

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Joshua: God's Faithful Giving Of The Promised Land To Israel

Part I: God's Leading Israel Into The Promised Land, Joshua 1:1-5:12

A. God's Commissioning Joshua To His Humanly Overwhelming Task (Joshua 1:1-9)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

2 Timothy 3:1 KJV predicted "that in the last days" of Church History, "perilous times shall come" due to increases in Satanic activity and man's evil (2 Timothy 2:22-26; 3:2-5a), and it can all leave us feeling overwhelmed:

(1) In the secular realm, four believers have recently shared with me or my wife humanly overwhelming difficulties they or their family members have faced on the job due to growing, heartless evil in the "global economy."

(2) We face it in Christian service, too. After I typed up the first draft of this sermon, I got several calls from a believer who was frustrated at statements made in the Bible commentary I recommend to be the best overall one to use! I had to side with him versus the commentary on the points in question, but when he then asked for another commentary I might recommend, I was stymied: the other relatively "good" works are either too technical, requiring one know the original Bible languages, or they have too much error for me to feel they are worth recommending!

Need: *So we ask, "In today's ungodly era where we can often feel overwhelmed, how can we succeed for God?!"*

- I. When Moses died, Joshua felt humanly overwhelmed by the spiritual difficulties he faced, Jos. 1:1-2a:**
 - A. The wording of Joshua 1:1-2a indicates that Joshua felt a great spiritual vacuum in his life when Moses died:
 1. Joshua 1:1a notes that Joshua began his ministry of leading Israel right after Moses, "the servant of the Lord," had died, suggesting that Moses' passing had left a significant spiritual vacuum in Joshua's life.
 2. Then, Joshua 1:2a also reports that God Himself spoke to Joshua, Moses' servant, to say, "Moses my servant is dead," meaning God was also keenly aware of Joshua's sense of spiritual loss at Moses' passing.
 - B. Moses' death not only left Joshua in a spiritual vacuum, it also left him feeling overwhelmed in his new role:
 1. God wanted Joshua to lead Israel after Moses died (Deut. 1:37-38), but Joshua could not fill Moses' shoes:
 - a. Moses was the only prophet in Israel's history who spoke with God face-to-face: all the others received God's communication in visions or dreams as lesser prophets, Deuteronomy 34:10 with Numbers 12:6-8a.
 - b. Moses had the unequalled record of working great signs and wonders before Egypt's pharaoh, his servants, his people and Israel, leading to Israel's great Exodus, Deuteronomy 34:11-12; Exodus 14:30-31.
 2. Also, the Canaanite nations Israel was to conquer in taking possession of the Promised Land were battle-hardened (Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 328), humanly formidable obstacles to Joshua's leadership of Israel.
 3. On top of this, decades before when Moses was alive and Joshua and Caleb had tried to encourage Israel to fight Canaan's giants, Israel's people spoke of executing them (Numbers 13:31-14:10a), so there was no human guarantee that Israel's people would now be willing to follow Joshua's lead of invading Canaan!
- II. God gave Joshua the answer to his feeling overwhelmed -- His spoken pledge to help Joshua, Jos. 1:2b-9:**
 - A. The Lord supplied verbally encouraging words of His *promise*, His *power* and His *presence* (Ibid., p. 329):
 1. God voiced His *promise* to give Israel the Promised Land of Canaan, Joshua 1:2b-4:
 - a. The Lord told Joshua He was giving Canaan to Israel, Joshua 1:2b-3a, 4.
 - b. God said He had given this same pledge to Moses (Joshua 1:3b), what we see occurred back in Deuteronomy 11:24 and what God long before had promised to Abraham way back in Genesis 15:18-21.
 2. God voiced His promise to provide His *power* to make Joshua succeed in conquering Canaan, Joshua 1:5a.
 3. God voiced the pledge that His *presence* would always go with Joshua in his ministry, Joshua 1:5b, 7d, 9b.
 - B. The Lord then explained Joshua's responsibility in seeing these divine promises fulfilled in his leadership role:
 1. For blessing, Joshua was to believe God's promise of giving Israel the Promised Land, Joshua 1:6b.
 2. For blessing, Joshua was to heed the Mosaic Law to make his leadership of Israel successful, Jos. 1:7b-8.
 3. For blessing, Joshua was to trust God's pledge to be with him so he could dare perform his task, Jos. 1:9.
- III. However, we TODAY do NOT have God's encouraging VOCAL guidance as did JOSHUA, so we might ask HOW we can be expected of God to function well amid what overwhelms us in our challenging era!**
- IV. Wonderfully, the ANSWER to this question is provided in the Joshua 1:1-9 CONTEXT (as follows):**
 - A. Of note, the ENTIRE message that God gave Joshua in Joshua 1:2b-9 is **ONLY** a REPETITION of PAST INSTRUCTIONS that *God had given to Joshua or to Joshua and all Israel THROUGH MOSES*:
 1. God's Joshua 1:2b call that Joshua take Israel into Canaan repeats Moses' words to him in Deut. 31:22-23.

