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**BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK**

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***STUDIES IN  
JOSHUA  
JUDGES  
RUTH***

by

Willard W. Winter

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## DEDICATION

To the Students of  
The Cincinnati Bible Seminary

Past and present with whom the author has  
spent many pleasant hours drinking deeply  
from the Well of Life, the Word of God.



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## PREFACE

Joshua, Judges, and Ruth form a unit of three books linking the history of the Pentateuch with the history of the monarchy. The period covered by the books was transitional. All the exhilaration of a new adventure pervaded the lives of the people of Israel, and this excitement is reflected in the historical record preserved for modern readers.

In this volume, *Studies in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*, acknowledgement is made of the material used by J. W. McGarvey in his *Classnotes in Sacred History*. Many gospel preachers have been blessed by the questions which form the bulk of the syllabus used in his classroom, and many of these notes are reflected in the questions used in this volume to stimulate the study of the reader. As is evident, the number of questions in *Studies in Joshua, Judges and Ruth* is larger than number used by McGarvey in the notes preserved from his classroom lectures.

The King James Version of the Bible has been followed, but notation is made where the American Standard Version provides insight into an understanding of the verses. In each chapter the questions are based on specific verses, and with each question the verses most pertinent are listed. Since the Bible is its own best commentary, constant reference is made to the Bible passages which are most helpful in understanding the text under consideration.

It is the hope of the author that the students will first read the Bible text itself. Next consideration should be given to the general outline of each chapter. The "Lessons for Learning" are provided with the thought of their being used for teaching lessons or preaching sermons from each individual chapter. Specific and detailed points of interest are brought out in the questions and answers. At the close of each chapter ten review questions are provided. Through the use of these various devices as aids for study, it is hoped

that the volume in hand may be used in many different kinds of study groups with profit for all.

May each one who opens the Bible study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

# INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA

The book of Joshua opens the section of the Bible commonly called the history books. The history books are twelve in number when we divide the Old Testament into sections of law, history, poetry, major prophets, and minor prophets.

Joshua is a part of that section of the Old Testament called the Former Prophets when we distinguish the former prophets from the latter prophets. The history in the book begins the story of Israel as a nation. It is, therefore, quite properly called the first book of the history of Israel.

## NAME

The book of Joshua derives its name from the principal character in the book. His name is a Hebrew name meaning "the Lord saves." The Hebrew word is transliterated into the Greek language to form the name given to Jesus. The similarity between the names can be seen even in the English forms—Joshua and Jesus.

## DATE

The book continues the story of the people of Israel from the point where the Pentateuch leaves it. It begins immediately after the death of Moses. The people of Israel mourned for thirty days after Moses' death. When this period of mourning was over, God gave the command to Joshua to move the people of Israel across the Jordan River from the east side to the west side. This was their entrance into the Promised Land.

The book closes with the death and burial of Joshua and his contemporary, the high priest, Eleazar (Joshua 24:29-33). The book, therefore, covers the lifetime of God's great captain and Moses' successor. The exact span of his life cannot be accurately determined. It is a fair assumption, however, that he was about the same age as

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Caleb. Joshua and Caleb were the two faithful spies sent out by Moses (Numbers 13). Joshua and Caleb were the only two men over twenty years of age when they left Egypt to arrive in the land flowing with milk and honey. Caleb tells us that he was eighty-five years old when he asked permission of Joshua to go down to Hebron and settle the land there (Joshua 14:10). He said that he was forty years old when he was sent out as a spy.

The Bible also tells us that Joshua was 110 years old when he died (Joshua 24:29).

If Joshua were the same age as Caleb, then the book covers a span of some thirty years. Forty of the forty-five years between the spying out of the land and the settling of it were spent in wandering. Five years were spent in subduing it by such campaigns as the battle with the five kings in the South and the kings under Jabin in the North. There would then be twenty-five years of peaceful administration in Palestine for the man described as Moses' minister (Joshua 1:1).

The date of the exodus can be rather firmly established as 1447. Forty years were spent in wandering, meaning that the people of Israel came to Palestine about 1407. If Joshua died some thirty years later, the book would cover the span between 1407 and 1377.

Josephus says that Joshua was eighty-five when he succeeded Moses (*Antiquities*, V, i, 29). Those who hold to an earlier date for the exodus (for example around 1491 B.C.) would then date the events in Joshua correspondingly earlier and have them conclude sometime around 1425 B.C. Those critics who argue for a later date and place the exodus in the nineteenth dynasty of Egypt under Rameses, would place the events of Joshua somewhere near the close of the thirteenth century or 1200 B.C. It seems impossible to hold to either of these dates in light of the statement of I Kings 6:1 that the Temple was begun 480

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years after the exodus. We can be fairly sure that Solomon's temple was erected in 967 B.C., thus placing the exodus around 1447. The dates for Joshua would thus best be set between 1407 and 1377 B.C.

