

## JOSHUA

1. The primary plot of Joshua is:
  - a. **Joshua 1:2** 2 Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.
  - b. **Genesis 12:7** 7 Then Yahweh appeared to Abram and said, To your seed I will give this land. So he built there an altar to Yahweh who had appeared to him.
  - c. The divine hero of Joshua is Yahweh. The human hero of Joshua is Joshua.
2. The primary message of Joshua is:
  - a. God grants supernatural victory to his people in order that they may possess and be blessed in the land he has given them as an inheritance.
  - b. God provides a place of rest for believers. It takes courage to enter that place.
  - c. "...Possessing the land of blessing and rest through courageous conquest."
3. The structure of Joshua is:
  - a. "The book of Joshua portrays key events in early Israel's life by means of vivid images. These include the actions of crossing the Jordan River (Josh 1–5), conquering the land (Josh 6–12), allocating the tribal territories (Josh 13–21) and learning how to worship God as a united people (Josh 22–24)."<sup>1</sup>
4. Key verses of Joshua are:
  - a. **Joshua 1:2** 2 Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel.
  - b. **Joshua 1:6-8** 6 Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful 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.
  - c. **Joshua 1:13** 13 Remember the word that Moses the servant of Yahweh commanded you saying, Yahweh your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land.
  - d. **Joshua 3:5** 5 Then Joshua said to the people, Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow Yahweh will do wonders among you.
  - e. **Joshua 10:40** 40 So Joshua struck the whole land, the hill country, the Negeb, the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining but devoted to destruction all that breathed, just as Yahweh God of Israel commanded.
5. Key words and phrases of Joshua are:
  - a. Be courageous.
  - b. Devoted to destruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 461–462.

- c. Inheritance.
  - d. Possession
  - e. Rest.
6. Key concepts of Joshua are:
- a. God as Warrior.
    - (1) God fights on his people's behalf.
  - b. The Judgment of God.
    - (1) Judgment comes to the enemies of God and his people.
    - (2) "Side by side with these pictures of miraculous victory are gruesome images of judgment and destruction: the extermination of the army and citizens of Jericho (Josh 6:21), Ai (Josh 8:22–25) and the towns of the southern and northern coalitions (Josh 10:28–41; 11:12–20); the destruction of part of the first Israelite assault force against Ai (Josh 7:4–5); the stoning and burning of Achan and his family for Achan's theft of items devoted to God (Josh 7:24–26); the entrapment, execution and hanging up of the corpses of the five kings at Makkedah (Josh 10:16–27)."<sup>2</sup>
  - c. The Grace of God.
    - (1) **Joshua 24:13** 13 I gave you a land on which you had not labored and cities that you had not built, and you dwell in them. You eat the fruit of vineyards and olive orchards that you did not plant.
  - d. The Land of Israel.
    - (1) God gives Israel the land of Canaan as a special inheritance and possession.
      - (a) **Joshua 10:40** 40 So Joshua struck the whole land, the hill country, the Negeb, the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining, but devoted to destruction all that breathed, just as Yahweh God of Israel commanded.
  - e. Israel and the Gentiles.
    - (1) It is in Gentiles' best interest to align themselves with Israel and the God of Israel.
    - (2) Rahab.
    - (3) The Gibeonites.
7. Types in Joshua.
- a. Israel's conquering of Canaan symbolizes the believer's conquering of the world, the flesh, and the devil.
  - b. Rest in the land of Canaan symbolizes the believer's experiential rest as a spiritually mature believer.
  - c. The crossing of the Jordan symbolizes the beginning of phase two spiritual maturity and discipleship.
  - d. The ark of the covenant symbolizes the presence of God.
  - e. Rahab's scarlet cord symbolizes the blood of Messiah Jesus.
  - f. God's wrath upon the Canaanites symbolizes his wrath on all unbelievers in the future.

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<sup>2</sup> Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 461–462.

8. The seven stone heaps of Joshua tie the book together.
  - a. **Joshua 4:3** 3 Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, bring them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight [Gilgal].
  - b. **Joshua 7:26** 26 [Israel] raised over [Achan] a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then Yahweh turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.
  - c. **Joshua 8:29** 29 At sunset Joshua commanded, and they took [the] body [of the king of Ai] down from the tree, threw it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised over it a great heap of stones, which stands there to this day.
  - d. **Joshua 8:30-31** 30 At that time Joshua built an altar to Yahweh, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, 31 just as Moses the servant of Yahweh had commanded the people of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones, upon which no man has wielded an iron tool. And they offered on it burnt offerings to Yahweh and sacrificed peace offerings.
  - e. **Joshua 10:27** 27 At the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took [the five Canaanite kings] down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and they set large stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.
  - f. **Joshua 22:26-28** 26 We [the Eastern tribes] said, Let us now build an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, 27 but to be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we do perform the service of Yahweh in his presence with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and peace offerings, so your children will not say to our children in time to come, You have no portion in Yahweh. 28 And we thought, If this should be said to us or to our descendants in time to come, we should say, Behold, the copy of the altar of Yahweh that our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you.
  - g. **Joshua 24:26-27** 26 Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone and set it up there under the terebinth that was by the sanctuary of Yahweh. 27 And Joshua said to all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of Yahweh that he spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your God.
  
9. The conquest of the land of Canaan was a high point in the history of Israel.
  - a. **Nehemiah 9:22-25** 22 You gave them kingdoms and peoples and allotted to them every corner. So they took possession of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon and the land of Og king of Bashan. 23 You multiplied their children as the stars of heaven, and you brought them into the land that you had told their fathers to enter and possess. 24 So the descendants went in and possessed the land, and you subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, that they might do with them as they would. 25 And they captured fortified cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all good things, cisterns already hewn, vineyards, olive orchards and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and became fat and delighted themselves in your great goodness.

10. Difficult questions about Joshua are:

- a. Is God cruel for ordering the massacre of the Canaanites?
  - (1) “The action of Israel against the Canaanites is never placed in the category of oppression but of divine punishment operating through human agency.”<sup>3</sup>
  - (2) Noah’s flood and Revelation are much worse than the so-called Canaanite genocide.
  - (3) Israel’s conquest of Canaan is not a repeatable event. It certainly does not justify genocide or holy war today.
- b. Is there archaeological evidence for Israel’s conquest of Canaan? Did the conquest of the land happen historically?
- c. Did the sun really stop?

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Wright, *The God I Don’t Understand*, 90.

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*Notes*