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### Introduction To Joshua

The book of Joshua falls under the grouping of historical books and they usually classify the twelve books, from Joshua to Esther, in the third division of the Hebrew canon, “the prophets”.

These differ from the Pentateuch, the first five books, Genesis to Deuteronomy, generally known as the Law or the Books of Moses.

1. Though these first five books do contain history also dealing with the redemptive history from creation to the death of Moses, they focus on the covenant and legislative foundation of Israel.

- a. The books of Moses take Israel to Canaan.
- b. Joshua takes Israel into Canaan.

2. The Historical books on the other hand record the historical movement of the nation of Israel in the promise land to captivity and post captivity, focusing on their development.

- a. Joshua covers about twenty-five years in the conquest of the land.
- b. Though they left some of the inhabitants in the land through compromise.

The book of Joshua is the Hebrews is listed in the “Former Prophets”, which consisted of six books, Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings.

\* Both Samuel and Kings were considered as one book each.

The “Latter Prophets” consisted of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets, considered as four books

The distinction between the “Former Prophets” and “Latter Prophets” is not their chronology of history necessarily but to the first and second group of books.

### **I. The geographical and political setting of Canaan for the book of Joshua.**

#### **A. The geographical area of Canaan.**

1. The land of Canaan is often referred to today as Palestine but this name is never used in the Biblical record.
2. Palestine was derived from the term “Philistines”, which the Greeks called “Palaistine” and the Romans named “Palestina”.
3. The Bible calls the area “Canaan”, after the son of Ham who settled the land Gen. 9:25, 12:5-7
4. The land of Canaan was cursed and later given to Abraham with a promised blessing, it designated the land west of the Jordan River, later east also.

5. The land went from Mount Hermon in the north to the desert south of the Dead Sea, covering a distance of 150 miles from Dan to Beersheba, averaging a 70 mile width, from the Mediterranean to the eastern highlands.
6. The land area is described by four parallel strips that run north and south.
  - a. The Coastal Plain along the Mediterranean.
  - b. The Central Highlands with mountainous peaks over 300 feet.
  - c. The Jordan Valley with the dead Sea at the lever of 1290 feet below sea level.
  - d. The Eastern Palestine or Trans-Jordan, a vast fertile plateau at heights of over 3000 feet, a small land of great contrast in topography, covering some 11,000 miles.
7. The Jordan Valley is said to be a most unique formation of nature being a part of the great geological rift extending from Syria in the north to south of the Dead Sea.
  - a. At one time believed to be filled with water, making it a 200 mile long lake from northern Galilee to 50 miles south of the dead Sea.
  - b. In the Bible times the area had three large bodies of water; Lake Huleh in

northern Galilee which was 230 feet above sea level, now drained, the Sea of Galilee, Chinnereth, 230 feet above sea level, and the Dead Sea at 1290 feet below Sea level.

- c. All three were joined by the mighty Jordan as it descended rapidly snaking some 160 miles to travel 65 miles to the Dead Sea
- B.** The political setting of Canaan.
1. The land is so strategically located that often it was the prize of world conquerors.
  2. Prior to Israel it was conquered by Mesopotamian from the east, the Hittites from the north and the Egyptians from the southwest.
  3. All of which equally harassed and attacked Israel often.
  4. These nation and other are always presented in the Bible from the prophetic perspective, they were serving God's purposes and part of God's judgment for their evil.
  5. When Israel apostatized God would raise up nations to chasten Israel.

*This is the geographical and political setting of Canaan for the book of Joshua!*

## II. The book of Joshua.

### A. The title and author of the book.

1. The name Joshua is the name of the principal character.
  - a. Joshua's name originally in Hebrew was "Hoshea", which means "salvation". Num. 13:8, 16
  - b. Moses changed his name to Joshua when he sent out the spies into Canaan according to Numbers. Num. 13:16
  - c. The name Joshua in Hebrew is a contraction of Jehovah-shua which means Jehovah is salvation.
  - d. The Hebrew name Joshua translated into the Greek is Jesus, who is Jehovah's salvation for man.
  - e. Iesus, Jesus is used in the Latin Vulgate.
2. The authorship of the book is generally excepted as from Joshua.
  - a. The man Joshua had first hand knowledge of all the facts and he is credited with writing it. Josh. 18:9, 24:26
  - b. The obvious editorial help is seen by the adding of the last five verses of his death, either Eleazar or Phinehas. Josh. 24:29-33

- c. There are those who hold to the theory of the "Documentary Hypothesis" for the Pentateuch, known as JDEP
- d. There is also no evidence for the theory of the Hexateuch, that Joshua formed a unit with the Pentateuch
- e. The bottom line is that all the Scriptures are inspired by God, inerrant and infallible, there is really only One author, the Holy Spirit of God. 2Tim. 3:16-17, 2Pet. 1:20-21

### B. The historical setting of the book.

1. The date is around 1407-05 B.C. when Joshua led the people into the promised land., some go as far as 1375 B.C.
2. Moses had just died and the leadership had passed to Joshua.
3. Joshua crossed the Jordan just before Passover, at the time the Jordan was flood season.
4. The entire nation of 2, 500,000 were ready to take the land that had been rejected forty years earlier.
5. Two and a half tribes settled on the east side, Ephraim, Benjamin and half tribe of Manasseh.
6. If Joshua was the same age as Caleb, forty at the spying of the land, Joshua

then began his leadership of Israel at age seventy-nine or eighty.

