

JOSHUA



The
Conquest
of
Canaan



KEN FLEMING

Joshua: The Conquest of Canaan

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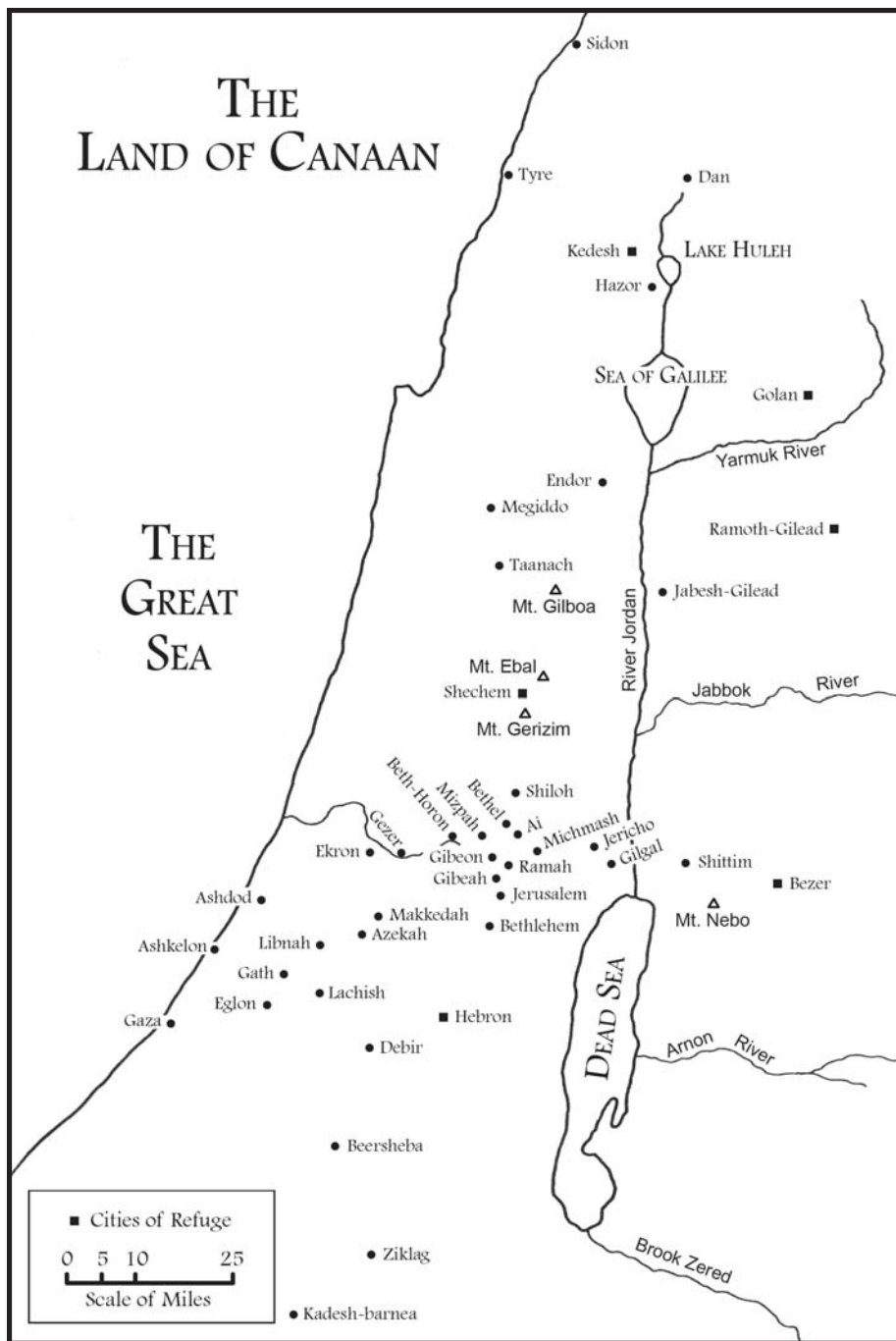
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THE LAND OF CANAAN

THE GREAT SEA



Introduction

THE MAN JOSHUA

Joshua does not suddenly appear on the pages of Scripture after the death of Moses; several references to him appear in the books of Exodus and Numbers. A consideration of these passages will help in understanding the human character of Joshua and the process by which God prepared him for leadership.

Although Joshua and Moses were different in character and temperament, there are some interesting similarities between the two men. Like Moses, Joshua was eighty when he began his major life work. Both were great leaders of the people of Israel. Moses led Israel out of Egypt and across the Red Sea to Sinai where they corporately received God's Law; Joshua led Israel out of the wilderness, across the River Jordan, and into the Promised Land where they corporately renewed their commitment to obey God's Law.

