

# **Joshua 1:1-5:12**

## **“Entering the Land”**

### **Introduction**

- Tonight we are going to begin our study in the book of Joshua
  - The history of the nation of Israel is really about three things, if you would like to write down our outline of the book

### **The Book of Joshua**

#### **Entering the promise land – Joshua 1-5**

#### **Conquering the promise land – Joshua 6-12**

#### **Possessing the promise land – Joshua 13-24**

- and I didn't make up this outline or steal it from another pastor's study, this outline is given to us in the first 6 verses of Joshua 1, where Joshua is told by God to Enter the land, conquer the land and then possesses it as an inheritance from the Lord

### **Now as we begin the Book of Joshua we are also beginning a new section of the Word of God**

- All last year we were studying what is called the Torah or the Law (not that it is all laws)
  - That section of the Bible consists of Genesis – Deuteronomy, all written by Moses during their time wondering in the wilderness
  - The books cover the historical time frame from creation of the world, to the formation of the Jewish nation, their bondage in Egypt and following deliverance and journey toward the promise land after spending 40 years in the wilderness

### **But now that we are done with the section known as the Law we enter into the second portion of the Old Testament**

- Now this second section is called many things depending on who you are using as a source
  - the Old Testament is divided into either 2 or 3 or even 4 sections as we know it in Christianity

### **The Earliest division of the Old Testament is in two parts – The Law and the Prophets**

- Jesus over and over again referred to this two fold division

### **“On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” – Matthew 22:40**

- Jesus uses the term, “The Law and the Prophets” to describe the Old Testament
  - He does this over and over again in the Gospels
  - He does this because the Hebrew Bible is divided into three sections

### **The Hebrew Bible**

#### **#1 – The Law – Genesis – Deuteronomy**

#### **#2 – The Prophets**

- **The former prophets – Joshua – Kings**
- **The latter prophets – Isaiah – Malachi**

#### **#3 – The Writings**

- **Job, Psalm, The writings of Solomon, plus Chronicles, Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah**

### **Now Christians have really given the Old Testament four sections**

#### **The 4 fold Christian division of the Old Testament**

#### **#1 – The Law – Genesis – Deuteronomy**

**#2 – The History – Joshua – Esther**

**#3 – The Poetry – Job, Psalm, the writings of Solomon**

**#4 – The Prophets – Isaiah - Malachi**

- same books but just a little different order

**But whether you want to follow the Jewish way of looking at the Old Testament or the Christian way, in either case we are beginning a new section tonight with the book of Joshua**

- now as the title suggests, the book of Joshua was written by Joshua
  - the man who had been Moses' servant for the entire 40 years of wondering in the wilderness
  - a man who had been a military commander in that time as well
  - and a man who had been one of the original 12 spies
- Joshua and Caleb were the only two of 12 spies who came back with a good report, we can do this

**The reasons we believe Joshua was the author**

**#1 – The first few chapters are written in the first person, using words like “we”**

**#2 - the book is clearly written from the perspective of a military leader who was there and Joshua was**

**#3 – Finally Joshua says he authored the book in the final chapter**

**“Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God.” – Joshua 24:26**

**So we are in a new section of the bible, the book of Joshua written by Joshua and it tells the story of the Nation of Israel, entering, conquering and possessing the land**

**Now the approximate date for the conquest is 1400 BC**

- this date fits with much of what we believe and know about the Exodus of Israel from Egypt 40 years before - but it also has some other interesting recent archeological evidences

**Archeologist have discovered letters at Tel el Amarna (Picture) in Egypt from the people of Canaan asking Egypt for help against the invasion from a people they call the Habiru**

- some scholars believe the name “Habiru” may be a Canaanite name for the Hebrews who were invading the land at the time
  - but when you get into what was happening in Egypt geopolitically at the time, they were weakened, no doubt by the exodus of 2 to 3 million workers and they were having trouble from their northern enemy the Hittites and so they developed a policy of non intervention at this time,
- and I see that and I just recognize the hand of the Lord on His people
  - and Israel did not have to face Egypt in the conquest, but just the local city states

**Archeology has also discovered much destruction that dates back to this period of 1400 BC giving us even more evidence of what the Bible says to be true**

**Now one more thing as way of introduction and then we will get into the text tonight**

- and that is even though this is a true story of the how the Hebrew nation, entered, conquered and possessed the land promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
  - there are also many spiritual parallels and pictures in this book as well

