

Joshua 07-02-02a

This is Friday, the 2nd of February, 2007. We begin a new study tonight in the book of Joshua. Let's take a moment as we begin to ask God's blessing on us individually and collectively as we approach the study of his word.

Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful to have lived another week, to have seen your provision and your grace extended to us on a day by day basis. We thank you for the provisions and the blessings as well as the challenges and the tests that have come our way. We know that all of these things work together for good to those who love you, to those who are called according to your purpose.

We thank you for the nation in which we live and the freedom that we enjoy to pursue our faith and our spiritual lives. We ask your blessing on us now as we begin the study of this portion of your word and we find in it and in this book as a whole, those truths that will thoroughly equip us for every good work. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen. The first of 12 books of history in the Old Testament is the book of Joshua. Following the five books of the Pentateuch, which tell the story from the beginning of the creation of the world, of course, all the way through to the death of Moses and Israel is at the brink of going into the promised land.

Moses ascends Mount Pisgah as we'll see here in a moment. And yet, although the narrative is virtually continuous with the story that we find in Deuteronomy, the book of Joshua is in a separate division, both in the Hebrew text and in the Septuagint. Our Old Testament and the division of books into the law and then the books of history and the books of poetry and then the major and minor prophets, our English arrangement follows that of the Septuagint.

And so in the Greek version and in our English version, Joshua is the first of the 12 books of history, not so in the Hebrew canon. And you will be perhaps surprised to learn that in the Hebrew canon, the book of Joshua is the first of the books of the prophets. You have the law, the prophets and the writings.

And Joshua is numero uno in the prophets. Quite an interesting choice for organization. The name Joshua, of course, comes from the primary character.

You probably are already familiar with the meaning of his name. What you may not remember is that Joshua is not his original name. Joshua was renamed by Moses.

And we find this out back in Numbers chapter 13 and verse 16. And this is the account of the sending of the spies into the land by Moses. And it says in Numbers that Moses is going to send a man from each tribe to spy out the land.

And so it gives the individuals from each tribe that are sent. From the tribe of Ruben, you

have Shemua and so on. This begins up in verse 4. When you get down to the 8th verse, from the tribe of Ephraim, you have Hosea, the son of Nun.

Later on, down in verse 16, these are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. Then Moses called Hosea, the son of Nun, Joshua. Now, what's the difference in these two names? Hosea or Hosea means deliverance.

Yehoshua or Yehoshua means the Lord or Yahweh delivers. So, Nun or Nun, the father, probably named his son Deliverance. What generation is Joshua's father from? He's from the slave in Egypt generation.

And evidently, he was a man of faith. You may be able to account for some of Joshua's extraordinary characteristics by his upbringing, or God may have anticipated that Joshua was going to be a man of faith and provided him with parents who could give him those resources that would develop and sustain his faith. I think it's not so much causative.

I don't think a good upbringing necessarily brings about faith, but I think God will supply often the upbringing that one needs. If you're going to be a person of faith and a person who's going to pursue maturity, God will make provision in various ways. It's not always a great upbringing.

Sometimes the best way to develop our faith is to give us a challenging upbringing. It's all in the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. Suffice it to say, however, that there is some significance.

Unlike Jabez or some of these other guys who didn't have a parent who gave them a name that reflected dismal prospects or pessimism. You remember what Rachel named her second son? Ben-Oni, son of my pain. Jacob said, oh no you don't.

He's going to be Ben-Yameen, son of my right hand. Then a bunch of his descendants turned out to be left-handed. But this is a prospect of hope.

Nun named his son Hosea, deliverance. And you get the idea that he was a man who looked forward. He may have died before the exodus ever took place.

He may have died early on. Maybe he was an older man at the time. We just don't know his history.

But we certainly know what he named his son, deliverance. When Moses came to know Joshua, he said, listen, I don't want to just call you deliverance. It's not just a general, all-purpose, one-size-fits-all deliverance.

