



STORY

6/17/06

Israel Enters the Promised Land - Joshua 1 - 5

TEACHER PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to tell these lambs purchased with Jesus' blood about your love, bless my daily meditation of Your Word. Help me not to be afraid of whatever threatens me. May I be used as a courageous leader of Your people into their eternal rest. Amen.

OUTER AIM

God Prepares Joshua to Lead His People Into the Promised Land

INNER AIM

Be Strong and Very Courageous

BACKGROUND

The mantle of leadership had passed from Moses to Joshua. The basic character of the people had not changed. We continue to see God's love and mercy in contrast to the disobedience of the Children of Israel. God's promise of this land to Abraham (Genesis 12) is being fulfilled after 400 years of sojourning in Egypt and 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

The Lord renewed the commission of Joshua and the promises He had made to Israel. "This is the land I will give you. I will never leave or forsake you." Only two things were required. 1) In loving obedience, the word and commands of God should be very precious to Joshua. 2) In strong faith he should be very courageous. It must have been a little scary when the people of Israel promised to follow Joshua just as they had followed Moses.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of Manasseh already possessed their land east of Jordan. They were reminded especially of their obligation to help the other tribes secure the rest of the land.

Joshua secretly sent two spies to view the land and Jericho. Jericho stood as the key to the land of Canaan because of its location and fortress. These spies were sheltered by Rahab, the harlot. (She is later mentioned with the ancestors of the Savior - Matthew 1). In faith she acknowledged Jehovah and asked for His protection. Cf. James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31. The spies came back convinced. "Truly Jehovah has delivered into our hands all the land, for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us."

Jehovah assured the people of His protection by repeating the miracle that led them out of Egypt. This time it was the Jordan River that they crossed in miraculous fashion. The Ark of the Covenant led the people through on dry land. Remember that Joshua and Caleb were the only ones that had seen the crossing of the Red Sea as adults (Joshua 3:7, 10; 5:1).

The rolling back of the waters 1) assured the people that the Lord was with Joshua as He had been with Moses (Joshua 3:7); 2) assured the people that the Lord was with them and would deliver them from their enemies (Joshua 3:9-10); and 3) the people who inhabited the land would realize the power of Jehovah and fear His people (Joshua 4:23-24).

Joshua also set up twelve memorial stones so that the next generation would remember what Jehovah had done for His people. Again (Joshua 4:6) it would provide an opportunity to explain to the next generation what God had done by explaining the meaning of this memorial of twelve stones from the bed of the Jordan River.

First it was necessary to renew God's covenant by the rite of circumcision. At Gilgal (literally = rolled away) their reproach was rolled away. Then the nation celebrated the Passover. Now that they were in the land promised to them, the manna ceased.

The Captain (Prince) of the host (army) of Jehovah appeared to Joshua. This was Jesus, the Angel of the Lord, who had appeared to Moses at the burning bush. Joshua was to bring to completion the task that had been given to Moses.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, today we learn about how important it is to listen to Your Word and to Your promises. Help us to be strong and courageous in our faith life. Give us faithful leaders such as Moses and Joshua. Help us to remember all You have done for us so that we can serve You all our days. Amen.

PRESENTATION

Review Israel's sorry history. The first time the Children of Israel were about to enter the land promised to Abraham, they were afraid to go in because of the strength of people, who already were in that land. As a result the Lord God said that they would wander in the desert for forty years. During these forty years an entire generation would die without being able to enter into the promised land. Of the twelve spies sent into the land, only Joshua and Caleb said, "God will give us this land."

Moses had died and now Joshua was about to take over the leadership of these people. God assured Joshua that the Lord would neither forsake nor leave him. This would be an important time in the history of God's people.

Again, they sent out two spies into the land. They were protected by Rahab, a prostitute in the city of Jericho. She recognized the power of Jehovah and asked the spies to spare her and her family. What is remarkable is that Rahab, this Gentile woman, would become an ancestor of the promised Messiah.

Joshua was further strengthened by the appearance of the commander of the Army of the Lord. He was addressed by Joshua as “my Lord.” Some have thought this “commander” was the archangel Michael. Others have thought He was the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Word. The point is that “if God be for us, who can be against us?”

APPLICATIONS

God continues to raise up faithful leaders for the next generation. Discuss with the children the pastors and teachers, who have served their congregations in the past years. Encourage them to think in terms of their service by talking about preparing for the teaching or preaching ministry.

The key to success is the study of God’s Word. The Book of the Law refers to the Torah, the first five books of Moses. We need to meditate upon God’s Word day and night. This meditation includes the reading of the Bible, thinking about its message, praying about it, and finally applying it to our daily lives.

God uses remarkable and unusual people to serve Him. God includes two women in the list of the ancestors of Jesus (Matthew 1). Rahab is a Gentile and a prostitute, and yet God in His mercy includes her in the ancestors of Jesus. The other woman is Ruth, the Moabitess, the great-grandmother of David.

It is good to build our own memorial stones. We talk about our history, build our buildings, and talk about ILC so that the next generation will remember what the Lord has done for us. It is important that the truths of God’s salvation be passed on to the next generation.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Joshua 1:6 - Be strong and of good courage.

Middle any of the above and...

Romans 8:31 - If God be for us, who can be against us?

Upper any of the above and...

Psalms 1:1-2 - Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

HYMN CHOICES

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” (TLH #54)