

Get With It

God has never promised anyone that life would be easy. Far from it! The future is not always filled with sunny days, but frequently with dark clouds and thick darkness. For the Christian, difficulties, grief and frustrations serve as a constant challenge to our faithful endurance. However, God abundantly supplies the resources needed to achieve a favorable outcome in life. Chief among such resources is the record of God's people as recorded in God's word, set as examples for us. The apostle Paul wrote the Christians at Rome: "Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4, ESV). One among many "former-days" examples is Joshua, a successor to Moses, chosen by God to lead Israel in conquest of Canaan following their 40-year trek through the wilderness. The first chapter of Joshua records God's commission to Joshua. He is to lead Israel to take the land in Canaan, which God had centuries before promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In essence, God is telling Joshua, "You are my man. Heed my word. Rid yourself of all fears. Fulfill my purpose for you. Now, get with it!"

While Joshua may well feel overwhelmed by the task set before him, God does not leave him without divine assurance. Four times within this short 18-verses chapter God encourages him, saying, "Be strong and courageous" (vs. 6, 7, 9, 18). For Joshua and the army he leads there must be no retreat, for this is God's battle. He is assured, "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you" (v. 5). Faith in God's presence, and obedience to His word, will assure him of victory. The fact that the Lord told him to "be strong and courageous" four times would imply, first of all, that God **meant** it, and second, that Joshua **needed** it.

Joshua, through 40 years of wandering with God's people through the wilderness, knew them in all their fickleness. He must have heard them ask a hundred times, "Where is God?" The "God is dead" cry is not anything new to our generation. We would not be surprised if many times he heard comments like, "Maybe God spoke to Moses, but maybe not." Now, could he trust the people to not be faithless as they faced Jericho?

Remembering that this was written "for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope," the Lord's promise to us is unchanged: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20, ESV). We can hear God saying to us, "I've given you life, with all its challenges. You are my man (or woman). Heed my word. Rid yourself of all fears. Fulfill my purpose for you. Now, get with it!" -
-Ron