Scripture divides the lives of both Moses and Joshua into three periods. Moses' 120 years were comprised of:

- forty years in Egypt training to be a leader
- forty years in the desert learning to know God
- forty years leading the Israelites out of Egypt and in the wilderness

As for Joshua, he spent:

- approximately his first forty years as a slave in Egypt learning to suffer with God's people
- the next forty years as Moses' assistant in the wilderness learning the ways of God and the skills of leadership
- his last twenty-five to thirty years leading the Israelites into their God-given inheritance

Joshua's Personal Background

Joshua came from a prominent family in the tribe of Ephraim although, according to 1 Chronicles 7:20-21, there were cattle thieves among his ancestors! His father's name was Nun. Joshua is called "the son of Nun" some twenty-nine times. His grandfather was Elishama, the captain and leader of the tribe of

Ephraim at the time of the exodus (Num. 2:18). Like all the Hebrew men living in Egypt, Joshua would have worked as a slave making bricks for the Egyptians. From early childhood he would have learned of the covenant promises God had made to the patriarchs that the sons of Israel would come out of Egypt with great possessions and inherit the land of Canaan. From time to time he would have seen the unburied casket of his ancestor Joseph awaiting its long-promised removal to the homeland (Gen. 50:25).

Joshua's Growing Anticipation of Deliverance

In his youth, Joshua would also have heard of Moses, the Israelite who had grown up as a prince in Pharaoh's palace. Some had hoped that Moses would deliver Israel but, after killing an Egyptian, he had fled east. Joshua would have heard that Moses had returned to Egypt after a forty year absence saying that God had commanded him to tell Pharaoh to liberate His people. Pharaoh however, would not let the Israelites go, resulting in Jehovah sending a series of plagues and judgments on the Egyptian people.

After nine such judgments Moses and his brother Aaron told the children of Israel that the final plague would be the death of every firstborn child in the land. The angel of death completed his work: every firstborn child of homes not protected by the blood was struck dead, including the firstborn son of Pharaoh. As a result, Pharaoh ordered Moses to immediately take the people out of his country. The Israelites, some two million of them, were prepared, and they left in haste. As they began to journey into the wilderness, Joshua would have been aware that his tribe of Ephraim had the responsibility of carrying Joseph's mummified body in a coffin back to the Promised Land (Ex. 13:19). His grandfather, Elishama, led the entire tribe of Ephraim, consisting of 40,500 people, out of Egypt (Num. 1:32).

Experiences that Shaped Joshua

With all of the other Israelites, Joshua perceived God's guiding hand in His provision of the pillar of cloud and fire to lead them out of Egypt (Ex. 13:21). He discerned the power of God displayed as the Red Sea opened before them. He joined in the praise of the people as they responded to the songs of Moses and Miriam. He witnessed the bitter waters of Marah being changed into sweet drinking water. He ate the manna God provided from heaven to feed the people. And when they murmured because they were thirsty, Joshua saw Moses strike the rock from which water gushed out for all to drink. These experiences would have fully convinced Joshua that God was with them.

Experiencing the Hand of God in Battle (Ex. 17:8-16)

During his wilderness experience, Joshua received a significant leadership opportunity which God used to prepare him for his role in conquering Canaan.

Following the incident when Moses struck the rock from which water gushed out, the stragglers at the rear of Israel's traveling multitude were attacked by the Amalekites at Rephidim. It is here that we first meet Joshua in Scripture. "And Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose us some men and go out and fight with Amalek'" (Ex. 17:9). At this crisis point, Moses appointed Joshua to the role of army general. It was a challenge to the Israelites—especially Joshua—for the people had no military experience. But Moses went on to tell Joshua, "Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand" (v. 9).

When Joshua had chosen his men and was prepared for battle, Moses held up his rod from his vantage point on the top of the hill. As long as he did so, Joshua's men maintained an advantage over the enemy. When Moses became tired, Aaron and Hur helped him by supporting his hands until the sun went down. The incident closes with: "So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (v. 13). Joshua learned from the Battle of Rephidim that deliverance and victory do not come from man's effort or skill, but from the Lord—a lesson that proved valuable when he became Israel's leader. From Numbers 13:16 it appears that Moses changed his given name from Hoshea, meaning "salvation," to Joshua, which means "Yahweh is salvation," so he was thereafter constantly reminded that *God* was his deliverer.

Witnessing the Glory of God on Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:9-18)

When they reached the base of Mount Sinai, God commanded Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders (of whom Joshua was one) to climb up the mountain. When they were part of the way up they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet was "a paved work of sapphire stone . . . like the very heavens in its clarity" (v. 10). It was similar to the vision that Ezekiel saw hundreds of years later. This vision of God, however it may be explained, was absolutely incredible, and the seventy elders expected to be killed. However the next verse tells us that God did not "lay His hand on them" to judge them; rather, they ate and drank. The elders, together with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, remained part way up the mountain, while Moses with his assistant Joshua went higher.

