

Bible Study Notes and Questions on the Book of Joshua

Introduction: Joshua leads his people Israel into the promised land by taking possession of the cities of the people in the land i.e. the Canaanites. God promised Joshua that he would be with him in defeating all men that oppose him provided he was strong and courageous (1:6,7,9) and obedient to the law of God by doing what is written in the book of the law and meditating on the law, day and night (1:8).

1) The victories of the children of Israel lead by Joshua (chapters 2-12)

The book shows how Joshua lead the children of Israel into the promised land miraculously through the river Jordan and prepared the armed men for war. All the males were circumcised at Gilgal (5:2-9).

Joshua was successful in taking all these cities of the Canaanites. Victory was already assured provided God's commandments were being obeyed. The Canaanites greatly feared the Israelites (5:1) because of the news of their crossing the Red Sea and destruction of the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og (2:9-11). Joshua was shown by the Lord how to take Jericho (6:1-27) and then Ai (8:1-29) after dealing with Achan's sin. A bad mistake was made by Joshua in being deceived by the Gibeonites in not consulting the Lord (9:14), Gibeon being the only city to make peace with the children of Israel (10:1). Joshua continued to completely defeat all the other kings mentioned in **chapters 10 & 11** with a list seen in 12:9-24. God had intended them to be destroyed (11:20) *"For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses."*

2) The land allocated to the tribes of the children of Israel (chapters 13-19)

This section of the book begins revealing the land still to be possessed (13:1-13). Then there is detail of what each tribe was given: Reuben (13:15-23); Gad (13:24-28); Half tribe of Manasseh through Machir (13:29-31; 17:1); The rest of Manasseh (16:4; 17:2-18); Judah (14:6-15); Ephraim (16:4-10). The tribe of Levi had no inheritance given (13:14, 33; 18:17).

Joshua had to rebuke slackness amongst the remaining seven tribes to possess the land. He saw to it that the seven tribes took up their possessions (18:1-10). The allocation is shown as follows: Benjamin (18:11-28); Simeon (19:1-9); Zebulun (19:10-16); Issachar (19:17-23); Asher (19:24-31); Naphtali (19:32-39); Dan (19:40-48).

3) Chapters 20-24

3.1) The cities of refuge (20:1-9)

3.2) The cities for the Levites from each tribe (21:1-42); Children of Kohath 23 cities (21:4,5,9-26); Children of Gershon 13 cities (21:6, 27-33); Children of Merari 12 cities (21:7,34-40).

3.3) God's faithfulness to Israel (21:43-45) in A) giving rest; B) victory over all enemies who stood against Israel; C) his promises coming to pass. God fulfilled what he said to Israel.

3.4) The Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh were sent by Joshua to their possessions given to them by Moses east of the Jordan. They make an altar called Ed meaning witness (22:1-34).

3.5) Joshua speaks to the leaders of all Israel to be faithful in serving the Lord. There seems to be two messages given: the first in 23:3-16 and the second at Shechem in 24:1-28.

3.6) Death of Joshua and Eleazer, the high priest, son of Aaron (24:29-33)

Questions

Introduction: This study is attempting to help Christians gear to their needs. It is not necessary to do all the questions but to concentrate on those relevant for each individual. The first section gives questions that require considerable amount of time and may well be best left for individual study. The second section concentrates on questions on particular chapters in the book. Depending on time available and the needs of the small home group or local church group, you should be selective on which questions to attempt. You can do the questions in any order. It is helpful to hand out these notes prior to meeting together to allow people time to prepare beforehand where possible.

Section 1

Q1 Summarise each chapter as concisely as you can in one sentence where possible. For example: **Chapter 1:** God's promise to Joshua (**1:1-9**) and the commands that Joshua gave to the children of Israel (**1:10-18**).

Q2 Show how God is at work in the book of Joshua. It is helpful to make a list of key verses such as **3:17; 4:22-24; 5:1**.

Q3 What spiritual principles can we learn from the book of Joshua?

Q4 What do we know about Joshua? It is helpful to begin with reading these scriptures from preceding biblical books as seen in **Exodus 17:9-14; 24:13; 33:11; Numbers 11:28, 29; 14:6-9, 30, 36-38; 26:65; 27:18-23; 32:11,12; Deuteronomy 1:28; 3:21,28; 31:3,7,23; 34:9**. You could discuss how Joshua was prepared in becoming a leader of the people. The following scriptures will help you in studying the character of Joshua: See **4:14; 8:35; 11:15**.

