

# Joshua - Introduction & Background

## Title

The title of the book most probably comes from its central character and therefore should not be used as an argument favoring authorship. "The name 'Joshua' is composed of two parts. The first part is a shortened form of the divine name 'LORD,' (Heb. *yhwh*). The second part is the Hebrew word for 'salvation.'" Campbell observes, "The title therefore suitably describes what God used Joshua to do, as recorded in this book, namely, to save His people by conquering Canaan and apportioning it to Israel as their promised homeland." Interestingly, Joshua's Hebrew name is the equivalent of the Greek or Aramaic name for Jesus. The parallel between Christ and Joshua is striking. Just as Joshua brought Israel into the fulfillment of her promises, Christ similarly brings the believer into the fulfillment of his promises. The LXX entitles the book *Iesous Naus* which means "Joshua the Son of Nun." The Latin title of the book is *Liber Josue*, which means the Book of Joshua.

## Authorship

Like the other historical books, Joshua is an anonymous work. Despite its anonymity, several lines of evidence point to Joshua as the book's author. First, Jewish tradition supports Joshua as the book's author. For example, the Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Bathra* 14b names Joshua as the author. Second, it would not be unusual to expect Joshua to be the book's author since the book itself portrays his involvement in various writing projects. He wrote a copy of the Mosaic Law (8:32), had geographical records made (18:8-9), and wrote a copy of the renewed covenant (24:26). If Joshua did for the book what he did for these other writings, then Joshua is an obvious candidate for the authorship of the book. Third, Joshua was qualified to write the book since he was Israel's leader at the time. Fourth, the events spoken of in the book are narrated from the perspective of an eyewitness. Moreover, the writer uses the first person plural pronouns "we" (5:1) and "us" (5:6) when describing the events of the book. Thus, Joshua would be qualified to write the book since he was an eyewitness to its events. Fifth, the book must have been written during the time of Joshua since it employs ancient names of Canaanite deities and cities. Examples include Balaah for Kiriath Jearim and Kiriath Arab for Hebron (15:9, 13). Also, "Tyre had not yet conquered Sidon which it did in the 12th century (13:4-6)." Moreover, the ancient cities of Byblos, Acco, and Hazor are described as part of the land. In addition, God promises to drive out various groups that are associated with the second millennium such as the Hivites, Perrizites, and the Gergashites (Josh 3:10). Furthermore, the description of the bringing down of the walls of Jericho

seems to be paralleled in at least one ancient Hittite text. In addition, the items stolen by Achan (Joshua 7:18-24) are reminiscent of the second millennium. Also, the Sheshai and the Talmai (15:14) are from the Hurrian culture that lived in the land from 1550–1200 BC. Finally, the 15–13<sup>th</sup> century BC suzerain vassal Hittite treaty structure is reflected in the covenant renewal ceremony in Joshua 24.

Despite the persuasiveness of these arguments, many contend that Joshua did not write the book. Advocates of the documentary hypothesis maintain that Joshua 1–12 were written by JE and P wrote Joshua 13–24. However, as explained in earlier arguments, the documentary hypothesis is built upon tenuous assumptions. Others contend that because Joshua could not have written some parts of the book, his authorship of the entire book is questionable. However, as explained below, it is better to understand these suspect portions to be the work of a later editor who amended Joshua's material.

### **Date**

Because the events of the book are narrated from the perspective of an eyewitness, how one dates the book is contingent upon how one dates the conquest of Canaan. While many date the Exodus in 1290 B.C. and the conquest in 1250 BC, it seems better to date the Exodus in 1446 BC and the conquest in 1406 BC. According to 1 Kings 6:1, the Exodus took place 480 years earlier than the inauguration of the temple, which took place in the fourth year of Solomon's reign (970–931 BC) in 966 BC. Thus, the Exodus took place in 1446 BC. Because of the existence of an additional forty-year period in between the Exodus and the entrance into Canaan (Ex 16:35; Num 14:34-35), the beginning of the conquest took place in 1405 BC.

