

Let's Worship God

25th-30th December 2017

Joshua

The Book of Joshua

THE PROMISED LAND



The Book of Joshua

THE PROMISED LAND

Monday -Joshua 11:16-23 - War Wrap-Up

This section - summarising the whole conquest, south and north - tells us that it took "a long time"! This is probably inserted to guard us against the impression that, since the record of these wars is brief, the time taken must have been brief too. The conquest was a long, gruelling, demanding process. God had told His people it would take time (see Ex. 23:29, 30 and Deut. 7:22). God's power was at work, but there still needed to be endurance and persistence from His people. God's power at work among us is not necessarily in quick flashes but sometimes over a long time - calling for simple, durable faithfulness.

V19-20 show us that it was the LORD who hardened the hearts of the nations against Israel. He hardened their hearts so that they might be utterly destroyed; that they might make no plea for grace. This is because the Canaanite's day of grace had passed; their iniquity was full. They had not turned away from their idolatrous and perverted worship. So the LORD gave them up, confirmed them in their rebellion, and led them to destruction by it. Who are we to say God should not do that? He is sovereign. A better response would be to tremble and worship. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10.31).

We also see in this section how needless our fears are. V21-22 talk about the Anakim. Dale Ralph Davis, an Old Testament professor, says: "They were the incredible hulks of the land of Canaan. Forty years before, Israel was sure that even God's help was of no avail against these big bruisers. In Israel's dictionary Anakim spelled terror". Now we read of these same Anakim being "cut off" by Joshua. God exposes how unnecessary the fear and unbelief of the Numbers 13 generation had been. The LORD's power is adequate to meet our most dreadful fears.

Questions

1. What does this teach us about the timing of God's work in our lives?
2. What do we learn from the Anakim about our fears?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would have patience.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war. Joshua 11:23

Praise: Psalm 107:1-6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The Book of Joshua

THE PROMISED LAND

Tuesday - Joshua 12:1-24 - The LORD's Great Faithfulness

Why do we have a chapter like this? What are we to learn? V1-6 describe the territory of two once-great kings on the East of the Jordan, whose land was now Israel's. Two and a half tribes were going to settle in that land, but for now they were helping their fellow Israelites with the conquest of the West of the Jordan. The inclusion of these verses may be to guard the unity of God's people. The 'East of Jordan' tribes feared that one day they might be considered as non-Israelite by the western tribes (see 22:21-29). This record reminds Israel: 'The LORD gave victories east of the Jordan too; don't forget Israel lives over there as well'.

We can easily think and give the impression that other believers (from other churches or from our own) don't quite belong: too much or too little money; different personality or taste; messy family circumstances; less Biblical or doctrinal knowledge than the 'in' group. V1-6 warn us against this type of divisiveness.

V7-24 may seem monotonous but we are being presented with an itemised account of God's goodness. It is proof that the LORD's ancient promise to Abraham - "To your offspring I will give this land" - was being fulfilled. "God was able to do what he had promised" (Rom. 4:21). These verses do not drip with boredom; they tingle with excitement.

The list is specific and detailed. Each conquered king is a sign of the LORD's power and a cause for Israel's praise. We should learn to be more detailed and specific in our thanks to God. If we trained ourselves to recognise God's goodness act by act and detail by detail, we would think more highly of Him and His Church. Much of our discouragement comes from failing to recognise what He has already done. Too often we simply, generally, vaguely say: 'Thank you for your many, many blessings'. Today, name some instead.

Questions

1. How do v1-6 challenge our attitude to other Christians?
2. What do v7-24 teach us about giving thanks to God?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for some specific things God has given you today.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war. Joshua 11:23

Praise: Psalm 107:7-12 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The Book of Joshua

THE PROMISED LAND

Wednesday - Joshua 13:1-7 - A Sufficient Promise

Probably even the most enthusiastic reader of Joshua will find the going tough as we move into chapters 13-21. Watching war movies tends to be more exciting than taking part in land surveys! Chasing a Canaanite out of the hill country certainly seems more thrilling than plodding through his former land counting villages and tracing borders! But our problem is that we are too far removed from this. We need to try to see the land distribution as Israel saw it. Just like some of our possessions have special value to us (but probably to no-one else!) because we inherited it or were given it, we need to see these chapters as describing Israel's inheritance. What's dull about that? The LORD had promised Abraham "To your offspring I will give this land" and now his offspring were walking through the valleys and counting the towns that made up the precise details of that promise.

Here, in verses 1-7, God gives His people a sufficient promise. Joshua was old but there was still much land to occupy. But the LORD's power would be enough for the task ahead. Joshua only had to allocate to the tribes their particular inheritances for them to clean out and claim. With God's help they had already made massive in-roads into Canaan. Their dominance was substantial, but it wasn't total. It was now time to allocate the land to tribes who would follow up and extend the conquest.

The tribes could not attempt to do this in their own stamina. They stood under the assurance of the LORD's promise: "I myself will drive them out before the people of Israel". In light of Joshua's ageing, the verse emphasises that it will be God: "I myself ...". In chapter 1, God's great promise had come in the light of Moses' death; now it comes in the light of Joshua's age. Joshua may be nearing retirement but the LORD will continue to be adequate for Israel. The ageing and weakness of His servants never handicaps the everlasting God!

