

Summary of Joshua

- (1) Israel had encamped on the plains of Moab – opposite Jericho. There Moses gave his last instructions to them and died (at Shittim) (Deut 31).
 - God wanted them to show the world **WHO HE WAS** so that all Nations would come to worship the **True God** and throw away their false idols which were manifestations of Satan.
- (2) We need to realise that **God** was entering Canaan
 - not **just** the Israelites, and we have to remember **God's Action** throughout the conquering of the Promised Land.
 - The process is **God**, the Creator and Lord, **reclaiming** His **own** territory and this mystery had to occur in **every** country, with every Nation – but the **INTERNATIONAL** aspect of conquering the world did not happen until **JESHUA** = Jesus, came.
- (3) God uses Joshua as a **NEW MOSES** for this stage of History. This is extremely important!
- (4) There are **4 Movements** in the Book of Joshua:
 - a) chap 1-5 where Joshua leads Israel into Promised Land.
 - b) chap 6-12 They meet huge hostility which throws them into battle with Canaanites.
 - c) chap 13-22 The land is divided among the Tribes of Israel.
 - d) chap 23-24 Joshua's final discourse and death.

- a) **chap 1-5** The author presents Joshua as a New Moses who will lead the people **into** conquering the Promised Land just as Moses had led them **out of** Egypt with signs and wonders.

So, like Moses, Joshua calls the people to obey the **TORAH** – God's Holy Word, which God gave them on **Mt Sinai**.

- Then, just as Moses had sent spies into the land in Numbers 14, so Joshua does the same, but with greater success – the wonderful story of **RAHAB** who became an Israelite and an ancestress of **King David!**
- In ch 3-4 Joshua leads all Israel across the Jordan and into the Promised Land.
 - Just as God opened the Red Sea for Moses to lead the Chosen People out of slavery and into the wilderness.
 - So, here God opened the Jordan River for Israel to cross over from wandering in the Wilderness to finding a settled home on Earth.

Note: that the Ark of the Covenant crossed the River **First**

- ⓔ this was **God's** entry into a land that **BECAME** a **Holy Land** because of **His** Presence and reign there.
 - this will finally be fulfilled when Jesus returns in Glory after the Nations have forgotten God and fallen back into idolatry, apostasy, immorality and child sacrifice (Abortion).

In chap 5 the story transitions as the Chosen People:

- (a) **Look BACK** to their roots as God's Covenanted People. So, this new generation is (i) circumcised and (ii) celebrate Passover
 - they had not been circumcised in the Wilderness and so there was not another Passover until they **entered** Promised Land.
- (b) **Look forward:** Here Joshua has his famous encounter with the Angelic Commander of God's Army – this **has** to be Michael, the Archangel, who became the **Protector** of all of God's People
 - { He fights **FOR** us on the spiritual plane
 - { He fights **WITH** us on the natural plane

- Ⓝ God's Angelic army is very much involved in **Human Affairs:**
cf 2 Kings 6:16 | Lk chap 1 | Resurrection Narratives
| Eph 6:12 |

Wonderful conversation between Joshua and the Angel

J = "are you for us or for our enemies?"

A = "Neither!!"

The Angel needs to have Joshua on God's side!! - It's NOT Joshua's Kingdom! He is merely God's SERVANT

(VIP) The conquering of Canaan was NOT Israel vs Canaanites.

- this was God's plan and He was using Israel to give His Judgement on the pagan practices of the Canaanites.

b) **Ch 6-12:** Here we are told about **2 GREAT** battles.

- then we are told of a number of battles which CONDENSE years of battles into a few brief summaries.

(i) The First two battles were against Jericho and Ai [ey-ie]. We are given these to show

- God's faithfulness at Jericho
- And Israel's failure at Ai

At Jericho Israel was told to take a PASSIVE approach.

- God's Presence in the Ark marched around Jericho announcing God's arrival in Canaan.

→ But He had come in Judgement! On the 7th Day – at the Blowing of the SHOFAR (trumpets) the walls fell down by God's power and action.

Lesson: God is the One to deliver His People, Israel, and in doing so He will reveal His Presence, Power and Glory to the OTHER Nations.

