

Conquer and Divide

Joshua Overview

(preached Pine Grove 2/8/15; Sunday PM)

Introduction

There it was.

Christmas morning of 1982.

Right there in my living room.

It was a Huffy boys bike.

Orange with the number 22 right below the seat.

My first very own bike.

A few months earlier, my dad had taken me into
Roses or Western Auto.

And we looked at bikes.

I pointed to that one right away.

And now here it is in my house and it belongs to
me.

Made quite an impression on me that I still
remember it very clearly even tonight.

But that is the nature of longing for something and
then finally getting it.

It seems to make us enjoy it more.

And treasure it even better.

Such is the love affair of a boy with his first bike.

I probably would have put it in the bed with me that night if dad would have let me.

And that is the feeling that comes with waiting for a bike and then getting it.

Well, we are going through that same experience as we journey with Israel into the Promised Land of Canaan.

Hundreds of years had passed since God had vowed to give Abraham a land of his own.

Certainly, it had been talked about among the people of Israel.

The promise of their own land was an incredible promise.

We take it for granted in our day to have our own land, but for a people who simply had no place to settle, it was a big deal.

If you have ever purchased a home or land, it is an important step in your life.

And a sense of ownership goes along with it.

This is what Israel is experiencing in the book of Joshua.

God has been preparing them for this moment.

He has grown their population, which demands the need for a land.

He has given them laws to govern their conduct toward God.

He has given them laws to conduct themselves towards one another.

God has grown a people into a nation.

He has given them laws.

The only left to give them is a land where they can worship Him.

Where they can fellowship with one another..

And where they can serve as a light to the other nations of the world.

The journey into the Promised Land is an important step in the plan of God.

If we put the brakes on a minute, and just step out of the car...

And look at the Bible, what is the Bible the story of?

Some would say that is the story of salvation.

They would say that the theme of the Bible is how to be saved.

And I would agree to a certain extent.

But I would add this?

Why must you be saved?

Well, the penalty for sin is external destruction in a lake of fire.

That is obviously a good reason to be saved.

But more importantly than that is the fact that salvation equips you to be a part of God's kingdom.

Remember what God original purpose for man was?

God made man and woman and told them to rule the earth and subdue and have dominion over it.

Man's purpose was to rule God's creation as God's representative.

But we know that Adam failed to accomplish that when he sinned.

And that rule was taken from him.

But the idea of God's kingdom did not fall with the fall of Adam.

Instead, the Bible then centers on how man can once again get to the point where he rule God's kingdom again.

And salvation is the way of fitting men for God's kingdom work.

Yes, salvation is the promise of eternal life.

Yes, salvation is the forgiveness of sins.

But salvation is primarily God's process of making people fit for His kingdom.

That is why the idea of the eternity as a place to play harps and sit on clouds forever is not biblical.

Eternity is the realization of God's kingdom purposes that He established way back in the book of Genesis.

The theme of the Bible is God's kingdom with Jesus as the King.

And if we outline the entire Bible along these lines, the first two chapters of Genesis...

Would be God's Kingdom Plan Given.

From Genesis 2 to Revelation 20 is the story of God's kingdom Plan Rejected.

With the final 2 chapters being God's Kingdom Plan Fulfilled.

And if you look at the story of the Bible through that outline, you will see that the majority of the Bible lies in the rejected part of the kingdom plan.

But as we move through the Bible book by book, you are going to see tiny pictures of the kingdom theme.

Remember those toys of my childhood called a view finder.

You would take these round disks and then put them in the slot in the view finder...

Then you would place your eyes over the two holes and look through and you would see this bigger and clear image of that little picture.

Well, that is the OT is many ways.

It provides little pictures of God's Kingdom plan coming together.

Let me ask you this...

What do you need to have a kingdom?

Well, you need a people to occupy the kingdom.

You need an area to rule.

You need a set of laws.

And you need a king.

Though there are other things.

Those are the basic requirements of a kingdom.

