

Courageous

Claiming Canaan, Lessons from the Book of Joshua

Lesson 3: Commanded (1:10-18)

It was spring, the time of barley harvest, and the melted snow of the mountains of Lebanon was making its way to the Dead Sea. The Jordan River was at flood stage; currents of swift cold water overflowed its banks up to one mile. It was a formidable sight to the Israelites and yet, God commanded: *"Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan"* (Joshua 1:11, NKJV).

The people were to prepare for new life and circumstances. They would soon face a new challenge, a new land, a new enemy. Although the Israelites had little knowledge of what the future held, they were to be purposeful while they waited for future instruction.

While nine and half tribes prepared go forward with God, others were "unmoving", forsaking God's ideal for their own. *"He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul"* (Psalm 106:15).

Read Joshua 1:10-18.

1. Describe the difference between active waiting and passive waiting.
2. Preparation is defined as "the action or process of making something ready for use or service or of getting ready for some occasion, test, or duty". Depending on what the Lord asks of an individual, active waiting may include training, study, etc.

What did active waiting include for the Israelites?

What does active waiting mean for you in your present circumstances?

3. If they were indolent, would they be ready to follow the Lord when He "parted the river"? Explain.

4. After instructing the people, Joshua turned his attention to the tribes of Ruben, Gad, the half tribe of Manasseh. What agreement appears to have been made?

Who "gave" them the land according to verse 14?

5. What directions were they given (vv.14-15)? How did their preparation differ from the other tribes?

6. Turn now to Numbers 32 and read verses 1-5.

7. For what reasons did the tribes of Ruben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh choose to remain east of the Jordan?

8. Who was involved in making the decision to stay?

9. How did their choice resemble that of Lot's in Genesis 13:10-11? How are their words similar to those in Luke 14:18-20? Also consider 1 John 2:16.

10. Do you believe that the tribes' familiarity with their surroundings contributed to their decision? Why or why not?

11. Considering God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12), why was their request disconcerting?

12. Continue reading: Numbers 32:6-15. How did their request remind Moses of their parents' refusal to enter the land 38 years before?

13. According to Numbers 32:16-32, what concessions were made to pacify Moses' concern?

14. Under what circumstances would these tribes experience God's judgment? (vv.20-23)

15. What is the difference between a sin of omission and a sin of commission? (Read James 4:17.) Do you think this applies to this situation? Explain.

16. Also read 1 Corinthians 6:12a and 10:23-24. Are we free to make decisions that are not beneficial to us or others?

17. Return to Joshua 1 and reread verses 16-18. While their efforts seemed heroic, even noble, those who crossed over the Jordan would be separated from their families for approximately 7 years. Had they entered in they would have

fought by their families' side. How can our decision to settle for less than God's best consequently affect those around us?

18. Consider their physical location in relation to the leadership, the tabernacle, and the Ark of the Covenant after they returned home. In Numbers 14:44-45, what occurred when these things were absent?

If they needed aid, where were their brethren located? Why isn't isolation ideal?

19. Why do you think these things were of no consequence to them?

20. Now read 1 Chronicles 5:23-26. Which tribes were first to be conquered by the invading Assyrians, never to return to their land?

Interestingly, the conquest of the remaining tribes did not continue until 722 B.C., some 20 years later (2 Kings 17:5-6).

21. Considering all these things, why must we obey God's commands, following Him where He leads?

In closing, read Proverbs 21:2, 14:12, and Psalm 106:14-15, then, Proverbs 4:25-27 and 3:5-6.