



Twelve Stages in the Bible - Conquest

Joshua

1. Joshua

2. The Conquest

We are in a series of sermons, which I have entitled, "12 Stages in the Bible." In these messages, we have been catching the big picture of the story of the Bible by looking at the major historical eras in the Bible. We have identified 12 of these eras, or stages, as I have called them: Creation, Patriarchs, Exodus, Conquest, Judges, Kingdom, Exile, Return, Silence, Gospel, Church, and Missions. [\[1\]](#) This morning, we come to our fourth stage in our study. We come to the stage entitled, "Conquest."

In recent weeks, we have looked at The Creation, The Patriarchs, and The Exodus. Each of these stages tie together to tell the story of the Bible. God **created** a world, perfect and pure, but soon afterwards, what was once glorious and pure was now marred with sin. Man rebelled against God and plunged the world into sin. So, God destroyed the world with a flood. Yet, this still didn't change the heart of men. But rather than giving up on the human race, in His grace, God chose a people for himself. He made a covenant with Abraham, the father of all **patriarchs**. God promised that He would make of him a great nation, with many descendants. God promised He would give him a land in which this nation would dwell. God promised that He would bless his descendants, which blessing would extend to all the families of the earth. Though the descendants of Abraham were disobedient and faithless, God has remained faithful to His covenant with them. Even hundreds of years later, when they were in distress in Egypt, God delivered them out of their bondage. This is known as the **Exodus**, which we looked at last week.

This morning, we come to the conquest. By "conquest," we mean, "the taking of the promised land." As Israel exited Egypt, the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was there, ready to be taken. The story of how Israel took the land is told in the book of Joshua. The story of the book of Joshua is set up in chapter 1.

Joshua 1:1-2

Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel."

Here we see Joshua introduced. He is described as the "son of Nun" (verse 1). He is described as "Moses' servant" (verse 1). He is commissioned the task of taking the mantle from Moses, who was dead, to lead the people into the promised land (verse 2) (which ties back to the patriarchs).

Joshua was given a huge task, but the promises that God makes to Joshua are equally vast. Consider them in verses 3-5, ...

Joshua 1:3-5

Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. From the wilderness [in the south] and this Lebanon [in the north], even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates [in the east], all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea [in the west] toward the setting of the sun will be your territory. No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

These promises would have come to Joshua as a huge comfort. God will give them the land. Every place where he walks will be given into his hand (verse 3). The territory before them was vast (verse 4). And yet, no one would be able to stand before him (verse 5). God would never leave him (verse 5). Verse 6 begins the exhortation to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."

Again, I hope that you are captured by the continuity of this story that I have been telling the past few weeks. Here is a reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are called, the "fathers." God had promised a land to them. And now, Joshua would be the man to bring them into the land.

God told Joshua to "be strong and courageous" (verse 6). In fact, three times in these first nine verses is Joshua told the same thing. Verse 7 says, "Only be strong and very courageous." Verse 9 says, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua was facing the task of leading somewhere near a million people into the land. God told him to have courage in the task.

I love the way that God framed His exhortation. He didn't say, "Be strong and courageous, so *that* you will give this people possession of the

land" (verse 6). He didn't say, "Be strong and courageous, *so that* the LORD your God will be with you" (verse 9). Instead, God said, "Be strong and courageous, *because* you shall give this people possession of the land" (verse 6). God said, "Be strong and courageous, *because* the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (verse 9). I trust that you see the difference. He tells Joshua to be bold, not because his success depends upon his courage. Rather, he tells Joshua to be bold, because God had guaranteed his success.

These are the sorts of exhortations that God gives to us. "Be bold! Be strong! Be courageous! Because I am with you." The little child is bold to stand up against the bully, as long as his big brother is with him. We boldly cross into dangerous territory when we have a military escort. We can be bold in our faith, because Jesus, Himself has said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Couple that with knowing that "God causes all things to work together for the good to those who love God and who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28), and we can have courage to be very bold with the gospel of Christ.

