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Article 6: Joshua at a Glance

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JOSHUA AT A GLANCE

This book records the supernatural parting of the Jordan River which allowed Israel to invade and conquer Canaan, beginning with Jericho, followed by the setting up of the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and the division of the land among the tribes of Israel.

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

AND NOW . . . THE MOST EXCITING OLD TESTAMENT BOOK, AS SUMMARIZED BY THE MOST EXCITING OLD TESTAMENT VERSE:

"Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it" (1:11).

Think of it. In just three short days Israel would accomplish that goal which had eluded the nation for nearly 40 long years. The book of Joshua is the counterpart of Exodus. Exodus records how God led his people out of the land of bondage, while Joshua tells us how God led his people into the land of blessing. Moses summarizes both books in Deut. 6:23: *"And he brought us out ... that he might bring us in."*

God had in Exodus parted the waters of the Red Sea to bring his people out of Egypt. He will now part the waters of the Jordan River to bring his people into Canaan. God performs whatever is necessary to assure both the exit and entrance for his people.

These two Old Testament books review God's basic plan for all Christians. He brings us out of spiritual death by way of salvation, that he might bring us into abundant life by way of sanctification. In the Bible, Canaan is not a type or symbol for heaven, but rather speaks of that overcoming life when we walk in God's perfect will (see Heb. 4:9-11).

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Joshua.** He was the son of Nun (Ex. 33:11) and Moses' successor (Num. 27:18) who led his people Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land (Josh. 1-4).
2. What? **The book of Joshua.**
3. When and where? 1390 B.C., probably near Mt. Ephraim in Israel (Josh. 24:30).
4. Why? To record the faithfulness of God in the conquest of Canaan.
5. To whom? For the first few generations dwelling in Canaan.

KEY EVENTS

1. God's great reassurance to Joshua
2. The parting of the Jordan and the passage into Canaan
3. The appearance of heaven's divine captain

4. The fall of Jericho
5. The sin of Achan
6. The reading of the Law of Moses from Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim
7. Miracle of the long day
8. Caleb's thrilling testimony
9. The setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh
10. A civil war narrowly averted
11. Joshua's final words to Israel

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Joshua:** successor of Moses who will bring Israel into the land of blessing
2. **Rahab:** a converted former harlot in Jericho who saved her life by hiding two Israelite spies
3. **Achan:** Israelite soldier who was executed for his sin of stealing which led to the defeat of his fellow soldiers in battle
4. **Eleazar:** son of Aaron and Israel's second high priest
5. **Phinehas:** son of Eleazar and Israel's third high priest

KEY PLACES

1. **Acacia:** Israel's final camp east of the Jordan, where the two men were sent to spy out Jericho
2. **Jericho:** central city in Canaan shouted down by Israel
3. **Gilgal:** first camp of Israel on the west side of the Jordan River
4. **Ai:** small Canaanite town which initially defeated an over-confident Israelite army
5. **Mt. Ebal:** where the divine curses for disobeying the Law of God were read
6. **Mt. Gerizim:** where the divine blessings for obeying the Law of God were read
7. **Gibeon:** Canaanite settlement where inhabitants tricked Israel into signing a peace treaty
8. **Jerusalem:** capital city of the Jebusites in the time of Joshua
9. **Valley of Aijalon:** where the sun stood still and the moon stopped
10. **Shiloh:** where the Tabernacle was first set up and where the land was divided among the twelve tribes
11. **Hebron:** area requested by and given to Caleb for his inheritance

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. Joshua has been called the Ephesians of the Old Testament. In this we see the salvation of a harlot from the town of Jericho (Rahab), and the condemnation of a Hebrew from the tribe of Judah (Achan; see 6:25; 7:24-26).
2. It records the only occasion where Jesus is referred to as the captain of the Lord's Host (5:14).
3. It describes the only city in history shouted down by its enemies (6:20).
4. It gives us the account of the most unusual day in history (10:14).
5. The only Old Testament book recording the death of Balaam (13:22).

6. The second of two occasions where God tells a man to take off his shoes for he is standing on holy ground (compare 5:15 with Ex. 3:5).
7. The first circumcision performed since Israel left Egypt some 40 years ago (5:2).
8. Joshua records the first of three instances where the Jordan is supernaturally stopped (3:14-17) (compare with 2 Kings 2:8, 14).
9. The cessation of manna after being divinely provided by God for 40 years (5:12).
10. The most exciting Old Testament book closes with the thrilling testimony of an 85-year-old man (Caleb), and the wise counsel of an 110-year-old man (Joshua) (see 14, 23, 24).

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BIBLE BOOKS

Exodus:

- Exodus records how God led his people out of the land of bondage, while Joshua tells us how God led his people into the land of blessing (see Deut. 6:23).
- Both the exit of Exodus and the entrance of Joshua involved a miraculous parting of waters—in Exodus the Red Sea; in Joshua the Jordan River.
- Both books are not just literal in their discussion of exit and entrance, but symbolic as well. Believers are spiritually taken out of “Egypt” (spiritual death) and brought into “Israel” (salvation, abundant life).

Judges:

- On the whole, Joshua is the most exciting Old Testament book.
- On the whole, Judges is the most depressing Old Testament book.

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. The Captain of the Lord’s Host (5:15)
2. The Lord God of Israel (24:2)