

# A Visitor's Guide to the Old Testament

## The Book of Joshua

- I. A new chapter
  - A. English Bibles – Twelve historic books
    1. Joshua through Nehemiah
    2. Roughly 1,000 years of history (1400 B.C. to 400 B.C.)
  - B. Hebrew Bible – “The Prophets”
    1. The “former” prophets vs. the “latter” prophets
      - a. “Former” prophets = Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings
      - b. “Latter” prophets = Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve
    2. What is the significance of placing Joshua among the “prophets”?
      - a. The difference between “preaching” and a “world history book”
      - b. The book is meant to convict, not just inform; to comfort, not simply to enlighten
- II. Fulfillment
  - A. The three great promises given to the patriarchs (Genesis 12:7)
  - B. In God's time the promises begin to reach fulfillment
    1. Exodus, the promise of nations fulfilled.
    2. Joshua, the promise of the land fulfilled.
      - a. Acts 7:5
      - b. The wanderings of Isaac
      - c. The message of Joshua (Joshua 21:45; 23:14)
  - C. The perspective of the Book of Joshua
    1. This is a summary account, not every battle or detail is listed (11:18)

2. When more is added than just names, the details demonstrate that without Miraculous intervention of God, Israel would have failed.
3. Joshua's achievements must remain limited and not overstated
  - a. Joint effort, not a singular one (e.g. the help of the Transjordan tribes)
  - b. Victory comes in battle, but the task not finished
4. Distinguish between taking the land in battle and occupying or possessing it.

### III. Author

#### A. ???

1. Not named in the book itself
2. No author for this book mentioned by name in the rest of the Scriptures

#### B. Some clues

1. The book records Joshua's death (24:29)
2. "We" section of the book (5:1)
3. Ancient names and boundaries
4. Jebusites occupy Jerusalem (15:63)
5. "to this day"
6. The Book of Jashar (10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18)

### IV. The man Joshua

#### A. Heritage (tribe and name)

#### B. What we know so far

1. Military leader (Ex. 17:10)
2. Moses's aide (Ex. 23:13, 33:11)
3. One of the spies (Numbers 13,14)
4. A capable spiritual leader (Numbers 27:18, 32:12)

## **An Outline of the Book of Joshua**

***Theme: The Promise of the Land Fulfilled***

### **I. Entering the Land (Joshua 1-5)**

- A. Preparations for entering the land (1)
  - 1. The charge to Joshua (1:1-9)
  - 2. First instructions (1:10-11)
  - 3. The charge to the Transjordan tribes (1:12-15)
  - 4. All Israel's response (1:16-18)
- B. Two spies in Jericho (2)
  - 1. Entry, discovery, and hiding (2:1-7)
  - 2. The oath of protection (2:8-14)
  - 3. Departure and sign of the scarlet cord (2:15-24)
- C. Crossing of the Jordan (3:1-5:1)
  - 1. Preparations for crossing (3:1-6)
  - 2. The crossing (3:7-17)
  - 3. The 12 memorial stones (4:1-10a)
  - 4. The crossing completed (4:10b-5:1)
- D. Ritual preparations (5:2-15)
  - 1. Circumcision (5:2-9)
  - 2. The Passover kept (5:10-12)
  - 3. The Commander of the Lord's Army (5:13-15)

### **II. Taking the Land (Joshua 6-12)**

- A. The conquest of Jericho (6)
  - 1. The marching orders (6:1-5)
  - 2. Day one of the "Jericho plan" (6:6-11)
  - 3. Days two through six (6:12-14)
  - 4. Day seven, the taking of Jericho (6:15-21)
  - 5. The promise to Rahab fulfilled (6:22,23)
  - 6. Jericho "devoted" to the Lord in destruction (6:24-27)
- B. Covenant disobedience and the conquest of Ai (7:1-8:29)
  - 1. The sin (7:1)
  - 2. The defeat (7:2-5)
  - 3. The aftermath (7:6-26)
  - 4. The victory (8:1-29)
- C. The covenant affirmations (8:30-35)
- D. The Gibeonite treaty (9)
  - 1. Introduction (9:1,2)
  - 2. The Gibeonite's deceit (9:3-15)
  - 3. The Gibeonite's lot (9:16-27)

