

- ⇒ East: the Euphrates River
- ⇒ West: the Mediterranean Sea

2) There was the promise of conquering all enemies (v.5). This is a picture of the believer's full and victorious life. As the Israelites marched forward, they would face opposition. There would be enemies who would confront and wage war against them. These enemies would do all they could to defeat the Israelites and either enslave or kill them. But the great promise of God is that of victory and triumph. They would conquer all the enemies who opposed them.

Thought 1. A full and victorious life is one of the great promises of God. The genuine believer who goes forward laying claim to the promised land will be victorious. There is only one condition: the believer must trust God, really focus upon God, marching forth and seeking the great promised land of God. This believer will conquer all the enemies, trials, and temptations that confront him. He will live a full and victorious life through the presence and power of the LORD.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (Jn.16:33).

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ro.8:35, 37-39).

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand (Ep.6:10-13).

(see also 1 Jn.5:4-5; Ps.44:5)

3) There is the promise of the continued, unbroken presence and rest of God (v.5). The Israelites would defeat all enemies by the presence of God. God promised to be with them, to never leave them nor forsake them. The *unfailing presence of God* would

always be present with His dear people. His *unfailing presence* would guide His people and give them victory over all enemies. What a promise from God, the glorious promise of His *unfailing presence*!

Thought 1. What a promise God has given us! The promise of His *unbroken presence*, that He will never leave us nor forsake us. No matter what enemy, trial, or temptation may face us—no matter what trouble, difficulty, or problem—no matter the size, the strength, or the destructive potential of the obstacle—God will be with us. His *unfailing presence* will never leave us nor forsake us.

And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mt.28:20).

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (He.13:5).

The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Ex. 33:14).

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Is.43:2).

(see also Ge.28:15; Jos.1:5; Jud.6:16; 1 Chr.28:20)

c. The forceful charge (vv.6-9).

God gave a forceful charge to Joshua, a charge to be "strong and courageous." Note that the charge is repeated three times.

1) God encouraged Joshua to be *strong and courageous* in his task, that of leading Israel to inherit the promised land (v.6). He was the military commander of an army that faced formidable enemies, and he knew that years of warfare lay ahead.

The land promised by God was a vast territory possessed by a number of powerful nations whose people were brutal and savage, wicked and evil to the core. Their *cup of sin* had become so full that God was now using the Israelites as His instrument of judgment against them. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Jos.11:20 for more discussion.) In facing such enemies year after year, the days of warfare and the sight of maiming and killing could easily begin to wear upon Joshua. God knew this; therefore, he charged Joshua to be strong and courageous in his task of conquering the promised land. It was his task to conquer the land and to divide it among God's dear people. He and the Israelites were to be the instruments of God's justice and judgment against the Canaanites who had become so evil and

corrupt. Throughout the days, months, and years of warfare, this dear servant of God was to stay the course. He was to be strong and courageous throughout the struggle.

- 2) God encouraged Joshua to be *strong and courageous* in obeying God, in obeying His law, His Word (vv.7-8). He was to obey everything that Moses had written. Note exactly what God told Joshua to do with the Word of God:
- ⇒ He was to obey all God's law.
 - ⇒ He was not to turn away from God's Word.
 - ⇒ He was never to stop sharing God's law or Word.
 - ⇒ He was to meditate on God's Word day and night. This would assure obedience.
 - ⇒ The result of his obedience would be prosperity and success. All that he and the Israelites put their hands to would prosper and be successful.

- 3) God encouraged Joshua to be *strong and courageous* in overcoming fear and discouragement (v.9). Having to face enemy after enemy, year after year—having to make the decision to send young men, husbands, and fathers into battle time and again who would be witnessing the bloodshed and horror of battle after battle—all this could break down the strength and courage of any commander and army. God knew this, and He cared for Joshua. Therefore, God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous in overcoming whatever fear or discouragement attacked him. To encourage and assure Joshua, God gave him the promise of His continued, unbroken presence. God promised that He would go with Joshua wherever he went, never forsaking or leaving him.

Thought 1. There are two strong lessons for us in this charge given to Joshua.

- (1) We must be strong and courageous in obeying God. We must keep His law, His commandments and Holy Word. We must never turn away from His Word; rather, we must meditate on it day and night. If we obey God, living in His Word and keeping His commandments, we will prosper and be successful in whatever we do. Whatever we put our hands to will be blessed by God. God will give us purpose, achievement, and fulfillment throughout life. But note: this promise is given only to those who obey God by meditating in His Word day and night, only to those who do exactly what He says.

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” (Jn.14:21).

But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does (Js.1:25).

“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city (Re.22:14).

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers (Ps.1:1-3).

