

## Lesson 8

# JOSHUA

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### **GOD STATEMENT FOR JOSHUA: THE GOD WHO GIVES \_\_\_\_\_(a) IN THE LAND**

When Moses passed the baton of leadership to Joshua (Deut 34), Israel was at the end of its 40 years of wilderness wanderings. Joshua had been Moses' faithful apprentice for most of those 40 years, and now he was about 80 years of age. The difference between Moses and Joshua is that Moses was a lawgiver and a leader while Joshua was just a leader. God completed the giving of the law through Moses.

When the book opens, the people of Israel are on the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River, preparing spiritually, morally, and physically for the conquest on the land of Canaan. Joshua's task is to lead Israel into the land, drive out the inhabitants, and divide the land among the twelve tribes.

### **HISTORY OR MYTH?**

Before we focus on book of Joshua itself, we need to deal with the scholarly debate about whether or not the events recorded in Joshua actually took place. Many Bible critics suggest that the contents of Joshua are just "\_\_\_\_\_"(b) and "\_\_\_\_\_"(c) rather than real \_\_\_\_\_(d). It's no surprise that the story of the fall of Jericho (Josh 6) is at the top of their list of "myths" and "legends."

How do we respond to the charges that Joshua doesn't report actual history? I would suggest two things: (1) the \_\_\_\_\_(e) Testament assumes the story of Jericho was a historical event, and (2) \_\_\_\_\_(f) evidence supports the biblical details of the story of Jericho's fall. Let's take a brief look at both of these points.

The New Testament clearly assumes that \_\_\_\_\_(g)—a central character in the Jericho story—really lived, and really did what she is described as doing in Joshua 6. Matthew reports that she was King David's great-grandmother (Matt 1:5-6), and that means she's an ancestor of \_\_\_\_\_(h). The book of Hebrews gives her a place of honor for welcoming the Israelite spies before the battle of Jericho (Heb 11:31). And James says she was justified by her faithful work on Israel's behalf before the battle of Jericho (Jam 2:25-26). And, of

course, the book of Hebrews also declares: “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days” (Heb 11:30).

Archaeological evidence also supports the Bible’s description of the battle of Jericho in every detail. For instance, when the site of Jericho was excavated about 100 years ago, evidence showed that the city was destroyed around 1400 BC, which perfectly fits the Bible’s chronology. It was also discovered that the city had been \_\_\_\_\_(i) (there was a 3-foot burn layer), which is precisely what the Bible said happened (Josh 6:24). Also, there were full grain jars found in the city. This fact supports the following details which are found in Joshua: (1) Jericho was destroyed \_\_\_\_\_(j) (Josh 6:5), (2) Jericho’s fall took place at the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_(k) season (Josh 6:14-15), and (3) the destroyers of Jericho didn’t \_\_\_\_\_(l) an enormously valuable commodity (Josh 6:17-19, 24). Finally, the Bible says the walls fell “\_\_\_\_\_”(m) (Josh 6:5, 20). Archaeological evidence also shows the walls of Jericho fell straight down which created a ramp at the base of the retaining wall (Josh 6:5; 20). This would have allowed would-be attackers to easily enter the city.

*Bottom line:* the book of Joshua is a historical record of what the living God said and did for the people of Israel as he fulfilled the promise that He first made to Abraham almost \_\_\_\_\_(n) years earlier.

## THE CONTENT OF JOSHUA

Think of the book of Joshua like a \_\_\_\_\_(o). There are three parts: two thin slices of bread, and a lot of filling in the middle.

- The top slice of bread in the sandwich is Chapter 1, the prologue which describes Joshua being commissioned as leader.
- The bottom slice is Chapters 23 and 24, which is Joshua’s final sermon and his death and burial.
- The filling of the sandwich is the account of how Israel entered, conquered, and divided the land of Canaan (the Promised Land).

