

Joshua and Judges



Daily Life
Five Oaks Church

Week 3: October 17–23, 2015

Day 1

October 19



Pray | Remember your God who provides, despite overwhelming obstacles.

WEAPONS OF WAR sometimes become unnecessary, a lesson well-taught when God is your adversary, and life with trouble is fraught.

Since the first battle was waged, people have sought technological advantage to kill their enemies more effectively. Battles are won and lost, not by the number of soldiers but by how well they were armed and equipped. The beginning of Joshua 11 starts out like every leader's and soldier's worst nightmare: Israel stands against a horde. That horde has lots of horses. Infantry versus cavalry does not usually end well. Then there were those chariots. How do you hold the line against chariots? It's a good thing every Israelite knew the story from the Exodus that talks about what God does about chariots and their charioteers.



Read | Joshua 11



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

It's possible you read through these verses merely seeing yet another long "historical" account or "list" that seems irrelevant to what God is doing today. How do you see how God operated with the Israelites relating to how God operates now?

In verses 6–9, God promises, Joshua and his troops act, God delivers, and Joshua follows God's instructions. Are there times that come to mind from your own life when God has promised and you have acted, sometimes without following his instructions totally and at other times following all of his instructions?

Ponder the expression "like the sand that is on the seashore." Israel is part of God's promise to Abraham to bless the world through offspring as numerous as the sand. . . . It also is no problem for God to reduce a military horde to nothing . . . He is always delivering on his promises. Which of God's promises do you need to trust in more in your life?

Day 2

October 20



Pray / Thank God, not just in vagaries, but specifics.

ACRONYMS ARE USELESS without the relevant context to know what they stand for. Only then will they make sense to you.

For forty years, the Israelites wandered in the desert as exiles. When God finally brought them into the Promised Land, they were not settlers or pioneers. This list is a reminder of God's provision. Only some cities and plunder were destroyed. God is giving his people prebuilt homes, businesses, crops, vineyards, and sheep and cattle. It was the ultimate move-in-ready home. This list was a reminder of God's provision for his people. The towns got new names. New people moved in. Later folks would be able to say, "Remember how God killed off king what's-his-name and gave us our beautiful town?"



Read / Joshua 12



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

Although convenient titles “Kings Defeated by Moses (and Joshua)” are misleading summaries at best, Israel’s armies under Moses and Joshua did not actually defeat these thirty-one kings. Make no mistake: God did. How does recognizing and remembering this in your life help provide a new perspective?

List making is useful when it is used to remember things to do or things we’ve done. It is not so useful when it fuels our pride, a grudge, or is used to put others down through comparison. Make a list of some of your life’s major accomplishments. Now review that list and honestly ask yourself which of these things God did the heavy lifting on.

A colossal power shift had been orchestrated by God in the Middle East, and Israel was the newest regional power on the rise. Only God could take a few people, given his promise, and make them into enough people to hold the land. The only catch was if they could only remain faithful to a God who always keeps his promises. Will you give God a chance to do great things in your life?

Day 3

October 21



Pray / Thank God for humor, laughter, and grace.

SOMETIMES IT IS the God of the obvious that we most need.

In the beginning of this passage, the writer tells us that Joshua is old—and then quotes the Lord pointing out the very same thing to Joshua. If that were not bad enough, a detailed list of things on the to-do list that remain undone follows.

The remainder of the text links the Israelites who took an early inheritance east of the Jordan with their countrymen who are now conquering and settling in on the west side. Just as Moses made these tribes cross over and fight for their brothers, they are included here so they are remembered as part of the same promises of God.

Prepare to look for the obvious by paying special attention to verse 13. Note what it says about whether Israel followed God's instructions.



Read / Joshua 13



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

Now to get back to the obvious, reread the second half of verse 6 and all of verse 7. God leads and provides, and Joshua and Israel follow and receive. How does approaching life by following God's instructions free you to act?

Reread verse 13. Are there consequences you are facing in your life today that are the results of your own previous sins or from the sins of others?

What is the inheritance God now offers those of us who are followers of Christ? Reflect on verse 33 as you consider your answer.

Day 4
October 22



Pray / Ask God for boldness, faith, and strength like Caleb's.

HOW OFTEN DO we fail to expect in boldness that God will fulfill what he has promised?

Maybe not his name, but certainly his storyline and character would make for a comic book hero if ever there was one. Caleb, one of only two survivors of God's direct judgment (because he and Joshua were the only two spies forty years ago who recommended they take the land), is now eighty-five. So what was his final request to his commanding officer? Permission to have what he was promised so long ago, of course. He had "wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel" (verse 14).



Read / Joshua 14



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

Why do you think God took part in the battle, as indicated in verses 10–11?

Joshua's obedience to God's instructions is one of the main reasons for Israel's continued success in battle. The phrase, "as he had done to" is used several times in chapter 10. List each verse in which that phrase is used. What does this say about the importance of following God's instructions?

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior, God has promised you eternal salvation and eternal communion with him. With today's reading in mind, is there any doubt in your mind that God is capable of delivering you from your sins and iniquities?

Day 5

October 23



Pray / Thank God for his provision and forgiveness.

HUMAN FAILURE IN no way negates God's ability to deliver on his promises.

God's instructions for the conquest of the land of Canaan were very clear: no Canaanite survivors. God would do the heavy destruction, but the Israelites still had to follow his instructions and were left to finish mop-up operations.

Judah's, Ephraim's, and Manasseh's allotments and the detailed description of their God-given share of the land are continuing reminders of God's provision. In many ways it is like reading a product description—but then when you get the actual product, you realize it is so much better in person than the picture in your mind's eye. To see with their own eyes what their ancestors only dreamed of and believed in on faith while they were nomads, slaves, and exiles at the very edge of the Promise Land . . . what must that have been like? Perhaps it was a foretaste of what arriving in heaven will be like.



Read / Joshua 15-16



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following questions for reflection.

God is the giver of good gifts. He did not just give land to his chosen people; he also drove out the inhabitants and provided towns complete with infrastructure and industry. When was a time when God not only provided for you but blessed you far above and beyond just the basics?

Several verses mention various Canaanites who were not driven out by the Israelites. It also affirms they are there “to this day” (when the passage was written). Does a lack of success in these particular cases mean that God did not deliver on his promises?

Think about the sins of the Israelites in not following God’s instructions for dealing with the Canaanites. These exceptions are the foundations of a who’s who of people who plague Israelite history. There are sinful things that we know we need to address in our own lives, yet we make excuses, thinking they do not really separate us from the fullness of his promises. When we omit any of God’s instructions, we set ourselves up for unnecessary pain and suffering. Is there a sin in your life that you need to bring to God right now?

Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved.

www.fiveoaks.church