

“Strong, and Very Courageous”

Joshua 1:1-9

September 18, 2005

by C.W. Powell

- 1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,
- 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.
- 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.
- 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.
- 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.
- 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.
- 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.
- 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.
- 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:1-9 AV)

It would be good this morning to remind ourselves of Paul's words in I Corinthians 10:11: *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

As we saw a few years ago when I preached through I Corinthians, we have here the use that we Christians have for the Old Testament. The reason for all the things of the Old Testament are for and to the Church. The ends of the world have come upon us; the

purpose for which the world was created is realized and will be realized in the church, which is the bride of Christ. Paul uses two words here:

Ensample, or Example, or type. It is meant to strike an impression on the mind. In our day the word “type” in printing is derived from this word. In a typewriter, the type key strikes the letter and makes an impression. Figuratively the word came to mean that which is in the mind that serves as a pattern or a standard. Thus the Old Testament stories are meant to impress our minds with the standard and are the authoritative word of God to mark out the definition of who Jesus is and what the inheritance of the saints is.

Admonition: Placing in the mind. Established in the mind. The impression that the Old Testament makes in the mind serves to warn and remind and encourage us in the Christian walk.

I intend to preach through Joshua, not as a moral exercise or an interesting history lesson, but because the book of Joshua is a powerful history of Israel taking possession of her inheritance in the land of Israel, following their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. It is not only history but it is a powerful spiritual encouragement to us, who have received the inheritance that is the purpose for the example that is given. They inherited cities and towns and lands and wealth in the land of Canaan; we inherit a kingdom which cannot be shaken, eternal in the heavens, but with its beginning in our lives on this earth. This book will help you to see what your inheritance is and how to take possession of it. With that in mind, let us look at the things before us.

It is no accident that the word Joshua is the Old Testament equivalent of the word “Jesus.” Such things do not happen by coincident in the Bible, but it is meant as a pointer, to get our attention, as it were. In fact, the word Jesus appears in Hebrews 4 and does not refer to Jesus of Nazareth but to Joshua, the son of Nun. Just as Moses was a prophet who the lawgiver for Israel figured Christ who would write the law upon our hearts, so Joshua who was their great captain and led them into their inheritance likewise figured Christ for He leads us into our inheritance in this world and in the world to come. Let us look at what is before us:

I. What was Israel doing here at this place in their history?

- a. Moses had led them out of the land of Egypt where they had been slaves.
- b. His purpose: that though them the world would be transformed.
 - i. They would received and preserve the Word of God.
 - ii. They would give the world the Law of God.
 - iii. Until the Anointed One came and put away sin, God would speak in figures and types and dark sayings; then He would speak plainly.
 - iv. They would bring forth the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ who would redeem the world and fulfill all the figures and types that God gave to Israel.

v. We should read this book in this way, that the Holy Spirit might make a strong impression on our minds and that we should be encouraged to win the prize that is set before us. These things are written for our benefit unto whom the ends of the world are come.

c. The land was given to them by promise, but this did not mean that they were excused from effort and warfare. Vs. 2: Therefore arise; go to war, be valiant and brave and energetic.

d. The promises of God do not relieve us of effort and labor, but encourage us to labor and effort. They do not make us weak; they make us strong. Three times God tells Joshua: "Be strong and of good courage:

Vs. 6. You will divide up this inheritance, for I have given it to you.

Vs. 7, 8: Do all the things that I have commanded you to do. Do not turn from the right hand or to the left: Meditate upon them day and night, to make sure that you do all that is commanded: Then you will prosper and have great success. The way of the Lord is blessing and success.

Vs. 9. do not be afraid, for I am with you everywhere you go.

II. I will take these three expressions, "Be strong and of good courage," and apply them to you and me. The imperative is even stronger to you and to me than it was to them.

a. Hebrews put it this way:

"25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:25-29 AV)

i. God spoke to them on earth; he has spoken to us from heaven.

ii. They received an earthly kingdom; we receive a heavenly one.

iii. They received a kingdom that perished; we receive one which cannot be shaken.

iv. We are to serve God

1. Acceptably: We are to be pleasing to. This word has the idea of "well-pleasing" This is a sermon in itself: what it means to be well-pleasing.

2. Reverently: With downcast eyes: a sense of shame or honour, modesty, bashfulness, reverence, regard for others, respect. Without brashness or arrogance. The idea is the opposite of forwardness and pride.

3. Godly fear. Proverbs 28:14. "Happy is the man that

feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.” (Proverbs 28:14 AV)

b. The first thing is this: You have an inheritance, purchased by Jesus Christ for you.

i. On this earth:

1. Forgiveness of sins and spiritual growth and encouragement. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

2. Daily bread and sustenance. Clothing and shelter. All you basic needs. “Seek the kingdom of God first, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you,” Jesus said.

3. This does not mean there will not be struggles. Israel had to go to war. We war against spiritual powers: doubt, fear, discouragement. Seek the kingdom of God FIRST.

ii. In the world to come: eternal life in the presence of the Lord God forever.

c. The second thing is Obedience to Jesus Christ. We do not follow Moses, but Jesus Christ. We read Moses to come to Christ, not Christ to come to Moses.

i. Joshua said, “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.” (Joshua 1:7 AV)

ii. Jesus said: “19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:19-20 AV)

iii. We must never forget the first principle of the Gospel, which is faith: “And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.” (Galatians 3:12 AV) For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. (Gal 3:18). We will not gain our inheritance if we do not seek it by faith.

iv. Therefore we live by faith and not turn again to what Paul calls the beggarly elements of bondage. In this we distinguish between what belongs to the nature of God. He cannot deny Himself and must be loved with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength; His image is also seen in man and we must therefore love people. But that is another subject, and I do not want to get distracted from the main point here: we serve with grace by faith; the law’s principle is “they that do such things live by them.”

v. God is a Spirit and He must be sought in Jesus Christ, who is our only connected to the spiritual things of God.

d. The third thing is this: The Lord God is with thee. Jesus put it this way: “I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth.

i. Israel did not inherit their kingdom, an earthly one, in their own strength, and neither shall we. The strength that wins the kingdom of God is not a human strength or a human wisdom, but the strength and wisdom of God.

ii. God knew what it was that he had sent Israel to do, and He knew that Israel could not win the land in their own strength. It would take the power of God and the strength of the right hand of Jehovah.

iii. Jesus, “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. . . . Go, therefore.”

III. Application: The application is in 2Peter 1:

“2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 1:2-11 AV)

i. We are given promises to overcome the world.

ii. We are to give all diligence. Be strong and very courageous

iii. We have conflicts in the spirit.

iv. We have conflicts in the flesh.

v. We must overcome great giants more formidable than those that attacked the armies of Israel. We face discouragement, slothfulness, weariness, lack of vision, jealousies and envy, bitterness and many other things that war against the soul.

“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (2 Timothy 2:3 AV)

You and I sit here in liberty today because of the hardness of many American soldiers. You need to read a good book on the sufferings of Washington's soldiers on the march to Trenton in 1776. They did this simply because they wanted to live free and have no bishop in America to rule their souls. [give illustrations]

Yet many men like Martin Luther struggled with spiritual struggles that are more important than those of the men of Washington's army.

vi. Many years ago I wrote these words, which for many years I kept on the bulletin board in my office: The greatest victories are not those which we win over circumstances or over others. The really big victories are those which we win over ourselves. The quiet joy of the victories won over weariness, discouragement, and bitterness will last a lifetime, long after the tinsel crowns and the gilded trophies are forgotten by all.

Be Strong, and Very Courageous. Amen and Amen.

May God bless you.