

Joshua

By David Phillips

Text: Numbers 13-14, the book of Joshua

Introduction

1. At times when God's people see the challenges that they must face it is hard to be courageous and confident through it all.
2. But God, in His great wisdom, has not left us without strength and encouragement in such times.
 - a. Throughout Earth's history God has had many servants who have stood firm in the face of great trials.
 - b. The lives of these faithful people are recorded for us in the scriptures so that we may not lose heart, but stand strong in the counsel of the Lord.
 - c. Therefore, in reflecting upon the lives of God's faithful, the Hebrew writer exhorts us, *"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us"* (Hebrews 12:1).
3. Such is the encouragement we gain from the life of Joshua.
4. As a man of courage, faith, devotion, and leadership there is much we can learn from the life of Joshua in order to better serve our Lord and Master.

Discussion

I. The Life Of Joshua

- A. He was a commander of the Lord's army (Ex. 17:18-13)
- B. Selected to be Moses' Assistant (Ex. 24:13).
- C. One of the Spies sent into the land of Canaan (Num. 13:16-25).
- D. Appointed as Moses' Successor (Num. 27:15-20).
- E. Became a great leader of God's people (Joshua 1:5; 24:31)

II. The Faith of Joshua

- A. Joshua saw the great promises, as all of God's people must.
 1. *"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).
 2. So it is that Joshua trusted in the Lord's greatness and in His promises.
 3. Even so, we have the promises of God today - even greater promises - that we can put our faith in just as Joshua did (Heb. 8:6; 2 Pet. 1:3-4).
 4. These Joshua received when he became Moses' successor.
 5. Yet even before that point in his life Joshua's faith shone above the rest of the people as we will see...
- B. As commander of the Lord's army (Ex. 17:8-14).
 1. The people of Israel had recently come out of Egypt; they had only crossed the Red sea less than two months earlier when the Amalekites came up against them.
 2. Though he had been a slave in Egypt all his life until now, Joshua was able to fight putting his faith in the strength of God to deliver the people.
 3. Therefore he fought and, by the hand of God, prevailed.
 4. Let us therefore also have faith that the Lord is with us during all the challenges that we face as His servants.

5. For such is the promises of our Lord, *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the ends of the age”* (Matt. 28:20).
 - a. God has given us our armor (Eph. 6:12-16).
 - b. He has given us our weapon, which no man can defeat when wielded correctly (Eph. 6:17).
 - c. Therefore let us take courage from the life of Joshua that we may stand as the Lord’s army today.
 - d. *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”* (Ephesians 6:10-11).

- C. As Moses’ assistant (Ex. 24:13; 32:17; 33:11; comp. 20:18-21).
 1. Joshua had courage where the rest of Israel trembled in fear, for when the rest of the people feared the voice and glory of God, Joshua was willing to draw closer to the glory of God at Moses’ side (Ex. 20:18-21; Ex. 24:13).
 2. When the rest of the people gave up on Moses, Joshua remained faithful over the forty days (He went up and came back down at Moses’ side, Ex. 24:13, 32:17).
 3. Joshua was devoted to God: He would be with Moses as Moses spoke with God in the tabernacle and He would not leave that place (Ex. 33:11).
 4. During all of this Joshua was still a young man (Ex. 33:11).
 5. This great faith which he had as a young man only grew as he aged, thus he was the perfect candidate to be Moses’ successor (Deut. 1:37-38).

- D. As one of the twelve spies (Num. 13:16-14:12, 20-24, 36-38).
 1. God had delivered Israel from Egypt with a mighty hand through great signs and wonders, just as He had promised (Deut. 4:34).
 - a. He had Shown Israel His glory on Mt. Sinai.
 - b. He had shown them His wrath against the sins of the people when Moses came down from Sinai the first time.
 - c. Yet when the spies went into the land of Canaan and saw the greatness of the people they trembled in fear as if God had deserted them.
 2. Let us understand that God shows us His mighty works for a reason: that we may have confidence in His power (Num. 14:11, 22).
 3. Therefore when Joshua, being aware of the strength of God, saw the strength of the people of Canaan he did not tremble, nor did he shrink back. He believed the power of God and trusted in Him.
 4. Therefore Joshua was able to stand fast with Caleb to persuade the people to follow the Lord, even when the people threatened to stone him (Num. 14:10).
 5. How will you respond when God’s people need encouragement to stand fast today? Will you command faith in God as Joshua and Caleb, will you believe in the encouragement given to you, or will you shrink back as Israel?
 6. Joshua shows us which action pleases the Lord (Num. 14:24, 37-38).

- E. As leader of God’s people (Joshua 1:5-7).
 1. Joshua, as a servant subject to God and to Moses, learned from Moses about faithful leadership (Deut. 1:37; 3:28).
 2. Thus Joshua put his faith in God as a leader for he...
 - a. Was obedient to the commands of God,
 - b. Relied on the strength of God,
 - c. Sought help from God (Joshua 7:6-9).
 - d. And with all his heart commanded all the people to do the same.
 3. Even so, every person who serves as a leader among the people of God must follow in this example.

4. For all leaders must servants at heart; serving the lord and His people with humility and obedience.
5. John 13:13-17: *“You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”*

III. The Leadership of Joshua

- A. Thus Joshua applied his training as a leader the rest of his life.
- B. His leadership consisted of directing God’s people in battle according to the Lord’s will (Josh. 1:5-9 summarizes his life, for he was obedient to all the commands of God).
- C. His leadership consisted of rebuking and punishing sin where the Lord commanded.
 1. The people sinned, but Joshua was ignorant of it (Josh. 7:1-9).
 2. God informs Joshua of the situation (Josh. 7:10-15).
 3. Joshua acts according to God’s will (Josh. 7:16-21).
 4. Sin is removed and the people restored (Josh. 7:22-26; 8:1).
- D. His leadership consisted of challenging the people to greater faithfulness: Read Joshua 23

Conclusion: Joshua’s Farwell

1. In Joshua’s final exhortation He spoke very plainly with the people.
2. His words ring ever true today. Let us therefore hear the word of the Lord spoken by Joshua and decide for ourselves: Joshua 24:14-25
3. *“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”* (Joshua 14:15).
4. We have seen in Joshua the blessedness of the Lord upon those who fulfill the command, *“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).
5. It is time for you to choose. Who will you serve?

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