

The Book of Joshua

Objective:

- 🕒 To know the content of the book of Joshua
- 🕒 To learn about Joshua as an example of Jesus

Memory Verse:

“The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey” (Joshua 24:24).

Introduction:

The book of Joshua is the first of the 12 historic books from Joshua to Esther. It forges a link between the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch) and the remainder of Israel’s history. The Book contains 24 chapters written mostly by Joshua himself except for the last few verses in the last chapter which are written after Joshua’s death, and are most likely written by Eleazar the son of Aaron.

Lesson Outline:

Joshua is the focus of this book and the people of Israel learn a crucial lesson; that victory comes through faith in God and obedience to His word.

Joshua’s original name was Hosea which, means salvation (Numbers 13:8) but Moses changed it to Joshua (Numbers 13:16) which means “Yahweh is salvation” and it is the Hebrew equivalent of the name Jesus. The secret of Joshua’s strength during his leadership is God’s promise that He will be with him (1:5). Thus Joshua trusted in God and adhered to the commandments.

Joshua is similar to Christ in bringing the sons of Israel triumphantly to their possession (the promised land), as Christ will bring many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10). Joshua succeeds Moses and wins the victory unreached by Moses. Christ will succeed the Mosaic Law and won the victory unreached by the law (Romans 8:2-4, Galatians 3:23-25, Hebrews 7:18-19). Rahab’s scarlet cord portrays safety through the blood (Joshua 2) (Hebrews 9:19-22) and amazingly, this gentile woman is found in Christ’s genealogy (Matthew 1:5). This represents the inclusion of the gentiles in the faith.

The book of Joshua covers 31 years from the death of Moses to the death of Eleazar the son of Aaron 6 years after the death of Joshua.

The book is divided into three geographical settings:

- (1) The Jordan River (Chapters 1-5)
- (2) Canaan (Chapters 6-13:7)
- (3) The twelve tribes situated in both sides of the Jordan (Chapters 13:8-24:33)

The setting of the first five chapters begins east of the Jordan as Joshua replaces Moses, crosses the Jordan on dry land and finally prepares for war west of the Jordan.

Joshua takes Israel from the wilderness to the Promised Land. Israel has now reached a climatic point in fulfilling the centuries-old promise in Genesis of a homeland. The first half of Joshua (1:1-13:7) describes the seven years conquest of the land and the second half (13:8-24:33) gives the details of the division and the settlement of the land.

The first five chapters record the spiritual, moral, physical and military preparation of Joshua and the people of Israel for the impending conquest of Canaan. Joshua is given a charge by God to complete the task begun by Moses (1:2). After being encouraged by God, Joshua sends out two spies who come back with encouraging report (in contrast to the spies of the previous generation). Obedience and faith are united in the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River (3:1-4:24).

God then directed Israel to conquer the first city “Jericho”. He instructed His people to march once around the city for six days and on the seventh day they should march seven times and the priests shall blow the trumpets and all the people shall shout with a great shout that the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up and conquer the city (6:1-5). The Lord uses this to test the people and to teach them that Israel’s success in battle will always be by His power and might and not their own.

Joshua’s campaign in central Canaan (6:1-8:35) places a strategic wedge between the northern and southern cities to prevent a massive Canaanite alliance against Israel. Joshua utilized the divide-and-conquer strategy and God’s plan led him to Central Canaan (6-8), Southern Canaan (9-10) and finally northern Canaan (11-12).

After listing the areas yet to be conquered (13:1-7), Joshua undertakes the long task of dividing the Promised Land to all the tribes of Israel. Two and half tribes settled east of the Jordan and nine and half tribes settled at its west. Then he assigned six cities of refuge and 48 cities for the Levites, which are scattered among all the tribes.

The last chapters (22:1-24:33) record the conditions for continued successful settlement in Canaan.

Access to God, as well as His forgiveness, comes only through the divinely established sacrificial system; and civil war almost breaks out when the eastern tribes build an altar that is misinterpreted by the western tribes.

Realizing that the blessing comes from God only as Israel obeys His covenant, Joshua preaches a moving sermon, climaxed by Israel’s renewal of her alliance to the covenant “The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey” (Josh 24:24).

Conclusion:

The Book of Joshua represents God’s commitment in fulfilling His promises to man even if man was not committed to Him. It also clarifies God’s hate to sin. It is the book of the new life, new land, new leadership and new gifts from God.

Applications:

- 🕒 Search for the names of the tribes, which lived east of the Jordan and the ones west of it.
- 🕒 Who followed Joshua in leading Israel?
- 🕒 Write few lines about 5 of the 12 historic books of the Bible.