

Be strong and courageous

△ Deuteronomy 31:1-8, 31:14-15, 23 and 34:9

Intro

We are continuing following
Joshua

Last week we saw Joshua leading
the people in action, while Moses,
Aaron and Hur are interceding
with God for the battle

And how he spend as much time with
God as he could

As preperation for him to be the leader
of Israel after Moses

Now we are at the end of Moses'
life, and we see the process of
passing over the leadership baton
to Joshua

The situation

God's people were now ready to
enter the Israel after spending 40
years in the desert

But this is before the giving of the law

And the rebellion with the Golden Calf

After which God instructed the people to wander for 40 years in the desert

We can see that also from Moses' age

At the beginning of Exodus we read that Moses is 80 years old

△ Exod 7:7

And now we read that Moses is a 120 years old

Exod 31:2

Joshua must therefore be somewhere between 60 - 70 years old, assuming that he was 20 when Moses was 80

Leaders in the bible are not very young!

And the Amalekites attacked

So it was crisis upon crisis

A little more background is given in Deut 25:17-18:

17 Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey out of Egypt, 18 how he attacked you on the way, when you were faint and weary, and struck down all who lagged behind you; he did not fear God.

So Amalek attacked Israel when they were weak

the were weak

They were also the first people that attacked Israel on their journey

Moses retirement

Moses knows he has to step down

He realises that he is now not so able anymore

And that he will not cross the Jordan

This is because he disobeyed God when God told him to speak to rock to provide water

And instead he struck the rock twice

Water still came out

But he did not trust God that his words would be enough

△ Exos 20:7-13

But instead of retiring he will die

God's promise

The people will enter the promised land

And the people living in the promised land will be removed

This is what God has promised the Israelites from the beginning

And now it will come through

There is a cost however

There is a cost however

The people living there will need to be destroyed

1 to make room for the people of Israel

2. to stop foreign influence of the people of Israel

as they are to be a holy people

For us in this day and age that sounds very cruel

Why does God need to kill a people in order for his people to make space

Logically I can understand it

But I question if this is the only solution

People over the ages have come up with reasons

But they are not satisfactory

Especially in modern and post-modern Britain

But God needed a land for his people to live and grow

As they are his chosen people

God will however do this himself

And give the people over to them

And history has shown that not all the people in Israel were killed, but that a lot of them lived peacefully, and sometimes not so peacefully with the Israelites

Be strong and courageous

In these readings we have seen this phrase: "be strong and courageous"

First of all the Moses to the people of Israel:

⁶ **Be strong and courageous.** Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Then Moses to Joshua

⁷ Then 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 ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance.

⁸ 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.**

Then God to Joshua

²³ The Lord gave this command to Joshua son of Nun: "**Be strong and courageous**, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you."

This phrase is always accompanied by the promise that

God will never leave them and also be at their side

⁶ Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for **the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.**”

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We have received the same promise

That God will never leave us or forsake us:

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ

Jesus our Lord.

△ Rom 8:38-39

And in the great commission

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. **And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**"

△ Matth 28: 16-20

The disciples doubted

But Jesus gave them this commission, and through them he gave it us

And with the promise that he will always be with us

So we can also be bold and
courageous

We may feel inadequate

Joshua would have felt the same

The people would have felt the same

Why so many times that God said
these words to them if they were not

But we have Jesus with us

So if we do what he tells us to do

He will help us and be with us

The results may not always be
encouraging

But as we are doing what he tells us to
do

Jesus is always with us

The Holy Spirit will empower us

We just have to do it

Go, and make disciples of all
nations

It is the whole process

some are better at reaching people

Others are better at teaching / preaching

Others looking after each other

Others thinking and acting strategically

Others caring physically for each others

What ever gift you have received

We are to use it in his service

Do not be shy, but be strong and courageous

For the Lord our God is with us!

I ry singing it!