

May 23-29, 2022

## Joshua 1–8; 23–24

“BESTRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE”

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**Summary:** *Joshua 1. The Lord speaks to Joshua—He is commanded to be of good courage, to meditate upon the law, and to keep the commandments—He prepares Israel to enter Canaan.*

*Joshua 2. Joshua sends spies to Jericho—They are received and concealed by Rahab—They promise to preserve Rahab and her household.*

*Joshua 3. Joshua leads Israel to the Jordan—The Lord cuts off the water of the Jordan; it stands up as a heap, and Israel passes over on dry ground.*

*Joshua 4. Joshua places twelve stones to commemorate the crossing of the Jordan—Joshua is magnified before the children of Israel as they cross the Jordan—After the priests bearing the ark pass over, the river returns to its course.*

*Joshua 5. The inhabitants of Canaan fear Israel—The males of Israel are circumcised—Israel keeps the Passover, eats the fruit of the land, and manna ceases—The captain of the Lord’s host appears to Joshua.*

*Joshua 6. Jericho is taken and destroyed—Only Rahab and her household are saved.*

*Joshua 7. Israel is defeated by the people of Ai—Joshua complains to the Lord—Achan and his household are destroyed because he disobeyed the Lord by taking the spoils of Jericho.*

*Joshua 8. Joshua uses an ambush, takes Ai, and slays its inhabitants—He builds an altar in Mount Ebal—The words of the law, both blessings and cursings, are read to the people.*

*Joshua 23. Joshua exhorts Israel to be courageous, keep the commandments, love the Lord, and neither marry among nor cleave unto the remnants of the Canaanites who remain in the land—When the children of Israel serve other gods, they will be cursed and dispossessed.*

*Joshua 24. Joshua recites how the Lord has blessed and led Israel—Joshua and all the people covenant to choose the Lord and serve Him only—Joshua and Eleazar die—The bones of Joseph, taken from Egypt, are buried in Shechem.*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### How is the next prophet selected?

The selection of Joshua to replace Moses was

anticipated by the Israelites. There was (and still is) a system that God established that there would always be a worthy “Prophet in waiting.” Known

examples include Joseph for Jacob, Joshua for Moses, Nephi for Lehi and presently the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. These prophets were and are still led by the Lord. History sometimes only records the results of their decisions without elaborating on the revelatory decision-making process. “The actions of Joshua raise the moral issue of the right

to take by conquest a land inhabited by another people. To this, the rabbis of the *Talmudic* era argue that the land of Israel was divinely designated for the children of Israel, and that the Canaanites were merely acting as caretakers of the land until the Israelites arrived.” “During the conquest of Canaan, Joshua always issued proclamations inviting the nations to choose peace and abandon idolatry. Jericho refused and was destroyed. The Gibeonites, fearing the same fate, chose peace, gave up idolatry and became servants, the “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for the sanctuary.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### What is in a name?

The name Joshua means “*Jehovah* saves.” In Hebrew it is pronounced “*Jeho-Shua*” That is the original pronunciation for the Savior’s name. Through Greek and then into Latin and finally into English, it has been transformed into “Jesus.” Accepting the Savior, *Jeho-shua*, requires stepping into a spiritual “gateway” or entering His kingdom. Since the tribes of Israel under Joshua crossed the Jordan to enter *Erez* (land) Israel after the Exodus from Egypt, the Jordan river has come to have a deep significance for Jews, symbolizing the gateway to the homeland after years of wandering in exile in the desert. The Bible relates that Joshua led the Israelites to a place across the Jordan from Jericho, and that the waters suddenly and miraculously stopped flowing, enabling the Israelites to cross into the Promised Land. Folklore and mythology have popularized the Jordan as the gateway to Paradise, and crossing it is seen as stepping from a world of troubles to one of peace. The river is also important to Christians because John the Baptist performed baptisms on its banks and Jesus was baptized there.” “Since the tribes of Israel under Joshua crossed the Jordan to enter *Erez* Israel after the Exodus from Egypt, the Jordan river has

come to have a deep significance for Jews, symbolizing the gateway to the homeland after years of wandering in exile in the desert.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### What meanings may be in immersion guidelines?

