

# Joshua & Introduction To The Books Of History

Joshua 1 – 24

Introduction to the Books of History, and the Conquest of Canaan Under Joshua

## Storing Up Treasures:

Discovering The Rich Teaching Of Scripture



**HISTORY**

**The Books Of History**

**HISTORY**

### The Purpose Of Biblical History

God's desire to communicate with His fallen creation is so strong that He has chosen several different literary styles to share His message. He has spoken to us through Law, historical narratives, poetry, prophecy, letters, and oration to name a few. Through every means possible God seeks the transformation of sinful humanity. However, it is interesting to note how prominent a place historical narratives play in the writing of the Bible. There is something engaging and instructive about a true story from the past.

Biblical history is not written to simply provide an account of past events, but to reveal the person of God and the plight of man. So, in this way, Biblical history was written for at least three main purposes. First, to provide reason to praise God. History reveals God as One worthy to be praised for His power and character (This is how Psalm 105 (praising God's goodness), Psalm 106 (praising God's mercy), and Psalm 107 use Biblical history.).

Praise

Secondly, Biblical history provides motivation to obey God. This is a dominant use of Biblical History. Nehemiah's great retelling of God's history with Israel is followed by the people making a covenant to "*observe and do all the commandments of Jehovah our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes*" (Nehemiah 9-10, 10:29).

Obey

History followed by pledge of obedience. The same was the desire of Stephen's sweeping description of Israel's hardness toward God throughout history (Acts 7). His desire was not to inflame, but to restore obedience. This is also the dominant use of Biblical history in the New Testament letters, who urge obedience in the present by calling to mind the history of the past. "*These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.*" (1 Corinthians 10:11). "*Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert.*" (Psalm 95:7, quoted in Hebrews 3:7-8; see also the use of history in Psalm 78). The past recounted to motivate obedience in the present.

A third reason for Biblical history is to provide motivation to trust God. The past gives hope for the future. The God who did, is the God who will. "*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*" (Romans 15:4). The basis of our hope that God will intervene in the future is that He has intervened in the past. He has conquered sin and death in history, and will conquer it for us ultimately in eternity. History is HIS-story to give hope to our stories.

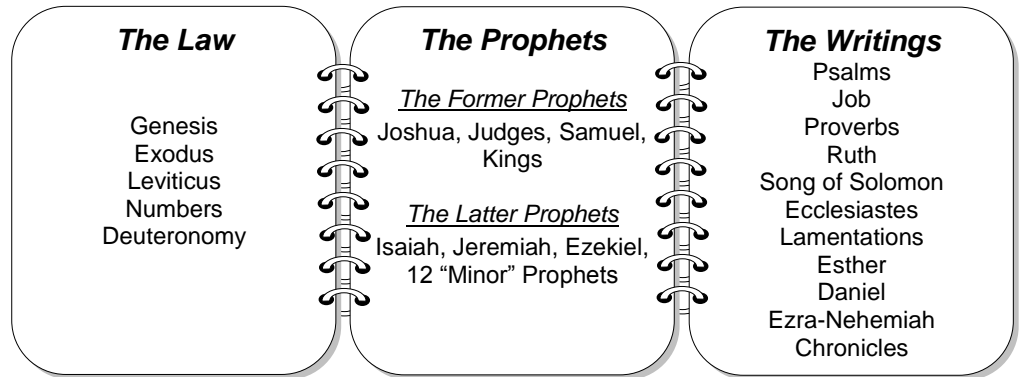
Trust

## Arranging The Books Of History: Alternative Methods

A Christian named Athanasius, in the fourth century AD was the first to use the name “histories” to describe the section of the Bible covering Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Esther. Although these books use a number of different styles of writing, they predominately relate the history of God’s interaction with the people of Israel over a period of 1,000 years (From the time they entered Canaan about 1407 B.C. to the reforms instigated by Nehemiah about 432 B.C.). These twelve volumes are not the only history found in the Old Testament, but they are the chief place you will find the Biblical history of the nation of Israel.

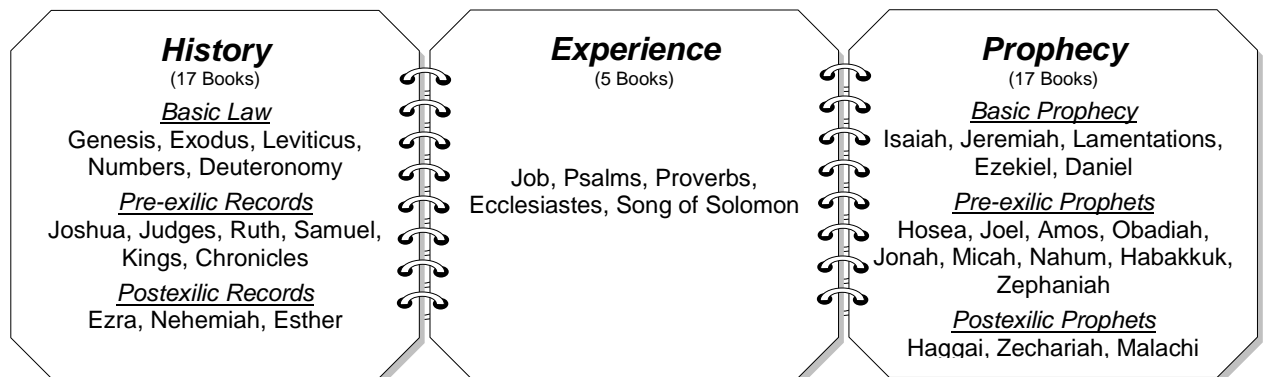
As early as the second century B.C. Jews saw their Bible as consisting of three divisions: Law (*Torah*), Prophets (*Nebhi'im*) and Writings (*Kethubhim*). The modern Hebrew Bible follows this arrangement. The five books of Moses constitute the first division. The Prophets consists of eight books: Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings (the Former Prophets); Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve (the Latter Prophets). The remaining books are considered the Writings. In this system the books which follow the Book of the Twelve (the Minor Prophets) are: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

### Ancient Arrangement Of The Old Law



The foundational books of the History section were considered “prophetic” because they were written by prophets. Later, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. the books of Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Ruth and Esther were moved from The Writings, combined with The Former Prophets, to make the arrangement we know as “The Books Of History.”

