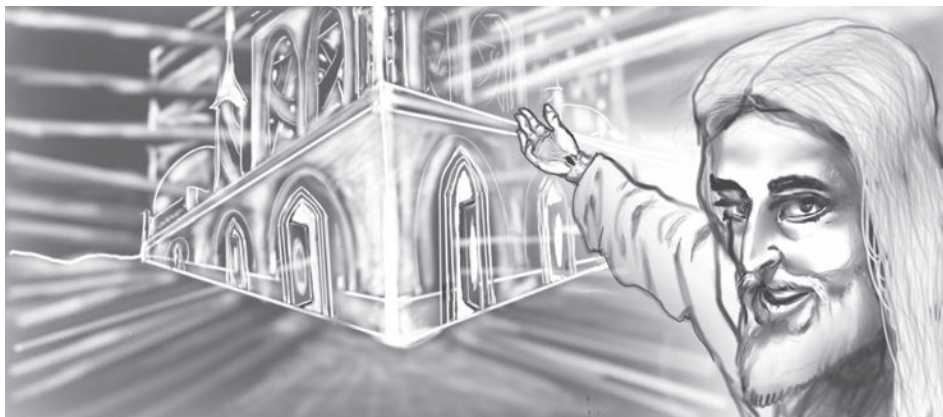


# The Real Joshua



## SABBATH—NOVEMBER 29

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Romans 5:14; Matthew 2:15; Joshua 1:1–3; Hebrews 3:7–4:11; 1 Timothy 1:18.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Those things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us. That’s because we are living at the time when God’s work is being completed” (1 Corinthians 10:11, NIV).



The land of Canaan is a symbol of our hope in a new earth. The work that the priests or religious leaders did in the holy tent was a symbol, too.

**IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA,** Joshua the man is a symbol. He stands for something much more than himself. We see this important rule all through the Bible. The land of Canaan is a symbol for our hope in a new earth. The work that the priests or religious leaders did in the holy tent was a symbol, too. Their work showed us the work that Jesus does for us in heaven: “But now Christ [came] as our special priest. He brings us the good things that [we now have]. He [went] into God’s own place in heaven. That [place] is a greater [more perfect] and much better tent than the old tabernacle [holy tent]. No person made this tent. It does not belong to this world [earth] at all” (Hebrews 9:11, EASY).

We must ask the questions: If Joshua is a symbol, what does that symbol mean? How can we be sure our answer is correct? What important rules help us to learn the meaning of symbols? What do these symbols mean for us in the end times?

This week, we will look at important rules for understanding the meaning of Bible symbols. We will study how the life of Joshua is a symbol for the work of the coming Savior. The life of Joshua also is a symbol for the work of the church and for things that will happen in the end times.

**BIBLE SYMBOLS (Romans 5:14)**

**Study these verses about Bible symbols: Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 10:1–13; Hebrews 8:5; and Hebrews 9:23. What do these verses tell us about symbols and what they mean?**

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Some of these Bible verses use the word “copy.” The things on earth in the Old Testament holy tent were copies of the real things in heaven. So, an Old Testament copy is a symbol for someone or something else that will happen in the future.

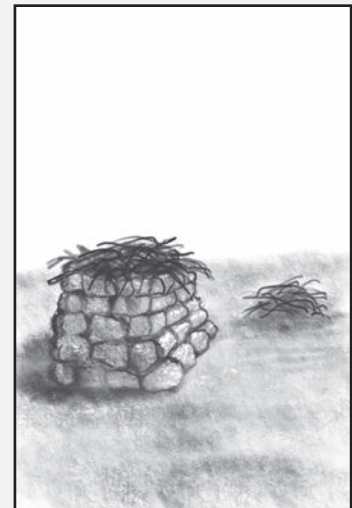
When we study Bible copies or symbols, we start with persons, happenings, or things in the Old Testament. We ask the question, How do these things show us Jesus and other Bible truths in the New Testament? God uses symbols in the Old Testament to help us understand Bible truths in the New Testament.

We must understand an important Bible truth about symbols. New Testament writers didn’t make up meanings for Old Testament symbols when they wrote. God gave the Old Testament symbols their meanings from the start. New Testament writers showed how the things that these symbols stood for happened in their time.