Some religious Jews who experience repeated immersions (monthly for women and regularly for men) step into their immersion font from the east side, immerse themselves, and then exit to the west side. This could be a reminder of entering into the gateway of cleanliness as the Children of Israel entered into their Promised Land. For religious Jews, immersions are favored below ground level in flowing water that emanates from bedrock— the “Rock of Salvation.” Consider that the lowest spot on the face of the earth where water that originates in bedrock flows, is where the children of Israel crossed into their erstwhile homeland. Judaism and Christianity agree that it is also the likely spot where Jesus came to John in Judea to be immersed. The twelve stones that the Children of Israel removed from the Jordan River were probably used as the altar at *Gilgal*, just east of Jericho. *Gilgal* became the temporary site of the center of worship, in effect, a temporary temple. “According to the Bible the altar was made of stones joined together with earth, the wider stones being placed below and the narrower above. The stones of the altar of the Temple were smooth and were plastered over twice a year, and according to *Judah ha-Nasi* were smoothed down with a cloth every Sabbath eve. Four stones were placed at the four corners of the altar; these were known as the “horns” of the altar.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Already discussed, the Lord has many names, such as “Rock of Salvation.” Another name is the “Bread of Life.” There is a distinct connection between rock and

bread, considering the ancient methods of preparing flour to make bread.

### **What connection may there be with stone and threshing?**

“When threshing, to separate the kernels from the husks, a large wooden board whose underside was set with basalt stones was dragged over the grain by a pair of oxen. The grains could then be shaken horizontally in a round sieve with a fiber net attached. This winnowing caused the lighter elements to be carried away by the wind while the heavier kernels fell down in a heap. The kernels were then milled or crushed (by stone).” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The law that Moses negotiated for the children of Israel was written on stone. Stones have always been symbolic for Jews. “On the breastplate were embedded 12 precious stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and the *Talmud* speculates that the oracular message was miraculously spelled out by the protruding of letters out of the tribal names inscribed on the stones.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **What are the two annual “holy convocations” for the Jews?**

The account of the fall of Jericho is regularly remembered in Jewish tradition as the holiday of *Sukkot* is celebrated. *Sukkot* lasts for eight days, beginning with the first full moon after the first day of fall. It is a reminder of wandering through the wilderness and living in a “*sukkah*,” a “bowery.” This temporary housing is also called a “tabernacle.” The festival of *Sukkot* is a sequel to the eight days of Passover (seven days preceded by a preparation day) which occurs at the first full moon after the first day of spring. Both of these spring and fall holidays have Biblical instructions to gather all of Israel for Holy Convocations. Latter-day Saints gather twice a year for General Conference that for decades emanated from the “tabernacle.”

### **How does Jewish “circling” around the pulpit remind us of “circling” Jericho?**

“The Bible records that Joshua, while besieging Jericho, made a circuit around the city every day for six days, and seven circuits on the seventh, when the walls fell (Joshua 6:12-20). Today, in the synagogue, on the first six days of *Sukkot* (except Shabbat), a single circuit is made around the *bimah* (pulpit) by the congregants...and chant *hoshanot* (praises to the Lord). On the seventh day, *Hoshana Rabba*, the procession is repeated seven times...Every adult male in the congregation is honored with carrying a *Torah*, and...there is much singing...” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **Who were the only two Israelites leaving Egypt that entered the Promised Land?**

Shortly after leaving Egypt, Moses sent scouts to spy out the land they were headed for. The account of Joshua and Caleb as spies or emissaries for Israel has additional symbolism because only those two returned with a good report—a faithful example of choosing to serve the Lord and then continuing to lead Israel. They were of the tribes of Joseph (Joshua) and Judah (Caleb). Of the two-million souls that embarked on the exodus, you might consider these two tribal elders as “one-in-a-million!” The tribes of Joseph and Judah have always led Israel in the past and must, through a good report, continue to serve the Lord and lead Israel in the Latter-days. The two tribes will once again combine as emissaries for the Lord preceding the gathering of the rest of Israel. As mentioned previously, the symbol of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism is the characterization of the two emissaries (Joshua and Caleb) carrying a clump of grapes between them—bringing good news!