Israel simply needs TO TRUST and WAIT: Ex 14:13 / Rom 8:28

(ii) **The Battle at Ai** makes the opposite point.

An Israelite named Achan (AKAN) who stole from Jericho some of the goods which were meant for God alone (i.e.) to be given to God in sacrifice or destroyed. (Under the ban – not for human consumption)

- Israel went into battle at Ai and were totally defeated!
- It was only after Repentance and dealing with Achan's sin that Israel gained the victory. Notice SELFISHNESS not allowed in KOG!

The lesson is that if Israel wants to inherit the Promised Land then they will HAVE to DO GOD'S WILL.

(NB) God's battles are not won by human scheming. The Human will adds the negative of selfishness and greed. God's battles are fought and WON by obedience to God's Will, by humility and LOVE. The selfish ego must surrender to God.

ch 9 The Gibeonites do what Rahab did at the beginning. They want to live so they "turn around" (supposed to express conversion!) and decide to follow the God of Israel.
- they make peace with Israel – but future History will show that this was politics – not religion! ("turn around" = metanoia = conversion)

ch 10-11 The other Canaanite Kings form an alliance to destroy Israel. Israel engaged them in battle and won by a landslide!

ch 12 Gives a list of cities won by Moses and by Joshua

Q. Why did God declare war on the Canaanites?

A. The answer is given in Pentateuch: Deut 7

- 1) They had become extremely morally corrupt: see Lev 18
- 2) They practiced child sacrifice: cf Deut 12:29-31.

God did NOT want these practices among a people He would call His Own.

Q. When we read that Israel “totally destroyed” those cities - that “there were NO survivors” Is this Literal? No! Battle stories in ancient world use **HYPERBOLE** to make their point. The **point** is that they were victorious and took the land.

Look at Deut 7:1-6

vs 1: the various tribes in Canaan are listed

vs 2: Israel was to conquer them and “put them under the ban”- destroy them

vs 3: “You must not **MARRY** them” – no interbreeding

- how could you marry someone you have killed?!

vs 5-6: The order **to destroy** was to destroy **their altars** to the demon gods

- Compare Joshua 10:36-39 and Joshua 15:13-15
 - ch 10: “they left not a man alive – every living creature... put under the ban”
 - ch 15:13-15: these towns are **STILL** populated by **Canaanites!**

Also, we have already seen that God **accepted** Rahab and the Gibeonites who turned to Him.
cf Ezek 33:11; 18:23

Ⓝ These are told as **HEROIC** events because they represent a **unique** moment in Israel’s history...
But they were confined to handfuls of people dotted across the land.

Ⓝ With **All** other Nations God instructed Israel in Deut 20 to **seek peace** and be at peace with them.

Ⓝ The **Purpose** of these battle stories was **NEVER** to tell anyone to fight in God’s Name – Instead, they show God’s **Justice** on Human Evil at a unique moment in human history, and how He delivered Israel from being annihilated by the Canaanites who were rich and more powerful than they were.

c) **ch 13-22:** Here we meet an aging Joshua dividing up the Land so that there will not be wars **among** the Israelites when he dies... so he finishes the parcelling out of the land **even though** the whole land is not **yet** conquered.

→ These chapters are **BORING!** It’s like reading a map but you have no pictures to help you. Yet, for subsequent History this material was vital.

Why? This was proof to the whole world that God had **kept** His promise to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the Promised Land – which **became** known as **Canaan.**
cf Gen 12:6-7

It was all coming to pass **NOW** and therefore they could **Trust** the God of Israel as **The God who keeps His Promises**

d) **ch 23-24**

- Joshua gives 2 speeches to the People – which are very similar to those of Moses in Deuteronomy:32
- Joshua reminds them of God’s generosity in rescuing them from the Wilderness and bringing them safely to live in the Promised Land - they must now be **FAITHFUL** to God **And** to His Covenant - this will bring life and blessing to the land.

But if they are **UNFAITHFUL**

they will call down upon themselves **THE SAME** Judgement which had just been meted out to the Canaanites – they will be **thrown out** of the land and sent into **Exile.**

At the end of the Book of Joshua, the **BIG QUESTION** is: **What are you going to do?**

His **own** Testimony was: “*As for me and my house → we will serve the Lord*”