

## Joshua 1:10-18

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#### “Preparing borderline believers”

#### I. Intro

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#### I. Intro

Experts tell us geographically that though it took 40 years to arrive at the land of promise they could have done it in 11 days. Yet God didn't want them to become discouraged in case of coming into contact with an established enemy so instead God led them by way of the wilderness and it took them approximately two years to reach Kadesh-barnea on the southwestern edge of the Promised Land. Yet they choose not to trust that the God who promises can enable us to inherit His promises and they spent the next 38 years in the wilderness. They could have been there in 11 days but God understood that they weren't ready so He took them through 2 years of preparation which they decided wasn't enough so the Lord stayed with them 38 years till they were done with themselves.

Three times in the first 9 verses the Lord told Joshua to be “*strong and of good courage*” and the 4<sup>th</sup> time in the first chapter this phrase appears it is said by those he is to lead. It is obvious based upon this that Joshua had **a healthy sense of inadequacy** in his abilities to lead the nation but he stepped forward non-the-less and the people encouraged him to continue to

trust the Lord to enable him to lead. We need men and women of God who have been broken by the Spirit of God who desire only the glory of God. It is these types of people who will see walls fall down and giants slain in the land of promise.

## **II. Vs. 10-11 Prepare provisions**

Vs. 10 Forty years before, at Kadesh Barnea, the nation had known the will of God but refused to obey it. Had they listened to Caleb and Joshua—they would have spared themselves those 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. There is a place in Christian service for godly counsel, but a committee report is no substitute for the clear commandment of God. Right upon the heels of God's thrice repeated exhortation to be "*strong and of good courage*" we notice that Joshua acts decisively by commanding the officers of the people. He didn't say, "*So fellows what do you think?*" There was no committee to see how many wanted to go for it, he had heard from the Lord and was going forward.

Friends it is never a wise thing once the Lord has spoken to you to procrastinate as such action is a sign of disobedience and a lack of faith. There have been many times that I have said I'm willing to follow You Lord all the while I'm delaying to do so. If we want to take possession of all that God has for us there can be no delay only obedience. That's what Paul says to the Colossians in Col. 3:23 "*whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men*".

Remember the words of Jesus' who listened to Jesus when they said of Him, "*He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*" First in verse 9 God tells Joshua "*Have I not command you?*" then here we read that based upon this Joshua commands his officers who will in turn command the people. In other words there was a chain of command and those that rule must be ruled themselves.

Vs. 11 Some believe that this command to “*prepare provisions*” indicates that Manna had already ceased from falling from heaven to be gathered. But even if it was still being gathered we know that it couldn’t last more than one day. Yet with that said all that was required of them was to prepare the provisions and cross over. We don’t see very often that part of “*preparing the provisions*” to possess the land of promise is learning to wait three days. I’m afraid that we Christians tend to think of waiting on God as inactivity because we are ready and He is dilly dallying around somewhere. But the waiting on the Lord for three days was the same time that they were to be preparing provisions. Friends preparation is never the enemy of inspiration and let me tell you that in your preparation there will be some perspiration. Joshua’s words to his leaders were words of faith and encouragement. “*You shall pass over! You shall possess the land! The Lord will give it to you!*” Joshua was with Caleb 40 years earlier when Caleb had made a similar speech in 13:30 saying, “*Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it*” as well as his own words in Number 14:9. Warren Wiersbe had this to say with regards to this “*It’s unfortunate but true that sometimes the only way a ministry can move forward is by conducting a few funerals.*” Hey saints before you think that too harsh I rather think that the funerals we need to be conducting are our own death to self centeredness. How glorious it is to observe that the two oldest men in camp were still the most enthusiastic in their faith instead set in their ways.

They needed to prepare the provisions so they could take possession of the promises. The provisions are no less given to us as are the yet obtained promises all we need to do is prepare them. Friend **one of the reasons so many of us fail to enter into the inheritance of the promises of God is lack of preparation of God’s provided provisions.** And what has He provided for us? What hasn’t He? He has given us the Word of God, gifts and enablings, each

other all of which are at our disposal and only require organization. As great a blessing as the promises of *“as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.”* And *“do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”* Are; they are not without our part of *“observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”* And *“Prepare provisions for yourselves”*. We have no right to expect the former with out the latter.

Hey did you notice what God does not say was part of the provisions which they were to prepare for? He does not say get the boats ready or build a bridge cause we are going to cross over the Jordan river in three days. It was the Lord that had brought them out of the bondage of Egypt on dry land and it would be the Lord who would bring into the inheritance of the promises on dry land. The work of preparation of God’s provisions does not mean that it is still not His work of grace and our walk of faith. Joshua commanded them and with great confidence in God’s ability to do what He had promised he said in *“three days we shall cross over this Jordan”* not swim across or row over or go under but cross over. Thus we see that faith and obedience work hand in hand for you and I to be able to enter into the land of promise. Of further interest these two things can not be a mere theory on our part, they can not be something we say intellectually we believe but practically we will not practice for if they are but theory we will forever remain outside of what He has already given us. You can only possess your possessions experientially not experimentally they are to be enjoyed now.