Joshua stayed with Moses on the mountain of God for six days covered by a cloud while the "glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai" (vv. 13-16). The children of Israel on the plain below said that it looked "like a consuming fire on top of the mountain." On the seventh day God called Moses to continue up the mountain alone, leaving Joshua there in the cloud for the next forty days (v. 18). For Joshua, the vision of God on a pavement of sapphire, the consuming fire glowing through the thick cloud, and the forty days meditating alone in that cloud while awaiting the return of Moses with the tables of stone must have been a life-changing experience. He learned there something of the glory, holiness, and power of God.

Worshiping in the Tent of Meeting (Ex. 33:11)

Forty days later, following the incident of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32), God told Moses to lead the people into Canaan, but He would not go with them (33:3). The people began to repent and Moses set up a tent outside the camp as a place to meet with God, called the Tent of Meeting. As the people watched him go in, they saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tent indicating God's presence. There God spoke to Moses "face to face." Joshua was with Moses in the tent, and he was so overcome by God's presence that he would not leave, even when Moses did. Joshua learned the value of being in God's presence and of worshiping Him.

Accepting the Ministry of Others (Num. 11:24-29)

After they had left Sinai, Joshua complained to Moses that two men, Eldad and Medad, were prophesying in the camp. In Joshua's opinion, Moses was the only man with the right to speak for God, so he asked Moses to forbid them to speak. But Moses corrected Joshua, saying, "Are you zealous for my sake? O that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them" (v. 29). Joshua learned not to be jealous when God uses others. It is God's prerogative to choose who will serve Him. Joshua discovered that the servants God chooses to use are not necessarily the people's choice.

Standing against the Drift (Num. 13-14)

The Israelites proceeded north and arrived at Kadesh Barnea on the border of the Promised Land. The Lord told Moses to choose leading men, one from each of the twelve tribes, to "spy out the land of Canaan." Joshua was chosen to represent the tribe of Ephraim. When they returned and gave their report, only Joshua and Caleb believed that God would indeed give Israel the victory over the Canaanites. The other ten saw themselves as "grasshoppers" by comparison with Canaan's fortified cities and armed soldiers. But Joshua and Caleb declared, "If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' . . . The LORD is with us. Do not fear them" (14:8-9). The congregation of Israel, however, did not listen to them. They sided instead with the ten spies and sought to stone Joshua and Caleb on the spot. Joshua learned about standing up for what you believe to be true and that the majority is not always right. In this regard Joshua was in the line of some great Christian leaders, like Huss, Luther, Knox, Wilberforce, Booth, and Carey.

Being Anointed by the Holy Spirit (Num. 27:12-23)

Thirty-eight years later, in the plains of Moab, God told Moses that he would not be allowed to lead the people across the Jordan and into the Promised Land (Num. 20:12). Moses prayed that God would "set a man over the

congregation . . . who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd” (vv. 16-17). God answered Moses’ prayer with, “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.” Moses then took Joshua and set him before the priest and all the children of Israel, and he laid his hands on him (vv. 22-23). Joshua learned that he needed the power of the Spirit of God to lead God’s people (cf. Acts 6:3-5).

Relying on God for Wisdom (Deut. 34:7-8)

When the Israelites arrived at the border of Canaan, the Lord took Moses to the top of Mount Nebo from where he was able to view the Promised Land. Moses died there in Moab, and the Lord buried him. Scripture says, “Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom . . . so the children of Israel heeded him” (Deut. 34:9). Joshua learned that no one is indispensable and that the wisdom he would need to do the task God had assigned him would come from God alone.

Summary

In these seven passages God gives us insight into how He prepared Joshua to become the leader of the Israelites during the conquest of Canaan. God uses similar means today to prepare those whom He will use in His service. Many of these separate incidents were small in and of themselves, but in each one Joshua learned an important lesson while proving himself faithful to God. Together these events demonstrate that the man God chose was both well prepared and highly qualified to serve as a leader.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Having learned something of the man Joshua we can turn with greater insight to the book. The storyline concerns the events surrounding the Israelite invasion of Canaan and the partitioning of the land among the twelve tribes. The people were emerging from forty years in the wilderness. As their new commander, Joshua was to lead a military invasion, conquer Canaan, and settle the twelve tribes of Israel there.

Authorship and Date of the Book

The question of who wrote the book of Joshua has been the subject of much debate among Bible scholars. Although it is written anonymously, one statement near the end of the book indicates that Joshua wrote at least some of it: “Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God” (24:26). While it may be that “these words” refer merely to the covenant words at Shechem and not the whole book, evangelical scholars generally believe Joshua wrote most of it and that others added the details concerning his death and a

few later events. Chapter 6 must have been completed during the lifetime of Rahab, the woman of Jericho, for it says “she dwells in Israel to this day” (6:25), indicating that she was still alive when the book was written. Evangelicals generally cite the biblical evidence to support an early date and believe that archeology can be interpreted to support that stand. Liberal scholars, on the other hand, have generally placed its writing after the monarchy was established by David and Solomon, while some think it was written after the exile. They interpret archeological evidence to support their position and generally reject internal biblical evidence.

