

# The Conquest of Canaan

Passages from the Book of Joshua

Document

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## Joshua Takes Command [Joshua 1 \(NASB\)](#)

Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses... No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. **Be strong and courageous**, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. **Only be strong and very courageous**; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go... Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.**"

Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, "Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, to possess it.'"

## The Fall of Jericho [Joshua 2-6 \(NASB\)](#)

Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly... saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went and came into the house of a harlot<sup>1</sup> whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. It was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from... the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them... So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate.

Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan... whom you utterly destroyed. When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore, please swear to me by the LORD, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death." So the men said to her, "Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when the LORD gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."

Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall. She said to them, "Go to the hill country, so that the pursuers will not

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<sup>1</sup> a prostitute

happen upon you, and hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return. Then afterward you may go on your way.” ....

They departed and came to the hill country, and remained there for three days until the pursuers returned [to Jericho]... Then the two men returned and came down from the hill country and crossed over and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and they related to him all that had happened to them. They said to Joshua, “Surely the LORD has given all the land into our hands; moreover, all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us.” ....

Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in. The LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors. You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days. Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead.”

So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the Ark of the Covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD.” Then he said to the people, “Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the LORD.” And it was so...

Now Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD... they marched around the city once and returned to the camp; they did so for six days.

Then on the seventh day they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times. At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, “Shout! For the LORD has given you the city. The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent...” So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city. They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the harlot’s house and bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her.” So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab... they also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel. They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. However, Rahab the harlot and her father’s household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel... for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, “Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and [re]builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates.” So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

## Joshua Destroys the Amorites [Joshua 10](#) (NASB)

**Background:** *Joshua and the Israelites made a treaty with the Canaanite city-state of Gibeon, which alarms the kings of the surrounding city-states, who form an alliance against Israel.*

Now it came about when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai, and had utterly destroyed it (just as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king), and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were within their land, that he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city... and all its men were mighty... So the five kings of the Amorites... gathered together and went up, they with all their armies, and camped by Gibeon and fought against it.

Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, saying, “Do not abandon your servants; come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites that live in the hill country have assembled against us.” So Joshua went up from Gilgal... The LORD said to Joshua, **“Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you.”** So Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal. And the LORD confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them...

Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

“O sun, stand still at Gibeon,  
And O moon in the valley of Aijalon.”  
So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,  
Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies.

Is it not written in the [book of Jashar](#)?<sup>2</sup> And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. There was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel....



John Martin, *Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still upon Gibeon* (1816)

### Victory at Makkedah

Now these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in the cave at Makkedah.<sup>3</sup> It was told Joshua, saying, “The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah.” Joshua said, “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and assign men by it to guard them, but do not stay there yourselves; pursue your enemies... Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand.” It came about when Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter, until they were destroyed, and the survivors who remained of them had entered the fortified cities, that all the people returned to the camp to Joshua...

Then Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave.” They did so, and brought these five kings out to him from the cave... When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came near and put their feet on their necks. Joshua then said to them, **“Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.”** So afterward Joshua struck them and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees; and they hung on the trees until evening. It came about at sunset that Joshua gave a command, and

<sup>2</sup> The Book of Jashar (Book of the Just Man) is an unknown book mentioned more than once in the Hebrew Bible, which may have contained a full poetic account of the battle that is quoted only briefly in the Book of Joshua.

<sup>3</sup> Note the cowardly behavior of the Amorite kings and contrast it with Joshua’s leadership.

they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and put large stones over the mouth of the cave...

Now Joshua captured Makkedah on that day, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword; he utterly destroyed it and every person who was in it. He left no survivor. Thus he did to the king of Makkedah just as he had done to the king of Jericho....

Thus Joshua struck all the land, the hill country... and the lowland and the slopes and all their kings. He left no survivor, but he utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded... Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.

### Joshua's Old Age

[Joshua 13](#) (NASB)

Now Joshua was old and advanced in years when the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed..."

### Joshua's Farewell Address

[Joshua 23-24](#) (NASB)

Now it came about after many days, when the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side, and Joshua was old, advanced in years, that Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and their heads and their judges and their officers, and said to them, "I am old, advanced in years. And you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God is He who has been fighting for you... The LORD your God, He will thrust them out from before you and drive them from before you; and you will possess their land, just as the LORD your God promised you. **Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you will not associate with these nations, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make anyone swear by them, or serve them, or bow down to them...** So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the LORD your God. For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you."

....

"Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage... We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God."

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It came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash.

Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

# READING GUIDE

and Discussion Questions

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## The Conquest of Canaan

Passages from the Book of Joshua

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER (as you read):

What were Yahweh's recurring instructions to Joshua at the beginning of the passage? How do these instructions set the tone for the rest of the passage?

Jericho: Who was the *underdog*?

What did the Israelites do to Jericho once they took it?

During the Battle of Gibeon, what did Joshua command to stand still? What does this say about the ancient Israelite *cosmology*?

Why was Joshua so successful in battle?

Did Joshua complete the conquest of Canaan?

Joshua says that the Israelites will prosper as long as...

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

DESCRIBE Joshua and the Israelites as they appear in these passages.

How is Yahweh portrayed in the Book of Joshua?

WHO CONQUERED CANAAN?