Moreover, Jephthah told Ammon that the Israelites had occupied the land for 300 years (Judges 11:26). Because the judgeship of Jephthah cannot be dated later than 1100 BC, the conquest was completed around 1400 BC. Interestingly, when one begins in 1446 BC, subtracts 40 years for the existence of an additional forty-year period in between the Exodus and the entrance into Canaan, subtracts an additional 300 years for the amount of time in between the conquest and Jephthah's day, and subtracts an additional 140 years for the time in between Jephthah's day and the fourth year of Solomon's reign, one also arrives at the 480 year figure spoken of in 1 Kings 6:1 that elapsed in between the fourth year of Solomon's reign and the Exodus.

Also, Caleb indicates that he was forty years old at the time of the Kadesh Barnea failure (Joshua 14:7) and eighty-five at the conclusion of the conquest (Joshua 14:10). Thus, 45 years elapsed in between Kadesh and the completion of the conquest. Because Israel wandered in the desert for roughly 38 years before entering Canaan (Num 10:11; 20:1,22-29; 33:38; Deut 1:3; Joshua 4:19), the conquest must have taken 7 years. This figure is not surprising in light of Joshua 11:18, which indicates that the conquest took some time. All

things considered, the conquest probably began in 1405 BC and was completed in 1399 BC.

Furthermore, extra biblical material supports an early date for the conquest. For example, the Armana letters (1400–1366 BC) feature the governor of Jerusalem, Abdi-Hiba, writing to Pharaoh Akhenaten (1375–1353 BC) requesting aid due to the incursions brought about by the Habiru. If “Habiru” is etymologically related to “Hebrew,” then more evidence can be mustered in support of the early date for the conquest. In addition, Garstang’s excavations of a Jericho cemetery unearthed scarabs that could not be dated later than the reign of Amenhotep III (1412–1376 BC). Moreover, of the 150,000 pottery fragments discovered in a Jericho cemetery, only a single fragment was of the Mycean type and this type only began to be imported into Canaan in 1400 BC. These archeological details show that Jericho was destroyed around 1400 BC. The ashes found in Canaan dating around 1250 BC are insufficient to date the conquest late since Hazor was the only city that the Israelites burned during the northern campaign and the burned level can be attributed to burning that transpired during the Judges era.

Given a 1399 BC date for the completion of the conquest and an additional 25 years for the completion of the events described in the book, it is likely that Joshua wrote the book not long after in 1374 BC. Because of the importance of the message contained in the book in order for Israel to remain in the land and avoid annihilation (24:20), it is likely that Joshua composed the book quickly. Such speed of composition is seen in the statement that Rahab was alive at the time of writing (6:25). However, several reasons have made scholars reticent to assign the book a date too close to the time of the original events.

These reasons include the repetition of the phrase “to this day” (4:9,14; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10), the fact that the book records Joshua’s death (24:29), the fact the conclusion of the book indicates that Israel remained faithful to God throughout the lifetime of not only Joshua but also the elders that outlived him (24:31), and the fact that the book describes events that took place after the time of Joshua. These events include Othniel’s capture of Kirjath Sepher (15:13-19; Judges 1:9-15), Dan’s northern migration (19:47; Judges 18), and Caleb’s conquest of Hebron (15:13-14; Judges 1:1,10,20). However, the date cannot be pushed too late since it portrays the Jebusites as still controlling Jerusalem (15:63) and David conquered Jerusalem thereby converting it into a Jewish city in 1000 BC (2 Sam 5:6-10).

The preceding arguments cause many to date the book around 1320 BC. However, it seems better to conclude that most of the book was written by Joshua around 1374 B.C. Unknown compilers and editors could have added the above insertions. Thus, the book in its final form was completed in 1320 BC. Perhaps the final compiler was Phinehas (24:33) who completed the book during the Judges era.

## **Scope**

As explained previously, the conquest began in 1405 BC and was completed in 1399 BC. The first number is derived from a 1446 BC date for the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1) and an additional 40 years for the period in between the Exodus and entry into Canaan (Ex 16:35; Num 14:34-35). The second number is derived from Caleb's age of 40 at the time of the Kadesh Barnea debacle (14:7) and his age of 85 at the conclusion of the conquest (14:10). Given the 45 year discrepancy between these numbers and given the fact that Israel wandered in the wilderness for roughly 38 years (Num 10:11; 20:1,22-29; 33:38; Deut 1:3; Joshua 4:19), the conquest must have taken seven years. The first half of the Book of Joshua (1–14) transpired from 1405 BC to 1399 BC.

