

JOSHUA

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA

The Jews distinguish the prophets into former and latter; the first of the former prophets is Joshua, or Sepher Joshua, the book of Joshua, as it is commonly called in the Hebrew copies; the Syriac inscription is,

“the book of Joshua, the son of Nun, the disciple of Moses:”

in the Arabic version it is reckoned a book of the judges, which adds,

“the first among the judges of the children of Israel was Joshua, the son of Nun, the twenty eighth from Adam, who reigned over Israel after the Prophet Moses.”

This book bears the name of Joshua, either because it is concerning him, his actions and exploits in the land of Canaan, or because it was written by him, or both; though some ascribe it to Ezra, and others to Isaiah; but it must have been written before the times of Ahab, as appears from (~~<1163>~~1 Kings 16:34); and even before the times of David, as is clear from (~~<1153>~~Joshua 15:63), compared with (~~<1016>~~2 Samuel 5:6); for though mention is made in it of the mountains of Judah and of Israel, from whence some have concluded, that the writer must have lived after the times of Rehoboam, in whose days the kingdom was divided; yet we find the distinction of Israel and Judah took place before, even in the times of David and Asaph, (~~<1016>~~Psalm 76:1); It is most likely that this book was written by Joshua himself, as the Jews in their Talmud ^{f1} assert; and, indeed, who more fit for it than himself? and if written or put together by another, it is most probable that it was taken out of his diary, annals, or memoirs; and though there are some things recorded in it, which were done after his death, these might be inserted under a divine direction and influence by Eleazar, or Phinehas, or Samuel, to each of whom some ascribe the writing of this book, just as Joshua is supposed to add some verses concerning Moses at the end of the Pentateuch: however, be it wrote by whom it may, there is no doubt to be made of the divine inspiration and authenticity of it by us Christians, since some histories

recorded in it are taken from it, or referred to, in (³¹¹⁰Hebrews 11:30,31); and the promise made to Joshua is quoted, and applied to every believer, (³¹¹⁶Hebrews 13:5,6); and the Apostle James refers to the case of Rahab, her character and conduct in it, (³¹²⁵James 2:25). The subject matter of this book is Joshua's taking upon him the government of the children of Israel, after the death of Moses, by a divine commission, exhortation, and encouragement given him to engage in war with the Canaanites; his conquests of them, the division of the land of Canaan to the children of Israel, and their settlement in it. It is of great use not only to give us the geography of the land of Canaan, and the history of the church of God, from the death of Moses to the times of the judges; but shows the exact fulfilment of prophecy, and the faithfulness of God to his promises in giving the land of Canaan to Israel, according to those made to their fathers, and the justice of God in punishing the Canaanites for their abominable sins, as had been foretold; and the wonderful care, of God, and his love to the people of Israel in preserving and protecting them, and in settling them in such a good land, notwithstanding all their murmurings, ingratitude, and unbelief, in the wilderness; and may serve to lead us to Christ, whose type Joshua was in the whole affair here related: his name has the signification of the salvation of the Lord in and he is by the Greek writers, and so in the New Testament, called Jesus, a Saviour, (⁴¹⁷⁵Acts 7:45) (³¹¹⁸Hebrews 4:8); and as they agree in their name, so they do in their state, condition, and character; Joshua was a servant of Moses, Christ was made under the law, and became subject to it, both moral and ceremonial; and also in their office, Joshua was the governor of Israel, and the commander of their forces, for which he was well qualified with wisdom, courage, and integrity; Christ is King of saints, the Leader and Commander of the people, who has fought their battles for them, being abundantly qualified, having the spirit of wisdom, counsel, might, and of the fear of the Lord, resting on him. Joshua was a type of Christ in various actions of his; in leading the people through the river Jordan, an emblem either of baptism, or of afflictions, or of death itself, in which Christ is with his people, and carries them through; in saving Rahab and her family, so Christ saves the worst and chief of sinners; in receiving the Gibeonites, who submitted to him, as Christ does all that come to him; in his conquest of the several kings of the Canaanites, so Christ has conquered all the spiritual enemies of his people, sin, Satan, and the world; in bringing and settling the people of Israel in the land of Canaan, their rest, and dividing it to them by lot, which Moses might not do; so Christ only brings souls into the true

