

Hymns: 7 God Will Take Care of You      8 Great Is Thy Faithfulness  
Scripture: Psalm 62:5-8

Big idea: The LORD is with thee.

### Introduction

Well, it's been **sixteen months** – sixteen months since the last time we were here with you. So much has **changed** since then, it makes your **head spin**.

Perhaps it's me. I'm **getting older**. By the way, I reached that big milestone – threescore years and ten -- during that time. That's seventy, and Betsy was listening to a preacher today says that's an expiration date. Most of us here, except Betsy, have passed it already. God by his grace has something else for us to do. That's fine. It's sobering. We have to think about what happens when we depart. Are your records all straight and so on. That was interesting.

A week ago was **Independence** Day, and Betsy on her iPhone was playing patriotic music. Normally when I hear that it's sort of uplifting. But there was a note of sorrow this time as I considered how **quickly** and how **low** our country has **descended** in such a short period of time. Clearly, the **judgment** of God is on this country. Christian **values** are **demonized** and Christians (we) are increasingly **under attack**.

So where do we turn? One thing I do is I turn off the fear mongering that we're getting non-stop in the media. And then what do we do? We turn to the LORD. That's what we're doing right now we are going to look to God's word. That's what we need to feed our souls.

The last time we met was **March 8, 2020**. At that time we were looking at the last days of the life of Jesus and had reached the day of the **Olivet Discourse**, just a **few days** before He went to the cross.

We're going to continue to suspend that study to try to **get a better grip** on **what in the world** is going on and **how Christians can cope** in these difficult times. In order to do that, we're going to the book of Joshua and witness for ourselves our almighty covenant-keeping God, in action.

Our scripture for today is: **Joshua 1:1-6**

Starting at Joshua chapter 1, verse 1.

But before we do that we really need a little background.

The book of Joshua is the sixth book of the Bible. It comes right after the books of the Law sometimes called the Torah. It's the first book that is named for a person. That person's given name actually was not Joshua, it was *Hoshea*. Hoshea means *salvation*. Moses changed his name and put a prefix on it to make it *Jehoshea* which means Jehovah or YHWH (Yahweh) is salvation – not just salvation but the **LORD** is salvation. That's his name.

Now you may think that's a little familiar. It's the same name that was given to Jesus. The angel said, "You shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." He's the Savior, and He's the LORD. It's just a different transliteration from Hebrew to Greek to English to get the name *Jesus* – the same word as *Joshua*. Joshua is actually a **type** of Jesus. In some ways we can see a parallel in his

life.

The first mention of Joshua is in Exodus chapter 17. But we have to go back farther than that really to get the context to understand this book – the book of Joshua. God picked a man Abram from Ur of the Chaldees and brought him to the land of Canaan. He promised to him in Genesis 12, Genesis 15, and Genesis 17 He made a covenant with Abram who he renamed *Abraham* – that he would receive a *land*, referring to the Promised Land – it's not called that in the Bible, but that's what we're talking about here – this land that He's giving to Abraham and to his descendants. A *land*, a *seed* – that's descendants --, and a *blessing* – the blessing is through him would come the Savior, the LORD Jesus.

Abraham had a son Isaac. The LORD confirmed this covenant with Isaac. Isaac had a son Jacob. Again, the LORD confirmed this covenant to him. Jacob had twelve sons. The twelve tribes of Israel descended from those twelve sons.

So now we have Jacob with his sons. One of these sons went to Egypt by God's providence. His name was Joseph. He went ahead of them. He became the prime minister of Egypt – the most powerful man of Egypt except Pharaoh himself. This Pharaoh looked kindly on Joseph and his family.

When the famine came and Joseph's family fled to Egypt, Pharaoh put them in the best land of Egypt – the Nile delta area called Goshen – and they thrived there. But when Joseph and the pharaoh died, the new pharaoh who took power enslaved the Israelites. And this was foretold in Genesis 15 – that these people would go out of the land, be strangers, and be afflicted for 400 years. Then they would come out and go to the Promised Land.

After the Israelites have endured that predicted time of affliction, they cry out to God. God raises up and directs Moses to contend with Pharaoh. He shows Pharaoh His power with the ten plagues. Pharaoh finally says okay, you Israelites can leave. They left.

On their way out, the Israelites were showered with jewels, gold, and fine things by the people of Egypt – perhaps hoping they could appease the wrath of God against them. After the Israelites left, Pharaoh had a change of heart. As they approached the Red Sea, The Egyptian armies came up from behind, but God maintained a buffer to distance between them.