Most evangelicals date the exodus about 1445 BC (with good reason), thus dating the beginning of the invasion of Canaan at about 1405 BC and the writing of the book of Joshua near the end of his life, twenty-five years later (in approximately 1380 BC). A discussion of the questions surrounding the dating of Joshua is beyond the scope of this commentary. We will accept the reasoning of evangelical scholars, believing that Joshua wrote the majority of the book and that it was completed by others after he died.

The Historical Setting

The land of Canaan extended from Gaza in the south to Sidon in the north and from the Jordan River on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. It comprised about 8,000 square miles (9,200 square kilometers), roughly the size of the State of New Jersey in the United States or one half the size of Switzerland in Europe. When the people of Israel (numbering probably about two million) entered Canaan, the Middle East was controlled by three powerful civilizations. To the north of Canaan, the Hittites lived in what we call Turkey today. To the east, the Babylonians occupied the Euphrates River Valley. To the south, the Egyptians inhabited the Nile Valley. Between these three powers, smaller groups of unstable city-states like Canaan existed. However, during the time of Joshua, neither the Hittites nor the Egyptians were trying to expand their influence, leaving a power vacuum in Canaan. The Israelites exploited that situation when they invaded the land.

In the context of biblical history, Joshua grows out of the books of Moses. During their forty years in the wilderness, Moses had prepared the Israelites for their inheritance of the Promised Land. Not only had he been an outstanding leader and lawgiver, he had also written the five books of the Pentateuch to communicate to them their history from creation to their becoming a people and a nation. Moses had imparted to them the Law from God which taught them their responsibilities to Him in daily life and worship. Moses had reviewed all these things in the book we call Deuteronomy while they were preparing to enter Canaan, just before he died.

Joshua's Three Purposes for Writing

While not specifically stated, we can observe three purposes that Joshua appears to have had in mind when he wrote the book. The first purpose was to demonstrate the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that his seed would inherit Canaan. That promise was first given when Abraham was still in Haran (Gen. 12:1-3) and confirmed to him when he separated from Lot (Gen. 13:15). God later defined the borders of the land and named all the peoples that his descendants would displace when they came to live there (Gen. 15:18-21). Later still, God told Abraham that Canaan would be his descendants' everlasting possession as part of an established covenant (Gen. 17:8). After Abraham's death, God confirmed the promise of the land to Isaac (Gen. 26:3). He reiterated it later to Jacob at Bethel before he went to Haran and when he returned twenty years later (Gen. 28:13; 35:9-12). All three of the patriarchs were buried in the land at Hebron. Later, when Joseph was dying in Egypt, he commanded that, when his people returned to the land, they were to take his bones with them and bury them there (Gen. 50:24-25). Thus, when Joshua wrote of the conquest of Canaan, it was in direct fulfillment of a whole series of prophecies to the patriarchs.

Joshua's second purpose was to encourage the Israelites to complete their conquest of all the land of Canaan after he was gone. He had demonstrated that God had been faithful to His promises, granting them the land by His grace, sovereign will, and power, and not by their own military power or skill. For this reason Joshua wrote of how God miraculously caused the walls of Jericho to fall down and of when the sun stood still. If they understood that the land they inherited was a gift from God and a fulfillment of His promise to Abraham over five hundred years earlier, it should have been a natural step to trust that God would be faithful to give them the rest of the land.

Joshua's third purpose was to demonstrate that God was holy and righteous. It was only when God's people obeyed His word that He gave them victory and blessing. The first twelve chapters of Joshua are far more concerned with obedience to God's covenant than with the details of the battles fought. It was the ark of the covenant and the activity of the priests that were central to their obedience in the crossing of the River Jordan. They were obedient in setting up memorial stones in the river and on the Canaan side at Gilgal. They were obedient in renewing the rite of circumcision as the sign of their covenant with God. They reinstituted the keeping of the Passover. Even when they "attacked" Jericho, it was their obedience to God's command to march around the city that resulted in God causing the walls to crumble. Blessing came from their obedience, but judgment came because of disobedience. Achan's disobedience in taking of the forbidden goods at Jericho led to their defeat at Ai. Joshua's record would have taught the children of Israel that God would bless them when they obeyed and judge them when they did not.

Illustrations in Joshua

The book of Joshua is more than interesting Bible history and more than an exhortation to the Israelites to claim the Promised Land. It provides us with wonderful illustrations of spiritual truths for believers (1 Cor. 10:11). Canaan is an illustration of the “heavenlies” or “heavenly places” that the apostle Paul wrote of in his letter to the church at Ephesus in the New Testament. Believers have been blessed with many spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3). However, these blessings, like the blessings of Joshua’s people, are enjoyed only if they are *claimed*. They are to be claimed in the arena where spiritual battles take place and where spiritual victories are won. They are the portion of our inheritance that is for life on earth today. The pagan strongholds of Canaan illustrate the enemies that Christians “wrestle” against, such as “principalities . . . powers . . . the rulers of the darkness of this age . . . spiritual hosts of wickedness” (Eph. 6:12). The Israelites fought against seven enemy peoples named as the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites (3:10). These peoples lived in fortified strongholds like Jericho, Ai, Gibeon, Libnah, Lachish, Hebron, and Gaza. The spiritual warfare of the believer parallels the offensive war in which the Israelites were engaged.