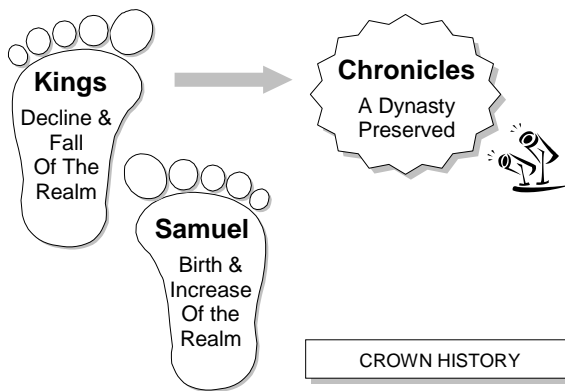
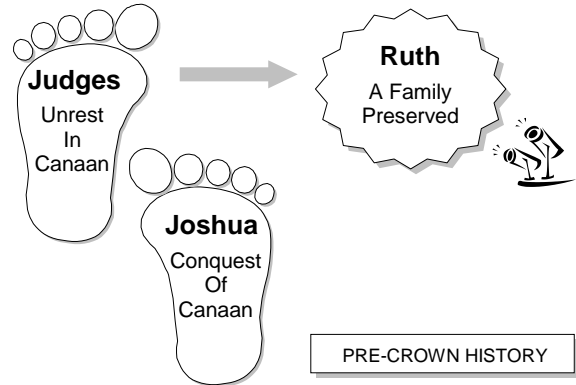
Other arrangements have been offered that help the reader with the flow of the Old Testament text. For example, Sidlow Baxter has proposed a threefold breakdown of Old Testament books. He classifies the first seventeen books as history and the last seventeen as prophecy. Sandwiched between are the five experiential books which focus on the inner life of Old Testament believers. In detail his organizational scheme looks like this:



## Arranging The Books Of History: An Elegant Method

Each of these arrangements emphasize an important element in the Old Testament writings. However, there is a certain elegance in the way the books are arranged in our modern Bibles that should be appreciated. The score of God's dealings with the nation of Israel is told in three movements. Each movement has three verses. Each movement has two books that move the story forward, and one book at the end that brings the story to a halt to turn the spotlight on one special facet of the times. A deep appreciation for the Holy Spirit's work of inspiration is seen in the beauty of the final product viewed as a whole.

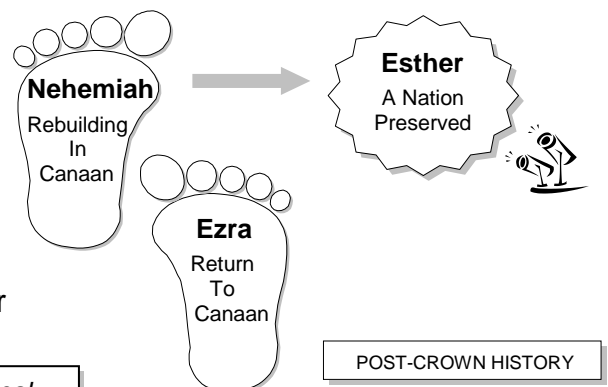
The first movement tells the story of the nation of Israel before she had a king. This is called the Pre-Crown History. The two books that move the story forward are Joshua and Judges, telling the story of Israel from the conquest of Canaan to the coming of the final judge, Samuel. The progression of history then stops, and the spotlight shines on a personal story in the book of Ruth which highlights an incident which chronologically fits somewhere into the Book of Judges, probably into chapter 10. Ruth records the preservation of a family.



The second movement tells the story of Israel under her kings. This is called the Crown History. Samuel is called to anoint Israel's first king, Saul. Zedekiah, Israel's last king presides over her final demise. A period of approximately 500 years are covered under the kings of Israel. Then again the progression of history stops and the book of Chronicles is penned (considered one book in Jewish tradition). Chronicles is not merely a retelling of the book of Kings, but puts in the spotlight God's dealings with the Davidic dynasty, showing how God kept His promise to

David. Chronicles the preservation of a dynasty.

The third movement of Israel's history is a triad of books that record Israel's experiences after captivity. This is called the Post-Crown History. It is driven forward by the two courageous books of Ezra and Nehemiah, that tell the story of Israel's restoration to the land, and reestablishment of her cities and worship. As before, the story stops to highlight a personal story in the book of Esther which highlights an incident which chronologically fits somewhere into Ezra, chapters 6 and 7. Esther the preservation of a nation.



James Smith observes, "The arrangement of the historical books in the English Bible moving two steps forward and one to the side creates the impression that one is virtually waltzing through a thousand years of history."

The following outline offers a summary of the movement of the Historical Books and their message.

<b><i>The Books Of History</i></b>					
<b>PRE-CROWN</b>		<b>CROWN</b>		<b>POST-CROWN</b>	
<b><i>Joshua</i></b> Conquest Of Canaan	<b><i>Judges</i></b> Unrest In Canaan	<b><i>1 &amp; 2 Samuel</i></b> Birth & Expansion Of The Kingdom	<b><i>1 &amp; 2 Kings</i></b> Decline & Destruction Of The Kingdom	<b><i>Ezra</i></b> Return To Canaan	<b><i>Nehemiah</i></b> Rebuilding In Canaan
	<b><i>Ruth</i></b> A Family Preserved	<b><i>1 &amp; 2 Chronicles</i></b> A Dynasty Preserved		<b><i>Esther</i></b> A Family Preserved	
<b>Settling In Canaan</b>		<b>Ruling Over Canaan</b>		<b>Returning To Canaan</b>	

"The Books Of History" James Smith

### **Who Wrote The History?**

The authorship of each book will be dealt with as we come to it, but in the following quote James Smith, gives one of the few detailed introductions to the Books of History, and presents the conservative view of the origin and authorship of the books in the History section (Smith draws from *Can I Trust the Bible?* R. Laird Harris).