The Israelites had nowhere to flee. The Red Sea lay before them as the armies of Egypt came ever closer from behind. Moses then lifted his staff and touched the waters of the Red Sea. The waters parted and exposed dry land. The Israelites, now a mass of two million people, crossed the Red Sea on dry land.

When the Egyptian army followed into the sea bed, the waters swallowed them up. So by the time they crossed the Red Sea, the Israelites had plundered the Egyptian people and destroyed the Egyptian army. These were unarmed people. This was the power of God at work.

Now we find Joshua entering the picture. The Israelites proceeded into the wilderness to a place called Rephaim which is a little south of the promised land. There they were met by the people Amalek called the Amalekites who fought against them.

Moses said we need someone to lead our armies and appointed Joshua. The LORD gave the Israelites victory over those hostile people. They then proceeded to Mount Sinai – where Joshua and Moses went up the mountain. God gave Moses the law. After Joshua and Moses came down, the Israelites went back north to approach the Promised Land. They stopped just south at Kadesh-barnea.

Then God said to Moses to pick one person from each tribe of Israel to go into the Promised Land and spy out the land. They did that for forty days. They reported back to Moses that the land was a wonderful place – flowing with milk and honey – but there's giants in the land, and we cannot conquer these people. They are too strong for us. They have cities with walls that go to the sky. Ten of them gave that report. Two of them said our God is able to defeat them just as he gave us victory over the Egyptian armies. They said the Israelites needed to have faith that the LORD would get them through this.

But the people were disheartened by the ten pessimistic spies rather than the two faithful ones. As a result, God judged those people. He said anyone age twenty and above will die in the wilderness because of their unbelief. The LORD sent them back to the wilderness to wander there for forty years. They all died except the two faithful spies – Caleb and Joshua.

After forty years of wandering, the Israelites followed Moses up along the east side of the Dead Sea. They asked King Sihon for passage through his land. Sihon refused and warred with the Israelites. The LORD gave the Israelites victory. They proceeded just north of the Dead Sea to a place called Shittim – just across the Jordan River from Jericho.

That's the short story summarizing a lot of history found in the books that preceded this book of Joshua. With that introduction behind us, let's launch into the scripture.

### Joshua 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,*

There's a whole lot in that verse.

1. The first word *now*, is actually *and* in both the original Hebrew and the Greek translation called the Septuagint. That *and* makes an explicit link to all of this history – God's covenant being made and His promises being fulfilled. Our story proceeds directly from there in the book of Joshua.
2. The first topic is *after the death of Moses*. This book starts out with **death**. The book ends with the death of Joshua. If you go to Genesis, it starts with life, and beauty, and peace. Everything's great in the beginning. But we find man fell in chapter 3. He sinned. And God proclaimed judgment on man. And that judgment is death. I've got my threescore and ten years behind me. So there's death there.

If you look at Genesis chapter five, maybe you remember this, it reads sort of like an obituary. It says Adam had a son *Seth*. And Adam lived a certain number of years **and he died**. You come to

the next man *Seth*. He had some sons, lived a certain number of years, **and he died**. And Seth's sons had sons **and he died, ..., and he died**. God was making a point here in Genesis 5. He's serious about this. This is the way it's going to be until the end.

That's the great thing about it. Recall Genesis ends with the death of Joseph. He was the one who went ahead and prepared the way for the rest of his family to come to Egypt. The end of Genesis ends with the death of Joseph. The last five words are *in a coffin in Egypt*.

So Genesis ends with this death. But the good news is the **Bible** ends back like it was in the beginning. There's no more sorrow, no more tears, no more death, no more **pain**. Everything is going to be wonderful, and those who know the LORD are going to be with Him in glory forever.

So we have good news. But in the mean time there's a lot of death. And by the way there's a lot of death in this book, but don't let that disturb you. The book shows the judgment of God against sin. We **want** God to judge sin and evil and show His power over them.

*it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua*

How unusual is that? We gloss over something like that. The LORD **spoke** unto him. If the LORD comes to me or you and says this or that, you need to do that. **That** is an amazing thing. We read in the scripture and we just gloss over it. He spoke to Adam. He spoke to Eve. He spoke to Moses a whole lot. Maybe we have reference to that more than anyone.

He spoke to the prophets. He spoke to Jesus. Jesus is God incarnate. That's a little different. In the red letter Bible there's a lot of references of Jesus speaking to His disciples and others. But we're looking at a less physical realm of speaking. This makes Joshua a very special individual – the fact that God's speaking to him. So He spoke to Joshua,

....,

[2] *Moses my servant is dead;*

Now why is that important? God told Moses the first time to **strike** the rock and water came out. The second time, God told him to **speak** to the rock. In a public way, Moses decided to strike the rock. He struck it twice. He was not supposed to do that. God judged Moses for his disobedience by forbidding him from entering the Promised Land.

