

# Joshua 01 - Introduction: Historical, Practical & Prophetic Aspects); Joshua's Personal Profile

## I. Israel's conquest of Canaan (Joshua 1:1—12:24)

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## Joshua 1

## I. Israel's conquest of Canaan (Joshua 1:1—12:24)

### (1) Preparations for the conquest of Shittim (Joshua 1:1—2:24)

(A) God's exhortation to Joshua (1:1-9)

**1 Now** it came about after the death of Moses **the servant of the LORD**, that the LORD spoke to **Joshua** the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying,

**1** Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying,

**1** After Moses, the servant of the LORD, had died, the LORD spoke to Nun's son Joshua, announcing to him,

**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, saying,

- Verses 1-9 are the preamble to the book of Joshua; they contain the basic principles that were to guide Joshua and Israel so they could obtain all that God had promised to their forefathers

- "Now" - ve, should be "And..."

— In Genesis, no ve; Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, yes; (Israel outside the Land).

Deuteronomy, none.

- It is a bridge book. Joshua, and every book until 1 Chronicles, yes. (Israel inside/after Canaan).

- "...the servant of the LORD" - a title shared by Abraham, David and the "Servant of the LORD" in Isaiah; it is used most frequently of Moses (Ex 14:31; Num 12:7-8, Deut 34:5; here)

- Joshua was honored with this title before his death (24:29)
- "...Joshua" - from the tribe of Ephraim (Num 13:8; 1 Chr 7:27)

2 "Moses My servant is dead; so now arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.

2 "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.

2 "My servant Moses is dead. Now get ready to cross the Jordan River—you and all the people—to the land that I'm giving the Israelis.

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel

- Continually reemphasized in this book, the land was God's gift to His people (v3,6,11,13,15)

- The nation mourned Moses' death for 30 days (Deut 34:8)

- The death of any of His servants never frustrates or limits God, though it causes Him sorrow

Think of the years of blessing in the Promised Land that Joshua forfeited because the people had no faith in God! But Joshua patiently stayed with Moses and did his job, knowing that one day he and Caleb would get their promised inheritance (Num 14:1-9). Leaders must know not only how to win victories but also how to accept defeats.

3 Every place on which the sole of your foot steps, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.

3 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.

3 I'm giving you every place where the sole of your foot falls, just as I promised Moses.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

- For the gift to be effective, possession had to be taken. For a check to be good, it needs to be cashed. For Christ's redemption to avail, it must be received and relied upon (Cf. Heb 4:2,11).

— The most exciting and fulfilling place for any person, family or community is in God's gracious presence and in the center of His purpose

— Possession was promised to the patriarchs and Moses (Gen 13:17; Ex 23:30-31; Deut 11:24)

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river **Euphrates**, all the land of the **Hittites**, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.

4 Your territorial border will extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon Mountains, to the river—that great River Euphrates—all the land of the Hittites—as far as the Mediterranean Sea where the sun sets.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

- "...Euphrates" - previously included as part of the boundary of the land promise 4x (Gen 15:18; Ex 23:41; Deut 1:7; 11:24)

- "...Hittites" - used in a representative sense (synecdoche) for all of the Canaanite tribes (Cf. 1 Kings 10:29; 2 Kings 7:6; Ezek 16:3)

5 No one will *be able to* oppose you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not desert you nor abandon you.

5 No man will *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.

5 No one will be victorious against you for the rest of your life. I'll be with you just like I was with Moses—I'll neither fail you nor abandon you.

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: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

- Here God is revealing Himself through His promises

— A commitment made before entire nation (Cf. 7:24)

— God changes not! Same promise for Christians today! Quoted in Heb 13:5-6.

— He has promised: His personal presence (Matt 28:19); His Holy Spirit to abide with us forever (John 14:16); an absence of fear, since He that is in us is greater than he that it is in the world (1 John 4:4); and an assurance of victory in our conflict with Satanic powers, in that we will be "more than conquerors" through Him that loved us (Rom 8:37).

— The nations of Canaan are "types" of the principalities mentioned in Eph 6:12

6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people **possession** of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

6 "Be strong and courageous, because you'll be leading this people to inherit the land that I promised to give their ancestors.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

- God now exhorts Joshua, on the basis of His promise (v5), to be "strong" and "courageous" (Cf. Deut 31:6)

— He is the God of all encouragement. His grand purpose of all His dealings with us is that we may come to know Him (John 17:3).

- "...possession" - inheritance [KJV]; describes the future possession of the land

— This term has rich theological significance, particularly in Hebrews; it means the enjoyment of the spiritual blessings of salvation (1 Peter 1:4)

- Ownership of the Land depended on God's faithfulness, but occupation of the Land depended on Israel's faithfulness (Cf. Deut 30:20)

— Here we see this involves responsive action on the part of the one to whom the promises are made (sometimes warfare response, sometimes receiving response)

The Book of Joshua records the fulfillment of these three promises: the first, that Israel would enter the land (v3-4), in Joshua 2-5, the second, victory over the enemy (v5), in Joshua 6-12, and the third, that God would divide the land as an inheritance for the conquering tribes, in Joshua 13-22.