"Tradition associates the name of Joshua with the authorship of the book that bears his name. Samuel is said to have been the author of Judges. The life of David as recorded in the books of Samuel was chronicled by the prophets Samuel, Nathan and Gad (1 Chronicles 29:29). Tradition assigned the authorship of Kings to Jeremiah. Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah may have come from the pen of Ezra. Jewish tradition is not united on the authorship of Esther. Mordecai and Ezra have both been nominated.

"Each book in this collection of twelve (with the possible exception of Ruth) should be regarded as a separate entity. The authors, however, seem to have been conscious of contributing to a continuing history. By means of a literary "hook" an author would connect his work to the work which preceded. Joshua 24:26 suggests that Joshua added his work to that of Moses. His work probably begins with Deuteronomy 34 and concludes with Joshua 24:28. The author of Judges would have added the record of Joshua's death (Josh 24:29–33). The author of Kings joins his work to Samuel by opening his book with the narration of David's death.

“An obvious discontinuity occurs at the conclusion of Kings. Chronicles begins with genealogies stretching back to Adam. The focus quickly moves, however, to David and his descendants. The hooking principle is again evident with the opening verses of Ezra. They repeat verbatim the concluding verses of Chronicles.”

### **A Literary Hook**

*Connecting With What Came Before*

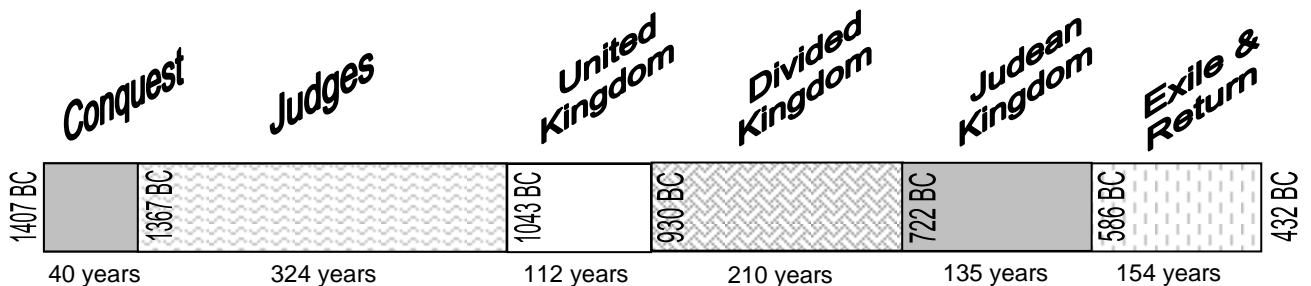
<u><b>Joshua</b></u>	<u><b>Samuel</b></u>	<u><b>Author Of Kings</b></u>	<u><b>Ezra</b></u>
 <p>Joshua</p> <p>Moses' Death</p> <p>Records the death of Moses to his own death (Deuteronomy 34 – Joshua 24:28)</p>	 <p>Judges</p> <p>Joshua's Death</p> <p>Records the death of Joshua to his own death (Joshua 24:29 – 1 Samuel 24)</p>	 <p>Kings</p> <p>David's Death</p> <p>The author of Kings joins his work to Samuel by opening his book with David's death.</p>	 <p>Ezra</p> <p>Cyrus' Rise</p> <p>Ezra begins with almost an identical quote from Chronicles.</p>
<i>They Knew They Were Writing A Continuing History!</i>			

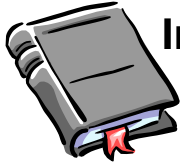
## The Chronology Of The Books Of History

Chronologically speaking, Old Testament history begins with Abraham. In the broadest possible outline of Old Testament history, about six hundred years elapsed between Abraham and Moses. About four hundred years passed between Moses and David. Between David and the conclusion of Old Testament history (Ezra-Nehemiah) another six hundred years can be assigned. The intertestamental period lasted about four hundred years. Thus a pattern emerges which may be illustrated as follows:

Abraham to Moses	Moses to David	David to Nehemiah	Nehemiah to Christ
600 years	400 years	600 years	400 years

The chronology of the Books of History are usually divided into seven periods. It is key to note how short Israel's golden ages were (the Conquest & United Kingdom), and how long Israel labored in rebellion (about 150 years out of 1000 years). In graphical form there is another testimony to God's mercy!





# Introduction To Joshua

Joshua 1 – 24

## Joshua! The Title Of The Book

The book of Joshua is named after its central figure, Joshua son of Nun. He was a slave in Egypt and was Moses' servant during the journeys of the nation (Exodus 17, Numbers 11:28). He led the army in the battle against Amalek (Ex. 17), and was one of

# Joshua

the two spies who had the faith to enter Canaan when the nation rebelled in unbelief (Num. 14:6ff). As a result of his faith, he (with Caleb) was permitted to enter the Promised Land.

Jewish tradition says that Joshua was eighty-five years old when he took Moses' place at the head of the nation, and He died at 110 (Joshua 24:29).

He was originally named Hoshea, which means, "Salvation." Moses renamed him Joshua which means, "The Lord Is Salvation" (Numbers 13:16). His name is symbolic of the fact that although he is leader of the Israelite nation during the conquest, the Lord is the Conqueror. Victory was the Lord's doing.

