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Second Chances: The Book of Joshua



The book of Joshua marks the transition from the leadership of Moses to that of Joshua. It begins with the story of the Israelites entering the Promised Land and ends with them settled in that land.

Joshua, indeed, had a tough act to follow. That is, to pick up where Moses had left off. But that challenge was only the beginning. Joshua was to do what Moses never did: take the nation, after 40 years in the desert, across the Jordan and into Canaan, according to the promise that God had made to the fathers years before.

“Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel” (*Josh. 1:2, NKJV*).

The key to the whole story is found here, in the Lord’s words to Joshua: they are going to enter “‘the land which I [YHWH] am giving to them.’”

Yes, Joshua is not going to do it alone, but only through the power and guidance of the Lord, who would have brought the people into the land a generation earlier had they obeyed their end of the covenant. Unfortunately, they didn’t, and thus, they met the consequences of their actions.

During the preceding 40 years, Israel had faced the negative side of the covenant. Because of the people’s rebellion against God, the entire adult generation who had experienced the wonders and marvels of the Exodus, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, perished in the desert. Four of the five books of Moses deal with what

happened to them as they wandered in the desert all that time. Now, under the leadership of Joshua, the second generation was ready to undertake the challenges of possessing the land.

“Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, ‘Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed’ ” (*Deut. 31:7, 8, NKJV*).

The promises of God given to the patriarchs and to Moses are about to be fulfilled. There is an air of expectation and excitement, a new beginning for the people, long homeless and dispossessed. God has been faithful in delivering them from slavery, and He can certainly be trusted to fulfill His promises concerning the land.

“The primary purpose of the book of Joshua is to describe Israel’s entry into the land of promise, the conquest of the land, and its division among the tribes. This purpose underlies the message of the book, namely, the faithfulness of God in fulfilling the promise of land made to Abraham. The book emphasizes God’s faithfulness to His covenant promises (*Josh. 21:43–45*).”—*Andrews Bible Commentary* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2020), p. 365.

We will discover together that, although the book of Joshua was written more than three millennia ago, the world in which we live today is not so different from that of Joshua’s in its spiritual challenges. We might face challenges of a different nature, but nonetheless there are challenges, especially spiritual ones, that threaten our security, our faith, and the fulfillment of the mission God has entrusted to His people. The example of Joshua will certainly inspire us to claim God’s promises concerning our time and to succeed through His power, as he did.

Though the book of Joshua was written more than three millennia ago, the world in which we live today is not so different from that of Joshua’s in its spiritual challenges.

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How to Use This Teachers Edition

“The true teacher is not content with dull thoughts, an indolent mind, or a loose memory. He constantly seeks higher attainments and better methods. His life is one of continual growth. In the work of such a teacher there is a freshness, a quickening power, that awakens and inspires his [class].”

—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 103.

To be a Sabbath School teacher is both a privilege and a responsibility. A privilege because it offers the teacher the unique opportunity to lead and guide in the study and discussion of the week's lesson so as to enable the class to have both a personal appreciation for God's Word and a collective experience of spiritual fellowship with class members. When the class concludes, members should leave with a sense of having tasted the goodness of God's Word and having been strengthened by its enduring power. The responsibility of teaching demands that the teacher is fully aware of the Scripture to be studied, the flow of the lesson through the week, the interlinking of the lessons to the theme of the quarter, and the lesson's application to life and witness.

This guide is to help teachers to fulfill their responsibility adequately. It has three segments:

- 1. Overview** introduces the lesson topic, key texts, links with the previous lesson, and the lesson's theme. This segment deals with such questions as Why is this lesson important? What does the Bible say about this subject? What are some major themes covered in the lesson? How does this subject affect my personal life?
- 2. Commentary** is the chief segment in the Teachers Edition. It may have two or more sections, each one dealing with the theme introduced in the Overview segment. The Commentary may include several in-depth discussions that enlarge the themes outlined in the Overview. The Commentary provides an in-depth study of the themes and offers scriptural, exegetical, illustrative discussion material that leads to a better understanding of the themes. The Commentary also may have scriptural word study or exegesis appropriate to the lesson. On a participatory mode, the Commentary segment may have discussion leads, illustrations appropriate to the study, and thought questions.
- 3. Life Application** is the final segment of the Teachers Edition for each lesson. This section leads the class to discuss what was presented in the Commentary segment as it impacts Christian life. The application may involve discussion, further probing of what the lesson under study is all about, or perhaps personal testimony on how one may feel the impact of the lesson on one's life.

Final thought: What is mentioned above is only suggestive of the many possibilities available for presenting the lesson and is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive in its scope. Teaching should not become monotonous, repetitious, or speculative. Good Sabbath School teaching should be Bible-based, Christ-centered, faith-strengthening, and fellowship-building.