7 Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the Law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may achieve success wherever you go.

7 Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.

7 Only be strong and very courageous to ensure that you obey all the instructions that my servant Moses gave you—turn neither to the right nor to the left from it—so that you may succeed wherever you go.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

- Joshua's responsibility was unwavering obedience to the Law; this would be his key to success

— Knowing the Law was only the first step; practicing it was what would make Joshua effective

8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to **do** according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will achieve **success**.

8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

8 This set of instructions is not to cease being a part of your conversations. Meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to carry out everything that's written in it, for then you'll prosper and succeed.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

- Moses kept a written record of God's words and committed this record to the care of the priests (Deut 31:9)

— This "set of instructions" (the Law), was the Israelites only "weapon" (Cf. v18)

— The Lord commanded Joshua to keep this Word in mind constantly so that he would remember his responsibilities under God, and would find encouragement to keep them (Cf. Ps 1:2; Is 59:21)

— Because Joshua revered God, His Word permeated his thinking, framed his decisions, and influenced every insight, word and action

— God's presence was made real to Joshua because God reveals Himself through His Word

— Moses wrote in a reminder for Joshua (Ex 17:14); we regard the "Book of the Law" as the five books of the Torah

— This emphasizes the centrality of the Law as the key to Israel's success, Joshua's effective leadership, and God's enabling presence with His people

- "...meditate" - *hagah*, literally means "mutter"; the idea is one continually muttering God's Word to himself, constantly thinking about it

— It's important to differentiate theoretical speculation about the law, such as what the Pharisees engaged in; instead, meditation is a practical study of the law for the purpose of observing it in thought and action, or carrying it out with the heart, mouth and hand

— We should never view Bible study and memorization as ends. They are important methods of obtaining the end, which is obedience to God's Word and for us today, Christlikeness

- "...do" - the blessing comes from doing, not just hearing (Cf. James 1:22-25)

- "...success" - not defined as material possessions or prominence, but as all the good God has designed for His people

— Success is human flourishing found in a life satisfied in God's purpose

— Success is finding fulfillment in honoring God, His Word, and His Name

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified nor dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

9 I've commanded you, haven't I? Be strong and courageous. Don't be fearful or discouraged, because the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

- This was not just good advice...Joshua was receiving orders from his Commanding Officer

- Be strong and courageous (4x: v6,7,9,18)

This passage contains the principles necessary for spiritual success in every age. We must: know what God requires, maintain perpetual awareness of that, and be consistently and completely obedient to it in our daily experience—in order to gain victory over our spiritual adversaries.

(B) Joshua's exhortation to Israel (1:10-18)

(a) Exhortation (1:10-15)

**10 Then** Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

**10** Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

**10** Then Joshua gave orders to the officials of the people.

**10** Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

- "Then" - promptly, no conference, committees, consents... (Ps 119:60, David; Cf. Col 3:23)

— After receiving his marching orders from Yahweh, Joshua prepared to mobilize the nation of Israel

11 "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within **three days** you are going to cross this Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it.'"

11 "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it.'"

11 "Go through the camp," he said, "and command the people, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, because within three days you'll be crossing the Jordan River to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you—so go get it!'"

11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

- "...three days" - during this time, the Israelites had time to consider and realize that they were totally dependent on God for the ability to cross the wide, swift Jordan River, then defeat the Canaanites

- Warning: manna ceased upon the Israelites entering the land (Joshua 5:12)

- Joshua was not the only person created for and called to take possession of the land. Every person had a vital role. All were to unite behind God's chosen leader in the mission, fight valiantly, and support Joshua with encouragement and allegiance. As each Israelite assumed their role in God's unfolding drama, they found their vocation, their calling.

Entering the land does not parallel the believer's entrance to heaven; it signifies his willingness to "cross the Jordan" and engage the enemy. In other words, it is a decision by a regenerate saint to submit to the lordship of Christ and trust God for victory in the spiritual battle.

Joshua and Caleb were the oldest men in the camp, and yet they were enthusiastic about trusting God and entering the Land. It isn't a matter of age, it's a matter of faith. And faith comes from meditating on the Word of God (1:8; Rom 10:17).

**12** But to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to the **half-tribe of Manasseh**, Joshua said,

**12** To the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said,

**12** Joshua told the descendants of Reuben, the descendants of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh,

**12** And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, Tribes that wanted to settle East of Jordan, yet would support conquest of the land.

- "...half-tribe of Manasseh" - half of the tribe chose to live east of the Jordan River, and half to the west (Num 32:20-33)

13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you **rest**, and will give you this land.'