Questions

1. Why do chapters like 13-21 matter in light of the bigger picture of the whole Old Testament and God's plan for His people?
2. How did God encourage the Israelites?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that God always keeps His promises.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war. Joshua 11:23

Praise: Psalm 107:13-18- See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The Book of Joshua

THE PROMISED LAND

Thursday - Joshua 13:8-33 - Receiving our Inheritance

This passage contains a dangerous sign of Israel's fading watchfulness. V8-13 describe the boundaries of the land possessed by the 'East of Jordan' tribes. V13 is the first in a series of similar statements that we'll see throughout the rest of Joshua and even into Judges 1 - accusations of tribal failure to fully follow up the initial conquest.

It was one thing to invade and conquer a territory; it was another thing to persevere over a period of time to occupy the entire territory they'd been allocated. V13 seems matter-of-fact. Incomplete obedience usually is. It brings no immediate crisis. Incomplete obedience seldom does. But this is a warning to all God's people: often we can be faithful in the greatest crisis of faith; we can remain steadfast in the heaviest storms; we may even thrive in the excitement of the heaviest battles; yet do we lack the dogged endurance and patient plodding that are often required in the ordinary activities of daily Christian living? Often we are slow to be faithful in what we consider to be little.

However, there is a note of repeated encouragement to be detected throughout these verses too. V15-23 go on to outline in detail the inheritance of the 'East of Jordan' tribes. Our old friends Sihon and Og keep reappearing, along with another opponent of Israel called Balaam! Throughout all the cities, villages and valleys of this chapter we're being reminded of the victories the LORD had previously given Israel.

These references jog Israel's memory and strengthen their faith in the face of their enemies. In remembering how God handled the fearsome Sihon and Og, God's people find assurance of His continuing protection and empowering of His people. We still sing about them in the Psalms today (Ps. 135:10-14; 136:17-22)! Faith finds steadfastness and expectation by remembering and rejoicing in the LORD's past acts of faithfulness.

Questions

1. What is the problem with what we're told in v13?
2. Why do Sihon and Og keep being mentioned in this chapter?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would remember and rejoice in the Lord's faithfulness.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war. Joshua 11:23

Praise: Psalm 107:19-24 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The Book of Joshua

THE PROMISED LAND

Friday - Joshua 14:1-5 - The True Inheritance

Now we move back to considering the land of Canaan - to the West of the Jordan, the main section of territory the LORD gave to His people. These verses mention twice (v3, v4) that the tribe of Levi did not receive an allocation of land like the other tribes. This adds to what we already saw in the previous chapter. 13:14 - "To the tribe of Levi alone Moses gave no inheritance. The offerings by fire to the LORD God of Israel are their inheritance, as he said to them". 13:33 - "But to the tribe of Levi Moses gave no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel is their inheritance, just as he said to them". In the middle of all this allocation of land, the people of God are being pointed to their true inheritance.

The Levites had no land for their inheritance because the LORD Himself was their inheritance (see also Deut. 18:1, 2). God did not want them to be concerned about land, but to concentrate on their crucial ministry of being priests for all the people. Their needs would be met from the offerings and sacrifices made to the LORD. As well as this they were given towns to live in and pasture lands for their livestock.

This information should summon all Israelites (and all Christians) to adopt the Levites' perspective. The work of the LORD was more important than what they actually possessed. If they did His work, He'd take care of their provision. They were also to see that God Himself is the portion or inheritance that we should be keenly anticipating. No Israelite should have despised their land allocation but healthy, grateful faith would have looked beyond the inheritance to the One who granted it. Healthy, grateful faith never prizes the LORD's gifts more than the LORD Himself. He is our portion - our inheritance - and remains that no matter what we may not have.

Questions

1. What was a Levite (and any Israelite) to focus on more than land/inheritance?
2. What can be a danger for us as we receive many good gifts from God?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that the Lord is your inheritance.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war. Joshua 11:23

Praise: Psalm 107:25-30 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The Book of Joshua

THE PROMISED LAND

Saturday - Joshua 14:6-9 - Wholehearted Devotion

Here Caleb recalls the episodes from Numbers 13-14, when Moses had sent twelve spies to investigate the land of Canaan. The majority of the spies brought back a report that "made the heart of the people melt". In their opinion, the cities of Canaan were highly fortified and their warriors were immense - Israel would be like a school rugby team facing the All Blacks! Caleb, however, had the courage back then to go against the flow: "Yet I wholly followed the LORD my God". That is the wholehearted devotion of faith. Caleb, along with Joshua, had the courage to take a stand against the majority (Num. 13:30) - even though it nearly cost him his life (see Num. 14:6-10). Caleb's attitude was: 'We can possess the land; the LORD is with us; stop fearing those big bruisers'.

Caleb's wholehearted devotion to God required courage: a willingness to stand against the crowd. His devotion of faith led to loneliness of faith, as is often the case. A Christian young person may experience this loneliness of faith when they are 'left out' because they go against the immoral flow of their culture. A Christian employee may experience this isolation when they tell their boss they must either resign or be transferred because they refuse to participate in something dodgy. God's people must be prepared: devoted faith frequently means lonely faith. Paul spoke of a time when everyone deserted him (2 Tim. 4:16 - though in the next verse he adds: "But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me").

In the days ahead in the Promised Land, as the Israelites failed to completely wipe out the infectious sinful Canaanites, those who were devoted to the LORD probably felt the pressure to conform and to compromise (see Judges 2:11-15). Standing alone would be hard. But they could remember the example of Caleb. Will you be a Caleb? Is your following of God wholehearted or half-hearted?

Questions

1. What characteristic of Caleb is emphasised in these verses?
2. In what situations might we have to do what Caleb did?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war. Joshua 11:23

Praise: Psalm 107:31-33 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced for the RP Global Alliance
by Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

If you have any queries please contact - admin@rpglobalalliance.org