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The Joshua Generation Died
2: 6-10

The Joshua generation dies DIG: How are these verses connected with the book of Joshua? What is the purpose of these verses? What three generations are in view here? What did Joshua and the elders share in common? What happened to the third generation? Why didn't they have the faith of their descendants?

REFLECT: Has a spiritual giant ever died in your family? Have you followed in their footsteps? What great works of God have you seen in your own life? Have you been diligent to teach your own children or grandchildren about our Lord? What hard fought battles are you fighting now to leave to your descendants?

Each generation must establish their own personal relationship with ADONAI.

In the initial section, these verses are nearly identical to the closing verses of **Joshua 24:28-31**. This passage forms a link between **Joshua 24** and **Judges 2:11** (**to see link click An – Cycles of Rebellion and Retribution**), and thus resumes the history of **Joshua**, which was interrupted by **Judges 1:1** to **2:5**. The purpose of the interruption was to provide a summary of the results of the wars with **the Canaanites**, and to make a sharp contrast with **the generation** that had just passed with the one that was about to come. From the high spiritual content of the book of **Joshua**, the downward descent into the darkness of apostasy can be clearly seen throughout the book of **Judges**; from **the generation** of **Joshua** and **the elders** who knew **ADONAI**, we will encounter **a** third **generation** that did not know **ADONAI**, either in the sense of being righteous, or in the sense of seeing **His** mighty works.[44]

After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the Land (2:6a). This verse helps us to understand the nature of the conquest. The united campaigns under **Joshua's** leadership had broken the back of **the**

Canaanite resistance, but much of the local campaigning was left to **the** individual **tribes**. So after the covenant-renewal ceremony at Shechem, **the tribes**, having been dismissed by **Joshua**, set about completing the occupation of **their** own allotted territory.

The concept of **the land** as **an inheritance** suggests the idea of a gift or legacy, something received because of the hard work and goodwill of another person. The reason for viewing Canaan in this way here lies in **God's** solemn promise to **Isra'el's** ancestors to give this **land** to **their descendants (Exodus 32:13)**, and the battles already fought by **Joshua** and **the first generation** to secure it for those who would follow **them**. Each **tribe's** allotment was understood to be its share of this inheritance **(13:6-7)**. Here, the idea of the **inheritance** is taken further: **each to their own inheritance (2:6b).** It is doubtful that this was ever understood in purely personal terms, as it is today, since to be expelled from your family or clan was to lose your share in **the inheritance (11:1-3)**. Nevertheless, there was a sense of sharing in **the land** as **Isra'el's** inheritance did extend, in some cases, right down to each particular member of a family, clan, or **tribe (2:9)**. But against the backdrop of **Joshua's** appeals before **he died (Joshua 23:1** to **24:27)**, it also carries the overtones of responsibility. Each **tribe**, clan, and person must do their part in taking hold of what has been given and sacrificed for; thus, honoring the giver.[45]

Then, **the second generation** was **the generation of the elders** (see the commentary on **Numbers Bt – ADONAI's Response: Spiritual leadership**), **who outlived Joshua and had seen all the great works that ADONAI had done for Isra'el. They served ADONAI throughout Joshua's lifetime (2:7 Hebrew). The great works were the deliverance from Egypt, the miracles in the wilderness, and the successful campaigns in the Transjordan as well as in Canaan. They were the guardians of the Torah. Moses received the Torah on Mount Sinai, and handed it down to Joshua, and Joshua handed it down to the elders (Aboth i. 1).** This verse clearly focuses on what **Joshua** and **the elders** shared in common. **They** had seen **the great works of ADONAI**. But it will soon be contrasted with the spiritual adultery of the next **generation** during the days of **the judges**.



When Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of ADONAI, died, he was 110 years old, which was the same age of **Joseph** when **he** died**; and they buried him near his property of Timnath-Heres, in the hills of Ephraim,** stretching from the north of **Jerusalem** to the Jezreel Valley, **north of Mount Gaash (Judges 2:8-9 CJB)**, a portion of **land** that **the people** had given to **Joshua (Joshua 19:49-50)**. This describes how **the Israelites** of **his generation**, as a way of honoring **him**, had given **him** a portion of **land** in the territory of **Ephraim** (**the tribe he** belonged to) as **his** personal inheritance. It also tells how **Joshua**, when he was free to do so, **built up the town and settled there.** In this way too, **Joshua** had been an example to the rest of **Isra'el**; **Joshua himself** had "gone to **his inheritance**, and "taken possession" of it, as **he** later told **his** fellow **Israelites** to do **(2:6a).**[46]

Then **verse 10** contrasts the two **generations**. **After that whole elder generation,** contemporaries of **Joshua** who had survived **him**, **had died, and another generation grew up who did not know ADONAI or remember the mighty things He had done for Isra'el (2:10 NLT). Not having personally experienced the convincing proofs of God's power which had won the faith and loyalty of their fathers, they doubted the accounts of the triumphs achieved in days gone by. This new generation abandoned the old paths and succumbed to the pagan Canaanite influences in their midst.** Each **generation** must establish their own personal relationship with **ADONAI**, it cannot continue in the spiritual strength of its past heroes.[47]

This third generation **did not know ADONAI** because **they did not know the mighty things He** did for **Isra'el** in the days of **Moses** and **Joshua**. This problem is well recognized in **Deuteronomy**, where **the parents** are commanded to be **diligent** to **instruct their children in the Torah** and to tell **them** of **the mighty things YHVH** did when **He** called **Isra'el** into existence (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Bt – Teaching the Covenant History**). It could be, therefore, that **the Joshua generation** unintentionally contributed to what happened after **their** passing by failing to be as **diligent** as **they** might have been in **teaching their children**. But that is hardly where this passage before us lays the blame. Given the shortness of time involved, and the overlap of **the generations** represented by **the elders** [such as Caleb] who outlived **Joshua**, **the** new **generation** could hardly plead ignorance. Rather, as the cycles of rebellion clearly show (see **Ae – The Cycle of Sin in Judges**), **their** "not **knowing**" was a choice caused much more by the enticements of Canaanite culture and **their** own willingness than any failure of **their** parents.[48]

This is the perennial peril. One **generation** can rejoice in a living faith, enjoy intimate communication with **ADONAI**, revel in the kingship of **Yeshua** in their daily life, and even delight in teaching **their** faith to those closest to **them**; yet the next **generation** may come along and couldn't care less. Not that **they** will formally repudiate everything. It's just that **they** will **know** *about* **the Lord** rather than ***know*** **the Lord**. **They** may remain within the church in **their** cold, dead, formal way. But there is no fire in **their** "faith," no warmth in **their** love, and no joy in **their** hope. Just because you sit in the garage doesn't make you a car. What **Paul** calls **the surpassing value of knowing Messiah Yeshua my Lord (Philippians 3:8)** sounds utterly foreign to **them**. **They** really don't care to understand it.[49] All we can do is pray.

Altogether then, this file deals with three specific **generations**. **The first generation** was **throughout Joshua's lifetime** and saw **the great works that ADONAI had done for Isra'el (2:7a). The second generation** were **the elders who outlived Joshua** and at least remembered **God's great works** so **they** continued serving **ADONAI (2:7b)**. But then came **a third generation**, **who grew up and did not know ADONAI nor remember the mighty things He had done for Isra'el (2:10). They** did not serve **God**.[50]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being so wise! How wonderful to know **You** as my **Father**! To know about you is good, but to actually know **You** in a personal*

*relationship is such a joy and comfort! The wisest thing anyone can do is to spend time in **Your Word**, getting to know **You** by reading, meditating and praying to **You**. How wonderful it is to be able to totally trust all that **You** say. And all **You** say and do is wrapped up in **Your righteousness** and covered over by **Your** steadfast love! **Your love, Adonai, is in the heavens, Your faithfulness up to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God. Your judgments are like the great deep (Psalms 36:5-6).** How much better and wiser it would have been for **the tribes** if **they** learned from the miracles of **their** deliverance from Egypt; but **they** forgot about **You** and lusted after other gods. In the same way, it is so much wiser to trust and worship **You** at all times, even when the enemy entices with supposed good things, as **Israel's** enemies enticed **her** with their pagan gods. Though life is hard and seems dark, so much wiser to love and follow **You** and in return receive an eternity of joy in heaven with **You**! **You** are a loving **Father** who cares so passionately for me – giving **Your** own Son to redeem me – I want to trust **You** always! In **Messiah's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*