

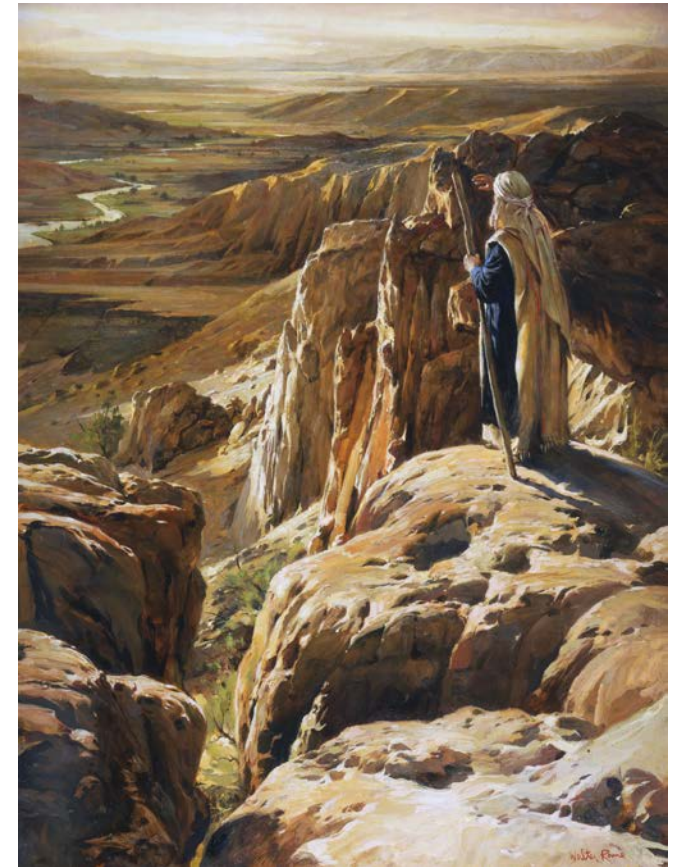
Lesson 18 - “Be Strong and of a Good Courage”

Joshua

Purpose: To encourage us to be strong and courageous in living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

If you are interested in downloading the Powerpoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>



Last Week's Lesson Challenge

Last week we studied Moses and his last words to the Israelites. We asked the questions, what can we learn from Moses' last words to the Israelites and how can we instill in our daily lives the actions that he asked the Israelites to take in their lives?

Would anyone share their thoughts or experiences on this subject?

Joshua - *God is help.*

The name also occurs in the Old Testament under the various forms Jehoshua, Hoshea, Jeshua, and Jesus; son of Nun, and successor of Moses; born in Egypt before the Exodus; fought with Amalek; was Moses' minister; one of the 12 spies; appointed Moses' successor. The book of Joshua contains the history of his conquest of Palestine. He died at the age of 110 and was buried in his own city, Timnath-Serah. He is the highest type of the devout warrior.

