

# JOSHUA'S APPOINTMENT AS LEADER OF ISRAEL

**BIBLE TEXT** : Numbers 27:15-23 ; Deuteronomy 34 :9 ; Joshua 1 :1-18

LESSON 152 **Junior Course**

**MEMORY VERSE:** "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Numbers 27:15-23**

<sup>15</sup> And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,

<sup>16</sup> Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

<sup>17</sup> Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

<sup>18</sup> And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom *is* the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

<sup>19</sup> And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

<sup>20</sup> And thou shalt put *some* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

<sup>21</sup> And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

<sup>22</sup> And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation:

<sup>23</sup> And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

### **Deuteronomy 34:9**

<sup>9</sup> And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **NOTES:**

#### **Moses' Faithfulness**

The work of Moses, God's faithful leader of Israel for forty years, has ended. What patience he has shown! and what intercession before God! Could there ever be another man to fill his place? Could anyone else lead that great body of people into the Promised Land?

God had been preparing another man as the leader of Israel. When it came time to choose Moses' successor, it was not put to the vote of the people; nor did Moses even trust his own wisdom to make the choice. These were God's people, and it was His business to name the new commander. Moses prayed: "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in" (Numbers 27:15-17).

No doubt Moses could feel who among his able men were the true servants of God. The people could see who had proved brave in battle and who had shown leadership. But to God alone is reserved the power to know "the spirits of all flesh." God could see who would obey Him and serve Him faithfully, better than any man could see.

#### **Consecrated While Young**

While still a young man Joshua had consecrated his life in service (**Numbers 11:28** <sup>28</sup> And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, *one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them*), and had waited upon Moses for many years, doing humble acts for the man he loved, as unto God. It had been his privilege to go at least part way up the mountain with Moses when he went to receive the Law from God. It must have put a greater love in Joshua's heart for God and a greater determination to live to please Him. After that he spent much time at the Tabernacle, no doubt praying for Moses and consecrating his own life to the Lord.

When Moses needed a brave man to lead the Israelites into battle against the Amalekites, Joshua was ready to go. God wrought a great victory in Israel that day.

It is natural for people to honor someone who has done great deeds of heroism. Perhaps Joshua was looked upon as a national hero when the battle was over. Although the wisdom and bravery of Joshua were traits that God could use, God did not even mention them when He appointed Joshua as the future leader of Israel. He was looking for something more important. God told Moses: "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit" (Numbers 27:18). How unimportant are the works of our wisdom and strength compared with what the Spirit can do through us if we are yielded!

Joshua had been chosen to go with Caleb when the twelve spies went into Canaan 38 years before. In contrast with the other ten spies, God said of Joshua and Caleb that they had another spirit. Through them God could work and encourage the people.

Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

### **Joshua 1:1-18**

<sup>1</sup> 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,

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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

### **Training Needed**

God had also been training Joshua for many years for this leader-ship. It had been almost 40 years before that Joshua had first consecrated his service, as Elisha who "poured water on the hands of Elijah." We do not read that he ever became impatient with his service and wondered if there would ever be anything better for him to do. He slowly learned through experience the things that would make him a wise and understanding leader. We are told that once when Joshua was still young and inexperienced he became quite upset when he thought someone was trying to take some of Moses' honor. Seventy elders had been chosen to help Moses, and they were supposed to go to the Tabernacle to perform their duties. However, two of the men had stayed by their tents and were prophesying. Joshua went hurriedly to Moses, thinking the men should be reproved. But Moses did not feel that they were taking any glory from him. He said, "Would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29).

God does not send out untrained men to shepherd His sheep. The leaders He appoints must have had training — not only in doctrine, but in living a Christian life. They need the wisdom which comes with experience. Jesus Himself lived among the people for 30 years before He began His ministry. That life was not a waste of time. When He was only 12 years old He was found in the Temple talking about His Father's heavenly business; and no doubt the life He lived after that attracted the people's attention. He suffered with others so that He would understand how they felt, and would know how to comfort them. He was tempted in all points as we are (yet without sin), so He would know how to help those who are tempted. Even after He was anointed by the Spirit at His baptism in Jordan, He went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil for 40 days before He began His ministry. Surely He can understand every strange trial that may come to us!

### **In the Sight of the People**

God recognized the right spirit in Joshua. Now came his ordination. Moses took Joshua before the congregation; and where all could see, he laid his hands upon Joshua's head, placing his power upon the new leader. The attention of the priests, too, was called to the fact that Joshua was not taking this honor upon himself; he was not making himself a ruler over them, but he was being ordained by God through His servant Moses. From this time on the people were to honor and reverence Joshua as they had revered Moses.

God would speak through the Urim and Thummim to the priests, and they would make known to Joshua the will of God. Then the people had to obey what Joshua commanded. God would continue to be their Guide.

### **Of Good Courage**

Moses died. At first Joshua must have felt terribly alone. The whole burden of Israel had fallen upon him, and he could not even talk with Moses about his problems. But God was right there with words of courage. Again and again He told Joshua, "Be strong and of a good courage."

There was much work to do. The 40 years of wandering in the wilderness were past, and the time to cross Jordan had come. This was no time to be fearful; and who would fear with such words as God spoke to Joshua: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with

thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

<sup>11</sup> Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

<sup>12</sup> And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying,

<sup>13</sup> Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

<sup>14</sup> Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;

<sup>15</sup> Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as *he hath given* you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.

<sup>16</sup> And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

<sup>17</sup> According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5). No one should be afraid with such promises of divine help.

These promises are just as much for us today. Are we afraid to trust God? When we are sick do we pray to Him to heal us, and know that He will? When we are in trouble, do we take our cares to Jesus, knowing He cares for us?

### **Courageous Witnesses**

Jesus told His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Jesus is with His witnesses today and we should be very strong and courageous.

What will give us that courage? Obedience to the Word of God. God told Joshua to obey all the Law, just as Moses had done. "Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 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" (Joshua 1:7, 8).

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 Who is going to be Israel's new leader?
- 2 When did we first hear of him?
- 3 What great work did he do early in the Israelites' wanderings?
- 4 How long did he serve Moses before he was made the leader?
- 5 What did God say about Joshua when He chose him for the leader?
- 6 At what other time did we hear that said of Joshua and his friend Caleb?
- 7 What encouragement did God give to Joshua after Moses died?
- 8 What was Joshua to do to prosper?

<sup>18</sup> Whosoever *he be* that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 Why was Moses concerned about who should govern Israel after his death?
- 2 Name some of the things that fitted Joshua to be Israel's next governor.
- 3 How did the people feel about Joshua? Had he ever led them out before in battle?
- 4 God gave Joshua some very wonderful promises. Name several of them.
- 5 How was Joshua to be guided in this new phase of his life?
- 6 How soon after Joshua took command of the Children of Israel were the people ready for Jordan's crossing?
- 7 Which tribes of Israel were already settled in their possessions? and what did Joshua say to them?
- 8 What was their answer?