

Joshua and Judges



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 1: October 3–9, 2015

Day 1

October 5



Pray | Thank God for his faithfulness and that he fulfills his promises.

NO MATTER WHAT we may be facing, we can have confidence and strength, knowing God is with us in all circumstances.

The Israelites left Egypt under Moses' leadership, headed to the land God promised to Abraham (Genesis 17:1–8 and Exodus 6:1–13). But they rebelled against Moses and ultimately God, so the Lord delayed in fulfilling his promise because of that generation's rebellion (Numbers 13–14).

Now Moses and the first generation have all died in the wilderness. Joshua is appointed as the new leader. Laid out before him is not only the task of leading a large nation (with a bad track record for obedience) but also the mission of going into a country to fight and eliminate cities of people (including giants) who have themselves rebelled against God and now face his judgment for their disobedience. If anyone needs encouragement and guidance right now, it's Joshua.



Read | Joshua 1:1–18 and Joshua 24:29–33



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

Joshua is inheriting a gigantic responsibility in leading the Israelites. It should be no surprise that he needs reassurance that because of God's presence with him, he can live a life of strength and courage. For everyone who chooses to pursue a personal relationship with him, God makes the same promise of his presence through the Holy Spirit. How can you better choose to lead others in strength and courage because God is with you in the midst of any difficulties he may be calling you to face?

God told Joshua that one of the keys to being successful in his mission to take the Promised Land was to know God's Book of the Law well so he could obey it. Similarly, we need to know the Bible well so we can understand how to be successful in our mission to glorify God and bring others into relationship with him. What habits do you currently have in place, and what habits can you work to form, so you are aware of and can meditate on the Bible throughout the day?

With the closing of the book of Joshua, we see that God's promise to Abraham to give the land to his descendants has been fulfilled, and Joshua is buried in the land he was faithful to lead the people into. Sometimes God's promises take a long time to reach fulfillment. How can the testimony of God's promises fulfilled in Joshua give you hope and anticipation for promises you are waiting on?

Day 2

October 6



Pray / Thank God for a time when he provided unexpected encouragement.

A GENUINE FAITH in God should move us from head knowledge of who God is and what he has done to heartfelt action and a desire to do whatever he may call us to do.

When the Israelites first reached the edge of Canaan with Moses, he sent out twelve spies, including Joshua. The returned report from Joshua and another spy, Caleb, was filled with descriptions of the prosperity in the land. The other ten spies focused on the fortified cities and size of the people who inhabited it. The people chose to respond in fear; they staged a rebellion and tried to return to Egypt. They didn't trust that God could bring them victory over seemingly insurmountable foes.

Now Joshua sends two new spies to survey the land and bring back a report, and they receive help and encouragement from a very unlikely source.



Read / Joshua 2:1-24



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

Rahab shows that her understanding of God has blossomed into a faith in what he can and will accomplish, and her actions and desire for mercy from his wrath reflect how fully she believes in who God is and that he will be able to do what he has promised his people Israel. If you have faith that God can and will accomplish what he has said in the Scriptures, how can your life better reflect your beliefs?

Rahab's faith stems from hearing about what God has done. What acts of God, both from Scripture and from personal experience, have worked to formulate or bolster your faith in God?

The spies return from scouting out Jericho encouraged: "Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands" (Joshua 2:24). God promised he would give it to them, but the spies witness directly that God is at work to fulfill his promise. God often provides us with the same kind of added encouragement, allowing us glimpses of how he is at work to accomplish what he has promised in the Scriptures. How have you been encouraged by seeing God at work to fulfill his word?

Day 3

October 7



Pray / Ask God to prepare your mind for your time in his Word today.

SOMETIMES GOD CHOOSES to bring us up against something apparently impossible so we can clearly see him as the deliverer we need, not just in that situation but in all things.

As the Israelites come to the edge of Canaan, a great obstacle appears on the horizon: the Jordan River. The writer emphasizes that God leads them to cross it during harvest when the river is overflowing its banks. An entire nation is looking out on a flooded mess of trees and bushes poking from the edges of a wide expanse of swiftly rushing water.

But a flooded river is no barrier for a God who has made a promise to his people, and he tells them to prepare themselves because “the Lord will do wonders among [them]” (Joshua 3:5).



