

The Freeman Road Church of Christ
1006 Freeman Road, Neosho, MO

Old Testament Examples Series
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Joshua

One of the most difficult tasks in life is to fill the shoes of a great person after they are gone. Throughout history, king's deeds have been overshadowed by the great victories of their predecessors. Leaders such as presidents and prime ministers often pale in comparison to the men that served before them. And even in the Old Testament, frequently men had difficulty leading God's people in the wake of incredible Bible heroes.

Perhaps no individual faced a more daunting task of filling big shoes than Joshua. Joshua was chosen to replace Moses as the leader of God's new nation of Israel. Of all the leaders to follow in the history of Israel, Moses was arguably the greatest. Joshua had to fill in the shoes of a man who had been sent by God to free the nation from Egyptian bondage; who had lead the people across the Red Sea; who received the Law from God on Mt. Sinai; and who led the nation through the wilderness for 40 years. Moses had been a powerful leader, a righteous leader, and a friend of God. Perhaps the most frightening fact Joshua faced however, was the nation he was about to lead had often rebelled even under the leadership of Moses! However, in true Biblical fashion, out of great challenge comes great victory. Joshua more than met the challenge he was presented with. Although Joshua is not one of the most famous Old Testament heroes, he is definitely one of the greatest.

Joshua's incredible story started long before he became the leader of the Israelite nation. He was a great military leader, and led the battle against the Amalekites in Rephidim during the journey to Mt. Sinai (Exodus 17). Joshua's faithfulness had also earned him the position of Moses' assistant (Exodus 24:13), and he even accompanied Moses at least part of the way up Mt. Sinai. The true test of Joshua is found in Numbers 13-14, when the nation sent 12 spies to spy out the land of Canaan. Joshua was one of those twelve spies sent to the Promised Land. In Canaan, the spies saw giants and mighty men of war, and they were terrified. When the spies gave their report to the nation, all of them except for Joshua and Caleb told the nation that trying to conquer Canaan was hopeless. Joshua and Caleb pleaded with the people to trust in God, and go in to take the land, but for their faithfulness the nation almost stoned them. God punished the nation for their rebellion, promising none of the fighting men over the age of 20 would enter the Promised Land; none except for Caleb and Joshua, who had remained faithful to God.

After the forty years in the wilderness had been completed, and the new generation of Israel had grown, God was ready to have His people conquer the Promised Land. Due to a mistake in the wilderness, Moses was not allowed to enter Canaan, and the task of leading the conquest fell to Joshua. God spoke to Joshua before the conquest, encouraging him to be courageous and faithful. Joshua definitely heeded the instruction of God, and led the nation to incredible victory.

While Joshua is often overlooked and seemingly overshadowed, the nation of Israel was more successful under his leadership than at any other time in history. In fact, the book of Joshua is perhaps the most positive and successful book of the Old Testament. Of the first four historical narrative books (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua), only the book of Joshua does not record a major failure of an individual or God's people as a whole. Even under the reigns of David and Solomon there came times

when the nation suffered due to some spiritual failure. Joshua led the nation in one of the greatest military campaigns in world history. Guided by God, Joshua conquered Canaan with an ingenious military strategy that is still employed by generals today. Beginning with the mighty city of Jericho, Israel divided the land of Canaan in two, and won battle after battle against Canaanite armies much larger than their own. Within a short seven year time span, Joshua conquered practically the entire land of Canaan. Under his leadership, God's promise of giving Abraham's decedents the land of Canaan was fulfilled.

Joshua is a great example for us today. Joshua is a great example of courage. Many times the life of a Christian can be difficult and challenging. Joshua received courage by trusting in God however, and overcame impossible odds. Today, if we will trust in God like Joshua, we too can have great courage, and overcome great trials in life.

Another great lesson we learn from Joshua, is the courage to stand alone for God. When Joshua encouraged the nation to go into the land, he stood against an entire nation that was ready to stone him. That did not deter him from remaining faithful to God though. Likewise, we today should be willing to stand up for our faith in God, even when we are alone in doing so or facing persecution.

Lastly, Joshua is a great example of serving God. Joshua lived his entire life in service to his creator. From departing Egypt, through the wilderness, and in conquering the Promised Land, Joshua always put serving God first in his life. It was this very idea of service which shaped Joshua's final sermon to the Israelite people. In one of the most notable verses of the Old Testament, Joshua proclaimed, "*And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*" (Joshua 24:15). All Christians can benefit from studying the story of Joshua, and applying the characteristics of this great hero of the Old Testament in their lives today.

Article by: Nate Bibens

May Teaching Schedule

Sunday, May 1st

10:00 Nate Bibens
4:00 Smith Bibens
Daniel

Wednesday, May 4th

7:00 Reading
Titus 1-3

Sat. & Sun. May 7-8th

10:00 Smith Bibens
4:00 Smith Bibens

Mon. – Fri. May 9-13th

7:00 Smith Bibens

Sat. & Sun. May 14-15th

10:00 Smith Bibens
4:00 Smith Bibens

Wednesday, May 18th

7:00 Randy Blankenship
2 Corinthians 8

Sunday, May 22nd

10:00 Roger Owens
4:00 Lee Owens
Hosea

Wednesday, May 25th

7:00 Roger Owens
2 Corinthians 9

Sunday, May 29th

10:00 Lee Owens
4:00 Randy Blankenship
Joel

Gospel Meetings

May 4-8	Highway 60, Neosho, MO	Doug Hawkins
May 7-15	Freeman Road, Neosho, MO	Smith Bibens Revelation Study
May 27-29	Ozark, MO	Young Speakers

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