



## "REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

### KEEP CALM AND MARCH ON!

#### Marching through the Book of Joshua: Lesson 1

##### First Day

Welcome to our study in the Book of Joshua. Sometimes this book is referred to as the Book of Conquests, or, better yet, Joshua's adventures of faith. Having a relationship with the Lord is truly an adventure! We are excited to join Joshua in his adventures of faith as he leads the children of Israel into the Promised Land. I know God has some adventures in store for us, too.

We will begin our study with a brief history of the Israelites and their exodus from Egypt. It's important that we are brought up to date with what's happening at the time that Joshua is writing. **What events had led the Israelites to this point? Why were they going to a new land? We will also be looking at the man Joshua ... Who was he? How was he chosen to be Moses' successor? What was his purpose in writing this book?**

Our prayer is that these and many more questions will be answered as we study together. The goal in this study is not only to learn Biblical truths, but also learn how to apply them to our life. As we learn how to apply the Word of God, our hearts will be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. A changed heart results in changed behavior. God desires to conform us into the image of His Son (Romans 8:29), and as we apply His Word, this is accomplished. So, don't read with only an eye for facts, but also an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to you.

As you study, use a highlighter to mark interesting facts, new thoughts, and words. (**Key words are words that are repeated.**) Keep a notebook handy to jot down questions that you have as you study. Also, have a Bible dictionary, a Webster's Dictionary, and a Concordance to help you. Commentaries are also very helpful, and I value the wealth of insight you can gain from them, but always use them after you have studied on your own. It's important to allow the Holy Spirit to unfold the Word to us personally before

we look to another for His interpretation. The Holy Spirit is the greatest teacher, and we want to make sure that we give God Himself the opportunity to speak to us, before our favorite commentator.

Before you begin your study each day, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to open your mind and heart and give you understanding. Then read His Word like a detective would research a case. Look for details. Ask yourself, **Who is writing? Why did he say that? Who is he talking to? What was happening at the time this was written? What was the culture like? What was the writer's attitude?**

To get the most from your study, at the beginning of each day, ask yourself these 3 simple questions:

- (1) **What does the text say?** (What are the facts?)
- (2) **What does the text mean?** (Definitions, etc.)
- (3) **What does it mean to me?** (How do I apply it?)

Learning what the facts are called is called "**Observing**" the text. Finding out what the facts mean is called "**Interpreting**" the text. And finding out what it means to you is called "**Applying**" the text. Application is the goal of any study, but you must have detailed observations and correct interpretation before you can understand how to apply it. We should be asking ourselves, "**How does this Scripture encourage me? Is there a warning in it? Is there a rebuke? What difference should this Scripture make in how I live my life?**"

**Now ... let's begin our study!**

It has been said that Joshua is to the Old Testament what Acts is to the New. The Book of Acts is a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles. Joshua is a record of how God began to conquer the world for His Kingdom, using His people. It records the expansion of the church. Francis Schaeffer called the Book of Joshua "a bridge, a link between the Pentateuch (the writings of Moses) and the rest of the Scripture." Joshua records the history of the nation of Israel as they conquer the land that God had promised them.

Joshua is often compared to the Book of Ephesians. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly places in Christ. Joshua reminds us that we can enjoy the blessings that God has for us right now. We have a glorious inheritance awaiting us, but we don't have to wait to enjoy His blessings. Today we can live victoriously and experience all

that the Lord has for us, including His promises of joy, peace, and rest. Alan Redpath said, "Victorious Christian living shouldn't only be a theory to be admired, but also an experience to be enjoyed."

The Hebrew Bible is divided into 3 sections: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The prophetic books are broken into 2 parts: Former and Latter. Joshua is the first book of the Former prophets, followed by Judges, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings. The placement of Joshua in the prophetic books was most likely done because this record of history illustrated the great principles which the prophets preached (F.F. Bruce, The Books and The Parchments). The prophetic books are not written as a thorough, scientific history of the centuries that are covered. Their aim is "to present an interpretive (prophetic) history of God's dealing with His chosen people, Israel, from the time of Moses' death, until the Babylonian captivity." (Joshua, Navpress) This book is mainly about what God did, rather than what man did. Not that the characters in the book are not important, but it is more a record of history rather than individuals. The land that was conquered was always a work of God, and He alone will be glorified. This book aims our focus on God Himself.

**Who wrote this book?** Jewish tradition tells us that Joshua himself is the author, except for the accounts of his death at the end of the book (Joshua 24:26-33). These may have been recorded by a personal scribe, such as Ezra. Some attribute the ending to other writers such as Eleazar and his son Phinehas. The book is written by an eyewitness and described with much detail, occasionally using "we" and "us." Even though some new scholars have challenged Joshua's authorship, there is really no reason to doubt Joshua as the writer. The book of Joshua is thought to have been completed in about 1400 B.C., covering approximately a 24-year span.

