

JOSHUA

The Story of Redemption

Thoughts and Comments

JOSHUA I

Prosperity Gospel?

The first few verses of Joshua command the Israelites to follow the law that they *"may have good success wherever you go."*

Some may read this and interpret it to mean that obedience is a direct precursor to success and prosperity.

This line of thinking is part of prosperity gospel teachings which are not biblical.

First of all, we would need to determine what is meant by 'success' here. Prosperity gospel teaches that if you are doing good enough, praying enough, giving enough, etc then you will have health and wealth.

But we know from numerous passages in Scripture that God never says this. He says the opposite. In this world we WILL have trouble. Look at Job, at the disciples, at Paul. They did not live comfortable, pain-free lives, yet they were following God.

Second, in Joshua, God is commanding the Israelites about the importance of Scripture-- to know it, to meditate on it, to write the words on our hearts and let it drive every aspect of our lives.

**"Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass."
(Joshua 21:45)**

favorite verse

It probably won't make us wealthy and illness-free but we will experience the blessings of obeying Him by having a right relationship with Him.

And we will be more aware of where He is guiding us. We will be able to draw more strength and comfort from him when we are immersed in His Word.



JOSHUA 2

Scarlet Letter

This chapter depicts the story of the spies going into Jericho to scout out the land. They go to Rahab, the prostitute's house and she hides them and helps keep them safe.

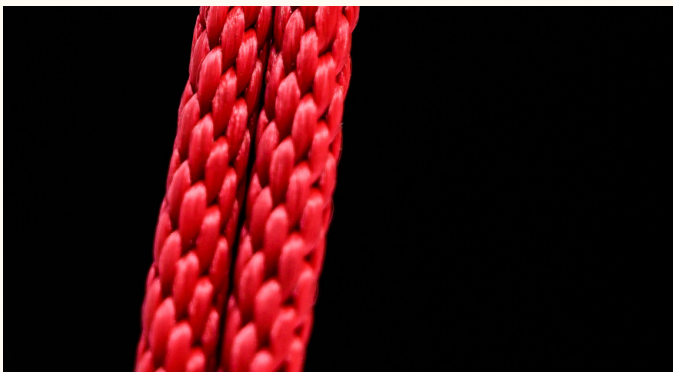
Why is it mentioned that she is prostitute?

Perhaps because this story (and Rahab's other references in Matthew 1:5 and Hebrews 11:31) show us that there is room for all kinds of people in the family of God.

Her past did not disqualify her from the grace and forgiveness of God. She believed in God and trusted Him. She was part of God's plan for salvation-- she is an ancestor of Jesus himself.

This story also reminds us of the value God sees in women. Many think the Bible is a book that shows the oppression of women. But God never oppresses women. He holds them in high regard and wants to include them in great ways in his plan for redemption.

Rahab and her family are saved because of her faith.



JOSHUA 3

Consecrate Yourself

Joshua tells the people in 3:5 "*Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.*"

This word is used often and some may not know what it means or if it's relevant to today.

To consecrate yourself means to dedicate yourself to the service and worship of God; to devote yourself to a higher purpose.

The Israelites were about to go to battle under the direction of the Lord to take the land promised to them. This was God's plan and they were to enact it.

They couldn't go into this unsure or uncommitted.

What does that mean for us today?

We may not be taking down Jericho, but as Scripture instructs us to put on the full armor of God we are clearly doing some sort of battle. We are at war with the sin in our hearts. There are dark forces warring for our souls.

We must ready ourselves. If we are followers of Christ we should take it seriously. Consecration is not a little service we do when we're 10 years old and never again. Consecration is daily evaluating the things in our lives and making sure all of who we are and what we do is in devotion to a holy God. We put off all that is unholy.

(Colossians 3)

We shouldn't just have a 'Christian' part of our lives that happens on Sundays and some Wednesdays... consecration is set apart- our whole selves, set apart for the work of the Lord.

