

## *Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey*

Bible Survey Lesson 12: The Book of Joshua Part I

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOSHUA**

#### ***Introduction:***

When we turn to the Book of Joshua we have left the first block of Old Testament books, the Pentateuch, and we move into the second block consisting of books of history.

Joshua 1:1-3, *"Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord that the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun Moses' servant saying. 'Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross the Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given to you, just as I spoke to Moses.'"*

Who could ever fill the shoes of Moses since, *" There arose not a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom knew the Lord face to face"*?

The book is named after the man God chose to do just that. WHERE DID WE FIRST MEET JOSHUA?

He was born a slave in Egypt experiencing the oppression of Pharaoh. He was forty when he left Egypt with his people in the Exodus. He was one of the twelve sent into the Promised Land as a spy. He was the leader of the army fighting off Amalek when he attacked. He was a faithful servant of Moses who waited for him at Mt. Sinai He was 80 years old when he received his commission from God (he lived for 110 years).

The name Joshua is a highly significant one:

In Hebrew it is Yehoshua = Jehovah's Salvation

Later translated into Greek it was Yesus = Jehovah's Salvation

#### ***Author:***

We cannot absolutely, positively identify the writer of the Book of Joshua, but we have some good hints:

- 1.** The author was an eyewitness to the historical events given in minute detail and vivid description often using personal pronouns.
- 2.** The book was written not long after the events occurred since the phrase "unto this day" occurs a number of times (i.e.--"Rahab . . . lived among the Israelites unto this day").
- 3.** Joshua is specifically identified as the author of much of the book (i.e.-- the words of the covenant, the land survey of Canaan, his farewell address, etc.).
- 4.** The bulk of the book was written by one person as proved by the unity of style, organization and common word usage (confirmed by computer analysis).

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5. The Talmud (ancient Jewish writings and commentary) state that Joshua wrote all but the concluding five verses which were written by Phinehas, son of the High Priest Eleazar.

### **Purpose:**

Joshua is a historical account of the conquest (Chapters 1-12) and division (Chapters 13-24) of the land of Canaan, The Promised Land. But, it is more than just a history book.

It was used during the time of the judges to remind a sinning Israel of their covenant with Jehovah God when "everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes." It commands them to be faithful to their personal and national relationship to their Lord.

### **Person:**

Joshua was a great man with many character traits for us to try to emulate. He was a man of:

**1. Faith** -- Numbers 14 -- Joshua and Caleb saw the same problems facing the nation in Canaan as the others when they spied out the land. Humanly, the taking of the land was impossible (they were as grasshoppers), but they were men of faith.

They were ready to **act** based on their **belief** that their Lord is the all powerful Lord based on their **confidence** that He can and will do what He says and keep His promises. Those are the ABCs of faith.

**2. Courage** -- Joshua 1 -- Joshua was given a special gift from God, Courage. In verses 5-9 God personally speaks to Joshua and tells him three times, "Be strong and courageous." Why?

Verse 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." Joshua showed his courage time and time again both by challenging the rebellious Israelites, and in confronting every enemy they faced.

**3. Loyalty** -- Exodus 33 -- God commanded the movement of the people by His presence in the form of the Shekina Glory cloud or fire. When they camped He would talk to Moses in the tent of meeting "face to face."

Joshua would always remain outside the tent just as he stayed at the foot of Mt. Sinai, ready to carry out any order Moses would bring from God.

**4. Obedience** -- Joshua 11 -- Joshua led the armies of God to victory destroyed cities and their inhabitants just as God, through Moses had instructed. This couldn't have been a pleasant job, but he obeyed.

In Joshua 1 1: 15 it relates, "Just as the Lord commanded Moses his servant, Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses."

**5. Commitment** -- Joshua 24 -- In his farewell address to the people he had lead to victory Joshua offers his final famous challenge. He tells them that God has been faithful always and now they needed to choose between the idols of surrounding nations or the true God.