- E. The Southern and Northern campaigns (10,11)
  - 1. Victory over the Southern Coalition (10:1-27)
    - a. The Coalition gathers (10:1-5)
    - b. The battle proper (10:6-15)
    - c. The task finished (10:16-27)
  - 2. The Southern campaign completed (10:28-43)
  - 3. Victory over the Northern Coalition (11:1-15)
    - a. The Coalition gathers (11:1-5)
    - b. The battle proper (11:6-9)
    - c. The task finished (11:10-15)
  - 4. The Northern campaign completed (11:16-23)
- F. The list of Conquered Northern kings and land (12)
  - 1. The kings and land of Transjordan (12:1-6)
  - 2. The kings and land across the Jordan (12:7-24)

### III. Possessing the Land (Joshua 13-21)

- A. The command to distribute the land (13:1-7)
- B. The Transjordan distribution recalled (13:8-33)
- C. The distribution of lands across the Jordan (14-19)
  - 1. Introduction (14:1-5)
  - 2. Caleb's inheritance (14:6-15)
  - 3. Judah's inheritance (14:1-63)
  - 4. Joseph's inheritance (16,17)
  - 5. The other tribes' inheritance (18,19)
- D. The cities of refuge and the Levitical cities (20,21)
  - 1. The cities of refuge (20:1-9)
  - 2. The Levitical cities (21:1-42)
  - 3. Conclusion (21:43-45)

### IV. Retaining the Land (Joshua 22-24)

- A. Joshua's farewell to the Transjordan tribes (22)
  - 1. The parting (22:1-9)
  - 2. Crisis of unity (22:10-34)
- B. Joshua's first farewell to all Israel (23)
- C. Joshua's second farewell to all Israel (24:1-28)
  - 1. Introduction and review of the past (24:1-13)
  - 2. Covenant affirmations (24:14-28)
- D. Conclusion: Burial notices (24:29-33)

(Adapted from Dale Ralph Davis, *Joshua, No Falling Words* and David M. Howard Jr., *An Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books*)

## Questions for the Book of Joshua

### **I. Entering the Land (Joshua 1-5)**

1. Why does the Lord remind Joshua of Moses' death? (1)
2. In verses 3-9 God piles on the encouragement. Find as many different encouragements as you can. (1)
3. What help did Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh give Joshua? (1)
4. Why might the spies have chosen to enter the house of Rahab the prostitute? (2)
5. How did Rahab protect the spies? (2)
6. Describe Rahab's faith. (2)
7. What promise did Rahab extract from the spies? (2)
8. What served as Israel's cue to start moving across the Jordan? (3)
9. The Lord said he would exalt Joshua in the eyes of the people. Compare the event the Lord used to exalt Moses in the eyes of the people with how God would exalt Joshua. (3)
10. What did this miracle mean for Israel? for Israel's enemies? (3)
11. Why do you think the Lord involved people from each tribe to carry these stones? (4)
12. Which words in verse 18 stress that the dry crossing was due to a miracle of the Lord and not to a mere quirk of nature? (4)
13. Why did the Lord want Israel to erect a memorial? (4)
14. Why was renewing the covenant through circumcision vital for Israel at this point in its history? (5:1-12)
15. Verses 4-7 preach the law and the gospel. Where do you see these two main biblical teachings? (5:1-12)
16. Read Exodus 12:48,49. Why did the circumcision ceremony have to take place before Israel ate the Passover meal? (5:1-12)
17. Explain why the end of manna was a time of joy and not disappointment. (5:1-12)
18. Joshua met a man with a sword in his hand. Who did this man say he was? (5:14)
19. Joshua asked if he had a message for him. What did the man reply? How does the man's answer identify who he is, answer Joshua's question, and give Joshua hope—all at the same time? (5:13-6:14)
20. Read Hebrews 11:30, and show the connection between Israel's faith and God's victory at Jericho. (5:13-6:14)