JOSHUA 4

Tell Them a Story

After the Israelites crossed the Jordan the Lord instructed them to make a memoiral of stones by the river *"that this might be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you.'"*

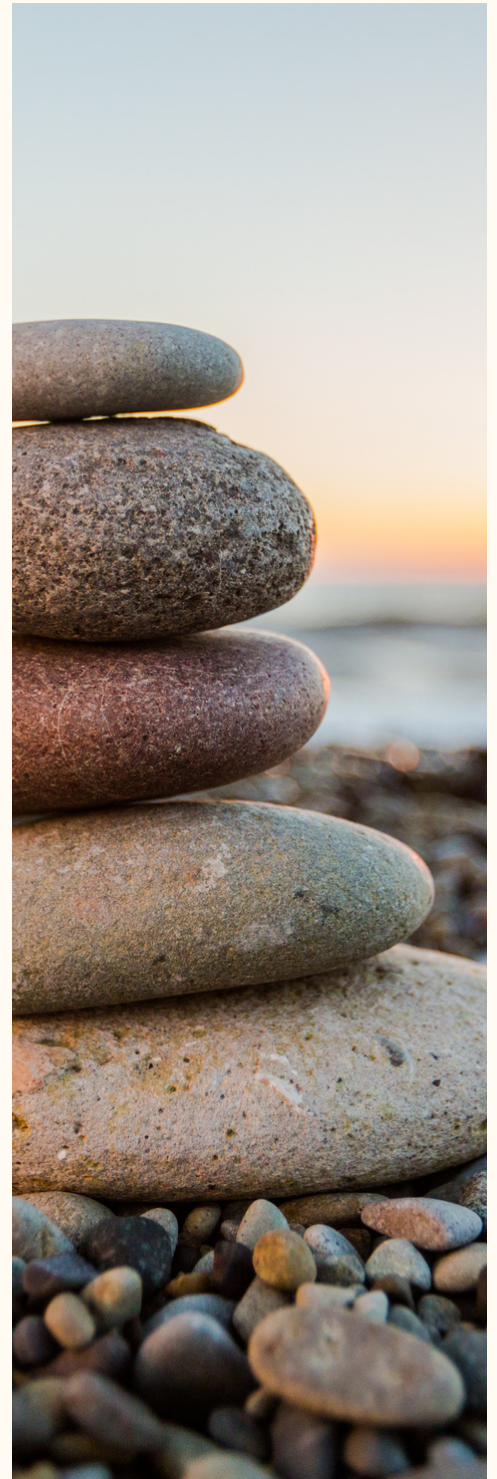
This inspired a blog post I wrote called [Tell Them a Story](#).

Here is a little blurb from it if you don't read the whole thing:

"These are the stories we need to tell our children. We have all experienced hardships and times of doubt. We've all cried our share of tears. We've wondered if God really cares. And when we look back, we see God's faithfulness and His provision. We remember the bondage to our sinful nature that God rescued us from. He gave us life! Our children need to hear these stories. They need to see that God is faithful in the struggle. That there is joy in the tears. There is dry ground amid the raging waters. There is love in the refining fire of our trials and we are not alone."

As parents we don't always want to show our kids our weakness. But they need to see our dependence on and obedience to God. Because they will walk their own perilous paths. They need to know how to see and remember God's faithfulness.

We need to share with them God's faithfulness through our own struggles.



JOSHUA 6

Devoted to Destruction

The Lord tells them to *"keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction."* The things devoted to destruction were the city of Jericho and all that was in it. The exceptions were Rahab and her family and silver, gold, iron, and bronze vessels.

This is a hard passage for us to read, just like many others thus far. (cont'd)

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Just like we don't like reading in Romans about vessels for destruction being people, we don't like to see it here either.

We may never understand God's good purposes in this, this side of heaven.

But we do know for sure a few things because of Scripture: God is holy. God is good. God is just. God is merciful.

The vessels of destruction get what is due them. The wages of sin is death. People who find themselves in Heaven, find themselves there not because of their own merit or because they deserved it. It is an act of grace and mercy.

Likewise, the sinful inhabitants of Jericho are destroyed by the divine judgment of God. Sinful Rahab is saved by God's grace and mercy.

Destroying entire cities was not uncommon in those times, however, God may have given these stipulations for their war because he wanted to make it clear that this was God's war, not the people's. They were fighting for the Lord, not to gain possessions and people.