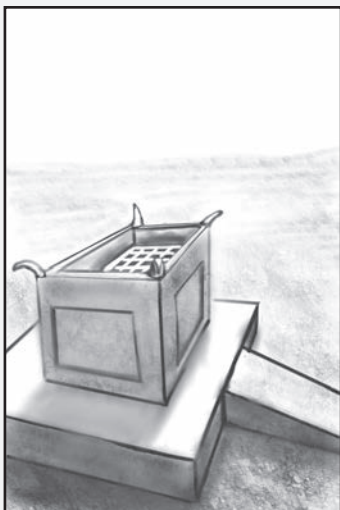
**Look at what the Old Testament writers said about King David. Then look at what the New Testament writers say about him. What lessons do these verses teach us about symbols and how they work in the Bible?**

- a. David: the man (Psalm 22:1, 14–18)**
- b. David: a symbol of future promises (Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 9:5, 6; Isaiah 11:1–5)**
- c. David’s words in the New Testament (John 19:24)**

When we look at these verses, we learn how the Old Testament helps us to understand the symbols in the New Testament. New Testament writers used the Old Testament symbols to teach Bible truth (2 Peter 1:12, NKJV) about Jesus and His work.



**New Testament writers used the Old Testament symbols to teach Bible truth (2 Peter 1:12, NKJV) about Jesus and His work.**

**SYMBOLS AND THEIR MEANINGS (Matthew 2:15)**

We can see these Old Testament symbols and their meanings all through the Bible.

No one is allowed to decide what a Bible symbol is or what it means in the New Testament. The Bible itself shows us the symbols and what they mean. The Bible also gives us important rules to help us understand these symbols and their meanings.

Each Old Testament symbol can have three different meanings in the New Testament. Three questions can help us understand what these meanings are: (1) What does the symbol show us about Jesus' life? (2) What does the symbol show us about the experience of the church? (3) What does the symbol show us about the end times?

We can see these Old Testament symbols and their meanings all through the Bible. These symbols and their meanings are very helpful. They show readers how to understand the Bible. They show us what the Bible teaches about Jesus, His saving plan, and the hope we have in Him.

**Look at three Old Testament symbols below: (1) Israel, (2) the Exodus, and (3) God's holy tent. The Exodus was the time when God helped Israel to escape from slavery in Egypt. What do each of the three symbols teach us about Jesus, the church, and the end times?**

- 1. How is Israel a symbol of**
  - a. Jesus (Matthew 2:15);**
  - b. the church (Galatians 6:16);**
  - c. the end times (Revelation 7:4–8, 14)?**
- 2. How is Exodus a symbol of**
  - a. Jesus (Matthew 2:19–21);**
  - b. the church (2 Corinthians 6:17);**
  - c. the end times (Revelation 18:4)?**
- 3. How is God's holy tent a symbol of**
  - a. Jesus (John 1:14; John 2:21, Matthew 26:61);**
  - b. the church (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 2 Corinthians 6:16);**
  - c. the end times (Revelation 3:12; Revelation 11:19; Revelation 21:3; Revelation 21:22)?**

"God is the real Writer of the Bible. So, the different parts of the Bible are in agreement. . . . All Bible teachings will agree too. Our explanations of the Bible must agree with what the Bible teaches about a topic."—*Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, page 65, adapted.

**JOSHUA, THE SYMBOL (Joshua 1:1–3)**

**How are the lives of Moses and Joshua the same? In what ways is Joshua a symbol for Moses? Read Exodus 3:1, 2; Joshua 1:1–3; Numbers 13:1, 2; Joshua 2:1; Exodus 3:5; and Joshua 5:15 for the answers.**

As we saw in Lesson 1, Joshua is the same as a ‘new’ Moses. Joshua also does many of the things that Moses did during the Exodus. The Exodus was the time when God helped Israel escape from slavery in Egypt. What else is the same between Moses and Joshua? Both Moses and Joshua meet with God. During their meetings, God gives each man his orders. Under the leadership of both men, Israel becomes famous. The countries around Israel are filled with fear. Moses leads Israel across the Red Sea. Joshua leads Israel across the Jordan. Both leaders celebrate the Passover. The Passover is the time when God saves the Israelites from the Egyptians. Both leaders understand that God wants all Israelite males to be circumcised. To be circumcised means to cut off the skin at the tip of the male sex parts. Manna or bread from heaven started to fall in the time of Moses. The manna stopped falling with Joshua’s leadership. God commands both Moses and Joshua to remove their shoes. When both men hold out their hands, Israel wins their fights. Moses tells the Israelites how to divide the land and how to set up cities of safety. Joshua divides the land and sets up the cities. Both Moses and Joshua give a goodbye sermon to Israel. At the end of their work for God, both men help Israel make the promise with God new again.

