

## Joshua's Farewell Address to Transjordan Tribes (1400 BC)

Joshua 22:1–8

### Joshua's Exhortation

1 Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh,  
 2 and he said to them, "You have observed all that Moses Yahweh's servant commanded you, and you have listened to my voice in all that I have commanded you;  
 3 you have not forsaken your kinsmen these many days, up to this day, and you have observed the obligation of the command of Yahweh your God.  
 4 So then, Yahweh your God has given rest to your kinsmen, just as he promised them; so then, turn and go to your tents to the land of your possession, which Moses Yahweh's servant gave to you beyond the Jordan.  
 5 Only be very careful to observe the commandment and law that Moses Yahweh's servant commanded you, to love Yahweh your God, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, to hold fast to him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

### Joshua's Blessing

6 And Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.  
 7 And to the half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given *a possession* in Bashan, but to the other half Joshua had given *a possession* with their kinsmen beyond the Jordan to the west; and when Joshua sent them to their tents and blessed them,  
 8 he said to them, "Return to your tents with much wealth, and with very much livestock, with silver, gold, copper, iron, and with very much clothing; divide the war-booty of your enemies with your kinsmen."

## A Crisis of Loyalties (1400 BC)

Joshua 22:9–34

### The Crisis Begins

9 So the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned *home* and departed with the Israelites at Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead to the land of their possession, which they had acquired according to the command of Yahweh through the hand of Moses.  
 10 And they came to the region of the Jordan that *is* in the land of Canaan, and the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar on the Jordan, a large and imposing altar.  
 11 And the Israelites heard *it* said that the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had built an altar next to the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan, on the side *belonging to* the Israelites.  
 12 When the Israelites heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the Israelites gathered *at* Shiloh to go up against them for battle.

### The Accusation

13 And the Israelites sent to the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, Phinehas the priest son of Eleazar,  
 14 and ten leaders with him, one leader for each family from each of the tribes of Israel; and each one *was* the head of his family among the clans of Israel.  
 15 They came to the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying,  
 16 "Thus says all the congregation of Yahweh: 'What *is* this treachery that you have committed against the God of Israel by turning away today from following Yahweh, by building for yourselves an altar to rebel today against Yahweh?  
 17 *Is* not the sin of Peor enough for us, from which we have not cleansed ourselves today, and for which a plague came to the congregation of Yahweh,  
 18 that you must turn today from following Yahweh? *If* you rebel today against Yahweh, tomorrow he will be angry with all of the congregation of Israel;  
 19 if, however, the land of your property *is* unclean, cross *over* to the land of Yahweh's property, where Yahweh's tabernacle resides, and take possession among us. But you must not rebel against Yahweh or against us by building for yourselves an altar other than the altar of Yahweh our God.  
 20 Did not Achan son of Zerah commit treachery with devoted things, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And he alone did not perish because of his iniquity.'"

### The Defense

21 And the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh spoke with the heads of the clans of Israel,  
 22 "Yahweh, God of gods! Yahweh, God of gods knows. And let Israel itself know, *if it was* in rebellion or treachery against Yahweh, do not spare us this day  
 23 for building for ourselves an altar to turn away from Yahweh, or *if it was* to offer burnt offerings, grain offerings, or fellowship

offerings on it, may Yahweh himself take vengeance.

24 But in fact, we have done this because of anxiety, because of a reason, saying, 'In the future your children may say to our children, 'What is the relationship between you and Yahweh the God of Israel?

25 Yahweh has made the Jordan a border between us and you, the descendants of Reuben and Gad; you have no portion in Yahweh.' So your children may put an end to our children worshipping Yahweh.

26 So we said, 'Let us build immediately for ourselves an altar, not for burnt offerings or for sacrifices;

27 instead, it *is* a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us for performing the serving of Yahweh in his presence with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and fellowship offerings; so that your children may not say in the future to our children, "You have no portion in Yahweh."

28 And we thought, if they say to us and to our children in the future, we can say, 'Look at this replica of the altar of Yahweh, which our ancestors made, not for burnt offerings or sacrifices; rather, it *is* a witness between us and you.'

29 Far be it from us to rebel against Yahweh, to turn today from following Yahweh, to build an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings, or sacrifices, instead of the altar of Yahweh our God that *is* before his tabernacle."

### The Resolution

30 Phinehas the priest, the leaders of the congregation, and the heads of the clans of Israel who *were* with him heard the words that the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh spoke, and they were satisfied.

31 Phinehas the priest, son of Eleazar, said to the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, "Today we know that Yahweh *is* among us, because you have not committed this treachery against Yahweh. Therefore you have rescued the Israelites from the hand of Yahweh."

