

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

July 2012

Joshua: Hope for God's People

Lesson #1: God's Call and My Insecurity

When have you had to fill some big shoes in a new job?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Joshua 1

*Note: The central theme of Joshua focuses on the Lord's pivotal role in the occupation of Canaan and therefore, God's character. It was He who would exalt Joshua and by His hand the Israelites would be empowered to drive their enemies before them. Those who were faithful to God's law were promised His blessing, but swift retribution awaited those who rejected His leadership.¹ A difficult theological challenge of Joshua is "holy war." God commanded Joshua to completely destroy the Canaanites – men women and children- who lived in the land. Sometimes their wealth was to be completely burned and thereby given directly to God (a form of sacrifice). At other times they were to kill them so they could take over their homes and land (and profit from them). This holy war may be a way of reducing the threat of apostasy, a form of punishment for the Canaanite's advanced state of sinfulness or a way to provide a safe place for his chosen people. Ultimately, it is the all-encompassing sovereignty of God that explains holy war. *Shepherd's Notes*, David R. Shepherd, p. 6 "Joshua's author is not attempting to give a history of Israel's government. He has instead abstracted that history to emphasize God's role in ordering the course of human events. To many observers modern life seems devoid of clear examples of divine leadership. The problem, however, resides with man. He must again learn to perceive God's presence underlying the complexities of personal and national experience."²*

1. Just as God prepared Moses, He prepared Joshua. How did Joshua know Moses? Nu 11:28; 13:8, 16-18
2. What must it have been like to walk in the shadow of Moses for 40 years? To see God's punishment of Moses? To become the next leader after Moses?
3. Why do you think that God chose Joshua? Ex 17:8-14; 33:11
4. This scene looks almost like an inauguration. What difference did it make *to the people* that God chose Joshua? What difference did it make *to Joshua* that he was chosen by God?
5. What three promises did God make to Joshua? vv 2-5 What conditions? vv 6-9
6. What did God say to encourage him? Heb 13:5
7. Divine sovereignty is not a replacement for human responsibility. (God's promises are prods, not pillows.) How did the people respond to Joshua's new leadership role?
8. What did the people expect of Joshua? Of God?
9. What is the early test of Joshua's leadership? vv. 12-15
10. What is the difference between God's promises and His commands?
11. God told Joshua and the people to stay close to the Law and close to Him. How do we do that today? Ps 119:105; 37:3-6; 1:2

APPLICATION

- What difference does it make that God says He will never leave or forsake us?
- How does Joshua's challenge and response help you do great things for God?

^{1 2} *The teacher's Bible commentary*. 1972 (F. H. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs, Ed.) (137, 138). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.