

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 11-27-11 PM NOTES
"JOSHUA"
#8 in Series, "The Glory of God in the Old Testament"

Joshua 24:29 (NKJV) "Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old."

I. Crossing the Jordan (Chapter 1-5)

Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV) "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ."

2 Peter 1:3 (ESV) "His divine power **has granted to us** all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence."

A. Joshua Charged (Chapter 1)

B. Rahab Cleared (Chapter 2)

Hebrews 11:31 (NKJV) "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace."

Matthew 1:5-6a (NKJV) "⁵Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶and Jesse begot David the king."

C. The Jordan Crossed (Chapter 3-5)

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV) "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

"The Jews could not get victory in Canaan and overcome the enemy without first going through Jordan. Nor can Christians today overcome their spiritual foes unless they die to self, reckon themselves crucified with Christ, and allow the Spirit to give them resurrection power."
—Warren Weirsbe

- II. Conquering the Canaanites (Chapter 6-12)
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Genesis 50:25 (HCSB) “So Joseph made the Israelites take an oath: ‘When God comes to your aid, you are to carry my bones up from here.’”

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With our study of the book of Joshua, we begin the history section of the Bible. From Joshua through Esther, we see the history of Israel from their entrance into the Promised Land, their troubles in the book of Judges, the expansion in the time of David and Solomon, the dividing of the nation into the northern and southern kingdoms, the falling away from God which resulted in the Northern Kingdom being taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 BC and the Southern Kingdom being taken into captivity by Babylon in about 587 BC. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah, deal with a remnant that was allowed to return in stages to Jerusalem after 70 years captivity in Babylon. The book of Esther recounts an incident in the late 4th century BC whereby the Jews were saved from annihilation in Persia by a wicked man named Haman.

I do not believe that there is any book in the Old Testament that gives more encouragement to a soldier for Christ than does the book of Joshua. We will learn lessons about faith, about leadership, and about the consequences of sin in the camp. More than anything, we will be encouraged as we see God fulfilling the promises He made to His people as they step out in faith to take what He has given to them.

Let's take a brief look at the man Joshua whose name is given to this book of victory. Joshua was born in slavery in Egypt. His father was Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim. We are told nothing about who his mother was. Originally, his name was “Hoshea” which means salvation. Moses changed his name to “Yeshua” or “Joshua” which means “Jehovah is salvation” (Numbers 13:16). The name “Jesus” in Greek is the equivalent of “Yeshua” or “Joshua” in Hebrew. During the wilderness wanderings, Joshua served as Moses assistant (Exodus 24:13). In the battle in the wilderness against Amalek in Exodus 17, Joshua led Israel to victory. As we saw in Numbers, Joshua was one of the 12 spies along with Caleb who brought back a good report and encouraged the Israelites to take the land God had given to them in spite of the giants and the fortified cities in the land. It was for this reason that Joshua and Caleb (who we will hear a lot about in this book also) were the only people over 20 who were allowed to go into the land. Jewish tradition says that Joshua was 85 years old when he was designated the leader to replace Moses. After leading Israel to victory after victory, we are told in **Joshua 24:29 (NKJV)** “Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old.” Life spans in 1400 BC were not a lot greater than today. There is encouragement here for those who are getting up in years. God used Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt when he was 80; He used Joshua to lead Israel into the Promised land when Joshua was 85; at 85 we see Caleb saying to Joshua, “Give me this mountain” in Joshua 14:12. The mountain Caleb was referring to was Hebron, one of the most fortified areas and therefore one of the most difficult areas to take in the whole land of Canaan. Caleb took Hebron! Perhaps it is time for us to stop using old age as an excuse for not attempting great exploits for God!

Let's take a quick tour through this exciting book of the Old Testament and focus on the glory of God.

I. Crossing the Jordan (Chapter 1-5)

In the first five chapters, we see Israel's D-Day as they finally entered the Promised Land 40 years after leaving Egypt. Perhaps the most important verse in this section of Joshua is Joshua 1:3 [Read]. This promise from God is the foundation of their faith. Their task in the Promised Land was to possess their possessions. God had given them the land and so all of their battles were simply a matter of walking in faith and taking what God had already given them. Oh, what a picture this is of the Christian life. We who are in Christ have this promise in **Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)** “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ”. Even though the Promised Land was theirs, there was still a battle to take it. In a sense they were battling from victory, not for victory. In the same way, God has given us all that we need to walk in victory. **2 Peter 1:3 (ESV)** “³ His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence”. The bottom line is that we are in a war,

but the outcome is determined; the final victory is already assured. The Christian life is walking and warring by faith – realizing that God has promised to us all that we need for the victory. That doesn't make our warfare any less intense, but it gives us confidence and joy in the battle that we have the victory when we war by faith.