### AUTHORSHIP

In the Talmud (*Baba Bathra*, 15 a) the Jewish tradition ascribes the authorship of the book to Joshua. The translators of the Greek version entitled the book with the Greek form of Joshua's name, thus indicating their belief that Joshua was the chief actor and author. Dr. Edward J. Young said that the author of the book in its present form could not be Joshua because it records events that were after him. He cited as examples such events as the conquest of Hebron by Caleb, Debir by Othniel, and Lashem by the Danites.

The last chapter records the death of Joshua and also the death of Eleazar. If this last paragraph were penned by a later author, there is really hardly any reason why Joshua could not have written the body of the work. Throughout the book we find statements such as "unto this day," indicating the passage of some time, but two or three decades are a considerable number of years. There is evidence that the book was written by one who had been an eyewitness to the events. Joshua 5:1 carries the statement, "We crossed over."

When Rahab was saved, she took her place in the midst of the Israelites. When the book was written, she was still alive. Joshua 6:25 says: "But Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all that she had did Joshua save alive, and she dwelt in the midst of Israel unto this day."

Since the book was evidently written by one who was contemporary with the events, there is hardly any reason

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for denying that Joshua wrote the book. Those events which are also recorded in the book of Judges are evidently "flash-backs." The record in Judges is a recapitulation of some of the things which had happened in the times of Joshua (Judges 2:10; Joshua 15:13-19; and Judges 1:12-15)

### PURPOSE

The book of Joshua is not intended merely as a continuation of the history of Israel from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua. It does fulfill this immediate purpose. Neither should it be called only a description of the acts of Joshua. The real purpose is to show how the faithful covenant-God fulfilled His promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:18; cf. Joshua 1:2-6).

This book also presents a typical entrance of God's faithful people into the blessings of His promises. The history of Joshua is used in this fashion by the apostle Paul in Hebrews, chapter 4. The similarity between the entrance of God's people into Canaan and the final triumph of God's people in the new Jerusalem is so striking that the King James Version gives this rendering of Hebrews 4:8: "For if Jesus had given them rest He would not have spoken afterward on another day." Jesus is the Anglicized form of the Greek name given to the only begotten son of God. The Hebrew form would have been translated *Joshua*. The reference of the apostle Paul in Hebrews 4:8 is evidently to the work of Joshua, as he led God's people into a promised rest. If that were the only rest God had prepared for His people, there would have been no mention of it in the Psalms of David (Hebrews 4:3, 4, 7; cf. Psalms 95:7-11).

We can hardly read the story of Joshua without realizing how God's people will one day be led into the glories of Heaven by their Saviour, Jesus Christ.

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### PLAN

The book is a straightforward historical narrative. Some of the passages are mingled history and exhortation, but the book is divided very neatly into two equal historical parts. The first part describes the conquest of the land; the second part describes the settlement of the land. The history is closed with a record of the great valedictory address by Joshua, Moses' minister and God's man for the hour. His ringing cry: "Choose you this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15), is one of the best-known passages of the Old Testament. It logically concludes a history.

### OUTLINE

Many outlines are given for this first of the twelve books of history. Most of them recognize a division which comes at chapter 13. The first twelve chapters describe the battles which Joshua fought in conquering the land. The last twelve chapters describe his efforts to see God's people comfortably settled in their new homes. The following outline is sufficient to bring the major events quickly to the attention of the reader.

It can be seen readily that the two parts, or halves, of the book correspond exactly to one another both in form and in content. The events described in 1:1—5:12 are preparatory to the conquest of Canaan. The conferences held by Joshua after the distribution of the land by lot (23:1—24:28) had no other object than to establish the covenant people firmly in the inheritance bestowed upon them by God. He exhorted them to be faithful to the Lord.

As chapter 12 rounds off the first part as something of an appendix which completes the history of the conquest of the land, so chapter 22 is obviously an appendix to the distribution of the land among the tribes of Israel.

## STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

God, the ultimate author of the Bible, is a God of order. Those who have been moved by the Holy Spirit have demonstrated an orderliness in the writings which have been preserved for us. This book of history is an outstanding example of this kind of document. It is an essential part of the Word of God.

### AN OUTLINE OF JOSHUA

Introduction: Joshua Commissioned (1:1-9)

I. The Land Conquered (1:10—12:24)

A. Preparation made to cross Jordan (1:10—2:24)

B. The Jordan crossed (3:1—4:24)

C. Israel circumcised at Gilgal (5:1-15)

D. Jericho and Ai taken (6:1—8:29)

1. An altar erected on Mount Ebal (8:30-35)

2. The Gibeonites received (9:1-27)

E. Southern Canaan conquered (10:1-43)

F. Northern Canaan conquered (11:1-15)

G. The conquest summarized (11:16—12:24)

II. The Land Divided (13:1—22:34)

A. Joshua divinely instructed (13:1-7)

B. The eastern tribes assigned (13:8-33)

C. The western tribes assigned (14:1—19:51)

D. Cities of refuge provided (20:1-9)

E. Levitical towns allotted (21:1-45)

F. The eastern tribes sent home (22:1-34)

III. Joshua's Farewell Address (23:1—24:29)

Conclusion: Death of Joshua and Eleazar (24:29-33)

### *THE WORK OF JOSHUA*

The work of Joshua was of terrible severity. We read of his work throughout the book that bears his name. When he fought against Debir, "He took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the

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souls that were therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king. So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded" (Joshua 10:39, 40).