**If you remember when we were going through the book of Numbers we talked about this a little bit**

- Israel being freed from bondage in Egypt is a picture of our salvation, being freed from our sin
  - the Red Sea being a picture of Baptism

### **The children of Israel then had a legitimate wilderness experience**

- the year it took them to walk from Egypt to Mount Sinai, receive the law and then walk to the promise land
  - as Christians we all go through this time – we have been saved, baptized, but we are new
  - we don't know the Word – the pastor says turn to the book of Hebrews and you spend the whole study trying to find in the Old Testament – I know that Hebrews is in the Old Testament
- I told you about the guy I met who was so excited to be saved and out of the world, but every other word as he was telling me was a cuss word – I am bleeping happy God saved me – for bleep
  - And that is okay – because He didn't know
  - Now if Pastor Rob was talking like that, that would be different
  - But we all go through young learning times

### **But then the children of Israel came to the verge of the promise land and they did not enter in because they did not believe God could give it to them**

- and then they started an illegitimate wilderness time
  - that is where many Christians are today
  - you should know better
  - you should have a handle on that issue in your life by now
  - you should know a few things about God and His word
- But you don't – because those promises God has given you, victory over sin, victory over yourself
  - You really don't believe or don't want to enter into all that God has for you
  - But you know this can't be all that there is to Christianity and you are right

### **God has a promise land for you**

- and though some of the old hymns make it sound like the promise land is heaven
  - as we study the book of Joshua we will see that there are battles to fight in the promise land, and sometimes they lose, and sin, and are defeated
  - that doesn't sound like heaven to me
- but that is because the promise land is a picture of the Christian, of the Spirit filled life
  - where you see the cities as promises God has given you
  - He loves you – He is for you – He can provide victory over that sin
  - And each city looks huge, but by faith and the power of the Spirit you take each of those cities one by one and you grow in your walk with God

### **I just mention this in our introduction because I will be referring to the promise land as a picture of the Spirit filled life as we go through the text over the next few weeks**

- so I just want you to know what I am talking about
  - but moving on – we need to get to verse one or we will never get through this

### **Outline for tonight's study**

#### **3 Steps for Entering the Promise land – Joshua 1-5**

#### **#1 – The Preparation of the People – Joshua 1-2**

#### **#2 – The Crossing of the Jordan – Joshua 3-4**

#### **#3 – The Affirming of the Covenant – Joshua 5**

- lets look at those one at a time

### **3 Steps for Entering the Promise land – Joshua 1-5**

#### **#1 – The Preparation of the People – Joshua 1-2**

- read verses 1-17

- The first thing that must happen in the preparation of the people is the leader must be prepared

#### **And we see God encouraging Joshua, multiple times**

- and as we saw on Sunday that is because Joshua was afraid
  - and rightfully so
  - if you are not afraid to lead 2 to 3 million people then you have never lead people
- And Joshua has been right by Moses' side for 40 years
  - Joshua knows that when they say to him in verse 17, as we followed and obeyed Moses so we will follow you
  - I bet he was tempted to say – I hope not – I hope we do better than the last 40 years
  - But he knew it was difficult to lead people
- And so Joshua needs the Lord to tell him, I will be with you, wherever you go

#### **But God also knows Joshua needs more than an encouragement, God knows**

#### **Joshua needs to be in the Word day and night**

- some liberal bible scholars like to teach that there was no authoritative Word of God until the 9<sup>th</sup> century, at least 500-600 years after this event and the reason they say is up until this time the Word was just passed down orally and you can't really trust oral tradition
  - but look at verse 8 – God says Joshua you need to read and meditate and obey all the things, that are written in this book
  - Moses had written the Word of God down

#### **And God has known since the earliest times, how important it is for men and women to be daily meditating in the Word, in fact day and night**

- the word meditate is closely related to the Hebrew phrase to chew the cud
  - an animal that does this, just brings the grass up over and over again, getting all the nutrients out

#### **So we need to be with God's Word**

- I thought we just read it – we do
- I thought we just study it – we do

#### **There should really be three relationships that you have with the Word of God**

- number one, you need to just read it
  - in this world we get dirty
  - even if you are trying to run from sin – things will just get in there as you are driving around, as you are watching the game
  - and we need to be washed with the water of the word and Paul tells us in Ephesians 5
- number two – you need to study it
  - Paul tells his protégé Timothy in II Timothy 2 to study to show yourself approved and a workman who will not be ashamed
  - Isn't it true, someone asks a question about the Bible and you think – I have no idea, I wish Pastor Rob was here right now, I don't know what to say – what do you do about that
  - Well – are you new to Christianity – just keep hanging out – you will get it – its okay

