

Joshua 1

Commentaries:

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What section of the Old Testament begins with *Joshua*? Historical books (from crossing of Jordan to the return from Babylon captivity – *Joshua*→*Esther*) – they are essentially in chronological order (can be read straight through, although *Esther* technically takes place between *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*)

What is the first division of the Old Testament? Books of Law or the Pentateuch

-**Third division?** Poetry (Job-Song of Solomon)

-**Fourth division?** Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel)

-**Fifth division?** Minor Prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

New Testament:

-**First division:** 4 gospels

-**Second division:** Acts (history of the church)

-**Third division:** 13 Letters of Paul (Romans-Philemon)

-**Fourth division:** 8 General epistles (James-Jude)

-**Fifth division:** The Revelation

What event took place just before the start of this book? The death of Moses – **Read Deut. 34**

What would have been the effect of the death of Moses on the Children of Israel? A huge shock

-Older people will talk about how they felt with Franklin Roosevelt died – he was in his fourth term as president (through the Great Depression and through almost all of World War II) – for most people, he was the only president they had ever known – It was an incredible blow to the people

-So this book starts after the death of Moses (the only leader most of them had ever known

-"*Joshua*" = God Saves, Jehovah is salvation

What New Testament name is based on *Joshua*? Jesus (the Greek version of *Joshua*) – so the Son of God was named after *Joshua* – what an honor!

Why would God the Father name his son after *Joshua*? There is no fault or mistake reported about *Joshua* (Let's call the problems with the Gibeonites an oversight)

Why would God require the Israelites to conquer the Land of Canaan? Why didn't he just cleanse the land of the pagan people and then let the Israelites enter?

-Because there is no free lunch, even with God

-Because they needed to learn to cooperate

-They needed to develop more loyalty to God

-They needed the experience – every enemy is different

-They had to be slowly introduced to the idea of judges

In the next few books of the Bible, we learn about the cycle in ancient Israel: apostasy--disastrous results--repentance (then the cycle repeats again and again)

The author? The Bible does not say, but Phinehas makes a good candidate (someone who lived through these events – *Joshua 5.1* – "we") – Phinehas was the grandson of Aaron (very courageous: *Num. 25.7-13, 31.6-8*)

Approximate date: 1375 BC

Joshua 1 – central thought: full cooperation among the 12 tribes

-**At the beginning of Joshua, how many years had they wandered in the Sinai desert?** 40 years

-**Why?** Because of their unbelief (*Numbers 13.25-33/14.1-10*) (40 days = 40 years)

-**Report of 10 spies?** Israelites like grasshoppers

-**Who else beside Joshua gave a good report?** Caleb

-**Reward?** Only 2 men over age of 20 were allowed to enter the Promised Land

-**Where was Joshua born?** In Egyptian captivity (like Moses)

-**Who was his father?** Nun (he had probably witnessed the 10 plagues)

-**What can we learn from this?** The importance of faithful parents (blood on the doorpost)

-**What can parents today do to encourage their children to grow up to be faithful Christians?**

How had God providentially prepared Joshua? He was the servant to Moses from his youth (*Num. 11.28*)

-With Moses at Sinai (Ten Commandments)

-Remained outside Moses' tent as a result of this (impressed him as a young man)

-One of the 12 spies (shows Moses' confidence)

We know that Joshua was a military leader – he defeated the Amalekites (*Exod. 17*)

-Defeated Og (*Num. 21.33-35/Deut. 3.33, 10-13*)

-Also a spiritual leader (*Joshua 24.31*)

Commentaries: Joshua was about 40 at the time of the Exodus, so about 80 years old

Notice: The Lord's preparation for Joshua was complete

-"Providence prefers prepared people"

Israel was ready to enter the Promised Land

-The 10 spies and their generation had died in the wilderness/followers of Korah died when the earth opened up and swallowed them

-All that stood between them and the Promised Land was God's command to go and do it!

Joshua 1.1-9

What phrases stand out?

-John F. Kennedy – "The torch has been passed to a new generation" (Inaugural Speech)

V1 – Even godly leaders (like Moses) don't last forever

-John Wesley's tombstone: "God buries his workers, but His work goes on"

-Recent deaths: Hugo McCord, Jim Bill McInteer, others

-**How do we prepare the next generation to take over when we are gone?**

V2 – **What was the biggest obstacle facing Joshua?** Getting across the Jordan River with 2-3 million people and their equipment, Tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant, tents

-**Do we have any songs about crossing the Jordan River and entering the land of Canaan?**

-On Jordan's Stormy banks (#509, 510)

-Shall We Gather at the River (#570?)