The Book of Joshua is a whole new page in the history of Israel. The children of Israel were promised land, and now, under the leadership of Joshua, they move in and begin to take possession. The word "possession" is used over 50 times in this book. Charles Swindoll divides this book into 4 main divisions:

1. Commissioning the leader and preparing the people (chapters 1-5)
2. Conquering the enemy in the Promised Land also known as Canaan (chapters 6-12)
3. Dividing the land between the 12 tribes of Israel (chapters 13-22)
4. Warning and challenging the victors (chapters 23-24)

Before we go any further, let's take a brief walk through history. Beginning with Adam, God began to prepare a people through whom He would redeem mankind. God chose Abraham to be the Father of that nation.

1. Read Genesis 12:1-7, 13:15-17, 17:8, and 22:15-18. What promises did God give to Abraham?
2. What was Abraham called to do? Read Genesis 17:9-14.

Circumcision was to be a sign of obedience to God. It was a symbol of the Israelites' commitment to God and their desire to be identified as one of His children. God was setting His chosen people apart from other nations that worshipped other gods. We need to remember that Abraham was not saved by circumcision. Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Romans 4:1-12). Circumcision was merely an outward sign of an inward faith.

At that time, the Jewish race began. Through Abraham's descendants, Jesus Christ would be born, thus fulfilling one of God's promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:3).

Abraham was called to leave his home in Ur and travel to a new, fertile land called Canaan. Canaan is also called The Promised Land, a Good Land (Deut. 8:7-10), or the Pleasant Land (Daniel 8:9). It is often described as a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8, 13:5).

As we travel through Genesis, Abraham had 2 sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Isaac was the first descendant that fulfilled God's promise to Abraham. Isaac married Rebekah and had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Through Esau came the people called the Edomites, and Jacob became the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. (We will learn more about those 12 tribes when we study Joshua 13.)

Jacob had many sons. We read about one of them named Joseph in Genesis 37-50. Joseph was sold by his brothers to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh from Egypt. He was sold as a slave, but God took him from a slave to a ruler of Egypt. Due to a famine, Joseph's dad Jacob and the rest of Joseph's brothers moved down to Egypt. Pharaoh allowed them to dwell in the land of Goshen as shepherds. Jacob, who was renamed Israel, died in Egypt at age 147, but was buried in a cave in the land of Canaan. Jacob and his

family lived as aliens and strangers in Canaan, but continued to trust God and His promise to them.

Before Jacob died, he brought his sons together and blessed them, dividing the land between them. At the time, this land was occupied by the Philistines and the Canaanites. We see them take possession of that land in Joshua.

Joseph died at the age of 110, in Egypt. The book of Exodus begins several hundred years later. Abraham's descendants had continued to grow in number. They numbered over 2 million people, which soon alarmed the Pharaoh. Remember, this Pharaoh was not the Pharaoh who had shown favor to Joseph. This Pharaoh feared that this group of people would usurp his authority, so he made them slaves to prevent this. They were slaves for 400 years and were treated very harshly. They continually cried out for God to deliver them. God heard their cries and delivered them by the hand of a man named Moses.

**We'll end here for today.** We only had a few questions, but a lot of reading. I pray that as you review the history of Israel, it will help put the events happening in Joshua into perspective. Tomorrow we will refresh our memories concerning the man named Moses. For now, let's take a few minutes to learn our memory verse. This verse was spoken to the children of Israel by Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy. As he was preparing them to enter into the Promised Land, he wanted them to remember the most important principle of life and their biggest "**Reason to Rejoice.**"

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him." **Deuteronomy 13:4**

## Second Day

**Review your memory verse. Are you walking after the Lord?**

Let's begin today with a look at Moses, the man whom God used to deliver Israel from slavery to Egypt. Always begin with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to teach you as you study His Word.

1. Read Exodus chapters 1-4 to refresh your memory of who Moses is.
2. What was Moses called to do?

3. What was he like? What was his attitude toward God?
4. Was he willing to serve God?
5. Did Moses have any fears? What were they? Give Scriptures to support your answer.
6. Do you find any similarities between how Moses responded to God, and how you have responded to God when He's called you to do something? Do you have any of the same fears?
7. How is Moses described in Numbers 12:3?
8. Define the word "meek." Name another person in the Bible who is an example of meekness and explain why.
9. Read Psalms 25:9, 37:11, and Matthew 5:5. How are the meek blessed?
10. Okay, you knew this question was coming. Is your life characterized by meekness, humbleness, and gentleness? Do you deal with people gently? Do you have a humble attitude? Do you have a meek and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:15)? Ponder this question. Ask the Lord to reveal any areas that He wants to make some changes.
11. What two things did God promise Moses in Exodus 3:7-8?