### **III. Vs. 12-15 Borderline believers**

Vs. 12-13 This reference by Joshua to these two and half tribes goes back to Numbers 32:1, 5 where we are told that *“the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region was a place for livestock, ...they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan.”* The other side of the promise land was comfortable it fit their life style but they were going to have to send the men over to the promised land to fight the battle yet without ever possessing the ground themselves. Now fast forward a few thousand years and you will find out the land that the Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh wanted because it was a perfect fit in Luke 8 is called Gadarenes was not a place of pigs and demons. Hear me out Christian the safest and best place for us, the perfect fit, is always going to be when we are pressing forward into the land of promise. There were no less battles in the land of comfort as God still required of those 2 ½ tribes to send over their armies to fight on behalf of the other tribes but there certainly was far less blessings!

Based upon Number 1:3 it was only the men 20 years and older that went to war. Now according to Numbers 26 the two and a half tribes that remained on the other side of the Jordan had 136,930 men available to fight but only 40,000 men actually crossed the Jordan and fought in the Promised Land according to Josh. 4:13 the others chose to remain to protect the women and children in the cities the tribes had taken in the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead. Joshua now has a special message for those who would be content with second best these two and half tribes who were willing to trade their inheritance in the land of promise for that which met their needs on the boarder. First he reminds them that doing so would not let them off the hook for warfare. We sometimes settle for 2<sup>nd</sup> best because we feel that it will be a lot easier and that my

friend is not the case. In fact it will require separation from that which is nearest and dearest to your heart. Friends listen up to live on the boarder is to live a divided life one in which you will never truly be satisfied. God will allow you to have what you want but it will be at the expense of the blessings that were to be yours in the land of grace and blessing. I'm not saying you're saved or that you aren't loved for you are but have decided to make your home out side of the best God has for you. Geographically speaking they stayed out side of the warfare of inheritance but remained vulnerable to the attacks of the Assyrians and Babylonians and were always invaded first. Far to many folks want to know how close they can live to Christ while still making their home outside of His precious promises yet I have never had anyone ask me how far they can go into the land of blessings. Oh how the Lord wants His children to be grace explorers and blessing hunters who will abandon the entire world for another glimpse of His goodness. Don't be like these 2 ½ tribes that said, "*Oh I'll go with you for a while but them I'm heading back to my stuff of the boarder.*"

Vs. 14-15 Not only were they required to fight they were required to be on the point during the battle as they were to pass before their brethren armed. So they obtained there portion before any of their brothers and sister so now they were to go before them in battle. According Num. 32:1, 4, 16 the tribes liked the land on the other side because it was "a place for cattle". Now listen up friends as it appears that **their first concern was making a living, not making a life.** They settle for having big flocks and herds outside the promises of God rather than to dwell with their brothers and sisters in the inheritance God had given them. Because of this based upon Josh. 22:10 they were far from the place of worship and had to erect a special monument to remind their children that they were citizens of Israel. I'm afraid that there are far to many Christians today who are content to be "*borderline believers*" who live close to the inheritance but never

quite live there themselves no matter how successful they may seem to be. They are willing to serve the Lord and help their brethren for a time; but when their job is finished, they head for home to do what they want to do. Judges 5:16 tells us that later on “*The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart.*” The rest given them would never be enjoyed fully until all tribes achieved it.

#### **IV. Vs. 16-18 Occupied with our occupation**

Vs. 16-18 Think of this for a moment God was calling the nation to enter into the land promised 500 years earlier a whole generation died in the wilderness because they didn't believe that the God who had promised to give them the land was able to accomplish what He promised and now on the eve before you go into the land 2 ½ tribes say, “*Hey remember we are happy to live in what has already be won.*” But Joshua was up for the task by reminded them of the promise to go in and defeat the enemy in the land before they enjoy their own. Hey saints don't expect to have everything to be hassle free when you take a step towards your inheritance in Christ. The first thing Joshua faced was that 2 ½ tribes didn't want what God had promised and that would have been a let down in morale. Just before entering in the numbers appeared to be dropping and the inclination would have naturally been “God's not in this” but Joshua just reminded them that their choice to stay outside of the promises of God didn't negate their obligation to the body to help others enter in. Joshua simply reminded them of the promise they made to Moses and responded in verse 17 by saying “*Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you*”.

“*All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go*” they promised Joshua. In a novel one of the characters complained “*I find the doing of the will of God leaves me no time for disputing about His plan.*” Oh that you and I would say these words to our Joshua, Jesus who has gone before us already defeated the enemies of our inheritance. “*We will*

*keep the peace and make sure now one rebels against your authority*”, they said. But notice that they had one request, *“Only be strong and of good courage”*. Friends if we are going to lead we need to do so with conviction and vision other wise the troops that follow will become discouraged and dismayed.