The Lord delivers. Yahweh is the name that God revealed to Moses at the burning bush. When they ask me who has sent me, what name shall I give? God says, you tell them, I Am has sent you.

Yahweh has sent you. And so Moses recognizes the faith and the belief, the nature of Joshua's character. And puts on his name that pre-nomen, if you will, that additional element that says it's Yahweh.

It is the revealed Lord who delivers. And it's a great thing. And so this is how Joshua becomes known, Yahoshua, instead of just Hosea.

Well, he, of course, is well known to us. He is Moses' assistant. He is one of the two faithful spies.

And eventually he is going to, as it were, he's going to inherit the mantle from Moses. And it's kind of fascinating, and I don't mean to digress too far. But the model, or the mechanism by which his name goes from Hosea to Yahoshua, and you have a divine element followed by a verb.

We have lots of others. We have Jonathan, or Yehonathan, Yahweh gives, Nathan, to give. Where you have just the prophet Nathan, and he doesn't have that prefix.

But the Shua element for deliverance is found in another name. Can you think of what it is? Think of a different divine prefix. How about my God? What would that give you? My God delivers.

What would that be in Hebrew? What did Jesus cry out from the cross when he said, my God? Elishua, Elisha, Elisha. Elisha is the very same form and verb with a different divine prefix. And if you think about it, there are some interesting parallels, which I won't really develop in great detail because that's not the subject of our study.

But if you think about it, Elisha comes after the great prophet Elijah, the man of God. Elijah was the stern, call down fire from heaven and take off the top of the mountain, slay the prophets of Baal. Elisha comes and he's got a double portion of the spirit of Elijah, the Holy Spirit.

But he's a kinder, gentler prophet, generally speaking. Now, you could cite the incident of the teenagers and the bears, but honestly, Elisha didn't do that. He just said, boo on you for calling me old bald head and God brought the bears.

But you remember when the Syrians came and were going to try to slay Elisha because they had heard that by some mysterious power, the king of Israel was evading their attacks and so on. And so this big Syrian army comes down to try to get Elisha. And he prays for a blindness.

And it's an interesting word in Hebrew. It actually means a sort of mental confusion to come on them. And they come and they get kind of disoriented.

And he leads them to the king and the king is ready to slaughter them all. And Elisha

says, no, let's feed them and let them go. And the Syrians never bother Israel again.

And they don't come after Elisha again. It was more grace, less judgment in many of Elisha's. There are a lot of similarities, though.

You have the widow of Zarephath in the one case. And you have the widow at, I can't think of the name of the town. Both of them have sons.

Both of them have supplies that run out. Elijah does it with one. Elisha does it with another.

Oh, I can't think of the name of that town. But you see Elisha as the successor. My God delivers.

And that element of deliverance, deliverance from judgment, is reflected in the kind of ministry that Elisha has subsequent to Elijah's. In the same way, we see Yahushua bringing a generation of people into the place of God's promise and God's covenant fulfillment, where Moses basically presides over God's judgment by the sin unto death for an entire generation. There is provision, there is grace, there are a lot of things.

But ultimately, the law comes through Moses. Fulfillment of the milk and honey land comes through Yahushua. Now Yahushua is a man of war.

Yahushua is a general and there is a lot of hacking and slashing and killing and conquering under Yahushua. So, I'm not saying it's all peace and the gentle Jesus with a child on his knee with Yahushua, in the same way that it's not that way with Elisha. But it's an interesting point of comparison to muse on, to look at Moses' successor and Elijah's successor.

In many ways, Elisha fulfills some of the commissions that were initially given to Elijah in terms of ministry to the kings and fulfillment of certain things that were supposed to take place. Elisha actually brings those to fulfillment and completion in the same way that Yahushua brings to fulfillment and completion many of the commissions and charges that were initially given to Moses. Lead this people.

