

LESSON TEXT: Joshua 1:1---5:15

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Joshua was an Ephraimite, son of Nun (1 Chron. 7:22-27). E was born in Egyptian bondage about 1490 B.C. His original name was Hoshea (Num. 13:8; Deut. 32:44). After Israel's exodus from Egypt he was appointed by Moses as commander of the army and defeated the Amalekites (Ex. 17:9). Moses changed his name to Jehoshua or Joshua (Num. 13:16; 1 Chron. 7:27). Joshua in Greek is Jesus. Moses took Joshua with him to meet God (Ex. 24:13; 32:17); Joshua guarded Moses' life (Ex. 33:11) and was protective of Moses' position (Num. 11:28).

In 1445 B.C. Joshua represented Ephraim in spying out Canaan. He opposed the report that Israel could not take the land, insisting that if Israel were faithful to God they could conquer Canaan. He nearly suffered death (Num. 14:7-10) for his faith. In the spring of 1406 B.C., east of the Jordan, God designated Joshua as Moses' successor (Num. 27:18). Moses then charged Joshua to faithfulness to God and his Word (Deut. 32:44-47), counseled him on various leadership procedures (Num. 32:28f; 34:17f), and Joshua received his commission and encouragement (Deut. 31:3,7,23). Joshua was about 85-90 years old when the mantle of leadership passed to him.

Walter Lippman was right when he said "The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on." This is what Moses left behind in Joshua. Christian Church "baby-boomer" leaders should be now, in the very thick of preparing to "leave behind" strong convictions concerning the Word of God and the will to carry on the Restoration Movement in the present generation of teenagers. The New Testament church is always just one generation away from serious debility by lack of trained, faithful leadership. RECRUITING AND TRAINING LEADERS IS THE FINAL TEST OF A LEADER!

"Success is never final, and failure never fatal; it's courage that counts" ----Grit (newspaper)

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God counsel Joshua to have courage when Joshua had already been courageous? Do you need to be encouraged to be courageous?
2. What had being careful "to do according to...the law"—have to do with conquering Canaan? Should we be careful to do the New Testament to get to heaven?
3. Why did the people need to prepare their provisions if God was going to **give** them the land? Have you prepared your provisions for "going over"?
4. What were Israelite spies doing boarding in the house of a harlot?
5. Should Rahab have lied to her own countrymen? How could she have played such a significant part in God's redemptive program (see Matt. 1:5; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25).
6. Was the ark used as a talisman for ignorant and superstitious people? Why were they to stay over 1000 yards away from it?
7. What would be the point in piling up a few stones near the Jordan River?
8. Do we have any memorials about which our children will ask? Do we teach them?
9. How did such a huge number of Israelites grow up without being circumcised? Why not just forget it since things had gone well for 40 years?
10. Where did the Israelites get the grain to make unleavened bread-- they had not been in the land long enough to plant wheat! Did they steal it?
11. Who was the man with the drawn sword? Do angels carry swords? Isn't that out of character for the God of Peace?

"He works on us in all sorts of ways. But above all, He works on us through each other. Men are mirrors, or carriers of Christ to other men. Usually it is those who know Him that bring Him to others. That is why the Church, the whole body of Christians showing Him to one another, is so important. It is so easy to think that the Church has a lot of different objects---education, building, missions, holding services...The Church exists for no other purpose but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became man for no other purpose. It is even doubtful, you know, whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose."---C C. S. Lewis

LESSON TEXT: Joshua 6:1---10:43

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Joshua's task was terribly severe (10:39-40)! He was to exterminate the Canaanites. Others were allowed to live if they did not resist Israel's march (Deut. 20:10-11). Some have said, this makes God a blood-thirsty ogre and Joshua guilty of genocide. But upon unequivocal orders from God Joshua was ordered to utterly destroy the Canaanites (Deut. 7:2,5,16,24; 9:1-5; 20:16-17; Num. 21:1-3).

