

Title: **JOSHUA—Jesus Saves!**
Text: Joshua 1:1-11
Subject: *Joshua Portraying Christ*
Date: Tuesday Evening—February 25, 2003
Tape # X-48a
Readings: *Bobbie Estes*
Introduction:

The Book of Joshua spans the history of Israel from the death of Moses to the time of the judges. It is a great monument, not to Joshua, but to the God he served. It is a declaration of God's great, unfailing faithfulness.

(Joshua 1:1-11) "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. (10) Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, (11) 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."

(Joshua 21:43-45) "And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. (44) And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. (45) There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

(Joshua 23:14) "And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof."

(Joshua 24:29-31) "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. (30) And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which *is* in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. (31) And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel."

By divine order Joshua assumed the government of the children of Israel after Moses died and brought Israel into the possession

of all the land of Canaan, which God had promised in his covenant with Abraham.

There is much debate among men about whether these twenty-four chapters typify the believer's entrance into and possession of God's salvation in this world or our entrance into and possession of God's salvation in heavenly glory. In my opinion, the debate is meaningless. The Book of Joshua portrays both.

Many say that the Israelites possession of Canaan cannot portray heavenly glory because they still had to contend with and overcome their enemies in the land and that will not be true of heavenly glory. Without question, that is true. Still, grace given on earth is glory begun; and glory given at last is grace consummated. The two cannot be separated. He who possesses God's salvation here in grace shall possess God's salvation in glory in the world to come.

The message of this Book is set before us in Joshua's very name. Joshua means "*Jehovah is Salvation.*" His name, in Greek, is Jesus. The message of the Book is "Jesus saves" (Matt. 1:21).

(Matthew 1:21) "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Proposition: Throughout this Book Joshua stands before us as a magnificent type of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, as Jehovah's righteous Servant; and, as such, he is held before us as an example of what it is to be God's servant in this world.

A TYPE OF CHRIST

Yes, it is important to see in this Book the exact fulfillment of divine prophecy. And it is delightful to see the displays Joshua sets before us of our God's faithfulness in all things

- He gave the land of Canaan to Israel, according to the promises he made to their fathers.
- We see the justice of God in punishing the Canaanites for their idolatry and sin, after being warned repeatedly of his impending wrath.
- How wondrous are the displays of God's faithfulness in exercising tender care of his people in this Book!
- His love to the people is also displayed as the everlasting love of the ever-faithful God. He preserved and protected the children of Israel and gave them the good land, all of it, in spite of all their murmurings, ingratitude, and unbelief. Joshua, at last, gave them rest!

But, the primary thing to be seen here is that this Joshua who gave Israel rest is a type and picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, who brings the Israel of God into the blessed, true sabbath rest of faith here and of glory hereafter. We know that this is the intent of the Holy Spirit because he tells us that Joshua was typical of our Savior (Heb. 4).

1. We have already seen that his name, "Joshua," marks him as a type of Christ.
2. As Joshua was servant to Moses, Christ was made under the law, and became subject to and obedient to it in all things.
3. As Joshua succeeded Moses, Christ succeeded the law.
4. As Joshua gave Israel what Moses never could, God's promised covenant blessing, so Christ gives us what the law never can, God's salvation (Rom. 8:2-4; Gal. 3:23-25).
5. As Joshua was the governor of Israel, and the commander of their armies, for which he was well qualified with wisdom, courage, and integrity; Christ is the King of saints, the Leader and Commander of the people. He is the Captain of our

Salvation. He has fought our battles for us and won the victory for us. And, like Joshua, our Lord Jesus Christ is an abundantly qualified Savior. God poured out his Spirit upon him without measure. He was bold, courageous, mighty and pure.

6. Joshua was typical of our Savior in his deeds, too. He led Israel people through the river Jordan, as Christ leads us through baptism and through death. As Joshua saved Rahab and her family, so Christ saves the worst and chief of sinners. As Joshua received the Gibeonites, who submitted to him, so the Lord Jesus Christ receives all who come to him. As Joshua conquered the kings of the Canaanites, so Christ has conquered all our spiritual enemies for us (sin, Satan, and the world), making us more than conquerors in him. Joshua brought the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, their rest, and divided it to them by lot, which Moses could not do. So our all-glorious Christ, and he alone, brings God's elect into the true rest, into spiritual rest here, and eternal rest hereafter. In him and by him we obtain God's salvation, all the blessings of his grace, and the inheritance of the heavenly glory.

Let's take a very brief look at this man, Joshua, as the servant of God, and see what we can glean from his life for our souls' good.

