



**Looking Inwards** (15 mins)  
*Caring For Each Other*

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an **opportunity to share**, not something you have to do, however, 'it's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



**Looking Outwards** (15 mins)  
*Concern For Others*

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours; or church, which you would like to share (please be careful not to pass on anything that is **confidential** or which you think the person/people concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



**HG62: Inhabiting The Promised Land (1/7)**  
*Joshua: New Beginnings*

**Joshua 1:1-9**

**Home Group Study Notes**

8<sup>th</sup> January 2012 - Revd Paul A. Carr



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN  
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION  
**BEFORE THE MEETING!**

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful.*



**Welcome** (10 mins)  
*Ice Breaker*

At the start of a New Year, many people resolve to live life differently in the year to come. What 'spiritual resolutions' are you planning to introduce in your life for the year ahead? Share your hopes with your Home Group! How might you be able to ensure they last longer than a few weeks?



**Looking Upwards** (10 mins)  
*Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...





## Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read through the text for this study, and any references given below, alongside those in the sermon notes, then answer the following questions - you may find it helpful to read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, of your answers with your Home Group.

**Introduction:** Moses and his generation did not inhabit the promises of God. How does this make you feel as part of an older generation here at Emmanuel? Have you ever thought that you may miss out on inhabiting the promises of God, tomorrow, because of the choices you make today?

**God chooses Joshua as the new leader:** God never chooses leaders by chance. They are, just like Joshua, the product of a lifetime's experiences. Can you think of anyone in Emmanuel who you feel God is setting aside for future leadership? Pray for that person. In addition, think about what you can do to encourage and support that person in God's calling on their life in the year to come.

**God gives Joshua three promises:** And what fantastic promises they are! If you could ask God for three promises for Emmanuel for 2012 – what would they be?

courageous – these are the words we need to hear when facing testing times. Joshua didn't use this as a reason to sit back and wait to see what God would do. No, the promise simply motivated Joshua to serve. We can't help but be encouraged when we think on what God is saying here. He's saying: *I won't drop you in the middle of a project that I've given to you.* God is not in the business of deserting his people when we get in trouble if we're honestly endeavouring to do his will. However, God does close doors, and his promise of power and presence doesn't preclude disaster, persecution, struggle, or difficulty. Our faith will be tested, we may suffer, our lives will be very hard at times - the work is tough. It isn't easy being a follower of Jesus, the cross that we are asked to carry can be heavy and asks a lot of us, we know that, but in the midst of it all, Romans 8:31: *If God is for us, who can be against us?* God's power will be with us through the good and bad times, and there is no opposition that God can't or won't take us through. Joshua was called, and encouraged, to exercise faith through strong and courageous leadership. But the grounds for whatever courage Joshua might have aren't in himself, but in the powerful encouragement that God will be with his people as they enter the land and as they trust Joshua's leadership. For Joshua, in the twenty-five years that are to come would, whenever he faced enemy opposition and is tempted to be afraid, remember that he has been personally commissioned by the Lord who promised the resources to fulfil the task. Whenever things go wrong - and they will - and he is tempted to be dismayed and anxious, he can claim the presence and power of the God who commanded him and the influence of the word of that God.

**Conclusion:** The beginning of a new year is a great time for us to re-examine our Christian lives. And it is safe to assume that all of us, young and old alike, will face new challenges in 2012 which will require new approaches. I want to suggest three:

**1) New Problems Will Require Creativity:** We're bound to have problems in 2012 and they won't be the same ones we had in 2011 and they will require greater creativity to come up with new solutions. Last year's ways of thinking and relating may not work. More than ever before, in 2012, we're going to need men and women who, instead of avoiding/ignoring the problems that come our way, ask God for creativity to solve them.

**2) New Pressures Will Require Conviction:** Conviction is a willingness to stand up for what you believe. More than ever before, in 2012, we're going to need men and women of conviction, who say, "I'm going to do the right thing no matter what the consequences". It means praying: Okay, Lord, what do you want me to do? What land do you want me to possess? What situation do you want me to move into? And we need to be sure to respond with conviction because we can lose the opportunities to inhabit all that God has set aside for us if we hesitate - just like Moses' generation.

**3) New Possibilities Will Require Courage:** Each New Year brings new possibilities and opportunities for growth. What are you being called by God to do today? How is God **Choosing; Giving; Encouraging and Commanding** you to serve him and his people in 2012? Street Pastors; the Living Room; Dads and Toddlers; Jesus and Music; the combining of Pulse and NYC; Heroes ... are just a few examples of new beginnings that will be established this year.