**Moses says that God will send a special messenger the same as Himself. Who is this special messenger? How does Joshua fit into this promise? Read Deuteronomy 18:15–19; Deuteronomy 34:10–12; John 1:21; Acts 3:22–26; and Acts 7:37.**

Joshua is part of God’s answer to the promise He gives Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18). But only the Savior can keep the promise that Moses makes. Jesus knew the Father (John 1:14, 18). The Savior showed the truth about the Father (Luke 10:22; John 14:6; Matthew 22:16). God gave Jesus His words to say (John 14:24). So, the lives of Moses and Joshua give us symbols that help us understand Jesus’ life.



**Both the lives of Moses and Joshua give us symbols that help us understand Jesus’ life.**

## THE NEW JOSHUA (Hebrews 3:7–4:11)



**Because of His baptism, Jesus is the Warrior who will fight the wars of God against evil.**

The wars that Joshua fought were real wars. These wars are an important part of Israel's history. God used these wars to help the Israelites settle in the Promised Land. There, the Israelites will enjoy peace and start a new government. The government will honor God's law.

Later, Old Testament writers show that the Savior will do the same thing that Joshua did. Isaiah shows us that the promised Savior "will give the land that is now ruined back to its owners" (Isaiah 49:8, ICB). This verse shows us that the Savior will be the new Joshua. Just as Joshua gave the land to the Israelites, the Savior will give the new Israel all the gifts that God promised the church.

**Read Hebrews 3:7–4:11. The Old Testament shows us that Joshua is the new Moses. How does the New Testament show that Joshua is also a symbol for Jesus Christ?**

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The writers of the New Testament show that Jesus does many of the things that Joshua did. Joshua stepped into Canaan after 40 years in the desert. In the same way, Jesus started His work for God after 40 days in the desert (Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). Jesus also started His work in heaven for us 40 days after He woke up from the dead (Acts 1:3, 9–11).

Joshua crossed the Jordan River. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11). After His baptism, Matthew, Mark, and Luke use a quote from a song about the Suffering Servant from God (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). Because of His baptism, Jesus is the Warrior who will fight the wars of God against evil. Jesus' life and death cause God to throw Satan out of heaven for good. Jesus' life and death help us win the fight over our spiritual enemies (Ephesians 4:8). Jesus offers spiritual rest to His people. He promises us a home in the new earth (Hebrews 9:15).

**What does it mean to "rest" in everything Jesus did for us and continues to do for us? Jesus won the fight against Satan for us. Why does this thought give us hope?**

**JOSHUA AND US (1 Timothy 1:18)**

Joshua is a symbol for Jesus. Also, Joshua is a symbol for the success of God's church. The church is the same as Jesus' body. How do the wars that Joshua fought with Israel show us the church's fight against evil? How are these fights different? Read 1 Timothy 1:18; 2 Timothy 4:7; Ephesians 6:10–12; 2 Corinthians 10:3–5; and Acts 20:32.

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The New Testament writers understood that Joshua was a symbol for the church. The members of the church are the same as the body of Jesus Christ. The church fights spiritual battles against evil. At the same time, the church enjoys rest because of God's mercy (Hebrews 4:9–11). The church also now enjoys many of the blessings of the things that God promises them in the future.

**Read 1 Peter 1:4; Colossians 3:24; Revelation 20:9; and Revelation 21:3.**

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Joshua's life showed so much of God's love and His law. That's why Joshua's life is a symbol for the Savior and the work He came to do.

For us today, the Savior already came. So, we don't need symbols to promise us the things that He will come to do. At the same time, we can show people who Jesus is. We can show God's glory and honor in our lives. Jesus wanted to share this glory with His followers (John 17:22). We can have this glory when we think about the love of God and His law. The more we think about Jesus, the more we show the beauty of His law and His love. If we want to do these things, we must spend time studying the Bible every day. We also must spend time thinking about Jesus' love and His teachings. For sure, when we look at Jesus, we will become changed.

