



# ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND: FAITH FOR THE JOURNEY INTO THE WORD *LESSON 17*

- WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS LESSON:
  - The nation of Israel enter the Promised Land and the leadership passes to Joshua
- BIBLICAL THEMES:
  - The promises of God are eternal
  - God requires faith; great leaders display great faith
  - Disobedience can delay God's promises in our lives
  - God's requirements for His leaders are great (to whom much is given, much is required)
- SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES:
  - Hebrews 11
  - Joshua 4:2-24
  - Joshua 1:5-9
- FOR FURTHER STUDY:
  - From Good to Great
  - Servant Leadership

# INTO THE WORD

## LESSON 17

### ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND: FATIH FOR THE JOURNEY

#### Introduction:

With the completion of the Tabernacle, the Lord God had a permanent, “portable” dwelling place with His people, and the foundation for the ceremonial law was established. It was now time for the young nation to inherit the land that God had promised. The Lord had given the Land of Canaan to the children of Israel. Now, it was their responsibility to believe God’s promise and take the land. The land was plentiful and perfect, but filled with giants. Twelve spies, one from each tribe of Israel, were sent to survey the land. Ten of the spies were intimidated by the cities fortresses and the size of the people dwelling there. These observations caused these ten men to doubt the word of God. Only Joshua and Caleb believed God’s word was true. They remained undaunted by what they saw, believing in God’s promise that they could possess the land. However, the disbelief of the ten other spies caused Israel’s entrance into the promised land to be delayed by 40 years. As a result of their disobedience, the nation of Israel continued to wander aimlessly in the desert, and all of the men 20 years of older died in the wilderness with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. After Moses died, Joshua became the next leader of God’s people and led them into the promise land.

#### Into the Word: Responding to God's Promises

##### 1. The Land of Promise

- The following scriptures outline the story of the 12 spies and God's reaction to the disobedience of the 10:
  - Numbers 13:25-33
    - <sup>25</sup>After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned <sup>26</sup>to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land. <sup>27</sup>This was their report to Moses: “We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. <sup>28</sup>But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! <sup>29</sup>The Amalekites live in the Negev, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and along the Jordan Valley.” <sup>30</sup>But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. “Let’s go at

once to take the land," he said. "We can certainly conquer it!"<sup>31</sup> But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!"<sup>32</sup> So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: "The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge.<sup>33</sup> We even saw giants<sup>[b]</sup> there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that's what they thought, too!"

- Numbers 14:6-34; 37-38
- Numbers 14:44-45

<sup>44</sup> But the people defiantly pushed ahead toward the hill country, even though neither Moses nor the Ark of the LORD's Covenant left the camp. <sup>45</sup> Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in those hills came down and attacked them and chased them back as far as Hormah.



### Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- Describe the different ways in which Joshua and Caleb viewed the Promised Land from the other 10 spies?
- Why do you think the lack of faith of the 10 spies displeases God so much?
- What do you make of Moses petitioning God on Israel's behalf? What does this say about his leadership?
- How do you view "obstacles" that you see in your life?
- How do you think God wants you to view these obstacles?

#### a. Faith Pleases God

When we receive new life in Jesus Christ all things have become new and we are new creatures according to the word of God. However, God's word states that we will endure trials of faith. In fact, the Lord asks us to count these trials as "precious", or in other words as "faith-building". If we trust God, and believe in the power of His word and Spirit throughout life's trials, our faith will be made perfect. Faith is perhaps the most important element of our relationship with God. It is like a marriage; even when times appear to be rough, we have covenanted with our spouse to continue our journey together, "for better or for worse". Trials faced together make a marriage stronger. It is hard to imagine

anything more powerful than the love that binds a Godly couple, married for over 60 years, who have faced life's heartaches and shared life's celebrations together. And so it is with God, trials and obstacle in our life, faced and overcome in faith, become opportunities for growth in God's kingdom. Remember, God's commitment is to form Himself within us, and if we allow Him, He will do what he sees fit in our lives to accomplish this goal. With His help and direction we can inherit the land of promise.

- Hebrews gives us the examples of Enoch, who was "translated" and did not see death because his faith was so strong that he pleased God, and He took him to be with Him.
  - Hebrews 11:5-6
    - <sup>5</sup>It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying—"he disappeared, because God took him." For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God. <sup>6</sup> And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.
  - Hebrews 11:1
    - <sup>1</sup>Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.

## **b. Disbelief displeases God and "stunts" our growth in the Kingdom**

The ten spies displayed the opposite characteristic of Faith, disbelief, in their attitude towards the promises of God. Just as the operation of Faith propels the kingdom of God, our disbelief and disobedience retards the growth of the kingdom of God in our lives.

- In Mark, Jesus chides (reviles) His disciples for unbelief. Afterward, he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.
  - Mark 16:14
    - <sup>14</sup> Still later he appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating together. He rebuked them for their stubborn unbelief because they refused to believe those who had seen him after he had been raised from the dead.
- Disobedience, as we have already seen, has severe consequences. The nation of Israel were to wander another 40 years before entering the promised land. Even Moses, despite the great things he was able to accomplish through his faith and obedience to God's leading, was seemingly harshly punished at the end of his life for disobeying God.