And that is what God is doing in the OT, he is giving snapshots of His kingdom plan.

What does he do first?

He finds a people and grows them into a nation.

Then he gives them a set of laws.

Now, in the book of Joshua he is giving them a land to occupy.

Do you see all that?

All of those are elements of a kingdom.

You have a people, they have laws and they are getting a land.

Now, what do they need?

They need a king.

And we will see Israel beg for a king, and God will give them a king for a while...

But the ultimate King is going to be who?

Jesus. He's the king and he fits the role of God's Kingdom plan.

He is going to be the king who will rule the God's kingdom.

The truth about every saved person in here tonight is that they are what?

The Bible calls you citizens of God's kingdom.

Salvation has provided eternal life and forgiveness of sins, but salvation has also made you a kingdom citizen.

Your king came to die for you.

But he will return to rule over His kingdom and you are a member of that kingdom if you have trusted in what the king did for you.

And that's really a long introduction to the book of Joshua...

But is important to see that the Bible is not just a series of books teaching a bunch of moral lessons.

No, the Bible is telling a story of God bringing about His Kingdom plans.

And the book of Joshua is important to that story because it is teaching the truth that every kingdom needs a land.

God is teaching that to Israel and even us.

A kingdom assumes that there is a land to inhabit.

That's why the eternal state is not you and me on a cloud with a harp.

No, if you look at the new heavens and earth in Rev 21-22, you see believers inhabiting a land.

There are rivers. There are trees. There are nations.

There are fruits. There are streets. There are jewels.

And these things in Rev 21-22 are not symbolic.

There are actual realities of the new heavens and earth.

God didn't lead Israel into a symbolic Promised Land in the book of Joshua.

He led them into a real land.

And he hasn't promised you a symbolic Promised Land in heaven.

No, it will be a real land with real people and real trees and real nations.

And it will exist in complete sinlessness for eternity.

That is an incredible promise to every believer from the Word of God.

And that is exciting for me to consider.

It is much more exciting than a cloud and a harp.

And so as we open up to the book of Joshua, I think we are reminded that God will establish His kingdom.

As surely as he led Israel into the land, he will as surely bring his kingdom to this earth...

That's why citizenship in that kingdom is the most treasured citizenship on earth.

So, let's look at Joshua...

We finally have a real simple outline to follow.

It looks like this....

I. Entering the Promised Land (1-5)

- A. Leadership Preparations (1)
- B. Military Preparations (2)
- C. Supernatural Preparations (3-5)

II. Conquering the Promised Land (6-12)

- A. Central Conquest (6-8)
- B. Southern Conquest (9-10)
- C. Northern Conquest (11)
- D. Total Conquest (12)

III. Dividing the Land (13-24)

- A. The Distribution of the Land (13-22)
- B. The Departure of Joshua (23-24)

I. Entering the Promised Land (1-5)

A. Leadership Preparations (1)

As we begin in Joshua, we begin with new leadership for Israel.

As we saw last week, Moses has died at the age of 120...

And though many people look at Joshua as this young and fearless leader, he was most likely advanced in years when he took over.

Estimates range anywhere from 70 years old to 90 years old when he became Israel's leader.

We know that he died at the age of 110, so I think he was closer to 90 when he became the leader.

And the first chapter is full of some important ideas for us to look at.

First, we see that God is teaching Israel the importance of leadership.

Moses came and now Joshua.

Second, the first chapter also identifies the purpose of the book as God describes the land that HE is giving to Israel in verse 4...

Then we see one of the most well-known verses of Joshua in verses 5- 6...

⁵ No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

⁶ Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

We see this great principle of God's faithfulness here.

You be strong and courageous, Joshua.

And the truth that many people miss here is that this is not a courage based upon human strength and bravery.

It is not flexing your muscles or relying upon your wisdom and knowledge.

No, Joshua is supposed to be strong and brave based upon the God that is in front of Him and behind Him and all around him.

I get frustrated with these so-called Christian books that talk about courage and strength based on this macho view of manhood.