rest, into spiritual rest here, and eternal rest hereafter; in whom they obtain the inheritance of the heavenly glory by lot, and by whom only they enjoy salvation and eternal life, and not by the works of the law. This book contains an history of Joshua, of his government, his acts and deeds, from the death of Moses to his own; how long that was is not certain; the Jewish chronologers^{f2} observe, that the time of his principality we find not in the text; though they^{f3} say he succeeded Moses when he was eighty two years of age, and governed Israel twenty eight years; Eupolemus^{f4}, an Heathen writer, says thirty years. Christian writers commonly make his reign to be twenty seven years^{f5}; but an Arabic writer^{f6} stretches it further to thirty one years; he says, he took the government of the people in the seventy ninth year of his age, and reigned thirty one; but it seems more probable that he was ninety three years of age when Moses died, who lived to be an hundred ten, so that only seventeen years intervned between the death of the one and of the other; seven years Joshua was in subduing the land, and ten years more were taken up in dividing it to the people, and settling them in it, and in the government of them; after which Eleazar might rule ten years more, whose death is mentioned in it; so indeed the book may be reckoned an history of twenty seven years, though Joshua lived only seventeen of them. The Chronicle, to which the Samaritans give the name of the book of Joshua, is a spurious work; an epitome of which Hottinger^{f7} has compiled, and translated out of the Arabic exemplar into Latin.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 1

Moses being dead, the Lord directs and encourages Joshua to take the command of the children of Israel, and go over Jordan with them, and take possession of the land of Canaan, and divide it to them; giving him gracious promises and strong assurances of his presence, and some good advice with respect to his conduct, (^{<0610>}Joshua 1:1-9); upon which Joshua orders the people to be ready in three days to go along with him, (^{<0610>}Joshua 1:10,11); and particularly addresses the Reubenites and Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, and puts them in mind of what Moses had ordered, and they had promised, to go along with their brethren, and assist them in conquering the land, (^{<0612>}Joshua 1:12-15); which they readily agreed to do, and promised obedience to him in all things, (^{<0616>}Joshua 1:16-18).

Ver. 1. *Now after the death of Moses*, etc.] Or “and after”^{f8}; the book begins as if something went before, it is connected with; and indeed it seems to be the last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, which treats of the death of Moses; and Joshua being the penman of (^{<0634>}Deuteronomy 34:5-12), as say the Talmudists^{f9}, and of this book, as has been seen, having wrote them, he goes on with the history of his own affairs in strict connection with that account, beginning where that ended; namely, at the death of Moses, whose character here given is

the servant of the Lord; and a faithful one he was in all things belonging to it, and in whatsoever was enjoined him by the Lord, (see ^{<0634>}Deuteronomy 34:5);

and it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’s minister; either in a dream, or vision, or by an articulate voice out of the sanctuary: of Joshua’s descent and relation, (see ^{<0231>}Exodus 33:11); and of his office under Moses, not as a menial servant, but a minister of state, (see ^{<0243>}Exodus 24:13);

saying; as follows.

Ver. 2. *Moses my servant is dead,* etc.] Which was said not for the information of Joshua, but to lead on to, and show the cause and reason of what he was about to say to him:

now therefore arise, go over this Jordan; near to which the whole body of the people of Israel were, and very probably were in sight of it:

thou, and all this people: which were very numerous, six hundred thousand men or more, besides a great number of women and children, and no boats to carry them over, or pontoons to put across the river:

unto the land which I give unto them, [even] to the children of Israel; and therefore it could be no case of conscience with Joshua, to go and take it out of the hands of the present inhabitants, since the Lord, who had a right to dispose of it, gave it to them. As this land was a type of heaven, and eternal life, which is the free gift of God through Christ, passing over the river of Jordan to it may be an emblem of the passage through death to the heavenly state; both of the death of Christ, the antitypical Joshua, who passed through it, as a surety to make satisfaction for sin, and as a forerunner to set an example, to sanctify death, to open a way into the holiest of holies, and prepare a place for his people; and of the death of the saints, which is necessary to their enjoyment of perfect rest and happiness.

