

JOSHUA

Outlined Bible

Introduction: Having completed the Pentateuch, the book of Joshua begins what scholars call the "Books of Hebrew History". Under the new leadership of Joshua, Israel will cross the Jordan and finally claim the promised land.

Name - The name "Joshua" reflects the key figure of the book.

Author - Though no author is named within the book, Jewish tradition assigns the book to Joshua, himself.

1. It is clear that Joshua did write some things found in the book. (cf. Joshua 18:9:24:26)
2. The author was surely an eyewitness of the events, for details given reflect a precise knowledge of certain events. (cf. Joshua 3:14-17; 4:19-20; 5:1-12)
3. Since Joshua's death is recorded (Joshua 24:29f) along with certain information occurring later than his time (Joshua 15:13-17), it is likely that these events were added by a later author.

Purpose - The purpose of Joshua is to record the conquest of the land of Canaan by the Israelites. In so doing, it is also recording the faithfulness of God to His covenant.

I. Background of the book

A. The man Joshua:

1. He belonged to the tribe of Ephraim and was the son of Nun. (Numbers 13:8)
2. He was a great military leader.
 - a. Legend proposes that he received military training while in Egypt.
 - b. Moses put him in charge of the Israelite army in a key battle on the way to Sinai. (Exodus 17:8-16)
 - c. He was one of the 12 spies sent into Canaan to scout the Promised Land. (Numbers 13)
 - [1] Only Joshua and Caleb brought back a report based on faith. (Numbers 13:25-14:10)
 - [2] Because of that faith, these two were the only men above age 20 at the time of the exodus who lived to enter Canaan. (Deuteronomy 1:34-40)
 - d. He had served as Moses' special assistant through the wandering period. (Exodus 24:13; 32:17; 33:11)
3. Joshua was a great spiritual leader.
 - a. He exerted spiritual leadership in his home. "But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." (24:15)
 - b. He was a tremendous spiritual influence on his people. "Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel." (24:31)
4. The name Joshua means, "Jehovah is salvation."
 - a. In Greek, his name is "Jesus."
 - b. As you might expect from his name and duties, he is a type of Christ.

B. The book covers a period of 25-30 years between the death of Moses and the death of Joshua.

C. As they entered Canaan, God had set their "foreign policy".

1. Israel could enter into restricted treaties with nations who lived outside the boundaries of the cover of the land given to them by covenant. (Deuteronomy 20:10-15)

2. However, nations inside those boundaries were to be totally destroyed. (Deuteronomy 7:1-2; 20:16-20)

II. Main Message of the book

- A. The main message of the book is Victory through faith
- B. In Joshua 12, the names of 31 kings and kingdoms conquered by the Israelites are listed.
 1. Amazingly, chapter 13 begins with this verse - "When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the Lord said to him, ' You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.'"
 2. Joshua 13:2-7 describes the area still to be conquered.
- C. These victories were accomplished by faith in a faithful God. "Not one of all the LORD's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled." (Joshua 21:45)

III. Outline of the book

- A. The entrance to Canaan (1:1-5:12):
 1. God exhorts Joshua to be "strong and courageous" in his role as the new leader. (1:1-9)
 2. Joshua responds in faith. (1:10-18)
 3. In preparation for their entrance, two spies are sent to survey the land.
 - a. Rahab, a prostitute living in Jericho, hid the spies, (2:1-7)
 - b. For her help and faith, they pledged that she would be spared when the Israelites entered the land. (2:8-24)
 4. At the command of God, the people crossed the Jordan on dry land and entered Canaan. (3:1-17)
 5. A memorial of twelve stones was erected at Gilgal. (4:1-24)
 6. While camped at Gilgal, two things were done before moving further:
 - a. All males born during the wandering period were circumcised. (5:2-9)
 - b. The Passover was observed. (5:10-12)
- B. The conquest of central Canaan. (5:13-8:35)
 1. Near Jericho, Joshua is assured of the Lord's presence and leadership. (5:13-15)
 2. Israel conquered the great, walled city of Jericho by obediently responding in faith to God's command. (6:1-27)
 3. Israel failed in its next battle against tiny Ai. (7:1-5)
 - a. The defeat was attributed to Achan's sin which was exposed and punished. (7:6-26)
 - b. Ai is then defeated. (8:1-29)
 4. An altar is erected at Mt. Ebal, and the law is read to the people. (8:30-35)
- C. The conquest of southern Canaan. (9:1-12:24)
 1. Fearing Israel, the Gibeonites deceive them into believing they are "outsiders" and enter into a treaty. (9:1-27)
 2. City after city falls before the Israelites. (10:1-43)
- D. The conquest of northern Canaan. (11:1-12:24)
 1. In an attempt to repel Israel, the remnants of the south join northern forces, and Israel faced its most formidable foe. (11:1-9)
 2. Israel conquers the rest of northern Canaan. (11:10-23)
 3. A summary is given of conquests on both sides of the Jordan. (12:1-24)
- E. Dividing and settling the land. (13-24)
 1. God commands the acquisition of additional land. (13:1-7)
 2. A lengthy section of scripture details the allotment of lands to the different tribes. (13:8-21:45)
 3. The eastern tribes (Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh) return home. (22:1-34)
- F Joshua's Farewell addresses (Joshua 23:1-24:28) and death (24:29-33).