## TOP SLICE OF BREAD: JOSHUA IS COMMISSIONED (Ch 1)

Just as \_\_\_\_\_(p) was the key to Israel’s trek to the edge of victory, so \_\_\_\_\_(q) will be the most important human element in their future success. He must accept the fact that his efforts must be a continuation of the work of Moses. To this end God encounters Joshua, reminding him that he has been called to lead Israel at this time as surely as Moses was called to lead Israel at the burning bush. God tells Joshua

to be \_\_\_\_\_(r) and \_\_\_\_\_(s), and to be careful to \_\_\_\_\_(t) the law. If he does this, he will prosper. In other words, he will set out to achieve what he sets out to achieve in God's name.

### **SANDWICH FILLING: ENTERING THE LAND (Chapters 2-5)**

Before entering the land, Joshua sends two spies into the land. This is not a lack of faith. It would have been irresponsible for a military commander to enter the land without first gathering all the information he could about what they might face.

The spies ended up at the home of a \_\_\_\_\_(u) named Rahab. She bargains for her life based on her impressive conviction that Israel's God is Lord of heaven and earth (Josh 2:8-13). The spies told her that she and her family would be spared if she marks the window of her home with a \_\_\_\_\_(v) \_\_\_\_\_(w) (it was as if she were marking her window with blood, so that death would not enter).

The conquest begins in a fashion similar to the exodus. The people must first cross a body of water. In this case it's the \_\_\_\_\_(x) River, which is overflowing its usual banks because of the rainy season. As He did at the Red Sea, God holds back the waters of the Jordan River and the army of God passes through on dry ground.

After crossing the Jordan and entering Canaan, Israel marks the event by piling twelve \_\_\_\_\_(y) (one for each tribe) at the location of their first camp, a place called \_\_\_\_\_(z). This was to be a lasting \_\_\_\_\_(aa) of how God dried up the river.

Also, all the men of the new generation are \_\_\_\_\_(bb), which highlights Israel's covenant with God. The people then celebrate \_\_\_\_\_(cc), which links them to their deliverance from Egypt. It also affirms that God will do for them in Canaan what He did for them in Egypt. Finally, the \_\_\_\_\_(dd) of God's armies meets with Joshua. In the encounter Joshua is told to remove his sandals because he was standing on "\_\_\_\_\_ (ee) ground" (Josh 5:15), an unmistakable reference to Moses and the burning bush (Ex 3:1-6). This signals God's full approval of Joshua, and Joshua's full commitment to obeying God.

### **SANDWICH FILLING: CONQUERING THE LAND (Chaps 6-12)**

Now the army is poised and ready to begin the \_\_\_\_\_(ff) to gain the Promised Land. The military strategy for taking the land is clear—

they were to \_\_\_\_\_(gg) and \_\_\_\_\_(hh). They were to drive a strategic wedge through the middle of Canaan and then, having divided the enemy into two halves, they conquered the south and then the north. This strategy prevented the forces in Canaan from uniting into a massive alliance, and it allowed \_\_\_\_\_(ii) to fight manageable numbers of Canaanites.

The first city attacked was the large, fortified city of \_\_\_\_\_(jj). The second was the smaller city of \_\_\_\_\_(kk). They won the battle of Jericho but were defeated at Ai. Israel learned some very important lessons from these two initial battles. In these two battles they experienced both the \_\_\_\_\_(ll) and the \_\_\_\_\_(mm) of the \_\_\_\_\_(nn) (blessings came through \_\_\_\_\_(oo) and curses were the consequence of \_\_\_\_\_(pp)).

The southern and northern campaigns are successful because Israel allows God to fight for them. The only problem comes from a foolish oath made by the leaders of Israel to a deceptive Canaanite group called the \_\_\_\_\_(qq). The Gibeonites pretended to be a people from a far-off country and asked for Israel's protection. Because Israel fell for the ruse and swore to protect the Gibeonites, Israel is forced to defend them and thus disobey God's command to eliminate all the Canaanites.

### **SANDWICH FILLING: DIVIDING THE LAND (Chaps 13-22)**

Seven years later, after much of the conquest is completed, God tells Joshua to \_\_\_\_\_(rr) the land among the twelve tribes. The divisions are allotted, and the tribes are to continue the final conquests in their assigned areas.

When the land had been allotted, the text makes it clear that the Levites received no specific territory. We are told that the \_\_\_\_\_(ss) was their inheritance—serving God was a sufficient gift for them. Of course, the individual Levites had to live somewhere, so towns with pastureland were allotted to them, scattered among the other tribes.

