

## 2019 Through the Bible Reading: *Bible Study Support*

The Book of Joshua	
Background (Who, what, why, when)	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Book of Joshua comes immediately after the Pentateuch and in many ways completes its story. The theme of the first five books of the Bible is the progressive fulfillment of the promise made first to Abraham in Genesis 12, repeated to his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. The Lord promised Abraham and his descendants that they would be blessed and would become a blessing to others, that they would grow to become a great nation and that they would be given a land of their own—and that these blessings would be enjoyed within a close covenant relationship with God. By the end of Deuteronomy, Israel has been brought into a covenant relationship with the Lord and has become a great people, but they remain just outside their promised land on the plains of Moab.</p> <p>Forty years before, the Lord had chosen Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt and to bring them to the land He had promised. Now, after so many years of wandering, Joshua, the new leader, is to lead God's people into the land and to divide the land as their promised inheritance from the Lord. The book of Joshua recounts Israel's conquest of the land of Canaan under Joshua's command. The book opens with Joshua being commissioned by the Lord as the leader of the Israelites. It tells of his victories over the Canaanite kings and how he allotted the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel. The book ends with Joshua encouraging the people to remain faithful to the Lord.</p> <p><u>Basic Outline</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Crossing into the Land (1:1–5:15)</li><li>2. Taking the Land (6:1–12:24)</li><li>3. Dividing the Land (13:1–21:45)</li><li>4. Serving the Lord in the Land (22:1–24:33)</li></ol> <p><u>Author</u></p> <p>Joshua the son of Nun is believed to have written most of the book as inspired by the Holy Spirit. The latter part of the book was written by at least one other person after the death of Joshua; most likely one of the high priests, Eleazar or Phinehas.</p> <p>Joshua was born a slave in Egypt. He appears in Moses' lifetime in increasingly important positions—as a warrior, as the assistant to Moses, as one of the spies, and finally, at age eighty-five as Moses' designated successor and conqueror of Canaan. He became Israel's leader at age eighty-five and led Israel for twenty-five years until his death at age 110. Joshua is a remarkable character with an exciting life story. He was known for his deep trust in God and as "a man in whom is the spirit" (Nu 27:18). As a youth he lived through the bitter realities of slavery in Egypt, but he also witnessed the supernatural plagues and the miracle of Israel's escape from the army of the Egyptians when the waters of the sea opened before them. In the Sinai peninsula it was Joshua who led the troops of Israel to victory over the Amalekites (Ex 17:8-13). He alone was allowed to accompany Moses up the holy mountain where the tablets of the law were</p>

	<p>received (Ex 24:13-14). And it was Joshua who stood watch at the temporary tent of meeting Moses set up before the tabernacle was erected (Ex 33:11). Joshua was elected to represent his own tribe of Ephraim when the 12 spies were sent into Canaan to look over the land. Only Joshua and Caleb, representing the tribe of Judah, were ready to follow God's will and take immediate possession of the land (Nu 14:26-34). The rest of the Israelites of that generation were condemned to die in the desert. Even Moses died short of the goal and was told to turn everything over to Joshua.</p> <p>God promised to guide and strengthen Joshua, just as He had Moses (Deut. 31:23; Jos 1:5). Joshua was God's chosen servant to bring Moses' work to completion and establish Israel in the promised land. To that special divine appointment, he was faithful – as the leader of God's army, as the administrator of God's division of the land and as God's spokesman for promoting Israel's covenant faithfulness.</p>
<p>Interesting Facts in Joshua</p>	<p>Rachab, a Most Unlikely Hero</p> <p>The mention of Rachab, the prostitute, is somewhat surprising in the book of Joshua. This unlikely hero helped Israel's spies and this act of courage and faith in the God of the Israelites earned her a place in Jesus' Messianic genealogy (Mt 1:5) and with those honored for their faith in Hebrews 11:31. It is encouraging to know that God sees and honors every step of faith, no matter how complicated our circumstances are.</p> <p><u>Did God really make the sun stand still?</u></p> <p>Joshua 10:12–14 relates an amazing miracle when the Lord, in response to Joshua's request, prolongs the day to allow Israelites to finish the battle. How do we reconcile such a miracle with what we know from science? Some suggest a "local miracle" in which God allowed light to remain in Gibeon, much like the Hebrews had light even when the Egyptians were in the dark (Exodus 10:23). However, the text seems to indicate an actual change of the earth's rotation, since it says the sun did not set. Others argue that the language of the passage is poetic and therefore not to be taken literally. But if we took this approach, how are we to know which events are to be taken as literal and which as poetic? Another view attempts to explain the event as an eclipse that gave the appearance of a long day in which the sun did not set. God timed the event to miraculously coincide with Joshua's prayer and moment of need. The main weakness of this view is that an eclipse typically lasts for minutes rather than hours.</p> <p>Probably the best explanation is simply to take Joshua 10 at face value—God performed a stupendous miracle, causing the sun to delay its "setting." God slowed the motion of the earth. Joshua described the miracle just as we might describe it, from an earth-bound perspective. From the perspective of someone standing on the earth, it does appear that the sun moves. We ourselves commonly speak of "sunrise" and "sunset"; it is the way we express ourselves. While we may not fully understand how this "long day" occurred, a miracle does not have to be scientifically proven—just accepted. Joshua prayed, and God supernaturally provided the light necessary for Joshua's army to win its battle. Interestingly, Israel's enemies worshiped the sun and moon, so "stopping the sun" was the ultimate sign of the superiority of the God of Israel as the true God. The Amorites' own gods were powerless to aid their cause as the God of Israel moved heaven and earth to grant His people the victory.</p>