After 40 years in the wilderness, God called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. This race became a nation as they came out of Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and received the law of God at Mt. Sinai. Canaan was the goal to which God was leading His people. The deliverance from Egypt was only in preparation for the blessing of Canaan.

Moses was a great leader and the Israelites saw God do miracle after miracle, but they still complained and grumbled. Even though God was always faithful to them -- providing food, water, and everything else they needed -- their hearts were still hard. Because of this, Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, when they could have made it to Canaan in 11 days. Even then, God did not forsake them. He provided for them, guided them, and protected them during those years.

We will end here for today. All through history, we see God keep His promises to His people over and over again. He promised them land, but their enjoyment of the land depended on their obedience to Him. They had to fight battles and take hold of their inheritance. They didn't hold up their end of the bargain. But God, because of who He is, always keeps His Word. What a "Reason to Rejoice"!

### Third Day

**Review your memory verse. Do you fear God?**

Yesterday we left the Israelites in a state of murmuring and complaining. (Sounds like us, doesn't it?) Moses continued to lead the people to the edge of the land, but he was not allowed to lead them into the land.

1. Read Numbers 20:1-13. What were the Israelites complaining about?
2. What did Moses do? Why was Moses barred from entering the Promised Land?

Moses misrepresented God to the people of Israel. God is never pleased when we do something in His name, without His blessing. We, like Moses, can misrepresent God to the people around us.

3. Why is it so important to represent God correctly?
4. Name some ways that Christians can misrepresent God.

5. Do you ever misrepresent God? Maybe to your children, or your husband? How about to your friends? Reflect on your actions and attitudes this past week. Were you a reflection of Christ?

Moses was the only man who ever spoke with God face to face (Exodus 33:11, Numbers 12:8). Deuteronomy 34:10-12 tells us that there has never been a prophet like Moses. He was truly a great leader. But even he had to suffer the consequences of his disobedience. God disciplined him, yet Moses never forsook God. God didn't forsake Moses, and He won't forsake you. Don't doubt His love for you if you are suffering the consequences of your own sin. God chastens us because He loves us (Hebrews 12:5-6).

6. Did Moses ever ask God to reconsider? What was God's response? Read Deuteronomy 3:23-28.
7. Read about the death of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:48-52, and 34. How old was he? How is he described?
8. Did Moses ever get to enter the Promised Land? Read Matthew 17:1-3.

We see the manifestation of divine life in the Book of **Genesis**. In **Exodus** we read of Israel's condition in Egypt, which is a great picture of the spiritual condition of our soul before we become born again. We also see how God delivers them from Egypt, bringing them salvation, which is a picture of our life in Christ as we are regenerated. In **Leviticus** we come into the holy of holies and learn about our sanctification. In the Book of **Numbers** we witness the people of God under trials and testings as they journeyed to Canaan. This is a picture of a soul that is not yet fully yielded to God. In **Deuteronomy** we read about the government of God and His expectations of His people as they prepared to enter Canaan. Now, in the Book of **Joshua**, we travel with the people of God as they conquer Canaan and appropriate their inheritance. Canaan represents a life fully surrendered to God, experiencing the rest and the blessings that result from a life of obedience.

This ends our lesson for today. Tomorrow we meet Joshua, the man whom God had prepared for many years to become the next leader of Israel. Until then, can you find one **"Reason to Rejoice"** from today's lesson?

#### Fourth Day

**Review your memory verse. Are you keeping His commandments?**

Moses passes the baton to Joshua. **Who is this man?** Joshua's original name was **"Hoshea"** (Numbers 13:8), which means **"salvation."** Moses changed his name in the wilderness to Jehoshua, or Joshua (Numbers 13:16), which means **"Jehovah is salvation."** This name change is probably the result of some spiritual qualities that Moses saw in Joshua. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, Joshua. (In Hebrews 4:8, the name "Jesus" is really Joshua.)

Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim and was born in Egypt. His grandfather was Elishama, captain and head of this tribe (Numbers 1:10). His father's name was Nun (1 Chronicles 7:20-27). God used all the circumstances in Joshua's life to prepare him to lead the people into the Promised Land. Joshua was 40 years old at the time of the exodus out of Egypt. He was 80 when he received his call to take over for Moses and 110 when he died. Let's take a few minutes to learn more about this mighty man called Joshua.

