

Joshua

I. The Main Idea of Joshua

The book of Joshua records God's faithfulness to the promises He made to the Patriarchs and the nation of Israel by giving the land of Canaan to Israel.

II. Outline of Joshua

Joshua 1-5	Crossing Over into the Land
Joshua 6-11	Taking the Land
Joshua 12-22	Dividing the Land
Joshua 23-24	Serving in the Land

III. Interpretive Keys to Joshua

- Genre: Historical Narrative
 - The author of Joshua intends to communicate historical events. It doesn't tell us everything we may want to know about history, but what it does tell us is a truthful account of the past.
- How can we defend God's character in light of His command for Israel to kill all the Canaanites?
 - As creator and sovereign, God has the right to be the judge over all nations and to bring judgment on evil nations (Gen 15:16).
 - As creator and sovereign, God has the right to choose what tool he will use to bring about the judgment (Exod 12:12; Lev 26:25; Num 31:3).
 - In Joshua's time, God was using the Israelites to bring judgment on the Canaanites (Deut 9:4-5). Later in Israel's history God would use the Assyrians and Babylonians to bring judgment on the Israelites (2 Kgs 17:1-23; 21:10-15; Isa 10:12-15). So it worked both ways.
- Some verses in Joshua indicate that Israel conquered the entire land of Canaan while other verses indicate that they did not conquer everything. So did Joshua defeat the entire land of Canaan?
 - Yes and no.

- On the one hand, the book of Joshua makes clear that God fulfilled His promise of giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites (Josh. 21:43-45; 23:14).
- On the other hand, Joshua and Judges make it clear that not all of the land was conquered.
 - There were still some cities and areas where Canaanites still dwelt (Josh. 13:1-6; 17:12-13, 16-18; 23:4-5, 12-13; Judg. 1:19, 21, 27-36; 2:3).
 - God foretold this to the Israelites while they were at Mt. Sinai: "I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the wild beasts multiply against you. Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased and possess the land." (Exodus 23:29-30; see also Deut. 7:22.)
- The best understanding of the Israelite Conquest was that the combined force of the Israelite army broke the backbone of the nations that dwelt in the land and established a large foothold in the hill country.
 - The Canaanite forces were significantly weakened by the battles that they lost against the Israelites. However, pockets of resistance still remained and it was the responsibility of each tribe to drive them out.
- So simultaneously, it can be said that God gave them the entire land, but they did not have control over the entire land.

IV. Historical & Geographical Summary of the Conquest & Settlement

- Stage 1: King Sihon and King Og are defeated by Moses and the Israelites. God gives to the Israelites the territory of these two kings, east of the Jordan River.
- Stage 2: The Jordan River is miraculously dried up and the Israelites cross over into the Land of Canaan, establishing a foothold in the center of the Promised Land.
- Stage 3: The cities of Jericho and (after some trouble) Ai are defeated. Israel drives a wedge into the center of the Promised Land, dividing the north from the south.
- Stage 4: God providentially gathers the main military forces of the southern city-states when they attack the city of Gibeon. Thus, in a single battle, the Israelites are able to defeat the main forces of the southern territory.
- Stage 5: Again, God providentially gathers the main military forces of the northern city-states in one place, and in a single battle the Israelites are able to defeat the main forces of the northern territories.



- Stage 6: Under the guidance of the Lord, Joshua divides the land among the 12 tribes of Israel. Larger tribes received a larger piece of territory, smaller tribes received a smaller piece, and the Levites were scattered in various cities throughout the country.

V. Archaeological Evidence of the Conquest

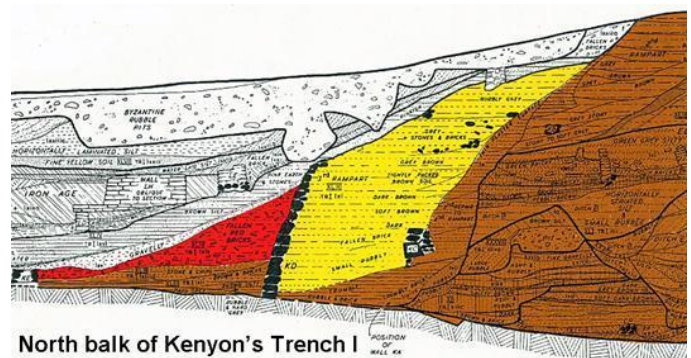
What should we expect to see in the archaeological record for the Conquest at the time of Joshua?

When people think about the Conquest, they tend to think of it as an intensely violent event where the Israelite army swept through the land destroying everything in sight. However, a careful reading of the text reveals a surprising insight:

For the most part, the Israelite Conquest was focused on destroying the Canaanite population, not Canaanite property.

- Deuteronomy 6:10-11 -- Before the Conquest, Moses predicts the Israelites *will* live in “great and good cities that you did not fill.”
- Joshua 24:13 -- The Israelites *did* live in “cities that you had not built.”
- Joshua 10:28-43 -- Account of the Southern Campaign: says nothing about the destruction of property.
- Joshua 10:40 -- Summary of the Southern Campaign: Joshua devoted to destruction “all that breathed.”
- Joshua 11:13 -- Summary of the Northern Campaign: “none of the cities that stood on their mounds did Israel burn, except Hazor alone; that Joshua burned.”

The only exceptions to this practice were the burning of Jericho, Ai, and Hazor. Therefore, we should not expect to find consistent massive burn layers or destruction levels in Palestine at the end of the fifteenth century. If we did, it would be *contrary* to the Biblical record and an *embarrassment* to the traditional view.



VI. Messianic Elements within Joshua

Type of Christ: Joshua

- Joshua and Jesus share the same name. “Joshua” is the English transliteration of the Hebrew name, while “Jesus” is the English transliteration of the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name:
 - Hebrew: יְהוֹשֻׁעַ *Yehoshua* English: *Joshua*
 - Hebrew: יְהוֹשֻׁעַ *Yehoshua* Greek: Ἰησοῦς *Iesous* English: *Jesus*
- So the fact that they share the same name suggests that Joshua is a “type” of Jesus in the OT. Is there anything about Joshua that reminds us of Jesus?
 - First, the name “Joshua/Jesus” means “Yahweh saves.” So the idea of salvation is tied up in the meaning of Joshua and Jesus’s name.
 - Moses changed Joshua’s name from Hoshea, “salvation,” to Joshua, “Yahweh saves” (Num. 13:16) perhaps as a memorial to the Exodus event where God dramatically saved Israel.
 - Meanwhile, Jesus provided “salvation” for those who believe in Him (“that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus,” 2 Tim. 2:10).
 - Secondly, Joshua led the people into God’s rest, similar to how Jesus leads us into God’s rest:
 - “the land had rest from war,” Josh. 11:23; “the Lord gave them rest on every side,” Josh. 21:44 (see also Josh. 1:13, 15; 14:15; 22:4; 23:1).
 - “For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.” (Heb. 4:8-11)