Joshua, as their leader, pictures the Lord Jesus Christ. The name *Jesus* in the Greek language is the same as *Joshua* in Hebrew. Jesus is the “greater Joshua” who leads His people into their inheritance, just as Joshua did. The book of Hebrews speaks of Joshua as a “type” of Jesus. It is Jesus who has given His people rest which is greater than the rest Joshua gave the people who followed him (Heb. 4:8). The Lord Jesus leads His people; He is the Captain of their salvation.

Two Phases of the Conquest

The conquest of Canaan was to be completed in two phases. The first phase was a united campaign where all available Israelites fought together as a large army to defeat the major strongholds of their enemies. First they attacked the central region; then they moved to the south as far as Gaza; finally they conquered the north as far as Mount Hermon (Joshua 1-12). Up until this time, no one was allowed to settle in the land. After that, the land was divided among the twelve tribes and the families were allowed to settle in the cities and farms of the area where each tribe was assigned. The second phase of the plan for each tribe was to secure its own territory and settle there (Joshua 13-24). The wise Bible student will gain a much better understanding of these latter chapters by frequently referencing the maps provided in the commentary.

Having reviewed the setting, purpose, and ways in which God prepared Joshua to lead the Israelites into Canaan, the reader will be better able to profit from a study of the book itself.

The Commission to Joshua

The Israelites were at an important juncture in their national and spiritual history. Over a twenty-five year period they would enter, conquer, and occupy the Promised Land, the territory that we call Israel today. There has been—and continues to be—a great dispute over which people group has the rights to this land. The Muslim world argues that the followers of Mohammed occupied the land in AD 638 and that it was inhabited by various groups of Muslims for most of the next 1310 years (until 1948). The Israelis who gained control of part of it in 1948 stake their claim on God’s promise to Abraham and on the actual invasion of the land by the children of Israel under Joshua’s leadership in 1405 BC, more than 2,000 years before the Muslims came. The Jews and their descendants have maintained a presence in the land (albeit sometimes a very small presence) ever since they conquered the land under Joshua. Throughout that long period of history, many enemies have wanted to evict them. Their present day enemies, the Palestinians, are part of a much larger struggle by the Muslim nations of the world to regain control of the land and drive them out.

The first chapter of Joshua is about God’s command to Joshua to cross the River Jordan into Canaan. It includes God’s promise that every place they trod on was to be their own possession and that no people in the land would be able to stop their advance. Finally, it records God’s encouragement to Joshua to be strong and courageous in light of faith in God’s promise and obedience to His Word.

“Moses . . . is dead” (v. 1)

The book of Joshua begins as the sequel to the story of Moses that was brought to a close in the previous chapter in our Bible, Deuteronomy 34. Moses knew the Lord “face to face” and was used by Him to perform unprecedented signs and wonders (cf. Deut. 34:10-12). However, God was not dependent on Moses. Even after Moses died, God continued working in the world, and especially among His chosen people. As the saying goes, “God removes His workers but He carries on His work.” God removed Moses but carried on His work through Joshua.

Joshua—Israel’s New Leader

As instructed by the Lord, Moses transferred his authority to Joshua by placing him before the priest in the presence of all the people (Num. 27:18-20). He then placed his hands on Joshua, signifying the transfer of authority and blessing. At that time Joshua was filled with the spirit of wisdom, and the people recognized him as their new leader (Deut. 34:9). The order is important: it begins with God’s choice, followed by man’s acceptance and obedience. Moses did not die of weakness or old age. God removed him and buried him to make way for Joshua, their new leader.

Moses was not the only one to die. The entire adult generation that had left Egypt forty years earlier died in the wilderness because of their rebellion against God at Kadesh Barnea. Because they refused to believe that God could give them the land, God told them that they would not enter it. It was thirty-eight more years before everyone over twenty-years-old when they left Egypt had died, the only exceptions being Caleb and Joshua (the two spies who had courageously believed that God would indeed give them the land). Thus it was with good reason that God chose one of them to be the Israelites’ new leader.

Joshua, the Servant of Moses (v. 1)

God described Joshua as the “assistant” of Moses (v. 1). He held this position for forty years. There is an important principle about leadership for us here. Many inexperienced people want to jump into leadership positions without first having learned to serve behind the scenes in lowly positions. The person God uses must first learn to be a servant. Joshua spent forty years in training as Moses’ assistant before God designated him as a leader. Even after Moses laid his hands on him he did not rush out and command the army to invade Canaan. He waited for God to speak and direct him.

