

The Story: Chapter 7
Joshua
Joshua 1-24

Question about The Canaanites: Did they have a chance to follow God before they were killed? Why did they have to be completely removed from the Promised Land?

Joshua 2:8-11 NOT FOR THE SCREENS

⁸ Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof ⁹ and said to them, “**I know that the Lord has given this land to you** and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. ¹⁰ **We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you** when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. ¹¹ When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

It was also pretty clear that they had heard the stories of Abraham and all that God was doing with him.

Deuteronomy 18:12 NOT FOR SLIDES

¹² Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord, and because of these detestable practices the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you.

Joshua 1 Remind them to be reading along. EX: Mac McCurry story.

Moses is now dead. Joshua takes over as the leader of the people of Israel.

These are some of the first things God tells him:

Joshua 1:6-9

⁶ “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. ⁷ Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything

written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

He tells Joshua right up front that He **WILL** lead these people to inherit the land that had been promised!

But look at what God tells Joshua here **in response** to the way things have gone for the Israelites so far:

1. Do not fear

Why did the Israelites ultimately miss out on the Promised Land? Fear kept them from going in and taking it.

- He's telling Joshua right up front that he must trust Him and let go of the fear that could hold him back.

See, God knows where Joshua is headed.

- God knows that there are battles coming.
- God is simply preparing Joshua for what is to come.

2. Do everything I tell you to do

Joshua was one of two spies that wanted to go into the Promised Land. He had seen the result first hand of what happens when you don't do what God tells you to do.

He was standing there when Moses struck that rock to get the water when God told him to “speak to the rock”. Moses lost the Promised Land over that.

(We'll talk more about that in a minute)

Joshua has seen all of the results of not following the direction of God.

- He spent 40 years in the desert because “other people” wouldn't follow God's direction.
- He knows how critical this is.

3. I will be with you wherever you go

He had also learned this from watching Moses.

- When God said to Moses that He was going to send an Angel ahead to take them to the land but He would not be going with them, and Moses said, “Oh, no Sir. If you're not going, we're not going”.

Joshua had learned that the **presence of God** was more important than the **stuff of God!**

So, God shares these things with him to prepare him for the big move...
Then God calls them to move forward.

Joshua sends in two spies to check out the land. You remember last time Moses sent 12 and only 2 believed they should go take the land. This time he just sent 2! There's some wisdom there!!!

- Committees!!!!

Then we see the start of a **brand new journey**.

Joshua 3:3-4

³...“When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests, who are Levites, carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. ⁴ Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before.

Why the ark? Because that represented the “Presence of God”!

- And, again, you never want to go anywhere without the Presence of God.

Here's what we can learn right here:

Statement: **You have never been this way before...**

1. You don't have to see the Upper Story if you know God is with you in the Lower Story.

EX: When your traveling with someone that knows where you are going but you don't...

LISTEN: When you can trust your guide, you don't have to question where you're going.

EX: Blind fold game where you guide your partner through a mind field.

Next step: Crossing the Jordan

As soon as they had crossed over the Jordan, the waters ran again.

Shortly after that, in chapter 5, we see the Lord require Joshua to have all of the men of Israel circumcised.

- This had been neglected during their time in the desert. But now they had to take care of it.

Why is this important?

- Because circumcision served as a sign that you belonged to God!

For us today that is what **baptism** represents.

- Looking back at the story, both the Red Sea and the Jordan River represented baptism, as we now know it.

- It represents the cleansing of our sin as part of our salvation.

- The Israelites were literally “saved” through the water at the Red Sea.

Then they were baptized into the Promised Land through the Jordan.

Question: Have you been baptized yet to show others you’ve given your life to Christ?

Here’s what else we learn:

2. The way we live should be an outward sign that we belong to God.

Is that true of you? Do people know that you belong to Christ because of the way you live when you’re around them?

Once he has them prepared they begin the process of taking the land that the Lord had promised as theirs.

But, **it started with Jericho.** One of the biggest cities in the land. The most important city is the Jordan Valley and the most fortified as well.

- You pretty much weren’t getting in here without an invitation.

So, this is where they started.

EX: You guys ever heard the phrase, “Always eat the big frog first”?

This is what the Lord did with the Israelites.

- He helped them conquer the biggest and best city first. That would melt the hearts of their enemy as they moved forward.

But look how He did it:

Joshua 6:2-4

² Then the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. ³ March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴ Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in.”

Now, don't you think it would have been a good idea to set some men off to the side with some big hammers to start chipping away at the wall?

But they didn't do it that way. Why? Because that's not how God asked them to do it.

Question: Where had Joshua seen a situation like this before?

- When God told Moses to speak to the rock and he hit it with his stick.

Here's the deal. Every time we hear that story we get mad on behalf of Moses. I mean he had been leading these people for years and one little mess up on a rock cost him the Promised Land.

But here's the real question: What do you think Joshua learned from the situation with Moses? He learned what you and I should learn as our third point today...

3. The only true obedience is complete obedience.

Joshua had already learned that God takes His commands very seriously!

4. Your part in the Lower Story may not be about you in the Upper Story.

We always feel like Moses got ripped off. What if God was using Moses to train Joshua so that he could actually get all the people to the Promised Land.

- I'm quite certain that Joshua learned some things through Moses that he definitely needed to know moving forward.

Question: [Is it ok with you if God needs to disrupt your Lower Story to benefit someone else in the Upper Story?](#)

Then we see this:

In chapter 13 we see the end of the battles and the beginning of the division of the land.

Chapters 14-22 cover how all of the land was divided up.

Chapter 23 Joshua pulls all of the leaders together and teaches them how to move on after he dies.

- He knows it won't be long before God takes him home.

In **chapter 24** Joshua gives them a rundown of everything that they've been through.

- He reminds them of all that God had done for them and all that He had shown them.

- He reminds them of how the Lord has taken them through battles and fought for them so they could be victorious.

- Then He reminds them of where they are living:

Joshua 24:13

¹³ So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.'

Reminder to the people: Don't ever forget how you got here.

Now, here's how you move forward after I'm gone:

Joshua 24:14-15

¹⁴ "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

He reminds them of all that God has done to get them there.

- And then gives them the challenge to choose to serve the Lord.

Why? Because there comes a point in every young person's life where they have to choose to serve the Lord on their own, without the prompting of Mom or Dad.

- He's telling them that this is their time to choose.

- It is no longer about what your parents did.

- You remember: Their decisions caused you to live in the desert for 40 years.

Today is your day to choose God!

This is huge in our culture today as well!

So, as their answer...

They told him they wanted to serve the Lord.

- He even warned them against it because this is a huge commitment that God takes very seriously.

So, for the 3rd time in this story he uses a rock to symbolize their commitment to the Lord.

- He had done this twice already.

- Right after they crossed the Jordan they stacked 12 rocks to remind them of what God did.

- In chapter 8, right after they defeated Ai, he built an altar of uncut rocks as a thanksgiving to the Lord for helping them win that battle.

And then in chapter 24 he placed a large stone up against the oak tree and said, ["This stone will be a witness against us."](#)

This stone was to serve as a reminder of the commitment they had made to God in case they ever turn away from their commitment.

TODAY: We have a number of rocks on stage to serve as a reminder for you moving forward.

- It may be a reminder for you of what God has done in your life.

- It may serve as a reminder of a time where God brought you through a rough time and you are thankful.

- Or you may need it as a reminder that you have chosen to follow the Lord and live according to His Word.

- You could actually take home a rock as a reminder of the day you gave your life to Jesus...

Whatever He's teaching you today, you come pick up a rock and take it with you as a reminder of today.