Take them to the land that I have promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Yahushua is actually the carry through. Well, of course, this name Yahushua is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is not an accident that Jesus bears this name. Wouldn't it be interesting if Jesus' name had been Hosea? He could have been named Hosea, Deliverance. He's Deliverance personified.

But it's not the same without that divine element at the beginning. It's not just any old Deliverance. It's not, I deliver myself, God helps those who help themselves and that sort

of thing.

It is Yahweh delivers. You will call his name Jesus. Why? He shall save his people.

He shall save your people actually from their sins. Well, this name in Greek, of course, is found as Iesous. And you find it used in that way, for example, in Acts, when Stephen is recounting the history of Israel and he gets to Joshua, he calls him Iesous.

In Acts 7.45, if you look at that in Greek, there's no difference in that form and the form that's used for Jesus himself. Same thing in Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 8. If Joshua had given them rest, then he would not afterward have spoken of another day. If Iesous had given them rest.

You could imagine this might actually cause a little confusion if you were operating in Greek. But interestingly, the Septuagint, when it gets to Numbers 13.8 and Numbers 13.16 and it gets to the Hoshea form or Hosea form, it spells it H-A-U-S-E, Hosea rather than Iesous. So there's a distinction there when you get to the Hosea form.

Well, the life of Joshua is in two parts, of course. When he's subordinate to Moses, you have one view. And beginning here in the book that we're about to study, you have an entirely different view.

He is very much in the background, with a few notable exceptions, during the lifetime of Moses. But he becomes the guy, which is why the name is attached to this book, upon Moses' death. Probably one of the most fruitful things we can do at this point is to introduce the book of Joshua by going back to the last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy.

Because as I said, this is really a continuation. And you know the history of Israel in the wilderness, their wanderings, many of the episodes that took place in terms of running out of food, running out of water, receiving the law, complaining. You've got all of that that's covered history-wise, primarily in the book of Numbers and the book of Deuteronomy.

When you get to chapter 34 of Deuteronomy, Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. Very significant point. Moses, from the top of Pisgah, can look down and see the specific point in the Jordan River where John the Baptist is going to baptize.

He can see the town of Jericho. And just beyond Jericho, from this vantage point, is the future city of Jerusalem, which is currently Jebus, formerly Salem, where Melchizedek had met Abram and had shared bread and wine. It's a hugely important vista that stretches out before the eyes of Moses as he ascends this mountain.

The Lord showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, all of Naphtali, the land of

Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea. Now, this is a little bit of a supernatural vision because from the top of Pisgah, I'm not sure you can see all the way to the Mediterranean, and Moses is 120 years old. Of course, it says his eye was undimmed, but he must have had a really sharp eye to be able to see that far.

But this is what God shows him. This is not unlike what the devil shows Jesus when he takes him to the top of a high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world. I think this is a transcendent vision.

God may have actually showed Moses the future of this land when the land would be settled by Naphtali and Ephraim and Manasseh and Judah, the plain of the Valley of Jericho once the Israelites begin to cultivate that area. And this may have been a prolepsis, a looking forward. The Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees as far as Zoar.

Then the Lord said to him, This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I will give it to your descendants. I have caused you to see it with your eyes. Notice, this is a caused vision.

He doesn't say, look, you can see it with your eyes. I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab according to the word of the Lord.

And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab opposite Baal Peor, but no one knows his grave to this day. Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyes were not dim, nor his natural vigor diminished.

And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended. Now Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him, so the children of Israel heeded him.

And did as the Lord had commanded Moses. But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel. It seems as though Moses has been stopped short.

But the end of this book emphasizes that that doesn't mean that Moses was a failure, or that the time under Moses was a failure. There has never been anything like the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt before Pharaoh. The mighty deliverance that took place is unparalleled.

Now, we know from our investigations in various places in the Word of God that the history of Israel in the Old Testament is a fruitful source of application for individual

believers. The nation in the Old Testament teaches us a lot about the individual believer in the church age. And as we begin the study of Joshua, I want to refresh that idea and suggest a couple of points of comparison.