- But have you been walking with the Lord for years – its time to study
- We are starting a new book, get a notebook, write things down, learn and study
- Number three – we are to meditate on the scriptures
  - To just keep bringing it back up over and over again
  - Personally I read about 7 to 10 chapters a day, some in the morning, some at night, read reading
  - But as I read a verse or two will jump out – really speak to what I am praying about or facing at that moment – and I write that verse or two down and try to repeat, memorize it, think on it – meditate all through the day

### **I really see it like the relationship with water**

- water cleanses us as we jump into the shower and gallons of water just pour over us and get the stink off
  - sometimes we use water to wash the car or the driveway or the patio (spilled eggs in driveway)
  - and again its gallons being used effectively not to wash me necessarily but to wash other things – that is what happens as I study
- but then there is the water we drink – hopefully in smaller amounts than the shower, but we assimilate it into our bodies and it is critical for life

### **Well the same is true**

- I have read a lot of Christian books in my life that say God wants to blessed His people
  - And I believe that is true – God does want to bless your life
  - But it doesn't happen as you focus more on your self or as you give into the lusts of your flesh
  - What did God tell Joshua?

**“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” – Joshua 1:8**

- You want to prosper in this coming year, you want to have good success
  - Be a man or a women who takes time to read the Word, to study the word, and to meditate in the Word

**God takes time to encourage Joshua and point Him to get into the Word, but it is not just the leader that needs to be prepared, the people do too and how God does that we see in chapter 2 – [read chapter 2](#)**

**Now this is a story we all know well, if you have been around the church for any time – we learned it in Sunday school – Rahab and the two spies**

- but why this is in the Bible and some interesting parts of it we rarely consider

**First of all I think it is amazing that Joshua sends out two spies**

- he knows that is all you need
  - remember he was part of the 12 spies, only two of which came back with a good report

**And even better, if you look at verse one, Joshua sent them out secretly**

- just incase the two came back afraid, the whole congregation wouldn't be waiting for their report like what happened 40 years before

**So Joshua secretly sends out two spies and they sneak into Jericho, probably by crossing the Jordan up by Galilee and then walking down and approaching the city from the north**

- they sneak into the city and they stop at the house of a harlot named Rahab

- now wait, what?
- These men of God stayed where?
- I mean if I was telling my wife this story about me, we wouldn't get passed verse 1, you stayed where – no you didn't!

### **What is going on?**

- well some scholars try to say the Hebrew Word for Harlot is the same word as innkeeper, so she was just an innkeeper, not a lady of the night
  - and that sounds good, now we can preach this story in church, but there is one problem
- Rahab is mentioned 3 times in the New Testament and all three times she is called a prostitute and the Greek New Testament word is clear what she was

### **So again – why are they here?**

- well as the Hebrew Word indicates and history records at this time often a person who ran an Inn offered a place to sleep, a meal to eat and company for the evening if you so desired, but not everyone who stayed at an Inn, used the prostitutes
  - in our day and age – you either go to the brothel or a hotel – in this day they were often the same place
  - it is almost this way in the world we live in today – where most Hotel rooms have some things you can watch that are super sinful
  - but not everyone who stays in a hotel room watches that stuff

### **So the wives of these two spies wouldn't be as shocked as we are – what the Bible is telling us is that they stayed at a hotel. A hotel, like most hotels of that day, where prostitution was offered**

- but this picture gives you once again some insight into how wicked this place called Canaan really was
  - God gets a bad wrap for telling the Israelites to destroy it completely, but...
  - But what? – there are places of prostitution all over our nation
- Yeah but this one was in her father's house, I have told you before what was forced upon the children of Canaan would disgust even the most worldly people in America
  - It is most likely that becoming a prostitute was forced on Rahab by her own Father

### **But all of that aside – the spies come to her house and they find out God has been at work in the hearts of the Canaanites – they are afraid of the Jews**

- and this is just what the people of Israel needed to hear

### **Joshua needed to hear God say to Him, I am with you, and meditate in the Word day and night**

- and the people needed to hear, that they could take courage and God was already at work and God was going to continue to work in their lives