Read / Joshua 3:1–4:24



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

The Israelites need to consecrate themselves and get ready for witnessing God at work. Dale Ralph Davis says, “It is crucial that Israel recognize that what happens is indeed Yahweh’s work; and unless they have proper insight, expectancy, and preparation, they could see Yahweh’s work and not understand its true value and significance.”¹ How do you prepare yourself so that when you see God at work, you recognize it and understand how valuable it is?

Before crossing the Jordan, Joshua says the event will be significant because it will help them to “know that the living God is among” them (Joshua 3:10). God does not often perform giant miracles, but the instances when he does expose more of his greatness can give us tangible moments to point to for encouragement in times of trouble. When you are faced with struggles, what events do you point to for hope and courage?

God commands the Israelites to build a monument to commemorate his work to bring them to the Promised Land so they will not forget. What steps can you take to more actively remember the wonders God does in your own life?

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *Joshua: No Falling Words* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 34.

Day 4

October 8



Pray / Ask God to help you keep your priorities in correct focus.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH God should always be of greater importance than anything we do, even if that work is to further God's kingdom.

With the Jordan River behind them, the Israelites are ready to begin the work of claiming the land God had promised to Abraham. But before conquest can begin, important practices must be observed and reinstated. The old generation that left Egypt did not circumcise their children, a symbol of the covenant relationship God proclaimed in identifying Abraham and his descendants as his chosen nation. Reinstating circumcision is an important symbol that this generation, unlike their fathers, will be faithful to follow the Lord and remain in covenant relationship with him.

Without a relationship with God, the land would mean nothing, and the conquest would fail.



Read / Joshua 5:1-12



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

The generation of Israelites that left Egypt had the appearance of a covenant relationship with God but did not live out that relationship by trusting in God's faithfulness and going in to conquer the Promised Land. Take a moment to analyze your actions. Do you boldly trust and follow God's directives in your life, or do you have the appearance of a relationship with little follow through?

Before even beginning the task of taking over the land promised to Abraham so many hundreds of years before they crossed the Jordan River, the Israelites must stop and circumcise all males. Circumcision is a symbol of their covenant relationship. While conquest is important, their relationship to God is even more so. How can you work to make sure your relationship with God always remains more important than the work you do in his name?

Once the Israelites enter the Promised Land, their supply of manna is no longer needed. This does not mean, however, that God is no longer providing for their needs. God's providence is still found in the abundance of food growing in the land he has given them. In what seemingly common ways is God providing for you?

Day 5

October 9



Pray / Ask God to better understand him as a God of justice and of mercy.

THE DESTRUCTION OF Jericho and the conquest of Canaan are bleak reminders of our sin and God's need for justice and purity. However, they also bear witness to God's grace.

When God promises the land to Abraham, he explains to him that his descendants will receive the land only after the Amorites (and presumably the other Canaanites) have reached God's appointed time to divinely punish them for their sins. For unknown reasons, God deems this as the appropriate time for the Canaanites to be judged for their unfaithfulness to him. However, he offers grace to Rahab and her family for her faith.

God extends grace to us all. One day we will face judgment for our unfaithfulness and rebellion against God's lordship, but we have the opportunity like Rahab to choose faith and to ask for mercy, identifying instead as God's people.



Read / Joshua 5:13–6:27



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

God commands the Israelites, a group with little military experience, to go up against the solidly fortified city of Jericho. But he sends his army commander to fight with them, providing exactly what is needed. What are you facing, and how can you pray for God to provide what you need?

The account of the defeat of Jericho makes it very apparent that the ultimate victor of the battle truly is God himself. God's instructions for how to infiltrate the city made it impossible for the Israelites to believe that they were responsible for the victory and gives the glory to God. In your own life or the experiences of others, how have you seen God at work to clearly display his glory and power?

Rahab's faith allows her and her family to become a part of the Israelites. She marries a Judahite named Salmon, and their descendants include King David and eventually Jesus (Matthew 1:1–16). God takes a woman with a sinful past and uses her as a means of helping fulfill his promises for a Promised Land and for a Rescuer from sin. God can use each of us despite what our pasts may contain. What in your past may be keeping you from fully believing God wants to or can use you for his kingdom?

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