Ver. 3. *Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon,* etc.] That is, in the land of Canaan:

that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses: (see Gill on ^{<<51124>}Deuteronomy 11:24"); though the Jews extend this to all without the land subdued by them, and even to all the countries they now tread on, and are exiles in; but the limits of what the Lord gave them are fixed in (^{<51004>}Joshua 1:4).

Ver. 4. *From the wilderness,* etc.] The wilderness of Kadesh and Sin, on the border of Edom; in the southeast corner, as Jarchi says, (see ^{<51043>}Numbers 34:3);

and this Lebanon; which though on the other side Jordan, and at a considerable distance, being the northern border of the land towards Syria, might be seen afar off; or it is expressed, because it was a well known place, as Kimchi remarks:

even unto the great river, the river Euphrates; which was the eastern border of the land, and to which it reached in the times of Solomon, whose dominion extended thither, (^{<102>}1 Kings 4:21); according to Jarchi, this was its breadth from south to north:

all the land of the Hittites: who, though only one of the seven nations of Canaan, are put for the rest, and the rather mentioned, because, as their name signifies, they were very formidable and terrible; among them dwelt the Anakim, and they themselves were very warlike and populous; or they are taken notice of particularly here, because they dwelt in the western part of the land described by them, so Kimchi thinks; according to Jarchi, this was its length from east to west:

and unto the great sea: the Mediterranean sea, which was the western border of the land of Canaan, called great, in comparison of the sea of Tiberias, and the salt sea, which were in it:

toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast; the western coast, (see Gill on "^{<612>}Deuteronomy 11:24"); this will be more fully verified in Christ, when his kingdom is from sea to sea, (^{<972>}Psalm 72:8).

Ver. 5. *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life*, etc.] What is promised to the people in common, (^{<612>}Deuteronomy 11:25); is here particularly promised to Joshua their general; and which was fulfilled in him, and still more in Christ his antitype, who made an end of sin, destroyed the devil, spoiled principalities and powers, abolished death, and overcame the world:

as I was with Moses, [so] will I be with thee; to counsel and advise, guide and direct, protect and defend, prosper and succeed; the Targum of Jonathan is, as my Word

“was for the help of Moses, so will I be with thee:”

I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; but grant him his presence, communicate strength unto him, make good his promises, and leave him not till he had made an entire conquest of the land of Canaan, and even not till the end of his days; and was true of Christ in his state of humiliation, in his sufferings and death, and even in the grave, where he was not left so long as to see corruption; as this is applied to particular believers, (see Gill on "^{<815>}Hebrews 13:5”).

Ver. 6. *Be strong, and of good courage,* etc.] The same exhortation Moses gave him, (^{<R307>}Deuteronomy 31:7); and is afterwards repeated in this chapter, as being of great moment and importance, as it is in the general of an army to show greatness and strength of mind, valour and courage, and not be dismayed at the number and strength of the enemy. As Joshua's work in fighting with the Canaanites, and conquering their land, so Christ's work in the redemption of his people, and subduing their enemies, required strength and courage, and both were very eminent in him:

for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them; and, this promise included and ensured the conquest of it, and the putting the people into the possession of it; for if he was to divide it to them, he must first take it out of the hands of the present inhabitants, and deliver it into the hands of the children of Israel, to be possessed by them, dividing to each tribe and family their part and portion.

Ver. 7. *Only be thou strong, and very courageous,* etc.] For though Joshua was a man of valour and courage, as appears by his war with Amalek, yet there was need of this exhortation, and of repeating it, since he was to engage with a people more and mightier than those with him, and who dwelt in strong and fortified places, and had been preparing for some time, having had notice, and were in expectation of the Israelites' attempt upon them:

that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee; not only as a private man obliged to observe the whole law, and act according to it in all things; though no mere man is capable of it, only Joshua's antitype, who is the end of it for righteousness to all that believe, having fulfilled it in all respects; but as the supreme magistrate under God, who was to see that the law was obeyed by the people in all things, and particularly as the general of the army, who was to observe to do what had been ordered, with respect to the Canaanites, (see ^{<R308>}Deuteronomy 7:1-5);

turn not from it [to] the right hand or [to] the left: from the law, by adding to it, or taking from it; so Ben Gersom explains it,