These are exciting times to be alive. I've no doubt that God wants to do great things in our lives this New Year – but it won't happen automatically. We have to step out in faith. Entering the Promised Land is a picture of how the Christian life ought to be lived - a great adventure full of intense spiritual warfare but with victory, faith, and obedience; spiritual richness and rest in God's power and provision. It's an exciting life of faith, trusting Jesus Christ, our Joshua. I pray that each one of us will be strengthened in our faith this year, that we will look forward with great excitement and anticipation for all that God has planned for us; that we would be strong and courageous, ready to follow God's marching orders and that, in all things, we follow our text for 2012: *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."* Philippians 4:6

This is an important lesson for us today. God has given us all spiritual blessings in Jesus (see Ephesians 1) but we must step out by faith to claim those blessings. The Lord has set before each of us, who know Jesus as Lord and Saviour, an open door that nobody can close. We are called to walk through that door by faith, to claim new ground for the Lord.

**2) They will be victorious over the enemies who confront them.** Vs5: *No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life.* What a tremendous promise. Back in Genesis 12, God told Abraham that other nations inhabited the Promised Land, and he repeated that fact to Moses. God promised that if Israel obeyed, he would defeat those nations, but he warned his people not to compromise with the enemy in any way. They might win a war or a battle, but if they deviated from what God required from them, they would lose the ultimate victory God intended for them. In the middle of the promise that the battle would be won, there is this amazing, wonderful promise of God's presence and power: *As I was with Moses so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.* God's commitment of his presence and power to always be with us is powerfully encouraging, and it never changes. It means that we, as God's people, can keep moving forward into God's will – despite all that may come our way.

**3) The land will be their inheritance.** In vs6 the people will trust Joshua's leadership, and the land will get divided up. The enemy will be defeated. Israel will possess the land. God will keep his promise to Abraham that his descendants will inherit the land.

Divine sovereignty always expresses itself through human response. God first speaks the word of promise, who He is and what He will do; and that encourages us as his servants to believe, step out, trust, and obey. Joshua will take new courage. He will allow the encouragement of God to change him over and over again.

**God ENCOURAGES Joshua to read His written word,** vs 7 - 8: God encourages Joshua, again, to vs7-8: *Be strong and very courageous, Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything that is written in it.* What is the 'book of the law' mentioned here? It was Moses written, historical, record of God's activity among the people from creation through the history of the patriarchs to Moses. Throughout the forty years in the wilderness Moses kept adding material to this record until finally it included everything that God wanted in it. It became the entire five books of Moses: Genesis; Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers; and Deuteronomy - the Pentateuch. It was the greatest legacy that Moses could have left to his successor. One of the things that has been challenging to me as I've been reading through the early chapters of Joshua in recent weeks is the fact that the secret of his military victories was not his giftedness as a great general, tactician, or soldier, but rather, his willingness to serve the word of God. It's one thing to say to a leader: *Be strong and courageous.* It's quite something else to enable him or her to do it. Joshua's strength and courage will come from meditating on the word of God, from believing the promises in it, from living in obedience to it – and so must ours. It's impossible to stand still in Christian life and ministry. If we idle in neutral, we start sliding backward, losing ground. Hebrews 6:1: *Let us ... go on ....* This command is to go on to spiritual maturity and to go on to become those who understand and can handle and teach others the word of God. It means moving ahead into new ground.

**God COMMANDS Joshua to be strong and courageous,** vs 6, 7, 9: The word courage is found three times and seems to be at the very heart of the passage. In vs6: *Be strong and courageous,* vs 7: *Be strong and very courageous,* vs9: *Have I not commanded you? Be strong courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.* God knew what lay ahead for Joshua. He may have had a lifetime of preparation for ministry and leadership and acquired many different skills but here, God is encouraging him to be strong and

God encourages Joshua to read His written word: Paul suggests that the secret of Joshua's "... *military victories, was not his giftedness as a great general, tactician, or soldier, but rather, his willingness to serve the word of God.*" In what ways might Joshua's example spur you on to new levels of spiritual maturity?

God commands Joshua to be strong and courageous: In what areas of your life (personal and spiritual) do you need new levels of strength and courage in order to face the challenges that lie ahead? Share these with your Home Group and take it in turn to pray for each other. Might Emmanuel need new levels of strength and courage in order to face the challenges that lie ahead in 2012? What might those challenges be?

Conclusion: How is God calling you to 'stand up and step out' to serve him, and his people, in 2012?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



## HG62: Inhabiting The Promised Land (1/7) *Joshua: New Beginnings*

Joshua 1:1-9

### Home Group Sermon Notes

8<sup>th</sup> January 2012 - Revd Paul A. Carr

**Introduction:** The dawn of a new year is usually a time of hope and ambition, of dreams for the future and thoughts of a better life. But it is a long time since many of us looked forward to the new year with such anxiety, even dread. I say this because the political and economic climates give us great cause for concern. The Coalition remains delicately poised and it would take only one or two resignations to provoke a wider schism and a general election. The rise in unemployment brings with it associated personal and social upheaval. Meanwhile, as the Euro-zone continues to cause uncertainty on the markets, the prospects for Europe have rarely been bleaker. As many commentators are remarking: the world picture has not been grimmer since the dark days of the mid-Seventies, when the OPEC oil shock, the rise of stagflation and the surge of nationalist terrorism cast a heavy shadow over the Western world. Which is why it's just as well that we have a sovereign God who keeps all things in the palm of his hands and that we can trust in Him for all that a new year will bring our way.