### **The men of the city hear the spies have come in and Rahab hides them on the roof**

- and then when asked, she lies to the men about the spies
  - now troubled people have made some trouble about this verse
  - does that mean God is okay with lying or just lying in certain circumstances?
- well it doesn't say that at all – it just says this what Rahab did
  - well how could she lie?
  - ah – she was prostitute, lying probably wasn't a problem on the moral list

### **You see so often the Bible records that something happened a certain way – it doesn't change God's heart on lying – but the Bible is just letting you know what was happening**

- But the main point of the these verses is to show you how God encouraged both Joshua and the people that the Lord was at work

**Before we move on though I find it interesting that the spies and Rahab work out this deal, we will spare your life if you hang a scarlet cord out the window, if you do this all that are in your house will be saved**

- I mean it is pretty amazing to me, God knows how He is going to destroy the city of Jericho right? – you remember – the walls are coming down and where does Rahab live? – in the wall – sounds like a problem

**But hang out a scarlet cord – scarlet meaning “red” and cord being the Hebrew word “tiqvah” which means “hope”**

- Rahab and her family were saved by the red hope hanging from her window
  - This picture we have seen before when the Jews put the blood of the lamb on the doorpost and the death angel passed over
  - We will see it again – we will all be saved by the scarlet hope of the cross

**3 Steps for Entering the Promise land – Joshua 1-5**

**#1 – The Preparation of the People – Joshua 1-2**

**#2 – The Crossing of the Jordan – Joshua 3-4**

- Read chapters 3-4 (maybe just chapter 3)

**Well the people of Jericho were afraid before, at least they must have thought we have the Jordan River between us and them**

- and the Jordan is at flood stage this time of year so even better
  - and then they watched the events transpire we just read about

**The Jordan River when you visit it today is really not much to look at**

- as you can see in these first two pictures
  - **Jordan Picture #1**
  - **Jordan Picture #2**
  - but there are some things you need to realize
- First of all, today in Israel, most of the flow of the Jordan river is diverted and used as the river travels through the nation
  - There is not a lot of rain in the middle east, and so they use most of the river – so what you see today is not as big as it used to be
- And the Bible tells us the Jordan was at flood stage

**To give you an idea of how vast the Jordan could of have – consider this next overhead picture of the Jordan valley**

- **picture of the Jordan Valley**
  - as you can see from the overhead shot – the Jordan river is snaking its way through the valley below
  - but at one time, especially at flood stage it would have filled that entire valley, from the mountains of Moab or what is Jordan today, to the Judean hills in the bottom of the picture in modern day Israel
- most credible scholars report that the Jordan river across from Jericho was normally, before they were taking all the water out, about 200 feet across and had the average depth of 18 feet
  - now again this being flood stage it could have been much larger

**This would have been an impossible crossing for 2 to 3 million people**

- so God makes a way where there wasn't a way
  - similar to what God did with Moses, God establishes Joshua by doing a great miracle of parting of water
- from what we read in the text God had the waters stop 15 miles north of where they camped, this would have given a wide crossing area for 2 to 3 million people

**Those that love to point out natural occurrences on how God worked, point to two events modern man has witnessed**

- Dec 8<sup>th</sup> 1267 a large section of the West bank fell collapsed and blocked the flow of the river for 16 hours

**And a little closer in history on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1927 a landslide caused by an earthquake blocked the flow for 21 hours**

- Of course people suggest these things because they don't like miracles – but if it was only the timing, that is a miracle enough
  - I believe God created the heavens and the earth and therefore He can do with them what He desires

**The way God had them cross the Jordan is so interesting to me especially again when we see the children of Israel entering the promise land as a picture of you and me walking in the Spirit**

- the first thing I notice is in verse 4 of chapter 3, God says, Give me space
  - I want you to follow the ark into the river and into the promise land
  - But give me space to work – you haven't been this way before

**So often we think we know what we are doing in our lives, we have had some measure of success and suddenly we think we are the experts**

- but in reality, walking in the Spirit, into all that God has for us, is not something we do because of experience, we have not been this way before
  - we need the Spirit of God
  - and we need to be willing to give Him space to work

**We live in a culture that wants things our way right away, if I have to wait more than 2 minutes for my hamburger, I'm leaving**

- and we bring that into our relationship with the Lord – God I prayed about this 10 minutes ago, where are you
  - we forget what we read in our Bible

**The apostles in the upper room where filled with the Spirit, but we miss the fact the when you put together the events of the book of Acts some scholars believe it was 10 days they were waiting for the power of the Holy Spirit**

- we don't want to wait 10 minutes – 10 days? – I don't have time for that
  - God says – Give me space to work