When Joshua is referred to as “Moses’ assistant” there is a deliberate contrast with the term used to describe Moses: “the servant of the LORD.” This phrase is used to describe Moses three times in this chapter (vv. 1, 13, 15). Moses is referred to as “the servant of the LORD” thirteen times in the book of Joshua, but it is not until the very last chapter that the title is used of Joshua himself (24:29). It would seem that Joshua earned that title by his life of obedience and faithfulness to God. This is especially significant, because the title is only used of one other person besides Moses in the Old Testament—David.

“Arise, go over this Jordan” (v. 2)

With Moses gone and Joshua in place as the new leader, the time had come for the nation to move forward and possess their inheritance. God said, “Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan . . . to the land which I am giving to them.” It was something to the effect of, “Get up on your feet, get over the obstacle of

the River Jordan and get into the land of blessing on the other side.” We all face these kinds of situations that call for commitment and obedience. The time for thinking and counsel is past. No more seminars on the strategy of invasion, or how to prepare kosher food, or a twelve-step program to victory. If they believed that God was going to give them the land, they needed to put their feet where they said their faith was, so to speak.

Christians today often talk and sing about being soldiers for Christ and gaining victory in Jesus. However, talking the good talk is much easier than fighting the good fight. C.T. Studd, a well known missionary of the late 19th century, found the same was true in his day, and he wrote a parody on the hymn “Onward Christian Soldiers” to motivate believers to become missionaries. He wrote,

“Mark time, Christian heroes, never go to war;
Stop and mind the babies playing on the floor.”

The commission God gave Joshua was to “you and all this people” (v. 2) — not to Joshua alone, but to the entire nation. So we as believers must arise with our Leader, the greater Joshua, and “possess the land” of victory and blessing that is before us.

The first two verses emphasize the fact that God was *giving* the land to the Israelites. The word *give* is used almost seventy times in Joshua in connection with the land and its parts. God was the primary Giver. God gave the land to the nation of Israel to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The basis for God giving them the land was His love: “Because He loved you . . . He brought you out of Egypt . . . driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you . . . to give you their land as an inheritance” (Deut. 4:37-38).

The Strategy (v. 3)

The *giving* of the land by God is balanced with the *taking* of the land by Israel. “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you.” The land was theirs, but they had to possess it step by step. God had promised that their victory would not be instant or sudden. Exodus 23:30 says, “Little by little I will drive them [the enemies] out before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land.” That was the strategy, but they had to put it into action. This step-by-step strategy is also the way to spiritual blessing and victory. We do not become mature Christians overnight; when we follow Jesus He leads us into victory after victory over sins like pride, jealousy, stubbornness, disobedience, and lack of faith, one at a time.

The Israelites on the east side of the Jordan looked westward toward Jericho and saw the fruitful land during harvest. The grain was waving in the wheat fields and the vineyards were heavy with grapes. However, possessing it was only a tantalizing possibility until they actually crossed the river and took possession of the fields one by one. The further in they went, the more they

would see what could be possessed.

The people were willing to follow Joshua, but relatively few believers today are willing to follow the greater Joshua into the spiritual inheritance that is available for all of us. The tragedy is that most Christians go home to heaven having never really “possessed” or enjoyed all that God wanted to bless them with while here on earth. These are the ones who remain unwilling to leave their worldly and fleshly ways. And because they do not identify themselves with the death and resurrection of Christ in a practical sense by putting to death the deeds of the flesh and living in the reality of His resurrection power, they do not fully experience their new life or obtain victory over their spiritual enemies. Rather, they spend most of their lives on the border as defeated Christians, seldom entering into “the land” of spiritual victory. The New Testament tells us to follow the example of Joshua by *laboring* to enter into that rest (Heb. 4:11).

The Extent of their Inheritance (v. 4)

God gave Joshua a detailed description of the land. The southern border was the wilderness through which they had come on their way from Egypt. The northern border is described as “this Lebanon,” the same mountain range that is in the modern country of Lebanon. The eastern border was the River Euphrates and the western border was the Mediterranean Sea. All the land between the east and the west was called the “land of the Hittites.” The word *Hittite* as used here is simply another word for the Canaanites, even though there was a large kingdom of peoples called Hittite in Asia Minor at about the same period of history. The borders described here are far larger than the land that was occupied by the Canaanite peoples. Actually, the people of Israel have never yet possessed it all, although they came close to doing so at the end of David’s life (1 Kings 4:21). There is a day coming, however, when Israel will fully occupy all the land that God has deeded to them (Jer. 16:14-16; Amos 9:11-15; Zech. 8:4-8). We too are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:3) and have a vast inheritance in Christ.

