

# Jesus our Joshua (1)

## Introduction

The tribes of Israel were standing on the verge of the Promised Land. They had been in this position before. Joshua and Caleb were ready to possess Canaan, but the people failed to trust God. They concluded that the land was filled with giants and they could not take walled cities. The conquest of a new land seemed impossible. They said, “*Let us return into Egypt*” (Numbers 13:30 and 14: 4)

Israel was confronted with the threat of conflict and rapid change. They felt they were poised on the edge of an unfamiliar new world that just seemed overwhelming. Even today in our age this is not a new experience. The fatal factor was that their fear was mixed with unbelief. The people of God were familiar with a wilderness lifestyle but now they stood on the border of a different occupied land. They had been given a covenant promise but they faced an impossible task, a hostile world, a threatening future that embraced radical change.

The church today with its Judeo-Christian heritage stands in a similar position on the edge of a foreign, rapidly changing new world. With more than a quarter of Australians without a declared religion we face a future where organised religion is retreating to a more minor role in our way of life. God had made a promise to Abraham about Canaan, but Israel was confronted with a hostile culture where people did ‘what was right in their own eyes.’ They faced a culture and a corporate way of life given to infanticide, perversion, violence and the dark arts.

In a similar way secular society today erodes any notion of a higher moral or spiritual authority. An ordered collective culture, religious freedom and human rights are increasingly threatened and curtailed. Past restraints are increasingly modified to accommodate, abortion, euthanasia, diverse sexual lifestyles and various forms of cyber corruption.

Today in the Western world Christian people are poised on the edge of a new world where their honesty, transparency and integrity are questioned at every turn. Instead of setting the moral tone of the nation, Christians are increasingly regarded with caution or even suspicion. Like the People of Israel, on the verge of a new future the Christian Church faces a daunting tomorrow, not from an overt militant paganism or military conflict but from a collective social mind-set that feeds on a ‘*political correctness*’ that is hostile to certain forms of difference and religion.

Joshua’s original name was Hoshea, “salvation” but Moses changed it to “Yehoshua” meaning “Yahweh is Salvation” (Numbers 13: 8,16) Joshua is also called ‘Yeshua’ the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name ‘**Jesus**’.

While the Old Testament text documents the conquest of Canaan and more than thirty enemy armies—Israel learned a crucial lesson. Today we are needing to learn all over again that ***Jesus is our Joshua*** and that blessing comes through trust and submission in what can sometimes appear to be impossible situations.

God's holiness brings judgement upon the pagan, immoral Canaanites. The real focus that under girds Christian people today in a society that is drifting is found in **God's covenant faithfulness to his promises through the ages**. Here we learn that victory comes through faith and obedience rather than military might, political mind-games, social engineering or numerical superiority. "*Not by might or by power but by my Spirit says the Lord.*" (Zech. 4:6), The future does not depend on human strength, manoeuvring or prowess, but upon God's Spirit for fruition.

In this book of Joshua and in these series of reflections Jesus triumphantly leads his people and he foreshadows a final victory as the one who will bring many to glory.(Hebrews 2: 10, 2 Corinthians 2:14). In these days we are called to lift our heads and to possess the land which the Lord our God gives us to possess. The future belongs to God. Jesus said, "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)

This means we can live with a certainty when it comes to facing the future. There is a sense in which the future, like the promised land is already ours to possess.

### **Reflection:**

Within sight of the Promised Land, on their first approach the Israelites turned back and perished. (Numbers chapters 13 &14) 'The people said, *'Let us return to Egypt.'* They could have made eleven days of progress, but they chose forty extra years of wandering. (Duet. 2:14).

### **How do we as Christian's respond to the challenges we face today?**

Reflect on the options of 'fight or flight' and the following passages. Matt. 26:52-55, Acts 4: 10-12, 5: 27-31, 17:16-17, 1 Tim 2: 1-4, 1 Tim. 6: 11-14.

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