

Preparing for Leadership

Joshua 1

How does God prepare people for greatness as leaders over His people?

As we study these passages describing Joshua, we want to consider his life, looking for clues as to his greatness.

Why did God choose him?

Why did he succeed as the leader of God's people?

Creation Fall Flood Confusion

Abraham Isaac Jacob Joseph

Moses => Joshua

Deliverance from slavery in Egypt

Promise to provide the land

Redemption of God's people Exodus 1-18

Liberation from Egypt 1-13:16

Journey to Sinai 13:17-18:27

To the sea 13:17-14:14

Through the sea 14:15-15:21

Although Israel should have been convinced to trust Yahweh and to submit to His rule forever, the effect was short-lived.

To Sinai 15:22-18:27

As they continued into the third phase of their journey, from the sea to Sinai, new tests of their faith caused new doubts and new complaints.

Four tests of faith 15:22-17:15

Bitter water sweetened 15:22-27

Food shortage solved 16

Water shortage supplied 17:1-7

Enemy defeated 17:8-15

Joshua was hand picked by God to lead His people into the land He promised to give them.

He grew up in slavery in Egypt.

He observed as God used Moses to lead the people out of Egypt.

He became Moses' aid.

He rose to the top as Moses' right hand man and top military leader.

Preparation for leadership takes time.

You don't rise to prominence overnight

Joshua spends years serving alongside of Moses, as God prepares him for leadership among His people.

In the three passages we're going to consider this morning, we get a glimpse of Joshua's preparation for ministry, under Moses' leadership.

3 KEY INCIDENTS GIVE US A GLIMPSE OF WHY JOSHUA ROSE TO GREATNESS.

The ONLY mention of Joshua before he is named as one of the spies!

INCIDENT # 1:**JOSHUA FOUGHT THE BATTLE AGAINST THE AMALEKITES 17:8-16**

While they were camped at Rephidim, the Israelites had to face their first encounter with an enemy.

The Amalekites attacked them.

The Amalekites were descendants of Esau.

[Amalek = “the one who works, labors” => the flesh –our best efforts

(McGee, Unger, et.al.) Compare Gal. 4:21-31– example of Ishmael

We only have victory over the flesh when GOD fights the battle!]

They should have known better than to attack Israel.

They should have known that God would bless them because of Israel.

They didn't acknowledge God's plan and His promise to Israel.

In order to demonstrate that God was fighting for them and the victory was His, Moses took his staff, Aaron and Hur up to the mountain.

Joshua is named to lead the armies of God's people

in preparation for his later role as leader of God's people

He leads God's army.

He learns early that the battle belongs to the Lord.

Moses holds up the rod—a reminder of how God has delivered them in the past.

Therefore, they can trust Him now!

If God doesn't fight for them, they don't win!

The real battle is fought on the mountain.

Joshua becomes aware that he is dependent on what happens up there.

God is fighting this battle for them.

Nevertheless, Joshua must fight the battle!

Joshua leads the other men in battle below.

Even with God's promise of victory, he has to stand before the enemy.

He has to fight the battle with their sword.

They only win the battle when they acknowledge their dependence on God and HE gives them victory.

God's sovereignty unites with their responsibility to defeat the enemy.

God uses Moses to give the victory to Israel.

But He also uses Joshua! BOTH are necessary!

As long as his hands hold the staff over his head, they win.

The rod is the instrument God uses to demonstrate His power.

It wasn't a magical rod.

The power wasn't in the rod.

But God used the rod as His instrument—to accomplish His purpose.

The act of holding the rod over his head with both hands acknowledges their total dependence on God's power for victory

If he lowers it, they lose.

When his hands are lowered, a picture of lack of dependence, the enemy wins.

Aaron and Hur hold his hands up while Moses sits on a rock.

Aaron and Hur assist Moses to keep his hands lifted up to the Lord.

Thus God demonstrates that He is giving them the victory.

If you were called to lead this battle, how would you have responded in the midst of this situation, when you observed your troops losing to the enemy?

God orders the story to be recorded because He will wipe out the Amalekites but doesn't want Israel to forget what He did for them when they fought the Amalekites.

God wants Joshua to remember.

God proves Himself faithful in preserving and protecting Israel

God doesn't want Joshua to forget!

He doesn't want Joshua to forget that He is able to deliver them.

He doesn't want Joshua to forget that He is intent on destroying Amalek.

They can trust God to protect them and to destroy their enemy.

As they depend on (trust) Him,

He will use them to destroy those who oppose Him and His plans for His people.

What was the message that was to be written on the scroll for Joshua's sake (17:14-16)?

What do you suppose Joshua would think when he saw the memorial and the message:

"Yahweh is my banner."

= He is what I lift up! He is my sign, my standard.

He is my rallying point—**He's the center of our focus!**

He is the One who gives us victory.

"Be sure to record this so that Joshua will never forget it!"

God's faithfulness in giving Israel victory over the enemy in this circumstance serves as a reminder to trust God in future battles.

Most important lesson:

God is on Israel's side!

Unless He fights for them, they will lose!

If they acknowledge their dependence on Him,

He will fight for them!