(see also Mt.6:33; 1 Ti.4:15; De.5:29; 26:16; 29:9; Jos.1:8; 1 Chr.22:13)

- (2) We must be strong and courageous as we march through life. Fear and discouragement can be conquered only as we are strong and courageous. God is with us, and He will never leave nor forsake us. This is His promise to us just as it was to Joshua. His unending presence is always with us wherever we go. Therefore, we must stand strong and courageous against all the enemies, trials, and temptations that confront us. No matter how many crushing problems, tough situations, or difficult people we face—no matter how many lustful temptations or terrifying trials we face—God is right there with us. God will deliver us and give us victory over the enemy that confronts us. We must stand strong and courageous, conquering all opposition and fulfilling our task for the LORD.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand (Ep.6:10-13).

But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded” (2 Chr.15:7).

(see also 1 Co.16:13; 2 Ti.2:1; 1 K.2:2)

DEEPER STUDY # 1

(1:3-4) **Promised Land:** the hope of the promised land was first given to Abraham and then to his son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob. Through the patriarchs, the hope of the people was passed down to all generations of Israelites. Down through the centuries, true believers among the Israelites longed for the land promised by God. Hope in the promised land of God was the beat of their hearts, the motivating force that drove them throughout life. Their very purpose for living was the promised land of God. They desired—strongly craved, yearned, coveted, and sought after—the great inheritance promised by God.

When God first made the promise to Abraham, all Abraham had to base his faith on was what God said. Abraham had to step out in faith and believe God's Word—His promise—that God was someday going to give him the land out in the future.

But now, centuries later, the Israelites were at last ready to cross the Jordan River and enter the promised land of God. Finally, they were ready to lay claim to the great inheritance given them by God, the inheritance of the promised land of God. Just as Abraham had to believe God to inherit the promised land, so the Israelites led by Joshua had to believe God to receive their inheritance. It was all a matter of faith. If the Israelites believed God, they would be given the promised land of God, the land of plenty and of rest, of both physical and spiritual rest.

DEEPER STUDY # 2

(1:3-4) **Promised Land:** because of the length of this DEEPER STUDY, it is being placed at the end of the commentary covering chapter one.

2 (1:10-15) **Joshua's command to the officers.**

The great book of Joshua opens with Joshua's command to the officers to mobilize the people for the march into the promised land. At last, the long-awaited command was given: prepare the people to march into the promised land. This was the command for which the people had longed and yearned to hear, the command to prepare to cross over the Jordan River to claim their inheritance promised by God.

a. The long awaited command (vv.10-11).

The long-awaited command came: prepare the people, mobilize them to march and cross over the Jordan. The commander of the army, Joshua, gave the command; and the orders went down through the ranks of the officers. Note the reference to three days: the people had to be mobilized to march within three days. This shows just how organized the Israelites were, for the population was over two to three million people. For that many people to break camp, secure food, and prepare their livestock to march within a

three day period demonstrates just how organized the nation was.

b. The special command to the tribes (vv.12-15).

Note the special command given to the two and one-half tribes from east of the Jordan. Joshua commanded them to remember the words of Moses (see outline and notes—Nu.3:1-42 for more discussion). Moses had already given these tribes the land east of the Jordan. They were already experiencing the promised rest of their inheritance. But note: this had been a special concession given to them, a concession made only because of their insistence. In return for the special concession, they had promised to fight alongside their fellow Israelites as they sought to conquer their inheritance. Consequently, Joshua commanded them...

- to leave their wives, children, and livestock in their land east of the Jordan (v.15)
- to mobilize their fighting men and lead the other tribes in marching across the Jordan (v.14)
- to fight alongside the other tribes until they secured their promised rest and possessed their inheritance of land (v.15). They could then return to their own land and people (v.15)

Note the emphasis upon the *rest* (nûah) that God promised His people. To the Israelite, *rest* meant secure borders and peace from enemies, success and prosperity in whatever they did, fruitfulness of land and crops, a strong commerce and economy among the businesses of the nation. Simply stated, "rest" meant that the people could go about their daily lives in peace, living full and satisfying lives.

Thought 1. The word *rest* (nûah) has spiritual and theological significance for the believer. When a person trusts Jesus Christ as his Savior, God gives that person "rest"...

- the rest of salvation and deliverance
- the rest of peace of heart and mind
- the rest of assurance and confidence
- the rest of purpose, meaning, and significance
- the rest of fulfillment and satisfaction

The genuine believer experiences a deep-seated rest, a rest of peace, assurance, and confidence within the deepest recesses of his heart. He knows where he has come from, why he is here, and where he is going. God floods his soul with the rest of His presence. When the genuine believer yields his life totally to Christ and claims the wonderful promises of God, God floods him with spiritual rest (see 11:23; 14:15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1).

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit,