

## **Joshua's Servant Academy**

### **Exodus 17:8-16**

#### **Introduction**

Our study in the book of Joshua begins with a brief overview of Joshua in the writings of Moses. Bible characters often illustrate some grace in our lives. In Abraham we have a picture of faith; in Joseph purity, in Moses meekness; in David courage and in Jonathan love. In Samuel we see a picture of faithfulness and in Joshua servant leadership.

Joshua was Moses' servant before he became Moses' successor. Joshua is mentioned some seven times in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In those brief mentions we are able to see some of the events and characteristics that shaped Joshua's life and character. God will use events—and Moses and miracles to prepare Joshua to lead God's people from their wilderness wanderings into the Promised Land.

Joshua began his life as a slave in Egypt and we all began life as slaves to sin. The Christian life is both a blessing and a battle. The life of Joshua and the book of Joshua serves as both a bridge of the Book of the Law to the historical books; but also as an illustration for victorious Christian living. Slavery to sin often brings brokenness. Liberation can bring recovery but recovery must lead to victory. Jesus said in John 10:10; "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and they may have it *more abundantly*."

The book of Joshua has several important themes but its major theme is the capture and occupation of the Promised Land. The book of Joshua chronicles the military campaigns under Joshua's capable leadership. Joshua knew that victory comes through faith in God and obedience to His word rather than through numerical strength or military superiority. Before we begin our study in the book of Joshua we start with a study of Joshua the man.

<b>Joshua</b>	<b>The Man of Prayer</b>	<b>Exodus 17:8-9</b>
<b>Joshua</b>	<b>The Man of Vision</b>	<b>Exodus 24</b>
<b>Joshua</b>	<b>The Man of Devotion</b>	<b>Exodus 33</b>
<b>Joshua</b>	<b>The Man of Loyalty</b>	<b>Numbers 11</b>
<b>Joshua</b>	<b>The Man of Faith</b>	<b>Numbers 13-14</b>
<b>Joshua</b>	<b>The Man Filled With The Holy Spirit</b>	<b>Numbers 27:18-19</b>

**Joshua The Man of Prayer**

The first mention of Joshua takes place in Exodus 17:8-9. Amalekites have attacked the rear guard of Israel.

The book of Exodus is the story of God's redemption of God's people. Moses attempted to redeem his people by murder and was forced to flee into the wilderness. But God called Moses (chapter 3:1-4:17) and Moses confronted Pharaoh with miracles, and plagues and the Passover. The children Israel experienced a mighty deliverance through blood and God's power.

In the wilderness the children of Israel were plagued by thirst, hunger, and opposition from marauding tribes.

*Exodus 17:8–16 (NKJV) 8Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.  
9And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand."*

*10So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.*

*11And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.*

*12But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.*

*13So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.*

Joshua's ministry begins with victory.

*14Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."*

*15And Moses built an altar and called its name, The-Lord-Is-My-Banner;*

*16for he said, "Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."*

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### **Exodus 17:8-16**

Amalek has attacked the rear guard of Israel. At the end of Israel's people were the young, the old, the sick, the stragglers. This is Israel's most vulnerable citizens. Joshua is appointed to lead men and fight with Amalek. Moses says; "you fight and I'll pray." Moses was 80 years old at this time. The victory that day made Joshua an instant celebrity. But Joshua never forgot that image of Moses praying and Aaron and Our holding the hands of Moses. This was Joshua's introduction to ministry. The lessons learned will soon become obvious. Joshua will learn early on that the real power is not in the sword but in the Lord. Spurgeon was fond of saying, "True prayer is true power."

Joshua's introduction to ministry includes a vivid picture of praying and fighting! The Christian must cultivate the discipline of prayer and prepare for war. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Thomas a Kempis wrote; "The devil does not sleep, nor is the flesh yet dead; therefore, you must never cease your preparation for battle, because on the right and on the left are enemies who never rest."

The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (see Genesis 36:12,16) and serve as a type and illustration of sin and God's commitment to have "war with Amalek from generation to generation". Amalek fought with Israel at Rephidim—in the wilderness—attacking and destroying the weak and the vulnerable on their journey out of Egypt. God promised to destroy them forever (see v.14; Numbers 24:20 and Deuteronomy 25:19).

Our battle sin is never ending. It is true that we have been delivered from the penalty of sin and we are being delivered from the power of sin and we will one day be permanently removed from the presence of sin but we must fight. Paul talks about the war of the flesh and spirit (Gal. 5:16-17) and says, "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

Up until this point in their journey from Egypt the children of Israel did not have to fight. The Lord fought for them (see Exodus 13:17). But now the Lord will choose to fight through them in order to overcome the enemy!

Joshua was called to fight! Warren Wiersbe writes; "Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs through loving channels to the glory of God." True ministry must be preceded by prayer and real leaders soon realize that the victory is not in the sword but in the Lord. Victory does not lie in will power or personal strength or native intelligence. Richard Blackaby tweeted this: Prayer sets the focus of your life. If you focus on godly things, you'll move in a godly direction and do godly things!"

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### **Exodus 17:8-16**

Does this shock you? The Christian life is not simply a playground but a battleground! Prayer is not a toy we play with but a weapon we use to fight.

Victorious Christian living begins with prayer and ends with prayer. Prayer connects us to power. We could give lots of reasons to pray. I could tell you the repeated commands to do so (see 1 Samuel 12:23; Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2). We could cite the example of Christ (Heb. 5:7) or Paul (Acts 9:10-11). What if I told you that prayer defeats the Devil (Luke 22:32; 1 Peter 4:7); prayer saves the sinner and restores the backslider and strengthens the saint. Prayer sends forth the laborers and heals the sick and glorifies the name of God. Prayer accomplishes the impossible, imparts wisdom, bestows peace and keeps one from sin. Prayer reveals the will of God. Prayer should be humble, bold, pleaded in faith, surrounded by sincerity. Prayer should be simple, persistent and definite. Prayer should be in accordance with God's will (see 1 John 5:14).

There are things that hinder prayer: unconfessed sin; insincerity; carnal motives; unbelief; Satanic activity; domestic divisions; pride, robbing God, refusing to submit to biblical authority; refusing to help the needy.

But victory over your enemies will never be accomplished by running or hiding or capitulation.

*We must pray.*

### **Joshua The Man Of Vision**

The next appearance of Joshua is Exodus 24. Moses was about to receive the divine pattern for the Tabernacle and the Priesthood. The Lord provides the plans. We provide passion and desire coupled with obedience. We accomplish ministry not by inventing our own ways to serve God but by seeking God's will and obeying God's Word.

The chapter begins with God confirming His Covenant with His people. Moses shared the Word of God with the people and they agreed to obey the Word of God. Their resolve literally evaporated because within weeks we find the nation worshiping an idol and violating every single commandment they agreed to obey. The people erect a stone altar with twelve stones which represent the twelve tribes and their willingness to obey God's Word. The blood on the altar is a picture of God's forgiveness and the sprinkled blood on the people represent a picture of forgiveness of sin and obedience to the Lord. The blood of Jesus is necessary not simply for sin—but even for imperfect service (vv.1-8).

At the end of the chapter (vv.9-18) we see a picture of Moses, Aaron and his two sons Nadab and Abihu along with the 70 elders of the people. They are to serve as witnesses of the glory of God on the mountain and they eat and drink in the presence of the Lord. Look at verse 11—you would think they see God and fall on their face in fear and terror—but they eat and drink—

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because the blood on the altar allows fellowship with God based on blood. God calls Moses to go up higher that he might receive the instructions on building the Tabernacle and establishing the priesthood. Moses leaves Aaron and Our with the elders **but took Joshua with him into the cloud of glory.** Aaron must have left and gone back from the mountain because in chapter 32 we find Aaron helping the people construct or fabricate the golden calf. When we abandon our place in ministry we often are not content to sin on our own—but our sin causes others to sin as well.

Exodus 24:13; *“So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.”*

Joshua was with Moses six days while the glorious cloud covered Sinai (v.16). On the seventh day Moses went alone—and left Joshua on Sinai for 40 days (v.18). Joshua was never the same. The experience of that vision—burned on his heart a deep sense of God's glory and God's holiness and God's power. Joshua was an eye-witness of the Shekinah—God's glory cloud.

**The Servant-Leader serves from a deep vision of who God really is—this vision makes all the difference in the life of the Servant Leader.**

We should pauses for a moment and ask ourselves a few questions:

“Are my thoughts about God—His nature and character and power and holiness consistent with what the Bible reveals?”

“Are my thoughts worthy of this great God?”

“Do I find myself viewing God different from what the Bible says about God?”

Joshua sat under Moses on the mountain, but later met the Captain of the Lord of Hosts. The Captain of the Lord was a warrior in full dress battle uniform, his sword by His side, and Joshua worshipped the Lord (see Joshua 5:13-15).

While Moses was on top of the mountain receiving the Law and the instructions Joshua was at the bottom of the mountain witnessing the vision! **The vision was a vision of God in power, majesty, holiness and glory.**

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18).*

In the book of Judges we see the people in a constant state of defeat—punctuated by periods of victory and deliverance. Their lives were dominated by slavery, defeat, unbelief, declension, disobedience, earthly emphasis, sorrow, weakness, disunity among the tribes and a lack of leadership. In the book of Joshua we see victory—faith—freedom—progress, obedience, a heavenly vision, joy, strength, unity among the tribes and strong leadership.

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Do you remember David's vision of the God of Israel? When the young man was tending his father's flock, he contemplated the power, the grandeur the majesty, the enormity of God. Later when he met Goliath in battle, it was not David's fighting skill, or his athletic ability, or his intrinsic giftedness that gave David courage and strength to face his giant, it was David's vision of the Lord.

Make a mental note right now. **My vision of God will help give me courage to fight the necessary battles to experience victorious Christian living.** You will need courage to both pray and fight the giants in your life. That courage must be rooted in prayer to God and a vision of God. 1 Samuel 17:26; "Then David spoke to the men who stood by him saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills the Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel. For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" The God of the Bible is a living God! The servant of the Lord has two visions of God (vision is our ability to see God in our circumstances).

We see God

1. In the Word of God
2. In the Creation of God

Expand your vision. People often ask me about my vision for ministry or my vision for service or my vision for life. What is your vision? What is your vision of God? In Isaiah 6:1 we read; "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled temple."

Isaiah's vision included seeing God in His sovereignty (throne); elevated (high and lifted up) and the train of His robe filled the temple (His garment praise? glory? touched every portion of the temple). Vision is not simply a euphemism for a plan of action. Vision is never a substitute for prayer or dependence upon God. Vision is the ability to see God in the circumstances before you.

Matthew 5:8; "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

Do you know why the pure in heart see God? Because they can't see anything else. Their hearts are like Ivory Soap; 99.99% soap. Pure soap—no additives, perfumes or fillers.

Pray for a growing awareness of the glory, majesty, enormity of God. Pray for the grace you will need to believe what you read in the Bible about God and His universe.

"Only he who can see the invisible can do the impossible" (Frank Gaines 1892-1977).

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The invisible becomes visible by faith. Paul wrote; "We trust in the living God" (1 Timothy 4:10).

We see the Lord in the **holiness** of His nature (1 John 1:5-6). We see God in the **heart** of his love (John 3:16). We see God in the **revelation of His Son** (Hebrews 1:1-2). We see God in the **might of His Spirit** (Acts 1:8) and the **sufficiency of His grace** (2 For. 9:8). We see God in the **purpose of His will** (Hebrews 13:20-21) and the **promise of His Word** (2 Peter 1:4).

"A blind man's world is bound by the limits of his touch; an ignorant man's world by the limits of his knowledge; a great man's world by the limits of his vision" (E. Paul Hovey).

"Vision encompasses vast vistas outside the realm of the predictable, the safe, the expected" (Charles R. Swindoll).

"Vision looks inward and becomes duty. Vision looks outward and becomes aspiration. Vision looks upward and becomes faith" (Stephen Samuel Wise).

### **Conclusion**

Vance Havner writes; "The vision must be followed by venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps—we must step up the stairs."

The first step is prayer. The second step is vision. Don't be frustrated that it may take some time to simply step on the first step. But you must begin. Prayer will lead to vision.

"There is nothing as powerful as an idea whose time has come" (Victor Hugo).

Prayer allows us to see God. But once we see Him—we must serve Him.

What do you want? A life-time of repeated victories punctuated by challenges and obstacles; or a life-time of repeated defeats punctuated by periodic moments of relief?

The Christian life is a blessing and a battle.