

# Let's Worship God

4th-9th December 2017

Joshua

## The Book of Joshua

**THE PROMISED LAND**

**BOWNE**

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### **Monday -Joshua 5:13-6:14 - The LORD Appears to Joshua**

We should consider 5:13-6:5 as one unit, ignoring the division between chapter 5 and 6 and viewing 6:1 as some additional information given 'in brackets'. This approach then helps us see that 6:2-5 contain the instructions of the visitor Joshua meets in 5:13-15 - who is "the commander of the army of the LORD" (5:14) and is in fact identified as the LORD Himself ("And the LORD said to Joshua ..." - 6:2).

He appears as a warrior. He carries a sword (5:13) and reveals Himself as "the commander of the LORD's army" (5:14). What a remarkable comfort this must have been to a man and a people about to commence a military conflict! Ultimate responsibility does not rest with Joshua as commander of the army. The twelve tribes are not the only troops fighting for their cause. Joshua obviously grasps that his visitor is divine: he falls down in worship (5:14). He also removes his sandals (5:15), just as Moses his predecessor had been asked to do in the presence of God (see Exodus 3:5). Awestruck worship and reverent submission before the LORD are the appropriate starting points for any act of service to God, especially something as major as Joshua was about to embark upon.

6:1 describes the seemingly hopeless situation confronting Israel. In light of this, the LORD's instructions (6:2-5) and the obedient actions of Joshua and the people (6:6-14) seem very strange indeed! But once again, it is the ark of the LORD that takes centre stage. It is referred to 9 times in 6:6-14, stressing how central God's presence is. His people are largely spectators. If Israel only marches and shouts, there will be no doubt about who batters Jericho to the ground! Sometimes God bypasses His people's activity to enhance His own glory among His people - since we have a tendency to obscure His splendour and steal His praise.

### **Questions**

1. Who is this figure who appears to Joshua?
2. Why do you think God's method for taking Jericho seems so strange?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that God would be glorified in all things.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

"So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land." Joshua 6:27

**Praise: Psalm 103:13-18 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

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## Tuesday - Joshua 6:15-21 - Why Such Destruction?

We might ask: isn't God's command to invade Canaan and wipe out all resistance (e.g. 6:17, 21) the complete opposite of the mind and spirit of Jesus? It is important for us to understand the Old Testament's own perspective on the conquest.

Look up Genesis 15:16. God is telling Abram that He will give his descendants the Promised Land. God explained that they wouldn't inherit Canaan immediately but would come back in the fourth generation - because: "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete". This suggests that the LORD was being patient with those inhabiting the land at the time of Abram but that when their sins had reached the limit, He would use Abram's descendants to bring judgement on them.

Other Bible passages between Abram and Joshua confirm this view. The LORD would cast out the residents of Canaan because of their gross sexual perversions (Leviticus 18:24-25) and their abominable pagan practices (Deuteronomy 18:12). However Israel could not adopt a 'holier-than-you' attitude. The LORD was not bringing His people into the land because they were righteous and deserving. "Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you" (Deuteronomy 9:5).

Bible commentator Dale Ralph Davis helpfully explains: "The conquest [in Joshua] is not a bunch of land-hungry marauders wiping out hundreds of innocent God-fearing folks at the request of their vicious God. In the Biblical view, the God of the Bible uses none-too-righteous Israel as the instrument of His just judgement on a people who had persistently revelled in their iniquity. This will not answer all your dilemmas with the conquest, but you must see the Old Testament's view - the conquest is not gross injustice, but the highest justice".

## Questions

1. What was to be done with the city of Jericho and everything in it?
2. What aspect of God's character does this teach us about?

## Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for God's justice and mercy.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

"So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land." Joshua 6:27

**Praise: Psalm 103:19-21 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

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### Wednesday - Joshua 6:22-27 - Salvation even in Judgment

In between the recording of the total destruction of Jericho (v21, 24) is a story of salvation and deliverance (v22, 23, 25). Rahab and her loved ones were rescued and began a life among the people of God. Rahab had recognised the power of Israel's God and fled to His mercy. Now, she received mercy. This pagan Gentile and her family now stood within the circle of the chosen people. They rejected their past associations with the Canaanites and transferred their loyalty to Israel and their God.

For the Christian, the story of Rahab is the story of the Shepherd's search for the one lost sheep. It shows the concern of Jesus for the despised of the world. It shows the transformation of values to which followers of Christ are called. It shows that those rejected by the world are precious to God.

In v26, Joshua places a curse on anyone who would attempt to rebuild Jericho's foundations and gates. The remains of the site are to be left undisturbed. This emphasises the completeness of God's judgment against Jericho. The city was to remain that way forever as a symbol of the power of Israel's God to all who would see it. In 1 Kings 16:24 the words of the curse came true for Hiel of Bethel.