Caleb and Joshua were from the same generation. If it is assumed that they were the same age then Joshua was also 85 years old in Joshua 14. Joshua died at the age of 110 (24:29). Thus, the second half of the Book of Joshua transpired over a 25-year period. Thus, Joshua 14–24 took place between 1399 and 1374 BC. In sum, the 32-year interval in between 1406–1374 BC represents the scope of the book.

Some say Joshua was older than Caleb since he was the leader. If Joshua were six years older than Caleb, then the book would transpire in the 38-year interval in between 1406 BC and 1368 BC.

### **Place of Writing and Recipients**

The place of writing is Canaan since Israel was in this land at the time of the book's closing. Joshua addresses the second generation that had emerged from the wilderness to experience the conquest. There was much land left to be conquered (13:1). Thus, Joshua wrote to the second generation of Israelites to exhort them to continue to conquer the land as well as honor God's covenant so that they will continue to stay in the land.

### **Purposes**

Joshua seems to have had several purposes in mind when he wrote his book. First, he wrote to trace the partial fulfillment of the promises given in the Abrahamic Covenant. Second, he wrote to preserve a historical record of the conquest (1–12) and division (13–24) of the land. Perhaps Joshua wanted to preserve this information in case later disputes arose among the tribes concerning the land allotments as well as the location of important cities. Third, Joshua wrote to preserve a historical bridge between the wilderness sojourn and the Judges era. Fourth, Joshua selectively used history to show the second generation and subsequent generations the blessings or curses that they will experience when they obey or disobey the Mosaic Covenant.

### **Message**

Joshua records the conquest (1–12) and division (13–24) of Canaan not only to demonstrate God's faithfulness in partially fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant but also to teach the second generation and subsequent generations the victory that they can experience when they do not trust in human might but instead trust in God by obeying the

Mosaic Covenant. Joshua also points out to his audience the curses that they can expect to experience when they dishonor the covenant.

### **Theological Themes**

First, the book explains God's faithfulness to both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. God's faithfulness to these covenants is seen in His unilateral actions in support of Israel. Examples include restraining the Jordan (3:14-17), destroying the walls surrounding Jericho (6:20), sending a hailstorm upon Israel's enemies (10:11), and extending the day so Israel could gain victory over her enemies (10:13-14). God's faithfulness is accentuated in that He provides victory in spite of the death of His choice servant Moses and in spite of overwhelming odds. Second, the book explains that obedience to the covenant brings blessing while disobedience brings curses. This information is pertinent to Joshua's audience in order to allow them to remain and prosper in the land. A third and related theme is covenant renewal, which occurs at the beginning (8) and end (24) of the conquest. Such renewal is significant to remind the second generation the importance of honoring the covenant so that they can experience God's blessings.

Fourth, the book stresses the importance of God's written word (1:8; 8:32-35; 23:6-16; 24:26-27). This emphasis is again helpful in exhorting the second generation to honor God's covenant. Fifth, the book stresses the importance of the purity of worship. This theme is evident not only through the mandate that Israel separate herself from Canaanite practices (22), but also through the second generation's circumcision (5:2-4), the celebration of the Passover (5:10-12), God standing on holy ground (5:13-15), and how Achan's sin jeopardized the success of the entire community (7). Sixth, the book stresses the holiness of God and His hatred for sin. God's hatred for sin is seen through His judgment imposed upon the Canaanites (6:21; 8:26) and Achan (7:10-15).

### **Structure**

The book contains the following three major categories: the conquest of Canaan (1-12), the division of Canaan (13-22), and the conditions necessary for remaining and prospering in Canaan (22-24). The conquest section (1-12) can also be further divided according to the various campaigns waged by Joshua against the Canaanites. Among them are the central campaign (5:13-9:27), the southern campaign (10), and the northern campaign (11). The book can also be apportioned according to geographical setting. Such sections include Israel west and east of the Jordan (1-5), Israel in Canaan (6:1-13:7), and the situating of the tribes in the west and east of the Jordan (13:8-24:33).

