

NEW YEAR SERMON

Enter into Your Inheritance

By

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Date: 6th January, 2018

God's Promises are Sacred and Inviolable

Every new year comes with new expectations of a better life and greater prospects. For us believers, our expectations are rooted in God's promises to us, all of which are "Yes" and "Amen" in Christ, His Son (see 2 Cor. 1:18-20). The Apostle Paul spoke to this truth in Acts 13:32-33:

*"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,
"God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee".*

God's promises are sacred and inviolable. Once He has assured us not to leave nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5), whether we are at the start of a new year or middle or ending of it, we can rest assured He's with us in all His glorious majesty and power.

His word is true to us individually and as a church. He never forsakes His people whom He foreknew (Rom. 11:2)!

Our history as a church is a chequered one. We have fought and won many battles. The church has passed through crises and challenges and has always emerged stronger – because Christ Jesus, the head of the church, is above all principalities and powers and every knee bows to Him.

Moreover, He has positioned us for victory in Him, declaring "...upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

Our history is a replay of the wilderness experience and history of Israel – almost always at war and always winning so long as they remained loyal to God!

As I stand before you, we have reached the Joshua era of possessing our inheritance as a church. Indeed, we have just gone past the phase of the Joshua era of confrontation and conquests by

war. We have made spiritual conquests of the enemy, and the inheritance lies before us to be possessed.

“As I was with Moses...”

In the history of Israel, the Joshua leadership era begins where Moses' leadership era ends.

And of course we are all familiar with the story of how Moses became Israel's leader.

Born at a time an infanticide decree issued by the Pharaoh of Egypt against all Hebrew male babies was in effect, Moses was miraculously raised in the Pharaoh's own house. Later on in life, he was handpicked by God to deliver the children of Israel from the house of bondage in Egypt. His divine charge was to bring them to the Promised Land in the land of Canaan. It was a journey characterized by God's ever presence with them in the wilderness, the giving of His Laws and the manifestation of His power to save, defend, feed and care for them.

But it was also a journey strewn with wars and rebellion – the rebellion of a divinely favoured people with short memories and hardened hearts! Largely due to the rebellious attitude of the Israelites, they sojourned in the wilderness for forty years, literally running round in circles!

Of the original Exodus group of redeemed ex-slaves, only two made it to the Promised Land. Even Moshe, the great leader, only saw the land from afar, on the mountains of Nebo, after God had chosen Joshua as his successor.

Moments later, Moses would die on the mountain range, on top of summit Pisgah, and the leadership mantle fell to Joshua.

Moses had led Israel for forty years.

It was at this stage, after the death of Moses, that the eternal God of covenant assured Joshua of His continued presence with Israel, particularly with he, the leader. It was not just a promise to accompany them or keep them company but to be the same God of victory and deliverance to them as He was to Moses.

Much more significantly, it was an assurance made in the context of actually possessing the long-promised inheritance for which Israel had been saved out of Egypt in the first place:

“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,

“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.

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

“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.

“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.”

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

“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:1-8).

In the passage, the vast territories demarcated for Israel, which were a divine reaffirmation of promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were not vast empty territories which the people could just go and possess. The promised inheritance was fully occupied and possessed by other peoples much more populous and stronger than the Israelites.

So that was the concern God sought to address – that in going to take possession remember I am with you. “No man” of the nations of Canaan whom you are to dispossess would be able to successfully withstand you, be he king or giant or warrior!

Only be “strong” to keep My Law; be strong to overcome the natural pull of the flesh to make you want to disobey Me; suppress the rebellious impulses of your heart to go your own carnal way. Have the will-power to put God and His commandments first, psyche yourself up to wilfully obey God with the power which He grants from Above – just as King David prayed: “...unite my heart to fear Thy name” (Ps. 86:11). In Daniel’s case, he resolved in his heart not to defile himself with his ration of the King’s unclean food and wine (Dan. 1:8).

Where obedience is present, victory is a foregone conclusion.

A Nation is Prepared in Godly Fear for War and Victory

The charge has already been given – take possession of the land. Now, it’s action time, and the Lord God of Israel must convince them *beyond words* that the victory would be theirs!

He would impress on them the fact of His presence with them by the performance of some of the same miracles He did in the time of Moses so they would be willing to submit to the leadership He had chosen for them. What is more, this would persuade them beyond all doubts that He would lead them to victory over their enemies.

At this stage, Israel is now encamped on the banks of the Jordan river – an initial obstacle to be overcome to gain access to the Promised Land.

“And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

“And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

“And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

“And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

“And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

“Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

“Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

“And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap” (Joshua 3:5-7, 9-13).

The words of the Lord came true exactly as He had said – and the waters of Jordan were cut off upstream as soon as the priests bearing the ark stepped into it, and Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground (vv. 14-17). “On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life” (Josh 4:14).

By the same token, God by the miracles He is performing in our midst today is sending a clear message to us that the current leadership is of Him and that He will give us the victory. This should strengthen our faith and our resolve to fight and win.

Already, the Lord has named us beneficiaries of vast spiritual and physical blessings, and in the ensuing spiritual battles under the victory banner of YHWH Nissi we have destroyed strongholds of the enemy, fought off enemy attacks and made impact on the souls of thousands with the saving truth of Jesus! Spiritual giants of the dark kingdom of Satan have been reduced to wimps. The sword of Yehoshua, the antitype of the O.T. Yehoshua (Joshua/Jesus), has given us the victory:

“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.

“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.

“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” (Josh 11:21-23).

In resting from war, we come into a rest of blessings, for He called us to “inherit a blessing” (1 Pet. 3:9). The hand of the Lord is up, and the enemies standing in our way of blessings, as mountains of problems, will be cut down to size.

We will possess our possessions this year. Every blessing promised us will be received in the name of Jesus according to His unfailing word of promise. Therefore, position yourself in faith for the bounties of the open heavens! He is ever faithful. Amen!