<p>Reasonable Defense for the faith in Joshua</p>	<p><u>Significance of the book of Joshua</u>  The book of Joshua was written to the descendants of those who conquered the land, as a historical account of how they had come to settle there. It celebrates God as general, defender, and king. It shows the geographical boundaries given to each tribe of Israel. It is more than just history, it prophetically interprets God's covenant ways with Israel in history - how He fulfills and remains true to his promises (especially through his servants such as Joshua, the judges, Samuel and David) and how he deals with the lack of faithfulness of the Israelites.</p> <p><u>Joshua foreshadows the coming of Jesus</u></p> <p>Joshua's name has significance beyond his own lifetime as a part of God's story. Originally named Hoshea, which means "Salvation," he was renamed Joshua by Moses (Numbers 13:8,16). Joshua means "The Lord Saves" and is the same name as Jesus (the Greek form of Joshua). The two are linked by more than a name. First Joshua conquers the Promised Land, the second Joshua (Jesus) completes what God did for Israel in a preliminary way through the first Joshua, namely, and overcomes all powers of evil in the world to bring God's people into their eternal "Promised Land".</p>
<p>Memory Verse</p>	<p><i>"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. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 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. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go"</i> (Joshua 1:6-9 NKJV).</p> <p><i>"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! 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"</i> (JOSHUA 24:14-15 NKJV).</p>
<p>Practical Application to memory verses</p>	<p>God is strong enough and faithful to deliver on his promises. Those who trust Him and respond in faith to His leading will inherit His promises and find rest.</p>
<p>Life Application from Biblical Themes in Joshua</p>	<p><u>Our Rest is in God and From God</u>  The Book of Joshua has an overriding theological theme of rest. The Israelites, after wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, finally entered the rest God had prepared for them in the land of Canaan. The writer of Hebrews uses this incident as a warning to us not to let unbelief keep us from entering into God's rest in Christ (Hebrews 3:7-12).</p> <p><u>God's Word is Our Best Guide in Life</u>  One of the key verses of the Book of Joshua is 1:8 <i>"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it."</i> The Old Testament is replete with stories of how the people "forgot" God and His Word and suffered</p>

terrible consequences. For the Christian, the Word of God is our lifeblood. If we neglect it, our lives will suffer accordingly. But if we take to heart the principle of verse 1:8, we will be complete and able to be of use in God's kingdom (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and we will find that God's promises in Joshua 1:8-9 will be ours as well.

#### Mentoring & Discipleship

Joshua is a prime example of the benefits of a worthy mentor. For years he remained close to Moses. He watched Moses as he followed God in an almost flawless manner. He learned to pray in a personal way from Moses. He learned how to obey through the example of Moses. Joshua apparently also learned from the negative example that cost Moses the joy of actually entering the Promised Land. If you are alive, you are a mentor. Someone, somewhere, is watching you. Some younger person or someone that you are influencing is seeing how you live and how you react. Someone is learning from you. Someone will follow your example. Mentoring is far more than the words that are spoken by the mentor. His or her entire life is on display.

#### God Keeps His promises

The last verses of Joshua narrate three burials: Joshua (Joshua 24:29-30), the bones of Joseph (24:32), and Eleazar the high priest (24:33). Strange as it may seem, these burials proclaim God's character. All three men were associated with Israel's days in captivity (Joseph long ago when Jacob's family first settled in Egypt, and Joshua and Eleazar as young men on the long journey through the wilderness). And now all three lay at rest in the land of promise, witnesses to God's faithfulness. God is the ultimate promise-keeper. As faithful and present as He was with Israel, so He is with us.

#### God alone deserves our worship and we must remove false gods (idols) from our lives before they destroy us

This is something we don't like to be reminded of, but the book of Joshua reminds of the negative consequences of compromises and agreements we make with the devil and the world around us. Whatever is not of God, needs to be removed quickly and decisively before it destroys us.