

Joshua: A Biblical Hero

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Date: 05 March 2017

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[0 : 00] Take your scriptures, for it is in God's word that we find out that there is such a God in heaven, a God of grace. We're going to read from Exodus, the second book of the Bible, chapter 17.

And we'll begin reading in verse 8 and read to the end. Exodus 17, 8 to the end. The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

Moses said to Joshua, choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.

So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning.

But whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it.

[1 : 08] Aaron and Hur held his hands up, one on one side, one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

Then the Lord said to Moses, write this on a scroll as something to be remembered. And make sure that Joshua hears it. Because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

Moses built an altar and called it, the Lord is my banner. He said, for hands were lifted up to the throne of the Lord.

The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation. Can you think of who is on the \$10 bill?

The American \$10 bill. Does anyone know? Hamilton. Alexander Hamilton. People are falling in love with Alexander Hamilton.

[2 : 13] The most popular Broadway play in the last few years is a musical called Hamilton. It is the hip-hop rap biography of the first secretary of the treasury.

Sounds crazy, but people love it. They really do. And they love it because of Alexander Hamilton and who he was and what he did.

Let me just tell you a little bit about him. He didn't grow up in an ideal situation. He grew up in Egypt.

That's where he was born. Or not Egypt. Excuse me. I'm thinking of the next guy we're talking about. Alexander Hamilton didn't grow up in Egypt. He grew up in the Caribbean. A lot farther away than...

He grew up in the Caribbean on a small island. He was surrounded by sugar plantations, slaves, prostitutes, criminals, violence.

[3 : 22] He had an extremely difficult childhood. Between the ages of 10 and 14, Hamilton's father, his dad, left the family. His mother died.

His guardian, who was his cousin, committed suicide, stabbed himself to death. And Alexander Hamilton found that. Hamilton was disinherited.

And at 14, he was left with no family, no money, no prospects. Six years later, 20-year-old Hamilton was George Washington's most trusted secretary and advisor.

So he's 20 years old. At 20, he was giving orders under Washington's signature. So Washington would just sign it and Hamilton would write what Washington...

Or he would write what he thought Washington wanted done. At 22, he was given jobs that Washington would trust in no one but him. At one point, he was given tyrannical powers over Philadelphia because the army needed blankets, the army needed horses, the army needed food.

[4 : 38] And it was Hamilton's job to encourage the city of Philadelphia to give that stuff up without leading to rebellion. And he was able to do that.

He negotiated with generals from different countries. He was incredibly gifted. He was incredibly courageous. He was always wanting front-line action.

That's where Washington first ran into him. He was in charge of the artillery. And he would haul these big field guns around. And he would charge into battle.

In one battle, he had two horses shot out from underneath him. He went on secret raids into enemy territory. And at night, he would read philosophers and textbooks on economics.

So he was a soldier. He was a servant. He's the sold-out patriot. He was incredibly gifted. He was one of the fathers of our country.

[5 : 51] And he was a lot like the person that we're going to talk about tonight, which is Joshua. Joshua. The Bible has its own heroes.

Joshua is one of them. And so tonight, we're going to start a series on the book of Joshua. But we're just going to be looking at the man himself this evening.

And what I want you to see, and I'm especially talking to young people, to you young people, is that Joshua was a hero, a person to imitate, a person that God had put his hand upon and used in a wonderful way.

So the world is saying about all kinds of people, be like this person. Be like me. And God brings out his own version of that.

And he says, look at Joshua. Here's someone you want to look up to. I'll show you someone to aspire to. And God brings out Joshua.

[6 : 59] And so let's talk about him. Where was Joshua born? I'll already let you know that. He was born in Egypt. He was born in slavery. We don't know anything about his earliest days.

But apparently, even early on, he distinguished himself in some way. Because early on, God had his hand on him.

Because the very first time we meet Joshua, we had read for us. Joshua was given command of the army to fight against the Amalekites.