This campaign of extermination has been criticized through the centuries. Josephus was aware of this criticism against his people and their way of waging war. He gave answer to the critics in his work *Contra Apionem* (1, 34). The early Christian writers also felt compelled to answer the unbelieving critics who found fault with the way in which Joshua and others waged war. In his work *Contra Celsum* (III, V), Origen came to grips with this problem. Cyril also in his *Contra Julian* (VI) dealt with this problem.

Such bloody battles are so much against the nature of some people that they lose their faith when they read about these campaigns. They have gone so far as to say that the God of the Old Testament must have been different from the God of the New Testament. Some have even characterized God as "a dirty bully."

To find fault with the campaigns of Joshua is to find fault with God Himself. Joshua was acting under the orders given to him by God: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee" (Deuteronomy 20:10, 11). These instructions were given to the people of Israel as they drew nigh to the Promised Land. The specifications applied to cities which were not in Canaan itself. Such kings as Sihon, king of

the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, were treated in this way.

Israel was not to spare those who lived far away if they were hostile. "If it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee" (Deuteronomy 20:12-14).

Different orders were given with regard to the people who lived in Canaan. Of these people God said, "Thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee" (Deuteronomy 20:17). His orders were epitomized in this way, "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deuteronomy 20:16). This exact phrase is used to describe the campaigns of Joshua, "he left none remaining" (Joshua 10:39). He destroyed all—all males, all females, all children.

The conquest of Palestine is informally represented throughout the Scripture as an act of righteous judgment against the inhabitants of the land. Their abominations called to high heaven for vengeance. The idolatrous rite which they practiced was intended to defile the people. The pollutions of their society were a disgrace to the human race. Their moral degeneracy reached a point finding no parallel in history. Ewald in his *History of Israel* (Vol. 2, p. 237) says that it is an eternal necessity that a nation such as the majority of the Canaanites then were, sinking deeper and deeper into a slough of discord and moral per-  
versity, must fall before a people roused to a higher life

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by a newly awakened energy of unanimous trust in divine power. Such people were the people of Israel. God had commanded them not to defile themselves in any of the practices which were common in Canaan. On the other hand, they were to keep His ordinances that they might not commit any of the abominable customs (Leviticus 18:24, 25, 30). The fact that the Israelites had spent an entire generation alone with God in the desert of Sinai after having been delivered out of the pagan society of Egypt before they entered into the defiled society of Canaan made them aware of the strict differences between right and wrong, and good and evil. They hated sin with a passion. They were conducting a holy war at the behest of God.

The flaming vengeance which fell upon Canaan did not come without warning. The history of these people would contain references to the utter destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1-24). The presence and example of Melchizedek and Abraham should have warned them against their ungodly practices (Genesis 15:16; cf. Luke 19:44).

The inhabitants of Canaan were granted repeated signs of the approach of the armies of Israel. They had heard of God's vengeance on Egypt (Joshua 2:10, 11). Still nobody repented of sins except Rahab. The people of Canaan were not at all like the people of Nineveh in the days of Jonah.

Not only had the people heard of God's vengeance on Egypt, but the Israelites had entered into an initial skirmish with the Canaanites forty years earlier when they sent spies out from Kadesh-Barnea. The eastern part of the land had been overthrown (Deuteronomy 3:5, 6). They saw the Jordan parted before a single arrow was shot, a spear thrown, or a stone slung. Even after the fall of Jericho, the first city attacked by Israel, there was none

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save the Gibeonites who sued for peace. Arnold in his book of *Sermons* said that the Israelites' sword in its bloodiest executions wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth to the very end of the world. Wilberforce in his *Heroes of Hebrew History* put forth the opinion that if the worship of Chemosh had superseded the worship of Jehovah all the grand designs of redemption would have been frustrated in their development.

The people of Canaan were responsible for their sins. They had sinned excessively and they were annihilated completely. It was Joshua's task to serve as God's messenger of judgment. The God of love is also ultimately a God of justice.

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### OUTLINE OF JOSHUA

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      - b. Joshua's command to the people 1:10-18
    - 2. Mission of the spies 2: 1-24
      - a. The spies sent 2: 1-7
      - b. The spies received 2: 8-21
      - c. The spies returning 2:22-24
  - B. Passage of the Jordan 3: 1— 5:15
    - 1. Divine guidance 3: 1— 4:24
      - a. Preparation of Joshua 3: 1-13
      - b. Jordan turned back 3:14-17
      - c. The passage 4: 1-18
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      - a. Circumcision renewed 5: 1-9
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    - 1. God's instructions 6: 1-5

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- D. Conquest of Southern and Central Canaan 7: 1—10:43
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