

Joshua - 1 - Under Moses

Early Life

How Joshua grew up and later met Moses is not revealed anywhere in the Scriptures. We know he was born around the time Moses killed the Egyptian and fled to Midian, but we don't know exactly how old Joshua was when he met Moses. Some (Josephus) have given an educated guess he was 45 when Moses led Israel out of Egypt, but there is nothing in the Scriptures to confirm it. We just don't have enough information. We do know he was 110 when he died, but there is nothing to tell us how long after the death of Moses it took to conquer the promised land or how long he lived in his inheritance before he died.

*Now it came to pass after these things that **Joshua the son of Nun**, the servant of the Lord, died, being **one hundred and ten years old**. Josh 24:29*

We can work out Caleb's age and the time it took to conquer the land, but not how long he lived in his inheritance.

*And **Caleb the son of Jephunneh** the Kenizzite said to him: "You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. 7 **I was forty years old** when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Josh 14:6-8*

*And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, **these forty-five years**, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, **here I am this day, eighty-five years old**. Josh 14:10-11*

So we know it was five years after they entered Canaan that this conversation took place, but with the other statement, it still remains vague.

*Now it came to pass, **a long time after** the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. Josh 23:1-2*

So even with all these facts, Joshua's age and early life will remain an enigma to us. He simply appears as Moses minister.

Moses' Minister

Joshua simply appears out of nowhere. All we really know about his past is that he was of the tribe of Ephraim. introduction or background. We know he was from the tribe of Ephraim because he was chosen from that tribe to represent them.

*2 Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them." 8 from the tribe of Ephraim, **Hoshea the son of Nun**; ...16 These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And **Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua**. Num 13:8-9, 16*

The name *Hoshea*(or *Hosea*) means "salvation," or "deliverer," while Joshua or *Jehoshua* means "Jehovah (Yahweh) is salvation." When the Septuagint translated this word into Greek they chose 'iesou' or Jesus. No explanation is given as to why Moses changed his name, but it was significant. There was a reason why Moses did so and he was already calling him *Joshua* even before they came to Mt Sinai because he is first introduced with the name Moses called him and not the one he was born with so their knowledge of each other had to precede that and may have been during the time of the ten plagues in Egypt. Hence there is really no introduction or reason given as to why Moses chose Joshua, but it is evident that he already trusted Joshua and as willing to put him into this important role.

*Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And **Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men** and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands became heavy; so*

they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 So **Joshua defeated Amalek** and his people with the edge of the sword. Ex 17:9-13

And **Joshua** discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of **Joshua**: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, *The-Lord-Is-My-Banner*; 16 for he said, "Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Ex 17:13-16 *

*NOTE: The fulfillment of this prophesy brought about the downfall of Saul's as King over Israel.

A few weeks/months later After God asked Moses to come up to Mt Sinai, Moses brought Joshua with him at this time he is called Moses assistant (*minister* - ASV *servant* NASB *aid* NIV). So once again, even before they arrived at Sinai, it is revealed that Moses and Joshua had a very close relationship as Joshua even ascends onto Mount Sinai with Moses.

Then 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." 13 **So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua**, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. 14 And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." 15 Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. Ex 24:12-15

The term "assistant" is an important term as it was used, not as a slave or servant in a menial capacity, but an important one. So Joseph became a servant of Potiphar and Elisha ministered to Elijah. As a noun, it also was used of angels who are God's ministers.

Verb: sharat "to minister, serve, officiate." ... This word is a common term in Hebrew usage, ancient and modern, in various verbal and noun forms. It occurs in ancient Phoenician, and some see it in ancient Ugaritic as well. *Sharat* is found just under 100 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. The first time it is used in the Hebrew Bible is in the story of Joseph as he becomes the slave of Potiphar: "And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served [RSV, "attended"] him..." Gen 39:4. As a term for *servicing* or *ministering*, *sharat* is to be **distinguished from the term for more menial serving, abad**, from which the word meaning "slave" or "servant" is derived. *Sharat* is characteristically used of "serving" done by royal household workers 2 Sam 13:17; 1 Kings 10:5. In the manner of the modern "public servant" idea, the word is used in reference to court officials and royal servants 1 Chron 27:1; 28:1; Est 1:10. ... **Elisha "ministered" to Elijah** 1 Kings 19:21. Foreign kings are "to minister" to God's people Isa 60:10.