And so how he got there, how Moses knew him, how Moses found out about him, we don't know. His life in Egypt, we don't know.

But we do know this, that in that whole period of his life, God had been preparing Joshua. He's in slavery, but God is preparing him in that harsh place.

[7 : 59] God is polishing him and refining him and shaping him into the tool that he is going to later become. And then all of a sudden, on the pages of Scripture, Joshua appears.

Without any introduction. Without any sort of run-up. There's no ancestry or anything. It just says, Moses said to Joshua, choose these men and go fight the battle.

He was in secret. Joshua was hidden this whole time. One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Isaiah 49. And it's speaking about the servant of the Lord, the Lord Jesus.

And there, Isaiah says, in the shadow of his hand, he hid me. He made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.

So do you see the picture? God is sharpening the servant of the Lord. He's polishing him. But no one sees that. No one sees God at work.

[9 : 08] God hides him. He's preparing him just for the right time. Getting him ready to fly. And that was Jesus for 30 years in Nazareth. Hidden.

Unannounced. Being polished. Being prepared. And that was Joshua down in slavery in Egypt. God was sharpening him. And so no one could say or no one would have said, God is going to use that man.

God is going to do something with him. But the Lord knew the plans of his heart. The Lord knew what he was going to do with Joshua. And so you can picture this divine weapon maker.

And he has this smile, this serious smile on his face as he secretly prepares his arrow. He's going to let this arrow fly. And the world's not going to know what hit them.

This arrow is going to shake the cities of men. And this arrow is going to crush the armies of God's enemies. But not yet. Not yet.

[10 : 10] And so does it seem like God is doing nothing with you? Does it seem like you're no one going nowhere?

Well, I don't want you to miss this encouraging lesson. God often prepares his weapons, his tools in secret. Just because it seems like nothing is going on doesn't mean that nothing is going on.

Just because it seems like you're hardly doing anything for the kingdom of God does not mean that your day isn't coming. Elisha was plowing his father's field when Elijah stopped by to talk.

Peter and John were tending their nets. They were fishing when Jesus stopped by to have a word with them. And that's how it often is.

Days of small things. Days of preparation. They're not wasted days. They're not wasted days. God is polishing his arrows. God's preparing you to fly against his enemies.

[11 : 23] And so so don't get discouraged. Instead, embrace it. Embrace what God is doing right then and there in your life. And if God is preparing you, then what you should be doing is preparing yourself.

Preparing yourself. So read. Learn. Serve. Be serious.

Be serious. Be serious. You know, forever wasting away your days is a boring, pointless way to live.

Do you want to really live? Do you want to be about doing something serious? Then prepare yourself for action. Take yourself seriously.

Take yourself seriously. God is taking you seriously. So don't waste those days of preparation. The whole idea that childhood and teenagers should just have fun all day long is a stupid, satanic way of living.

[12 : 28] It's the world's life. It's the world's life. It's the world's life. The world says your life is going to begin, but not yet. But what God says to young men and young women is your life has already begun.

It's not going to start. It has started. And so get with it. Live it. God's preparing you. Prepare yourself. And so get to know this book.

Get to know what God's word says and what God's word teaches about life. Get to know and understand what God's thoughts about life.

About relationships. About economics. About finances. About friendships. Get to know those things.

Get wisdom. Proverbs says. Get understanding. So don't waste your days of preparation. Don't waste your days of preparation.

[13 : 31] Joshua didn't and he was ready when God called. And so we're going to meet Joshua. And so let's meet him. The very first time we meet him. The first time he walks across the pages of scripture is right here in Exodus chapter 17.

And what we find here is that Joshua is a soldier. He is a war leader. He is a general. He is a rough and tumble man who is in charge of leading Israel's armies into battle.

Into their very first battle. Israel. I don't. I can't imagine the state of the Israel Israel army Israelite army was in great shape. They've just come out of Egypt.

It's been a few weeks. They're probably more of a rabble. Than an orderly army. And yet Joshua is going to lead them into battle.