### **Christ in Joshua**

There are no direct messianic prophecies found in the Book of Joshua. However, Joshua is a type of Christ. In fact "Joshua's name is the Hebrew equivalent of the name Jesus." Just as Joshua gained victories that Moses could not, Jesus also gained victories that the Mosaic Law could not. "As Joshua led Israel to victory over her enemies and into

possession of the Promised Land, and as he interceded for the nation after it had sinned and been defeated, so does Jesus. He brings the people of God into a promised rest (Heb 4:8-9); intercedes for His own continually (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25), and enables them to defeat their enemies (Rom 8:37; Heb 2:14-15)."

Christ will also bring many sons to glory (Heb 2:10) and lead His people in triumph (2 Cor 2:14). Other Christological references include the appearance of the Lord's commander (5:13-15), which arguably represents a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, and the fact that Rahab appears in Christ's genealogy (Matt 1:5).

### **Genre**

The protestant OT places Joshua as the first of the historical books, which encompass Joshua through Esther. However, the Hebrews divided the Old Testament canon into the following three categories: the Law or Torah, the prophets or *naviim*, and the writings or *kethubim*. The prophets were further divided into the former prophets, consisting of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, and the latter prophets, consisting of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets. Ruth, Daniel, and Lamentations were considered part of the writings section. Thus, Joshua served as the first book of the former prophets. The former prophets differed from the latter prophets in three important areas. First, while the former prophets used history to convey a purpose, the latter prophets used oracles to convey a purpose. Second, while the former prophets involved a continuous historical narrative, the latter prophets used oracles with little historical information to place them in a historical setting. Third, while the former prophets were not primarily focused on foretelling, the latter prophets did make some use of foretelling. Because Joshua is considered one of the former prophets, the book is not given primarily for the purpose of conveying history. Rather, it selectively weaves together history for the purpose of conveying important spiritual lessons.

### **Unique Characteristics**

The Book of Joshua represents one of the OT story line books. These books are important in that they communicate new information regarding the historical development of the nation rather than merely representing an expansion or recapitulation of previously existing information. However, Joshua is unique among these story line books in that it does not record a massive failing on the part of Israel.

### **The Moral Problem of Canaanite Genocide**

Many balk at God's command to Joshua to destroy the Canaanites (6:21). However, several principles must be kept in mind. First, the Canaanites were not innocent victims but rather were involved in gross depravity (Lev 18; 19:26,31; Deut 9:4-5; 12:31; 18:9-11; 2 Kings 23:10). Second, God extended patience to the Canaanites (Gen 15:13,16). However, the Canaanites ignored the warnings God gave to them through Abraham, Melchizedek, and the nation of Israel (9:1-9; 10:1-5; 11:1-5). Third, it was necessary for Israel to exterminate

the Canaanites so that the Jew in turn would not be corrupted and annihilated (Deut 7:3-4). Preventing such annihilation was important since God's redemptive purposes to the entire world were to be mediated through Israel.

Fourth, elimination of the Canaanites was necessary in order to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 15:18-21). Thus, only those groups within the land that God gave to Abraham were to be destroyed. On this point the God of the Bible is distinct from the god of Islam who calls for global genocide rather than confining genocide to a specific locale.

Fifth, the command to destroy the Canaanites represents descriptive rather than prescriptive genre. In other words, it is a one-time command given in history rather than an open command that God's people are to implement today.

### **Outline**

#### 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)

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

(a) Exhortation (1:10-15)

(b) Response (1:16-18)

(C) Israel's spies spy out Jericho (2:1-24)

##### (2) Israel crosses the Jordan (3:1—5:12)

(A) Crossing described (3:1-17)

(B) Memorial described (4:1-24)

(C) Circumcision and celebration of Passover at Gilgal (5:1-12)

(a) Circumcision at Gilbeath-haaraloth (5:1-9)

(b) Celebration of the Passover on the plains of Jericho (5:10-12)

##### (3) Israel conquers Canaan (Joshua 5:13—12:24)

(A) Central campaign (Joshua 5:13—9:27)

(a) Theophanic appearance (5:13-15)

(b) Victory at Jericho (6:1-27)

(c) At Ai (7:1—8:29)

(i) Defeat (7:1-26)

(ii) Victory (8:1-29)

(d) First covenant renewal at Shechem (8:30-35)