7. Joshua died at age 110, therefore his leadership lasted thirty-one or two years. Josh. 24:29
8. The conquest of the land can be seen in three movements.
  - a. Entering the land. Josh. 1-5
  - b. Overcoming the land. Josh. 6-12
  - c. Occupying the land. Josh. 13-24

**C.** The nations occupying the promised land in the book.

1. The land was populated by a mix of people who were descendants of Canaan the son of Ham and Noah. Gen. 10:15-20
2. The Hittites from the sons of Heth settled in Asia Minor.
3. The Girgashites from the regions west of the Sea of Galilee.
4. The Amorites a mountainous people in the highlands west and east of the Dead Sea.
5. The Canaanites from the northern section.
6. The Perizzites associated with the Canaanites in the north.
7. The Hivites the peaceful Gibeonites near Jerusalem.
8. The Jebusites the war like tribe that settled around Jerusalem.

9. Since 1468 B.C Canaan had been dominated by Egypt, establishing garrisons and native princes educated in Egypt to rule as puppet monarchs but in 1400 B.C. Egypt's foreign power deteriorated.
10. The entire land was filled with debased idolatry, confirmed by the Ras Shamra (Ugaritic) tablets and the extant relics of fertility cult practices unearthed at Beth-shean, Megiddo, etc..
  - a. El was the supreme deity, described as a bloody and cruel tyrant, of uncontrolled lust.
  - b. Baal was the son of El and his successor, he dominated the Canaanite groups and considered "Lord of heaven.", the god of rain and vegetation.
  - c. Anath was sister of Baal and one of three goddesses who were patronesses of sex and war, with sacred prostitutes and child slaughter.
  - d. Ashtoreth Astarte or Asherah were also consorts of Baal and goddesses of sex and war.
  - e. Molech and Milcom were Ammonite gods of orgy as Chemosh was the national deity of the Moabites.

**D.** The purpose of the book.

1. To reveal the fulfillment of God's promise and faithfulness to Abraham. Deut. 34:4 (Knowing God's Word: Ellisen:60)
  2. To confirm the affirmation regarding their redemptive history by giving them the land of promise. Josh. 1:2-3
  3. To confirm to the people that God was with Joshua as He was with Moses. Josh. 1:5, 17
  4. To divide the land to the people. Josh. 1:6
  5. To remind the people of God's about the holiness of God and that they could not depend on God to be for them when sin was in the camp, as He allowed the destruction of those who went to Ai due to sin in the camp. Josh. 7
- E.** The spiritual application of the book.
1. The book of Joshua stands for the life of faith and victory in contrast to the book of Number, representing unbelief and failure.
  2. Joshua is a type of Christ leading his people into the promise land to possess their spiritual blessing.
  3. Canaan represents not heaven as some old hymns state for there won't be any giants or enemies in heaven, but the present life of the believer who rests in

- Christ and takes possession of his spiritual blessing. Heb. 4:8-11
4. The Jordan River does not represent death and arriving in heaven but the death of the Old man and the empowerment of the Spirit to live in the heavenlies as Ephesians tells us. Gal. 2:20, Eph. 5:18, Phil. 1:21
    - a. 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. Eph 1:3
    - b. Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. Eph 1:20
    - c. And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph 2:6
    - d. To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Eph 3:10
    - e. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Eph 6:12
  5. Canaan represented three things to Israel.

- a. Rest.
- b. Abundance.
- c. Victory.

**F. Key verses, words and phrases.**

**1. Key versus.**

- a. “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Josh. 1:8
- b. And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Gergashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: “Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan.” Josh. 3:10-11
- c. On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.” Josh. 4:14
- d. Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for

they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way. Josh. 5:7

\* Gilgal means rolling, the shame of Egypt the flesh life!

- e. And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, Are You for us or for our adversaries? So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” Josh. 5:13-14
- f. So the LORD said to Joshua: “Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? “Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Josh. 7:10-11
- g. Now Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have

done; do not hide it from me.” Josh. 7:19

- h. Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. Josh. 9:14
  - i. As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses. Josh. 11:15
  - j. Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. Josh. 23:11
  - k. And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Josh. 24:15
2. Key words.
- a. Rest, fifteen times. Jos. 1:13, 15, 3:13, 7:25, 10:20, 11:23, etc
  - b. Strong.
  - c. Courageous.
  - d. Dismayed.
3. Key phrases.
- a. Be strong and courageous or of good courage. Josh. 1:6, 7.9,18, 10:25, 23:6

- b. Be very courageous. Josh. 1:7, 23:6
- c. Be not afraid or dismayed. Josh. 1:8, 9, 8:1, 10:25