<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bd/joshua?lang=eng>



The Book of Joshua

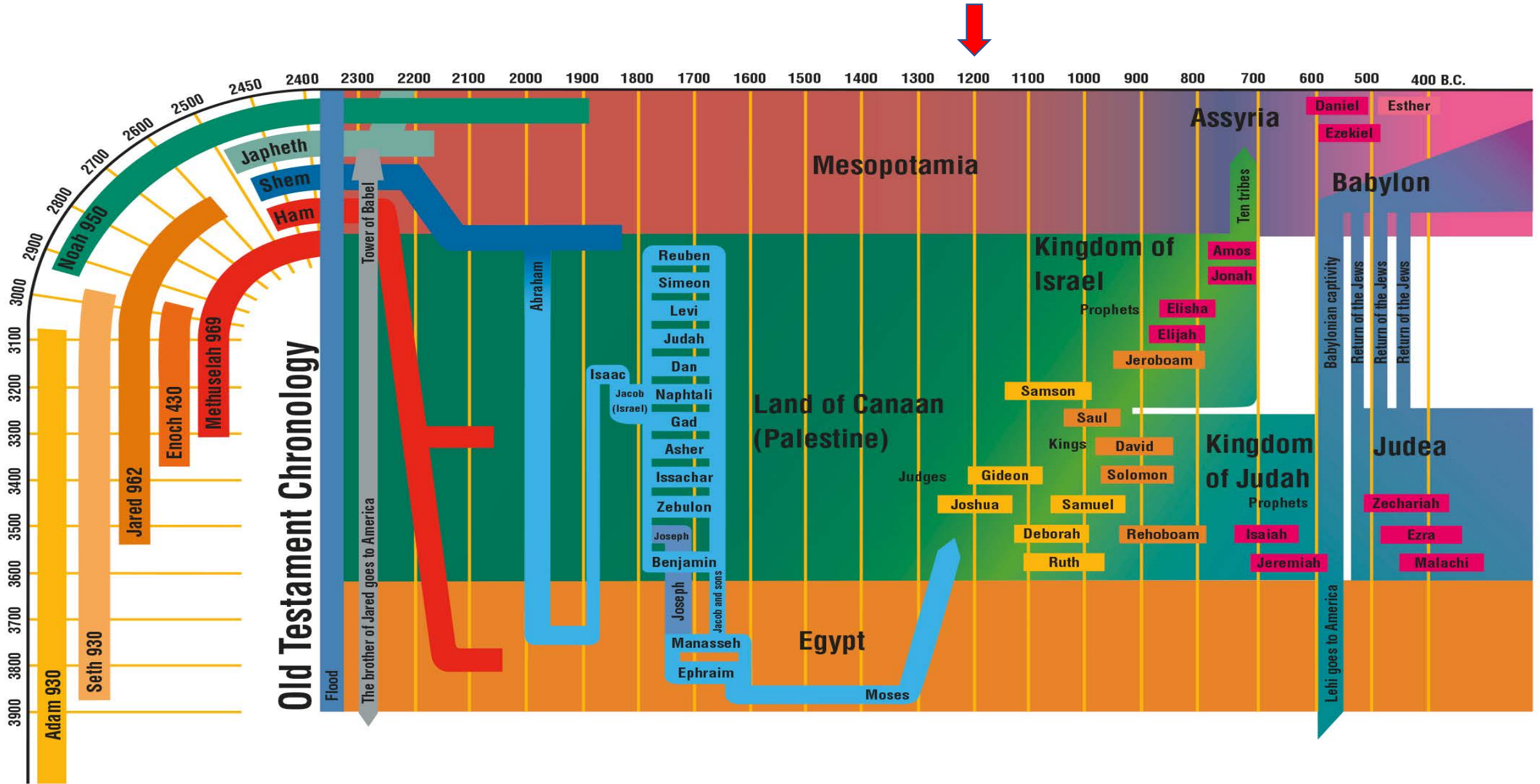
Why study this book? - The book of Joshua recounts the Israelites' entrance into the promised land under the leadership of the prophet Joshua. Studying this book, you will learn principles that can help them to have courage and be strong in the midst of opposition. You can also learn important lessons from the successes the Israelites experienced because of their obedience to the Lord and from the failures they experienced because of their disobedience.

What are some distinctive features of this book?

The book of Joshua is a continuation of the five books of Moses (Genesis–Deuteronomy) and describes how the Lord helped the Israelites obtain the promised land. The account of the conquest shows that as the Israelites strictly obeyed the Lord's commandments, the Lord made them victorious over their enemies. The book's final two chapters ([Joshua 23–24](#)) emphasize the importance of serving the Lord rather than the false gods in the land of Canaan, foreshadowing an important problem the Israelites would struggle with in the future, as recorded in the book of Judges and many other books of the Old Testament.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-seminary-teacher-manual/introduction-to-the-book-of-joshua?lang=eng>

The Book of Joshua in the Old Testament Timeline



Joshua 1:1-5

1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Jehovah told Joshua that the land that he would give them would stretch from the wilderness in the south, Lebanon in the north, the Euphrates in the east and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. The actual geographic size of the Israelite Nation would never reach all of these boundaries, but in the time of David and Solomon – 300 years later --, it would be close.


Joshua 1:6-9

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.



Jehovah cautions Joshua that in his strength and courage, remember what Moses taught you. Remember that your strength and courage comes from Jehovah. Stay on the strait and narrow path that Jehovah has set before you. Don't turn left or right to seek after the things of men.

Joshua 1:7

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

President Howard W. Hunter taught: “Joshua knew that his obedience would bring success, and although he did not know exactly how he would succeed, he now had confidence in the result. ... Surely the experiences of the great prophets [found in the scriptures] have been recorded [and preserved] to help us understand the importance of choosing the path of strict obedience” (“Commitment to God,” Ensign, Nov. 1982, 57, 58).

What do we need to do in our lives to find and follow the “path of strict obedience”?

Joshua 3:17

And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.



After 40 years in the Sinai Wilderness, Israel, under Joshua's leadership, would pass across the Jordan River on dry land and enter the Promised Land just like they left Egypt on dry ground at the Red Sea. Jehovah wants Israel to see Joshua as they saw Moses, the mantle of leadership and prophecy passing from one of the Lord's anointed to another.

