

# Joshua

strong & courageous



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BOOK ONE



Northview  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

# Joshua

## strong & courageous

### INTRODUCTION

The book of Joshua tells how the Israelites capture the rest of the land of Canaan—the land God had promised to their ancestor Abraham. Joshua succeeds Moses as the leader of Israel. Like Moses, he tells the people what God wants them to do. In the course of the military campaign, the Israelites discover that victory depends on obeying God. When they obey God, they are successful. When they try to fight in their own strength, they fail.

The hero of the book is Joshua, whose name means ‘The Lord Saves’! This is the same name as ‘Jesus’ in the New Testament. Joshua is a worthy successor to Moses, listening to God and leading the people in much the same way. He has a difficult task, because the land of Canaan cannot be conquered by military might. It can only be captured through a venture of faith. The disobedience of even a single person can lead to disaster for everyone. Above all, there is to be no compromise with the pagan nations who live in Canaan, or their gross fertility gods.

At the end of his life, Joshua commits himself and his family to obey God—and challenges all the tribes of Israel to do the same.



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## Day 1 • Read Joshua 1:1-9

Context is crucial to understanding scripture. Moses, who had led Israel for more than 40 years has died and Joshua is taking on that responsibility at a critical point. Moses had met God at the burning bush (*Exodus 3*), performed many signs and wonders, would habitually meet God face to face as a friend, (*Exodus 33:11*) and was the conduit through whom God gave the people his many laws for life and worship.

- 1) What did God commission Joshua to do in these verses?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What kinds of obstacles, dangers and challenges was Joshua facing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) Were the people he was to lead known to be cooperative and obedient? Did he have a trained and equipped army?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) Have you ever been put into a place of great responsibility, taking over from somebody way more gifted and experienced? How did you feel?

**Day 2 • Read Joshua 1:1-9 again**

- 1) What instructions and promises did God give Joshua?
  
- 2) Hearing so clearly from God such promises, why do you think God then had to urge Joshua twice to be strong and courageous and not to fear or be dismayed?
  
- 3) Does God typically speak that clearly to you? Has He ever?
  
- 4) Even when you know what God has said, do you ever still feel inadequate or fearful?

**Day 3 • Read Joshua 1:1-9 again**

- 1) Twice in this short passage (verses 7 and 8) God ties his promise of success to fully obeying his word. Does your life experience confirm this instruction?
  
- 2) How often in your own life or the lives of those you observe does trouble result from unscriptural choices or actions?
  
- 3) In our popular culture, “meditation” is generally described as a relaxed, “mind-emptying” experience. Is that how God describes meditation in verse 8?
  
- 4) How are you doing at “day and night” meditation on God’s word leading to obedience and success?

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## Day 4 • Read Joshua 1:1-9 again

The content of the promises and instructions in this passage are quite controversial today. God told Joshua, “you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.”

- 1) What are the borders of the “inherited” land God described to Joshua? Do Israelites today live in anything near those boundaries?
  
- 2) Do you know where in the Bible to find the repeated previous promises that God called an “everlasting covenant” he was referring to when he said “you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them?”
  
- 3) Many people in our world today, including Christians, believe the Jews somehow lost the right to this inheritance and are illegitimate “occupiers.” What do you think about this and why?
  
- 4) Those Christians who still believe in the validity and authority of scripture are observably the people, other than Jews, who are most likely to support Israel now. Are you familiar with what the Bible, including the New Testament, says about the role of the Jewish people and the “holy land” in current and future events?



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**Joshua 1:10-18** *Moses, Israel's greatest leader, is dead. Left to lead the nation of Israel is Moses' aide: Joshua. Although Joshua had been mentored by Moses and has some leadership experience, he has never been without Moses' oversight. Joshua now faces the daunting task of leading Israel across the Jordan into Canaan. Once there, the Israelites will have to fight a multitude of nations who are already well settled there. The time has come for Joshua to be strong and courageous, and begin leading God's people. This passage reminds us that we serve a powerful God who is worthy of our trust and obedience.*

## **Day 1 • Leadership, Read Joshua 1:10-18**

Joshua is a great example of godly, courageous leadership. Joshua had military leadership experience (Exodus 17:8-14), and had been one of the leaders of the tribe of Ephraim (Numbers 13:2-3,8). Furthermore, he had been mentored by Moses for many years, and in Numbers 27:12-23 Moses had commissioned Joshua before all Israel to be his successor. Nevertheless, the task of leading the entire nation of Israel would have been extremely daunting. Israel was a large people who had a history of disobedience. Furthermore, the mission ahead of them was both difficult and dangerous. However, Joshua trusted the LORD and commanded Israel to prepare to cross the Jordan.