(e) Treaty with the Gibeonites (9:1-27)

(B) Southern campaign (10:1-43)

(a) Canaanite southern coalition gathers to destroy Gibeon (10:1-5)

(b) Israel defends Gibeon and defeats the southern coalition (10:6-15)

(c) Southern cities conquered (10:16-43)

(C) Northern campaign (11:1-23)

- (a) Canaanite northern coalition gathers to fight Israel at Merom (11:1-5)
  - (b) Joshua defeats the northern coalition (11:6-15)
  - (c) Summary of the conquered areas (11:16-23)
- (D) Summary of conquests (12:1-24)
  - (a) Transjordan kings and land (12:1-6)
  - (b) Canaanite kings and land (12:7-24)
- II. Division of Canaan (Joshua 13:1—21:45)
  - (1) The land still to be conquered (13:1-7)
  - (2) Transjordan division (13:8-33)
  - (3) Western land division (14:1—19:51)
    - (A) Division of the land by lot (14:1-5)
    - (B) Caleb's inheritance in Hebron (14:6-15)
    - (C) Judah's inheritance (15:1-63)
      - (a) Borders (15:1-12)
      - (b) Caleb and Othniel's inheritance within these borders (15:13-19)
      - (c) Inheritance by clan (15:20-63)
    - (D) Joseph's inheritance (16:1—17:18)
      - (a) Ephraim (16:1-10)
      - (b) Half of the tribe of Manasseh (17:1-18)
    - (E) Survey and distribution of remaining land (18:1-10)
    - (F) Remaining tribes (Joshua 18:11—19:48)
      - (a) Benjamin (18:11-28)
      - (b) Simeon (19:1-9)
      - (c) Zebulun (19:10-16)
      - (d) Issachar (19:17-23)
      - (e) Asher (19:24-31)
      - (f) Naphtali (19:32-39)
      - (g) Dan (19:40-48)
    - (G) Joshua's inheritance of the city of Timnath-Serah in Ephraim (19:49-51)
  - (4) Important cities (Joshua 20:1—21:42)
    - (A) Cities of refuge (20:1-9)
    - (B) Levitical cities (21:1-42)
  - (5) Conclusion (21:43-45)
- III. The conclusion of Joshua's ministry emphasizing conditions necessary for Israel to stay in the land (Joshua 22:1—24:33)
  - (1) Transjordan tribes build an altar while returning home (22:1-34)
  - (2) Joshua's final sermon (23:1-16)
    - (A) Past blessings for obedience (23:1-12)

- (B) Future curses for disobedience (23:13-16)
  - (3) Second covenant renewal at Shechem (24:1-33)
    - (A) Joshua gathers the leaders at Shechem (24:1)
    - (B) Historical prologue (24:2-13)
      - (a) Election of the patriarchs (24:2-3)
      - (b) Redemption from Egypt (24:4-7)
      - (c) Wilderness wanderings (24:8)
      - (d) Transjordan conquest (24:9-10)
      - (e) Israel currently lived in houses that they had not built (24:11-13)
    - (C) Covenant terms (24:14-24)
    - (D) Covenant preservation (24:25-28)
      - (a) Covenant written (24:25-26a)
      - (b) Covenant stored (24:26b)
      - (c) Covenant memorialized (24:27-28)
  - (4) Joshua and Elieazar die and are buried (24:29-33)
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## Introduction

The name of this book in Hebrew, Greek, and English comes from the principal character in it—Joshua—rather than from the writer. Joshua may or may not have been the writer of this book. The title is appropriate because “Joshua” means: “Yahweh saves.” “Joshua” is the Hebrew name that translates into Aramaic as “Jesus.” What Jesus is to God’s people in a larger sense, Joshua was to the Israelites in a smaller sense. Joshua brought God’s people into the realization of many of God’s plans and purposes for them. This book is a record of God’s deliverance of the Israelites into what He had promised them.

In the English Bible, Joshua is one of the historical books. In the Hebrew Bible, it is in the second of the three main divisions of the OT, the Prophets (the Law and the Writings are the first and third divisions of the Hebrew Bible). Joshua is the first book in the first half of the Prophets, called the “Former Prophets.” The Former Prophets section contains four books (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings), as does the second division, the “Latter Prophets” (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve minor prophets).