A. Joshua Charged (Chapter 1)

Think of the pressure Joshua must have felt. Moses was one of the greatest men of God and greatest leaders who ever lived. Joshua 1:2 [Read]. Think of it – about 2 million griping complaining people who were not really trained for war and they were all looking to Joshua to lead them into battle against a vastly superior force. Joshua needed to be reminded of some things and that is exactly what God is doing. God encourages Joshua first with the promise of the land (Verses 2-4), the promise of His presence [Read 1:5], and the assurance that God would keep His word (verses 6-9). Joshua's courage was in the Word of God and the faithfulness of God. "If Joshua was able to conquer Canaan having only the first five books of the Bible, how much more ought we to overcome now that we have the complete Bible?" [Warren Weirsbe, *Expository Outlines of the Old Testament*, Page 208]. God used Moses to bring Israel out of bondage, but now He charges Joshua to bring them in to the land God promised.

B. Rahab Cleared (Chapter 2)

It is interesting that Joshua sent only two spies into the land instead of the twelve that Moses sent almost 40 years earlier. You can be certain that Joshua made sure they knew that their task was to bring information back relating to strategy and not offer opinions about whether or not to go into the land. That issue was already settled. While inside the city of Jericho, the two spies were hidden by a prostitute named Rahab. Why would Rahab, a Canaanite, help the spies from Israel? Joshua 2:9-13 [Read]. Rahab was saved (physically and spiritually) by faith. It was a simple faith, but she believed that the God of Israel was the one true God and she looked to Him for deliverance. How do we know that Rahab believed? The Bible tells us that she did! In the faith hall of fame in Hebrews 11, we read this of Rahab in **Hebrews 11:31 (NKJV)** "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace." My favorite sermon title relating to Rahab was from Adrian Rogers: "From the House of Shame to the Hall of Fame". She had faith and that faith worked by protecting the spies – God's men on mission. Not only was Rahab and her family spared, she was assimilated into Israel, married an Israelite. Listen to something even more amazing in **Matthew 1:5-6a (NKJV)** "⁵ Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse begot David the king." Rahab was in the lineage of David (his great, great grandmother) and thus in the lineage of Christ.

C. The Jordan Crossed (Chapter 3-5)

Contrary to many hymns, Canaan is not a picture of Heaven. There was sin in Canaan and also warfare there. There is no sin or warfare in heaven. Canaan represents God's inheritance for every Christian that is claimed by faith. It pictures a life of battles and blessings, but also rest in Christ. In Hebrews 4 we see that the entrance of Israel into Canaan is a picture of the believer entering into a life of rest and victory through walking by faith in Christ.

We see Joshua preparing the people to go in to the Promised Land in chapter 3:3-5 [Read]. Since they were going to have to walk by faith in the Promised Land, God had them enter by faith. In normal times, the Jordan River isn't that big. At this location in normal times it was about 30 yards wide and fairly easy to cross. At this time of the year however, it was swollen by rains and was anywhere from 100 yards to a mile wide. The Jordan runs from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea and that involves a drop of 1,000 feet. That meant the river was not only deep and wide, it had a very strong current because of the drop in elevation. The point is that it was impossible for 2 million people to cross. Let's see what happened in 3:8-17 [Read]. God always keeps His word! This miracle serves three purposes: first, God was glorified; second, the people of God were encouraged and their faith was strengthened. Most of these Israelites had not seen the miracles in Egypt or the parting of the Red Sea. Third, the enemies of God were terrorized.