“turning to the right hand is, when any adds to its words; and turning to the left hand, when he diminishes from them;”

or “from him”^{f10}, that is, from Moses; from his good way, as Kimchi; though he adds, or else from the book of the law; for though he does not mention the book, he does the law; so Ben Melech:

that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest; succeed in every battle he engaged in; it would be well if generals of armies would observe this; the way to obtain victory over enemies being to be observant of the laws of God themselves, and to take care that they be observed by the soldiers under their command: or “that thou mayest act wisely”^{f11}; the word of God furnishing out instruction to men in every station of life, (see [Luke](#) 3:10-14).

Ver. 8. *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth*, etc.] He was often to read it, frequently repeat it, and speak of it, to refresh his own memory with it, and the memory of those about him. Jarchi restrains it to the book of Deuteronomy now before him:

but thou shalt meditate therein day and night; whenever he had any leisure from the important business of his office, whether by day or night, (see [Psalm](#) 1:2);

that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; which frequent speaking of it, and constant meditation on it, would lead unto:

for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success; in his wars with the Canaanites.

Ver. 9. *Have not I commanded thee?* etc.] The above things, to go over Jordan with the people into the land of Canaan, and to observe the law of Moses in all things, and to be of good courage, which is again repeated; consider who it is that has given these orders and instructions, the great Jehovah, the everlasting I AM, who is faithful to his promises, and able to perform. The consideration of which would serve to animate him to the work he was called unto, to encourage his faith in God, to engage in his service cheerfully and readily:

be strong, and of a good courage; (see Gill on “[Joshua](#) 1:6”); (see Gill on “[Joshua](#) 1:7”).

be not afraid, nor be thou dismayed; at his enemies, numerous and powerful, nor discouraged at anything in himself, any unfitness for such

service, as he might think, or at any difficulties he might fear from the people he had the government of, and was to lead on; it was enough that the divine Presence was promised him, and which is repeated:

for the Lord thy God [is] with thee whithersoever thou goest: or, as the Targum of Jonathan,

“for thy help is the Word of the Lord thy God;”

(see Gill on “^{<6005>}Joshua 1:5”).

Ver. 10. *Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people,* etc.] The same word is used in (^{<6168>}Deuteronomy 16:18); where it seems to design such officers that attended on the judges, and executed their orders; but one would think it should here rather signify officers in the army, as captains, and the like; unless it should design a sort of heralds, who were to make proclamation throughout the camp, each of the orders issued by Joshua, immediately upon his having the above directions and instructions from the Lord:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 11. *Pass through the host,* etc.] The whole camp of Israel, consisting of six hundred thousand fighting men:

and command the people; even all the people of Israel; this includes women as well as men, for the one, as well as the other, were to do what follows, and especially it may seem the business of the former:

saying, prepare ye victuals; this must be understood; as Kimchi observes, of other sorts of food besides bread; for they had manna, the bread of heaven, which fell about their tents every morning, so that they were sufficiently provided with that always, and which did not cease until they had entered the land, even until the sixteenth of Nisan, (^{<6612>}Joshua 5:12); though indeed, as Abendana observes, that might be said to be prepared, it being ground in mills, and beat in mortars, and made cakes of, (^{<6108>}Numbers 11:8); but rather this designs meat and other provisions, which being upon the borders of Moab and Midian, they could furnish themselves with for their money; and besides, they were in the possession of a fine country, of Bashan and Gilead, they had taken from Sihon and Og. Jarchi interprets it of everything fit for journeying, and arms for war, with which they were supplied from the spoils of their enemies, the

Egyptians at the Red sea, Amalek at Rephidim, and the Amorites and Midianites lately smitten by them; and to this sense Josephus^{f12} seems to agree:

for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan: or at the end of three days, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Jarchi, while there are yet three days, after that ye shall pass over: but here arises a difficulty to be reconciled, how this could be done three days after, when the spies, which Joshua is afterward said to send into the land, stayed three days in the mountains, besides the time of their going, and returning, and stay at Rahab's house; and it was not till after their return that the camp began to move; to which it may be observed, that though the affair of the spies is afterward related, they might have been sent by Joshua before this order was given to prepare for the journey, and of this opinion are several of the Jewish writers^{f13}: this being the case, they might return before the expiration of these three days, at the end of which Joshua, with the whole host, moved, agreeably to these orders:

to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it; which must be a great inducement and encouragement to them to observe his instructions, and go over with him.

