

## Our God-Given Goal Joshua 1:1-9

In the Old Testament, God dealt with Israel as a nation in the same way he deals with individuals in the New Testament. The Old Testament is life in video; living interactions with God by which we learn who God is, the requirements of relationship with him and responsibilities of living as people in covenant with the only true God.

*1 Corinthians 10:11 - Now these things happened to them [Israel] as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.*

The pages of Joshua provide some of the richest instruction for what it means to live the Christian life.

### **First: A Word about Joshua**

- Joshua was originally named “Hoshea” but Moses gave him a new name as a sign of Joshua’s dedication to God (Numbers 13:16).
- The first time Joshua is mentioned is in Exodus 17 when Moses’ arms were propped up by stones so Joshua and his men could win the battle.
- In Exodus 24, Joshua climbed Mt. Sinai with Moses when Moses received the law
- When Israel sent spies into the Promised Land in Numbers 27, only Joshua and Caleb came back with a positive report

### **Second: A Word about the Book of Joshua**

- Joshua forms a bridge between the Pentateuch (1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of the OT) and the historical books of the OT.
- The book spans 25 years
- It begins at Moses’s death
- The end of 40 years of wilderness wanderings
- The entrance to the Promised Land
- It records how God fulfilled his promise to give Israel this new land

**Theme:** *Joshua 21:45 - Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.*

- It records the geographical boundaries of the Promised Land and the inheritance of each tribe
- It records Israel’s military victories and failures
- It records Israel’s incomplete obedience / disobedience to God in failing to completely possess the land
- We find heroes – Joshua, Rahab and Caleb
- We find losers – Achan
- And losses – Ai, the tribe of Dan and the treaty with the Gibeonites

IMP: The last few verses of Joshua narrate three burials: Joshua (Joshua 24:29–30), the bones of Joseph (24:32), and Eleazar the high priest (24:33). Strange as it may seem, these burials proclaim God's character. All three men were associated with Israel's days in captivity:

- Joseph long ago when Jacob's family first settled in Egypt,
- and Joshua and Eleazar as young men on the long journey through the wilderness.

And now all three lay at rest in the land of promise, witnesses to God's faithfulness.

What does it all mean? **God is the ultimate promise-keeper, the only real Promise-Keeper.** As faithful and present as He was with Israel, so He is with us. *"Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go"* (1:9).

### **Third: Misconceptions about Canaan**

Much of our hymns portray Canaan as heaven but this is incorrect.

*Where the Soul Never Dies*  
*"To Canaan's land I'm on my way,*  
*Where the soul of man never dies."*

*On Jordan's Stormy Banks*  
*"O'er all those wide extended plains shines one eternal day;*  
*There God the Son forever reigns, and scatters night away."*

The first person Joshua meets in Canaan has a drawn sword and the book is one of warfare. Rather than heaven, Joshua presents the Christian life as one of trust or resting in Christ.

*Exodus 3:7-8 - Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup> and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey..."*

Deliverance from Egypt was only preparation for the enjoyment of Canaan. The ten plagues, the Passover, the Red Sea crossing, the wilderness wanderings would have been useless without Canaan.

*Romans 8:30b - ...those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

We are called out to be brought in, brought into Christ and all that he is and has for us.

### **Fourth: Joshua and Jesus**

*Hebrews 6:1 - Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity...*

Too many of us are

- hanging around Egypt, half in love with the world, or
- wandering in the wilderness, trying to fulfil God's commands under our own strength

when God has called us to the Lord of milk and honey.

*1 Corinthians 1:20 - For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.*

The rest, the joy, the happiness, the fulfilment we seek, we should not seek as the world does; as though it is our own invention or obtained by our own ability.

The rest, joy, happiness and fulfilment of Christianity are found in Christ and in relationship with Jesus: knowing and loving Him.

He is our Canaan. He is our dry Jordan and city of refuge.

I am suggesting that the book of Joshua in the Old Testament prepares us for what the New Testament teaches us, that our salvation is in Jesus. And I don't mean only salvation from your sins but also from what daily ails us. Jesus is your salvation from your greatest fears...

When Mary and Joseph gave their baby that name it had a special meaning, but it was not an unusual name.

- The first-century Jewish historian Josephus mentions at least twelve different people he knew with the name Jesus, including four high priests.
- In Acts 9, we read of the Jewish false prophet, Bar-Jesus.
- In Colossians 4, Paul mentions one of his fellow workers, Jesus, called Justus.
- Some ancient manuscripts of the gospel of Matthew refer to the robber released by Pilate as Jesus Barabbas, which can be translated, ironically enough, "Jesus, son of the father."