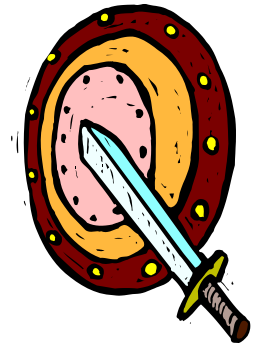
The New Testament makes it clear that Joshua is a type of Christ (Hebrews 4:8, where "Jesus" (KJV) should be translated "Joshua"). The name "Jesus" in Greek is equivalent to "Joshua," both mean "God's salvation" or "Jehovah is the Savior." Joshua's work and name pointed beyond himself to One greater than He. He was merely a shadow of Him who was to come. Just as Joshua conquered earthly foes, so Christ has defeated every enemy through His death and resurrection. It was Joshua, not Moses (representing Law), who brought Israel into Canaan, and it is Jesus who leads us into spiritual rest and victory. As Joshua assigned the tribes their inheritance so Christ has given us our inheritance (Ephesians 1:3).

Sources "Talk Through The Bible" Wilkinson & Boa. "God's Masterwork" Swindoll. "Expository Outlines" Wiersbe

## Key Theme: Conquest Through Conflict

The key concept of the book of Joshua is possession through conflict by the power of *Yahweh*, the Captain of the Lord's host. The "land" is a vital factor in the book of Joshua, you will read about "the land" 87 times in the book. This land had been promised over 400 years earlier to Abraham, and the children of Israel had to be settled in the land to prepare the way for the coming of the next Joshua, Jesus of Nazareth.

It is important to realize that Israel's **ownership** of the land was unconditional under the Abrahamic covenant, but **possession** of the land was conditional upon faith and obedience. Israel already owned the land because of God's gracious covenant, but it was time to convert ownership by promise into actual possession. God gave them title to the property but they could only possess it by marching over every step. God said, in Joshua 1:3, "I will give you every place that



*the sole of your foot will tread upon.*” Each square mile would have to be taken from the people who currently occupied the land. And there in is one of the most important principles taught in the Bible, that conquest comes through conflict. God graciously, freely wants to give us many things, but we must be willing to take.

The Lord still desires a people who are willing to dispossess the forces of hell as He leads them into new areas of conquest and possession. In our own personal lives we must learn that the blessings of conquest only come through conflict. We must daily do battle against the flesh, the world, and the devil if we are going to fully enjoy the inheritance to be given us. *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the of this dark world and evil in the heavenly full armor of God, so* **You Either Conquer Or You’re Captive!** *authorities, against the powers against the spiritual forces of realms. <sup>13</sup>Therefore put on the that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”* (Ephesians 6:12-13). Though we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ, we must realistically face the fact of our enemies (Ephesians 6:12) and strengthen ourselves by putting on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-11, 13-18). (See use of “overcome” in Revelation 2-3.)

God is looking for men and women who will conquer the Canaanite thinking within them, and Canaanite living in the world around them by waging the spiritual battle for souls. *“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup>The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). The war does not end at baptism, it starts. We must put our foot on every square inch of our lives and bring them under the control of Christ. When we do, the full inheritance is ours; we possess what He has promised. The book of Judges illustrates what happens when a believer quits his battle against sin, he drifts back into captivity, suffering, and loss. You either conquer or you’re captive!

### **The Theme Illustrated**

*“Faith is the victory that overcomes the world!”* is illustrated in Joshua 6 at the fall of Jericho. Jericho was a strategic city which stood as the key to a successful entry into Canaan. God told them what to do in order to receive it. Unlikely as it seemed, the orders were followed in every detail and the walls fell (see Hebrews 11:30). The glory was God’s, and the victory was given by grace through faith.

*“Be sure your sin will find you out,”* the counter balance is illustrated in Joshua 7, at the defeat of Ai. No spoil was to be taken from Jericho, it was devoted to the Lord. Achan’s greed caused him to disobey God. One of sin’s most tragic features is revealed in this story, how innocent people may suffer for another person’s deed. Israel could be released from the consequences of Achan’s sin only by dealing with the problem.



## The Message Of Joshua In Ephesians

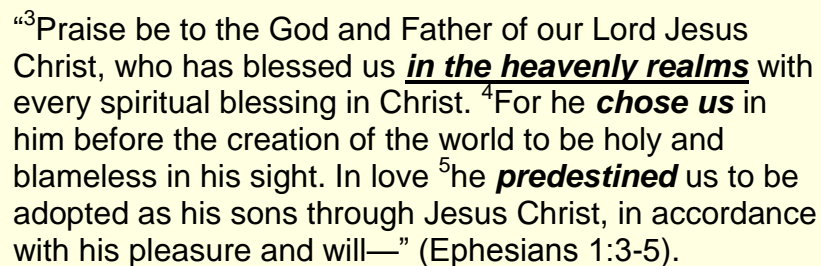
There are tremendous parallels between the story of the book of Joshua and the message of Ephesians. We have noted earlier the similarities between the Pentateuch and the New Testament writings. This should not surprise us to find such relationships, because God so ordered Israel's physical salvation to illustrate the spiritual salvation supplied through Christ. In Joshua we see Israel entering and possessing the earthly inheritance given in Abraham. In Ephesians we see the church entering and possessing the heavenly inheritance given in Christ. Sidlow Baxter in "Explore The Book," does a fine job drawing out these parallels by appealing to Paul's use of "the heavnlies" (or "heavenly realms") in Ephesians, as he, I think, rightly sees as the anti-type of Canaan. In Ephesians "the heavnlies" describes this realm of higher and fuller life, to which a land "flowing with milk and honey" was pointing. There are five occurrences of "the heavnlies" in Ephesians, each one bringing to reality the shadows seen in the Conquest story.

***In Both Cases,  
The Place Of Blessing Was...***

### **Predestined Inheritance Of A Chosen People.**

Each was the predestined inheritance of a chosen people. 500 years before Joshua lead the people over the Jordan God has said to Abram, "***Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. <sup>15</sup>All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.***" (Genesis 13:14-15). When God through great miracles delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage He made the same promise to the nation, "***When the Lord brings you into the land ... he swore to your forefathers to give you***" (Exodus 13:5). Israel was chosen in Abraham to receive the land of Canaan.