- 1) As if leading an entire nation wasn't challenging enough, Joshua's first task as Israel's new leader was to lead them across the Jordan river which was then at flood stage. Have you ever been in a position where God asked you to do something that absolutely terrified you? What was your response?
  
- 2) God has given most of us leadership roles in some capacity. You might be the head of a ministry, a business, a family, a class, a meeting, etc. What positions of leadership has God given you? How are you honoring him as a leader in those contexts?

## Day 2 • God's Promises

Israel had been waiting a long time to see the fulfillment of God's promise of land. God had first made this promise to Abraham centuries ago in *Genesis 15:18-21*. God renewed this promise to Moses in *Exodus 6:2-8*, while Israel was enslaved in Egypt. God then freed Israel from Egypt, leading them by a pillar of fire and cloud, and splitting the Red Sea before them. Yet, when the LORD brought them to Canaan's doorstep, Israel chickened out and disobeyed God's instructions to take the land. One generation later, Israel finds itself in a *deja vu* moment. Would they finally see the fulfillment of God's promise?

- 1) What is the relationship between God's promises and Israel's obedience in this passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) Are there specific promises that God has given you that have yet to be fulfilled? The book of Joshua reminds us that God always fulfills his promises, yet God calls us to live in faithful obedience as we await the fulfillment of his promises. How are you waiting for those things God has promised you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) God's greatest promise to us is eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. Do you ever stop and anticipate the joys and glories of heaven? How are you living your life today based on the promise of eternity?

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## Day 3 • Keeping our word

Back in *Numbers 32* the Reubenites and Gadites asked Moses for the land they were currently living in. “The Reubenites and Gadites, who had very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock” (*Numbers 32:1*). These tribes recognized that the land they were in was suitable for them and their flocks so they approached Moses and asked him if they could settle in Gilead and Jazer, and not bother crossing the Jordan. Moses informed them they could have the land, but their fighting men would still have to cross the Jordan and fight alongside their fellow tribes until Canaan had been conquered. At that point their fighting men could return to their wives and children in Gilead. The Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh (these three tribes are together called the Transjordan tribes) agreed and vowed to fulfill Moses’ demand.

- 1) The Transjordan tribes could easily have told Joshua that they were unwilling to cross the Jordan with the rest of Israel. They could have claimed that their vow was no longer valid since they had made it to Moses, and they had made their vow a long time ago! They would not have been keen on leaving their wives and children in a different land without many fighting men to defend them in the case that a foreign nation came to invade their newly conquered cities. But, these three tribes kept their word and their men fought with the rest of Israel on the west side of the Jordan. Have you ever made a vow to the Lord and then struggled to fulfill it? Why was it difficult for you to keep that vow?
- 2) Keeping our word is important if we expect people to trust us. We may never find ourselves in a situation like what the Transjordan tribes found themselves, yet we should do our best to fulfill even our everyday commitments. How do you think it affects people when we do not keep our word or follow through on commitments we made to them? Do you think we lend or rob the gospel credibility when we do not keep our word when we make promises to other people, especially non-Christians?
- 3) In the end, the Transjordan tribes were faithful to the vow they made to both Moses and Joshua and in Joshua 22 Joshua sends them back home to their wives and children. Because of Israel’s obedience, God gave them rest in a land that was not their own. God blesses our obedience as well. Part of that obedience is being faithful to keep our word. Reflect on your life for a moment and ask yourself: Am I trustworthy person? Do I keep my word? Could this be an area in which God might want to work in me?

## Day 4 • Obedience

The response recorded in *Joshua 1:16-18* comes not just from the Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh, but from Israel as a whole. Together they answered Joshua: “*All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.*”<sup>17</sup> *Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you. Only may the Lord your God be with you, as he was with Moses!*<sup>18</sup> *Whoever rebels against your commandment and disobeys your words, whatever you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous.”* (*Joshua 1:16-18*). Although Joshua was a new leader who lacked experience in his new posting, all of Israel committed itself to follow him. In fact, not only do the Israelites commit to follow Joshua, but they also pray that the Lord’s presence might go with him, and they encourage him with the same words the Lord had spoken to him earlier in the chapter.

- 1) *Hebrews 13:17* instructs us to “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” How can we facilitate God’s work by obeying and submitting to our leaders? How do you go out of your way to encourage the leaders God has set above you?
  