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### **Read Joshua 24:14 and 15**

Joshua was a great man, but he wasn't perfect. God, as always, allows us to see the weakness of even His best servants. He will misjudge people and situations, he will get in a hurry and move ahead of God, he will let the people get to him, but, in his heart he was always God's obedient servant.

If we could just take a small fraction of his character and emulate it in our daily lives we would be men and women of God and unbelievable warriors for Christ.

### ***Homework:***

Read: The Book of Joshua

Think: About the battles you will face in this hectic holiday season.

Apply: The character traits of Joshua; Faith, Courage, Loyalty, Obedience, and Commitment to help you react properly.

Bible Survey Lesson 13: The Book of Joshua. Part II

### **OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA**

#### ***Introduction:***

The Book of Joshua picks up the historical record started in the Pentateuch.

**In Genesis** God brings about the birth of Israel (Gen. 12:2--"I will make of you a great nation" and promises to give it the land of Canaan).

**In Exodus** He delivers His people from oppression in Egypt, gives them the Law, and leads them to the Promised Land (they fail to enter).

**In Leviticus** He gives them a way to come to Him (the sacrifice offerings) and away to keep right with Him (the special events).

**In Numbers** Israel is organized and journeys across the desert and up to the very gates of Canaan again.

**In Deuteronomy** They make final preparation to enter the land with Moses being careful not to let them repeat their earlier mistakes.

In our last lesson we were introduced to Joshua. Moses is dead and Joshua is chosen by God to be the new leader of the Nation of Israel. His job is to lead the children into the "Promised Land."

The book can be divided into the Conquest and the Occupation of the land. It holds many great examples of God's faithfulness in keeping His promises to His followers. It also gives us great examples of what happens when a person gives Himself to God without reserve and obeys Him explicitly.

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### I. CLAIMING THE LAND (Chapters 1-5)

The first five chapters illustrate what can happen when faith is exercised and tells us five activities that faith produce.

#### A. Faith Believes (1)

1. Faith believes God as He speaks through His word.

Joshua was facing this great challenge and was obviously afraid. God told Him to be strong and courageous (three times) but He didn't stop there. He added in verse 8, *"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 written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."*

2. *As they prepare and pack to move they pledge to obey God.*

*Joshua gives his officers orders to be ready to move in three days and, even though the members of the tribes of Rueben, Gad, and half of Manasseh opt to stay, they pledge to obey God and Joshua regardless of what the command. They even pledge to put any disobedient persons to death.*

#### B. Faith Counts (2)

1. *Even though Joshua and his men have explicated trust in God, they will still follow proper military procedure. They still plan before they build, count the cost before they go to war.*

*Verse 1-- "Then Joshua . . . secretly sent spies saying, 'Go, look over the land, especially Jericho. '"*

2. *The spies end up trapped in Jericho and only Rehab's nerve and quick thinking helped save them and allow their report to get back to Joshua.*

*Putting the debate on the morality of her acts aside, we know she had faith ("for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath") and was rewarded for her actions. Her life was spared, she married into one of the families of Judah and became, by grace, one of the ancestors of David and Jesus.*

#### C. Faith Acts (3)

1. *Faith is never static. Faith is **action** based on **belief** that God will do what He promises and **confidence** He can do what He wants to do. (The ABCs of Faith)*

2. *In this case the action is the crossing of the river Jordan. With the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant into the river a miracle happens resembling the first one out of Egypt, and the nation crosses over into the land toward Jericho.*

#### D. Faith increases (4)

1. *When the nation crossed to Jordan, Joshua had twelve men (one from each tribe) bring twelve stones from the middle of the river to make an altar at Gilgal on the eastern border so that they would have an object lesson for their children illustrating the miracle crossing.*

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2. *God also strengthens their faith in Joshua.*

*Verse 14-- "That day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of the people of all Israel; and they revered him all the days of his life just as they had revered Moses. "*