And as we've seen all throughout the Old Testament: God is holy, and evil cannot stand in his presence. Eventually all sin and evil will be wiped from the Earth completely in the ultimate act of justice. But for now, we see smaller acts of justice as God brings glory to himself.

[This is a good article with more insight: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/gods-justice-in-the-land-of-canaan/>]

JOSHUA 6

Bringing Down the House

If you've had any time in Sunday School then you are probably familiar with the fall of Jericho-- the walking around the city silently six days and then on the seventh walking around it seven times and then at the trumpet's call "shouting a great shout."

Maybe you've even seen the Veggie Tales rendition of this scene complete with purple slushies.

The whole thing seems almost comical! Why would God ask them to do something so strange?

And why did it work?

I would be really interested to know what that would have looked like in real life.

This passage reminds me that God is God and I am not. And sometimes he may ask of me to do something strange, seemingly pointless, or tedious. But just like the Israelites, I should trust that God's way is best.

And it may be that God wants me to be sure, like Jericho, that the result is all Him. He may fashion things to happen in a way that has no explanation other than God did it. He doesn't want us to mistake his providence for our own righteousness or ability.

God gets all the glory. We get to be part of His plans in the way he has designed for us. And if we're paying attention, we'll get to sit in amazement of the things God accomplishes through unorthodox means.



JOSHUA 10

The Sun Stood Still

The battle at Gibeon is a well-known passage because it is a miracle in which God made 'the sun stand still' in order for Joshua to defeat the enemy.

Much has been speculated about this passage.

It is often used by people to try to discredit the Bible- the sun can't stand still, and that's not even what creates day and night- the Earth revolves around the sun. So is this error enough to toss out the credibility of the Bible?

The people of the Bible did not know the science of the earth, moon, and stars as we know it today. There are some places where God communicates to them or they communicate in a way that makes sense to them. The point of the passages is maintained

Did the sun really stand still, or rather, did the Earth really stand still? There are many claims on both sides of this issue confirming or denying or trying to make sense of this miracle. There are many problematic scientific implications of the Earth standing still. Considering God's power, it's, of course, possible that God chose to do a miracle of such epic proportions and sustained everything in a way where everything was largely undisturbed.

However, another possible explanation could be that rather than making the day long as many think, he helped make the NIGHT long. Not actually stopping the rotation of Earth, but bringing a major thunderstorm and hail storm that maintained the darkness.

Joshua 10:9-11 tells of Joshua marching through the night for a surprise attack. It tells of God sending hailstones from heaven. Could the darkness have been prolonged by a major thunderstorm?

We don't know exactly how God did the miracle in this chapter, but we do know that God went before Joshua and he delivered them victory. We know that God did something amazing. This passage is not meant to provide us with scientific information but with information about God's power.

We don't have to worry about the 'sun standing still' threatening the Word of God. No matter how much misinformation is said against it.



JOSHUA 21

Come to Pass

Joshua 21:45 (as stated above) tells us that all of God's promises came true.

This is a big deal. Think about being an Israelite still in Egypt under slavery. Do you think you could comprehend what God actually did for them? They are now in the Promised Land and

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have been given their inheritance. I'm sure there were times where they started to doubt that God could do what he said he would. And now they have seen it in some many ways.

This is a good reminder for us that God keeps his promises. All of his words ring true.

Isaiah 55:10 says, *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

That gives us confidence in God and in the truthfulness of Scripture.

JOSHUA 1-24

Partial Obedience

Something I've kinda seen throughout the Israelite's passage out of Egypt and into the Promised Land is that they 'almost' obey. They obey MOST of the things but maybe not completely and wholly.

Is partial obedience disobedience?

It's like the whole white lie thing. Is it a lie if it's technically true but implies something false?

If you're looking for loopholes to obedience, you're probably disobedient and your posture before God is not one of submission. Obedience is one way we show God we rightly view him as an authority over us.

The Israelites disobeying, even in 'little' ways, is an assault on God's commands, holiness, and authority.

We can see some of the effects of this 'partial obedience' in that they did not fully drive out the Canaanites from the land. The consequences of that led them to pagan worship and further disobedience toward God.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next up... Judges 4