



BIBLE
EXPOSITOR
AND
ILLUMINATOR

Fall Quarter
September | October | November 2023

Bible Expositor and Illuminator

FALL QUARTER

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Success and Failure

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LOOKING AHEAD

Winston Churchill said success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm. He may have been humorously highlighting the need for persistence in muddling through hard tasks. But if this or any other philosophy leaves God out of the picture, it is flawed. True success always comes from a right relationship with God; failure comes from failing to trust Him. The lessons this quarter will remind us of that.

Our first unit shows God's people moving forward in bold faith. We see Joshua leading the Israelite nation in victory over the fierce Canaanite armies (lesson 1), including giants, descendants of Anak that may have been like Goliath of David's day (Josh. 11:21).

The spies who went into Jericho also succeeded when God provided them a surprising ally in Rahab (lesson 2). The Israelites' subsequent defeat of Jericho underscored again the reality that God is truly the source of success (lesson 3).

The next two lessons describe God delivering Israel from cruel oppression. Ehud did not hesitate to strike Israel's enemies (lesson 4), while Gideon needed lots of convincing (lesson 5). In the end, though, both Ehud and Gideon succeeded by trusting firmly in God.

The second unit shows vastly different results due to faithlessness. By ignoring God's direct command, Achan brought humiliation and military defeat to the whole nation (lesson 6). Rather than learning from Achan's ruin, the nation persistently rebelled against God and suffered the painful consequences (lesson 7). Finally, Israel showed the utmost disrespect for God by asking for a king (lesson 8).

The final unit provides stern warnings and real-life examples of what happens when people reject God. Joshua exhorted Israel to obey the Lord; but while they mouthed the words (lesson 9), their history shows a dismal lack of faith and obedience (lesson 10). Even David, their greatest king, transgressed God's commands in a despicable way (lesson 11). Although God sent prophets like Amos to condemn Israel (lesson 12), He ultimately handed down the worst punishment—removal from the Promised Land (lesson 13).

It seems the failures found in this quarter's lessons play out again all around us. The wealth of biblical instruction and examples, however, should inspire us to focus on God, the true source of success.

—Todd Williams.

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Formula for Success?

KENNETH SPONSLEER

Success has always been a popular topic. The secular book world is awash in titles that promote success in everything from business to diet and health to raising well-adjusted children. Surefire formulas are offered, often bolstered by compelling statistics and inspiring testimonials. Much of what is out there does offer valuable insights on various topics, and many people benefit in specific ways.

Sometimes even the Bible is cited in the prescriptions for successful living. Often this is done without much understanding of what Scripture actually teaches, but occasionally, valid biblical insights undergird the presentations. Still, the vast majority of books and articles focus on success as the world defines it, meaning the pursuit of happiness or improvement in this present life only. Spiritual realities are rarely even a concern, much less the aim.

The Bible, by contrast, cannot be reduced to a mere success manual, but it does contain principles that, if followed, promote successful living. Unlike the vast array of secular literature, however, Scripture is concerned primarily with living successfully before God—with pleasing Him and growing in His favor and love. In other words, spiritual success is the number one priority, not the ability to amass material wealth or achieve social status.

Moreover, the scriptural prescriptions for success in spiritual matters are far different from, even contrary to, the typical outlook that pervades most secular literature. What the Bible has to say about living successfully in God's sight

is rejected as foolish and unworkable by most people today (or in any era), and that is to be expected. Yet God's Word gives the only sure and reliable principles that apply to any and all situations.

What we can glean about success in God's sight from our present quarter of studies comes mainly from the first unit of lessons. What do we find there? The unit begins with God's exhortation to Joshua to be strong and courageous in carrying out his commission to lead Israel in conquering and possessing the Promised Land (Josh. 1:1-6). The second portion of the lesson (11:16-19, 21-23) reports the astonishingly successful result of that endeavor.

From the first portion, 1:1-6, we learn that strength and courage are certainly keys to success in carrying out God's mission. We are, of course, talking about spiritual strength and courage that rests on God's promises (vss. 3-4). And going further in the passage (beyond the lesson text itself), we find that God explicitly links this courage to obeying His Word (vs. 7), in Joshua's case the law given through Moses. Joshua is told to meditate on that law daily in order to do everything in it (vs. 8). Success, or prospering, is directly tied to faithfulness in that spiritual discipline.

A bit farther on in Joshua, we see another amazing success and the equally amazing steps that led up to it. Circling Jericho once each day for six days and then seven times on the seventh day might have exerted a deep psychological effect on the enemy, but there was no actual military reason for it. Yet it

(Editorials continued on page 186)

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

JOSH. 1:1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

11:16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the

mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

17 *Even* from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all *other* they took in battle.

21 And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities.

22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

NOTES

Be Strong and Courageous

Lesson Text: Joshua 1:1-6; 11:16-19, 21-23

Related Scriptures: Numbers 27:15-23;
Deuteronomy 11:22-25; 31:7-15, 22-23; 34:5-9; Joshua 22:1-9

TIME: 1405 B.C.

PLACES: Shittim; Canaan

GOLDEN TEXT—"Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses" (Joshua 11:23).

Introduction

Some of us grew up singing a little chorus that said, "Every promise in the Book is mine, every chapter, every verse, every line." While the melody is catchy and easy to remember many years later, the message is a bit misleading. As children we did not analyze everything we sang; we just sang for the fun of it. As adults, however, we should pay better attention and realize that many songs and choruses are actually theologically inaccurate. There are promises in the Bible that were for Israel only, for example, and are not for us today.

That does not negate the fact that

God's Word is full of promises for His children today. How sad it is that many believers fail to spend quality time in the Bible and as a result do not benefit from those precious promises!

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. **THE PROMISE OF THE LAND**—
Josh. 1:1-6
- II. **THE TAKING OF THE LAND**—
Josh. 11:16-19
- III. **THE COMPLETION OF THE TASK**—Josh. 11:21-23

Exposition: Verse by Verse

THE PROMISE OF THE LAND

JOSH. 1:1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your