Joshua asked the Israelites: “ ‘Why do you wait so long to take your land? The LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given this land to you’ ” (Joshua 18:3, ICB). How would Jesus ask us this same question today?



**The more we think about Jesus, the more we show the beauty of His law and His love. If we want to do these things, we must spend time studying the Bible every day.**



**“We want workers who care about God’s cause. Who will answer the cry that comes from people everywhere on earth ‘Come over . . . and help us!’” [Acts 16:9, NLV]?”**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “The church needs people who are the same as Caleb and Joshua. Caleb and Joshua were loyal and filled with faith. The church needs people who are ready to accept everlasting life and are willing to obey God. Our churches badly need these workers. These workers must share Jesus everywhere on earth. The cities and villages also badly need these Bible workers. The people in these cities and villages worship false gods. They are no different from the people in Asia who haven’t heard Bible truth. These people worship nature and many gods. The true love for souls is missing from the hearts of church members. These church members say that they serve God. But their hearts are no longer warm with a love for people. They no longer care about sharing Jesus with them and leading them to Jesus. We want workers who care about God’s cause. Who will answer the cry that comes from people everywhere on earth: ‘Come over . . . and help us!’ [Acts 16:9, NLV]?”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 4, page 156, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① How do the symbols in the Bible help you to understand better the work of Jesus Christ for you?
- ② How are the spiritual battles that we fight the same as Joshua’s war to win Canaan? How are our battles different?
- ③ Joshua was a symbol of the promises that God made to modern Israel. God kept those promises to His church in the life and death of Jesus. Think about how Jesus kept all the promises that God made to us in Joshua. Now think about God’s promise of a life without pain, suffering, and death. How does this future promise give us real hope in the everyday problems that we have in our lives?
- ④ Joshua showed God’s love in his life. Joshua’s life showed us the work that Jesus came to do and is doing for us now in heaven. What are some of the ways that you can let Jesus show His love in you more fully?

## TRUSTING IN GOD'S TIMING

For four years, Kim Sun argued with his parents about the Bible every time he came home to South Korea on vacation. Sun was studying religion at the Adventist University of the Philippines. After Sun finished school, he kept talking to his parents about the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Then Sun started his master's studies in religion. He continued to fight with his parents about Bible teachings. The fights got so bad that members at Sun's parents' church started to pray. They prayed that Sun's parents wouldn't leave their church. Finally, Mother asked Sun to stop talking about the Bible.

Sun felt upset until he heard a sermon. The preacher of the sermon said that God has a special plan for each person's life. The sermon helped Sun understand that his plan for his parents may not be God's plan. Sun decided to pray and trust God's timing. He didn't talk to his parents about the Bible for two years.

In the meantime, Sun finished his master's and got a job with the church. Sun wished with all his heart to work as a pastor. But he didn't get a job offer.

As time passed, Mother started to wonder if her own beliefs were keeping her son from getting a job. Mother heard someone ask Sun if his parents were Seventh-day Adventists. Sun said that his parents belonged to another church. Mother asked Sun, "Would it help you to get a job if we joined your church?"

Sun understood that his parents were worried about his future. But he didn't want them to become Seventh-day Adventists for that reason. He wanted them to join the church because they believed in its message. Sun said, "Mom, that would not help me. You need to study the Bible for yourself and then decide."

Sun introduced his parents to a Seventh-day Adventist pastor in their area. The pastor started to study the Bible with them. Nothing Sun said convinced his parents for the last five years. But now, as they studied the Bible, they saw Jesus' love in the Seventh-day Adventist teachings. After two months, Sun's parents joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Sun was so happy! He was the first Seventh-day Adventist in his family. Now his parents joined him in his faith. Sun remembered the joy he felt many years ago in the Philippines when a man's life changed after Sun introduced him to Jesus. After that experience, Sun wanted to work for God full-time.

Now, Sun decided to go back to the Philippines to work for God.

Kim Sun is a manager for the 1,000 Missionary Movement, in Silang, Philippines. The headquarters were built with help of the 13th Sabbath Offering from 1996. Read more next week.

## INSIDE *Story*



**But now, as Sun's parents studied the Bible, they saw Jesus' love in the Seventh-day Adventist teachings.**



**Kim Sun**