The strength of the Lord is found in men who find their strength in the Lord and not their own toughness.

Jesus would probably have impressed no one with what we think is toughness, but you better believe HE was strong and courageous.

He taught with boldness and he confronted lie with toughness.

But it was not his strength but strength from the Father.

It is been said that no man stands taller than we he is on his knees.

And that is because his toughness comes from dependence.

It doesn't come from independence.

It comes from quiet time with the Lord not from a loud mouth.

Remember the little dog of the commercials...

He would go around making fun of other dogs because His huge and tough bulldog daddy was standing behind him.

That is a good picture of strength and courage.

I can get up here and boldly proclaim truth not because I drive a 4 wheel drive and work out.

I can get up here and boldly proclaim truth because I am speaking the God's Word to the world.

That is a biblical view of strength and courage.

Ask my wife....

She will tell you I'm not that tough.

But when we rely upon God and we base our life upon the truth of His word...

We are strong people and we can do courageous things...

And then in verse 7-8, there is one more very important truth to see...

⁷Only be strong and very courageous; ^[b]be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may ^[c]have success wherever you go. ⁸This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may ^[d]be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will ^[e]have success.

Look at verse 8...

“This book of the law”

Though I ran out of time to highlight it last week...

The first 5 books that we have just completed were written down and given to the priests.

And they were to be the book of the law that Joshua was to meditate upon day and night.

This is so central to the God's plan in the world.

Though other books would be added to the Scriptures, God was establishing the fact that His written Word is the key to everything.

It is the key to Joshua's success.

It is the key to your success.

What we know about God is a result of what HE inspired the authors of the Bible to write down.

That why this is so precious.

It is the truth of all that we know about God and his world.

And God is giving that snapshot to Israel right here as they prepare to enter the land.

This book needed to go before them into the land and this book needed to be obeyed.

So, there is a lot of good principles right here in the opening chapter of Joshua.

First, you need a leader.

Then you need to depend upon to God.

And you need to obey His written word.

So, we move from leadership preparations to....

B. Military Preparations (2)

Joshua sends some spies into the land to gather information about Jericho.

The spies took shelter into the house of a harlot named Rahab, who lied to the authorities to protect the men.

She was later rewarded in two ways.

Her family was spared death when Israel invaded and she became a believer in the God of Israel..

And was a great grandparent of Jesus.

Rahab the prostitute was a member of Jesus' earthly family tree.

What a great example of God's love for the nations.

He uses and then saves a Gentile harlot to deliver His people.

Then the final steps for Israel to enter the Promised land were...

C. Supernatural Preparations (3-5)

In chapters 3-5, God goes before Israel to dry up the Jordan River and allow them to cross on dry land.

After they cross, they set up a memorial to remember God's kindness in drying up the river to allow them to cross.

Here is another one of those pictures that Israel is creating in their photo book of God's kindness and greatness.

Many people will write in their Bible to remember God's faithfulness to them.

And I would encourage each of us to have those snapshots of God's grace in our mind that we can turn to when things aren't going well for us.

And with the end of chapter 5, Israel prepares for battle...

So, let's move to section two....

II. Conquering the Promised Land (6-12)

A. Central Conquest (6-8)

This is a section of battles that Israel engages in in conquering the land.

The first occurs at Jericho and is probably the most well-known.

Joshua leads Israel to march around the city 7 times before blowing a trumpet and watching the walls of the city fall.

As God promised, Rahab was spared in Israel's conquest of Jericho, but everyone and everything else was destroyed.

Unfortunately, the great victory gives way to a great defeat in chapter 7.

In another well-known story of the OT, Israel is defeated at Ai when they took some things from Jericho.

God had told them that everything in Jericho belonged to Him, yet Achan took silver and gold from Jericho.

He hid them in his tent, and the whole nation suffered for his sin when they were defeated at Ai.

Eventually the sin was confessed, Achan and his family executed, and Israel returned to defeat Ai in chapter 8.

What is the clear lesson of Achan?