sharat OT:8334, "*minister; servant*." The noun form of the verb appears several times meaning "minister" or "servant." As Moses' right-hand man Joshua is referred to as "minister" (KJV), "servant" (RSV, JB, NASB), "assistant" (NEB), or "aide" (NAB) in Ex 24:13. Angels are God's "ministers... that do his pleasure" Ps 103:21; cf. Ps 104:4. (Vine OT 8334)

We would love to know more, but this is all the information we have been given. Joshua may have continued to the top with Moses or waited somewhere near the top for the 40 days, but when Moses comes down from the Mount, Joshua is still with him.

And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other they were written. 16 Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets. 17 And when **Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted**, he said to Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp." 18 But he said: "It is not the noise of the shout of victory, Nor the noise of the cry of defeat, But the sound of singing I hear." Ex 32:15-18

Joshua was also always in the tabernacle, when the Lord spoke to Moses. He is here again identified as a servant(*sharat*) and also a young man(even though he is more than forty years old). He remains near the tabernacle even when Moses leaves. We do not know if he heard or participated in these conversations.

So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, **but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.** Ex 33:11

Later, but still before the spies were sent to Canaan, Joshua is again called Moses minister and this time it is added that Joshua is also one of his choice men or one who had served with him from his youth.

*But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 So **Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men**, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" 29 Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" 30 And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel. Num 11:26-30*

One of the Twelve sent into Canaan to spy out the land.

He was one of the leaders who was chosen by Moses as one of the 12 spies into Canaan. It was also here that we learn that while his parents called him Hoshea, Moses called him Joshua.

*And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, **every one a leader among them.**" 8 **Of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun.** . . . 16 These are the names of the men that Moses sent to spy out the land. And **Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua.** Num 13:1-2, 16*

With great faith in the Lord Joshua and Caleb gave their testimony of what God could do with Israel. He showed at this time the reasons why Moses was drawn to him and had changed his name.

***But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;** 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. 8 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.' 9 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." 10 And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel. Num 14:6-10*

*Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, **all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.** 30 **Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun,** you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31 But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'" Num 14:28-35*

Preparation as Leader to Replace Moses

When due to sin, Moses was forbidden to enter the promised land, and Moses interceded for the people asking God to select his successor, Joshua was chosen.

*Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying: 16 "**Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,** 17 who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." 18 And **the Lord said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;** 19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. 20 And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21 He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the Lord for him by the judgment of the Urim. At his word they shall go*

out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him — all the congregation." 22 So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 **And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.** Num 27:15-23 *

*NOTE: This is the first time in the Scriptures that the “laying on of hands” was used. As in the NT, it “inaugurated” him.

Moses referred to Joshua in his sermon to the people.

"And the Lord heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35 'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the Lord.' 37 The Lord was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there. 38 **Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.** 39 'Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. 40 But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.' Deut 1:34-40

God wanted Moses to help prepare Joshua by encouraging him and strengthening him.

"And **I commanded Joshua at that time, saying,** 'Your eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings; so will the Lord do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. 22 **YOU MUST NOT FEAR THEM, for the Lord your God Himself fights for you.**' Deut 3:21-22

"But the Lord was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the Lord said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. 27 Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. 28 **But command Joshua, and ENCOURAGE HIM AND STRENGTHEN HIM; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.** Deut 3:26-28

One of Moses last acts before he died was to officially inaugurate Joshua in front of Israel.

Then **Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE, for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it.** 8 And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. **He will be with you, HE WILL NOT LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU; DO NOT FEAR NOR BE DISMAYED.**" Deut 31:7-8

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; **call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him.**" So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. 15 Now the Lord appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle. Deut 31:14-15

Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. 23 **Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you."** Deut 31:22-23

Thus the life of Moses ended and Joshua began his work as leader of Israel. Not only does Moses life end, but so also does the book of Deuteronomy of which he wrote all but the last chapter which records his death and Joshua taking up his role as leader. Joshua was fully prepared to take command, for when Moses had laid his hands upon him not only was he inaugurated, ut was also given and “the spirit of wisdom.”

So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. 7 Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. 8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended. 9 **Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.** Deut 34:5-9