32 And Phinehas the priest, son of Eleazar, and the leaders returned from the descendants of Reuben and Gad, from the land of Gilead, to the land of Canaan to the Israelites, and they gave them their report.

33 The report satisfied the Israelites; they blessed God, and they did not speak of going up for battle against them to destroy the land in which the descendants of Reuben and Gad were living.

34 The descendants of Reuben and Gad called the altar Witness, "Because," *they said*, "it *is* a witness between us that Yahweh *is* God."

## Joshua's Farewell Address to All Israel (c. 1380 BC)

### Joshua 23

1 And it happened, after a long time, after Yahweh had given rest to Israel from all their surrounding enemies, and *after* Joshua was old and well-advanced in years,

2 Joshua summoned all Israel, their elders, heads, judges, and officials, and he said to them, "I am old and well-advanced in years, 3 and you have seen all that Yahweh your God has done to all these nations for your sake, for Yahweh your God *is* fighting for you.

4 Look! I have allotted to you these remaining nations as an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, *with* all the nations that I have cut off, to the Great Sea in the west.

5 And Yahweh your God will push them back before you and drive them out of your sight, and you will possess their land, just as Yahweh your God promised to you.

6 Be very strong to observe carefully all that is written in the scroll of the law of Moses so as not to turn aside from it, *to* the right or left,

7 so as not to go among these remaining nations with you; do not profess the name of their gods, and do not swear by them, serve them, or bow down to them.

8 But hold fast to Yahweh your God, just as you have done up to this day.

9 Yahweh has driven out before you great and strong nations; and as for you, nobody has withstood you to this day.

10 One of your men put to flight a thousand, for Yahweh your God *is* fighting for you, just as he promised you.

11 Take utmost care for *the sake of* your life to love Yahweh your God,

12 for if indeed you turn back and join these remaining nations among you, and you intermarry with them, marrying their women and they yours,

13 know for certain that Yahweh your God will not continue to drive out these nations from before you; they will be for you a snare and a trap, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land that Yahweh your God has given to you.

14 Look! I am about to die, and you know in all your hearts and souls that not one thing failed from all the good things that Yahweh your God promised concerning you; everything has been fulfilled; not one thing failed.

15 But just as all the good things came to you that Yahweh your God promised, so will Yahweh bring to you all the bad things until he has destroyed you from this good land that Yahweh your God has given to you.

16 If you transgress the covenant of Yahweh your God, which he commanded *to* you, and you go and serve other gods and bow down to them, Yahweh's anger will be kindled against you, and you will perish quickly from the good land that he has given to you."

## Covenant Renewal at Shechem (c. 1380 BC)

Joshua 24:1–28

Judges 2:6

### Remembering the Past

1 And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem; he summoned the elders of Israel, their heads, their judges, and their officials, and they presented themselves before God.

2 And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel: ‘Long ago your ancestors—Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor—lived beyond the river, and they served other gods.

3 I took your ancestor Abraham from beyond the river and led him through all the land of Canaan, and I increased his offspring; I gave him Isaac,

4 and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.

5 And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in its midst; and afterward I brought you out.

6 When I brought out your ancestors from Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued after your ancestors with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.

7 They cried out to Yahweh, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and he brought the sea over them and covered them; your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt. Then you lived in the wilderness for many days.

8 And I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan; they fought you, and I gave them into your hand; you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you.

9 Then Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, set out and fought against Israel, and he sent and summoned Balaam son of Beor to curse you,

10 but I was not willing to listen to Balaam, and he richly blessed you. So I rescued you from his hand,

11 and you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the citizens of Jericho, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, fought against you, and I gave them into your hand.

12 I sent before you *the* hornet and they drove out before you two kings of the Amorites; *but* not by your sword or bow.

13 I gave to you a land that you have not labored on, and cities that you have not built, and you live in them; you eat *from* vineyards and olive groves that you have not planted.’

### Renewal of Covenant Loyalty

14 “So now, revere Yahweh and serve him in sincerity and faithfulness; remove the gods that your ancestors served beyond the river and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh.

15 But if it is bad in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves today whom you want to serve, whether it is the gods that your ancestors served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you *are* living; but as for me and my household, we will serve Yahweh.”

16 And the people answered and said, “Far be it from us that we would forsake Yahweh to serve other gods,

17 for Yahweh our God brought us and our ancestors from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery, and did these great signs before our eyes. He protected us along the entire way that we went, and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed.

18 And Yahweh drove out all the people before us, the Amorites who live *in* the land. We will serve Yahweh, for he *is* our God.”

19 But Joshua said to the people, “You cannot serve Yahweh, for he *is* a holy and jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins.