### **BOTTOM SLICE OF BREAD: THE LAST WORDS OF JOSHUA AND HIS DEATH (Chaps 23-24)**

The last two chapters are a moving finale to the book. Joshua knew he was going to die soon and wanted to make provision for the future of the nation. He reminded them that \_\_\_\_\_(tt) had fought for them and brought to pass all His promises. He then exhorted them to reject

other gods, and to obey “the book of the Law of Moses” (Josh 23:6). He also warned them that failure to \_\_\_\_\_(uu) would result in loss of land (Josh 23:16).

The last verses of the book record three burials: the burial of Joshua, the burial of Joseph, and the burial of Eleazar (Aaron’s son). For forty years they had carried a coffin containing Joseph’s bones because his dying wish was to be buried in the Promised Land. Now at last Joseph’s bones could be laid to rest in the land he had looked for.

## THE LESSONS OF JOSHUA

- God wants to \_\_\_\_\_(vv) all people. In the story of Rahab we see that even Canaanites can be saved through faith.
- If \_\_\_\_\_(ww) doesn’t fight for us, we have no chance of \_\_\_\_\_(xx). The conquest of Canaan is about God’s glory. It’s about His \_\_\_\_\_(yy). His power achieves the victory.
- God always keeps His \_\_\_\_\_(zz). The conquest of the Promised Land focuses on the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham; it is a \_\_\_\_\_(aaa) to the fact that God keeps His promises.
- God is a God of \_\_\_\_\_(bbb). Both the land and the covenant are evidences of God’s \_\_\_\_\_(ccc). Israel’s power or righteousness had nothing to do with God’s desire to make a covenant with them or give them the land. It was God’s love.
- Living for God requires ongoing \_\_\_\_\_(ddd). A diligent commitment to faithful obedience to God’s covenant is essential for success. As Jericho demonstrates, God fights for Israel as long as the people are \_\_\_\_\_(eee) to the \_\_\_\_\_(fff). Joshua also reminds Israel of this in his final exhortation to them (Josh 23:6).
- \_\_\_\_\_(ggg) is the essence of \_\_\_\_\_(hhh). The battle of Jericho illustrates the connection between faith and obedience. So does Hebrews 11:30.

- Each \_\_\_\_\_(iii) must embrace the covenant on its own. The belief and obedience of one generation will not suffice for another generation.
- We have to \_\_\_\_\_(jjj) to enter “the Promised Land.” We will face \_\_\_\_\_(kkk). We aren’t going to stroll into the Promised Land any more than the Israelite were.

### KEY PASSAGES IN JOSHUA

- Joshua 1:1-3
- Joshua 1:6-7, 9, 18
- Joshua 1:7-8
- Joshua 6:1-5
- Joshua 7:1
- Joshua 23:14
- Joshua 23:6
- Joshua 24:14-15

### FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY:

[a] REST	[x] Jordan	[uu] obey
[b] myths	[y] stones	[vv] redeem
[c] legends	[z] Gilgal	[ww] God
[d] history	[aa] memorial	[xx] success
[e] New Testament	[bb] circumcised	[yy] power
[f] archaeological	[cc] Passover	[zz] promises
[g] Rahab	[dd] leader	[aaa] monument
[h] Jesus	[ee] holy	[bbb] grace
[i] burned	[ff] battle	[ccc] grace
[j] quickly	[gg] divide	[ddd] obedience
[k] harvest	[hh] conquer	[eee] obedient
[l] plunder	[ii] Israel	[fff] covenant
[m] flat	[jj] Jericho	[ggg] obedience
[n] 650	[kk] Ai	[hhh] faith
[o] sandwich	[ll] blessings	[iii] generation
[p] Moses	[mm] curses	[jjj] fight
[q] Joshua	[nn] covenant	[kkk] opposition
[r] strong	[oo] obedience	
[s] courageous	[pp] disobedience	
[t] obey	[qq] Gibeonites	
[u] prostitute	[rr] divide	
[v] scarlet	[ss] Lord	
[w] thread	[tt] God	