CAPITOL® COMMISSION
Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders

NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

January 14, 2025

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule
Tuesday, January 14, 7:00-7:45 AM
HHR #3
All Welcome!
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Today, we embark on a new journey through the Book of Joshua for the 103rd General Assembly, First Regular Session. Let me first acknowledge that our Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Supreme Court Justices, Legislature, statewide governing leaders, staff, Capitol Police, and employees at large, approach spirituality from different religious convictions, and some none at all. It is fine to not agree, and I would love to listen to your story of faith. Disagreements should not lead to assassinations of one's character or aggression against one's belief system. Please reach out to me, let's journey in friendship.

Introduction

There is a new Sheriff in town. Moses is dead. Joshua assumes leadership of Israel. The leadership transition from Moses, who leads the Hebrews out Egypt, to Joshua who leads the Israelites into the Promised Land is significant in the history of Israel. We can learn much from Joshua's leadership, such as: faith, obedience, courage, loyalty, vision, coalescing a team of leaders and followers, and military and strategic leaders. Leaders make leaders.

As excellent as Joshua's leadership was, it was God's sovereign guidance that led Israel across the Jordan River to the fall of Jericho, to the defeat of AI, eventually the conquering of Canaan. God showed up as the initiator and sustainer of Israel. The more Israel trusted God to fight their battles the more victories they incurred. It was God's promise to Abraham, not Cousin Vinny. If God said it, you can bank on it. Joshua sought God's guidance learning that triumph is not achieved through human strength but through obedience to God's will. The more you trust God in your life seeking His guidance and following Him, He will defeat the spiritual enemies in your life.

Historical Context

The Book of Joshua narrates Israel's fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Joshua's leadership marks the fulfillment of God's promise to take possession of the Promised Land. From 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, to their conquest of Canaan, to the crossing of the Jordan River and culminating in the division of the land among the twelve tribes, God was faithful. When human leaders live by faith in God their challenges always end in triumph. Sometimes on earth and always in heaven! In this narrative, we see God offer spiritual lessons to Israel and beyond that speak directly to you and me.

Before we move forward on this journey with Joshua, we begin with Abraham. God chose Abraham to leave his home country of Ur (Southern Iraq) and go to the Promised Land called Canaan (Israel). Through Abraham they became the community of Israel. God established the covenantal promise of blessing on Israel with physical land and descendants as numerous as stars in the sky (Genesis 12 & 15).

The Hebrews find themselves in Egypt because of a severe famine. What seemed to be a temporary stop turned into 400 years of servitude until Moses led Israel out of slavery from Egypt crossing the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez or Aqaba) and to Mt. Sinai where Moses received the 10 Commandments and entered into covenant with God.

Moses died in the Plains of Moab (Western Jordan) after he delivered his final message to Israel, instructing them to: obey the commands of God, remember God's love, and remain in covenant relationship with God. Recorded at the end of the book of Deuteronomy, Moses leaves the Israelites

with a choice about their relationship with God: choose life or death, blessing or cursing. You choose.

The Redemptive Name

The Hebrew name for Joshua is (Yehoshua) meaning "Yahweh is salvation" or "The LORD saves.". His name became Jesus in English. Both Joshua and Jesus share the same root meaning: "God saves."

Angelic Commander of God's Army

Joshua encountered the angelic commander of God's army, yet did not recognize the angel. Joshua asks: 'are you for us or for our enemies?' The angelic commander said: 'neither – I'm on the LORD's side.'

Wrong question – the right question is: 'Joshua are you on the LORD's side?' (Joshua 6)

The story is not about the Canaanites, per say, rather, it's to inform Joshua and Israel that the battle is the LORD's. Israel was to take a back seat on this one.

Battle Narrative

Years are packed into a few chapters. Stories of conflict between Israel and the Canaanites ensued. These are not merely historical events, they represent the ongoing struggle between God's kingdom and the forces of evil. The Israelites' conquest of Canaan was not just about securing land; it was about fulfilling God's will on earth.

3 Big Questions **(By Dr. Tim Mackey – Bible Project)**

1. Why is God declaring war on the Canaanites? Didn't Jesus say love your enemies?

The primary reason is given earlier in the story (Genesis 15). Essentially, the Canaanite culture was deeply corrupt, immoral, practicing child sacrifices and sexual rituals (Leviticus 18; Deuteronomy 12). It was exceedingly evil. God used the people of Israel to bring judgment on these nations of corruption.

2. Did God command the destruction of all the Canaanites like a genocide?

Absolutely not! When He used phrases like: destroy them, drive the Canaanites out of the land, leave no survivors, it was hyperbole. One way we know this is because the cities of Hebron and Debir were populated. God told Israel to not: intermarry with them because of corruption (not about race or ethnicity), do not do business with them; and
some of the Canaanites came to faith in the God of Israel. So, Joshua fits into other ancient battle accounts by using non-literal language as part of the narrative style.

3. Did this narrative mark a unique moment in Israel's history?

Yes, these battles were limited to the people living in the land of Canaan. Israel was commanded by God to seek peace with the all-other nations around them (Deut. 20). God brought justice on human evil in a unique moment in history.

Distribution of the Promised Land

Subsequent to Israel defeating their enemies, Joshua's leadership team began to distribute land to twelve tribes of Israel, thus fulfilling one of God's promises: that He would bring all Abraham's descendants into the Promise Land.

Application For Living

First, it shows us that God is faithful to His promises. Just as He gave the land of Canaan to the Israelites, God gives us the promise of eternal life through Christ.

Second, it teaches us that obedience to God's Word is essential for success in life. Joshua's obedience to the commands of God led Israel into victory, and our obedience to the teachings of Scripture will lead us into spiritual victory.

Third, it points to the ultimate conquest led by Jesus Christ. Just as Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land, Jesus, the true Joshua, leads us into the Kingdom of God. Through His death and

Next Study
January 28, 2025