

Joshua 1:1-9

Introduction

In the Jewish Bible, the Book of Joshua is the first book in the *Nevi'im* (Prophets), which is the second section of the *Tanach* (Hebrew Bible).

Joshua appears early on as Moses' sentry at the base of Mount Sinai during the Golden calf incident (**Exodus 32**). He also has an important role as one of the 12 spies sent into the land of Canaan, and one of only two who came back with positive reports about the land (**Numbers 13-14**)

Finally, after Moses strikes the rock and loses his right to enter the Land of Israel (**Numbers 20**), Joshua is designated the next leader of the Israelites. And it is under Joshua's leadership that they enter the land of Canaan.

The overall story arc of the Book of Joshua involves the Israelites' conquest and settlement of Canaan. The book as a whole can be broken down into three sections: The history of the conquest, the allocation of the land, and Joshua's farewell speech.

See <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-book-of-joshua/>

The book of Joshua contains many similarities to the story of Moses:

- Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt. Joshua leads them into Canaan.
- Moses leads Israelites miraculously across Red Sea. Joshua leads them miraculously across the Jordan River.
- Moses sends out spies into Canaan. Joshua sends out two spies to Jericho.
- Moses allocates land on the east side of the Jordan. Joshua allocates land on the west side of the Jordan.
- And finally, Moses gives a prolonged address before dying, as does Joshua. This farewell address at the end of the book brings the parallelism between the two leaders full circle.

Joshua a Type of Christ

Before Moses sent the spies to see the Promised Land, he changed Joshua's name from *Hoshea* to *Jehoshua* (**Numbers 13:16**). According to midrashic sources, Moses foresaw the disaster that would occur when the spies returned, and gave his apprentice moral support by adding the name of God to his name, changing Hosea ("saves") into Joshua ("God saves").

Yehoshua (the Hebrew version of Joshua) eventually became *Yeshua* (Jesus's Hebrew name)

The name *Yehoshua* underwent a shortening in later biblical texts to *ישוע*, *Yeshua* / *Y'shua* due to a phonological shift over time. The Septuagint had already transliterated

יֵשׁוּעַ *Yeshua`* into Koine Greek as closely as possible in the 3rd-century B.C., the result being Ἰησοῦς *Iēsous*.

Joshua's crossing the Jordan points to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, as well as His crucifixion and resurrection.

Although Joshua led Israel in conquering the Promised Land, Israel did not realize it completely as the promised "resting place" - because that would be accomplished through the spiritual rest brought in by Jesus.

- **Joshua 22:4** - "And now that the LORD your God has given your brothers rest as He promised them, you may return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you across the Jordan."

- **Hebrews 4:8-9** - "Now if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God..."

Joshua was "Moses' minister," just as Christ was "made under the Law" (**Galatians 4:4**). Joshua, by leading the people into the Promised Land, did what Moses could not do. In the same way, Jesus leads us into righteousness and eternal life, something the Law of Moses could not do.

- **Romans 3:20-22** - "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference"

- **Matthew 5:17** - "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

- **John 1:17** - "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Moses did not have the people circumcised, but Joshua did.

In the same way, Jesus is the circumciser of the heart:

- **Romans 15:8** - "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers"

The early church fathers believed Joshua was a type of Christ:

"When you see Jerusalem overthrown, the altar forsaken, no sacrifices, no holocausts, no drink offerings, no priests, no Levitical ministry, when you see all these things cease, say it is because Moses the servant of God is dead, and Jesus the Son of God obtains the leadership." (Origen, Homily 2 on Joshua)

Joshua 1:1-2 - "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel."

For thirty days the camp had been full of weeping and mourning for the great Lawgiver.

Rashi - "Moses My servant has died": If he were alive, I would prefer him. The Rabbis interpret this passage as a reference, not to Moses the leader, but to Moses the Lawgiver, concerning the 3,000 laws that were forgotten during the period of mourning for Moses. Joshua came and asked the Lord to repeat these laws to him. Said to him the Holy One, Blessed be He: Moses My servant has died, and the Torah is called by his name, implying to you that it is impossible [to convey them to you.] Go out and occupy them with martial activities.

Joshua is commanded to cross the Jordan, but no explanation is given on how to do that. The river is in full flood (**Joshua 3:15**), overflowing its banks. "Jordan" means "descender" and its descent toward the Dead Sea causes it to flow with tremendous force at full flood.