## 2. Death of Moses

Moses was allowed to view the Promised Land from Mt. Pisgah, where he died at 120 years old, but he was not permitted to enter it. Moses had disobeyed God when he struck the rock, when God had directed him to speak to it in the wilderness:

- This episode is recounted in Numbers 20:7-12. This episode seems harsh, given Moses' relationship with the Lord, yet there are principles we can learn here. Moses had been given the massive responsibility of leading a nation. Every decision he made affected the entire population. The higher in leadership we go in the kingdom of God, the less personal rights we have, and the less margin for error we have. To whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48). Consider Jesus himself. He gave everything, even his life. Additionally, the rock that Moses struck in the wilderness was a type and foreshadow of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). The gospel message, personified in Christ, demands our utmost obedience.
- However, Moses continued to lead and trust in God following this episode. He did not grow resentful or bitter toward God, but trusted His judgment to the uttermost. Before he went up to Mt. Pisgah, Moses delivered his farewell address to the people of Israel, displaying his great love for the nation of Israel and the tremendous trust God had placed in his leadership (Deuteronomy 6)



### Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- What do you make of the instructions given by Moses to the nation of Israel?
- What kind of leader is Moses at the end of his life?

- The death of Moses is described in Deuteronomy. God himself buried Moses:
  - Deuteronomy 34:5-6
    - <sup>5</sup> So Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, just as the LORD had said. <sup>6</sup> The LORD buried him in a valley near Beth-peor in Moab, but to this day no one knows the exact place.

## 3. Leadership Passes to Joshua and the Crossing of the Jordan River

And so Joshua, son of Nun, became the next leader of Israel.

- Joshua 1:5-9
  - <sup>5</sup> No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you. <sup>6</sup> "Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. <sup>7</sup> Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the

left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. <sup>8</sup> Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. <sup>9</sup> This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you



### Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- What characteristics of leadership do you see addressed here?

go.”

- Once again the Lord showed himself mighty to his chosen people, and when the priests who were bearing the ark stepped into the river Jordan, the water parted and the Israelites came into a land with ready-made cities, houses, orchards and vineyards (Joshua 3 and 4). They took 12 stones and built a memorial to remind them of what God had done for them for future generations to remember the promises of God (Joshua 4:2-24.)



### Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- Why do you think Joshua commanded the people to erect a memorial to God's goodness?
- How is it possible for us to do this in our lives? Why is it important to remember what God has done for us?

- And so the land was theirs, if they could learn to trust the Lord. This is the lesson that God perhaps continually teaches us: trust and obey. We need to trust and obey in God even when situations seem impossible. The nation of Israel would need to remember their deliverance from Egypt, and the crossing of the Jordan as they faced their first battle this side of the Jordan--the city of Jericho.

#### 4. Example of God's Grace: The Story of Rahab

The second chapter of Joshua tells the story of Rahab the harlot, who lived on the city walls of Jericho and harbored the spies sent by Joshua. Read Joshua 2: 1-24). Rahab had heard of the God who delivered his people from Egypt and her respect for this God she had heard about caused her to allow the men of Israel safe

passage. She did not deliver them into the hands of her King. Because of her faithfulness to the men of Israel, Rahab saved herself and her family when the city of Jericho was destroyed. (Joshua 6: 17). God always reaches for the faithful. Rahab went on to be in lineage of Jesus Christ, foreshadowing the gentile church.

- Matthew 1:3-6

<sup>3</sup> Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar). Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram. <sup>4</sup> Ram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon. <sup>5</sup> Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab). Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth). Obed was the father of Jesse. <sup>6</sup> Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).

## 5. The Battle of Jericho: Trusting God's Commands

God's instructions to Joshua for victory over the city of Jericho were pretty unusual (Joshua 6). God instructed the men of war to march around the city walls once a day for 6 days, lead by the priests carrying the ark, with 7 trumpets of rams' horns. On the seventh day, the Lord instructed them to march around the city seven times and on the seventh time to blow the rams' horns, and for the people to shout with a great shout, promising that the walls of the city would then fall "flat". They would require faith and obedience to carry out the Lord's unusual directions. As we have seen, Joshua was a leader who followed God's instructions. The memorials he had built to God's delivering power, coupled with his own faith, demonstrated when he and Caleb were not dismayed by what they saw when they first spied the promised land, enabled him to have complete faith in God's instructions and experience great victory.

- Consider the Hebrew word for "shout" in the Jericho story:
  - SHOUT - H7321 - *roo-ah'*
  - A primitive root; to *mar* (especially by breaking); figuratively to *split* the ears (with sound), that is, *shout* (for alarm or joy): - blow an alarm, cry (alarm, aloud, out), destroy, make a joyful noise, smart, shout (for joy), sound an alarm, triumph.

## 6. The Disobedience of Achan

Joshua's obedience finds its opposite in the disobedience demonstrated by Achan. God instructed the Israelites not to take anything for themselves when they captured Jericho - no silver, gold, brass, iron, or garments. Achan, however having seen and coveted the riches of Jericho disobeyed God. He took of the spoils and hid them (Joshua 7:1; 10-12).

As a result of his sin and disobedience, Achan couldn't praise God (Joshua 7:19-21; 25-26). Achan's sin was exposed and removed, and cost him his life and the life of his family.

### Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- What do Joshua's example and Achan's example reveal to us?
- Why do you think Achan was punished so severely?



As they were obedient to God, Israel continued to take city after city. Righteousness and purity brings the power of God. In the Old Testament, battles were won not according to the size of their army, but on their right relationship with God.