So we read about it. Moses, Aaron, her. They're going to go on top of the hill. But Joshua is the one who's going to be down in the valley. So Moses has his role.

[14 : 38] Joshua has his own role. And so oftentimes in the Bible, the very first time you see someone, the very first time you meet them, it often tells you the kind of person they are.

It sort of sets the lines. It sets the boundary. It shows you what you're dealing with. And the first time we run into Joshua, he's a soldier.

He's a warrior. He's not so much a religious leader like Moses. He's not a priest like Aaron. He's not a prophet like Elijah. The first time we meet Joshua, it's without any introduction.

It's with no ancestry. We don't get the usual, the son of this guy and the son of the next guy. It's just Moses said to Joshua, choose some of our men and go out and fight the Amalekites.

And then in verse 14, we even get, I think, a picture of Joshua's heart again. The Lord, after the battle, the Lord said to Moses, write this on a scroll.

[15 : 37] That's something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I'm going to completely blot out the memory of the Amalekites from under heaven.

I'm not exactly sure why God especially wants Joshua to hear what his plans are and his intentions for the Amalekites.

But I think it might have been that Joshua wanted to finish the job. We know that later on, the Amalekites are destroyed, not by Joshua, but eventually, supposedly, or it's supposed to be the final thing by Saul.

But I think right here, Joshua wants to finish the job. He wants to keep fighting. But the Lord is saying that that's not right now. I hear what you're saying. I've seen what the Amalekites have done.

And I'll be fighting them from now on. And if that is the case, which it's tentative, but we're not sure exactly why the Lord wants Joshua especially to hear this.

[16 : 46] But if that is the case, you again see something of Joshua's heart. He is a warrior. He is a fighting man. He's a soldier for God.

He wants to destroy God's enemies. His heart burns to fight for the Lord. He is not like Jacob who wants to sit around the tents. Zeal for the Lord burns in his heart.

He's this man of action, a weapon in God's hand. And so that's what you see first. If you want to understand Joshua, you have to see that he is a soldier. He's a military man.

He's a warrior. Then secondly, he's a servant. He's a servant. A soldier and a servant.

The next time we see Joshua is over in Exodus chapter 24. Would you turn there? Exodus chapter 24. We're going to skip through or we're going to hit a few passages that where we can get a good feel for what kind of person Joshua was.

[17 : 49] So Exodus chapter 24 and verse 13. And then it says this. Moses is about ready to go up on the mountain.

Well, verse 12. The Lord 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 commands I've written for their instruction. And then Moses set out with Joshua, his aide or his servant, his minister.

And Moses went up on the mountain of God. Now, we know that Aaron, Moses's brother, Miriam, his sister, they stayed down there.

They stayed off the mountain. They stayed down in the camp. But Joshua, as Moses's personal servant, his aide, his minister, he goes with Moses up on the mountain.

We don't hear what happens to Joshua while Moses is all the way on the top of the mountain, entering the cloud and speaking with God. We know what happens down at the foot of the mountain.

[19 : 01] Remember? The people, after a while, they're like, where is Moses? He's left us. Where's God? Let's build an idol. And Aaron makes the calf. But Joshua, apparently, stayed on that mountain by himself for 40 days and just waited for Moses.

Never came down. Never a lost heart. Joshua is Moses's faithful servant. So turn over to Numbers chapter 11.

Numbers chapter 11. And here we get another view of the same thing. 11 chapter, or verse 28.

Numbers 11, 28. Joshua, son of Nun, who had been Moses's aide since youth, spoke up and said, Moses, my lord, please stop them.

And Moses replied, are you jealous for my sake? So you hear that. Joshua had been Moses's aide from youth. And exactly what that means, we don't know.

[20 : 11] But he had been his longtime servant. And here you see Joshua's love and his faithfulness for Moses. In the context, what has happened is some of the other elders in the community had started prophesying.

And Joshua says, my lord, stop them. And Moses says, replied, are you jealous for my sake?

