

Joshua Son Of Nun

'Moses spoke to the Lord asking Him, "Let Yahweh, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation. A man who may go out before them and who may come in before them, who may lead them out and who may bring them in so the congregation of Yahweh not be as sheep who have no shepherd." God said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Holy Spirit and lay your hands on him. Set him before Eleazar the priest and before the congregation, and commission him in their sight. You will impart your honour on him so the congregation of the Children of Israel may obey. He will stand before Eleazar the priest who will inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before God. At Joshua's word they will go out and at his word they will come in, both he and all the Children of Israel with him, all of the congregation." Moses did as God commanded him and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest and before the congregation. Moses laid his hands on Joshua and commissioned him as God spoke by Moses' (Numbers 27:15 to 23).

Moses gave Joshua a powerful name. In Hebrew, Joshua the son of Nun would be Joshua Ben Nun, Ben meaning 'son of'. He was from the tribe of Ephraim. Joshua was known as a 'prince' or strong leader. 'Send out men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I give to the Children of Israel. From every tribe of their fathers send a man, everyone a prince among them ... From the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun' (Numbers 13:2 & 8). It was Moses who changed Joshua's name just before he was sent out to spy on the enemy. 'These are the names of the men who Moses sent to spy out the land. Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua' (Numbers 13:16). From that day onwards, Hoshea, meaning 'Salvation' was called Joshua, meaning 'YHWH is Salvation'. God knew Joshua by name. His name in Hebrew was Yehoshua, the same name as the Hebrew name of our Lord and Saviour, Yeshua/Jesus, Who was the human embodiment of the holy name of God, which means 'YHWH is Salvation'. The part of the Jordan River where Jesus was baptised by John was the same part of the river where Joshua crossed over 1,400 years earlier.

Joshua was utterly devoted to God and was very dedicated to wholly serving the Lord from a young age. When the other Israelites went about their daily lives, Joshua remained in the Tent of Meeting – the ancient equivalent of a synagogue. 'The Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend. Moses went again into the camp but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart out of the Tabernacle' (Exodus 33:11). Joshua's devotion to God was noticed and he was given leadership roles at a young age. Joshua was the man who led the Israelites into their Promised Land. The first mention of Joshua in the Bible was dramatic. He had been chosen to lead the army and was told to choose his soldiers then go out and fight the enemy. Joshua was known to be one of Moses' chosen men (Numbers 11:28). 'Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us and go out, fight with Amalek" ... So Joshua did as Moses told him and fought with Amalek ... Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Yahweh said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the sky" (Exodus 17:9 & 10, 13 & 14).

The next mention of Joshua was equally as dramatic. Joshua, Moses and over seventy other men actually saw the Living God, Who spoke to them. The men were not frightened by the holy presence of God but sat down to enjoy a picnic. After they had enough food, God called Moses and Joshua to climb the mountain to receive the first Ten Commandments written by the finger of God. We can make two important notes here: The Ten Commandments were written in characters so small the entire Law and all of God's commands were able to be contained on both sides of two small, flat pieces of stone that Moses could carry in one hand, plus, Moses and the Children of Israel all spoke Hebrew so therefore the famous Ten Commandments were written by God Himself in the Israelite language of Hebrew. 'Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu (Aaron's two eldest sons) and seventy of the elders of Israel went up (the mountain). They saw the God of Israel. Under His feet was like a paved work of sapphire stone like the skies for clearness. He did not lay His hand on the nobles of the Children of Israel. They saw God and ate and drank. Yahweh said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the Law and the commands I have written so you may teach them." Moses rose up with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up the mountain of God ... When God finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave to Moses the two tablets of the testimony, stone tablets, written with the finger of God' (Exodus 24:9 to 13; 31:18). 'Moses (with Joshua) turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand (one hand), tablets that were written on both their sides, on the one side and on the other they were written. The tablets were the work of God and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets. When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted he said to Moses, "There is the noise of war in the camp" (Exodus 32:15 to 17). It was not the sound of war but of sin, dancing, singing and worshipping the golden calf (Exodus 32:18 & 19).