If anyone was able to do this, it was Joshua. See, Joshua didn't come out of nowhere. One of the things that struck me most in my study this week is the position that Joshua played in the days of Moses, though nobody seems to notice.

What do you know about Joshua? I'm not asking you about the Joshua of the book of Joshua. But, I'm asking you about the Joshua before the book of Joshua. God was preparing this man for this moment. Would the full facts known about any great men who accomplished great things for God, you would be able to see how it was that God was preparing them.

I think about Charles Spurgeon. He was the greatest preacher of the 19th century. He began pastoring at New Park Street Chapel in London at the age of 19. On the one hand, you say, "Incredible!" To be sure, he was greatly gifted of the Lord. But, little attention is paid to the fact that his father and grand-father were both preachers as well. He grew up in a godly home with godly examples all around. With a father and grand-father who could answer his questions and build into his life.

I think about John MacArthur, arguable the best preacher of our day. He is a fifth generation preacher. His father and grandfather and great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather were all pastors. Such a legacy does something to a man, when he is surrounded by a wealth of godliness and knowledge.

I'm no different. I'm not a self-made man. I've come from a heritage of a great mother and father who have demonstrated love and submission for 50 years this morning. [2](#) Every year of my life, I have seen them attempting to work out God's plan in their marriage.

Joshua, likewise, was prepared for his tour of duty, because God prepared him for that day. My message this morning has two points. I want to spend the first portion of our time together looking at the life of Joshua. In this point, we will look at the ways in which God was preparing him, long before the death of Moses. And then, we'll look at the story of the conquest, paying particular attention to God's role in the conquest. It may surprise you. It surely surprised me this week. Anyway, here's my first point, ...

1. Joshua

How appropriate this point is for Father's Day! The application of this text will naturally flow to those of us who are fathers. Just as God was preparing Joshua for the day of battle, so too, we would do well to train our sons for their battle in this life.

In order to look at this, we need to go back into the Pentateuch. Last week, we ended our study of the book of Exodus in chapter 17. It's where I want to begin this week. When we left off last week, we saw the people grumbling because they had no water. But, after the LORD gave them the water from the rock, God gave them their first military victory.

Exodus 17:8-13

Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us and go out, fight against Amalek Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

This is the first mention of Joshua in the Pentateuch. We see him as the commander of the army, who fought against Amalek (verse 9). We don't know how old Joshua is at this time, but he's old enough to be a commander of the army. The best estimate is that he is somewhere near 40 years old. The battle was such that it was clearly the LORD who was fighting. When Moses held his hands up, the people of Israel prevailed. But, when Moses could no longer hold his hands up, the Amalekites prevailed. Eventually, due to the help of Aaron and Hur--to hold up Moses' hands-- Israel prevailed.

I don't think that it was lost on Joshua as to who was really fighting the battle. He learned that day the lesson of Psalm 20:7, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" (NIV). I don't think that it was an accident that God was preparing Joshua for future battles. "Joshua, when you go out into the battle, remember where the secret of your strength lies. It's not with you. It's with the LORD." So also with you. God is the secret of your strength.

The next time that Joshua is mentioned in the Pentateuch is found in Exodus 24. We know much about how Moses was up on Mount Sinai, receiving the law from the LORD. But, little do we know about the role of Joshua during this time.

Exodus 24:12-13

Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with

the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction." So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

Throughout the next eight chapters, we read of all the things that the LORD gave to Moses. We don't hear anything about Joshua, until Moses is coming down from the mountain, in chapter 32, which is a sad chapter. Moses was up on the mountain receiving the law, and the people down below were worshiping idols. Let's pick it up in verse 15, ...

Exodus 32:15-18

Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one side and the other. The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets. Now when Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a sound of war in the camp." But he said, "It is not the sound of the cry of triumph, nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat; But the sound of singing I hear."

It's quite clear that Joshua wasn't with Moses the entire time, because only after coming down the mountain did he meet Joshua on the way. It's also clear here that Joshua, along with Moses, wasn't quite sure of what was going on. So, where was Joshua? I think that he was part-way up the mountain, praying for Moses, his master as he was meeting with God. Joshua had a 40 day experience with God on Mount Sinai as well. Maybe it wasn't with the glory of God, but it was close! Being half way up the mountain kept Joshua from participating in the idolatry below.

