



Charting the Course:

a devotion by Chuck Hall

Two Mandates: Take the Land and Make Disciples

After the death of Moses, God commissioned Joshua charging him to mobilize the Children of Israel and cross over the Jordan to take the land that He was giving them. Joshua's mandate to take the land can be seen as an Old Testament type of the mandate given to the Church to go and make disciples of all nations.

The key to Joshua's success in taking the land is found in Joshua 1:7-9. Joshua is instructed to obey God and to meditate continually on His Word, not letting it "depart from his mouth." If he will do this, the Lord promises to be with him wherever he goes and to give him great success.

Obedying and meditating on the Scriptures involves pondering, studying, and carefully reflecting on their meaning and power. In the Hebrew context, meditation also involves verbal expression: to mutter, to speak, to talk, to utter. Many such examples of meditation are found in the Psalms and, thus, are in the context of praying. From this tradition of meditation comes "davening", a specialized type of Jewish prayer in which one rocks back and forth, lost in deep communion with God, as he/she prays and recites biblical texts. In the case of Joshua 1:8, meditating on the Scriptures involved repeating the text over and over again, often as a prayer, so that understanding of the law might come.

Just as this spiritual discipline of meditation was critical to Joshua's success in taking the land, it is essential to us in knowing Christ and fulfilling the Great Commission. This exercise is what I refer to as praying the scriptures out loud to God. It is a life-changing method of prayer! It is a great help to me to find passages that reveal the attributes of God. As I reflect upon His attributes and pray them out loud, God reveals Himself to me in a very special way. I also find promises that relate to my personal and ministry needs. I meditate upon them and pray over them as well. If you do this, your faith will grow and you will see God move powerfully in your life.

One such promise for us found in Acts 1:8 declares that "you shall receive power" to be witnesses throughout the world after the "Holy Spirit has come upon you." Jesus is referring to the "Promise of the Father" (v.4), or "baptism with the Holy Spirit" (v. 5). The baptism with the Holy Spirit is so important to reaching the nations that God says that we are not to go until we have received that power (See Luke 24:46-49). Many of us have tried to do the work of God without the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, we have seen little fruit. Some have become discouraged and others have even been tempted to quit. A ministry without the power of God is not God's will for us. He promises that when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we will receive the power to preach the gospel to the nations--and that He will work with us confirming the word through the accompanying signs and wonders.

Just as meditation, prayer and obedience were the source of Joshua's success; these disciplines along with the power that comes with the baptism with the Holy Spirit will give us fruitful ministries as well. Let us not only embrace this for ourselves, but let us teach others to do the same. "For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Joshua 1:8)