Of all the millions of Israelites who left Egypt, plus the mixed multitude of Egyptians and other races that joined them during the mass exodus and in the wilderness (Exodus 12:38; Numbers 11:4), only two men,

Joshua and Caleb lived to enter the Promised Land. They seemed to be the only two people who wholly followed the Lord and they were the only two spies who gave the Promised Land a good report when the other ten spies were doubtful and gave an 'evil report' regarding the land (Numbers 13:30 & 32). The Lord said, 'None of the men who came up out of Egypt from twenty years old and upward will see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob because they have not wholly followed Me, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, because they have wholly followed God' (Numbers 32:11 & 12). Caleb was from the tribe of Judah (Numbers 13:6).

Joshua was a warrior but even he needed to receive encouragement from God. The Lord had to encourage him because the people tended to have a negative outlook whereas the Lord, Who knows the end from the beginning, knew they would win their battles. 'No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses so I will be with you. I will not fail you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage for you will cause this people to inherit the land I promised to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Take care to do according to the law which Moses My servant commanded you. Do not turn from to the right hand or to the left so you may have good success wherever you go. This book of the law will not depart out of your mouth, but you will meditate on it day and night so you may observe to do according to all that is written therein. You will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid, neither be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go' (Joshua 1:5 to 9).

Joshua met the Lord face to face and worshipped Him. 'It happened, when Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold a Man stood in front of him with His sword drawn in His hand. Joshua went to Him and asked, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" He said (to Joshua), "No, I have come now as commander of Yahweh's army." Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshipped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" The Prince of Yahweh's army said to Joshua, "Take off your shoes for the place on which you stand is holy ground." Joshua did so' (Joshua 5:13 to 15). If this Man had been a holy angel, Joshua would not have worshipped Him.

No other leader mentioned in the Bible equalled Joshua's conquests. Under the command of Moses, Joshua won victories over the evil Amalek, the Amorites and Bashan. The Book of Joshua records more of his exploits. Solely by faith, trust, obedience and with the help of the Lord, Joshua conquered seven pagan nations or tribes and thirty-one different kingdoms. Joshua was a faithful warrior and was the deputy of Moses as a young man. Joshua learned everything he knew from Moses. He led the Israelites into Canaan later called the Land of Israel, he conquered all the enemies of the Israelites, he established peace for the Twelve Tribes of Israel and did not claim any land for himself until all of his kinsmen had received their inheritance. It was Joshua who led the Israelites to victory and took the city of Jericho (Joshua 2:1 to 6:26). His victories cleared the eastern side of the Jordan River for some of the Israelite tribes to settle. On the western side of the Jordan River the Hittites, more Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, Jericho and Ai were all overcome and they were all greater in number than the Israelites. Joshua and the Israelite army were able to achieve this impossible task because – 'Yahweh was with Joshua and his fame was in all the land' (Joshua 6:27).

After all the positive words of encouragement, suddenly there was defeat. Joshua was mortified and fearful. 'The men of Ai struck about thirty-six men of them and chased them from before the gate even to Shebarim, and struck them at the descent. The hearts of the people melted and became like water. Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the Ark of God until the evening, he and the elders of Israel and they put dust on their heads. Joshua said, "Alas Lord God, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to cause us to perish? I wish we had been content and lived beyond the Jordan! Oh Lord, what can I say after Israel has turned their backs before their enemies? The Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it and will surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. What will You do for your great name?" (Joshua 7:5 to 9).

The Lord immediately gave His answer. Some of the men of Judah had taken the idols and not destroyed them. This is what the Lord said to Joshua. "Get up! Why have you fallen on your face like that? Israel has sinned. Yes, they have transgressed My covenant that I commanded them. Yes, they have even taken of the devoted things, have stolen and also deceived. They have even put it among their own stuff. Therefore the Children of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies because they have become devoted for destruction. I will not be with you any more unless you destroy the devoted things from among you. Get up! Sanctify the people and say, "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, for the God of Israel says, 'There is a devoted thing in the midst of you, Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the devoted thing from among you'" (Joshua 7:10 to 13).