**We read of Joseph being prepared in prison for 17 years and we think, oh that Joseph really needed some work in his life**

- oh Moses being prepared for 40 and we think, what kind of loser was he
  - but really church? – do we really think we have a better handle on our hearts and our lives than Joseph and Moses?
- So all I am saying is, if it has been a couple of days or months or even years
  - Give the Spirit space to work

**And then when it's time – step in by faith**

- you know if I was one of the priests I would suggest, how about the water part and then I step in
  - remember with Moses – the wind blew all night and when we woke up, the waters were parted, then we went through
  - how about that method
- but so often that is not the way it works when it comes to walking in the Spirit
  - it is that you take a step of faith as the Lord is calling, not just because you are crazy and then the Lord meets you
  - the Lord parted the waters



**And on the other side and in the middle of the Jordan, God has them set up a memorial of 12 stones to remind them of God's miraculous dealings with them**

- both Pastor Rob and myself have talked to you about the importance of writing down what God is teaching you, what you are praying about, worried about
  - write it down and then when God shows you, answers you, works for you – write that down
  - those journals, those memorials will be a huge blessing to your spiritual walk
  - and they will be as such to the next generation

**I love what they are told at the end of Joshua chapter 4, God says, when your children ask, you tell them about me**

- you know kids are full of questions, and it can be irritating, but I encourage you to see it as an opportunity to share the Lord with them
  - share your journals with them, so they can see how you walked through things with the Lord, how you prayed for them, and what God did
  - it will be a huge spiritual legacy for your family
  - and it is never too late to start – the enemy says it is too late – but I tell you, if my Mom or Dad showed me a journal they had written all last year of things they were praying for me, I would fall off my chair and it would be the greatest thing I could ever receive, it's not too late to establish memorials to the Lord

**3 Steps for Entering the Promise land – Joshua 1-5**

**#1 – The Preparation of the People – Joshua 1-2**

**#2 – The Crossing of the Jordan – Joshua 3-4**

**#3 – The Affirming of the Covenant – Joshua 5**

- read verses 1-12

**Now again as I said before the people of the land were afraid, but at least they had this swollen Jordan River between them and Israel**

- then the people of Jericho can see with their eyes, and the word starts spreading through the land
  - the Jordan river dried up
  - the people of Israel were coming in
  - they were afraid

**And if it were you or I that were planning the attack, we would rush right in while they were afraid, get them on the run**

- but man is not running this campaign, God is
  - and He has the children of Israel do probably the worst two things you would possible do right before a major battle

**I mean we will talk more about Jericho next week, but this is the crown jewel of the promise land, Jericho was a massive walled city**

- it is going to take every thing they have to conquer, at least that is the way it would seem to a human brain
  - but God has them circumcise all the males and then have a feast
  - are you kidding me?
- I won't get into it and I don't have to, but you can just image the state that would have put the fighting men of Israel into
  - Ladies how many of your guys, do well with a cold or the man flu, you heard of this right
  - Its technically the same virus that you get and still run the entire household and many of you even still work
  - But when a man gets the man flu – oh, nothing is happening – he is not ready for battle

**Now is this a good time for circumcision? - I picture 1 million very sad, sensitive, the world has ended men, not a ready army**

- so what do you do next – feast of Passover, a bunch of eating
  - now I like this better than circumcision as a prewar strategy, but still think it through
  - a few weeks ago, how did you feel after Thanksgiving – like fighting a battle, no, you felt like a nap
- And Thanksgiving isn't the best example – I can't deal with one day of overeating, but this was 8 days
  - The better pictures are about right now, right after the holidays, Christmas, New years – anybody feeling a little sluggish about 2 weeks of cookies and pies, and fudge – fudge, isn't that a great word – just describes it so well – fudge, rhymes with “pudge”

**You don't feel ready for a marathon, you might feel like you need to run one, but you are not ready**

- so why – why would the Lord have them circumcise the men and then have a feast
  - the answer is because these were spiritual things – these were the signs of the covenant God made with His people – the Feasts, circumcision, signs they were right on with God
- And because this was going to be a spiritual battle, their spirits had to be right first and foremost – God knew it, and God knows it is still true today

We think there are battles in my family, things we need to work on – I don't have time for devotions or Wednesday Nights or a home fellowship – we need to fight for our family

- I really believe we get the order backwards
  - You need to seek first the Kingdom of God and the Lord will take care of the things!