IV. Key Themes of the Book

- A. Victorious faith – Joshua 6:

1. As Israel prepared to enter Canaan, they faced the most fortified city of the ancient world - Jericho.
 2. God commanded a bizarre plan for victory. (Joshua 6:2)
 3. The victory was achieved because of:
 - a. God's power. (Joshua 6:2)
 - b. Israel's faith.
 - c. An obedient faith response.
- B. Two "problem" passages.
1. Many have ethical questions about the utter extermination of the Canaanites. (Joshua 11:20) ,
 - a. History and archaeology reveal that the Canaanites were base, immoral, and idolatrous people. (cf. Deuteronomy 18:9-14)
 - b. Undoubtedly, God wanted that influence completely abolished for the sake of protecting Israel.
 - c. We underestimate God's disdain for sin. An all-holy God has both the right and obligation to take vengeance on idolatry and immorality. (cf. John 2:14-16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 21:8)
 2. Does the story of Rahab (Joshua 2:1-7) justify lying under certain circumstances?
 - a. Rahab lied to protect the two spies sent to scout Jericho.
 - b. Some ethicists have argued that her falsehood was appropriate and justified.
 - c. In truth, Rahab was saved in spite of her lie (and in spite of her prostitution), and nowhere does scripture commend her for either.
 - d. Like us, she was saved by grace through faith.
 - e. The Bible condemns lying under any circumstance. (cf. Leviticus 19:11; Ephesians 4:25)
 - [1] The devil is the "father of all lies." (John 8:44)
 - [2] Impenitent liars face an ominous destiny. (Revelation 21:27)
- C. An example of undying faith and zeal – (Joshua 14)
1. In Joshua 14:6f, Caleb makes a plea to his old friend Joshua to let him conquer a mountain fortified by Anakites (or Anakim).
 2. Caleb begins his request by recounting their faithfulness as spies 45 years earlier.
 3. Now 85 years old, Caleb claims an undying vigor and wants to drive out the Anakim. (14:12)
 4. Joshua consented and gave Caleb Hebron as his inheritance.
 5. “I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.” (14:8)
 6. A Caleb-like faith and his "wholehearted devotion" to the Lord are the ingredients for a long, fruitful, and happy life.

JOSHUA

Summarized Bible

“After the death of Moses, the Lord said to Joshua ... Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers. Be careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 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 good success. Joshua commanded the officers to command the people to 'Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess.’” (Josh. 1:1; 5-11)

“Joshua sent two men secretly as spies, saying, ‘Go, view the land, especially Jericho.’ And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. ... Before the men lay down, she came up to them on the roof and said to the men, ‘I know that the Lord has given you the land and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites. As soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God. Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.’ And the men said to her, “Our life for yours even to death! She let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was built into the city wall so that she lived in the wall. And she said, “Go into the hills, or the pursuers will encounter you, and hide there three days until the pursuers have returned. Then afterward you may go your way.” (Josh. 2:1-2; 8-16)

“They came down from the hills and passed over and came and told Joshua all that had happened to them saying ‘Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands. And also, all the inhabitants of the land melt away because of us.’” Josh. 2:23-24

“The Lord said to Joshua, ‘Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, when you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.’ Joshua said to the people of Israel, ‘Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God.’ Then you will know that the living God is among you and that he will without fail drive out from before you.” (Josh. 3:7-10)

“When the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest). The waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away and those flowing down toward the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan. ... The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.” (Josh. 3:14-17; 4:19)

The Lord told Joshua to circumcise all uncircumcised men as none were circumcised after departing Egypt. Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham well before Moses was given the Old Covenant.