## II. Taking the Land (Joshua 6-12)

1. How does this first great victory at Jericho set the pattern for the rest of Israel's occupation of the land? (6:15-27)
2. How did Joshua fulfill his promise to Rahab? (See 2:12-21.) In what sense was Rahab already "devoted" to the Lord? (6:15-27)
  1. Why would any kind of defeat for Joshua and the Israelites have been shocking? (7)
  2. Evaluate Joshua's prayer. (7)
  3. The Lord answered Joshua's prayer. What did the Lord say . . . (7)
    - about Joshua's lying on the ground?
    - about how Israel had sinned?
    - about how Israel could make things right?
  4. What was Joshua trying to do for Achan in verse 19? Was he successful? (7)
  5. Why did Joshua need the Lord's reassurance: "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged"? (8:1)
  6. Describe the strategy and preparations for the battle at Ai. (8:1-29)
  7. Describe the significance of Joshua's raised javelin. (8:1-29)
  8. Humanly speaking, traveling north to Mounts Gerazim and Ebal was a foolish thing to do. Evaluate. (8:30-35)
  9. What is the significance of Joshua copying the law of Moses here in the heart of the Promised Land? (8:30-35)
  10. Why didn't the Israelites destroy the Gibeonites? (8:30-35)
  11. Who was smarter, the kings of Canaan who allied themselves against Israel or the city of Gibeon? Explain. (Note what they said to Joshua in verses 24 and 25.) (9)
  12. What plan did the Gibeonites devise to save their lives? (9)
  13. What tragic mistake did the Israelites make? (9)
  14. How did the Israelites try to control the damage caused by letting the Gibeonites live? (9)
  15. The Israelites went against God's will by not consulting the Lord and destroying the Gibeonites. However, the Lord can use even our sins for his own purposes. What good can you see coming from this? (9:27)
  16. Why did the five kings from southern Canaan attack Gibeon? How did the Lord use their plans for the good of his people? (10)
  17. How do the following verses show that the Lord was fighting for his people: 10:8, 10, 11, 12-14?

18. Why did it take courage to kill the five southern kings? (10:16-27)
19. Using a map, trace the route Israel covered as it conquered one city after another. (10)
20. What do the beginnings of chapters 10 and 11 have in common? (11:1-20)
21. Which verses bring out the power of the forces that were amassed against Israel? Why do you think the author highlights their power? (11:1-20)
22. Why do you think the Lord ordered the special tactic, "You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots"? (11:6)
23. Using a map, trace the route of Joshua's northern campaign. (11:1-20)
24. Why do you think the author stresses the destruction of the Anakites? (See Numbers 13:28,33.) (11:21-12:24)
25. Which words indicate that the conquest of Canaan was complete? (11:21-12:24)
26. Note 12:7-24. What do you think the Holy Spirit wanted to teach us by including this long catalog of names? (11:21-12:24)

### III. Possessing the Land (Joshua 13-21)

1. What large areas of the Promised Land still had not been taken by the Israelites? How did Joshua lead by personal example? (13:6)
2. If there is time, use a map to trace the rough boundaries of the inheritance God gave the tribes on the east side of the Jordan. (13)
3. The Lord repeatedly refers to the assignment of land as the tribes' inheritance. What does the word *inheritance* stress about the land? (14)
4. What does the assigning of the lands *by lot* indicate? (14)
5. What request did Caleb make of Joshua? (14)
6. Note how Caleb described himself. How had the Lord cared for him during the 40 years in the wilderness? (14)
7. Read Genesis 49:8-12. Jacob had given his son Judah the greatest blessing. What was the main promise God gave to Judah? (15)
8. Can you think of ways the allotment of land to Judah would play into God's plan to bless the world through that tribe? (15)
9. How did Caleb demonstrate that his intention to drive out the Anakites (14:12) was not just an empty boast? (15)
10. Why do you think the author makes a special note about Jerusalem? (15:63)
11. The tribes were supposed to mop up the work started by Joshua. For roughly seven years, Israel had continued to live in tents near Gilgal. Under Joshua, they had captured and, in

some cases, completely destroyed the chief cities of the land. All that remained were smaller towns, which individual tribes could destroy with the Lord's help. However, we hear a recurring theme in 6:10 and 17:12,13. What is that theme? (16,17)

