

Old Testament Types of the Lord Joshua - Jehovah the Saviour

New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.

Today, we begin a study of Old Testament types of the Lord Jesus. As we look at the types, pictures, or shadows we must always remind ourselves that they will never be perfect. The only perfect, holy, obedient, and faithful Man who walked in this world was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. However, we must remember that the whole Bible speaks of Christ and points to Him. As we look at the different people who are types, we trust it will help us appreciate the person and work of the Lord Jesus even more.

Joshua lived in the 15th century B.C. He was the son of Nun. He was an assistant to Moses and one of his faithful men. Just before Moses died, he handed over the responsibility of leading the children of Israel (God's people) to Joshua. The story of Joshua begins in Exodus 17 then we read further in Numbers, Deuteronomy, and the book of Joshua itself. Joshua lived and served the LORD and His people faithfully until he died at 110 years old (Joshua 24). Moses gave him the name Jehoshua, which was shortened to Joshua, the same name as Jesus in Greek and signifies "Jehovah the Saviour." Joshua is a type of Christ in His salvation.

Let's consider Joshua in four ways:

1. Joshua was a young man who served.
2. Joshua was prepared and ready for the work God wanted him to do.
3. Joshua was given authority and was dependant on God.
4. Joshua was a leader and delivered God's people safely into the promised land.

Joshua was a young man who served

In Exodus 17:9 Moses told Joshua to choose some men to go out and fight the Amalekites. Moses told Joshua that he would go and stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in his hand. Joshua did as he was asked to do. Joshua was a good soldier, but he needed the help of God. Moses held up the staff, but his arms became weary, and Aaron and Hur had to help him keep his arms up. While his arms were held up Joshua was winning but when his arms dropped the Amalekites were winning. The battle continued until sunset, and Joshua defeated the enemy. Joshua was obedient and he was victorious in his first battle. However, he had been taught a lesson that he needed to trust and rely upon God in battle.

In Exodus 24:12 the LORD said to Moses,

"Come up to Me on the mountain and be there: and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

Moses rose and took Joshua his assistant up into the mountain of God (Mount Sinai). Joshua was just about to experience the presence and the glory of God. God caused a cloud to cover the mountain for six days. What happened during that time we are not told but I am sure this was an experience that Joshua would never forget. On the seventh day God called Moses out of the cloud and the glory of the LORD was seen by all of Israel. Moses went on to spend forty days and forty nights in another part of the mountain with the LORD alone, while Joshua waited patiently where he was.

In Exodus 32:15 Moses came down the mountain with the two tablets of stone which had the ten commandments that God had written on both sides. Joshua came down with Moses and he heard the noise coming from the children of Israel below. Joshua wrongly thought that it was the sound of war in the camp, but Moses pointed out that it was the sound of singing. The people had become impatient because Moses had been away for so long, and they had sinned against God by making a golden calf and worshipping it.

The last reference to Joshua as Moses' young assistant is in Exodus 33:7-11. Moses always took his own tent and pitched it far away from the main camp and called it the "Tabernacle of meeting." Anyone who sought the LORD would go there. When Moses went into the tent the pillar of cloud would come down and cover the entrance while the LORD spoke to him. The LORD talked to Moses in the tent "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." All the people watched when Moses went and worshipped the LORD. It seems that Joshua stayed in this tent when Moses returned to the main camp. Maybe there was a few different sections in it. Joshua must have experienced the presence of God on many occasions in that tent. Joshua was a young man who served Moses and in turn served God. He was obedient, faithful, patient, godly, and he had learned to trust in God.

Joshua was prepared and ready for the work God wanted him to do

Joshua who had been Moses' assistant since his youth had now become one of his most trusted men. In Numbers 13 God told Moses to send some men to spy out the land that God had promised to the Israelites (the land of Canaan). One leader from each tribe was selected including Hoshea from the tribe of Ephraim and Caleb from the tribe of Judah. At this point Moses changed Hoshea's name to Joshua. The spies went out and explored the land for 40 days. They brought back some of the amazing fruit. A single cluster of grapes along with a few figs and pomegranates had to be carried by two men on a pole. When they arrived back, they gathered the people who were anxious to hear all about it. Interestingly the spies all saw the same things. However, ten of the spies came back with a different mindset to that of Joshua and Caleb. The ten admitted that the land flowed with milk and honey as God had said. Look at the evidence of the fruit we brought back. However, there was a but! They reported that the people who lived there were powerful, their cities were large and fortified. And there were giants in the land. They told the people "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are" (my paraphrase of v.31). Caleb on the other hand stood up and told the people,

"Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it" (Joshua 13:30).

This brought major doubts to the people, and they wept. They grumbled against Moses and Aaron. They wanted to choose another leader and go back to Egypt; how sad, remember they worked as slaves there. Joshua's time had come. He and Caleb stood up and addressed the people.

"The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them" (Joshua 14:7-9).

The people talked about stoning Joshua and Caleb. The LORD had had enough of the people doubting His promises. So, the ten spies who brought back the bad report were struck down with a plague and died. Also, everyone who was 20 years old and above were told that they would not enter the land, they would wander for forty years in the wilderness and die there. Only Joshua and Caleb would enter the land. Joshua the man continued to serve under the guidance of Moses during the years in the wilderness.

