

# Bible Stories

## CONQUEST

Joshua 1:2-8  
August 27, 2022

The book of Joshua begins where Deuteronomy left off – with the death of Moses:

*“Moses my servant is dead. Get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them. <sup>3</sup> I will give you every place where you set your foot, just as I promised Moses. <sup>4</sup> Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates to the Great Sea on the west. <sup>5</sup> No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. <sup>6</sup> “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. <sup>7</sup> Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” {Joshua 1:2-8}*

It was not long after Joshua gave the order to move that the Children of Israel finally stood at the edge of the Jordan River. But, before crossing, Joshua needed to know the true situation in Jericho, so he sent 2 men to investigate.

Arriving in Jericho the spies found themselves at the inn of Rahab.

Scripture identifies Rahab as a *zōnāh* - a prostitute - but she seems more like a landlady and the 1<sup>st</sup>-century Jewish Historian, Josephus, states that she kept an inn.

In Hebrew, the consonants that comprise the word *“prostitute”* are *znh*. They are the same consonants that comprise the word for a woman who provides food and provisions. Interesting.

At any rate, what is important to this story is that Rahab, a Canaanite woman, welcomed 2 Hebrews spies, hid them, lied to her own people to spare their lives, and gave them instructions on how get back to their own camp safely.

And here’s why she did it:

**Rahab to the Spies:** *I know your God has given you this land. We are all afraid. We have heard about the Red Sea and what you did to Sihon and Og - the kings of the Amorites. We have no courage left, because the Lord your God is the God of Heaven and Earth. --- I have dealt kindly with you, so swear to me that when you take the city, you will spare me and my family. {Joshua 2:9-13}*

**Spies:** *We promise – with a few conditions – tie a red cord in the window, gather your entire family into the house and don’t tell anyone. If you don’t abide by these conditions, we will be free of our promise. {Joshua 2:14, 20}*

**When the spies finally arrived back in camp they reported to Joshua:** *The Lord will surely give this land to us because all the inhabitants of the land are terrified of us. {a very different report from the one 40 years before – see Numbers 13-14}*

**Yahweh to Joshua:** *Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of Israel. They will know that I am with you just as I was with Moses. {Joshua 3:7}*

**Joshua to the Israelites:** *Come and listen to the words of Yahweh. This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you....*

Israel broke camp and headed for the Jordan – the Ark leading the way. The Jordan was at flood stage, yet the priests, carrying the Ark, walked right in and stood on dry land in the middle of the river until the entire nation had crossed safely. Finally! The Land of Promise.

When the Amorite kings and the Canaanite kings, west of the Jordan, heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan, *“their hearts melted and there was no spirit in them any longer.”*

Before Israel continued into the Land, a couple of things had to happen:

- All the men born in the wilderness had to be circumcised.

- Passover was celebrated – this included the eating of some of the fruit of the Land – the next day the Manna stopped.

Let the CONQUEST begin....

### First up, Jericho.

Jericho was tightly shut – no one going in or out.

**Yahweh to Joshua:** *For 6 days all the armed men are to march around the city as seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> When you hear the sound of the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout. The walls of the city will collapse and the people will go straight in. {Joshua 6:3-5}*

And that is exactly what happened ---- The people gave a loud shout of victory - the walls fell - the Israelites ran straight into the heart of the city – Jericho was totally destroyed ---- except for Rahab and her family.

Meanwhile, someone was disobeying the direct order not to take plunder from the city....

### Next up Ai.

The Ai spies reported that it would take 3,000 men **MAX** to take the city – Ai would be **NO** problem.

3,000 men went to Ai, 36 died and the rest were chased back to where they came from – **Disaster!**

The people became terrified.

What went wrong? Why had Yahweh failed them?

Joshua tore his clothes and laid down in front of the Ark:

**Joshua:** *Sovereign LORD, why did you bring us across the Jordan if You were only going to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites? We should have been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! O Lord, what can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? The Canaanites and the other people of the land will hear about this and they will destroy us. What will you do then for your own great name? {Joshua 7:7-9}*

This sounds very familiar – blaming God for the situation – yet strange, coming from Joshua {see Exodus 14:11-12; 17:3; Numbers 20:3-5}.