In the same way, in Ephesians we find that God has predestined an inheritance for all those who are chosen in Christ. God has chosen that all those in Christ would receive the inheritance. Being in Christ is not a matter of physical lineage, but of spiritual rebirth (John 1:13; 1 Peter 1:23).



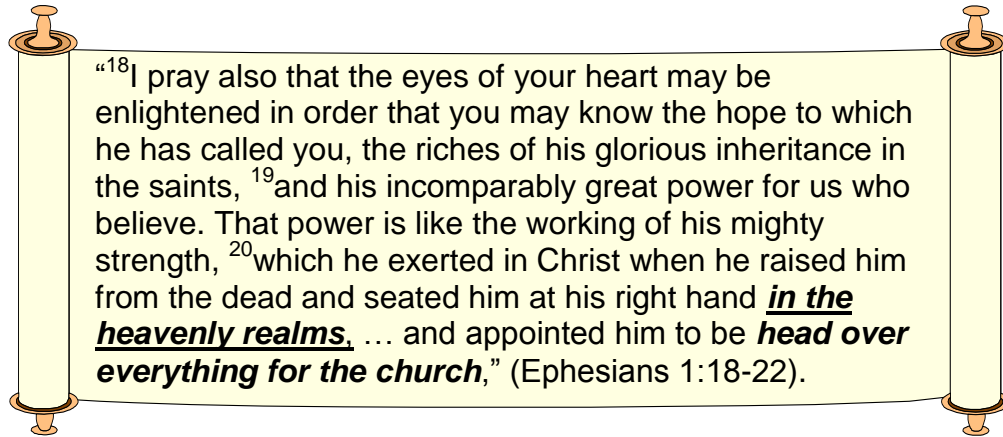
**<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For he **chose us** in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>he **predestined** us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—"** (Ephesians 1:3-5).

Israel was blessed with all *material* blessings in the *earthly places* in Abraham. The Christian is blessed with all *spiritual* blessings in the *heavenly realm* in Christ. Notice also that to enjoy this fullness of material blessings Israel must be in the land. Similarly, to enjoy the fullness of spiritual blessings in Christ we must be "***in the heavenly realm.***" (Galatians 3:26-27). The reason why we miss them is because we are not in the place where God gives them.

### **Opened By A Divinely Ordained Leader.**

In the case of Israel all was put into the hands of Joshua. It was said to him, “***you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them.***” (Joshua 1:6), and “***you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance.***” (Deuteronomy 31:7). Joshua was God’s chosen leader to secure the victory over the foes, and it was Joshua who God used to divide up the inheritance for each tribe and each family (Joshua 11:23).

In the new Israel, the church, we find that it was Jesus that was God’s divinely ordained (Christ) leader to both defeat the enemy of sin and death, and to distribute the inheritance to those who would believe. You find this work in the second occurrence of “the heavenly realms” in Ephesians.

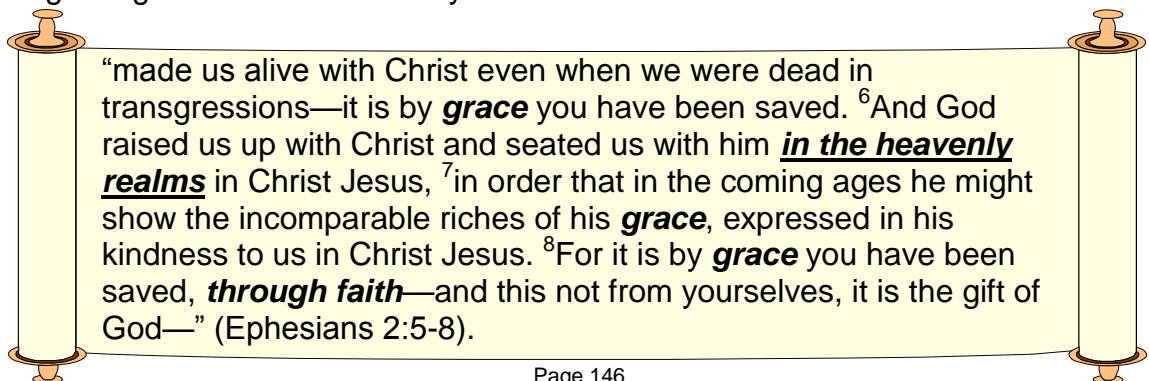


Joshua is a beautiful type of Christ as the trustee and representative of His people. It is the ascended Savior who divides the inheritance, and allots it to His believing people as by faith they plant their feet upon the promises.

### **Gift Of Grace To Be Received By Faith**

Canaan was given to Israel in Abraham, not in Moses, the man of the Law. By the Law Israel could never have become entitled to Canaan. Moses was not privileged to lead the people in, nor can the Law ever lead us into God’s promised rest for our souls in Christ. Therefore, Moses must die, and Joshua must take his place (Joshua 1:2). Salvation through Law is superseded by salvation through faith. Highly significant to our times is that the book of Joshua illustrates the character of saving faith. It is much more than knowledge, an acceptance of certain facts. The victorious faith of Joshua is a trusting, struggling, obedient faith. One that puts your very life today in the hands of God.

The third use of “heavenly realms” in Ephesians highlights that our salvation in Christ is also a gift of grace to be received by faith.