Now what Joshua is concerned about is these elders, these men are going to take your spot, your place, your place, Moses. And Joshua doesn't want any of that.

So Moses replies, are you jealous for my sake? I just wish they were all like me. The answer is, was Joshua jealous for Moses? And the answer is, yeah, he is.

It was wrong. But Joshua doesn't want anyone getting honor and taking a place of leadership over his master, Moses. So when Aaron and Miriam and Korah and others in the book of Numbers, they all rise up against Moses.

[21 : 21] They have a big problem with Moses leadership. And finally, the whole community wants to be done with Moses. There was one person who stood fast when Aaron and Miriam and Korah and all the rest were saying, aren't we all?

Shouldn't we be in charge too? We're your family. There was one who was standing by Moses that whole time who was happy with his position. The one who never wanted his master's place.

It was Joshua. Joshua knew how to play second fiddle. He knew how to play second fiddle.

He knew how to play backup quarterback. Do you want to play first fiddle? Do you want to have the place of preeminence?

Maybe learn to play second fiddle first. There's nothing that teaches you how to lead better than learning to follow.

[22 : 30] The people that are itching to become first, who are never happy sitting behind someone, are usually the very last people that you want to lead. Do you want to lead?

You want greater responsibility. You want to do something more for God's kingdom. Find someone to follow. Find someone to help.

Find someone to serve. What made John the Baptist so great? Because he was happy with the place that God gave him.

John says the bride belongs to the bridegroom. He's like, this isn't my day. This isn't about me. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice.

That joy is mine and it's now complete. He must become greater and I must become less.

[23 : 35] So how long did Joshua play second fiddle? How long did Joshua serve Moses? 40 years. 40 years.

At least. Probably longer. 40 years. So think of that. Here he is, this man of action. This man who is aggressive.

He's a warrior. But he's also a servant. He's also content to stay where he was. That's a rare combination. So he's a soldier.

He's a servant. And third, he's a sold out believer. He is a sold out believer. Of course, the most well known exploit of Joshua is that he was one of the 12 original spies to go into Canaan.

He and Caleb were the two spies that stood up against all the rest and who stood up against all of the people. Not just the 10. We don't like to feel like we're in the minority when we're sitting there with 10.

[24 : 48] Joshua and Caleb were the minority in the millions. And it was just those two that said, no, let's go. And God himself says, Joshua and Caleb alone followed me wholeheartedly.

Wholehearted. Sold out. Trust in me. No matter what they saw. They're all in. So 12 spies, one from each tribe, went into Canaan. Joshua was from Ephraim.

He represents the tribe of Ephraim. 12 spies went through the whole land. 12 spies said the land was good. But there's that song.

Ten were bad and two were good. And what did they see? Those spies. Some saw giants great and tall. Some saw grapes with clusters long.

And some saw that God was in it all. Ten were bad and two were good. Joshua saw the grapes. Joshua saw the cities.

[25 : 53] Joshua saw the giants. And Joshua saw that God was in it all. And he and Caleb said, let's go. Let's take the land.

The Lord has given it to us. The whole assembly then rebelled. And Numbers 14 says that Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes. And they said to everyone, let's go.

Their protection is gone. They're ours for the taking. Their protection is gone. But the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them. So Joshua wasn't like everyone else.

He was the sold out believer. He saw the same giants that they did. He saw the same cities with the walls that supposedly went up to the heavens.

But he saw that God was in it all. And so he doesn't waver through unbelief. When everyone is for heading back, he is for heading forward. When everyone else is complaining, he is preaching and encouraging.

[26 : 51] When everyone else is trembling, Joshua says, now is the time to attack. Now is the time to attack. Because he knew his God. And he knew if God is for us, then who can be against us?

So he was this man of faith. A man of faith. Not just in word. Not just saying it. But when it came time for action, he was a man in word and in deed.

And because he believed, he received the land. God said, not one of you will enter the land. I swore with uplifted hand to make you make your home.