Joshua was given authority and was dependant on God

In Numbers 27 God told Moses to appoint a man who would lead Israel out of the desert and take them into the promised land. God did not want the people to be like sheep without a shepherd. Moses had been their leader as well as being their priest. Joshua was appointed by God and commissioned by Moses before Eleazar the priest and the people. Joshua was to be given some of Moses' authority so the people would obey him. However, Joshua in the future had to go to Eleazer the priest to ask the LORD for guidance. Joshua was a military leader who needed priestly guidance. Joshua continued with a full heart and in everything he did he followed the LORD (Numbers 32:12). Leaders need encouragement and in Deuteronomy 1:38 Moses told the people to encourage Joshua. In leading the people into the land and in battle he needed to know the mind of God. Every decision he made as leader would affect the interests of the people in some way. He was dependent on the ministry of Eleazer the priest, for Joshua was to lead Israel in to inherit the land that was promised by God. Moses continued to encourage Joshua until he [Moses] died (Deuteronomy 34).

Joshua was a leader and delivered God's people safely into the promised land

The book of Joshua tells the story of Joshua who with God's help and guidance led the children of Israel into the promised land of Canaan. If it had not been for their sin and rebellion, the people could have been enjoying the pleasures of the land many years before. God's desire is always that His people should enjoy the many blessings He provides for them. As we read through the book Joshua the people still had battles to win to conquer the land. However, with God's help the enemy was cast aside and the victory belonged to God's people.

God told Joshua that the time had come for the people to cross the river Jordan and enter the land. The people responded to Joshua's leadership and vowed to obey him. Joshua led the people in a remarkable way. The whole nation crossed over the river Jordan while the priests carrying the ark of the covenant stood in the river. The waters were in flood, but the river parted. Spies were sent into Jericho to assess the enemy. Rahab hid the spies and in doing so brought blessing upon herself and her house. Jericho was captured and destroyed in a remarkable way. In procession behind the armed men were the seven priests with trumpets and the priests carrying the ark quietly. All marched round the city once each day for six days. Then on the seventh day they marched round the city seven times before the people shouted and the walls collapsed; and every man charged into the city and destroyed every living thing apart from Rahab and her household. Then the city was burnt down.

Although the people were now in the promised land, they still had to do exactly what God wanted them to do. They had to be obedient to Joshua and to the Word of the LORD. In Joshua 7 we read of Achan's sin and of how he and his family paid the price for bringing trouble upon the whole nation. Joshua went on to conquer the kings from the north to the south of the land. In Joshua 12 you can see the list of the defeated kings. Joshua had taken the entire land. Not one of God's promises to Joshua and to His people had failed.

At the end of his life, Joshua challenged the people (Joshua 24:14-24). He said,

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”

He made it clear to the people where his loyalties lay, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Israel had served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua, and they had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel.

We have travelled briefly through the life of Joshua who lived and served under God's direction. Joshua was used by God to deliver His people safely into the promised land of Canaan. Joshua had taken them from the wilderness into the land. He had fought many battles and won many great victories against the enemy.

Let us now briefly consider a few types or pictures of the Lord Jesus in Joshua's life.

Jesus the perfect servant

The first instance that caught my eye was when Joshua as a young man served in Moses' tabernacle of meeting. The Lord Jesus although being "God with us" came to serve.

"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

The Lord Jesus was the perfect, obedient, humble servant. He served His Father, and He served people. He even washed His disciples' feet; He even washed Judas's who was about to betray Him.

Jesus the prepared and ready servant

Joshua after having served under Moses and before God was prepared and ready to do what God wanted him to do. The Lord Jesus before coming into this world knew what work He had to do. We read of the Lord at twelve years old when He said to His parents, "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:29). We do not hear anything about the Lord Jesus from the age of twelve to the age of thirty when He began His public ministry. During this time in Nazareth, I think that He was being prepared as a man to be ready to do what His Father sent Him to do. He had a mighty work to do. His name was called Jesus which means Saviour. In His death and perfect sacrifice, He would save His people from their sins. The Lord leads His people through faith from the wilderness of sin to the sure hope of eternal life in heaven above.

Jesus who was mighty in battle

The Lord Jesus had a great battle to face. He had to face Satan. He had to defeat him and, in giving up His life on the cross, He also defeated death and hell. The Lord Jesus faced that battle alone. No one could stand against such an enemy. The question of sin had to be dealt with before a righteous and holy God. The Lord Jesus offered Himself up as the perfect sacrifice for sin. By doing this He will save us from our sins if we trust in Him. We deserve to die just like the Israelites all those years ago. Instead, God led those people out of the wilderness over the river Jordan (which speaks of overcoming death) and transported them safely into the promised land. What a wonderful picture of how the death of Christ has brought each Christian into pleasures forever more. We have a new life in Christ, sin has no more dominion over us, we have salvation, forgiveness, redemption, peace, eternal life and so much more. Like the people of Israel, who were given their promised inheritance, believers in the Lord Jesus will be brought safely into the joy of His Father house (John 14:2-3).

In the future the Lord Jesus, the humble Servant, the great Warrior, who defeated Satan, will come with power and in glory. He will come and rule this world in righteousness. Every enemy will be put under His feet. Mighty kings and rulers will bow before Him, and He will set up His kingdom.

I hope you have enjoyed these brief glimpses of a wonderful Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ in the life of Joshua. I am sure with further study you will see many more pictures. I pray that you will be moved to appreciate the Lord more and more which will motivate you to serve, honour and praise Him in your life. May God bless you, Amen.

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