“On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.” (Josh. 5:10)

“When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, ‘Are you for us or for our enemies?’ ‘Neither,’ he replied, ‘but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.’ Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, ‘What message does my Lord have for his servant?’” (Josh. 5:13-14)

“Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets

of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets.' ... On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. When the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city! The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared. ... So, the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. When they burned the whole city and everything in it." (Josh. 6:1-4; 15-17; 23-24)

"But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things. ... Achan replied, 'It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them, took them and hid them in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath.' ... Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger. Joshua then captured and burned Ai." (Josh. 7:1; 20-21, 25-26, 28)

"Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses — an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the Lord burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings. There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua copied on stones the law of Moses, which he had written. All Israel, aliens and citizens alike, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the Lord, facing the priests who carried." (Josh. 8:30-33)

"When the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a ruse (deception, trickery). With worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. The men put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, 'We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.' ... The men of Israel sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath." (Josh. 9:3-6, 14-15)

"Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbors, living near them. ... The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, but all the leaders answered, "We have given them our oath by the Lord, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. ... Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, "Why did you deceive us by saying, 'We live a long way from you,' while actually you live near us? You are now under a curse: You will never cease to serve as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God." (Josh. 9:18-19, 22-23)

"When the five kings of the Amorites — the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon — joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it. The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: 'Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us!' So, Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army. The Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel." (Josh. 10:5 -7)

“When Joshua was old and well advanced in years, the Lord said to him, "You are very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over. But the Israelites did not drive out (all) the people.” (Josh. 12:7; 13:1)

“Caleb said to Joshua, ‘You know what the Lord said to Moses at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. I brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. So, on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.' ... He (God) has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said." Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So, Hebron has belonged to Caleb because he followed the Lord, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. Then the land had rest from war.” (Josh. 14: 6-9, 10-15)

“The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the Lord handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; everyone was fulfilled.” (Josh. 21:44-45)

“Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh and said to them, "You have done all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. For a long time now — to this very day — you have not deserted your brothers but have carried out the mission the Lord your God gave you. Now that the Lord your God has given your brothers rest as he promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan. But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.’ Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their homes.” (Josh. 22:1-6)

“When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. When the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them. So, the Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead — to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. With him they sent ten of the chief men, one for each of the tribes of Israel, each the head of a family division among the Israelite clans. When they went to Gilead — to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh — they said to them: "The whole assembly of the Lord says: 'How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the Lord and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin, even though a plague fell on the community of the Lord! And are you now turning away from the Lord.’” (Josh 22:10-18)

“Then Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh replied ‘The Mighty One, God, the Lord! The Mighty One, God, the Lord! He knows! ... Let us get ready and build an altar — but not for burnt offerings or

sacrifices.' On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the Lord at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, 'You have no share in the Lord. If they ever say this to us, or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the Lord's altar, which our fathers built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.' ... When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the community — the heads of the clans of the Israelites — heard what Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. And Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, said to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, "Today we know that the Lord is with us, because you have not acted unfaithfully toward the Lord in this matter. Now you have rescued the Israelites from the Lord's hand." (Josh. 22:21-22, 26-28, 30-31)

“After a long time had passed, Joshua was old and well advanced in years summoned all Israel and said to them: "I am old and well advanced in years. You yourselves have seen everything the Lord your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the Lord your God who fought for you.” (Josh. 23:1-4)

“Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them. But you are to hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have until now.” (Josh. 23:6-8)

“But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you may be sure that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the Lord your God has given you.” (Josh. 23:12-13)

“Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed. But just as every good promise of the Lord your God has come true, so the Lord will bring on you all the evil he has threatened, until he has destroyed you from this good-land he has given you. If you violate the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, the Lord's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you.” (Josh. 23:14-16)

“Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your forefathers, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the River and worshiped other gods. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the River and led him throughout Canaan.' ... I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out of Egypt. ... Then you crossed the Jordan. ... 'I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.' 'Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness.'” (Josh. 24:1-3, 5, 11, 13-14)

“If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you. But the people said to Joshua, ‘No! We will serve the Lord.’ Then Joshua said, ‘You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord.’ ‘Yes, we are witnesses.’” (Josh. 24:20-22)

“Joshua died at the age of a hundred and ten. They buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel. And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants. And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.” (Josh. 24:29-33)

Key Points from Joshua

- None of God's promises ever fail.
- The Lord spoke to the Israelites directly through His servant Joshua but now speaks to His people through His son Jesus, the Christ.
- Do not depart from the Book of the Law but meditate on it day and night. For us today we should study diligently and meditate on the inspired word of God to know His will and not depart from it.
- Unfaithfulness brings pain and sorrow whether with God or people. It may not be in this present life but in the eternal life, if unforgiven.
- The Israelites remained faithful to God when there were strong, faithful and righteous leaders. God gave requirements of His spiritual leaders in the kingdom established by Christ and His atoning sacrifice.