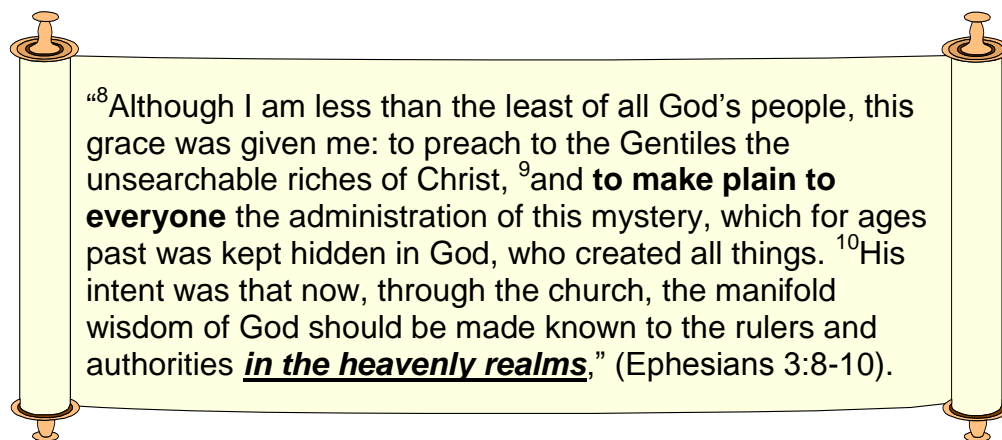


We, like rebellious Israel, have not earned a seat in the heavenly realms in Christ. All human pride of salvation disappears and is replaced with thankful praise for the One who has made us alive by His grace. However, if salvation was merely the result of grace, then all would be saved, and according to Scripture all are not (Matthew 7:12-13). This is because God has always ordained that the extending of His grace must be met by faith. *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith,”* is illustrated in the fall of Jericho. There was no doubt God gave the victory, but He required faith. Each stride around that wall, each trumpet blown in the air, each shout lifted up was a demonstration of trusting God to deliver them. Salvation by grace through faith, puts the praise where it belongs “God, not man,” and puts the obligation where it belongs, “on our faithful trust and obedience, for God is always faithful.”

### **A Place Of Striking Divine Revelation.**

Israel’s entering and possessing of Canaan was intended to be a revelation of the nature of the true God to Israel herself, and to the nations of her day. That’s why when they crossed the Jordan they erected a monument of stones saying, *“He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.”* (Joshua 4:24). Moses told Israel that by giving them victory in Canaan, *“Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you.”* (Deuteronomy 28:10). This is what happened in the life of Rahab! God revealed Himself to the world by the way He worked through His people, and it caused Rahab to put faith in Jehovah.

In the same way, the fourth occurrence of “the heavenly realms” in Ephesians identifies how God makes known His wisdom to the church so that all people might see God’s plan of salvation.

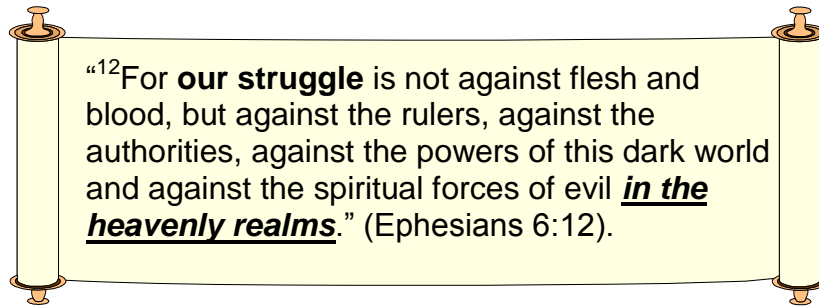


The way Jehovah dealt with Israel revealed to her and her world His great mercy, grace, justice and power. Likewise, when the gospel is preached and men and women are transformed by its message of salvation from sin, and their lives are conformed to the image of God’s Son, the world, and even the angelic beings stand in awe of God’s wonderful character.

## **A Place Of Conflict**

In the earthly Canaan there were the giant sons of Anak, the cities “walled up to the heaven.” There were the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, and Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and probably a few terminates! All nations greater and mightier than Israel, and most terribly, nations that were exceedingly evil. Therefore Israel was to utterly destroy them. They must be completely run out of the land or they would become a trap to Israel. Now, God was with them, they could be defeated, but they must engage them in battle.

Once again Canaan reflects our experience in “the heavenly realm” in Christ. In the last occurrence of this phrase in Ephesians we are reminded of the battle we face to conquer our hearts and our land for God.



Thank God, that just as there was no power that could withstand Joshua and Israel, so no power in the spiritual realm can withstand the power of Christ. He has defeated Satan, and is now “**far above all rule and authority, power and dominion.**” (Ephesians 1:21). In Him victory is ours. But, we must enter the battle. We must put on the “**whole armor of God**” (Ephesians 6:11). We must take our stand on what the Bible tells us we are. We must use the sword of the Spirit to defeat Satan’s lies. We must apply the power of God in prayer to our daily battle.

With modification from “Explore the Book” Baxter

## **Outline Of Joshua**

Since the book of Joshua is a book of graphic movement it is fitting to describe its main sections with words of action like, Crossing, Conquering, and Claiming. The first part of the book talks about preparing a people to take the land, and the key thought is *consecration*. God consecrates Joshua as leader, giving him courage and a mission. God consecrates the people by having all the men circumcised at Gilgal. The second section of the book talks about conquering the enemy, and the key thought is *conflict*. The land is given to them by gracious right, but they must claim it through confronting every rebellious nation and driving them out, or putting them to death. The final section of the book talks about claiming the land, and the key thought is *rest*. A nomadic family, became a slave nation, who became a wandering community, but finally they could become established citizens in their own land. Houses would replace tents. Crops would replace manna. Home at last.