-There's a Land beyond the River (#690)

-To Canaan's Land (#694)

-Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (verse 3) (#193, 194) – "When I tread the verge of Jordan...."

-Just Over in the Gloryland (#383)

-Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

V 3 – Promise from God? The land is yours

V 4 – Extent of the promise: Mediterranean Sea to Lebanon to Euphrates (but they never reached those dimensions, because of the weak faith of the people)

V 5 – God will not fail (people may fail)

-**Why did God support Joshua?** He had tested him

V 6 – What did Joshua have to do? Be strong and courageous

V 7 – Without deviating to the right or the left

-**Do we face that danger today?** – We can deviate from the truth to the right or to the left (liberalism vs. ultra conservatism) – two extremes today

-**What were the two extremes in first century Judaism?** Pharisees and Sadducees

-We can fall off of either side of this table

V 8 – 3 aspects of the law? 1. Talk about it, 2. Think about it (meditate on it), 3. Obey it

V 9 – One plus God equals a majority!

Optional note:

-The name of Joshua – from parents: Hoshea – *Num. 13.8* (salvation); when only 2 spies gave the good report, Moses changed the name of Hoshea to: Joshua – *Num. 13.16* (YHWH-salvation) – a slight change

-both his parents and Moses had high hopes for this man

Interesting: *Deut. 32.44* – Moses refers to "Joshua" – but the footnote says: "lit. Hoshea"

-The two names are very similar

-We have many examples in the Bible of people's names being changed (Jacob-Israel/Abram-Abraham/Simon-Peter)

Joshua 1.10-15 – Joshua commands the people

V 10 – How soon to cross the Jordan River? 3 days

There was a Union general in the early years of the Civil War who tried to outwait the enemy:

General George McClellan – he would pause for months at a time and not attack the enemy; he would call for new horses, and more supplies

-It was said that he was good at overestimating the power of the enemy – Lincoln finally replaced him – **Was Joshua that way?** – No – they would cross the Jordan in 3 days

V 11 – Parallel: Moses and the Red Sea – an impossible obstacle could be overcome with God's help

-**What was Joshua's tone?** Confidence – he was not a coward

V 12 – Why did Joshua address the tribes of Reuben, Gad, half-tribe of Manasseh?

-Because Moses gave them land on the east side of the Jordan/cattle

V 13 – They could leave their cattle east of the Jordan River

V 14 – Joshua lets the women and children and cattle stay east of Jordan River
-*Joshua 4.13* – only 40,000 went/rest stayed to protect families and possessions

V 15 – **What was Joshua's promise?** All would... (fulfilled: *Joshua 22.1-9*)

Joshua 1.16-18 – Joshua receives the support of the people

V 16 – **How would this statement affect Joshua?** Tremendous event

V 17 – We will follow... you just follow God as Moses did
-They followed (contrary to their parents)

V 18 – **How enthusiastic were they?** Death!

Lessons from Manasseh (half-tribe), Gad, Reuben

- They were a part of the team
- Their responsibilities could not be left to others
- They didn't say: "It's their problem"

How does this apply to the church today?

Read Heb. 13.17 – people like to snipe at elders, even though the congregation has appointed them to that position, after examining the qualifications

Note: The worst fight this writer ever saw growing up in the church was over the elders' decision to pave the parking lot

- It is on a hill, and gravel was not working, but people got very upset
- But they should have thought about *Heb. 13.17*
- Visiting older members
- Cleaning the building
- Fulfilling our assignments

Why didn't Joshua start telling the Israelites to start building boats for the crossing of the Jordan? Because he had seen what God did at the Red Sea

Lessons from *Joshua 1*:

1. God keeps his promises

- Even though we don't always cooperate
- If the Israelites had cooperated and obeyed, they could have been in Canaan 40 years earlier
- General Douglas MacArthur said that Joshua was one of the truly great generals in world history
- Theodore Roosevelt often said that the book of *Joshua* was his favorite book in the Bible

2. Salvation is free, but conditions must still be met

3. God does not require perfection, but he does require faithfulness (*1 Cor. 3.5-9, 1 Cor. 4.2*)

- No-one can be perfect, but all can be faithful
- Was Moses perfect?
- Was David perfect?
- Elijah?
- Apostle Peter?
- A. Lincoln: *I would rather have a great man with a great flaw, than a weak man with no flaws.*

Joshua's leadership qualities: confidence, obedience, trust (as with elders today)

-Joshua would have made a great elder in the New Testament church

Read Song #194 (Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah) – a summary of *Joshua 1*

See: Campbell, David K., *Joshua: Leader Under Fire*, p. 15 – last paragraph

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