Moses is stopped short of going into the land. The generation that he led is stopped short, with a couple of exceptions, of going into the land. And this sort of typifies the situation for Israel in the age of Israel.

Think about Israel coming all the way down to the time of Christ. Here is Christ essentially offering the nation of Israel a trip across the Jordan into the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

John the Baptist, the last great prophet, changed your mind. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. And it is as though that same problem that kept them from going across when the spies returned, you had two witnesses, Caleb and Joshua, Caleb and Joshua, Caleb and Yeshua, two witnesses saying, it's a good land, let's go in.

In Jesus' day, you have John and Jesus. Making this essentially same proclamation. And in each case, the nation stops short.

Even the faithful in the Old Testament age can only stand on the mountain and look longingly across the Jordan at the land of promise. But you can't get there as an Old Testament saint. Yeshua, Joshua here, now that we're beginning this book, is going to take a new generation of people into the land in the same way that the Lord Jesus is going to bring his church into the place that the first generation, Israel, should have and could have inherited.

And they dropped and failed. Unless you think this is completely an invention on my part, turn with me to Hebrews chapter 3. This is precisely the point that is made in Hebrews chapter 3 and 4. Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Christ Jesus. Now, let me stop right here.

Consider the apostle and high priest of our confession. You remember where we just were in the end of Deuteronomy. Keep your finger in Hebrews and go back to Deuteronomy.

Because the Lord spoke to Moses in the preceding chapter, chapter 32, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, Go up this mountain of Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho. View the land of Canaan. This is 32-48 of Deuteronomy.

God says, Go up in the mountain, view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession, and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as, watch closely, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. Because you trespassed against me among the children of

Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not have in the midst of the children of Israel. You remember this.

Moses struck the rock instead of speaking. But listen, in Deuteronomy, chapter 32, verse 51, when it says, You trespassed against me, that you is plural. When it says, You did not hallow me in the midst of the children of Israel, that you is plural.

You know who it's talking about? Moses and Aaron. You too did not hallow me. You too trespassed against me.

It was the prophet of Israel, the civil leader and authority in Israel, and the priest who trespassed. Moses has the governing authority, the ruling authority. Aaron has the spiritual authority, the priestly authority.

And the two of them trespassed, and both of them died on mountains, gathered to their people, and didn't cross into the land. So, I think it's interesting that in Hebrews chapter 3, Jesus Christ is the apostle and high priest. He is the ruling authority and the priestly authority, rolled into one.

And he does what both of those failed to do. And in case I forget to mention it many weeks from now, if you go to the last chapter of Joshua, Joshua chapter 24, verse 29, it came to pass after these things. This is after the book of Joshua is over.

Joshua's mission is complete. Joshua has done his job. Look at Joshua 24, 29.

It came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died being 110 years old. They buried him within the borders of his inheritance at Timnath Sera, which is in the mountains of Ephraim on the north side of Mount Gaash. Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, and done all the works of the Lord which he had done for Israel.

The bones of Joseph are talked about there. Now look at verse 33. What's the last verse in the book of Joshua? Eliezer the son of Aaron died.

They buried him in a hill belonging to Phinehas, his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim. The civil authority and the priest both die at the end of Joshua, just like they both died at the end of the book of Deuteronomy. Moses and Aaron died at the end of Deuteronomy.

Joshua and Eliezer die at the end of Joshua. Hebrews chapter 3. Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the ruling authority and spiritual authority of our confession. Jesus Christ, who was faithful to him who appointed him, as Moses also was faithful in all his house.

This one has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses inasmuch as he who builds

the house has more honor than the house. Every house is built by someone. He who built all things is God.

Moses was faithful in his house as a servant for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward. But Christ has a son over his own house whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm to the end. We have the option.

We have a choice of being the ones who dropped in the wilderness or holding fast confidence, holding fast the rejoicing of hope, firm to the end, and being those who go in. Our apostle and our high priest died on the cross, but instead of being the end of a thing, it is the beginning of a thing for us. It is through his death that we live.