Knowledge of Joshua and his deeds spread throughout Canaan (v27). God's presence with Joshua was the reason for this "fame", for without that presence none of the miracles of ch.3-6 would have taken place. The fall and capture of Jericho served warning on the remaining inhabitants of Canaan that this people and their God were serious about their occupation of the land.

### Questions

1. In the salvation of Rahab, what can encourage you in witnessing and praying?
2. What important truth about God was emphasised by what Joshua did in v26?

### Prayer Points

1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

“So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.” Joshua 6:27

**Praise: Psalm 104:1-6 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

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## Thursday - Joshua 7:1-9 - The LORD's Burning Anger

Read the opening and closing verses of chapter 7 (v1, v26). The writer seems to 'bracket' the chapter with these verses to draw our attention to the fact that the LORD's "burning anger" is the key to understanding chapter 7. "And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel" (v1).

Verses 2-5 must then be interpreted in light of these words. Fresh from conquering Jericho, Israel suffers a surprise defeat at the hands of tiny Ai, leaving the people terrified (v5). This happened because God was angry at them. John Calvin says: "fewness of numbers (v3) was not the cause ... and ought not to bear the blame of it. The true cause was the secret counsel of God, who meant to show a sign of His anger".

These verses are telling us that God's people failed because they were under God's wrath. The Church should tremble at the thought of God's wrath. What makes us think that Israel is the only congregation who has been or is under the wrath of God?

In v6 we see that Joshua (who doesn't know what we know from v1) is devastated. There is one chief concern in his prayer in v7-9: the honour of the God of Israel. Israel's enemies would surround them and wipe out their name - and what would that do for God's great name (v9)? Israel's destruction would reflect on the LORD's reputation.

What better prayer could we pray? "O Lord ... what will you do for your great name?" At times we will find ourselves in a similar position to Joshua - times when confusion strikes and we haven't a clue what God is about. Our response should be the same as Joshua's: anguished prayer to a mystifying God, pleading both our danger and His honour.

## Questions

1. What was the sole reason for the defeat at Ai?
2. What was Joshua's main concern?

## Prayer Points

1. Pray that the Lord's name would be glorified.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## Memory Verse

"So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land." Joshua 6:27

**Praise: Psalm 104:7-12 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

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### Friday - Joshua 7:10-12 - The LORD's Burning Anger ... at whom?

Look again at v11: "Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings". Why does God say that all of Israel has sinned and all of them have stolen? V1 told us that: "Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things". But either side of that, v1 also says: "But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things ... And the anger of the LORD burned against the people of Israel".

This chapter contains important teaching about shared responsibility in sin and judgement. All of Israel suffered because of the sin of Achan. In our self-centred, individualistic culture that seems very unfair. Our natural response is to complain. But a better response would be to fear. Fear because the sin of one man turned away God's presence from a whole people. Fear because that man's whole household was drawn into his punishment (v24). Too often we have far too tame a view of sin, instead of fearing its infectious contamination.

We might still ask why Achan's family was executed with him in v24. It is possible that they were accomplices who knew about his crime, though the text doesn't tell us that. It may represent that a man's influence - for good or for bad - extended far beyond himself. What we do know for sure is that God is teaching Israel a solemn and memorable lesson in this chapter about the seriousness of sin and its knock-on effects on the people of God. We also know that God is a completely holy and good Judge who always does what is right.

### Questions

1. What does this incident teach us about sin?
2. What does this mean for the church today?

### Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would put sin to death.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

"So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land." Joshua 6:27

**Praise: Psalm 104:13-18 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

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## **Saturday - Joshua 7:12-15 - The LORD's Burning Anger ... revealed**

The structure of chapter 7 leads us to v12 as the very core - the hinge of the whole passage. Hardly anything could be more frightening than to hear the LORD threaten in the second part of the verse: "I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you".

Nothing is more crucial than the presence of the LORD with His people. Moses - Joshua's predecessor - said to God after the people had been given God's law at Mount Sinai: "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" (Ex. 3:15, 16). The LORD's presence with them was what made the Israelites distinct, according to Moses. Now this presence was about to be forfeited. Nothing should disturb God's people more than the loss of God Himself from among them.

Retaining God's presence would be costly: they would have to destroy the devoted things. Sometimes extreme action must be taken if the presence of God is to remain. This is one reason why the discipline exercised by the church leadership is so important. Perhaps the apparent absence of God from parts of the church is due to our unwillingness to purge the evil from our midst. It is too easy for churches to become careless about sin.

However, in wrath God remembers mercy. He doesn't leave Israel guessing but clearly reveals the cause of His displeasure and tells them what to do about it (v13, 14). Through these fearful words shines God's clear desire to restore His people to His favour.

## **Questions**

1. What was God's threat to Israel and why was this so significant?
2. "Retaining God's presence can be costly". What might this mean for you?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

"So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land." Joshua 6:27

**Praise: Psalm 104:19-24 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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