
Joshua—Preface

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Preface and Acknowledgment

Preface: I began this book back in the middle of the year 1998 and finished (more or less) in the middle of 1999. When I began writing this, I had already finished exegeting several books of the Bible, and several other portions of books, none of which was I satisfied with the final result. With Joshua, I am fairly happy with the final result. The reason I began this book is that I was not being fed at church, and have thus far not found a single church which deals with God's Word in the detail and with the respect that I think is appropriate. After years of faithful church attendance, I began to do a great deal of the study for myself, until my church attendance decreased and my personal study increased. This was not a choice I made lightly nor altogether consciously, nor is it a choice that I recommend to any other believer. Christians, apart from other Christians, tend to become antinomian or, at the very least, goofy and dogmatic (words you might apply to this commentary). We are a group effort; however, there are times that a person has to leave the group for awhile—but that time is related to group effort, and that's where I am at this time. If you just flat out stop going to church, citing what I have written here and your unhappiness with your present church, you are a damned idiot who is just looking for any way out. There are outstanding study aides out there. To name two: the late J. Vernon McGee has a broadcast found in almost every single city in the United States and several places abroad where he goes through the Bible in five years, hitting every book, and a vast majority of the verses. Every believer should find where McGee is and listen faithfully for at least five years, if not ten. A second resource, if your church is not giving you what you need, is Bob Thieme. His tapes from the mid 60's through the mid 70's are extraordinary. You may not like him personally, but he does some of the best Bible teaching that I have ever heard. One need not have financial concerns, as these tapes are sent out as needed, without regard to one's financial ability to support his ministry. I first heard about Bob when I was a very poor student in California. I listened to his tapes, was pissed off at him for several months (although I continued to listen), and listened to an hour of Bible teaching every single day for about the next twenty years. Not once during that time did I find myself added to some strange quasi-Christian mailing list as a result of my association with his ministry; nor did he even once send me a letter telling me the desperate straights that his ministry was in, and could I just send him whatever was in my heart. For a long time, I was unable to support his ministry, and later, I was able. I always received his tapes faithfully, regardless.

Acknowledgment: Don't think that I just got this whiff of inspiration and sat down to write and what resulted was this book of Joshua. I first of all had twenty years of teaching under the ministry of Robert B. Thieme Jr., for which I will be eternally grateful. He set me straight on hundreds of doctrines and pointed me in the right direction when it came to Biblical exegesis. What has impacted in particular with regards to this book is his teaching of dispensations. Now, EVERYONE in the community of believers is a dispensationalist. I have found that no matter how much a believer holds to the false doctrine of covenant theology, you can push that believer in to a corner where he will finally admit that some things were done differently in the Old Testament than are done now. That is the most fundamental tenant of theological dispensationalism, and all believers with any kind of an opinion will agree to this, if you push them hard enough (which I have done). From there, it is simply a matter of degree. Now, the problem with most cults or believers who begin with the Old Testament is that they become confused in our relationship to the Law of God. Bob's teaching kept me from falling into that sort of trap. For any brand new believer who wants to read the Bible for himself, you should never, ever start in the book of Genesis. The place for the unbeliever or the new believer to start is at the very beginning, which is the book of John in the New Testament.

Now, it would be impossible to name all the shoulders that I stand upon, primarily because I don't know their names. However, I would venture to guess that I am standing on the shoulders of probably 2000-5000 believers who devoted their life to studying, to teaching, to archeology, to the written word; they no doubt had a great barrage of people who prayed on their behalf, acting as blockers for a quarterback. A great pastor might receive all the attention and admiration of his congregation, but what you never see is the hundreds and thousands of prayers offered on his behalf by ten times as many people which allow him to proceed. Any pastor who thinks he stands on his own is a fool. You may never know the names of the people who prayed on your behalf, or the blocking that they did on your behalf, but God knows, and these prayers will become a part of the permanent record in heaven.

Now, let's see if I can be specific in terms of the people that I know of that I am beholden to. Had it not been for Bob Thieme's ministry, even though I quote him sparsely throughout my exegesis, I doubt that I would even be doing this in the first place. Even if I had proceeded without his original direction, my exegetical approach would be a sorry shadow of what it is today. When quoting the Bible, I primarily use the NASB, judging it to be one of the very best translations, hitting a tremendously well-placed midpoint between ultra literal and understandable. I rarely quote from it word for word, and for this I apologize. Often, when using the NASB, I give my bastardization of it. I tend to replace LORD with Jehovah, *shall* with *will*, and I take several other liberties as well. My intention is not to denigrate this excellent translation, nor to obfuscate the passage at hand, but to facilitate understanding. If a person is to own but one Bible, this should be it. I am also deeply beholden to Young's *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*, Owen's extremely helpful *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* (my crutch), the NIV as well as over a dozen other English translation of the Holy Scriptures. When it comes to commentaries, I have been lucky to have stumbled across Keil and Delitzsch's *Commentary of the Old Testament*, McGee's radio broadcasts converted into book form and *Barnes' Notes*. I would have been able to do nothing without my BDB Lexicon or Gesenius's excellent lexicon; and I have been so thankful for the use of Wigram's *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament*. Obviously, I used Strong's Concordance as well. I can't let this go without mentioning *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; ©1976, which has been an outstanding resource for a lot of the nitty gritty material. In fact, for this study, I used roughly 100 different books and translations, and I tried to do my best to give credit where credit was due. I will list all of the authors from whom I specifically drew in the Bibliography section of this book; but my point is, I am standing on the shoulders of at least these 100 men (and any translation or book may have had multiple contributors). All of these men had training, had a Christian background, and learned what they learned from other teachers and authors who likewise stood upon the shoulders of hundreds, if not thousands, of dedicated men. And this is only an allusion to the people whom I can see, so to speak. Behind this are the prayers and financial support of thousands upon thousands of believers whose names will not be known to us until eternity. My point in all this is that we are a team effort. And when it comes to something which I have stated dogmatically and unequivocally that you disagree with, just get over it and move on. You will find out I was right in eternity, and you may even come to that conclusion before that.

Gary Kukis
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