Except for Caleb and Joshua. And as soon as God said that, the ten spies dropped down dead of a plague. Only Joshua and Caleb survived.

Joshua and Caleb, their faith saved them. When everyone else was dying. He was a sold out. And so Hebrews says, by faith the walls of Jericho fell.

[27 : 52] By faith the walls of Jericho fell. By faith Joshua became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Joshua was a great man.

He did great things. Because he believed in a great God. And that God did not disappoint him. Not in the least. And then last, Joshua was a spirit-filled man.

He was spirit-filled. So he's a soldier. He's a servant. He's sold out. And he's spirit-filled. Turn over to Deuteronomy chapter 34. This is the last place we're going to turn tonight.

Deuteronomy chapter 34 and verse 9. And of course this is, Moses has gone up on the mountain and he's in the hill and he's now gone.

Dead. In Deuteronomy chapter 34 verse 9. Now Joshua, son of Nun, was filled with the spirit of wisdom. That probably should be a capital S.

[28 : 57] The spirit of wisdom. Because Moses had laid his hands on him. Joshua was a spirit-filled man. He was gifted. He was graced.

He was graced. He was graced. From God on high. He was qualified to lead by the spirit of God.

Now, you will never understand Joshua. Joshua. We'll never understand Joshua, the man, until we see this. He had a great many gifts.

Natural gifts. Natural talents. But over it all and in it all, the spirit of Christ was at work. The spirit of Christ, who gives gifts to men, was at work.

And so Joshua is the soldier, the servant, the sold-out believer, a spirit-filled leader. And so in his right hand is a sword, and his left hand, he's full of wisdom. He loved God.

[29 : 58] God loved him. He had been polished in the harshest of circumstances. He was courageous and humble. He believed when everyone else didn't.

And when all of his neighbors were dead, he walked into the land and took it. He was victorious. So young people, do you want to live a life that matters?

What do you strive to be? What do you aspire to? Joshua was a soldier. What about you? Is the only battle you are fighting on the PlayStation?

On your Xbox? Or are you fighting against sin? Are you fighting against the sin from within? Are you fighting for purity? Are you fighting for holiness?

Are you fighting the real battle? Or is it just the pretend battles? Is it one bit of entertainment to another? Joshua was a servant.

[31 : 15] A faithful servant. So the question is, who are you serving? Who are you helping? Joshua learned to lead because he had learned how to follow.

He had learned how to serve. The church needs you to rise up. We don't need a generation of people who want to be first.

We need a generation of Joshua's and Timothy's who knew what it was to serve. Who know how to say no to their pride and take the lower spot.

Paul said of Timothy, I have no one like him. Timothy, a young man who served with me as like a son with a father.

A father and a son. And Paul says, I have no one like Timothy. And Moses could have said the very same thing about Joshua. I have no one like him.

[32 : 19] No one like him. And I wonder, is anyone saying that about you? Or do your parents have to wrestle you into doing anything and everything?

Are you the first to serve at your table or the last? Are you the first to do your chores or the last? And what about here? Are you waiting to graduate high school, graduate college, get married, just serve?

If you have two hands, if you have two feet, if you have a mouth, if you have a brain, if you're here and you're a member, there's things for you to do.

Joshua became great because he served and he sold out. He was committed. He was going the whole way. It didn't matter about giants and cities and all the land is full of people that hate us and they don't want us.

Joshua knew what he, what God had promised and he was going to get it. And so are you sold out? The world is rising up against you young people, against us and our faith and there are lots and lots of people walking away and so the question is, are you going to go out with the ten or are you going to stay with the two?

[33 : 42] When everyone bows down to the idol, will you stand with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Will you dare to be a Daniel? Will you dare to stand alone?

Joshua was spirit-filled and if you're a Christian, we don't have to wonder if you're filled with the spirit. That is the gift of God to us.

That in the church, in the people of God, he has now poured out his spirit spirit on all of us. So each of us have gifts and graces and the only question is not, do you have these gifts, Christian?