In Greek, it is *Iēsous*; in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, *Yesu*. Both are derived from the Hebrew, in which the name is *Yeshua* or Joshua. Joshua is made up of two parts:

- *Ya*, which is short for Yahweh, and
- *hoshea*, which means "salvation."

This is why Mary and Joseph gave their little baby the name Jesus — "*Yahweh saves.*"

It is true, that like Joshua in the Old Testament, we are commanded to "*go over this Jordan...*" (Joshua 1:2) and like Timothy in the New Testament, we are commanded to "*fight the good fight*

of faith” (1 Tim 6:12), yet at the same time, we must acknowledge like David that, “the battle is the Lord’s” (1 Samuel 17:47).

a) The Law cannot save us. 1-2

*After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, <sup>2</sup> “Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.*

b) The Lord is our Salvation. 3-6

*Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, just as I promised to Moses. <sup>4</sup> From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory. <sup>5</sup> No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. <sup>6</sup> Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.*

Moses in all of his glory, strength and deliverance, could not do for Israel what Joshua does. He is God’s appointed and anointed person to lead his people out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

*Matthew 1:21 - She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*

This is perfectly fulfilled in Jesus –

*Ephesians 1:3-11 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ<sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

There is a sense in which Jesus IS the answer to every question. And yet, we live in a world of conflict

### **Fifth: Our Canaan**

If Canaan is not heaven, what is it? What was it for Israel? It was the land of promise and blessing but also a fallen country. It is the world in which we live.

Chapter one of Joshua is much like the Great Commission given by Jesus

*1:2 - Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel...9 - Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."*

*Matthew 28:19-20 - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[b]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

### **Sixth: Resting in Jesus**

*Numbers 13:27-33 - We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.<sup>28</sup> However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there.<sup>29</sup> The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan."<sup>30</sup> But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."<sup>31</sup> Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are."<sup>32</sup> So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height.<sup>33</sup> And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.*

Like Israel, we have opposing voices. Do we trust God or do we return to the wilderness. Do we see disobedience as returning to the wilderness?

All of this occurred at **Kadesh-Barnea** which was the primary encampment for Israel when they lived in the wilderness (Deut 1:46). It was here that –

- Israel first failed to capture Canaan – Numbers 14
- Moses struck the rock that brought water – Numbers 20
- Miriam and Aaron died – Numbers 20
- Moses sent envoys to the King of Edom asking for permission to use the King's highway – Numbers 20
- Israel refused to enter the Promised Land after the spies' poor report – Numbers 13-14

Resting in Jesus does not mean we are lazy –

Joshua 1:2b-3 - *go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.* <sup>3</sup> *Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you...* <sup>6</sup> - *Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.*

It does mean that we, 1:7-8 - *Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go.* <sup>8</sup> *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful 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.*

**Christians define success as joyful obedience**

### **Conclusion:**

But not all of us are there yet. Some of us are still trying to earn our way to heaven and not trusting Jesus. Some of us are gauging our Christianity on keeping up with the spiritual Jones and not obeying the Lord.

We say to our unsaved friends, “Trust Christ” but to our struggling Christian friends, “Try harder. Pray more.” But the answer to life’s questions and the remedy to life’s hardships for both nonChristians and Christians is the same, “Jesus.”

That answer doesn’t deny the disciplines of Christianity. But it does remind us that Jesus is the power of the Christian life.

These verses seem like a good challenge/invitation each Sunday of this series:

Joshua 24:14-15 - *“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.* <sup>15</sup> *And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond 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.”*

## Community Groups

1 – Read 1 Corinthians 10:11. What were some of the things that happened to Israel in the OT that serve to instruct us in our modern lives?

2 – What does Joshua/Jesus mean?

3 – Read Ephesians 1:3-11 - In what ways does Jesus save us?

4 – Why isn't Canaan a type of heaven?

5 – How does Moses represent the law?

6 – Read Romans 3:19-20 - Why can't the law save us?

God gave the Law to reveal His standard of absolute righteousness to convict us all of our true guilt before Him, so that we would see our need for the gospel.

7 – How is Joshua like Jesus? **His victory is ours.**

8 – Why is it so hard to trust Jesus for salvation?

9 – Why is it so hard to trust Jesus with daily life? Like the 10 spies, what opposing voices do you hear?

10 – Kadesh-Barnea is a place of disobedience. What places in your life tempt you to not trust Jesus and disobedience?

11 – Read Joshua 1:7-8 – What outline do these verses provide for trusting Jesus?