

God's Promise To Joshua

Joshua 3:7 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

The children of Israel were about to leave the wilderness. In the concluding chapter of Deuteronomy (ch.34) Moses dies and is buried on Mount Nebo, in the plains of Moab. The Lord denied him the privilege of passing into Canaan because of his behaviour at Meribah (cf. Num.20). The responsibility to lead the children of Israel was handed over to Joshua.

Now, note what was central to both Moses' ministry and Joshua's ministry; in Dt. 29:29 we read, The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all [the words of this law](#). At the beginning of his ministry Joshua is also told, Josh. 1:7 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](#). You will take special notice of the emphasis on the Law/Word of God as these children of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land.

The Word of God is altogether important in every aspect of the Christian life, - I could *never* over-emphasise it enough! Within this context we also have the subject of soul-winning. It is God's Word that points to God's grace that saves; it was not to Moses, nor to Aaron, nor to Joshua, nor to any other man that they were directed; ... in order to conquer the land they were directed and to be instructed to the Word of God, [Thus saith the Lord](#).

In Num.13:2 Moses is commanded [Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them](#). Twelve men went to spy out the land; in v.8 you discover that [of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun](#) was sent. Many years later it is now Joshua who is doing the sending out (Josh. 2:1). This is the incident where the two spies enlist the help of Rahab; they

returned full of great confidence, Josh. 2:24 they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us. What a contrast to the despondent message of the ten spies that returned to Moses, you remember what *they* said, Num.13:27 We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. 28 Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan. 30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. 31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. 32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. 33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

The enemy is too great! ... that is what they were saying; they were seeing the greatness of the enemy rather than the greatness of the Lord. But, the enemy were *defeatable*! ... And Caleb and Joshua recognised this. It is no wonder then that Joshua, - when he had taken over from Moses, - sent only two men. Sometimes, - and it's a Biblical principle we meet often, - sometimes God only uses a few where man would seek for a crowd. Two spies were all that were needed on this occasion. (We see this same principle when Gideon's army was reduced to 300 men.)

But consider *the wasted opportunities* that had been lost in the intervening period. Why hadn't those ten spies listened to Caleb and young Joshua and gone in and taken the land? The answer is quite simple, - it was their lack of faith in the ability of God. Had those ten original spies saw what Caleb and Joshua saw they wouldn't have been afraid to conquer the land.

What holds us back in the pursuit after soul-winning? Could it be just that? ... Does it portray itself in our lack of faith in the ability of God to save? Do we really believe that God can save our loved ones, and those with whom the Gospel is shared?

Look and see what was happening here in Josh.3. On the face of it, it is not as big an event as the crossing of the Red Sea ... but, - at the same time, - yes, it is for it is the prophetic Word of God coming to pass that the children of Israel would enter into the Promised Land.

There mightn't have been the mass of water as was in the Red Sea, but this crossing of the River Jordan was no less a miracle of God for on this occasion He was bringing His people closer to their home.

I was greatly encouraged on Sunday evening, not simply by seeing a goodly number in the pews; what was of greater encouragement to me was to see the guests our church folk had invited along to the service.

What was different about our service last Sunday evening? We didn't get in some up-to-date and modern praise band. We didn't change the format of our service so that it was more like a 'religious cabaret' act. Neither did we change the message in case it would be offensive. ... No, nothing changed last Sunday evening:

- * It was still Betty, accompanied by Sonya, on the organ and piano respectively,
- * It was still the old-fashioned hymns (What a Friend we have in Jesus, And can it be, Amazing Grace),
- * It was still the regular format, - a hymn, prayer, choruses, hymn, Bible reading, sermon, hymn,
- * And it was still the old Gospel, "Ye must be born again"

But what was different? Let me tell you what I believe was different ...

- * Our people invited people
- * For days (and longer) prior to the meeting many of you told me you were praying for the meeting.
- * I got the impression you were looking forward to the meeting.
- * You were thinking of who you could ask and you were praying for them ... and also you were praying that God would give you the confidence to invite them.

* I watched you as I was preaching ... and you were 'with me'. I'm not saying you don't normally be 'with me' but it was different,- we were working together in this business of soul-winning. You brought people who need to be saved along to the church last Sunday evening and you showed God you care for their salvation.

Now I know some of you invited friends and family and they didn't come along. Don't give up though; God sees into *your* heart and He sees *your* desires that your loved ones would be saved, - keep on trusting Him and invite them along again and don't give up. Godly persistence is rewarded!

Didn't you notice the friendliness in the hall afterwards? Didn't you notice how our guests were at ease amongst us? Didn't you hear some of them saying they would be back? *Pray* that God will use and bless our efforts. *Pray* that God would lead us as He led these Israelites. A number of those folk haven't been in church for a long time ... and any church they may have attended wouldn't subscribe to the Gospel of the Bible.

Did you notice any opposition? It was good to see the Mormons that Pearl invited coming along, but if you were watching you would have seen them trying to 'evangelise'. I was speaking with a Mormon elder earlier in the week and while it was good to see them, - and I would welcome them back again, - I was telling him that I considered it bad manners and inappropriate behaviour for those young folk to have been trying to 'evangelise'. He told me they ought not to have been doing anything of the kind. They were guests in another church and they ought not to have been trying to win converts to Mormonism. ... But, you see, where God is working *you find the opposition*. I saw one or two other little indications of opposition ... but there has *got* to be opposition when God is at work! *Pray* that God will keep the opposition of the enemy at bay, - whether he is dressed as a Mormon or as anything else.

Did you come away from Sunday evening with a prayer in your heart for the unsaved?

Do you believe that God can save those you invited? Have you been praying for them ever since, ... for their soul's salvation?

This was a fantastic moment in the history of the Israelites when they heard the Lord say to Joshua, [Josh. 3:7 This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. ...](#) And do you see where he immediately took them, [v. 9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God. ...](#) And he brought them down to the waters' edge. As the soles of the feet of the priests touched the water, the waters receded, - as they did forty years before at the Red Sea, - *what God has done in the past, He can do again!* ... With the waters [standing upon an heap \(v.13\)](#) they walked, as it were upon dry land; the Bible says, [v. 17 And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.](#) *The promises of God are true, - they had entered the Promised Land for which they had so long yearned!*

I want to show you some records of our church membership, since the church's foundation in 1901. ... There has been a trend in virtually all older churches of falling membership. ... Can God reverse the trend and once more add numbers to our church, such as He would have? Surely it begins with [the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD \[*standing*\] firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan.](#) Who are the priests? I take you over to [I Peter 2:9 ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.](#)

Can God reverse the trend of our church membership dwindling? Is it His will that our elderly congregation is almost the final generation of this fellowship here? No, I believe that where and when God desires He can raise up a people with a burden for the souls of the lost to be saved. ... Has God such a people as this in Pathhead Baptist Church today? ... How does He see our hearts? How does He hear our prayers? Does He see us willing to put our foot into the Jordan in order to cross into the land He has promised?