



Key Themes in the book of Joshua

1. **The Promised Land.** Gaining possession of the land is a central theme of Joshua.

- The land of Israel (Canaan) was part of God's **permanent**, unconditional covenant (Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:8).

Israel was defined by twelve tribes, originated in the twelve sons of Jacob (Remember, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Jacob's name was later changed to **Israel**. His twelve sons are noted in Exodus 1:2-5. The Bible calls the people of Israel, "*The children of Israel.*"

- Before they could possess the land promised to them, they would enter bondage, as slaves, in Egypt for over 200 years (Exodus 1:7-14).
- Moses led *the children of Israel* out of their bondage, and Joshua will lead them into their freedom and possession of the land (Joshua 1:1-4).

2. **The Destruction of the Canaanites.** Standing in the way of possessing the land were the Canaanites. God instructed the *children of Israel* to completely annihilate the Canaanites—all of them, man, woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass.... We will discuss the questions that arise from this God directed slaughter of an entire people group. We will answer the question, "Does God have a right to bring judgment on sinning humanity?"

3. **God's intervention through miracles.** What was the purpose of miracles?

- The miracles authenticated the God of Israel (2:8-11; 3:10).
- The miracles authenticated Joshua's leadership (3:7; 4:14).
- The miracles gave the physical victory to Israel over the enemy (10:9-14).

4. **Faith and rest.** A recurring theme we will see throughout the book of Joshua is **faith**. Faith was the key to victory for Israel. Likewise, **faith** today is the key to eternal life. We are saved, not by possessing, or destroying, or miracles, our victory over death comes solely by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Joshua and the children of Israel will find rest through faith, but it was only temporary. Permanent rest is found only in Christ.

A key verse in Joshua is 11:23:

So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

Today, in our world of lockdowns, and troubles, we too can find rest. We can use the book of Joshua to help us remember God is faithful and always keeps his promises. We will see the characteristics of God at work as we move through this historical book of the Bible.