DIVINELY PREPARED

When God is about to do something, he prepares a person for the work and prepares the work or place of service for that specific person. He spent eighty years preparing Moses to do a forty year work. Our Lord Jesus was prepared by thirty years' experience for the work of three. And Joshua, like our Savior, was prepared by God to be Israel's deliverer.

Be sure you get the hint. If we are God's, if we are believers, if we are born of God, we are his servants. If the Lord God ever uses you or me for anything, he will prepare us for that specific thing, and he will prepare us just as he did Joshua and just as he did the Lord Jesus as a man. How? How does God prepare his servants for his service? He has many tools that he uses for this purpose.

SUFFERING

The first tool by which God prepares his own to serve him is suffering and sorrow. Joshua was born into slavery in Egypt. He knew what it was to suffer. Israel's bondage in was Egypt harsh and cruel. Yet, that was part of God's preparation of Joshua for his calling (Ex. 3:7).

(Exodus 3:7) "And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows."

In the kingdom of God, no one ever rises to the place of much usefulness, but by suffering. Abasement is the path to exaltation and sorrow is the path to service.

That was the case with Joshua. And that was the case with the Lord Jesus (Heb. 5:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:11).

(Hebrews 5:8-10) "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; (9) And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; (10) Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec."

(1 Peter 1:11) "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified

beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

The Apostle Paul exemplifies this for us in his own experience in 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. Whatever our struggles, sorrows, limitations, and losses may be in this world, they are according to the wise and good purpose of our heavenly Father. Suffering is God's method of preparing us and maturing us (1 Pet. 4:13; 5:10).

“‘Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross,
But my Savior's power to know,
Sanctifying every loss.—
Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all –
This is happiness to me.

God in Israel sows the seeds
Of affliction, pain, and toil.
These spring up and choke the weeds
Which would else o'erspread the soil.
Trials make the promise sweet.
Trials give new life to prayer.
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.

Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisements by the way,
Might I not with reason fear
I should prove a castaway?
Bastards may escape the rod;
Sunk in earthly, vain delight;
But the true born child of God

Must not, would not, if he might.”

William Cowper

(1 Peter 4:13) "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

(1 Peter 5:10) "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*."

SUBMISSION

Another instrument God uses to prepare us for his service is submission. Grace teaches all who experience it to submit to authority. At its very core faith is surrender to the dominion of Christ, submission to divine authority (Lk. 14:25-33). Joshua was prepared for his place of service by learning to submit to God's authority, the authority he had invested in Moses.

The Son of God submitted himself to the will of God in all things, that he might be our Savior.

- Isaiah 50:5-7
- Gethsemane
- Calvary

As Israel's divinely appointed prophet and leader in the wilderness Moses represented God's authority over them in both civil and spiritual matters, much as divinely appointed pastors do today in spiritual things (Heb. 13:7, 17) and civil magistrates do in civil matters (Rom. 13:1-7). Joshua, following Moses' orders, honored God, served Israel and defeated the Amalekites (Ex. 17). In those days he was known as the servant of Moses, staying with his master and serving him faithfully. Men may have looked

upon him as Moses' "yes man," but he was really, in the highest sense possible, God's servant (Jos. 11:15).

(Joshua 11:15) "As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses."

PATIENCE

The Lord God prepared Joshua to be his servant and prepares us to serve him, just as he prepared our Savior in his manhood, by causing him to learn patience. We are all terribly impatient by nature. Therefore God fixes it so that we have to wait on him, and learn to prefer waiting on him. It had been forty years since Joshua and Caleb had gone in to spy out the land. For forty years Joshua walked with Israel through the wilderness, patiently waiting for him to give them the land. Now, he takes Israel in to possess it, after forty years of waiting in patient faith.

Blessed are those who are taught to wait on the Lord (Ps. 27:14; 37:7, 34; Pro. 20:22; Lam. 3:26). I am often asked (by pastors and others who feel constrained to do something to correct what they see as a bad situation), "What should I do? How should I handle this?" My answer is almost always, "I do not know whether I could do it or not, but I am sure the best thing for you to do is nothing. Just wait on the Lord. He will work it out." For my own part, I have never yet attempted to fix a problem that I did not make worse, or make something happen I did not soon regret.

(Psalms 27:14) "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."

(Psalms 37:7) "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

(Psalms 37:34) "Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*."

(Proverbs 20:22) "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; *but* wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee."

(Lamentations 3:26) "*It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.*"

JOSHUA'S CHARACTER

What kind of man was Joshua? In a word, he was a man of faith, a man who believed God. That is what our Lord Jesus exemplified above all else. And that is what it takes to serve him. We cannot serve him, except as we believe him. Yet, our believing him is ever the result of him giving us faith and sustaining it by his grace.