The book of Joshua, just like a new year, was a time for new beginnings for the people of Israel. It was a time for new leadership, a new land and a new way of living as God's chosen people. God had promised a land overflowing with milk and honey. However, despite being miraculously delivered from slavery in Egypt the children of Israel had spent 40 years wandering around in the wilderness, unable to inhabit the land God had provided because of their disobedience and apathy. But they now find themselves on the other side of the River Jordan – one step away from the promise, which was lost by the previous generation and inherited by the new. Moses (just like the former generation) was forbidden from entering into the Promised Land because of his disobedience. In Deuteronomy 34, at the top of Mount Nebo, God said: I promised the land to Abraham and I'm going to give it to the people. However, you won't be able to cross over because of disobedience in your life, but a new generation of the people will cross over and will enter.

Moses had asked God to give them a leader, and God told him to choose Joshua. In his final message to Israel, Moses passed the mantle of leadership to Joshua, Deuteronomy 31:7-8: *Moses summoned Joshua, and said to him in the presence of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous; for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their forefathers to give them; and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.*

Moses died, aged 120. Even godly leaders like Moses don't lead forever. On the grave of John Wesley, the founder Methodism, there is a plaque that says: *God buries his workmen, but his work goes on.* There comes a time in every ministry, in every church, when God calls for a new beginning with a new generation and new leadership. I'm 50 this year and I'm fast realising that I'm yesterday's man but I do know that I don't want to be part of a generation who will miss out on inhabiting the promises of God. Are you? It's a serious question issue, isn't it?

You and I have a responsibility, and a duty, to be a good example to the next generation, to ensure that we don't miss out and to encourage and develop the next generation of leaders, and I'm not just thinking about Tom and Andy, but our young people and those whom God is calling to lead.

**God CHOOSES Joshua as the new leader, vs1 - 2:** God chooses a new leader for a new generation and speaks, vs2: *Moses my servant is dead ...* And with those words a new leader was in place. But where did Joshua come from? What were his credentials for leadership? Nothing ever 'happens' overnight with God, does it? God had spent many years preparing Joshua for his new responsibility of leadership. Let's have a quick look at some of his qualifications. Joshua, son of Nun, was named Hoshea which means 'Salvation.' An interesting choice of name when we remember he was born in slavery in Egypt. Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua, which means 'Yahweh is Salvation.' Joshua is the Hebrew form of the name Jesus. As a young man, Joshua saw the signs and wonders that God performed in Egypt. He would have seen: the water turned into blood; the various plagues; the miraculous deliverance as the waters of the Red Sea rolled back to save Israel and then close to drown Pharaoh's army.

The first time we meet Joshua is as a soldier, about two months into the wilderness, Exodus 17:8-10a, where he is chosen by Moses because he was a man of courage and of good reputation. Joshua was also involved in receiving the law on Mount Sinai, Exodus 24:12-13, as a personal assistant to Moses. Joshua was there as God's truth was revealed. I'm sure that was very important in Joshua's spiritual development. In Numbers 13-14 we meet Joshua the spy. Remember how God commanded Moses to choose 12 men to spy out the Promised Land. They were away for 40 days and when they returned they all reported that the land was wonderful, but they were split on what they ought to do. Ten of the spies discouraged the people by telling them the enemy cities and armies were too great and that Israel just wasn't strong enough to take the land. They looked at God through their own eyes and saw under the circumstances. Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, had the minority view. They encouraged the people to trust God and to go ahead and move into the land. They saw above their circumstances and remembered a God of power and strength whom they knew was big enough for the battles that lay ahead.

Joshua had patiently served Moses for 40 years – not an easy task, I'm sure. And through all that, I've no doubt, that Joshua was becoming a man of faith and trust in God and that God was using this time to strengthen his faith and courage and he was being prepared to succeed Moses. Whilst Joshua had tremendous respect for Moses – he is mentioned 57 times in this book – it doesn't mean Joshua had to be a Moses clone! Every leader is different in gifts, temperament, style, and personality. Joshua had to be free to maintain his individuality as a man chosen by God for the task. And so it is with us. God gives Joshua, and the people, vs2, their marching orders: *Get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them.*

**God GIVES Joshua three promises, vs3 - 6:** God wants to encourage Joshua in his leadership and so he gives him three promises. It struck me as I was reading this that God doesn't give Joshua any explanation as to how he will accomplish these things. We, as God's people, have to learn to live on promises and not on explanations, to walk by faith instead of by sight. When we trust God's promises and step out by faith, we can be sure that the Lord will give the practical, physical directions when we need them.

**1) They will enter the land and cross the Jordan.** In vs3, God begins with the physical act of stepping out by faith: *I will give you every place where you set your foot ...* Remember how God had promised a new land to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses, vs4 gives some indication of the size and boundaries. God had already given them the land, but it was their responsibility to put one foot in front of the other and start taking the territory, to step out in faith and claim it.