
  - c) Joshua had to get the word out that it was time to enter the Promised Land. The "chain of command" to pass that order appeared to be already in place. Joshua gave the orders to the officers in charge and they passed the information on from there.
  - d) In Verse 11 is Joshua's first command as a leader. He essentially tells everyone that they have three days to pack up because on the third day, they will enter the land.
    - i) If you read the text carefully, God never told Joshua to enter on the third day. It was either Joshua's decision to pick the third day or God told Joshua to do it in three days and that fact is not recorded in the first nine verses.
  - e) OK, why three days? If God told us to do something, wouldn't we want to do it as soon as possible? Why wait this length of time?
    - i) First there is the symbolic reason. When Jesus died on the cross, one had to wait three days before "The price for sin has been paid and now once can begin their new life in the trust that the price was paid". The Israelites had to wait exactly three days before they could begin their new life trusting God "in" the land.
    - ii) Second, it may take people up to three days to organize their "stuff" for a move.
    - iii) More importantly, it gave time for the Israelites to actually contemplate the big moment that is about to occur in their life and think about the significance.
    - iv) Finally, notice that Joshua's first command was "reasonable". In other words, he didn't give them just five minutes to pack. ☺ He gave them enough time for word to get around and for everyone to contemplate this big step.
15. Verse 12: But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, <sup>13</sup> "Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.'
- a) We now come to a "footnote" in the plan to take the land. In Numbers 32:33 (et. al.), there were two and one half tribes that essentially did not want part of the Promised Land.
    - i) These two and one half tribes said in effect, "The land where we are standing right now is just fine for us. We are happy to have this area right here.
    - ii) Symbolically speaking, some people are "Happy just where they are" in their relationship with God and don't want to enter the "full rich life" that comes from trusting God with every aspect of their lives. They are content with the blessings they have received up to that point and don't want to spiritually grow any farther.
  - b) These two and one half tribes reminded Joshua that Moses had granted their request to live east of the Jordan River. It gets back to the concept that God never forces us to follow Him or even draw closer to Him. If one is content "where they are", it may not be what God desires of us, but God is willing to grant that, as He doesn't violate our free will.
    - i) The point as it relates to Christians is that when we accept Jesus' payment of our sins, the "Spirit of God" makes His home inside of us. At the same time, God never forces us to make any sort of "move" that God wants for our lives. Yes God desires that we take the next step, but God never forces us to take that step.
    - ii) That principal is symbolically fulfilled by these two and one tribes who didn't want to take the next step God had for them and move into the Promised Land.

16. Verse 14: Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers
- a) Joshua is still speaking just to the representatives of these two and one half tribes. He is reminding them of their commitment to God. On one hand, these people are reminding Joshua of God's command to let them live here. On the other hand, Joshua is reminding them of God's commitment that all of them are to help conquer the land.
  - b) OK, time for more "symbolic stuff". ☺ If these people were happy right here, why would Joshua command their fighting men to still be a part of the army and conquer the land?
    - i) If "God is God", the Israelites were more than capable of conquering the land with the soldiers of the other tribes and still win. Why was it so important to Joshua that the men of these two and one half tribes still go and fight?
    - ii) What I suspect is going on, is Joshua wants to (spiritually speaking) show these men what they are missing out on. Joshua wants to show them the full rich life they can have in the Promised Land. (That principal is an example of "mediating" on the Scriptures and learning how they apply to our lives!)
    - iii) Further, Joshua is showing these men the importance of learning how to trust God. By being a part of the army, they can, at first hand, see how God can work through them to make a difference for Him. In other words, Joshua wants these men to come along not because God needs a bigger army, but to show them how to learn to trust God through times of battles.
      - a) Yes we are talking about literal war-like battles. Symbolically it is speaking of our fight over sin, but let's not lose fact that this is about warfare.
    - iv) Again, God is not saying to them or to us that we have to kill anyone and everyone who doesn't believe the Gospel message. This particular war was "God-ordained" over 400 years earlier. In other words, God gave the people living in that land over 400 years to repent of their sins and then it becomes like a "mercy killing" where it is more merciful to kill them than to let them keep living like this.
      - a) God calls on us to spread the Gospel message and not to wipe out any individual or any particular group of people. A related principal here is that eternal judgment belongs to God and not to us. (See xxx).
17. Verse 15: until the LORD gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise."
- a) Joshua is telling the men who are part of these two and one half tribes in effect: "You must come with us and fight against those who live here. After we are done, then you can go and live with your wife and children in the land east of the Jordan River."
  - b) Joshua expected this to be accomplished in a relatively short time span. I don't know if Joshua thought this would take a few days or a lifetime, but Joshua thought the time span was short enough that these men could eventually go back to be with their families.
  - c) Whatever length of time it was going to be, Joshua was convinced this was a winnable war, only because Joshua was positive God was going to make it so.
    - i) Was Joshua being overly confident here? No in the sense that Joshua knew God had given the land east of the Jordan to these two and one half tribes. Therefore, if God had promised it to them, then it was possible for this warfare to be over in time for them to enjoy that land.
  - d) That leads to the subject of "us" and the warfare over sin. It is winnable. The war does go on over the total length of our life in that we can never be perfect people. At the same time, we can overcome whatever fears or negative issues we have as long as we are trusting in God to overcome that issue, and not be dependant on our own strength.

18. Verse 16: Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey your words, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"
- a) Here we have the first response of the Israelites to Joshua. I don't know if this response came just from members of those two and one tribes (i.e., their leaders) or representatives of all 12 tribes. Either way, the response is a good one. ☺
  - b) The Israelites are saying to Joshua, just as we accepted Moses as our leader, so we have accepted you as our leader. Then the group said that whoever rebels against Joshua as our leader will be put to death.
    - i) Now that is loyalty. ☺ It would be like the generals of the army saying to their commanding leader we accept you as our leader, and anyone in our army who rebels will be put to death. Now go lead us and lead us well.
  - c) Joshua had to be feeling pretty good at this point. He was just told by God to go lead. He gave his first set of commands to get ready to cross the river and his announcement to the two and one half tribes that they must come along. Then the leaders of the tribes say to Joshua that we promise to be loyal to you to the point of death.
    - i) Think about that statement "symbolically": Remember the name "Joshua" is the same word that means "Jesus". Here is everyone saying that they will be loyal to Joshua (i.e., Jesus) to the point of death!
    - ii) Getting back to the story, one has to wonder if Joshua was letting this get to his head. If it was, all Joshua had to do is remember how these people still rebelled against Moses at times. Joshua would have to remember that his strength comes from God and not himself. If Joshua started to let this get to his head, God would punish Joshua like He punished Moses for disobedience.
    - iii) Joshua already had a "lifetime" of watching Moses be a great leader and at the same time be humble before God. Joshua watched Moses understand the chain of command and now it was Joshua's turn to lead and at the same time, understand the chain of command from God through him, to the Israelites.
    - iv) That is what is meant by the last line of "be strong and courageous".
  - d) Like I said in my opening comments, this chapter is about preparing for leadership. As a leader, one has to understand that we are ultimately accountable to God and therefore, we are accountable to God for how we act as a leader.
  - e) I stated way back near the beginning of the lesson that even if you and I never get to some sort of leadership role in this lifetime, we are going to have a leadership role in the next life. The New Testament promises that Christians will "rule and reign" with Jesus. Well, if we are going to rule with Jesus, it means just that, "rule"! In other words, God is calling all of us to leadership. At the same time, we are still subservient to God, in this lifetime and in the next lifetime. If we can remember that chain of command, we will rule successfully in whatever leadership capacity God calls us to in this lifetime.
19. I want to end this with a reminder of being a servant as a Christian. One could read this whole lesson and think, "If I just acknowledge there is a God, and be obedient to Him, then I could be a good leader." My point here is that one cannot do an end run around Jesus in this role.
- a) To be accepted before God, first we have to deal with the "sin issue". The problem with trying to please God with our own efforts is we never know how good we have to be in order to please God. Therefore we accept Jesus' payment for our sins as being adequate for all of our sins. After we accept that, then God can (and does) make His home in side of us and thus begins the desire for God to guide us and we submit to His will.
  - b) On that happy note, I can wrap it up for the week. ☺

20. Let's pray: Father, thank you having Jesus pay the price for our sins, so that we can have the opportunity to serve You the rest of our lives. Lord, we don't know the plans you have for our lives. Help us to be good servants of You and servants of those you call us to serve in order to be the type of person You want us to be. Prepare us for any leadership role You have for our lives. Help us to remember we live to serve You and not ourselves. May You be glorified in all that we do in our lives. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.