OBEDIENT FAITH

In Joshua 1:8 God said to him—"*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.*"

In chapter 5 before the battle of Jericho, Joshua found himself walking alone at night in front of the walls. There he was confronted by the pre-incarnate Christ, who identified himself as "*Captain of the host of the LORD.*" Immediately, he fell flat on

his face before the Lord. Throughout the days of his service we find Joshua praying, seeking the will of God, endeavoring to lead Israel according to the Word of the Lord in all things. After the failure at Ai, knowing that the failure arose from his own sinful, self-confidence, we see him on his face again, crying out to the Lord in preparation for the second battle. Faithful men lead God's people by people of prayer and by his Word. So it was with Joshua, So it was with the Lord Jesus. And so it is with God's servants today.

COURAGEOUS FAITH

Four times in the first chapter The Lord commanded Joshua to be courageous. It takes courage, divinely given courage, to walk with God and serve him.

- Christ was a man of enormous, perfect courage!
- We have every reason to be courageous, as we walk with God and seek to do his will.

Illustration: *Martin Luther*

General Omar Bradley defined bravery this way: "the capacity to perform properly even when scared half to death."

I do not doubt that Joshua was fearful because the Lord spoke to and said, "*Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hock their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.*" (11:6). Yet, he did what the Lord God called him to do. He won battle after battle.

I know that I am often fearful as I think about facing difficulties or assuming weighty responsibilities. I have often spoken to the Lord like David, as I endeavored to obey that which I knew to be

his will, saying, “*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*” (Ps. 56:3).

Obedience often involves risks and demands moral courage, particularly when that obedience involves leading others in the name of Christ.

Joshua's courage involved much more than just fighting Israel's enemies, great as that was. He had to deal with sin in the camp of Israel after Achan had taken the cursed things of the Babylonians in chapter 7. With great courage, the courage of faith, he commanded Israel to stop procrastinating and take their inheritance in chapter 17.

HUMBLE FAITH

Joshua was God's servant, doing God's work, for God's glory. As such, he was a truly humbled man. Humility, true humility, makes a man bold and courageous. True humility is the recognition that I am weak and helpless, nothing I myself, but I am the servant of God. As such, I lean not upon my own wisdom, strength, and ability, but his. And with my God nothing is impossible (Phil. 4:13).

Joshua followed God's plans, not his own. The conquest of Canaan was not a haphazard thing. It was very carefully planned and executed. First Joshua captured the central hill country, dividing it in half. Then he led Israel in conquest of the southern territory, then the northern. He conquered the cities first, then more the rural areas. Twice he led his men in forced marches through the night to take the enemy by surprise. All along the way, we find him engaged in prayer, seeking God's direction.

There were a two notable exceptions, two instances in which Joshua acted in self-confidence. He did not seek the Lord's

direction before Ai, or before entering into the covenant with the Gibeonites. Both times there he failed miserably. But even his own failures did not induce him to quit, to give up his responsibilities, or to abandon God's cause and his people.

When he was defeated at Ai, he acknowledged the failure, sought the face of the Lord, and went back and won the battle. When he was tricked into making league with the Gibeonites, he admitted the mistake publicly, and then he made it work to the benefit of the nation and to God's glory.

There is a very important lesson here. A person's faithfulness is not to be judged by isolated acts, but by the tenor of his life. Faithful men are still only men at best, and often fail. But they do the best they can and keep going when they know they have erred, learning from their failures. Experience is a tough teacher. It always gives the exam first and then teaches the lesson afterward. But there is no teacher like it. Joshua turned to the Lord in his failures, found both forgiveness and renewed strength, and continued serving the Lord God and his people. How gracious God is! He not only uses a crooked stick to draw a straight line, he forgives the crooks in the stick, and gets glory to himself in using it (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

Being the man he was, humble before God, Joshua enlisted others, and they trusted his spiritual authority as God's servant. He could not have done the job without the thousands who followed his direction. The conquest of Canaan was not the work of one man. It was the work of all Israel, those whose names stand out in the forefront of the battles and those who served behind the lines, unseen and unknown by most.

Throughout this brief history, Joshua's troops consistently obeyed his orders, not because they were afraid of him but because they respected him and trusted him as God's servant. He

commanded their respect and loyalty by his character. What a picture he is of what a pastor, or leader of any kind, ought to be. They knew that he was serving the Lord God and serving them. More than that, he stands signally before us as a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's righteous Servant, who commands our allegiance to him by his obedience for us (2 Cor. 5:14). Like our Savior, Joshua was a truly humble servant of God.