Obey God perfectly.

Refuse to think that you can hide your sin from Him.

Realize that your sin, no matter how private, hurts others.

Now Jericho and Ai were battles in the center of the Promised Land, so now we move in chapters 9-10 to the....

B. Southern Conquest (9-10)

The battles move south and there's one famous miracle in this section of Joshua, where the Lord caused the Sun to stand still...

Which allowed Joshua to defeat the Gibeonites.

You can read about that battle in Joshua 10.

The battles then take a turn in chapter 11...

C. Northern Conquest (11)

Where Israel wins battles around the Sea of Galilee and even north of there.

And in chapter twelve, we see

D. Total Conquest (12)

A list of defeated kings is given in this chapter as a reminder of God's promise to Abraham to give his descendants a land of their own.

And with that we finish up this second section of Joshua.

The final section goes from chapter 13-24 and finishes out the book...

The Promise Land has been entered.

The Promised Land has been conquered.....

Now it must be divided among the nation....

III. Dividing the Land (13-24)

A. The Distribution of the Land (13-22)

In a chapter that reminds you of two friends sitting down and diving upon a pack of M&Ms...

“One for you....One for me...”

God simply divides up the land upon the 12 tribes of Israel...

And if you flip through these chapters from 13-19, you will see these divisions taking place....

(Here is a map of those)...

But you will notice that there is no land for the tribe of Levi.

The tribe of Levi serves as priests for the people...

So God scattered cities across the land where they acted as priests for the people..

They helped in the worship of God, and God wanted them across the land as a visible reminder of the need of the people to worship him.

Similar to the idea of how churches are spread all over the world.

And with that, let's look at Joshua 21:43...

⁴³ So the Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. ⁴⁴ And the Lord gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵ Not ^[m] one of the good promises which the Lord had ^[u] made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

God has a people.

They now have His laws.

And now they have a land.

God's faithfulness is unmatched.

His power is unequalled.

He promised it and it came to pass...

B. The Departure of Joshua (23-24)

In his final days, Joshua gives a farewell address to all of Israel in chapter 23...

And he laid before the people all of what God had done for them in chapter 24...

He reviews their history.

He looks at God's faithfulness.

And he simply challenges the people to serve the Lord.

Look at Joshua 24:13....

¹⁴ “Now, therefore, ^[g]fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and ^[h]truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the ^[i]River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵ If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

You know that's a catchy phrase.

People have signs made of that and hang it in their house.

There are decorative plates and pot holders with the phrase..

It is a really popular phrase from the OT.

But I want to end with a clear reminder from the word of God...

That the pledge to serve the Lord is not just a confession that makes you feel good...

But it also means that you will take action to honor what you say...

Look down at verse 19 of the same chapter...

19 Then Joshua said to the people, “You will not be able to serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression or your sins. 20 If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you.” 21 The people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the Lord.” 22 Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the Lord, to serve Him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.” 23 “Now therefore, put away the foreign gods which are in your midst, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel.” 24 The people said to Joshua, “We will serve the Lord our God and we will ^[k]obey His voice.”

A sign hanging in your house is more than a feel good saying, it is a call to action.

For Israel it meant, putting away their foreign gods, and turning their heart to God.

For you, it may mean putting away idols in your own life.

It may mean putting off the constant practice of a recurring sin.

It may mean giving more time to the pursuit of the Lord instead of pursuing the world.

Pledging to serve the Lord is more than a motivational phrase for Christian bookstores to sell for profit.

Committing to serve the Lord and obey the Lord from the heart is more about a way of life....

Than a way to decorate your home...

Conclusion

As we wrap up Joshua, we wrap up a golden era in the life of Israel.

Though they have shown disobedience to god at times, they are about to make sin a way of life for them.

I often wonder if that is because they had gotten comfortable.

They now have a land.

Often times, that equals complacency.

Which leads to apathy and then sin.

And that will be true of the book of Judges, but we will have to wait to next week to find out.

Let us pray.