13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God gives you rest and will give you this land.'

13 "Remember what Moses commanded you when he said, 'The LORD your God will provide you rest, as well as this land.'

13 Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land.

- "...rest" - an important concept to grasp in order to understand what the conquest of the Land provided the Israelites
- It also clarifies what the author of Hebrews had in mind when he referred to "the rest" that we enjoy as Christians (Heb 3-4)
- It was not rest in the sense of freedom from conflict, but instead resting in contrast to journeying. It was entrance into, and initial participation in, the inheritance the Lord promised His people (Cf. Deut 12:10; 25:19; Joshua 21:44; 23:1; 2 Sam 7:1,11; 1 Kings 8:56; Ps 95)

## Rest

In Christian experience, the "crossing of the Jordan" does not only correspond to the believer's death and entrance into heaven, which some popular Christian songs suggest. It also parallels the believer's entrance into the *enjoyment* of his or her eternal life—now—through dedication to Jesus Christ (Rom 6:13; 12:1-2), and through walking by means of the Spirit (Gal 5:16). The wilderness wanderings resemble the experience of the redeemed believer, who has not yet fully committed himself or herself to God, and who is still "walking in the flesh." When the Israelites crossed the Jordan, they encountered real *physical* enemies, and also had to contend with their *spiritual* adversaries—just as a NT believer does when he dedicates himself to God and walks by the Spirit. The Christian's rest is not the absence of hostility. It is the beginning of the *enjoyment* of some of the blessings that God has promised us (i.e., eternal life, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, victory over our spiritual enemies).

14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross ahead of your brothers in battle formation, **all** your valiant warriors, and shall help them,

14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them,

14 Your wives, your young children, and your livestock will remain in the land that Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan River, but you and all your warriors will cross, ready for battle, in full view of your relatives, and you will help them

14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them;

- "...all" - limited sense, not literally "all" the warriors from these tribes with their brethren across the Jordan

— The 2-1/2 tribes had 136,930 men available (Num 26:7,18,34), but only 40,000 men actually crossed the Jordan to fight in the Promised Land (Josh 4:13); the rest remained to protect the women in the cities the tribes had taken in the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead (Num 32:1-5,16-19)

— When the soldiers returned home, they shared the spoils of war with their brothers (Joshua 22:6-8)

- The desire of the Trans-Jordan tribes was for "a place for cattle" (Num 32:1,4,16); their first concern was for making a living, not making a life

— They would rather prosper than dwell with their brothers and sisters in the inheritance that God had given them. They were so far from the place of worship, they had to erect a special monument to remind their children of their heritage (Josh 22:10ff)

— They seem to represent the "borderline believers" who get close to the inheritance but never quite claim it, no matter how successful they may seem to be. While available for a time, when their appointed task is finished, they head home to do what they want to do.

15 until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as *He is giving* you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you may return to your own land, and take possession of that which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."

15 until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as *He gives* you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise."

15 until the LORD gives relief to your relatives, as he did to you. Then they'll take the land that the LORD your God is giving them as their inheritance. You'll return to the land of your heritage and receive the inheritance that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the east side of the Jordan River, in the direction of the sunrise."

15 Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising.

- In one sense, their attitude was commendable: they followed through on their previous commitment to Moses (Num 32:25-27) and with their present commitment to Joshua (v16-18)

(b) Response (1:16-18)

**16** They answered Joshua, saying, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.

**16** They answered Joshua, saying, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.

**16** "We'll do everything that you commanded," they replied. "We'll go wherever you send us.

**16** And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses.

17 Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses.

17 We'll listen and obey you in everything, just like we did with Moses. Only may the LORD your God be with you, just as he was with Moses.

17 According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses.

- They prayed for him. The best thing we can do for those who lead us is to pray for them daily and ask God to be with them. No Christian warrior succeeds to the glory of God apart from prayer.

- When Joshua did not pause to seek the mind of God, he failed miserably (Josh 7; 9), and so will we

*Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire? —Corrie ten Boom*

18 Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous."

18 Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous."

18 Anyone who rebels against what you say and doesn't listen to your words regarding everything that you command will be executed. Only be strong and courageous."

18 Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

- We do not read that they ever rebelled against Joshua's authority

— When he "mustered them out" (Joshua 22) he did so with words of commendation and blessing

— A remarkable thing about these days of preparation is that nothing was said about Israel's enemies nor the weapons that they would need to fight them

- Their victories (and setbacks) are instructive for us in our battles also!

- Their most powerful weapon was a sword! (The Word, Cf. Joshua 1:8)
- "Be strong" (4th time in this chapter); remember Eph 6:10
- A discouraged army is never victorious

Four sources of Joshua's strength: (1) a faithful past, (2) a distinct call, (3) the sense of the presence of God, and (4) the indwelling of the Word of God. [F.B. Meyer]