### ***E. Faith Pays (5)***

1. *Another evidence of faith is willingness to do what God asks, even if it is not comfortable. The rite of circumcision, which had been neglected for years was re-instituted. This was very difficult for the adult males but they obeyed.*

2. *Joshua also re-instituted the Passover celebration and he himself was even ordered to yield his sword to the Captain of the Lord's hosts.*

*In, "paying the price" by these deliberate acts of faith and obedience, the land was claimed and victory assured.*

## ***II. CONQUERING THE LAND (Chapters 6-11)***

*I was visiting the Air Force Academy many years ago and I sat in on an introductory class on basic military tactics. He mentioned a number of familiar names; Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Napoleon, etc.*

*Then they caught me by surprise by mentioning a great tactician named Joshua. What he did that called for this mention was to present an early example of the military strategy of divide and conquer. Joshua led his army into the heart of Canaan, driving a wedge and cutting the area into two parts making communication and re-supply difficult. This destroyed an effective coalition between the nations of the north and south. It was, according to that instructor, a masterpiece of strategy.*

*We will take advantage of this and break the next section into three parts:*

### ***A. The Central Campaign (6-8)***

#### ***1. Victory through Faith--Jericho (6)***

*By complete obedience, complete victory*

#### ***2. Defeat through Sin--Ai (7)***

*By self-confidence and unconfessed sin*

#### ***3. Restoration (8)***

*By confession, recommitment, and obedience, victory again.*

*After subduing Ai, Joshua made one of his serious mistakes. He made a deal with the Gibeonites, forgetting warnings in Deut. 7:1-2 and instruction in Joshua 1:8. The crafty Gibeonites fooled him because he failed to pray and rely on God.*

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### ***B. The Southern Campaign (9-10)***

#### ***1. Alliance with Gibeon (9) (The Gibeonite deception)***

*Since Joshua was fooled into making the pact he was bound to honor it when he received a call for help from them. It seems a powerful southern coalition of five kings had attacked Gibeon.*

#### ***2. War Against the Five Kings (10:1-27)***

*Five nations led by Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem attacked and Joshua brought his army to the rescue with a forced march to the battle scene and God's army routed the enemies with the help of a "small" miracle (the sun stands still).*

*Two things are clear: 1. Joshua was a man of his word. He kept his deal even though it had been deceitfully gained. And 2. God was faithful to his promise of victory even though Joshua made this mistake.*

*Later, other kings will notice that Joshua and his God are trustworthy.*

#### ***3. Other Conquests (10:28-43)***

*One after one the other cities of the south fall to Israel.*

### ***C. The Northern Campaign (11)***

#### ***1. An alliance of Northern kings brought Joshua into battle.***

*2. It was such a vast force, it "Struck fear in Joshua's heart." but God answers "Don't be afraid of them. God has Joshua attack before the alliance is fully formed and Israel routs their enemies again.*

*3. Joshua's final campaigns are against the mountain people, some of whom were giants. All victories bring glory to God.*

### ***111. COLONIZING THE LAND (Chapter 12-24)***

*The remaining chapters recap the victories of the children of Israel and discuss the dividing of the spoils of war, the land, the protection and responsibilities for worship and administration of the new land.*

#### ***A. Declaring the Spoils of Victory (12)***

#### ***B. Dividing the Spoils of Victory (13-21)***

*1. Statutes of liberty (13-19)*

*2. Statements of equality (20)*

*3. Standards of justice (21)*

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### ***C. Dedicating the Spoils of Victory (22)***

### ***D. Defending the Spoils of Victory (23-24)***

*The book ends with the death of Joshua along with the final burial of Joseph's bones, which had been carried carefully during all these years.*

*The birth place of the patriarchs was one of the major arguing points for the right of the Jews to a nation of their own in these lands in 1967. Their dream is still to own the entire Promised Land, but we know that will not happen until God unites the land under the rule of the Messiah, Jesus.*