*This is the book of Joshua!*

### III. The man Joshua.

- A. Joshua the courageous soldier. Josh. 1:1-10:15
  - 1. Joshua the soldier receives his command directly from the Lord, encouragement and warning. Josh. 1
  - 2. Joshua the soldier sent spies out to the land. Josh. 2
  - 3. Joshua was to be a soldier of faith. Josh. 3-10
    - a. Joshua was to cross the Jordan. Josh. 3-4
    - b. Joshua was to circumcise the male at Gilgal. Josh. 5
    - c. Joshua was to conquer Jericho in a strange way. Josh. 6
    - d. Joshua was defeated at Ai due to sin. Josh. 7
    - e. Ai fell once sin had been removed from the camp! Josh. 8
    - f. Joshua was deceived by the Gibeonite due to trusting in himself. Josh. 9:1-10:15

- B. Joshua the wise administrator. Josh. 10:16-22:34**
1. Joshua conquered the land. Josh. 10-12
  2. Joshua was old and advanced in years and there yet remained land to be conquered and encouraged them to possess it. Josh. 13-19
  3. Joshua appointed the cities of refuge and for the Levites. Josh. 20-21
    - a. The cities of refuge were assigned. Josh. 20
    - b. The cities of the Levites were given. Josh. 21
  4. The two and a half tribes were released from their vow to settle the land and return to the east side of the Jordan. Josh. 22
    - a. Ruben.
    - b. Gad.
    - c. Half of Manasseh.
- C. Joshua the aged leader. Josh. 23:1-24:33**
1. Joshua called for the leaders of Israel prior to his death. Josh. 23:1-10
    - a. He reminds the people of God's faithfulness and his to drive out the nations and told them to be courageous and do what the law declared lest they go into the remaining nations and serve their gods. Josh. 23:6-10

- b. He told them of the greatest incentive for them to be faithful, to love God or else they would compromise with the people of the land and God would no longer drive out the people of the land. Josh. 23: 11-13
  - c. He told them that he was about to die and that as God had been faithful, He would be harmful to them if they transgressed the covenant. Josh. 23: 14-16
- 2. Joshua reviews their history. Josh. 24:1-13**
- a. He called all the leaders to Shechem. Josh. 24:1
  - b. He reminded them of their ancestry, Abraham was a pagan. Josh. 24: 2
  - c. He told them God separated Abraham to Himself. Josh. 24:3-5
  - d. He Delivered Israel through Moses. Josh. 24:5-7
  - e. He protected them from Balsam. Josh. 24: 8-10
  - f. He gave them the land they possessed as He sent hornets before them. Josh. 24: 11-13
  - g. He called for the people to fear and serve the Lord in view of all he had said, in sincerity and truth and to put away the gods of their fathers. Josh. 24: 14

3. Joshua called the people to decide whom they would serve. Josh. 24:14-26
  - a. He asks them to choose whom they will serve and declared that he and his house were going to serve the Lord. Josh. 24: 15
  - b. He hears the people choose God. Josh. 24: 16-18
  - c. He repeated that they could not serve and other gods without consequences and they affirmed their commitment and made a covenant at Shechem. Josh. 24: 19-25
  - d. He wrote the word in the Book of the Law as a witness against them and they departed to their inheritance. Josh. 24: 26-28
4. Joshua died at a good old age. Josh. 24:29-33
  - a. Joshua died a servant of the Lord. Josh. 24:29a-b
  - b. Joshua died at age 110. Josh. 24: 29c
  - c. Joshua was buried at the border of his inheritance at Timnath. Josh. 24: 30
  - d. Joshua left a legacy that lasted during the life of those who served in his day and they served the Lord. Josh. 24: 31
  - e. Joshua's men buried the bones of Joseph at Shechem. Josh. 24: 32

- f. Joshua's men also buried Eleazer, the son of Aaron in the mountains of Ephraim. Josh. 24:33

*This is the man Joshua!*

#### **IV. The outline of the book of Joshua.**

- A. The entering of the land. Josh. 1-5
  1. The charge to Joshua and the preparation to cross the Jordan. Josh. 1
  2. The spies sent out to Jericho. Josh. 2
  3. The crossing of the Jordan. Josh. 3
  4. The memorial erected. Josh. 4
  5. The death of the flesh life at Gilgal. Josh. 5
- B. The defeating of the people of the land. Josh. 6-12
  1. The conquest of Jericho. Josh. 6
  2. The defeat at Ai due to Achan. Josh. 7
  3. The victory at Ai. Josh. 8
  4. The deceit of the Gibeons. Josh. 9
  5. The conquered kings. Josh. 10-12
- C. The distributing of the land. Josh. 13-24
  1. The division of Canaan. Josh. 13-19
  2. The cities of refuge. Josh. 20
  3. The portion of the Levites. Josh. 21
  4. The alter of witness. Josh. 22
  5. The farewell of Joshua. Josh. 23-24

*The outline of the book of Joshua!*