



A Systematic Expository Study on the book of JOSHUA

STUDY 3: FOLLOWING A LEADER WHO IS UNDER AUTHORITY **Joshua 1:10-18.**

God had commanded Joshua, **“Have not I commanded thee?”** (Joshua 1:9) and Joshua was ready to obey God implicitly. He was commanded to **“observe to do according to ALL the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee”** (Joshua 1:7). So he did. **“As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.”** (Joshua 11:15). Joshua was a man under authority throughout his ministerial life. Leaders and **“officers of the people”** followed him because he himself was a leader under authority. The Lord touched, moved, and bent the will and heart of the people to obey and follow him because he also consistently obeyed and followed the Lord. It is striking to note how the word **“commanded”** is repeated in chapter one. **“Do according to all which Moses commanded thee”** (verse 7). **“Have not I commanded thee?”** (verse 9). **“Then Joshua commanded the officers.”** (verse 10). **“Pass through the host and command the people”** (verse 11). **“Remember the word which Moses commanded you.”** (verse 13). **“All that thou commandest us we will do.”** (verse 16). **“Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death.”** (verse 18). No wonder this generation possessed the Promised Land. Their leader obeyed God, the officers obeyed their leader, the people obeyed the officers and God was faithful in fulfilling His promises on behalf of the nation. Following a leader who himself submits to authority, we shall possess our possessions without delay.

PROMPT RESPONSE TO DIVINE COMMISSION

Joshua 1:10,11; Galatians 1:15,16; Psalm 119:32, 60; Luke 9:59-62; Matthew 4:19-22; 1 Kings 19:19-21; 1 Timothy 4:11,12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,12,14.

God had commissioned and commanded Joshua and his response was prompt and immediate. He did not procrastinate; he did not delay his obedience. **“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people.”** He did not act before God spoke; he would not run ahead of God. But once God spoke, there was no tardiness but prompt obedience. That is ever the conduct of one whose heart is committed to honouring and glorifying God. There is no **“halting between two opinions”**; there is no waiting for **“a convenient season”**; **“conferring with flesh and blood”**; there will be no **“great (vacillating) thoughts of heart”**, no **“great (indefinite) searchings of heart.”** (1 Kings 18:21; Acts 24:25; Galatians 1:16; Judges 5:15,16).

Procrastination is an evidence of a lack of heart for the divine precepts and an absence of concern for the divine glory. When there is an earnest bent of heart towards God, we shall not linger. **“I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments”** (Psalm 119:60).

Restitution will not be delayed, evangelism will not be delayed, and obedience to **“thus saith the Lord”** will not be delayed, when the heart is truly in love with the Lord. Once a duty is discovered, it will be discharged immediately.

“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people”. He commanded, he did not beg, plead, suggest or ask for what the officers and the people may feel like doing. In commanding the officers, he was rightly exerting the authority with which God had endowed him. As the servant of the Lord, he was himself subject to the will of his Master, but as the true leader of God’s people, he should exercise authority and control over them. The true minister of the gospel will not conduct himself as a blatant dictator; neither will he act as a cringing, servile coward.

There is a happy medium between being an overbearing Diotrefes and a compromising Aaron (3 John 9,10; Exodus 32:1,2,21,22). **“Pass through the host, and command the people.”** The officers were also to command the people. Each level of leadership has authority and control over the people under them. Where there is no honour or respect for the leader immediately above us, there can be no sustained revival and there will not be the expected progress in our ministry and service. **“Prepare you victuals.”** If we are going to be strong for the journey and the battles ahead, we must be well-fed with the Bread of life, properly nourished in the words of faith. **“Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan.”** To pass over Jordan, they were to prepare food, not boats. Joshua had faith in God and expected that as they passed over the Red Sea miraculously so will they pass over Jordan through the unfailing power of God. His language expressed faith and full confidence in God. For a leader commissioned and commanded by God, faith is seeing himself as God sees him, seeing the enemies as God sees them, seeing obstacles as God sees them, seeing the promised land as already given by God, only to be possessed as God’s people move in.

PURPOSEFUL RESOLUTION TO KEEP DECLARED COMMITMENTS

Joshua 1:12-15; Numbers 32:1-7, 16-25, 31, 32; 30:2; Psalm 15:1,4; Ecclesiastes 5:4-6; Proverbs 20:6; 1 Corinthians 4:1,2.

“The Reubenites, the Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh” were called upon to **“remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded”** them. The reference is to what is recorded in Numbers chapter 32. The two and half tribes had asked for their portion on the other side of Jordan. Moses had granted their request on condition that they would go over Jordan to fight side by side with the rest of Israel against the Canaanites. They had promised Moses that they would play their part in the conquest of Canaan. Now Joshua told them, **“remember”**. Joshua had no new commandment for them, only **“the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you.”** In so doing, he complied with his commission, for the LORD had bidden him to **“observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded thee”** (verse 7), and this was one of those things (Numbers 32:28-30). The two and half tribes did not say that with the death of Moses, they were no longer under obligation to keep their word. They assured Joshua that they were resolute and would keep their commitments to the Lord. Our covenant and commitment is with the Lord. Even if the leader is dead, God is still alive and we must pay our vows and keep on rendering obedience to Christ our Lord and eternal Master.

This is the faithfulness expected from every servant of God, from every **“minister of the Word”** whose ministry will be blessed by God.

PROMISED READINESS TO OBEY DIRECT COMMANDS

Joshua 1:16-18; Numbers 32:25; Deuteronomy 5:27; 1 Peter 2:13-15, 18; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Samuel 15:23; Deuteronomy 17:11-13; Psalm 68:6; Hebrews 12:25,28.

“All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.” That was a new generation of Israelites. The mixed multitudes had all died in the wilderness. The disobedient and the rebellious had been purged or taken away. The rest were ready to obey. When the people are willing and ready to obey the officers, and the officers are all willing and ready to obey their leader Joshua; when all the tribes are willing and ready to obey all of God’s Word coming through their leader, within three days, they will pass over Jordan. God is ready to take all of us over this Jordan. No power can frustrate the plan of God for our lives if only we can obey God with a perfect heart. As they pledged their unwavering obedience to God and to Joshua, so should we do. Then victory will be certain. They told Joshua, **“only be thou strong and of a good courage.”** They had no message of their own to give Joshua, only what God had already told him. That is a worthy example for us in encouraging our leaders. Then in unity, they decided and determined to deal with anyone or any group of people who will rebel against the authority of the leader. They kept their word and God kept His promises to them. They possessed their possession.

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