It's through his death that we enter and go across. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, today if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. Now the author of Hebrews is going to show us this application from these two generations in the nation of Israel.

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as in the Meribah, in a day of trial in the wilderness where your fathers tested me, tried me, and saw my works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation and said, They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways. I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. This word translated, beware, is from blepo. Blepo is the word that literally means look out, watch out.

The best literal, in fact I think one of the translations, New English or one of them, that's how they translate it. Watch out, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief departing from the living God. Of course, to me this puts a stake through the heart of Reformed theology and predestination and so on, but I'm sure they have some sort of explanation.

You have to watch out, lest there be this heart. It doesn't say throw up your hands in fateful resignation if there is in you an evil heart of unbelief because that's the way you were predestined. We have to watch out.

We have to make sure this heart doesn't show up in us. Exhort one another daily. It doesn't say pray that God will count you among the predestined.

Exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. While it is said today, if you will hear his heart, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

I can't think of a clearer passage in the Bible exhorting us to choose wisely, to set a guard and watch out for our own hearts and look out for one another and encourage each other that this heart of unbelief doesn't spring up. Why? Verse 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses? Now with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who did not obey? One of the major themes of the book of Joshua is victory through obedience. Victory through obedience.

One of the major themes in Exodus and Numbers and Deuteronomy and detailing the history of that first generation is defeat through faithlessness. Defeat through disobedience. The second generation is going to be characterized overall.

Be a few setbacks here and there. Generally speaking, though, the theme is victory through faith and obedience. To whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Ah, pistia. The alpha privative, the negative ah in front of pistia, which is the noun form of believing, belief, faith. Chapter 4, Hebrews.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering his rest, let us fear, lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed, the gospel was preached to us as well as to them. But the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

We who had believed do enter that rest, as he says. I swore in my wrath that they would not enter my rest. We must be wary.

Those who have believed enter that rest, as he said. Yet God's works were accomplished from the foundation of the world. For he has spoken somewhere about the seventh day this way.

God rested in the seventh day from all his works. But to say again or repeat what was given earlier, they shall not enter my rest. There's a choice.

That's the point. You can be first generation. You can be second generation.

Today, if you'll hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. Look at verse 8. If Joshua had given them rest, he would not afterward have spoken of another day. Even though Joshua is a picture, and you have Israel going into the land and conquering, there is a warning bell that tolls at the end of the book because Joshua dies and the priest dies.

And that's just the way Deuteronomy ended. And this is not going to last, is it? By the time you get to the book of Judges, which comes after Joshua, we're going to start to see

that gilgal cycle of failure and crying out and deliverance followed by apathy and unbelief and failure and woeful times followed by crying out to God and deliverance. And it just cycles over and over and spirals ever downward until you get to Judges 18 and you have the Benjamites and that whole sorry mess toward the end of the book.

Well, if Joshua had given them rest, he would not afterward have spoken of another day. And of course, afterward is a reference to Psalm 95. There is still a rest for the people of God.

He who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his own works as God did from his. Here's the whole point. The author of Hebrews is making this point to church-age believers because the nation of Israel is like that first generation who got stopped short.

We are like that second generation. And we have a choice whether or not we're going to go in. Now, you might say, well, wait a minute.

Didn't they all go in? Sounds to me like there wasn't much of a choice. It was just by virtue of being born in that second generation, they all go in. Well, that's why we're going to study the first chapter of Joshua and we're going to see.

It's our time situation. This is a good place to pause and take our break. When we come back, we're going to dive in.

That's all the introduction you're going to get to the book of Joshua. Anything else, we'll pick up as we go. We're going to start at Joshua 1.1. And before we get but a few verses in, we're going to find out that, yes, indeed, there was choice even for the second generation.

And not everyone opted to go in. That's what we'll pick up when we come back.