The wickedness of the Canaanites is unparalleled in history! They sodomized adults and children as worship, practiced homosexuality, incest, Satan-worship, human sacrifice, bestiality (sex with animals), sado-masochism, flagellation and other depravities. This was their way of life--in art, drama, religion, home---everywhere (Lev. 18:1f; 1 Ki. 16:32-34; 18:26-28; 2 Ki. 10:15f; 16:2-4; Isa. 57:3-10; Jer. 19:5; 32:35; Hosea 4:11-14; 9:10; 13:2; Amos 2:7). They engaged in necromancy and cannibalism. They corrupted everyone around them and succeeding civilizations, including Israel, because they were not utterly destroyed as God commanded!

The Canaanites could have done differently! They knew better (Rom. 1:18-32). There were Canaanites who made a godly response to what they knew--Melchizedek, Abimelech, Rahab. Canaan had the "record in the rocks" (i.e., the Flood, 2 Pet. 3:3-5); Sodom and Gomorrah; Pharaoh and Egypt; Israel's defeat of their neighbors 40 years earlier (Deut. 3:1-11); the miracles of God as Israel approached Canaan (Josh. 2:8-14); and the families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had witnessed among them.

God's courageous servant today, just like Joshua, must take the Sword of the Spirit (the Bible) and attack Canaanite depravity today wherever it raises its hideous head! He must contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints and save some by snatching them from the fire (Jude 3,22,23). THE CHURCH MUST SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT!

"Courage, moral courage...The world is in a constant conspiracy against the brave. It's the age-old struggle--the roar of the crowd on one side and the voice of your conscience on the other."

--General of the Army Douglas MacArthur

QUESTIONS:

1. Gimme a break! People shouting and walls fall down? Any proof of this?
2. Why didn't they march around Jericho 7 times in one day and get it over with?
3. Where did they get the idea that everything devoted should be destroyed? (Lev. 27:28-29). Why?
4. Why did God question the propriety of Joshua's praying about the defeat at Ai? Is there a time to pray and time not to pray? When?
5. What's wrong with just a little coveting? (7:21) didn't God make us to want things? Who would miss what Achan took, anyway?
6. And what about Achan's punishment--wasn't it much too severe?
7. "Let him who is without sin, cast the first stone"--huh?
8. Now what about Joshua' deceit in ambushing the people of Ai (8:4-9). Should armies (or police) deliberately lie to people? What about the CIA, FBI, plain-clothes police, etc., etc.?
9. Whoooops! How could Joshua make a covenant with the Gibeonites without asking the Lord's direction?
10. When they discovered the Gibeonites deception, why didn't they slay them?
11. What is the point of the sun and moon standing still? Couldn't Israel have defeated its enemies without that!

A duty dodged is like a debt unpaid; it is only deferred, and we must come back and settle the account at last.

--Joseph F. Newton

It is not said that *after* keeping God's commandments, but *in* keeping them there is great reward. God has linked these two things together, and no man can separate them---obedience and power.

--F. W. Robertson

LESSON TEXT: Joshua 11:1--14:15

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Ninety per-cent of the chronic patients who see today's physicians have one common symptom. Their trouble did not start with cough or chest pain or hyper-acidity. In 90% of the cases, the first symptom was FEAR. This is the opinion of a well-known American internist as expressed in a discussion on psychosomatic medicine. It is also the consensus of a growing body of specialists. Fear of losing a job, of old age, of being found-out"--sooner or later this fear manifests itself as a clinical symptom. Ann Landers, who receives an average of 20,000 letters of burdened-people each month, was asked if there was anyone burden which predominates. One problem above all others, she replied, is FEAR. People are afraid of losing their health, their wealth, their loved ones, even of life itself.

When Joshua awoke one morning and saw the enemy Canaanite kings, with all their troops...in number like the sand that is upon the seashore, with very many horses and chariots (11:4), he felt FEAR! The man who knows no fear is not only a gross exaggeration, he is a biological impossibility. God made us to fear but he didn't intend us to be COWARDS! "Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once"---William Shakespeare. Gandhi said: "Cowards can never be moral."