**Yahweh:** *Stand up! Why have you fallen on your face? Israel has sinned and transgressed my covenant. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That's why you cannot stand against your enemies. I will not be with you until you destroy what was devoted to destruction.... In the morning you are to cast lots and he who is guilty shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done a disgraceful thing in Israel! {Joshua 7:10-15}*

Lots were cast: Judah → Zerahites → Zabdi → Achan!!

**Achan:** *I have sinned against Yahweh! I took a beautiful mantle, 200 shekels of silver and a bar of gold. They are in a hole under my tent.*

Achan, his entire household, and all that belonged to him were destroyed.

After the sin had been removed from Israel, Yahweh once again told Joshua to take Ai ---- This time, victory.

### The Gibeonite Situation

Joshua and Israel were gaining quite the reputation. The local kings gathered to fight – except for the Gibeonites – they had a different strategy: Pretend we don't live anywhere near the action **{they sent their envoys with worn out wineskins, sacks, sandals, clothes and stale bread}**.

Joshua took the Gibeonite Envoys at their word. He did not ask too many questions. He did not consult with God. Instead, he decided to make a peace treaty with them. 3 days later he learned the truth.

**Joshua:** *Why did you lie to me? You are cursed – you will be slaves for the house of God.*

**Envoys:** *We were told that your God commanded you to take the land and we were afraid. We are in your hands, do what seems right to you.*

{this “curse” would become a blessing to the Gibeonites. They were given a special place near the presence of God and later history shows that they remained among God’s people}

## The Longest Day

When the king of Jebus (Jerusalem) heard about the treaty between Gibeon and Israel, he and the 5 kings of the Amorites attacked Gibeon.

**The Gibeonites to Joshua:** *Do not abandon us! Come quickly and save us!*

**Yahweh to Joshua:** *Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. They will not be able to withstand you. {Joshua 10:8}*

Joshua and his men marched all night and took the enemy by surprise.

- **Joshua 10:10-11** - The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel, who defeated them in a great victory at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. <sup>11</sup> As they fled before Israel, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

It was starting to get dark but the battle wasn’t over, so Joshua said to Yahweh, in the presence of his men, **“Sun stand still over Gibeon and moon over the valley of Aijalon.”**

- **Joshua 10:13-14** - So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. <sup>14</sup> There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a man. **Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!**

Joshua and the army of Israel completed the Southern Campaign destroying Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron and Debir.

The king of Hazor called for reinforcements from the kings of Madon, Shimron and Achshaph – from the kings north of the hill country - in the Arabah - south of Chinneroth in the lowlands - and Dor to the west – to the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Hivites.....

They all gathered to fight against Israel.

**Yahweh:** *Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel, slain. {Joshua 11:6-8}*

**Joshua 11:23 - So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.**

## What do we do with these stories?

The first few verses of **“Joshua”** give us the formula for the successful conquest of ancient Canaan:

- “I will give you every place you set your foot”
- “I will never leave you or forsake you”
- “Be strong and courageous”
- “Be careful to obey all the laws My servant Moses gave you – do not turn to the right not to the left..... meditate on them day and night....

Strength, courage and would be required, but it would be **OBEDIENCE** that would open the door for Yahweh to act on behalf of Israel and do what He had promised to do:

- **Genesis 15:18–21** - On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram saying, “To your offspring I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River, <sup>19</sup> *the land of* the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup> the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, <sup>21</sup> the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”
- **Exodus 3:8** - And I have come down to deliver them from the hand of *the* Egyptians and to bring them up from this land to a good and wide land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.
- **Deuteronomy 6:1–3** - Now this *is* the commandment, the rules and the regulations, that Yahweh your God charged to teach *to you for you* to observe in the land that you *are* about to cross *over* into to take possession of, <sup>2</sup> so that you may revere Yahweh your God by keeping all his statutes and his commandments that I *am* commanding you, you and your children and grandchildren, all the days of your life and so you may live long *lives*. <sup>3</sup> And you shall hear, Israel, and be careful to observe *these instructions*, so that it may go well for you and that you may multiply greatly, *just* as Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, promised you, *in* a land with milk and honey....