

JOSHUA - A STUDY GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. What picture of God would you have if you had only the book of Joshua? Who do you think wrote this book which includes events even after Joshua's death? (see Joshua 24:29-33)
2. Why do you think Moses changed Joshua's name from Hoshea? (Numbers 13:8,16) Do you know anyone else in the Bible named Joshua? (Hebrews 4:8, *KJV*)
3. With a promise such as the Lord gave him (Joshua 1:5-9; 23:9,10; compare Leviticus 26:6-13; Deuteronomy 7:24; 11:25; 31:6-8; 32:30; Exodus 23:20-33; Deuteronomy 20:16-18; Genesis 12:1-3) why didn't he continue the conquest of the land until there were no Canaanites left?
4. If you had been Joshua would you have been encouraged by the people's promise, "We will obey you, just as we always obeyed Moses?" (Joshua 1:16,17) Was Joshua being honest when he said, "be faithful to the Lord, as you have been till now?" (Joshua 23:8)
5. Does the people's statement in Joshua 1:18—"Whoever questions your authority or disobeys any of your orders will be put to death"—give us any idea of their attitude toward the value of human life?
6. Why do you think the spies went into Rahab's house? (Joshua 2:1) What do you think of a God who would save Rahab and all her family because she did such a good job of lying? (Joshua 2:1-16; 6:22,23) What does lying have to do with faith? (Hebrews 11:30,31; James 2:25) Why was this woman chosen as an ancestor of King David and of Christ? (Matthew 1:5) On what basis do you think Rahab decided that these Israelites were the people of God? Do you think Rahab and her family were the only ones in Jericho who believed in the God of Israel and therefore the only ones who could be saved? Do we have any evidence that any of the other members of her family were believers in God? Or were they saved because they came inside her house? (Joshua 6:22-25) Compare Noah and the ark. How could the spies be so confident that they would be able to preserve her and her family? (Joshua 2:14)
7. Why did the angel that appeared to Joshua present a very military appearance and seem to suggest an approach of war or battle if he really didn't want them to fight? (Joshua 5:13-15)
8. Why do you think the Angel asked Joshua to take off his sandals? Are bare feet more respectful in some way? (Joshua 5:15; compare Exodus 3:5)
9. What was the purpose of the elaborate seven day process to conquer Jericho? Why do you think God demanded that everything of value in Jericho be kept for the temple, when He didn't make the same demand regarding other cities they conquered? (Joshua 6:1-25)
10. What kind of God would order the stoning of Achan, his wife, his children, and all his animals (Joshua 7:15)? Was that the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit? Why would God ask the Israelites themselves to do it? (Joshua 7:15,25,26) Could this have been "gentle Jesus, meek and mild?"
11. What do you think of Joshua's speech after the Ai incident? (Joshua 7:7-9) Was he just as bad as the people? Why do you think Joshua failed to inquire of the Lord before he sent the troops up to Ai?
12. Why did God apparently use the casting of lots in the case of Achan and other Bible stories? (For example, choosing Judas' replacement: Acts 1:23-26) Why don't we choose church leaders this way now? Wouldn't we feel more confident that we had gotten the right person? Why not use it to identify sinners? (Joshua 7:13-26; 14:2; Judges 20:9; 1 Samuel 10:20; 1 Chronicles 6:54,61; Jonah 1:7; Matthew 27:35; Acts 1:26)

13. What do you think of the fact that Joshua made the treaty with the Gibeonites based on lies? Should he have been bound by it? (Joshua 9) Again the Canaanites were blessed for lying! Why didn't Joshua inquire of the Lord first? What would have happened if the Gibeonites had come and told the truth and said they wanted to worship the true God?
14. What do you think of the victory at the battle of Gibeah? (Joshua 10:1-15) Was God helping them fight? Who sent the hailstones (vs. 11) and held back the sun? (vs. 12-14) Is this an example of the "hornets" mentioned in Exodus 23:28 and Deuteronomy 7:20? (1 Samuel 5:9; 14:15) What do you think Joshua was referring to when he said, "I sent the hornets before you"? (Joshua 24:12) Why did he say, "your swords and bows had nothing to do with it" [the conquest of the land]?
15. Was the fact that Joshua hamstringed the horses and destroyed the chariots evidence that he at least was trying to follow God's directions in avoiding fighting? (Joshua 11:9)
16. Why did they sometimes totally destroy everybody as in Joshua 6:21; 8:25; 10:7-15,28-41; 11:8,11-14,18,20? (Compare Deuteronomy 20:16-18; Numbers 31:13-18,49)
17. In what way did the Lord harden the hearts of the people who were fighting against Israel? (Deuteronomy 20:10-18; Joshua 11:20)
18. Why didn't Joshua go down and conquer the land of Philistia? (Joshua 13:2,3) Think how much trouble it would have saved later.
19. What kind of relationship do you think existed between the Israelites and all the cities of Canaan that were not conquered but continued to exist among them? (Joshua 13:13; 15:63; 16:10; 17:13,18; Compare 23:13) How do you explain the statements that Jerusalem was conquered several times, but it was still ruled by the Jebusites? (Joshua 10:1-5,23; 12:10; 15:63; 18:28)
20. Was it true that "the Lord gave to Israel all the land that he had solemnly promised their ancestors?" (Joshua 21:43; 23:14,15) Did they then have peace? (Joshua 21:44; 22:4) Was it true that "not one of all their enemies had been able to stand against them, because the Lord gave the Israelites the victory over all their enemies?" (Joshua 21:44,45; 23:9) Did Israel actually have "security from their enemies around them?" (Joshua 23:1) Do you think it was actually possible for them to carry out the command "Do not neglect any part of [the law of Moses], and then you will not associate with these peoples left among you or speak the names of their gods or use those names in taking vows or worship those gods or bow down to them?" (Joshua 23:6,7)
21. Why were some of the Israelite tribes so reluctant to move in and conquer their enemies if "any one of you can make a thousand men run away?" (Joshua 23:10)
22. What do you think is implied by the warning against intermarrying with the Canaanites? (Joshua 23:12,13) Joshua obviously warned them very strongly against worshiping other "gods." (Joshua 23:15,16) Does this seem to have had a very long-lasting effect? Do you think that some of the Israelites were still worshiping the gods of Mesopotamia and Egypt as Joshua seemed to imply? (Joshua 24:14,23)
23. After the people had promised to serve the Lord, why do you think Joshua said they couldn't? (Joshua 24:18,19)
24. What does Joshua 24:31 imply about the leadership of Joshua? Were they really serving the Lord all those years? How does this fit with Joshua 24:14,23?

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