The fact that the Hebrews included mainly historical books, such as Joshua, in the Prophets section, reveals a basic attitude of God’s people. They viewed what God revealed here not primarily as a historical record, as much as an authoritative record of selected historical events designed to teach important spiritual lessons. We should therefore recognize Joshua, not so much as a record of history, but as a “selective history” intended

to reveal God's will. In the Prophets section of the OT, God revealed Himself through historical events as well as through the oracles of individual prophets.

### **Timeline**

The date of the Exodus was probably about 1446 BC (Cf. 1 Kings 6:1). Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness (Ex 16:35; Num 14:33-34). Thus Israel crossed the Jordan River and entered the land about 1406 BC. The Book of Joshua, therefore, begins with events in or very close to the year 1406 BC.

Josephus said the conquest of the land took five years [*Antiquities*, 5:1:19]. However, when Caleb received the town of Hebron as his inheritance, he said that God had promised him 45 years earlier that he would enter Canaan (14:10; Cf. Num 14:24). Since God gave that promise 38 years before Israel crossed the Jordan, the conquest (Joshua 1-12) must have taken closer to seven years (1406–1399 BC). However, Joshua 1-9 deals with events that probably happened in less than one year.

### **(1) Historical**

Continues Deuteronomy; it introduces Israel to the Land

- Genesis: Book of beginnings (heaven, earth, Israel)
    - Primary Doctrine: Election; Noah, Shem, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph (Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13)
  - Exodus: Deliverance from bondage; went in to Egypt a family, came out a nation
    - Primary Doctrine: Redemption (6:6; 15:13); by grace (burning bush a model); Passover Lamb
  - Leviticus: Manner of worship (only two months of history)
    - Primary Doctrine: fellowship and worship; tabernacle, et al; sanctification
  - Numbers: Wilderness Wanderings
    - Primary Doctrine: failure of unbelief; failure to enter, overcome, occupy
  - Deuteronomy:
    - Primary Doctrine: Obedience a precondition
- [Deuteronomy is a bridge between the first four (outside the land) and the next seven (inside the land)!]
- Joshua: Conquest of the Land; [the iniquity of the Amorites was now full (Gen 15:16); the land was to "vomit out its inhabitants" (Lev 18:25)]

### **(2) Practical**

- It is a book about war and warfare. We are expected to be soldiers, taking the offense (Matt 16:18)
- This book is about Victorious Christian Living (1 John 5:4)

— It is a clarion call to obedience and action. It fits our times.

### **Joshua's Preparation**

- God prepares a servant for the task and the task for the servant. 17 years for Joseph; 80 years for Moses; many years of trials and testings for David, et al.
- Suffering a key part of it. Great affliction in Egypt preceded the Exodus.
- It was true of our Savior (Luke 24:26; 1 Peter 1:11); it is true of His people (1 Peter 4:13; 5:10). Our Lord's scars are now glorified in heaven.
- Submission to authority, under Moses, etc.
- Delay; patience. 38 years wandering due to other's unbelief.

### **Joshua's Leadership**

- He walked with God. He was a man of prayer, etc.
- He had courage: essential
  - If you're timid, you'll never accomplish much for the Lord (Matt 25:24-30)
  - Joshua had the courage to deal with sin in the camp (Joshua 7) and he challenged the tribes to claim their inheritance (17:14-18)
- [Sometimes it takes more courage to face your own people at home than the enemy on the battlefield...]
- Joshua had a plan and followed it; it was not a haphazard affair: it was carefully planned and skillfully executed
  - *He who has no course plotted, no wind is favorable.* —Ancient Chinese proverb
- He didn't quit: "Experience is the name everyone gives his mistakes."
  - **Experience is a tough teacher because it always gives the exam first and teaches the lesson afterward.** If we turn our mistakes into mirrors, we'll see only ourselves. If, by faith, we turn our mistakes into windows, we'll see the Lord and get the strength to keep trying.
- He enlisted others and commanded their respect. True leaders don't demand respect; they command it.
  - It takes stature more than authority. **Real leaders don't use people to build their authority; they use their authority to build people.** He isn't a hero; he makes them.
  - A leader is one who takes twice as much blame and half as much credit. Joshua qualifies on both counts.