Victory Based on the Presence of God (v. 5)

God wanted to encourage Joshua in his huge responsibility to lead the people into a hostile land. Fortified cities with trained armies would fight for every inch of it. God promised him that no enemy would be able to stand before him. He said, “I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.” In guaranteeing His presence, God gave Joshua a most convincing historical example: “as I was with Moses” (v. 5). Joshua knew well of God’s presence with Moses through the ten plagues, the Red Sea, the wilderness, hunger and thirst, attacks, grumbling, and unbelief. Through it all God had been with Moses, and He would be with Joshua. God promised continuous victory as long as he lived. It is equally true that He will be with us. If God is for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)?

Fear not I am with thee, Oh be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid,
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.

Rippon's *Selection of Hymns*
"How Firm a Foundation"

The Courage to Conquer (vv. 6-9)

The story of Joshua is an allegory of how the people of God can move from their mediocre Christian experience to a victorious Christian experience as they possess their inheritance in Christ. Just as the Lord encouraged Joshua, so He encourages us to follow Him into the place of blessing. Our inheritance, like Israel's, will not be easily achieved. Their inheritance was in enemy territory with fortified cities and giants. Our inheritance is in the heavenlies, where principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age try to stop us from obtaining spiritual victory over such enemies as sin, doubt, fear, and trials. The thought of conquering their enemies made the Israelites afraid. Without God it is easy to let our fears and our failure to trust God keep us from enjoying all that He has for us. The "day of small things" mentality has gripped far too many people, where we become resigned to accepting second best (cf. Zech. 4:10).

"Be strong and of good courage" (v. 6)

In the first few verses, God commanded, "Get up . . . get out . . . get over . . . get into." Between verse 6 and the rest of the chapter, the words "be strong and of good courage" occur four times (vv. 6, 7, 9, 18). The Israelites—like us—needed strength because they were weak, and—like us—they needed courage because they were afraid. As their leader, Joshua would need courage more than anyone in Israel. Leading people into new territory is always difficult. When people do not share the same vision and drive that their leader has, they are slow to follow. They quickly sense fear, turn back, and are quick to complain.

The Reasons to be Strong and Courageous

Each time God called Joshua to be courageous He gave him good reason to be so, indicated by the little word "for" which occurs each time the command was given. The first "for" is in verse 6 and relates to the people: "Be strong and of good courage, *for* to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them" (v. 6). The second "for" occurs in verse 8 and relates to God. With respect to keeping His Law, God said, "*For* then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." The third "for" appears in verse 9 and relates to Joshua himself: "*For* the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Let us pursue these three calls to courage a little more deeply.

- Joshua could have courage in light of his role in *the purpose of God* to give them the land (v. 6).
- Joshua could have courage in light of the provision of *the written Word of God* (vv. 7-8).
- Joshua could have courage in light of the assurance of *the presence of God* (v. 9).

Courage in Light of the Purpose of God

The first call to be strong and courageous was given because Joshua was to divide, as an inheritance, the Promised Land. It takes courage to lead people into their *spiritual* inheritance. Have you ever tried to teach someone who thinks they are under law, not grace (Rom. 6:14)? Have you ever tried to teach eternal security in Christ when a person thinks they have to personally “hold on” to their salvation? Have you ever persuaded someone to put into practice the biblical discipline of personal prayer? Most believers are “dull of hearing” and want only “milk” instead of the “meat” of the Word of God (Heb. 5:11-14). God gave the land to Israel, but it was only theirs to enjoy when they appropriated it.

Believers, pictured by the nation of Israel, are to be possessors, not just surveyors. The twelve spies had been surveyors of the land from one end to the other, but they ended up possessing nothing except a large bunch of grapes. Joshua needed to be strong and resolute to bring the people into the land, but he could be so because he knew he was fulfilling God’s purpose.

Courage in Light of the Word of God

The second reason for Joshua to be courageous was that he had the Word of God which he was to carefully obey. This time God told him to be *very* courageous, because it would take more courage than claiming and dividing the inheritance (vv. 7-8). The context gives us the reason for this: it always takes more courage for leaders to deal with their own personal obedience than to exhort others to obey. Joshua was told he must “observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you . . . then you will have good success.” The instruction manual was the law God had given to Moses. Joshua was responsible to personally obey *all* of it.

The reference to Moses in verse 7 is interesting. Moses had received the Law from God and had just completed writing the first five books of our Bible. Even though he was gone and many things for the Israelites were changing, no change was to be made in the Law or the standards of conduct that God demanded. For example, He had declared, “Be holy, for I am holy,” and this command was not to change just because the standards of the world had changed (Lev. 11:44). Fifteen hundred years later the same moral standard was just as applicable to the readers of Peter’s letter (1 Pet. 1:16). The great moral principles of God’s Word do not change.

The Responsibility to Obey

Notice several aspects about Joshua's responsibility to obey (vv. 7-8). He was responsible to obey the entire law. The commandment was "observe to do," or "be careful to do." He needed to be determined and resolved to know all the Law and to put it into practice. It was not enough for him to pick out a favorite section and find comfort in it. It was not enough to know the truth of creation or offer occasional sacrifices. Instead, he was to know and observe the entire Law.