# The Book Of Joshua

*Obedient Faith Brings Abundant Blessings*

Chapter	Chapters 1 – 5	Chapters 6 – 12	Chapters 13 – 24
<b>Action</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Crossing The River</b></p> <p>The commission to Joshua (1) The covenant with Rahab (2) The crossing of Jordan (3–4) The circumcision at Gilgal (5)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Conquering The Enemy</b></p> <p>The central campaign: Jericho; Ai; Gibeon (6–9) The southern campaign (10) The northern campaign (11) The defeated kings (12)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Claiming The Inheritance</b></p> <p>The tribal territory assigned (13–19) -Eastern Canaan (13–14) -Western Canaan (15–19) The special cities appointed (20–21) -The cities of refuge (20) -The priestly cities (21) The border tribes allotted (22) The nation admonished (23–24)</p>
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Consecration!</b>	<b>Conflict!</b>	<b>Rest!</b>

OUTSIDE CANAAN - PROMISES GIVEN

INSIDE CANAAN - PROMISES FULFILLED

The spiritual significance of Joshua can be seen from the flow of the book. Like Joshua through the parting of the waters of the Jordan, God leads us into Christ through the waters of baptism (Galatians 3:28; Romans 6:1-7). In Christ are all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), but first there must be conflict. Conflict with self, sin, and Satan (1 Corinthians 9:27; Ephesians 6:11). The more battles we win through the power of God, the more rest we experience in our inheritance. The book of Joshua teaches that obedient faith brings abundant blessings.

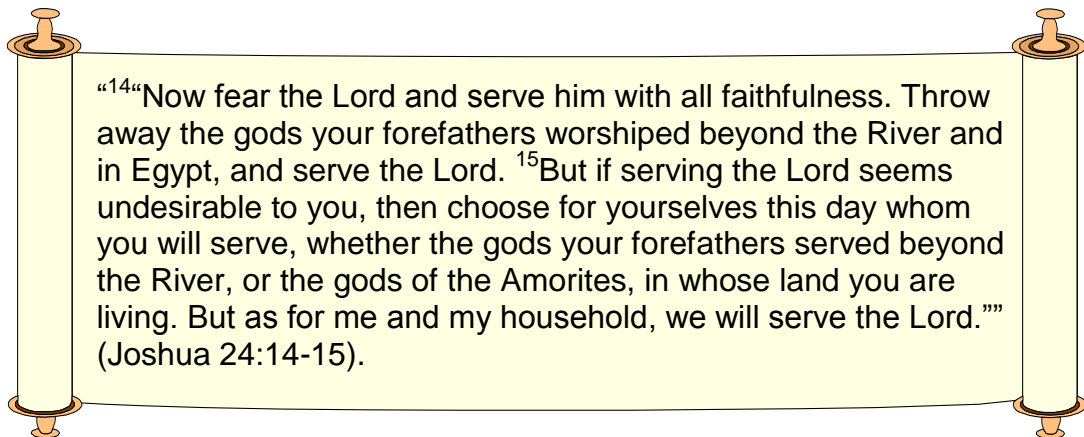
James E. Smith has an intriguing alternate outline that arises out of the opening verses of the book. The above outline may prove more practical, however, when an outline arises straight from the text it is often more preferable. This is how Smith describes the outline of the book. "The Book of Joshua opens with a word of the Lord for Joshua. That opening speech virtually outlines the entire book. *"Arise, go over Jordan"* (1:2) points to the preparation for conquest (chapters 1–5). *"No man shall be able to stand before you"* (1:5) announces in advance the result of the Israelite-Canaanite clash (chapters 6–12). *"You shall cause this people to possess this land which I swore to give to their fathers"* (1:6) is prophetic of what is described in chapters 13–22. The exhortation *"Be strong...to guard to do [i.e., to carefully do] according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you"* (1:7) anticipates the concluding hortatory section of the book (chapters 23–24) in which Joshua pleads with the people to be faithful to the Lord." An approach with yields the following outline.

<b>THE STRUCTURE OF JOSHUA</b>				
<b>PREPARING FOR VICTORY</b>	<b>ENGAGING THE FOE</b>	<b>CONQUERING THE LAND</b>	<b>POSSESSING THE INHERITANCE</b>	<b>ENCOURGING THE COMMITMENT</b>
chs. 1–5	chs. 6–9	chs. 10–12	chs. 13–22	chs. 23–24
The Lord Reveals the Plan	The Lord Gives the Victory	The Lord Empowers Israel	The Lord Fulfills the Promise	The Lord Demands Fidelity
<i>"Arise, go over Jordan"</i> (1:2)	<i>"No man shall be able to stand before you"</i> (1:5)		<i>"You shall cause this people to possess this land which I swore to give to their fathers"</i> (1:6)	<i>"Be strong...to carefully do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you"</i> (1:7)
<b>THEME: THE VICTORY OF FAITH</b>				

Modified from "The Books Of History" Smith

## Choose This Day! Joshua's Call

"Life is a matter of choice not chance," that was Joshua's final word to Israel. In fact, the option of choice goes all the way back to the garden of Eden. God created the first humans. He put them in a Paradise. He gave them a free will. And He gave them a choice. And essentially the choice was, "Obey Me, or die." And, it's still about that simple. There are two ways, two kingdoms, two fathers (Matthew 7:13-14; Colossians 1:12-13; John 8:42-44). And we must choose. Joshua's call for Israel to choose in Joshua 24:14-15, teaches us some important lessons about the choice before us.



**You Must Choose Personally.** He says, “*choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve*” (:15). And the principle is simple and it's crucial, no one can choose God for you, for we will be held accountable individually (2 Corinthians 5:10) Jesus said, in Luke 14:27, “*And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*” (Luke 14:27). You must choose personally.

**You Must Choose Purposefully.** If you are going to choose God then you're going to have to say “No,” to some other things. He said, “*Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord*” (:14). It must mean that even in the land they still had some of those old idols from Egypt, and they needed to do something about them. Choosing God means getting rid of all other claimants to Lordship. You can't say, “Yes,” to God unless you are willing to say “No,” to something else. (Titus 3:10-12)

**You Must Choose Publicly.** We haven't made the choice for God if we haven't gone public with it. If you're afraid to let people know what side you're on, you haven't made the choice for God. Joshua stood up in front of the very people who knew him best and he made his choice, publicly, and then they did the same, “*And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the Lord our God and obey him.”*” (Joshua 24:23-24). Let people know that you have chosen to serve the Lord.