1. Our first glimpse of Joshua is in Exodus 17:8-16. Read this account and answer the following questions:

- a. Who was Israel fighting with?
- b. What city were they in?
- c. What was Joshua called to do?
- d. Describe the battle.
- e. Why were they fighting? (vs 16)
- f. What do you think God was teaching them?
- g. What was the significance of the rod?
- h. What did Joshua learn about God that day?

The Amalekites were descendants of Amalek, a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12). They were a hostile, nomadic tribe that killed for pleasure.

They would go from camp to camp, plundering the villages. As Israel entered the land, the Amalekites seized the opportunity to attack.

2. Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3 and Deuteronomy 25:17-19. What did God want Israel to do to the Amalekites?
3. Read Exodus 17:16. Who were the Amalekites really fighting against?
4. When we are in the midst of a battle, of what can we be assured? Read Romans 8:31 and Psalm 118:6.

Joshua learned a very powerful lesson that day. The rod that Moses raised was not magical, nor did it have any power in itself. The rod was merely a representation of God's power. Man can always fight, but the power comes from God. Joshua learned that the battle belonged to the Lord and that he needed to depend on God alone for the victory. It is in our weakness that God is made strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). When we try to fight in our own strength, we lose every time.

5. Read Psalm 33:16-22. Where does our strength come from? How can these verses encourage you when you find yourself in the midst of a battle?
6. Are you in the middle of a "situation"? Whose strength are you fighting with? Are you depending on your own strength, or on God? Don't wait until you're being defeated ... recognize His power today and allow Him to fight the battle for you.
7. Aaron and Hur were holding up Moses' arms (Exodus 17:10-13). When Moses was tired, they were there to lift him up. What lesson can we learn from this?
8. Are any of your friends in a spiritual battle right now? What can you do to hold up their arms? How can we offer encouragement and support?

9. Is there someone in your life holding up your arms? Take a minute to write them a note of thanks. Let them know how much their support is appreciated!

This ends our lesson for today. After the battle at Rephidim, Moses built an altar and called it "Yahweh Nissi", which means, "The Lord is My Banner" (Exodus 17:16). What banner are you flying as you fight the battle?

### Fifth Day

**Write out your verse from memory. Did you obey His Word this week?**

Yesterday we met Joshua the soldier, who was chosen by Moses to lead the battle against the Amalekites. Today we will continue learning about our new friend Joshua and how God was preparing him for the great task that was ahead.

1. Read Exodus 24:9-17 for our next peek at Joshua. What was Joshua allowed to do? Why was this an honor? What was Joshua called in vs. 13?
2. What did Joshua learn about God on Mount Sinai? (vs 17)
3. Joshua is mentioned again in Exodus chapter 32. Read this account. What role did Joshua play? What did Joshua learn about God that day? What did he learn from Moses? What did he learn about sin?
4. Why do you think this incident was part of Joshua's training? How could it help prepare him for leadership?
5. Find Joshua in Exodus 33:7-11. (Sounds like Where's Waldo!) What kind of relationship did the Lord have with Moses? Why was this so valuable for Joshua to see?

6. Now read about Joshua in Numbers 11:24-29. Why was Joshua upset?

7. In what way was Joshua trying to glorify Moses? What was Moses' response?

Joshua learned another huge lesson that day. God's glory always came first. Joshua thought that Eldad and Medad should have gone before Moses in the tabernacle, but Moses discouraged any exaltation from Joshua, pointing him once again to the One who deserves all honor and glory. Francis Schaeffer said, "**A leader must never confuse himself with God.**" Joshua needed to learn who was in charge before he could be an effective leader.

8. Are you in any type leadership position? Do you ever forget who is **YOUR** boss? Ask the Lord today to give you a humble heart, ready to point all glory and honor back to Him.

Let's rejoice together that God prepares us for our future. How comforting it is to know that nothing with God is accidental. Even our trials are for a purpose. He has a plan for us, and everything we encounter is preparing us for that plan (Romans 8:28). We can rest knowing that our very life is in His mighty hands.

We'll stop here for now. Next week we will continue to get to know Joshua a little better. Joshua was in training under Moses for many years. He experienced slavery, wanderings, and battles. He watched Moses lead with courage and strength, but with a spirit of meekness. He saw Moses have an intimate relationship with God. He saw Moses meet God face to face. He saw God give Moses the Ten Commandments. He saw God move in a cloud and in a pillar of fire. Joshua experienced for himself God's guidance, care, and provision for His people. I can't think of a better training ground than being the assistant to Moses.

Take a few minutes and ask God to show you a "**Reason to Rejoice**" this week. If you're like me, you can think of a million! Spend some time thanking Him for choosing you to be one of His kids. See you next week!