If Joshua had not felt fear, he would not have trusted in God to deliver Israel. The Bible tells us that "fear is the beginning of wisdom." Mark Twain said: "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear--not absence of fear." God starts us with fear to bring us to faith which gives us courage to carry out the mission to which he calls us. "Courage is almost a contradiction in terms; it means a strong desire to live taking the form of readiness to die."---G.K. Chesterton. God told Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will give over all of them, slain, to Israel." So Joshua attacked! And he conquered! Joshua believed God and obeyed him. Faith, obeying, even though fearing, **is** godly **courage!**

"One man with courage makes a majority"

--Andrew Jackson, U.S. President

QUESTIONS:

1. After all the evidence that the Israelites were invincible, why did these kings with their innumerable hordes presume to fight with Israel? (11:1-5).
2. If it was God's doing to harden the hearts of Israel's enemies, why would he hold them responsible and require them to be utterly destroyed? (11:20).
3. Who were the Anakim? (Cf. Nu. 13:22,23; Gen. 6:4). Any Anakim you're scared of?
4. Why are God's covenant people required to fight, destroy, & take possession"? Even his NT people? (Cf. Amos 9:11-12 with Acts 15:16-17; Eph. 6:10f; 2 Cor. 10:3-5).
5. How much of the land did Joshua take? Does modern Israel have a "Biblical mandate" to take Canaan?
6. How long before Joshua took this land had God promised it to Israel? (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 28:13). Why does it take God so long to do things?
7. Why was poor Levi not given any inheritance? (13:14). Does God slight some?
8. Come on, why so much repetition? Doesn't God know this is boring?
9. Was it right for Caleb to "toot his own horn"? (14:6-12).
10. Was it right for Joshua to show partiality toward Caleb? (14:13,14). Isn't that breaking the Law (Deut. 1:17; 16:18-20, etc.).

"The thread on which the different good qualities of human beings are strung as pearls, is the fear of God. When the fastenings of this fear are unloosed, the pearls roll in all directions, and are lost one by one."

--Orchoth Zadikkim

"Fear causes people to draw back from situations; it brings on mediocrity; it dulls creativity; it sets one up to be a loser in life." --Fran Tarkenton

LESSON TEXT: Joshua 15:1--22:34

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

From the Lewiston, ID, newspaper, *Tribune*, "The crossword puzzle which should have appeared in today's *Tribune* appeared instead in yesterday's, together with the answer to the puzzle that should have been printed yesterday. Therefore, the puzzle that should have appeared yesterday is in today's *Tribune*, together with the answer to Wednesday's puzzle. The puzzle for today and the answer to the one that should have been printed yesterday are reprinted."

Retired U.S. Army general, Maxwell Taylor tells that when he was Army Chief of Staff he was reviewing a rating report on a high ranking officer which said, "This officer is often confused when given conflicting orders." Gen. Taylor wrote on the report, "Not suited for duty in Washington." Did you know the Pentagon has reportedly scrapped one of the favorite acronyms of WWII-- "SNAFU" (Situation Normal, All Fouled Up), and is replacing it with "FUBB" (Fouled Up Beyond Belief)? We smile, but it is a serious matter.

The major *faux pas* of a poor leader is lack of communication. Along with conflicting directions, this deficiency in leadership inevitably results in confusion, disunity, and failure. Joshua could never be accused on either score! He told the Israelites, clearly, in detail, without ambiguity or compromise what the will of God was for their occupation of Canaan-land. Joshua proceeded with orderliness, organization, intelligence, fairness and communicativeness. He moved over 3 million nomads into an unknown land in the face of lingering hostility, settled them, and united them. GOD WANTS ORDER (Col. 2:5).

There is a N.T. mandate for decency (Gr. *euschemonos*, well-schematized) and order (Gr. *taxin*, arranged in military order or formation) in 1 Cor. 14:40. The idea that a non-ordered approach to worship or any other service to God is more desirable is not scriptural! It is not God who is the author of confusion, but the devil! Satan is the scatterer (Matt. 12:30).

If you are confused about what to know, what to believe, what to do, God can bring order to your life---look in the Bible (2 Sam. 23:5; Psa. 37:23). ---Paul Thurman Butler