12. You can't help but like the daughters of Zelophehad. (See 17:3,4; see also Numbers 27:1-11 and 36:1-12.) What did they treasure more than anything? (16,17)
13. What is the essence of the complaint lodged by the people of Joseph? (16,17)
14. How do Joshua's words in verse 3 serve as both reprimand and encouragement? (18,19)
15. Read Genesis 49:5-7. How does the allotment for Simeon fulfill Jacob's deathbed prediction? (18,19)
16. Read Genesis 49:13. How does the allotment for Zebulun fulfill Jacob's deathbed prediction? (18,19)
17. Read Genesis 49:20. How does the allotment for Asher fulfill Jacob's deathbed prediction? (18,19)
18. How do verses 49 and 50 demonstrate that Joshua's faith had been well-placed when he and Caleb some 45 years before encouraged the Israelites to go up and take the land? (18,19)
19. What was the purpose of the cities of refuge? (20,21)
20. What was the procedure when someone fled to a city of refuge? (20,21)
21. What does the Lord show us about himself by appointing six special cities of refuge? (20,21)
22. Why do you think all the cities of refuge were also Levitical cities? (20,21)
23. What was the Levites' real inheritance? (See Deuteronomy 18:1,2.) (20,21)
24. What was the role of the Levites according to Deuteronomy 33:8-11 and 2 Chronicles 17:8,9? (20,21)
25. How does 21:45 bring out the Holy Spirit's clear purpose in giving us the book of Joshua? (20,21)

#### **IV. Retaining the Land (Joshua 22-24)**

1. How did Joshua bless the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh? What warning did he give them? (22)
2. What did Joshua tell the soldiers to do when they returned home? (22)
3. The two and a half tribes built an altar before they crossed the Jordan River. Was it wrong for them to do this? What might each party have done differently? (22)
4. What name did the eastern tribes give to the altar they built? (22)
5. In verse 6 Joshua told the Israelites through the elders to "Be very strong." Why could they be strong? (23:5,9-11)

6. What one basic thing were the Israelites to do? What one basic thing were they not to do? (23)
7. What sharp warning did Joshua extend at the conclusion of this chapter? (23)
8. Why do you think Joshua added the reminder in verse 2 that Israel's forefathers had served other gods? (24:1-18)
9. Using Joshua's outline, do a quick history of the people of Israel. (24:1-18)
  - verses 2-4:
  - verses 5-7:
  - verses 8-10:
  - verses 11-13:
10. What was the purpose of this summary of salvation history? (24:14)
11. What was Joshua's challenge to the people? How did they respond? (24:1-18)
12. Why do you think Joshua told the people they could not fulfill their pledge to serve the Lord? (24:19-33)
13. How did the people respond? (24:19-33)
14. Joshua continued to preach the law. Explain how he did this in verse 22. (24:19-33)
15. Joshua would not accept their initial answer, and he pressed them with the law. Why he did this becomes clear from what he says in verse 23. Explain. (24:19-33)
16. Joshua would not withhold the gospel forever. What was his next step? (24:25,26)
17. Agree or disagree. Joshua's epitaph was not written on a marble gravestone. It was written in the lives of the leaders he influenced and the people he led. (24:19-33)
18. Why is verse 32 a suitable place to mention the burial of Joseph's bones? (24:19-33)

Questions taken from "The Whole Bible Project" © 2006 Northwestern Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission.