20 If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster to you; he will destroy you after he has done good to you.”

21 And the people said to Joshua, “No, we will serve Yahweh.”

22 And Joshua said to the people, “You *are* witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves to serve Yahweh.” And they said, “*We are* witnesses.”

23 He said, “Remove the foreign gods that *are* in your midst, and incline your hearts to Yahweh the God of Israel.”

24 And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve Yahweh our God, and we will listen to his voice.”

### Sealing the Covenant

25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people on that day, and he established for them a statute and a judgment at Shechem.

26 Then Joshua wrote these words in a scroll of the law of God, and he took a large stone and set it up there under a large tree, which *is* at the shrine of Yahweh.

27 And Joshua said to all the people, “Look, this stone will be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of Yahweh that he spoke with us. It will be as a witness against you, so that you do not deny your God.”

28 Then Joshua sent the people away to their inheritance.

6 And Joshua sent the people away, and the Israelites went each to their own inheritance to take possession of the land.

### The Death of Joshua (c. 1380 BC)

Joshua 24:29–33	Judges 2:7–9
<p>29 After these things Joshua son of Nun servant of Yahweh died; he was one hundred and ten years old.</p> <p>30 They buried him in the territory of his inheritance, at Timnath-Serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.</p> <p>31 Israel served Yahweh all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who lived long after Joshua, and who had known all the work that Yahweh did for Israel.</p> <p>32 The bones of Jacob, which the Israelites had brought out from Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in a piece of land that Jacob had bought from the children of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for one hundred pieces of money; it became an inheritance for the descendants of Joseph.</p> <p>33 And Eleazar son of Aaron died; and they buried him in Gibeah in the hill country of Ephraim, which had been given to his son Phinehas.</p>	<p>8 And Joshua son of Nun, servant of Yahweh, died at the age of one hundred and ten years.</p> <p>9 They buried him within the border of his inheritance in Timnah-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash.</p> <p>7 And the people served Yahweh all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who saw all the great work Yahweh had done for Israel.</p>

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#### **Chronological Notes**

- 1) We know that Joshua died at the age of 110 (Josh 24:29; Judg 2:8). However, we are not told how old Joshua was at earlier points in his life. Instead we are told: a) Joshua was a “young man” at the time of the Exodus (Exod 33:11), b) Joshua was “old and advanced in years” at the end of the conquest of Canaan (Josh 13:1), and c) Joshua was “old and advanced in years” when he made his last exhortation to Israel (Josh 23:1—an event that took place “many days” after the conquest).
- 2) How old was Joshua when he was a “young man”? There are a few clues that can help us assign a reasonable age to Joshua at the time of the Exodus: a) Joshua was chosen to lead the attack against the Amalekites at Rephidim in 1446 BC (Exod 17:8–16), b) Joshua was a leader of the tribe of Ephraim and one of the 12 spies sent into Canaan by Moses in 1445 BC (Num 13:8, 16—Caleb was 40 at the time, cf. Josh 14:10), c) the minimum age for military service was 20 (Num 1:2–3), d) the minimum age for performing Levitical service in the Tabernacle was 25/30 (Num 4:3; 8:24), and e) Rehoboam was referred to as being “young” at the age of 41 (1 Kgs 14:21; inferred from 12:8). This data leads us to conclude that Joshua was most likely in his early 40s at the time of the Exodus (we infer that Joshua was older than Caleb due to the disparity in physical condition at the end of the conquest; cf. Josh 14:1–10).
- 3) If we guess that Joshua was 5 years older than Caleb (who was 39 at the time of the Exodus), then we have an age of 44 for Joshua at the time of the Exodus. Does this age make sense of all the relevant data? The age of 44 fits all the requirements of age given by the law, makes sense of Joshua being a tribal leader and a military commander, and yet still fits the description of “young man.” It also means that Joshua was 90 at the end of the conquest (Caleb being 85), which is a good age to fit the description of being “old and advanced in years” (cf. Eli in 1 Sam 4:15–18). Thus we conclude that Joshua died approximately 66 years after the exodus in 1446 - 66 = c. 1380 BC.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Petrovich suggests c. 1384 BC for Joshua’s death, making him 48 years old at the Exodus [Douglas Petrovich, “The Dating of Hazor’s Destruction in Joshua 11 By Way of Biblical, Archaeological, and Epigraphical Evidence,” *JETS*, 51/3 (Sept 2008) 496, n. 27]. Merrill speculates that Joshua was 30 at the Exodus, with a date of c. 1366 BC for his death [Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 147]. Steinmann suggests 1399–1379 BC for the period for the deaths of Joshua and the elders [Andrew E. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul*, 106].