Q5 If you have the resources, look up the names of cities, rivers and other places in a concordance or dictionary. They all have a meaning. Is there any significance in each place?

Q6 What are the main themes in the book of Joshua?

Section 2

Q1 In view of what God said to Joshua regarding the book of the law in **1:8**, how should we treat the word of God?

Q2 Show what the Lord had promised to Joshua and the children of Israel. See **1:1-9; 2:9; 3:10; 6:2; 8:1; 10:8; 11:6**.

Q3 Why was Rahab, the prostitute spared? See **2:1-21; 6:17, 22-25**. Is there evidence that she lived a changed life after the destruction of Jericho? You may find **Matthew 1:5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25** helpful.

Q4 How did the inhabitants of the land view the children of Israel? See **2:9-11; 5:1**. Read also **Exodus 15:14-16**.

Q5 Why did the Lord command Joshua to take twelve stones out of the midst of the river Jordan? See **4:1-8, 20-24**.

Section 2 continued

Q6 What did Joshua set up in the midst of the river Jordan? See **4:9, 10**.

Q7 What is significant about the ark of the covenant in the crossing of the river Jordan? See **3:6-17; 4:11, 18**.

Q8 Why was it important for the sons of Israel to be circumcised? See **5:2-8**. It is helpful to refer to and read **Genesis 17:9-14, 23-27**.

Q9 What is known about Gilgal? See **4:19; 5:9-12**.

Q10 Discuss who is speaking to Joshua in **5:13-15**.

Q11 Write down the miracles in the book of Joshua. What is the purpose of each miracle? See **3:5-17; 4:15-18,22-24; 6:15-21; 10:6-15**.

Q12 Why was Achan's sin so serious? See **6:17-19; 7:1-26**.

Q13 Look carefully at the mistakes the children of Israel made. See **7:1; 9:1-15; 22:10-34**. How can we learn from their mistakes?

Q14 It seems cruel of God to command Joshua to destroy all the inhabitants of the land. Can you see from scripture why this is so? See **11:18-23**. It is helpful to read **Genesis 15:13-21**.

Q15 Name the only city to make peace with Israel. Discuss what is known of this city and how Joshua treated the inhabitants. See **9:3-27; 10:1-10; 11:19**.

Q16 Why is there a full list of the kings and their cities recorded in **12:1-24**?

Q17 What territory had still to be possessed by the children of Israel? See **13:1-7**.

Q18 Why did the Levites have no territory in the promised land? See **13:14,33; 18:7**. See also **Deuteronomy 10:9; 18:1,2**.

Q19 What is known of Caleb in this book? See **14:6-15; 15:13-19**.

Q20 Can you see in the book of Joshua that the children of Israel were already disobedient to God? See **13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12, 13; 18:3**.

Q21 How did the remaining seven tribes receive their inheritance? See **18:4-10**.

Q22 Read carefully **chapters 18 & 19**. Can you find any significant information in the remaining seven tribal allotments? For example, consider the places mentioned.

Q23 Name the cities of refuge and what were they used for? See **20:1-9**.

Q24 Where did the Levites live? See **21:1-42**.

Section 2 continued

Q25 Do we see God's promises to Moses and subsequently to Joshua being fulfilled?
See **21:43-45; 23:3, 9, 10, 14**.

Q26 What is known of the altar 'Ed'? Why did the children of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of the children of Manasseh build it? See **22:1-34**.

Q27 Do you think Joshua could foresee what would happen to the children of Israel? See **23:12, 13, 15, 16**.

Q28 Do you think Joshua took seriously the word of God? See **8:32-35; 23:6-8; 24:25-27**.

Q29 What had the Lord done for Israel as shown by Joshua speaking to the children of Israel in **24:1-13**?

Q30 How were the children of Israel to treat God? See **24:14**. Is this true for us today?

Q31 Read carefully **24:14-25**. Is there evidence that there was idol worship already amongst the children of Israel?

Q32 Read **Genesis 50:25**. Was Joseph's request fulfilled? See **24:32**.

Q33 What do we know about who God is in the book of Joshua?
See **1:5,9; 2:11; 3:5,10,13; 4:24; 6:27; 10:25, 42; 21:43-45; 22:22, 23, 34; 23:10; 24:19**.

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