2. God's Joshua 1:3 promise that every place that his feet treaded in Canaan He had given to Israel repeats Moses' words to Joshua and all Israel back in Deuteronomy 11:24a.
 3. God's Joshua 1:4 description of the Promised Land's borders that He was giving to Israel repeats Moses' words to Joshua and all Israel back in Deuteronomy 11:24b.
 4. God's Joshua 1:5a promise that no Canaanite foe would be able to stand against Joshua in battle repeats Moses' words to Joshua and all Israel back in Deuteronomy 7:24b.
 5. God's Joshua 1:5b promise to Joshua to be with him, never to forsake him repeats Moses' words to Joshua and all Israel back in Deuteronomy 31:6b.
 6. God's Joshua 1:6a, 7a call for Joshua to be strong and of a good courage in leading Israel to possess Canaan repeats Moses' call to Israel and to Joshua in front of all Israel back in Deuteronomy 31:6a and 7a.
 7. God's Joshua 1:6b promise that Joshua would lead Israel to inherit the land promised to the fathers repeats Moses' words to Joshua about that fact in His words to Joshua in front of all Israel in Deuteronomy 31:7c.
 8. God's Joshua 1:7b-8 directive for Joshua to heed the Law exactly and to meditate on it constantly repeats Moses' words back in Deuteronomy 17:19-20 to Israel and her future kings on doing so for God's blessing.
 9. God's Joshua 1:9a repeat call for Joshua to be strong, of a good courage and not to be afraid or dismayed repeats Moses' directive to Israel and to Joshua in front of all Israel back in Deuteronomy 31:6a, 7a.
 10. God's Joshua 1:9b promise that He would be with Joshua wherever he went in leading Israel to conquer the land of Canaan repeats Moses' words to Joshua and to all Israel back in Deuteronomy 31:6b and 11:24a.
- B. This Joshua 1:1-9 practice of looking to past instruction by godly instructors and ultimately to Scripture for guidance in hard times fits the 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2 directive given to **US** in **OUR** challenging era (as follows):
1. As we noted in our sermon introduction, Paul taught that we believers in our era of the latter days of the Church would face "perilous times" due to increases in Satanic activity and man's sin, 2 Tim. 2:24- 3:5.
 2. Thus, for guidance in humanly overwhelming, "terrible times" when the believer does **not** have access to God's immediate, verbal guidance as did Joshua, a believer must take the following steps, 2 Tim. 3:14-17:
 - a. He must heed what God let him learn and become convinced was true as taught by godly believers in his past, 2 Tim. 3:14. In Joshua's case, this involved heeding the past words of God's servant, the late Moses.
 - b. The believer must above all heed previously written Scripture, 2 Timothy 3:15, for it is divinely inspired and profitable for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness," 2 Tim. 3:16 NIV. Since Moses' words in Deuteronomy are part of canonical Scripture, Joshua's heeding the late Moses' words also meant He was to heed all the canonical Scriptures that had been written by his time.
 - c. Canonical Scripture thus equips even today's believer in his "perilous time" to be mature, thoroughly prepared for every good work until Christ's return, 2 Timothy 3:17-4:2!

Lesson: *Before Joshua faced his humanly overwhelming task to lead Israel in difficult times, God had supplied all the information he needed to equip him to succeed in that role through the past godly Moses and Scripture! Thus, we must handle humanly overwhelming tasks in our perilous era by following the example set by Joshua!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16, 36. (2) If facing a humanly overwhelming issue due to formidable evil we face, may we trust that God has already prepared all we need to know for handling it, that we stick to what He let us learn and become convinced was true at the instruction of past credible believers, and ultimately that we heed what canonical Scripture that was written beforehand directs that we do today.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In this sermon's introduction, I told of getting calls from a man who was frustrated over statements made by the best "reliable" Bible general commentary I recommend to believers, and how I had agreed with the man opposite the work I had recommended, and how I was stymied at his ensuing request that I recommend another commentary!

However, in line with this sermon, I suddenly recalled what the reputable Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost testified that the godly founder of Dallas Seminary, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, had told Pentecost's class in his first chapel when he was a student back in 1937. Chafer's remark then was: "'Our goal is to make you men into independent exegetes of the Word of God.'" (An interview with Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, "Preach the Word," Dallas Connection, Winter, 2000) I thus told the man that in light of our challenges with Bible commentaries, we must **all** ultimately ***independently differ*** from even what "credible" commentaries teach when God the Holy Spirit through Scripture reveals they err!

God has already anticipated every humanly overwhelming issue we face and has given us the direction we need to handle it in the words of credible human forerunners and His Word! May we thus heed God's lead!