INCIDENT # 2:

JOSHUA ACCOMPANIES MOSES ON THE MOUNTAIN 24:12-18

Revelation to God's people 19-40

The law reveals God's standard of conduct for His redeemed people.

The law of God revealed to His people 19-24

Israel's covenant relationship with God defined (summarized) 19-20

God's covenant confirmed 24

After the summary of the law was given, the formal dedication service is celebrated.

Only Moses is allowed to approach the Lord.

All others are to remain at a distance (1-2)

Following the dedication service, Moses *and Joshua* go up onto the mountain for forty days, where God gave them His commands.

Only Joshua accompanies Moses on the mountain.

No one else is allowed to come near the mountain.

Joshua is becoming increasingly prominent.

He may have only gone part way up,

[WE DON'T KNOW what happens to Joshua during those forty days!

It's pretty clear he didn't take part in the dialogue.

God only speaks face to face with Moses.

But Joshua's exposure to God's presence is second only to Moses!

Many assume he only went part way—but the story doesn't SAY that!

He goes up with him—he comes back down with him.

If Moses doesn't eat, it appears that Joshua doesn't eat either.

The focus of attention is on Moses—the story seems to imply that Joshua SAW the whole thing!

but he is certainly up front in the story.

He has a "front-row seat"

He observes what happens on the mountain.

Joshua observes the power and presence of God.

How do you suppose this time on the mountain would have impacted Joshua's life and ministry?

[Introduction to third incident:]

The way to God revealed to His people 25-40

Plan described 25-31

Plan delayed 32-34

Disobedience manifested 32:1-6

They become impatient and make a golden calf to represent Yahweh

Judgment decreed 32:7-10

Intercession received 32:11-14

Moses rejects God's plan to destroy the people and start over.

He pleads on their behalf

Judgment enacted 32:15-35

They come down from the mountain, with the tablets of the law in hand

Joshua notices the noise (**32:17-19**)

He thinks it sounds like there's a battle going on below.

He identifies with Moses in his faithfulness to God and in his reaction to the people—He stands with him.

Separation threatened 33:1-6

Presence promised 33:7-17

After their failure, God changes the plan.

They will enter the land, but God's going to send an angel to give them the land.

He won't go with them because He'd have to destroy them because of their sin.

Moses goes out to meet with God, as was his custom.

He expresses his concern.

If God doesn't go, HE won't go!

INCIDENT # 3:

JOSHUA STAYS IN THE TENT OF MEETING 33:7-11

A different "tent of meeting"—a place where God met with men—*until* the Tabernacle was built.

It was a tent outside the camp; the Tabernacle was in the center of the camp.

When people wanted to know God's will, they went there to meet with Him.

When Moses went it was different.

When he went, everyone knew it!

Moses visited this tent whenever he desired to meet with God.

God visibly came down to meet with Him.

The pillar of cloud was a demonstration that God was meeting with Moses.

Whenever that happened, the people worshiped.

What did Joshua do?

Only Moses goes to the tent of meeting, to meet God, when HE's there!

But, wait, there's Joshua again—present in the tent!

Joshua always seems to be around, as a witness to these encounters between Moses and Yahweh. He saw their interaction.

Joshua observes the face to face conversation between God and Moses.

It becomes the basis for his own desire for that kind of relationship with God.

When Moses goes back to "life as usual," administering among the people of God, Joshua stays at the tent of meeting.

How would that impact your life?

It seems that Joshua had a continual, ongoing desire to meet with God.

He may have had a ministry function at the tent.

It's still significant that, in his preparation,

Joshua is determined to stay

—at the place where people go to inquire of the Lord

—at the place where God meets His people.

He lives with a continual reminder of God's presence with His people.

God is present in the midst of His people.

He certainly knew what was going on when Moses had his face to face encounters with God.

He, of all people, understood what God meant when He said,

“As I have been with Moses, so I will be with you.”

He was there to see it all!

What an exciting promise!

“I’m going to have that kind of relationship with God too!”

How important is it to us that we have the privilege of a face to face encounter with God?

Do we take advantage of the offer?

Is it important for US to spend time alone with God?

After examining these passages and observing Joshua’s preparation to lead the people of God, what do you think God desires for us as His people today?

THREE MAIN LESSONS:

1. IT TAKES TIME TO DEVELOP MATURITY FOR LEADERSHIP.

Joshua served with Moses for years, as he was prepared to take Moses’ place.

He proved himself faithful over time.

He did not receive instant recognition/prominence.

Paul tells Timothy, *“Don’t be quick to lay hands on people.”*

It takes time to mature and to demonstrate faithfulness.

Part of training for future leadership involves submission to present leadership—following those God places over us!

2. GOD REQUIRES FAITHFULNESS

IN THE TASKS HE GIVES US TODAY,

TO PREPARE US FOR MINISTRY TOMORROW!

3. WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE BALANCE BETWEEN GOD’S SOVEREIGN CONTROL AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

Only GOD can win the battle—He gives us victory!

But, God DOES call us to fight the battle.

God uses Joshua as His instrument to accomplish His purpose.

WHAT ABOUT US?

WHERE ARE WE IN GOD’S TRAINING PROCESS?

Are we willing to learn from others?

Are we faithful in carrying out the responsibilities God has given us today?

Do we understand difference between what only GOD can do, and what He expects US to do?