

The Divinely Appointed Leader, Joshua 1:1-9

Joshua

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua 1:1-9

The book of Joshua is distinctly the book of the inheritance and links very intimately with the Epistle to the Ephesians in the New Testament. We have the manifestation of divine life

in the book of Genesis; redemption in the book of Exodus; then the entrance into the holiest and the believer's sanctification typically set forth in Leviticus; the people of God under trial and testing in Numbers; and the government of God in Deuteronomy. Then we naturally move right on to the book of Joshua, in which we have the people of the Lord entering upon their inheritance.

In **1 Corinthians 10:11** we read that these things happened unto them for our types. So we are warranted to think of the land of Canaan as a type of the present blessings that are ours in Christ and to see in the wars of Israel a picture of the Christian's conflict. Israel's inheritance was of an earthly character. We might say they were blessed with all temporal blessings in earthly places in the land of Canaan. We, according to the Epistle to the Ephesians, are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

As we open this book we are introduced to the divinely appointed leader who is to guide the people into their inheritance. It is very significant that the name "Joshua" is the same as the name that our blessed Lord bore here on earth. *Jesus* is the anglicized Greek form of *Joshua*. The word *Joshua* means "Jehovah the Saviour," and we may see in this Joshua of the Old Testament, a type of the Jesus of the New Testament. Moses, the lawgiver, led the people to the very border of the land but was not permitted to lead them into it. Joshua took up where Moses left off. The Apostle Paul tells us that the law was Israel's child leader till Christ, but when Christ came they were no longer under the child leader. So we have in type the dispensation of the law passing away and the new dispensation of grace beginning. Of course, the people were actually under the law during all the days of Joshua and the Old Testament, and during the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. It was not until the Lord's Resurrection that believers were delivered from the

law. Joshua typifies the risen One leading us on into the privileges of the new creation.

We read first of the death of Moses. “Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister.” This was when Israel was encamped east of the Jordan in the land of Moab. The Jordan was the eastern border of that part of the land separating Palestine from Moab. At God’s command Moses went up to the top of Mount Nebo and viewed the land and there died. The Lord Himself, we are told, buried him and no one knows where his sepulcher is to this day. Moses was so anxious to go into the land. He pleaded with the Lord to permit it, but he had failed at the water of Meribah, and God told him he could not enter Canaan. Moses prayed earnestly to be allowed to go in. Finally, God said, “Speak to Me no more about this matter.” But He told him he could view the land from the top of Mount Nebo. Moses got into the land eventually when on the Mount of Transfiguration he and Elijah appeared with the Lord Jesus, and they were speaking of those things which should shortly be accomplished at Jerusalem—the work of the Cross which our Saviour was just about to consummate.

When Moses died God put Joshua in his place. He was to lead the people into their inheritance. The Lord had promised the land to them long before; He gave it to them by title. Now He says very definitely, “Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.”

It is one thing to have title to an inheritance, but it is quite another thing to make it one’s own practically. We who are saved are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly

places in Christ, but how much of our inheritance have we actually appropriated? How much do you really enjoy of that which is yours in Christ? Many of us live in doubt, trouble, and perplexity most of the time. We fail to enter into and enjoy that which God has given us in His Son.

I have often likened this to a library. People sometimes come into my little study and look about. I have a few books which I have accumulated in the course of fifty years, perhaps some three thousand or more, and some people who are not used to doing much reading think that I have quite a collection. There are not nearly as many as there would be if a lot of my friends would return borrowed books. Sir Walter Scott once called those people, "Good bookkeepers."

But some folks look around and ask, "Do all these books belong to you?"

I say, "Yes; they are all mine." And I wish some other people could say the same thing about all the books they have!

The next question they ask is, "Have you read them all?"

I reply that I have read all that are worth reading. Sometimes I just get started and find that the book is worthless, so I do not finish it.

Well, the next question will be, "Do you know all that is in them?"

And I have to say, "No; I certainly do not. This little head of mine is much too small to contain all that is in these books."

Now our possessions in Christ are like that. The entire library is mine, but I do not really possess it. God has given us an inheritance, but we do not appropriate all that is ours.

Notice the extent of Israel's inheritance. "From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the

river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.” That took in the land from Euphrates down to the border of the land of Egypt, and the Mediterranean Sea, and then from the desert of Arabia on the south to Damascus on the north. God gave all this to Israel; and for a very brief time during Solomon’s reign they possessed most of it, but they have never actually possessed for themselves all the land to which they were entitled. Some day they will. We are told in one of the Minor Prophets (**Obadiah 17**) that the house of Israel shall possess their possessions. Oh, I wish that we as Christians might possess our possessions, and so enjoy the riches of our inheritance!

Just what do you mean by that, you ask? I mean, God has given us His Word. In this Word He has put before us our inheritance. He would have us study His Word, make it our own; enter into everything that it reveals. If we did this we would be able always to live a victorious life in Christ; we would really enjoy our inheritance in Him. Instead of dillydallying with the things of this poor world we would find something so much better in Him. A young man, after his conversion, was asked by some former friends of his to go to a movie. “No,” he replied, “thanks, but I have no time; all my time is filled with the things of Christ.” That is what it means to be delivered from the things of the world.

“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” God said, “You will not have to turn back; I’ll drive out your foe before you.” Alas, alas, they did not believe God’s Word, and again and again the enemy reigned over them because of their own disobedience.

Now we wrestle not with flesh and blood; we are not engaged in a conflict with other nations. But our foes are spiritual,

and the same God who fought for the people of Israel is the One who will give victory while we obey Him. We sing sometimes

Trust and obey, for there's no other way

To be happy in Jesus, But to trust and obey.

In the next verse we have a word of encouragement. "Be strong and of good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them." We may take these words home to our hearts today when we are fearful of our spiritual foes.

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." Victory depended on their adherence to the Word of God, and it is just as true today. We have so much more of God's Word than they had. They had only the five books of Moses and possibly the book of Job, which may have been written at that time. This is all the Bible they had, and God said, "Take this Word and walk in obedience to it, and you won't need to fear any foe; I'll ever be with you."

Now we have the whole Bible, and God calls upon us to search this Word; let it be the man of our counsel, the food of our souls, and the sword with which we face the enemy. God promises that if you will be strong and of a good courage and walk in obedience to His Word you will never need to dread the conflict; you will never need to fear; you will be able, at all times, to say with the Apostle Paul, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (**1 Cor. 15:57**).

If you do not have victory through Christ Jesus, I can tell you why. It is because you are neglecting reading and

obeying your Bible. Read your Bible as you ought to and obey it, and you will be able to live a life of victory. John Bunyan had written in the front of his Bible, on the flyleaf, "This Book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this Book." We have the Scriptures to read, and we are to walk in obedience to the Word as it is opened to us by the Holy Spirit.

Young people, if you want to know what will make your life prosperous, get God's own recipe for good success. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." There you have it. Do you want your life to be prosperous? Do you want a successful career? Then take God's Word, read it, and obey it, and God promises those two things.

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." There seemed good reason why they should be afraid—unused to warfare as they were, facing seven nations with walled cities and armies, nations that had been constantly quarreling with each other down through the centuries, and the people of Israel were to go against these nations and take possession of their land. They might well tremble if they thought only of their own power and their own ability. But as they walked in obedience to the Word of the Lord He promised to deal with the enemies and to empower Israel to overcome them. Although we belong to a different dispensation we may take these words as an exhortation delivered to us personally, and as we read them and walk in obedience, we can count on God for victory.

Joshua was commanded not only to read but to meditate on the law of God. It is by meditation that we really make the Word our own. To read attentively is like eating the Word. Meditation answers to digestion of the truth. Mere intellectual acquaintance with the letter of Scripture avails little. It is as we weigh carefully what God has revealed that we obtain from it that spiritual power that enables us to rise above our difficulties and triumph by grace over all our foes. Thus we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We become weak and are easily overcome when we neglect this important spiritual exercise, for the Word fed upon alone gives strength