Surely this was a part of the preparation of Joshua to lead the people into the promised land. Again, it's a bit like his preparation on the battlefield at Rephidim. It's training in the ways of God. It's training in the ways of prayer.

We see the emphasis of Joshua being a praying man coming in Exodus, chapter 33. It regards the tent of meeting. Moses had this tent that was a good distance away from the tent (verse 7). Anyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent (verse 7). Consider the text, ...

Exodus 33:9-11

Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Joshua stayed in the tent. Now, why do you think that he stayed in the tent? I believe that he stayed in the tent to pray. Moses was speaking "face to face" with the LORD in this tent. When Moses left, Joshua remained to commune with the Lord. Do you see how God is preparing Joshua to be a spiritual leader for the nation of Israel? Spiritual leaders are cultured in the practice of prayer. Joshua didn't come out of nowhere to lead the people of Israel. He could lead the people of God, because he followed God in the closet.

The next time we see Joshua in the Pentateuch is in the book of Numbers. We learn of him on the occasion when two men, Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp (Numbers 11:26). Now, we don't know exactly what this means. It may simply mean that they were preaching. Or, it may have a reference to God's Spirit being upon these men, inspiring them with His words, which they were, in turn, giving to the people of God. It may have been a supernatural thing, predicting what would take place in the future. Or, it may have been entirely natural, as they were preaching from the law which Moses gave. Whatever it means, Joshua took offense at their actions.

Number 11:27-29

So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them." But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"

Joshua had been Moses' personal assistant. He was Moses' right hand man. He learned from Moses. He was taught by Moses. Moses certainly disciplined this man. He cultivated within him the spiritual attitudes necessary to lead the people of God.

Here, we see Moses teaching Joshua a thing or two about humility. Moses took no offense at others arising and pitching in to help lead the people. Moses knew that it isn't about him. Rather, it's all about the LORD. I believe that Joshua learned a thing or two about humility on that day. He learned from the most humble man on the face of the earth, according to Numbers 12:3.

Why was Moses such a great leader? Because He was such a humble man! What would be the secret to Joshua's success in the future? He was a humble man, who learned this from Moses

We have time this morning to look at one last vignette of Joshua. It comes in Numbers 13. **Not only was Joshua a man who knew that God fought the battles; not only was Joshua a praying man; not only was Joshua taught humility; but, Joshua was a man of faith as well.**

Perhaps you remember this story. Just after Israel had been redeemed out of slavery in Egypt, Moses sent twelve spies to spy out the land of Canaan. Their names are given in verses 4-15 (of Numbers 13). Among them are Caleb and Joshua. This is significant, because ten of the

twelve came back with a bad report. They said, ...

Numbers 13:27-29

We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.

Their counsel comes in verse 31, ...

Numbers 13:31-33

"We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.

In other words, "The inhabitants of the land are too much for us. We dare not try to take the land from these people, because they will annihilate us!" But two of the twelve spies sang to a different tune. They trusted the LORD. In chapter 14, verse 6, we see Joshua and Caleb tearing their clothes, in opposition to what these spies had said. Then, they spoke to the congregation, saying, ...

Numbers 14:7-9

"The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us--a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

In other words, "By all means let's take the land. If God is for us, who can be against us! Let's not rebel against what God has told us.

Well, the people didn't like the advice of Joshua and Caleb. According to verse 10, they attempted to stone them with stones. It was only the appearance of the glory of the LORD which distracted them from doing so (verse 10). And the verdict was clear: All in Israel (20 years and upward) would die in the wilderness, except for Joshua and Caleb. God said ...

Numbers 14:29-30

"Your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun."

And so, Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years in which everyone, 20 years and upward, passed away, except for Joshua and Caleb. The fact that Joshua was ready to lead the people in the promised land was a testimony to his faith in God.