The entire family were slaughtered. It would have been terrible for his innocent wife and children, animals and livestock but the Lord ordered everyone to be slain and burned. 'Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his cattle, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that he had, and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? God will trouble you today." All Israel stoned him with stones and they burned them with fire and stoned them with stones' (Joshua 7:24 to 26). After the purging of sin from the camp, Joshua and his army wrought a great victory over Ai (Joshua 10:40 & 42). Joshua and Caleb spent their entire adult lives obeying God's every command, loyally, faithfully, fearlessly, righteously, with humility and honour. As a result of their obedience they were the only two people blessed to enter the Promised Land, to fulfil God's plan to build the nation of Israel so our Messiah could eventually come from Israel. When King Jabin from Hazor in the north formed an axis of evil with nine other kingdoms to come against the tiny Israelite army who were advancing from the south at the Waters of Merom, Joshua's men won the battle and took the cities too. The Land of Israel was won for God and for the Children of Israel under the command of Joshua (Joshua 10:1 to 43; 11:1 to 23). 'Joshua took the whole land (the Land of Israel) according to what the Lord God spoke to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to (the Children of) Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. The land (of Israel) had rest from war' (Joshua 11:23).

When the Children of Israel overcame the land and drove out the inhabitants, killing most of them, some people have found it hard to understand why men, women, children and even animals were killed. The reason is given in the Bible. God removed people from their lands, not because the conquerors were righteous but because of extreme sin like idolatry, human and especially child sacrifice, ancestor worship, rampant homosexuality, violence and other evils. 'Do not proudly assume Your God has thrust them out from before you because you are righteous, it was because of the wickedness of these nations God does drive them out from before you. Not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart do you go in to possess their land but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God does drive them out from before you' (Deuteronomy 9:4 & 5). The people living in Canaan were so wicked, God could not allow them to continue. Their religious beliefs were in direct contrast to what God commanded. They worshipped many false gods and goddesses, Baal, Asherah, fertility and practiced ritual prostitution, homosexuality and paedophilia, defiling every child then burning them alive on altars to appease their false gods. God determined to stop the cruelty and the immorality. 'Every abomination to God, which He hates, have they done to their gods, for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods' (Deuteronomy 12:31). Archaeology has discovered hundreds of tiny urns containing the ashes and tiny bone fragments of babies and small children who had been sacrificed to Baal. To leave any of the Canaanites alive could have resulted in their evil practices continuing through children that became adults so even the young children were killed. That may seem a bit savage because in our time civilians are spared and only soldiers are targeted but there was a good reason for that command. Archaeology has also discovered the Canaanites equivalent of shocking pornography. What they found were images of greatly exaggerated genitalia. The land had to be cleansed of such practices. It was judgement on a particularly evil culture.

God warned the Children of Israel to completely destroy the enemy because they would become 'a snare and a trap to you, a scourge in your sides and thorns in your eyes' (Joshua 23:13). Judah was the only tribe that completely obeyed God and destroyed all of the Canaanites living in their land. The other eleven tribes stopped obeying the command to wipe them out as soon as peace was declared. After a time of peace the Israelites became complacent and began to intermarry with the surviving Canaanites and included idol worship into their daily lives. That brought terrible consequences to the Children of Israel. They became slaves and were kept in cruel bondage under Jabin and his deputy Sisera. The Canaanites re-established themselves. Thugs roamed around raping, pillaging and enslaving the Israelites who lived in hopelessness and terror. Eventually, they cried out and were delivered. They walked with God for a time and then fell back into sin. That pattern continued for generation after generation. Eventually, during the exile to Babylon, the Children of Israel woke up to their sin and put all idolatry out of their lives. They returned to Israel and built the second Temple so when Jesus came they were a people dedicated to God. The Lord is restoring Israel and the Jewish people so when Jesus comes the second time, Israel will be ready to receive their King. He will rule from Jerusalem. We have the dedication of Joshua to thank for the initial building of Israel as a nation. 'Joshua sent the people away, every person to their inheritance. After these things happened, Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of God died, being one hundred ten years old. They buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, and had known all the work of God, the things He had done for Israel' (Joshua 24:28 to 31).

Amen and God bless you.

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