God told Joshua to obey the spirit of the Law, not just the letter of it. He was to do "*according to all the law*" (v. 7). He did not need a specific verse for every word or action. The spirit of the Law, which refers to those things that are consistent with the written Law and that result in God's glory, would guide his decisions and actions. For God's people, although many areas of life are not specifically addressed and discussed in Scripture, we can still find guidance in the *spirit* of Scripture. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Joshua was also responsible to be consistent. He was not to deviate from it either to the right hand or to the left (v. 7). Some people can be scrupulous about certain biblical commandments and ignore others. Joshua was commanded to run a straight course of complete obedience.

Meditation

The Book of the Law was not to "depart" out of Joshua's "mouth," meaning he was not to forsake it. Whenever he spoke, Joshua was to use Scripture as the basis of his authority and as a tool for communicating wisdom and instruction to the people. God told Joshua, "You shall meditate in it day and night." Meditation is quiet contemplation of God and His Word. We often liken it to the practice of a cow chewing the cud. The repetitive nature of meditation is an excellent, character-building habit for believers; sadly it is a lost art among most of us. Constant noise and various forms of distraction rob us of the quiet heart meditating on the Word of God. Just as, in many ways, "we are what we eat" physically, so "we are what we eat" and digest spiritually. Jeremiah said, "Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. 15:16).

The Hebrew people, however, had a slightly different concept of meditation. To them, their thoughts were accompanied by the reciting of the actual words out loud. The basic meaning of the word "meditate" is to "mutter," which reflects this habit. For this reason God charged Joshua, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth" (v. 8). He was to be constantly repeating it aloud. This form of meditation remains a practical way of keeping focused on the subject at hand. Many Christians make a habit of praying aloud for the same reason.



JOSHUA



EXAM BOOKLET AK '08 (3 UNITS) B-JOSHUA

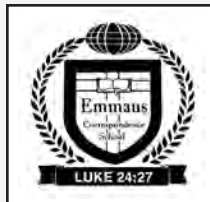
STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| A. blue | C. yellow |
| B. green | D. orange |

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Course Components

This exam booklet should be used in conjunction with the book *Joshua: The Conquest of Canaan* by Ken Fleming, published by ECS Ministries © 2006.

How To Study

There are twelve exams, and each exam relates to one or more chapters of the book *Joshua: The Conquest of Canaan*. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapters through at least twice, once to get a general idea of the contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one exam per week.

Chapter Titles	Exam
Introduction and Joshua 1 (pages 9-27)	1
Joshua 2–3 (pages 29-45)	2
Joshua 4–5 (pages 47-63)	3
Joshua 6–7 (pages 65-80)	4
Joshua 8–9 (pages 81-96)	5
Joshua 10–11 (pages 97-114)	6
Joshua 12–13 (pages 115-125)	7
Joshua 14–15 (pages 127-133)	8
Joshua 16–17 (pages 135-142)	9
Joshua 18–20 (pages 143-156)	10
Joshua 21–22 (pages 157-166)	11
Joshua 23–24 (pages 167-177)	12

LESSON 1 EXAM

INTRODUCTION & JOSHUA 1

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. Joshua came from the tribe of

A. Judah

C. Levi

B. Ephraim

D. Simeon
2. God prepared Joshua for leadership by

A. exposing him to learning experiences

B. anointing him with His power

C. speaking directly to him

D. isolating him from evil influences
3. The invasion of Canaan by the Israelites occurred about

A. 1445 BC

C. 1405 BC

B. 1002 BC

D. 900 BC
4. Joshua’s purpose for writing the book of Joshua appears to be

A. to show the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham

B. to encourage the Israelites to complete their conquest of Canaan

C. to demonstrate that God is holy and righteous

D. all of the above
5. The book of Joshua is

A. historical narrative

B. spiritual allegory

C. a “how-to” for winning wars

D. both history and pictures of spiritual truth
6. The person God uses in leadership must first learn to

A. be a servant

B. speak authoritatively

C. take command

D. form a leadership team

- 7. Joshua could have courage because
 - A. God had purposed to give the Israelites the land
 - B. the Canaanites were as good as dead anyway
 - C. God had promised to be with him
 - D. both A and C_____

- 8. Joshua's success was based on
 - A. his large army
 - B. the weakness of the enemy
 - C. his obedience to God's Law
 - D. his skill as a military tactician_____

- 9. When the Israelites who settled on the west side of the Jordan had found _____, the east Jordan tribes could return home.
 - A. happiness
 - B. rest
 - C. prosperity
 - D. comfort_____

- 10. Joseph, Moses, and Joshua all picture
 - A. our joy and prosperity
 - B. our safety in this life
 - C. Christ's work in our lives
 - D. Christ's death on our behalf_____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Why do you think it is important for New Testament believers to study the book of Joshua?