As Moses was magnified by the Lord in the eyes of Israel when God parted the Red Sea, so Joshua was magnified in the same way through the parting of the Jordan River. In both instances Israel passed through the water into a newness of life. This passage may have been what Paul had in mind when he spoke of Israel's baptism "in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:2). In each instance the passage represented a new covenant agreement. Israel passed over the River Jordan on the first day of the Passover.

Joshua 4:1-9

1 And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying,

2 Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

3 And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.

4 Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man:

5 And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:

6 That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?

7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

8 And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

9 And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

Joshua commemorates the crossing of Jordan by building an altar made of 12 stones carried by one man from each of the 12 Tribes.

Having crossed the Jordan River, Jericho is the first Canaanite city that lays before the Army of Israel. The battle of Jericho is found in Joshua 6. However, the destruction of Jericho really starts in Joshua 2 where spies are sent to Jericho to observe the city and its defenses. Rahab, a woman of Jericho, hides the spies and is given a promise of safety for her and her household. Much like the avenging angel in the night of the 10th Plague, the Passover, Rahab is told to gather her family in her home and hang the same red “thread” over her window that the spies used to come and go from her home. Rahab and her family are spared in the battle and join Israel.

Rahab will marry Salmon of the Tribe of Judah and is the great-great grandmother of King David, making her a direct ancestor of Jesus Christ.

The battle of Jericho is recorded in Joshua 6.

The inhabitants of Jericho knew full well of the powerful destruction that Israel had directed against the kingdom of the Amorites east of Jordan. Therefore, it is no surprise that they shut up their walled city against Israel.

The prevalence of the number seven in the Lord's dealing with Jericho's defense is significant. Throughout the law of Moses, seven was used numerous times to signify the covenant. Its association with the covenant probably stems from the idea that "seven ... is associated with completion, fulfilment, and perfection" (Douglas, New Bible Dictionary, s.v. "number," p. 898). By patterning the conquest of Jericho in sevens, the Lord taught Israel that their success lay in the covenant with Jehovah; His perfect power brought conquest, not their own.

As the ark of the covenant symbolized the presence of God in the tabernacle's Holy of Holies, so it symbolized His leadership of the armies of Israel as they carried it before them while they marched around the city. This was not a mere mortal conflict: Canaan was to be destroyed by the very God of Israel. This truth was impressively taught to Israel by the presence of the ark.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-genesis-2-samuel/joshua-1-24-the-entry-into-the-promised-land?lang=eng>

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[Joshua 24:15](#). “Choose You This Day Whom Ye Will Serve”

Near the end of his life Joshua called his people together for a final blessing and warning, very much as Moses had done. Such messages should be considered very significant, for what a prophet says as he approaches death seems to be an effort on his part to rid his garments of the blood of the people by placing the full responsibility for their conduct squarely upon their shoulders. Joshua showed Israel exactly what God had miraculously done for them in the past and challenged them to choose whom they would serve.

Elder Erastus Snow said the following: “Joshua said to ancient Israel: ‘Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; if the Lord be God, serve him; if Baal, serve him. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’ (Joshua 24:15) I think what we need to learn are the true principles that shall lead us to peace, to wealth and happiness in this world, and glory and exaltation in the world to come. And that if we can learn these principles, and receive them in good and honest hearts, and teach them as our faith, and practice them in our lives, we shall show our manhood, our independence and our agency as creditably before the angels and the Gods, as any wicked man can, in refusing the good and cleaving to the evil, exhibit his before the devil and his angels.” (In Journal of Discourses, 19:180–81.)

The Gospel of Jesus Christ was founded on the principle of free agency. We have a right to choose. Joshua encourages the Israelites to choose to serve Jehovah by saying “...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Consider also the words of the Apostle John found in Revelations 3:16
16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

John was telling those who chose to sit on the fence between the Gospel and apostasy that they needed to get off the fence and serve the Lord because lukewarm was just as bad as cold. He would not accept lukewarm.

We make choices every minute of every day. Most are insignificant. Few are great. We don't make the choice to serve the Lord only once, but we make that choice day after day. Choose you this day, whom you will serve. Did Joshua realize how prophetic he actually was?

This Week's Lesson Challenge

In some of his final words to the Israelites, Joshua challenged them to make a choice – serve themselves and man or serve Jehovah. He led my example – “for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Consider this week how many time you choose between yourself, humankind and the Lord. Further consider how you could choose the Lord over other things on a more consistent basis.