We saw earlier that Canaan did not picture heaven and I would also say the Jordan doesn't picture physical death. I believe it pictures what some call death to self. I think that it more accurately pictures

our reckoning by faith on our union with Christ and that our old man is now crucified with Christ and we are free from sin's bondage and are raised in newness of life as a partaker of Christ's very life. Crossing the Jordan is when we deny self, reckon on our death with Christ, and allow the Spirit of Christ to fill us and enable us to walk by faith to fully rest in Him and see Him bring victory in every area of our life. Crossing the Jordan is losing our life that we might experience His life in us living through us. **Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)** "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Warren Weirsbe gives a great summary: "The Jews could not get victory in Canaan and overcome the enemy without first going through Jordan. Nor can Christians today overcome their spiritual foes unless they die to self, reckon themselves crucified with Christ, and allow the Spirit to give them resurrection power" [Warren Weirsbe, Page 213].

Once they crossed over the Jordan, they were now in the land God promised them. With every step they no doubt remembered what God said in **Joshua 1:3 (NKJV)** "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you..." After crossing the Jordan, the people renewed the covenant with the Lord, the males were all circumcised as a sign of the covenant, all the people celebrated the Passover, and they began to eat the fruit of the land after almost 40 years of manna in the morning, manna in the evening, and manna at suppertime. Now the battle would begin as they claimed their inheritance from the Lord.

II. Conquering the Canaanites (Chapter 6-12)

The strategy God gave to Joshua was to cut across Canaan and divide the land starting with Jericho and continuing with Ai, Bethel, and Gibeon. The Israelites would then conquer the southern cities and then complete the conquest by defeating the northern cities. They experienced a few setbacks on the way however.

A. The Central Campaign (Chapter 6-9)

Standing between the Israelites and their conquest of the land of Canaan was the city of Jericho. This city guarded all the passes into Canaan. Jericho was not a large city, but it was an impregnable city. There were two walls around the city of Jericho. The outer wall was six feet thick and about ninety feet high. There was about a fifteen foot separation between the outer and the inner wall. The inner wall was about fifteen feet thick. You can see that this was a formidable obstacle. By the way, what is your Jericho? What is that one thing that keeps you from walking in victory, resting in Christ and living an unexplained life? Just as the Israelites had to deal with Jericho, you have to deal with this obstacle the enemy had placed in your life. It may be unforgiveness, some addiction or habit, some relationship that needs to be broken off, a marriage that needs to be healed, pride, unbelief, an undisciplined life, etc.

After an encounter with a person who seems to be a preincarnate appearance of Christ Joshua is given the instructions for taking Jericho. The instructions were strange to say the least. Instead of building ladders or fashioning battering rams, the Lord instructed them in Joshua 6:2-5 [Read]. Why these unusual tactics? I don't claim to know all of God's ways, but one reason is obvious. Here at the very beginning of their conquest of the Promised Land, God was showing them that it was going to be Him who will give them victory and it will Him who gets the glory. How could they take any credit when all that they did was to walk around the city and yell? God was showing them that the key to victory was to listen to and obey Him – it was not in military strategy (though God did give them some amazing strategy that is still studied today by military tacticians). When the people obeyed God, the huge walls protecting Jericho fell. We read about it in Joshua 6:20-23 [Read].

When we get to chapter seven the wheels start to fall off. After Jericho, the next town was a small place called Ai. Compared to Jericho, there was no problem with Ai. There is no record of the military leaders seeking the Lord about what to do. They had destroyed Jericho – Ai was nothing. They didn't bother to send the whole army to Ai. We read about it in Joshua 7:2-4 [Read]. Joshua was distraught after the defeat and so he sought the Lord (which he should have done before they ever went to Ai). God told Joshua the problem while he lay prostrate agonizing before the Lord. [Read Joshua 7:10-11]. An examination revealed that the culprit was a man named Achan. He had taken some gold and silver and fine clothing

from Jericho when God said to take nothing. As a result of his sin, Achan and his family (who were evidently in on the theft) were stoned to death. After dealing with the sin in the camp, Israel through some brilliant God-given strategy took Ai.

Let's think about some lessons here. Why would God allow all of Israel to be defeated for the sin of one family? God did not just see Israel as a group of tribes and clans within the tribes. He saw Israel as one – His chosen people. There is a principle there that affects the church. The true church is one body – the body of Christ. Would God chastise a whole church and withhold fruit and blessings because of the sin of one or a few? He certainly would and does. The sin of a few can affect the spiritual power, fruit and effectiveness of the many. The open public sin of a part of the church brings reproach on the whole church and more importantly on the person of Christ. That is why the church must practice church discipline. This is a hard mentality for Americans to accept. We are such an independent bunch. We say, "What I do is my business and none of yours!" The Israelites learned that sin in the camp is everybody's business.