**You Must Choose Promptly.** One final warning comes from Joshua about the matter of choices, and that is the need to choose God must be made promptly. He said, “*Choose you this day!*” When a decision to follow the Lord is not made, over time the heart can become hardened (Ephesians 4:18; Hebrews 3:12-13). The time to choose to serve the Lord is “Today,” is the day to hear His voice and respond (Hebrews 3:7).

# Seeing The Savior

Hearing The Message Of The Bible



## The Place Of Canaan In The Message Of Joshua

Christians who find significance only in Old Testament books which prophetically portray the coming of Christ will be disappointed with the Book of Joshua. The book contains no personal messianic prophecy. What is the main significance of Joshua? The answer is seen in what the land of Canaan typifies.

**Canaan Is Not A Picture Of Heaven.** In many of our hymns the Jordan river is taken as representing death, and the land of Canaan represents heaven.

However, according to Hebrews 3, and 4, Old Testament Canaan is a type of the believer's present position and possessions in Christ. The comparison is between the present spiritual warfare and the ancient efforts of Israel to conquer Canaan. Canaan is not a symbol of heaven, but of the Christian life on earth.

For example, Canaan was a place of conquest through years of conflict, this is not a picture of heaven where we will be separated from sin and suffering. In addition, it was possible for Israel to be ejected from Canaan by her enemies, and we know she actually was ejected because of her sins (which pictures the fact that a believer can forfeit their salvation). Heaven will be a place of uninterrupted fellowship with God.



**Canaan Pictures The Christian Life.** The meaning of Canaan is fixed by New Testament teaching and circumstance. Jordan does not typify death of the body and departure into the beyond, but that deeper union of our hearts with Christ in His death in baptism whereby we become completely separated unto Him, and introduced into the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. The tragedy is that the majority of Christians live far below their revealed privileges and redemption rights in Christ. The Christian life is no more meant to be a wilderness than a wedding feast is meant to be a time for sackcloth and ashes. God has opened up to us in Christ a present experience of sanctification comparable to a fertile, fruitful, fragrant, sunbathed Canaan. In light of this understanding of Canaan, the following better typify Canaan's meaning to the believer.



**Canaan Was Israel's Place Of Rest:** Instead of their toil in Egypt and their wandering in the wilderness, Israel was to be able to settle down and find a home in Canaan where they were to function as the people of God and as a light to the nations. Possessing and subjugating the land filled with enemies was to lead to that rest and fellowship with the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:10-11 and Leviticus 26:6-8). This is the application of Canaan in the book of Hebrews (Hebrews 3-4). Those Christians who thought they should give up on their faith in Christ because of the persecution against them, were encouraged to remember that in Christ is the only place of true rest.



**Canaan Was The Place Of Bounty:** Here was a land flowing "with milk and honey," a "good and spacious land" (Exodus 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 13:27, etc.). Some 16 times it is called "a land of milk and honey." It was a land of extraordinary fruit (Numbers 13:26,27), a land of corn and wine, kissed with the dew of heaven (Deuteronomy 33:28; Leviticus 26:5; Deuteronomy 11:10-12). As Paul would write, "**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.**" (Ephesians 1:3).



**Canaan Was A Place Of Triumph:** In Canaan were enemies and forces much mightier than Israel, yet these enemies were a defeated foe even before Israel ever struck a blow. Why? Because the victory of Israel lay not in its own skill or power, but in the power and might of *Yahweh* their God (Deut 7:2; 9:3; Josh. 1:2f). The battle is always the Lord's (1 Sam. 17:47). This is a triumph that believers in Christ experience now, *"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him."* (2 Corinthians 2:14). And, *"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."* (Romans 8:37).



### The Cord Of Faith

In the story of Rahab's faith there is a powerful allusion to salvation. She was determined to be delivered from the coming judgment and the sign of her trust in God's kindness was a scarlet cord. All the way back to the earliest days of the church, you can find the writings of the earliest Christians, and when they talk about Joshua 2 and the scarlet cord, they always make the same conclusion—that it was a type for the blood of Jesus. There is a scarlet thread that runs all the way through the Bible. It goes all the way back to Genesis 3 when God had to kill animals to give Adam and Eve clothes to cover their shame and their sin. It goes to the Passover when the lamb was slain and the first-born was delivered and Egypt was destroyed. It goes through all the countless sacrifices of the temple over the years, as the people made propitiation for their sins. And it leads you right up to Calvary where the ultimate Lamb of God was slain. Today there is a cord that can cover any sin you've ever committed. The Bible says in Ephesians 1:7, *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."* While the city of sin crumbled around Rahab's little home, and the practitioners of sin were reaping their judgment, she sat safely under the scarlet cord, untouched. That is the hope of all those who are under the blood of Christ, that when judgment comes against this world, and no sinner will stand, we can sit confidently at peace under the blood, untouched.



### Ethical Problem? Extermination Of The Canaanites

Some see the actions recorded in Joshua as those of a savage and primitive people, and find a difficult ethical problem in how God could allow the extermination of a people. But a holy God has not only the right, but the obligation to take vengeance against idolatry and immorality. The God of holiness is in perpetual conflict with the forces of evil. To be sure, this move to exterminate the Canaanites came only after lengthy probation (Genesis 15:16) and only after dramatic illustrations of Yahweh's wrath against immorality right there in the land of Canaan (Genesis 18–19). In the course of time the cup of Canaanite iniquity was full. The holiness of God could no longer overlook the corruption of those peoples (Leviticus 18:24–27). He therefore commissioned Joshua to unleash his wrath upon these hardened sinners. Total surrender to Yahweh was the only escape from destruction. Every Canaanite who surrendered to Yahweh was spared. Thus even in the midst of judgment the Lord showed mercy to those who sought it (Joshua 2:8-21; 6:22-25).