Ver. 12. *And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh,* etc.] Who were settled on that side Jordan where Israel now were:

spake Joshua, saying; as follows.

Ver. 13. *Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you,* etc.] In (⁽⁴⁸⁷²⁾Numbers 32:29,30); and to which they had solemnly agreed; and, now the time was come to put it into execution, Joshua reminds them of it:

saying, the Lord your God hath given you rest: from their travels, and a settlement in a country agreeably to their own desire:

and hath given you this land; where they now were, and which they had taken from Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and joined to Moab, on the borders of which Israel lay encamped; and by this it appears, that the settlement of these tribes, on the other side Jordan, was according to the will of God; he gave it to them.

Ver. 14. *Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan,* etc.] This was what they themselves proposed, agreed unto, and confirmed, (⁽⁴⁹²⁶⁾Numbers 32:16,17,26,27);

but ye shall pass over before your brethren armed; bearing arms, to fight for them; for none but such that were fit to bear arms were obliged to go; and these were to go “harnessed”^{f14}, as some render the word, or in a military order, in rank and file, by fives, five in a row; not at the front of the army, for the standard of Judah went first, but along with them; for “before them” signifies no other than in the presence of them, and in company with them:

all the mighty men of valour, and help them; to obtain a conquest over the Canaanites; all, according to the order of Moses, and by their agreement, were to go, all that were able to bear arms; but Joshua did not take them all, only a select company of strong and valiant for, out of an hundred thirty thousand, but forty thousand went with him, (⁽⁴⁰⁴³⁾Joshua 4:13).

Ver. 15. *Until the Lord hath given your brethren rest, as [he hath given] you,* etc.] Rest from their travels, as they had:

and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them: are settled in the land of Canaan, as they were on that side Jordan:

then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it; the countries of Sihon and Og, they were put into the possession of:

which Moses the Lord’s servant gave you on this side Jordan, toward the sunrising; the land, given to them lay to the east of Jordan.

Ver. 16. *And they answered Joshua,* etc.] The two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, the heads of them, such as were deputed for that purpose, and were their mouths to him:

saying, all that thou commandest we will do; with respect to this affair of going over Jordan with their brethren, to assist them in the conquest of the land of Canaan:

and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go; in what position he would have them be in the army, and to whatsoever part of the country he should send them to subdue, and to whatsoever city he should order them to besiege.

Ver. 17. *According as we have hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee*, etc.] Not right or wrong, but in all things that were according to the laws and will of God made known to them; and particularly it may refer to the above affair, which was settled between Moses and them, to whom they then hearkened, and now promise to confirm the same, and hearken to whatsoever orders and instructions Joshua should give them relative to it, according to the plan agreed upon:

only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses; which is not mentioned as a condition of their obedience to him, but rather as a reason of it, and as an encouraging motive to it; for, according to Kimchi, the true sense and meaning is,

“for the Lord thy God will be with thee, as he was with Moses;”

so Noldius renders it,

“seeing the Lord thy God is with thee.”

Ver. 18. *Whosoever [he be] that doth rebel against thy commandment*, etc.] Refuses to go over Jordan with his brethren the children of Israel, when commanded by Joshua so to do:

and will not hearken to thy words in all that thou commandest him; or, if he does go over, yet will not obey orders to take such a post, or go against such a city, or march into such a part of the country:

he shall be put to death; this part of military discipline they agree to, and hereby declare their entire submission to him as their general; some understand this as spoken by all Israel, and of their promise of obedience to Joshua, as their governor, in all things:

only be strong, and of a good courage; which also is not to be understood as a condition of their submission and obedience, but as a hearty wish and prayer for him, that he might have strength and courage necessary to the great work he was engaging in, and which to see would be no small encouragement to follow and obey him.