B. The Southern Campaign (Chapter 10)

After hearing about Israel's victories over Ai and Jericho, several other Canaanite kings came together to form an alliance. They decided to first punish the Gibeonites who had made a covenant with the Israelites through deceit. The Gibeonites sent to Joshua for help and Joshua saw an opportunity to defeat this confederation of kings and their armies before they expected it. With the element of surprise Israel attacked these armies and in a panic they fled from Israel. Their escape route ran through a valley called Ajalon. The Israelites were in hot pursuit and the Lord sent a hail storm on the escaping armies [Read Joshua 10:11]. Joshua saw that darkness was overtaking them and this would give these enemies time to regroup. Joshua made a bold request of the Lord [Read Joshua 10:12]. The next verses tell us what happened [Read Joshua 10:13-14]. God supernaturally prolonged the day to give Israel time to defeat their enemies. I could give you several theories as to how God brought this about, but I will simply say that God who created the planets and put them in motion suspended the laws He set up and accomplished His will. Joshua is not making a scientific statement wrongly assuming that the sun rotates around the earth. He is using the language of observation. He was speaking from the perspective and appearance of things on the earth. We do that same thing all the time! For example the TV weatherman says, "The sun will rise tomorrow at 6:25 AM". Actually the sun doesn't rise; the earth rotates, but from the perspective of earthly observation, the sun rises. What would you think of someone who says, "I want to get up early in the morning in time to see when the earth has rotated to the extent we can see the sun over the horizon"? No, they would say, "I want to get up in time to see the sunrise".

With the extra time the five kings were captured and executed. Joshua 10:28-43 gives a summary of the successful southland campaign.

C. The Northern Campaign and the Defeated Kings (Chapters 11-12)

As the Israelites moved North, the kings would make alliances to fight them, but none prevailed (Joshua 11:1-8). There is a great summary in Joshua 11:23 [Read]. In chapter 12 we see a summary of all the kings defeated by Israel. It is an impressive list.

III. Claiming the Promise (Chapter 13-24)

Even though all of the land promised to the Israelites had not yet been taken, the land is now divided up among the tribes. Each tribe was to finish taking the land allotted to them.

A. The Territory Assigned (Chapter 13-19; 22)

Some highlights of this section are how Caleb (85 years old) takes Hebron in chapters 14 and 15. There was mixed success by the individual tribes in wiping out the Canaanites in their allotted territories.

B. The Special Cities Appointed (Chapter 20-21)

These special cities included the cities of refuge where a person who had accidentally killed another person could find refuge from those taking revenge [Read 20:1-6]. Also the special cities included cities for the Levites. This allowed the priestly tribe to be scattered among all the other tribes to provide guidance in the worship of God.

C. The People Admonished (Chapter 23-24)

As Joshua comes to the end of his life, he was concerned that all of the tribes weren't wiping out their enemies as commanded. Actually chapters 23-24 are Joshua's farewell address. Joshua is concerned that the people are more and more open to co-existence with the Canaanites instead of confrontation. Joshua warns them what will happen if they forsake the Lord's covenant and the Lord's commands [Read Joshua 23:14-16].

Perhaps the best known verse in Joshua is Joshua 24:15 [Read]. Joshua is saying that co-existence with the Canaanites is not an option. Compromise is not an option. The same is true for us with the world around us that we are commanded in Romans 12:2 to not be conformed to. We must make a choice. Every Christian, but especially every Christian husband and father should say with Joshua in **Joshua 24:15b (NKJV)** "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

CONCLUSION

The book of Joshua concludes with what seems like a strange fact [Read Joshua 24:32a]. Why include that? It was a testimony to the faithfulness of God to keep His promises. Over 400 years earlier Joseph gave this command to the Israelites before he died – **Genesis 50:25 (HCSB)** "So Joseph made the Israelites take an oath: 'When God comes to your aid, you are to carry my bones up from here.'" Joseph's Great Grandfather Abraham was promised the land of Canaan by God for his descendents. Joseph believed that promise. He knew that in God's timing the Israelites would be going to that Promised Land and he didn't want to be caught dead in Egypt. When they buried Joseph's 400 year old bones, it was a reminder that God keeps His promises. (3637)