### **Joshua's Message**

The practical message of the Book of Joshua is:

- God keeps His promises and enables His servants to succeed if they will trust Him and obey His Word.

- The spiritual message is that God has a rich inheritance for His children now, and they can claim it by faith (Cf. Heb 3-4; Ephesians).
- Joshua reveals that it is because God loves people that He hates sin.

Different kinds of Christians:

- (1) Most: still in bondage in Egypt
- (2) Delivered, but wandering in the wilderness of unbelief because they won't enter their inheritance by faith
- (3) Others prefer to live on the borders of the blessing
- (4) Others who follow their Joshua (*Yehoshua*) and enter the Promised Land and claim their inheritance

Crossing the Jordan, spiritually, is not "dying and going to heaven." It's a picture of dying to self and old life and entering our spiritual inheritance here and now, enjoying the fullness of God's blessing as we serve the Lord and glorify Him. That's what Heb 4 calls "entering into His rest."

Joshua is not the key person in this book. The Lord is. He is, indeed, "the Lord of all the earth" (Josh 3:11). He keeps His promises.

Joshua 3:5: "Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." The God of Joshua lives. But where are the Joshuas?

### **Lessons for Today's Christian**

- Not about life after death: it's about life after "birth"!
- His goal: not just deliverance from Egypt, but to the Promised Land (Gen 14:13-17; Ex 3:7-8)
- Heb 3-4: "into His rest..."
- Ephesians: "in the heavenlies..."
- Rom 8:30: Predestinated—called—justified—glorified

***A Christian does not work up to victory: he works down from it (His).***

Moses — the Law

Joshua — Victory

### **Strong enemies: Eph 6**

Controlled by spiritual evil: destroy completely! (Eph 6:11)

### **(3) Prophetic**

- *Yeho-Shua*: "The Lord is Salvation" in Hebrew; Jesus in Greek
- A type of our Savior vs. Moses, the (failure of) the Law

#### **(4) Mystical Aspects (Col 2:16-17)**

- Joshua as a "type" of Christ ("type" is a foreshadowing or model of)
- Namesake: *Ye-ho-shua* = Jesus (Greek)
- Prophet: foretold God's plan
- Priest (!): Moses' minister (Ex 33:11)
- King: Commander of the Host (Israel)
- He came after Moses (John 1:17; Rom 8:3-4; 10:4-5; Gal 3:23-25); what Law could not do, He completed
- He leads to victory (Rom 8:37; 2 Cor 1:10; 2:14)
- He is our advocate when we have suffered defeat (Cf. 7:5-9; 1 John 2:1-2)
- He allots our inheritance (Eph 1:11,14; 4:7-11)

#### **Jordan**

- Started at Bethabara ("The House of Crossing")
- John the Baptist baptized in same spot (John 1:28)
- Chose 2 spies? Not 12!
- Circumcised at Gilgal (10th of Nisan); waited three days; crossed on the 14th (Passover)
- Manna ends
- What does "crossing the Jordan" typify?
- Why were "spies" sent?

#### **Canaan**

- Seven-year campaign [45 years (Num 14:30) less 38 years spent in the wilderness (Deut 2:14)]
- What does Canaan typify?
- Heaven? (Yet, wars there!) Conquest through conflict!?
- Canaan: "Crossing over the Jordan" = ?
- Israel came not as pilgrims, but as invaders to take possession...
- Canaan: present position and possession and Christ (Heb 3-4)
- 4:8-11: "...enter into that rest..." Note v3
- = Israel's promised rest (Deut 6:10-11; Lev 26:6)
- = place of bounty (Ex 3:8; Deut 11:10-12; 33:28; Lev 26:5)
- = place of triumph (Deut 7:1)