Well, after 40 years of wandering (and the death of many in Israel), they come to the precipice of the promised land. And Joshua, who was probably 80 years old at the time is ready to lead them. God had prepared him to lead the people.

Fathers, what are you doing with your children to prepare them to fight their battles? Are you teaching them that God is the sovereign one who fights that battles of this life? Are you teaching them to be children of prayer? Are you teaching them humility? Are you modeling faith before them, that they too might believe and trust in God?

We are now ready for our second point, ...

2. The Conquest

At the beginning of the book of Joshua, we find Israel gathered together at the edge of the Jordan. They are on the precipice of taking the land. God's instructions to Joshua is to "cross this Jordan, you and all this people" (1:2). The book of Joshua describes how they did it.

The book is filled with excitement. It is high-impact drama at it's best. There is espionage. There are traitors. There are wars. There are unusual victories. There are unexpected defeats. There are tactical strategies that win the wars. There are deceitful treaties signed. There are alliances made. Nations rise and nations fall. It's all in the book of Joshua. It's the sort of book that you just can't put down at night.

Now, the actual conquest of the land began in chapter 2, with the sending of two spies into Jericho, just over the Jordan river and into the land. These men find housing in the home of Rahab, the harlot (2:1). She had heard of God's dealing with the nations. So, she said to them,

...

Joshua 2:9-13

I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer

because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore, please swear to me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.

Because of her faith, the spies promised to do as she had said (verse 14). The actual conquest of Jericho comes in chapter 6. In verse 1, we read of how Jericho was prepared for the attack, "Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in." In the days of the Bible, walls surrounded the city for protection. When an invading army was coming up against you, often the best strategy was to lock the doors and fight them from the top of the wall. This was Jericho's strategy.

God's plan to conquer this nation was unique (to say the least).

Joshua 6:2-5

The LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors. You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days. Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead.

By all human reasoning, this was a strange plan, sure to fail. I mean, whoever heard of taking a city with horns and shouting? But Joshua, a man of faith followed God's plan. They marched around the city the first day (verses 6-11). They marched around the city the second day (verses 12-14). They continued on the third day, and the fourth day, and the fifth day, and the sixth day. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times. Then "the people shouted, and the priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city" (6:20). According to verse 21, "They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword."

Now, let me ask you, who gained the victory at Jericho? It certainly wasn't the Israelites, was it? They incapacitated a city by blowing horns and shouting. But, God brought the wall down. God gave them the victory. It's why verse 27 says, "the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land."

Now, unfortunately, all was not well inside the Israelite camp. We read, ...

Joshua 7:1

But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.

In other words, when Israel had conquered Jericho, Achan took some of the booty for himself, and God was not pleased. And so, when the people of Israel came against the city of Ai, they were defeated (7:5). Now, why did they lose? There was no earthly reason why they should have lost. When the spies went out to spy the land, they determined that it was an easy victory, so, they only sent a few thousand men (7:2-3). They lost, because they had lost the favor of God because of the sin of Achan. The rest of chapter 7 tells the story of the sin of Achan, who saw the silver and gold, and coveted them, and took them, and concealed them in his tent (7:21). He and his family paid for the sin with their lives (7:25).

Now, once the sin had been purged from Israel, what do you suppose happened? Surprise, surprise, the people of Israel conquered Ai. The story is told in chapter 8. They conquer the city from a surprise ambush from the rear. It's good military stuff. So, why did the Israelites conquer Ai? Because God gave it into their hands. Before the victory, the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand" (7:18).

God gains the victories. This is the story of the book of Joshua. You will miss the point of the book of Joshua if you think that it's a book about a people who are military geniuses. It's not. This is a book about God's power to give the people a land.

Continuing on into chapter 9, we see a sad chapter in the story of the conquest. There were some people in the land from Gibeon. "They heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai" (verse 3) and they were afraid for their lives. So, they concocted a plan. Here are the details, ...

Joshua 9:4-6

They also acted craftily and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins worn-out and torn and mended, and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled. They went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us."