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread

Joshua 1:3 - "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses."

Rashi - why is it stated, 'Every place where your foot will tread?' Even outside of Eretz Israel. [i.e.] After you have conquered the land, all that you will conquer outside the land, will be holy and will be yours.

See previous instances of this promise: **Genesis 12:1-7; Genesis 13:14-17; Genesis 15:18; Genesis 17:8; Exodus 23:30, 31; and Deuteronomy 11:24**

This is a magnificent promise. For us, it means that we must simply show up for God's kingdom to extend. Israel failed to acquire their whole promised territory because of sin, sloth, cowardice or unbelief. To "tread" is not to visit as a tourist, but to dislodge the enemy and overcome in war. Israel had to show up on the battlefield, relying on God to give them the victory.

- **Genesis 3:15** - "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

- **Romans 16:20** - "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

Joshua 1:4 - "From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of

the sun, shall be your coast."

The Hittites, descended from Heth, the second son of Canaan (**Genesis 10:15**), here stand in for all the Canaanite tribes (as the Amorites do elsewhere).

The plains of Mesopotamia, even as far as Nineveh and Babylon, were included. Under David and the Solomon, lands reaching to the Euphrates River were under tribute to Israel but never fully incorporated. The Philistines and the Phoenicians were never dislodged from the coast. God's promise was dependent on "if ye shall keep my commandments and ordinances." Israel failed to obey, and thus failed to "tread."

The overthrow of spiritual Babylon would await destruction by the Messiah, described in **Revelation 18**.

Joshua 1:5 - "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Targum: "as my Word was for the help of Moses, so will I be with thee:"

- **Deuteronomy 11:25** - "There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you."

Completely fulfilled in Christ:

- **Colossians 2:14-15** - "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

- **Hebrews 13:5** - "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

- **Romans 8:31** - "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Joshua 1:6 - "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them."

- **Deuteronomy 31:6** - "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid or terrified of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you."

- **Deuteronomy 31:23** - "Then the LORD commissioned Joshua son of Nun and said, "Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I swore to give them, and I will be with you."

- **1 Chronicles 22:13** - (David to Solomon) "Then you will succeed, if you carefully

follow the statutes and ordinances that the LORD commanded Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged."

- **1 Corinthians 16:13** - "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."

If Joshua was to divide the land among them, he must first take it out of the hands of the present inhabitants.

Joshua 1:7 - "Only be you strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded you: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go."

Rashi says the first exhortation to "be strong and courageous" applied to the worldly pursuits of conquest. The second applied to Torah study and the spiritual realm.

"turn not from it to the right hand or to the left" - The rabbis understood this to mean do not add to or subtract from the Torah teachings.

"that you may prosper" - *sakal* - act wisely and with prudence and understanding

Joshua 1:8 - "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Rashi believes "his book of the law" only refers to the book of Deuteronomy. Others say the whole Torah.

"prosperous" here is a different word *tsalach* that means successful, "to push forward"

"success" is *sakal* - act wisely and with prudence and understanding

- **Psalms 1:1-2** - "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Joshua 1:9 - "Have not I commanded you? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be you dismayed: for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Targum of Jonathan: "for thy help is the Word of the Lord thy God"

Joshua and Caleb had said the same thing to the people:

- **Numbers 14:9** - "Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not."

Spiritually, and within our own hearts, the enemy is our old man, Adam. His evil inclination is rooted in covetousness, wanting more than you have.

- **Hebrews 13:5** - "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

- **Colossians 3:5** - "...covetousness, which is idolatry."

The author of Hebrews takes this promise of God to Joshua and refers it to internal "Canaanites" - covetousness and discontent. The sin of Adam and Eve, and every other kind of evil, springs from these.

We need to be "strong and courageous" in resisting the inner Canaanites and giants - the voices within us that try to keep us out of the rest - worry, regret, self-seeking personal agendas, pride, guilt - the list goes on and it different for each of us. God will fight for us, but we need to show up for the battle and "labor to enter into the rest."

- **Exodus 23:30** - "Little by little I will drive them out ahead of you, until you become fruitful and possess the land."

Paul says when these enemies assail us - "have a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." (**2 Corinthians 10:6**)

God is calling on us to focus all our strength and courage in facing self-seeking within our own lives. Like Joshua, Jesus has led the way to the cross. He promises to give us the victory, so we can possess each successive portion of the land in spiritual rest.