Moses represents the Law. He wrote the Law. His name is almost synonymous with the Law in the Bible. The Law cannot save. So the fact that Moses was shut out from leading the Israelites into the Promised Land makes a lot of sense. God will use the savior to lead the people into the Promised Land. That man was Joshua whose name means the LORD is salvation.

*Moses ... is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan,*

... referring to crossing the Jordan River. By the way, it's in flood stage it's a raging torrent.

There were two million people he has to lead across. How's this going to happen? He's got a lot of faith here. Joshua doesn't even seem to question it. He seems to say "Okay, God you're telling me to do it. You are going to do it. You got us across the Red Sea. You can get us across this raging river.

*... go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people,*

two million of them

*unto the land which I do give to them,*

God's reiterating, this is a covenant. I'm fulfilling this covenant promise I made. I'm **giving** you this land.

*even to the children of Israel.*

When we think of Israel, we think of of a country. But He's talking about the children of Israel. Who is Israel? *Israel* is the new name that God gave to the man Jacob, who had the twelve sons that became the twelve tribes. So the children of Israel are the descendants of the twelve sons. These are the twelve tribes 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.*

God made this promise. He had it all worked out. Moses couldn't take them in. He said **Joshua** will take them in. Joshua was Moses' right-hand man. He was his servant, his protegee, and finally he was his successor. When Moses died, Joshua took over.

In Numbers 27, Joshua was ordained formally to be Moses' successor. We see that also at the end of the book of Deuteronomy. He made this promise to Moses:

*[4] From the wilderness and this Lebanon*

The wilderness is where Moses wandered, down in the south, south of Canaan the land that flows with milk and honey. That's the wilderness. Lebanon is up north, in the mountains.

*even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites,*

This refers to Canaan – where the Israelites went to spy out the land the place that flowed with milk and honey.

*and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun,*

The sun sets in the west. The great sea is the Mediterranean.

*shall be your coast.*

Keep in mind, the wilderness is not part of the Promised Land. That's the boundary. That's where Israel begins in the south. Lebanon is not part of Israel. That's where it stops. The Mediterranean Sea is not part of Israel. That's the border. That's important to keep in mind.

*[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:*

**What a promise:** as he was with Moses? Moses was one of the greatest miracle workers recorded in the Bible. God promises He will give Joshua this same great power and indeed Joshua did some great miracles by the power of God. What a promise! And what a time for him to receive that encouragement from God.

*(so I will be with thee:) I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

We need to be careful. God here makes a specific person at a specific time. He promised Joshua he would be do great miracles like Moses did. We cannot take that for our own, but this little expression here: *I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee* there's something special about that which we will look at in just a minute after we look at one more verse.

*[6] Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land,*

This mission has already been mentioned. Joshua was to give different sections of the Promise Land that he will conquer to the different twelve tribes of Israel.

*which I swear unto their fathers to give them.*

Again, God's reminds Joshua that He's the covenant-keeping God, and He will do this. But that expression *Be strong and of a good courage* that's interesting because that order was given back in Deuteronomy chapter 31 – ahead of this. The Song of Moses came after that.

It seems like this expression is a rallying cry. God says it three times in this chapter, but others are saying it also. The Israelites are saying it. *Be strong and of a good courage* –it's like a rallying cry or almost like a **fight** song. We need to keep that in mind.

Now remember what was said about returning to the expression *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*. We need to wrap up with that.

### Application

You may have heard that two and a half, weeks ago the Champlain Towers South Condo, Miami, Florida collapsed apparently due to structural deterioration. Back in February, Congressman Greg Steube quoted Deuteronomy 22:5 in defense of biblical values. Then Congressman Jerrold Nadler responded back with, *"What any religious tradition describes as God's will is no concern of this*

*Congress."*

Isn't that presumptuous! There's a congressman right there to whom he was speaking who said biblical values were important to him. Is he not a member of Congress? Are not other congressmen who also support Mr. Stubes's stated beliefs, are not they part of Congress? But it's worse than that. He said this even as he faced the bold motto high in the chamber: IN GOD WE TRUST.

As the foundations of our nation crumble, we need not fear. Why? We can take the promise that God is near as the Bible says. That same promise is quoted in the New Testament – making it clear that we can take that one.

Hebrews 13

*[5] be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said,  
I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

There it is!

*[6] So that we may boldly say,  
The Lord is my helper,  
and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

So in these tough times as things get a little bit more crazy every day, we can hold on to these truths in our hearts and be confident that we have a God who will be with us and we do not need to fear.

## **Benediction**

*The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:  
The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:  
The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)*