



## Exploring God's Love through the Bible: God's Faithfulness in Joshua

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### The Context of the Book of Joshua

- Joshua “picks up the story of God's people where Deuteronomy left off. This book continues from the death of Moses and his replacement by Joshua, a military leader who was also a spiritual one. Joshua goes on to challenge the Israelites not only to conquer Palestine but also to follow the Lord. The first half of the book recounts the conquest of the Promised Land and the second half details the division of that land among the twelve tribes of Israel.
- The events of this book follow those recorded in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. The people of Israel were encamped on the Plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River. Moses had died, and Joshua had become commander-in-chief. He was about to lead the people across the Jordan and into the Promised Land. Law, as represented by Moses, cannot lead God's people into their inheritance. Only Christ in resurrection, pictured by Joshua, can do that.
- “Just as Exodus is the story of God leading His people out of Egypt, so Joshua is the story of God leading His people into the Promised Land. He would complete the good work He began despite the unbelief of the nation. As we will see, the people hadn't changed; they were still faithless. Nevertheless, the Word of the Lord would be fulfilled and the seed of Abraham would be planted in the covenant land (Gen 15:13-16) to take root and grow.”
- While the book is anonymous, ancient tradition has it that it was written largely by Joshua himself, completed after his death by Eleazar the high priest and his son Phinehas.” - MacDonald

### Exhortation Concerning the Love and Faithfulness of God!

*Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass. (Jos 21:43-45)*

- What a faithful God we serve, who keeps His **promises** to His people!
- Many preachers and theologians see Joshua as a “type” of Christ, based upon the similarities of their names and the nature of their missions: leading God's people into His promises. (FYI: *Yeshua* is the Hebrew name, and its English spelling is “Joshua.” *Iesous* is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name, and its English spelling is “Jesus.” Thus, the names “Joshua” and “Jesus” are essentially the same; both are English pronunciations of the Hebrew and Greek names for our Lord.—[GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))
- Indeed, Scripture declares:

*For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Heb 4:8-13)*

And in the same context, we are exhorted:

*Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb 4:14-16)*

Jesus and Jesus alone, is the fulfillment of the promises of God...

*Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (Gal 3:16)*

### **Surveying God's Faithfulness in Joshua**

1. God is Faithful to honor His **Word!**

*No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. 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. 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. (Jos 1:5-8)*

- God's Word flows from His loving and holy Heart. **He gives it for our good!** We can trust Him to honor those who honor Scripture!
- He will not leave or forsake us! Be strong and courageous! Be careful and do!

2. God is Faithful to His people despite their **sins!**

There are two wonderful examples we might consider: The case of Rahab (Jos 2) and the defeat and victory at Ai (Jos 7-8). In both cases God showed Himself to be a forgiving God, using a prostitute (and saving her family from death) and forgiving His people for sin in the camp.

In the case of Rahab, who was smart enough to hide Joshua's spies from detection, God blessed her ingenuity and faith, if not her lifestyle.

- The writer of Hebrews declares, *"By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given a friendly welcome to the spies."* (Heb 11:31) James wrote, *"And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?"*
- What kind of a God uses a prostitute? A faithful one! **When we consider our own, ongoing sins...oh, the mercy and love of God in Christ Jesus, who uses wretches like us!**

In the case of the battle at Ai, which occurred AFTER the great victory at Jericho, our holy God refused to tolerate sin in the camp. Scripture says,

*But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel. (Jos 7:1)*

- What was supposed to be an easy victory turned into defeat at Ai! (7:2-5) After Joshua cried out to God, God said:

*Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. Get up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; for thus says the LORD, God of Israel, "There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted things from among you."' (Jos 7:11-13)*

- So by lot Achan was taken. He stole some clothes and money (7:21). Joshua and the people took Achan, his family, and all he owned, stoned them with stones and burned them. (7:25-26)
- Although God's judgment was harsh, He remained **faithful**; there was redemption for the people:

*And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Take all the fighting men with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, and his people, his city, and his land. (Jos 8:1)*

### 3. God is Faithful to lead His people in **War!**

- Prior to the battle at Jericho, look at this astounding act of faithfulness and encouragement by the LORD:

*When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" And the commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. (Jos 5:13-15)*

- And He is still with us! Oh, if we could only open our eyes and see....

*When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. And when the Syrians came down against him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, "Please strike this*

people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness in accordance with the prayer of Elisha. (2 Kings 6:15-18)

*The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! (Ps 34:7-8)*

4. God is Faithful to **fight** for His people!

An amazing battle occurred in Joshua 10. Five kings combined forces to fight against Israel at Gibeon. This is what happened:

*And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you." So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword. At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel. (Jos 10:8-14)*

- This battle opened the door to a great number of conquests by Joshua in the south of Canaan. Joshua also secured the north before the land "had rest from war." (Jos 11:23) Gibeon was a turning point.
- **Saints, our faithful God was willing to STOP THE SUN to finish the battle, throwing STONES FROM HEAVEN at the enemies of His people! He will fight for His people!**

5. God is Faithful to **warn** His people!

After conquering in the south and north, and dividing up the land among the tribes of Israel (Jos chps. 10-22), Joshua (now an old man) warned God's people (Jos 23). He told them:

- To finish the land conquests (23:4-5)
- To be strong and keep the Law of God (23:6)
- To not "mix with these nations" or worship their gods (23:7)
- To "cling to the LORD your God" (23:8)

He said:

*For the LORD has driven out before you great and strong nations. And as for you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day. One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God. (Jos 23:9-11)*

He told them if they became like the nations around them, the Lord would stop fighting for them and the pagan nations would become a "snare and a trap, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes..." (Jos 23:12-13) Oh saints, hear this Word! :)

**In similar fashion, Christ calls His church to “finish our race and keep the faith,” (2 Tim 4:7) “come out from among them and be separate,” (2 Cor 6:17) and to “abide in Him” (Jn 15:4), “hold fast to our confession” (Heb 4:14) and to the Gospel (1 Cor 15:2).**

May we obey that call...the call of a loving, faithful King. Amen.