The question is, are you using them? And you say, I don't know what to do. Well, if you find something to do, you'll find your way to what you're good at and what God has intended for you and maybe you'll find your way to the places that God hasn't intended for you.

But the question is, are you serving? If you are serving, you'll find your way to your gifts. The attitude comes before the job description or the job that is particularly yours.

[34 : 52] Finally, just to say this, he's a soldier, he's a servant, he's sold out, he's spirit-filled.

Does that remind you of anyone? Does that remind you of anyone? Does that seem to be pointing to someone? There was a man who came second.

He was the second Adam. He was the second Abraham. Abraham means exalted father. They would call him the everlasting father.

There was a second Isaac who got laid on an altar. There was a second Jacob who wrestled with God and overcame. There is a second Moses who went up onto a mountain and proclaimed the word of God to his people.

And he was second. Second Adam, second Abraham, second Moses, the second David, the second Solomon, the second Jonah, the second Hosea, the second Joshua.

[35 : 59] Joshua. In Hebrew, his name would have been Joshua. Joshua means the Lord saves. And they called him Jesus because he would save his people from their sins.

Joshua came up out of Egypt and out of Egypt I called my son. And Jesus was a soldier. came to destroy.

Came to destroy the works of the devil. And he fought the devil in the desert and overcame him. And he fought the devil at the cross and overcame him.

And he is coming again to drive out the kingdoms of men and to establish the kingdom of God on earth. The Lord is a warrior mighty in battle. And was Jesus a servant?

The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. And Paul says he made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant.

[37 : 09] Was Jesus sold out? He set his face like a flint to go to Jerusalem. And then when he was on the very brink of it he said, not my will but your will be done.

All the way to the cross. He sold out. Held nothing back. And was Jesus spirit filled? Luke says and filled with the spirit Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the spirit into the desert.

So brothers and sisters and young people Joshua is a hero. Someone to aspire to. Someone to imitate. Someone to say wow, I want to be like him.

But he is not the greatest hero. He is just a signpost pointing to the greatest hero. The greatest soldier. The greatest servant. The most spirit filled. The most sold out. And so look at Joshua.

Be like him. But put your trust in the second Joshua. Joshua. Because the second Joshua can save your soul. Can give you eternal life.

[38 : 16] Final rest. That's what Hebrews talks about. Joshua gave God's people rest in the land. But Jesus has come that we might have eternal everlasting rest.

So imitate Joshua. Tomorrow. You are going to have opportunities to imitate Joshua because you're going to have opportunities to serve.

You're going to have opportunities to say no to yourself. You're going to have opportunities to fight against your own sin and against the temptations of the devil and of the world. You're going to have opportunities.

And tomorrow you should imitate Joshua but trust but trust in Jesus. trust in him. Everyone who followed Joshua inherited the land.

That's sort of the whole big point of the book of Joshua. Everyone who went up with Joshua followed him as their commander. They received an inheritance in the land.

[39 : 17] And everyone who follows Jesus will receive eternal life. He will lead us into that heavenly kingdom. And so we just need to follow him and stay with him until he at last brings us home.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father we do thank you for the story and the picture of Joshua. And I pray for our young people. I pray for them that they might grow up to be like Joshua.

And I pray for our parents that we would have these high expectations for them. that we would be pushing them and pressing them in the direction of someone truly to imitate.

And we thank you Lord that you are the second Joshua. You are the true fulfillment of his life and his ministry. And Lord Jesus I pray that you would give us faith to hold on to you and to follow you into the land of giants.

Into the land of temptations and deceit and all the things that Joshua and the people are going to run into. And that is where we are now. Pray that you would help us to fight that good fight like Paul said.

[40 : 38] and give us faith above all else to hold on to you when it when it is so difficult and can be so frightening and the work is so hard.

Help us Lord Jesus sustain us in these days and these hours. I ask this in your name.
Amen.