It's a great plan. Gibeon knows full well that they can't win a straight up battle with Israel. So, they seek to deceive their potential conquerors. Such is the strategy of those who know that they can't win straight-up. They will seek to deceive.

To the disgrace of Israel, verse 15 gives the result, "Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them." When it was discovered that the Gibeonites were actually living in the land, Joshua called for them and asked them, "Why have you deceived us?" (verse 22). And then, the answer comes, ...

Joshua 9:24-25

Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us.

And so, they enslaved them and made them "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (verse 27). Now, the big question, "Why was Israel deceived in this matter?" The answer is really quite simple: the leaders refused to pray. Back in verse 14, we read, "The men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the LORD." Had they sought God's counsel, they would have destroyed these people. But, they sought to conquer the land on their own strength, and in so doing, they failed. I trust that you are seeing how prominent this theme is of God's role in conquering the land.

Now, in chapter 10, again, we see the LORD exerting His sovereignty to grant Israel victory. The chapter begins with five kings making a treaty with one another to fight against Gibeon, who had betrayed themselves into the hands of the Israelites. Because of the treaty that Israel had made with Gibeon, Israel was obligated to come and fight against these five kings. And upon going up to fight, the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you" (10:8). And God fulfilled His promise.

Joshua 10:10-11

And the LORD confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. As they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.

Now, who gained the victory against these kings? It was the LORD! In verses 12 and 13, we read about how God lengthened the day, so that the victory might be complete, "The sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies" (verse 13). Who can stop the sun and extend the day, but the LORD? Who can stop the moon and extend the day, but the LORD?

The conquest of the land of Canaan is all about the LORD giving Israel the land which he had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Much of the rest of the book is devoted to a detailed history of all of the lands and kings that Israel conquered and how the land was divided among them. The end of chapter 10 tells how they took the Negev, that is the south. Chapter 11 tells of how Israel took the territories in the north. The climax of the book comes in chapter 21, ...

Joshua 21:43-45

So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

How did Israel get the land? Their military power? Their military might? No, it was the LORD who "gave" it to them. The land that God had sworn to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he gave to Israel (verse 43). He gave them rest from all of his enemies (verse 44). He fulfilled all of His promises (verse 45). This is the story of the conquest. It's the story of God making good on His promises!

I want to finish my message this morning with an extended reading of a portion of the last chapter of Joshua. It gives a summary of the patriarchs, the exodus, and the conquest. And it does so in a way that God takes all the credit.

Joshua 24:1-13

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. Then **I took** your father Abraham from beyond the River, and **led** him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. To Isaac **I gave** Jacob and Esau, and to Esau **I gave** Mount Seir to possess it; but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. Then **I sent** Moses and Aaron, and **I plagued** Egypt by what I did in its midst; and afterward **I brought you out. I brought your fathers out** of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. But when they cried out to the LORD, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them and covered them; and your own eyes saw **what I did** in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time. Then **I brought** you into the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan, and they fought with you; and **I gave them into your hand**, and you took possession of their land when **I destroyed** them before you. Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel, and he sent and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and **I delivered you** from his hand. You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Girgashite, the Hivite and the Jebusite Thus **I gave them into your hand**. Then **I sent**

the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow. I **gave** you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant."

The application comes in verses 14 and 15, ...

Joshua 24:14-15

Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

This is my exhortation to you as well. Fear the LORD. Serve the LORD. If you don't want to serve the LORD. Then, you can choose for yourself who you want to serve. Perhaps you want to serve the god of money. Perhaps you want to serve the god of your security or the god of your internet or the god of your family. Whatever god you want to serve, then serve that god.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on June 21, 2009 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] These stages are from the book, *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*, by Max Anders. It's an excellent book to help you grasp the main storyline of the Bible.

[2] On the day that this message was preached, it was my parent's 50th wedding anniversary. They were married exactly 50 years ago, to the day -- June 21, 1959. During the service, we had an opportunity to honor them and rejoice with them on this day. My father described what it was like 50 years ago. It was a hot, humid Sunday (just like the day this message was preached). They were married in the afternoon, shortly after church in the morning.