

The Book of Joshua

This book has 3 main parts :

1. The conquest of the Promised Land
2. The dividing up of the Promised Land
3. The last days of Joshua

Chapter 1

God said to Joshua:

"I will be with you, as I was with Moses.
I will not leave you or abandon you.

Be strong and stand firm and be careful to keep all the Law
which my servant Moses laid on you.

Never swerve from this to right or left,
and then you will be happy in all you do.

Have the book of this Law always on your lips.
Meditate on it day and night,
so that you may carefully keep everything
that is written in it.

Be fearless, be confident,
for wherever you go I the Lord your God am with you."

Then Joshua said to the people:

"Get ready, for in 3 days you will cross the Jordan River and
take possession of the land which God is giving to you."

Dear God, thank you for the courage and confidence
that you give us

Chapters 2

Joshua sent two men as spies to explore the Jericho area.
In Jericho they went to the house of Rahab the prostitute.

The king of Jericho was told about this
and he sent men to capture the two Israelites.

But Rahab hid the men
and told the king that they had already gone.

Rahab said to the men in their hiding place on her roof :

"I know that the Lord has given you this land.
My people are afraid of you.

We have heard how the Lord dried up the sea
for your crossing out of Egypt.

We have heard how you defeated the 2 kings Sihon and Og.

Since I have shown you kindness
I now ask you to show kindness to my family
and spare their lives when you attack this city".

The men agreed and told Rahab
to tie a scarlet cord to her window
so the Israelites would know her family were inside.

Rahab helped the men go down from the window by a rope.
The men stayed in the nearby hills for 3 days
until it was safe to leave.

The men returned to Joshua
and told how the people of Jericho
were already trembling at the thought of an Israelite attack.

Lord, please bless all women and girls
caught up in prostitution

Chapter 3

Instructed by the Lord,
Joshua told the people to go to the bank of the Jordan River.

He told the priests carrying the Sacred Chest
to stand in the river on the edge of the water.

As soon as the feet of the priests touched the water,
the river stopped flowing.

The people then went across the dry river bed
towards Jericho.

Dear God, please help me
to cross rivers of difficulty, doubt, conflict etc

Chapter 4

After the Israelites crossed the Jordan River,
Joshua selected 12 men, one from each tribe,
and told them to get 12 stones from the middle of the Jordan.

The 12 stones were set up at Gilgal, east of Jericho,
as a reminder of how God had helped
the Israelites cross the river.

When children in the future asked

"What do these stones mean?" parents were to answer:

"The waters of the Jordan separated and stopped flowing
when the Lord's Sacred Chest entered the river.

These 12 stones are a permanent reminder of this."

As soon as the Israelites had finished crossing the Jordan,
its waters immediately started flowing again.

Dear Lord, please don't let me ever forget
the many times you have helped me cross "Jordan" rivers

Chapter 5

The kings of the Jordan area heard that the Lord had dried up the Jordan's waters to let the Israelites cross over.

The kings became very afraid of the Israelites.

At Gilgal near the Jordan the Lord instructed Joshua that all un-circumcised men should be circumcised.

It was at Gilgal that the Israelites kept the Passover Feast and tasted the produce of the land.

As soon as the Israelites tasted the produce of the land, the manna stopped falling.

Dear God, thank you for all you did for the Israelites

Chapter 6

The Lord said to Joshua:

"I am delivering Jericho and its king into your hands.

Get your soldiers to march around Jericho.

Do this for 6 days, marching with the Sacred Chest with 7 trumpets in front of it.

On the 7th day, march around the city 7 times, and then let the whole people give a mighty war cry."

The soldiers and people did this, and when the war cry was made, the walls of Jericho fell down.

The Israelites then entered the town and captured it. They spared the lives of Rahab the prostitute and her family.

Dear Lord, long ago you caused the walls of Jericho to fall.
Please in our day cause walls of
prejudice and corruption to fall

Chapter 7

The Lord had told the Israelites not to keep anything for themselves when they captured Jericho.

But one man disobeyed the Lord and secretly kept some of the spoils.

As a result of that man's disobedience, the Israelites were defeated in battle when they attacked the town of Ai.

The disobedient man's identity was found by drawing of the lot:

- of the 12 tribes, one was chosen, the tribe of Judah.
- of the tribe of Judah, one clan was chosen, that of Zerah.
- of the families of Zerah, one was chosen, that of Zabdi.
- of the men of Zabdi, one was chosen, Achan.

Achan admitted his guilt.

He and his whole family were then stoned to death and a great cairn built over them.

All of Achan's possessions were burnt.

Dear Lord, please don't let me disobey you

Chapter 8

Once again the Israelites attacked the town of Ai, this time with a special strategy:

5,000 men went by night to the back of the town and hid themselves in the nearby hills.

In the morning Joshua and the rest of the people marched towards the front of Ai.

When the king of Ai saw them coming, he led his people out for battle.

In chasing the Israelites, the king of Ai left his town undefended.

Then the 5,000 Israelites attacked Ai from the rear and set it on fire.

When the men of Ai looked back and saw their town on fire, they realized they were caught in a trap.

The Israelites easily won the battle and captured Ai.

Dear Lord, please give leaders the courage of Joshua

Chapter 9

After hearing that the Israelites had captured Jericho and Ai, other peoples of the region formed an alliance to fight against the Israelites.

But the people of Gibeon used another strategy: they tricked the Israelites into thinking they were not locals but had come from far away.

So the Israelites made a treaty with them.

When the Israelites realized they had been tricked, they kept their side of the bargain and did not attack Gibeon.

Instead the Gibeonites became wood-cutters and water-carriers in the service of the Israelites.

Dear Lord, please help nations
to make treaties instead of war

Chapter 10

Five kings in the southern part of the land made war on Gibeon.

The Gibeonites appealed to Joshua for help.

Joshua and his soldiers marched through the night and caught the armies of the 5 kings by surprise and defeated them.

The Israelite army also attacked other southern towns and captured them.

Joshua and his army were victorious in the south because the Lord supported and helped them.

Dear God, please help me in the battles of life

Chapters 11 – 21

Some kings in the north combined to fight the Israelites. But the Lord delivered them into the power of Israel.

Eventually the whole country had rest from war, and the land was divided up among the 11 tribes.

So it was that the Lord gave the Israelites all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors. They took possession of it and settled there.

The Lord granted them peace on all their frontiers just as he had sworn to their ancestors.

Of all the promises that the Lord had made to the House of Israel, not one failed. All were fulfilled.

Dear Lord, please give peace to nations troubled by war

Chapter 22

The campaign to subdue the whole land had taken a long time.

Joshua especially thanked the tribes from across the Jordan for their help.

These tribes - Reuben, Gad and Manasseh - had been given land on the Eastern side of the Jordan, but still helped in the campaign to control the Western side.

Joshua said to them:

"Despite the fact that the campaign has lasted so long, you have loyally helped your brothers.

Keep on loving the Lord your God, following his paths. Be loyal to him and serve him with all your heart."

Dear Lord, please help me to be loyal
- to you, to my family and to my country

Chapters 23, 24

As Joshua neared the end of his life, he urged the Israelites to stay faithful to the Lord while living with many foreign neighbours:
"Continue to observe everything written by Moses. Do not mingle with the foreign peoples still among you. Do not utter the names of their gods.

Stay loyal to the Lord your God.
Love the Lord your God.

If you stay faithful, the Lord will bless you.
If you are unfaithful, everything will go wrong for you.

Choose today whom you will serve:
the Lord our God, or false gods.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Dear Lord, may Joshua's dying words be true for me:
"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"