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it proper for a father (Caleb) to barter his daughter to any man who would help him fight for the land 15:13-19
2. Why didn't the Ephraimites drive out the Canaanites? 16:10 What resulted? (Num. 33:55; Judg. 2:3). Would the church today have any driving out to do? (2 Cor. 5 & 6; Rev. 2:20; Titus 3:10; Matt. 18:15-17). What if it doesn't?
3. Why would Joshua allot land to women? 17:3-6; cf. Nu. 27:1-11. Should women's rights be second and only if there are no men?
4. When some complained they needed a larger allotment 17:14f. What did Joshua say? Does that apply to us (Matt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:11-27).
5. Why hadn't some received their allotment? 18:2; Prov. 6:6-11; 10:4; 13:4. Might this illustrate Phil. 2:12; Jn. 9:4; etc.
6. Was it being partial to allot Joshua a special portion 19:49?
7. Were they gambling when they cast lots for portions of land? 19:51. How could that be called decently and in order?
8. What were cities of refuge for? 20:1-9; Num. 35:1ff. Should man-slayers be protected? When? Where? How?
9. Has God kept his promises to you 21:43-45 which ones? How do you know?
10. Why did the eastern tribes build their own altar? 22:7ff. What resulted? How could it have been averted? Is there an application for today's church?

"The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and to preserve change amid order."

--Alfred North Whitehead, philosopher

He who has no taste for order, will be often wrong in his judgment, and seldom considerate or conscientious in his actions.

--Johnson Kaspar Lavater

LESSON TEXT: Joshua 23:1--24:33
Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Someone has said, "We can retreat from life or meet it head-on. God has a plan for each life, but we'll never find that plan or victory by a head-in-the-sand approach to life. When it comes to problems, the way out is the way through."

Engineers were asked to give their ideas on a possible railroad through the Andes Mountains. They said, "Impossible!" As a last resort a Polish engineer named Ernest Malinowshi was called in. His reputation was well known, but he was at that time in his 60th year of age and the financiers were afraid to give him the job. Malinowshi assured them it could be done and he could do it. The railroad began! It wormed its way across the Andes from Peru with 62 tunnels and 30 bridges along its way. One tunnel ran 4000 feet in length and was 15,000 ft above sea level. Twice, revolutions in some of the countries through which the railroad passed held up construction. Once Malinowshi had to flee Peru and remain in exile for a time--but nothing deterred this aging Pole in completing the engineering feat that became one of the wonders of the world in 1880.

God created human beings with the sovereignty of choice. Joshua chose to serve the Lord when thousands of his contemporaries were rebelling against God. Joshua believed victory was by the way through the obstacles and enemies. He always encouraged others to choose God's way. He reminded them God had given plenty of evidence of his divine presence and sustenance; that they would have to exert some effort themselves to possess the land; and they must follow the revealed word of God without deviating. Joshua told them, "It can be done, it has been done, and you can go on doing it!"

Jesus Christ, God-Incarnate, demonstrated historically, here, on this earth, in a human body, at a place, at a time, that victory over the ultimate human enemies--Satan, sin, and death--is guaranteed through obedient faith (Heb. 5:8-9). But faith, you see, is not automatic or inherent--it is by **choice** and by **covenant!**

"Give thanks to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"--understanding "the victory that overcomes the world is our faith!" ---The New Testament

QUESTIONS:

1. Is old-man Joshua on a nostalgia-binge reminding his countrymen of the past? Isn't the past irrelevant for the present since things keep changing?
2. How come they were allowed no deviation from the law of Moses? what if the law did not fit a particular circumstance? Couldn't it be altered?
3. Was Joshua racist? 23:7-13. How come no mixed marriages? Is this relevant for today?
4. "Every promise in the Book is mine!" How about the promise to destroy the deviant, transgressor of the covenant? Is the latter a promise of God in the NT?
5. Good grief, Joshua--You just preached in ch. 23 the same sermon as in ch. 24! Must we study the same old Bible week after week? Why? Wouldn't studying more modern information and ideas be better? Remember 1 Tim. 6:20-21? Col. 2:8?
6. Does God really give us a choice? Is he really going to give us what we choose? Forever? If we choose to serve God, where do we find out how to serve him?
7. Can a father choose for the rest of the family? When? How?
8. Is Joshua being sarcastic, pessimistic, or just down-right obstinate by telling the people "You cannot serve the Lord; for he is a holy God"? Isn't that judging?
9. Almost 100 years after the Exodus they still had idols? Why? How long does it take to purge God's people of their idols?
10. What about Deuteronomy 4:2--did Joshua add to the law of Moses? 24:25-26

"The Difficult is that which can be done immediately; the Impossible that which takes a little longer."

--George Santayana

"To the timid and hesitating everything is impossible because it seems so."

--Sir Walter Scott