#### **Joshua: Personal Background**

- Joshua was the eldest son of his father, Nun. (He would have had a special interest in the sprinkling of the blood the night of the Passover in Egypt!)
- A study of his genealogy (1 Chr 7:20-28) reveals that some of his relatives did not have a good reputation—they were cattle thieves!
- He is first seen fighting the enemies of God only two months after the exodus from Egypt (Ex 17:8-16)
- Moses is instructed to write this “in the book...” (Ex 17:14); a definite article is implied
- For the ears of Joshua: a hint of his future assignment to be a military leader!
- [Moses is named 57x in the book...]
- On Mt Sinai (Ex 24:18; 32:1-18; 33:11); Joshua, not Aaron, left in charge of tent of meeting! (Num 11:28)
- *Oshua* = “He saves” (Num 13:8); renamed *Yehovah-Shua*, “Yehovah is salvation” (Num 13:16), the Hebrew form of “Jesus” (Matt 1:21; Cf. Acts 7:45); Joshua is called Jesus in Heb 4:8.
- Joshua was a member of the 12 sent to spy out the land; he and Caleb were the only ones to give a good report—and to survive the 40 years! (Cf. Num 13:1—14:39).
  
- It took only a few days to get Israel out of Egypt; it took 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel.
- They had traveled from Egypt to Sinai in only two months
- The Lord kept them there for a year
- Their unbelief stretched out their journey another 40 years
- [He stood his ground at the threat of his life (Num 14:10). They were going to stone the two witnesses! (Cf. Rev 11)]
- Ordination (Num 27:18-23); picked long before (Deut 3:28); an answer to Moses’ prayer (Num 27:16-17); Spirit-filled (Deut 34:9)
- [Rabbinical tradition ascribes that Joshua wrote the last 8 verses of the Torah]

### **Three Characteristics of Faith**

Joshua clarifies three characteristics of faith:

(1) Faith involves *accepting God’s standard of holiness*. We tend to undervalue the need for personal and corporate holiness in our day, because God is not judging sin immediately, as He did in Joshua’s day. This is the day of His patience. Nevertheless, Joshua teaches that *without holiness* there can be no spiritual power or consistent victory in our experience (Cf. 1:8; 24:19-25). This is why the Christian must pay attention to his or her inner life: our thought life.

(2) Faith also means *abandonment to God’s will*. God has revealed in His Word how His people can experience all He wants them to have. Because God’s ways are not the ways

that we would choose, from our finite carnal viewpoint, we have trouble trusting God and committing ourselves wholeheartedly to His will. The Israelites succeeded at Jericho, as they did, because they committed themselves completely to engaging in that battle as God had commanded. They did so even though it must have looked like suicide to obey.

(3) Faith also involves *achievement in God's might*. It is God who wins the victories.

Without God, His people "can do nothing" productive (John 15:5). However, with Him "all things are possible" (Matt 19:26; Phil 4:13). The Israelites learned this when they failed at Ai. Success does not really come as a result of *our* action as we obey God. It comes as a result of *God's* action working through instruments whom He finds usable.

### **Book of Joshua: Organization**

Joshua 1-5 - Entering the Land

Joshua 6-12 - Overcoming the Land

Joshua 13-24 - Occupying the Land

The victory of faith.

### **Overview of Joshua**

The Book of Joshua demonstrates that God is perpetually at war with sin. He hates it and will judge it, not only because it is an offense to His character, but because it destroys the people He created for fellowship with Himself.

Joshua is a very positive book. It is a book of victory, success, and progress, and it teaches the reasons for these blessings. God had chosen the Israelites, by His grace, to receive blessing from His hand, and to be a blessing to many other people. As Israel anticipated entering into what God had for her, she possessed special promises from God. God had promised them His presence (1:5; Cf. Matt 28:20) and His power (1:5; Cf. 2 Cor 12:9). To the extent that they accepted His standard of holiness, abandoned themselves to His will, and acknowledged His might, they succeeded. To the extent that they committed themselves to the person and covenant of Yahweh, they prospered.

So the book of Joshua is a wonderful book of success, with little record of suffering by God's people, because they were obeying the Lord. However, the few incidents of lack of complete obedience mentioned above [i.e., Achan, and the Gibeonites] show that full blessing to all requires full obedience by all.

The perennial principles of victory, revealed and illustrated in the Book of Joshua for all who seriously study its text, still apply to all who are God's people.

The practical message of the Book of Joshua is that God keeps His promises and enables His servants to succeed if they will trust Him and obey His Word. As does the rest of Scripture, Joshua showcases the blessings that come to those who enter life's battles when they believe every foe has already been met and conquered by the Lord Jesus Christ.