

Joshua – the man who stopped time to finish God’s work

Joshua 10:12 *Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.*

Joshua 10:13 *And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.*

Joshua 10:14 *And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.*

Joshua, the son of Nun, is a unique character in the Bible. From his youth he distinguished himself as a boy who loved God deeply and followed Moses, the servant of God, wholeheartedly. I pray today that the life of young Joshua will inspire my listeners, the young in particular, to dedicate themselves to a life of service and bold faith for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, where did Joshua learn to appreciate and value the importance of time? We will need to go back to his youth in Egypt and join the timeless story of the Exodus, beginning with the most fearful night in the history of Israel.

Exodus 12:23 *For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.*

We are in the season called Easter in the western calendar. However, this term is a misnomer actually – the biblical name is the Passover. The 7th century English monk, Bede, wrote that Easter comes from Ēostre, the Germanic Spring goddess in whose honor feasts were held in April. For us, the people of the true God, the Passover is about the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that saves us from sin and death. In Egypt, God “***passed through*** to smite the Egyptians”, but he “***passed over***” his people when he saw the blood on the doorposts. Hallelujah! Only those whom God passed over can celebrate this season; death must pass over us and not descend upon us! The Egyptians, whom God passed through, were left in utter devastation. Hence, let us never forget – we are commemorating death passing over us. The Blood of Jesus saves us from eternal death. Let us say to death, “pass over me, in Jesus name!”

John 6:51 *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

Joshua may have been the firstborn of his family. We can be certain, if this was the case, that this young boy was shaken to his roots that night. Death came for the firstborn sons; the flower and strength of the family and nation. Young people normally never spend much time thinking about their mortality; they leave this to the elderly. What matters most often is the present, friends, play and fun. However, that night Joshua was forced to reevaluate his life and priorities. I pray that God will speak to some young people today and remind you of the fragility of life and the transience of time. Who knows how many Egyptian firstborn sons Joshua knew personally? Everything changed that night – God passed through Egypt and decimated the firstborn sons, but he passed over the Hebrews when he saw the blood of the lamb. The sight of the blood on the doorposts and the terror of death passing over imprinted into the psyche of Joshua the value and urgency of using time wisely forever. I hope and pray the same will transpire when the young partake of the Lord's Supper this season, once the lockdowns ease and you can gather together with your pastor in church. May it be a turning point in your life – a Joshua moment!

Exodus 24:13 And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

Exodus 32:17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.

We now see the effects of the Passover night upon the life of young Joshua. He was soon called the “minister of Moses”. There certainly were many other men who were more mature and experienced than Joshua, but somehow this young man distinguished himself by his commitment and dedication to Moses. Young people, God will reward your commitment to him! May he see a Joshua-like spirit in your heart! Of the two million souls with Moses, God selected this youth, Joshua, to approach to the base of Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:13). We are not told how Joshua survived for forty days and nights at the base but we do know that he somehow had not deserted Moses, for he was also puzzled at the commotion and noise coming from the camp. He had no idea that Aaron and the children of Israel were committing idolatry. Staying with Moses at Sinai was not a one-off occurrence in Joshua's life; we see this pattern repeatedly.

Exodus 33:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Staying close to the man of God and the house of God will protect and shield you from many sins, young people! Who knows whether Joshua would have been enticed like Aaron

had he decided to leave the base of Sinai and join the others. It pays richly to wait on Moses! While the elderly Aaron lived to regret his actions, the young Joshua had nothing to regret. Whom you decide to wait upon will come back to either bless or stain your memory.

Isaiah 40:30 *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:*

Isaiah 40:31 *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

There is a hasty spirit in youth. Without proper guidance and close mentorship, the young can suffer much hardship. Thankfully, Joshua's decision to stick close to his mentor, Moses, guided him into the perfect will of God. Once, when Joshua heard some individuals prophesying outside the camp when God put his spirit on them, he wrongly assumed this was contrary to God's will. "And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them" (Numbers 11: 27&28). He was zealous, but wrongly so, for God's order, but Moses was there to channel his zeal. But, woe to the young person who has no godly mentor; such zeal can only lead to confusion and destruction. We see this today in the many young souls that travel to hot spots in the Middle East to join fanatic groups, like ISIS. I had a student in Norway who did so once. Lack of guidance and mentorship entices such youth to leave the comfort and affluence of the West and live lives of misery with terrorists. Young people, yoke the passion of your youth to your Moses, the pastor and other saints who can guide you. You will avoid the sin of Aaron.

Numbers 13:16 *These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.*

Moses represented the old order. His name meant "drawn out from the water". God drew Israel out of the waters of affliction of Egypt. Moses will forever, by the grace of God, be associated with the great deliverance from the hundreds of years of misery in Egypt, the foreign land of the oppressor. Now, however, Moses looked prophetically at the young Joshua and realized that he represented the future of the people of God. Joshua was chosen to take the people into God's land – the land of Canaan. Clearly, Joshua pointed to the coming of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. His name was changed to foreshadow the coming deliverance through Jesus; the true Lamb of God. Therefore, God prompted Moses to change the name of this young man from Oshea to Jehoshua. Oshea means "save, deliver" but Jehoshua means "Jehovah is salvation". There is a big difference. You see, no one can enter heaven without

looking to Jesus – he is God, our savior and deliverer. No other name can give us the power to enter the blessed gates of heaven except the name of Jesus. The Israelites followed this changed name, which pointed to Jesus, in their battles, judgement and even in the sharing of the land – all was done by Joshua (Jehoshua). We, today, are doing battle in the name of Jesus Christ, judgment will be in the name of Jesus Christ, and this same Lord Jesus Christ will divide the inheritance for us in heaven.

Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Joshua took Israel into Canaan. Young Apostolics – you may be the ones, after we are gone, to see the return of Jesus. We may be your Moses! Thank you for listening to us and allowing us to guide and counsel you. But, I wonder if soon you must take over and lead the people to meet the Lord Jesus Christ who is returning soon. If I am speaking by the Spirit, then we must encourage you, as Moses did Joshua. “But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see” (Deuteronomy 3:28). Be of good courage, we say to you in Jesus mighty name! Let me conclude with what we started. Joshua’s acute awareness of time.

Joshua 10:13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

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The visitation of death in Egypt upon the firstborn ingrained in Joshua the importance of redeeming time. Joshua dedicated his youth to the service of God. Now, many years later, perhaps close to the age of 100, he continues to wisely use his time for the glory of God. In fact, he is the only man to stop time (i.e. the Sun and Moon) in the name of Jehovah, so he could finish the work of God – defeat the Canaanites and divide the land among God’s people, as the Lord commanded him. His youthful zeal for God never diminished and he demonstrated to the pagan Canaanites that the Sun and Moon are not gods (although God commanded them to rule over the day and night), but servants of the most high God. He showed them that the God of Israel alone is God. The earth stopped rotating and the cover of night and darkness failed to deliver the Canaanites from Joshua. Come, young people, and the not so young, let us emulate the life of Joshua – a life that even time honored and stood still.