SELFLESS FAITH

Joshua's humility made him a selfless man. I mean by that that he was a man who served others, not himself. He was not moved, motivated, or guided by his own interests, but by the interests of the church and kingdom of God. True faith is a gift of God that makes people self-denying, self-sacrificing, and self-abasing.

Joshua was concerned for Israel. He was not simply concerned only for their present state, but for their future. His two farewell messages (chapters 23 and 24) display this fact clearly. Men who think only of what they can get today are not faithful servants of God. They are opportunists. God's servants, like Joshua, and like the Lord Jesus of whom he was a type, lay down their lives in the services of eternity bound souls for the glory of God. They are not takers, but givers. They do not use people. They are used for people.

GOD HONORING FAITH

Being a man of faith, a man who believed God, Joshua lived for God's glory. He sought the glory of God above all else. When he served Moses (served God under Moses – Numbers 11) he was very jealous in protecting Moses' honor and reputation, because Moses was God's servant. He loved and honored Moses; but his zeal in honoring Moses arose from his love for his God and his desire to honor him.

When Israel crossed the Jordan river, he gave glory to the Lord. He said, “*Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you*” (Jos. 3:10). Once they had crossed over the Jordan, Joshua erected a monument of stones to the perpetual praise and honor of God (4:1-24), “*That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God forever.*” Throughout the book of Joshua he repeatedly gave God the glory for everything that happened. It was the Lord who fought for them, the Lord who conquered their enemies, the Lord who gave them the land to the people. Joshua wanted the name of the Lord to be magnified in all the earth.

Again, he was in this representative of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Savior’s unceasing prayer was, “*Father, glorify thy name.*” If you and I are truly God’s servants, that is the unceasing cry of our hearts as well.

THE MESSAGE

The message of these twenty-four chapters is very clear—“Jesus saves!” As Joshua brought Israel into the land of Canaan and gave them rest, so the Lord Jesus Christ will save his people (Matt. 1:21). There is a people in this world who are his people. They are his by his own eternal, sovereign choice. They are a people to whom God has from eternity given all the blessedness of heaven and eternal glory as a covenant promise (Eph. 1:3). And Christ shall save them. He shall bring them all into the possession of their inheritance, for the glory of God.

LESSONS

The Book of Joshua teaches us much about our great God, as he is revealed in the person and work of his dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Joshua is the central figure in this Book. But the

Book is not about Joshua, or even the greatness of his faith. It is really about Christ and the greatness of his grace and salvation. That is the key to understanding the things recorded in these chapters.

1. God our Father in Christ is a covenant keeping God.

He is the Lord our God distinctly. Yes, he is God over all, “*the Lord of all the earth*” (3:11); but he is our God, the God of his people Israel, distinctly. He claims us as his own and declares himself to be ours. He takes a personal interest in us and keeps his covenant forever.

2. Our great God keeps his promises.

He is always faithful to his Word. Every promise he made to Israel in his covenant with Abraham and verified to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 13:15; 15:18; 26:3; 28:4, 13), he fulfilled (Jos. 21:43-45; 23:14). Those five verses alone ought to be sufficient to end all the rantings of prophecy gurus who imagine that God has not yet fulfilled his promises to Israel. Joshua declared, by divine inspiration, “*not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you.*”

3. How gracious, merciful, and forgiving God is!

He who forgave the harlot Rahab, saving her and her house because of the blood of Christ (represented in the scarlet cord she hung out her window), still forgives sinners freely through the blood of his dear Son (Eph. 1:6).

Many look upon the slaughter of the Canaanites by the command of God as being contrary to what I have just said about God’s free forgiveness of sin. The question is often raised, “How can a

good, gracious, forgiving God kill people and send them to hell?”

The fact is—God’s goodness, justice, and truth demand the punishment of sin. Yet, the goodness and grace of God is seen throughout the Book of Joshua. It was the goodness of God that delayed his judgment for centuries before bringing Israel into the land, giving the inhabitants of the land space for repentance. Long before Joshua conquered Canaan, the Lord God sent Abraham into the land as a missionary. There Abraham walked with God, worshipped him, and bore witness to him; but the Canaanites preferred their idols to the God of Abraham.

Before Israel came over Jordan and took Jericho, the Lord graciously sent his reputation ahead of them, provoking fear in the Canaanites. As a result of the gospel being brought into Canaan, by some means or other, Rahab and her family and the entire city of Gibeon believed God.

But God’s grace is seen in his judgment, as well. In wrath, he remembers mercy. It was the grace of God that wiped out that hopelessly decadent, idolatrous society, so that another generation could grow up in a land where God was worshiped and honored. Yes, the Lord God graciously and wisely raises up entire nations and treads down entire nations for the salvation of his elect (Isa. 43:1-7).