- 2) Do you ever pray for your leaders and pastors? Spend time committing those over you to the Lord in prayer. Ask God to fill them with the Holy Spirit and to lead them as they lead you.



**Day 1 • Joshua 2:1-24**

After reading this passage, Joshua 2:1-4

- 1) What did you learn about God? . . .
  
- 2) What surprised you? . . .
  
- 3) What do you need to do? . . .

**Day 2**

Who is Rahab? (see also *Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25*)

- 1) What was her profession?
- 2) What characteristics describe her?
- 3) What was her relationship with her family? The community?
- 4) Why would the spies have chosen her house?
- 5) What was her religious status?
- 6) What risks does Rahab take in protecting the spies (v. 1-7)?
- 7) What does Rahab know and believe about the God of Israel (v. 8-11)?

Interesting that the same stories cause fear in one (the inhabitants of Jericho) but faith in another (Rahab and her family). What was different? Vs. 11 . . . Rahab declares “for the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.” This is her confession of faith. A sign to the spies that she can be trusted. Rahab is considered the 1st Gentile believer. As an innkeeper, she had heard the stories of the God of the Israelites. She heard of His power and believed by hearing the word. Rahab was saved because of her faith in God. *Romans 10:9-10. “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”* Making a commitment to follow Christ means turning from sin (conversation) and leaving /cutting off from our past. Rahab’s faith enabled her to turn from her culture, her people, her religion. Give personal examples of what this looks like in your life. Who were you before your commitment to Christ. Who are you now?

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## Day 3

- 1) What did Rahab have to do to remain under the protection of the Israelites?
  
- 2) What do we have to do to remain under the protection of God? (reference *Psalm 91:1*)
  
- 3) What deal does Rahab make in exchange for helping the spies? (v. 12-16)
  
- 4) What conditions must she and her family fulfill in order to be saved? (v. 17-21)

## Day 4

- 1) Rahab heard the stories of the God of Israel and she grew in faith. What have you heard (read or listened to) from the word of God recently that has encouraged and strengthened your faith?
  
- 2) How do you get to the place where you hear and believe so strongly that God is speaking to you. How is that faith built? How was Rahab able to recognize 'the enemy' as safe. What does this say about Rahab?
  
- 3) Personal extension questions: Write it. Share it. Pray it.
  - a. What has God been telling you about Himself lately?
  - b. What do you love most about who God is?
  - c. What is God asking you to trust Him with?

### References:

<http://www.gotquestions.org/life-Rahab.html#ixzz3Jmtscfml>  
[trivialdevotion.blogspot.com](http://www.gotquestions.org/life-Rahab.html#ixzz3Jme7udsz)  
<http://www.gotquestions.org/life-Rahab.html#ixzz3Jme7udsz>  
*The Scarlet Cord: article by Graemme Marshall*



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## Day 1 • Waiting

At this point in Israel's story the people have been subject to 40 years of wandering in the desert waiting for the time when the promises of the Lord will come to fruition. They have been living off of the Manna and quail provided by God, for the entire time, and are probably ready for the spoils of the Land (see *Numbers 13*). They are waiting in the valley of Moab (Shittim) and finally Joshua moves them to the banks of the Jordan...only to wait another three days! One can only imagine the sighs of exasperation coming from the people! Yet, even this simple phrase "at the end of three days (vs. 2) reminds us that God's timing is always perfect. This reality is hard to remember when we find ourselves in the middle of a metaphorical scorching desert, subsisting on the seemingly meager provision from God.

- 1) Is there something in your life in which you are crying out to the Lord "How long must I endure this?"
  
- 2) Does a reminder of God's perfect timing provide comfort while you wait? In what way?
  
- 3) What might God be teaching you while you wait on Him to move mightily in your life?

## Day 2 • Greatness

*Joshua 3:7* provides a clear understanding in how we should view personal greatness. “*Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.*” God exalted Moses and Joshua, not so that they could be great, but to that the people of Israel would know that God is with them. In other words, their success was a means to show the greatness of God in their lives. The writer of Joshua only understood success in light of God’s favor and purpose upon someone. Joshua was only great because God was with Him, which made Joshua a conduit for Israel to see how great God was, not how great Joshua was. This is a paradigm we need to spend significant time reflecting on.

- 1) What things are you currently successful at? Home? Work? Sports? School? Church?
  
- 2) What is your attitude towards the success you have been granted? Are you being successful in such a way that those who notice see God? Or are they finding themselves enamored with you?
  
- 3) How might God be making his name great through your success? How might you position yourself to be a “willing vessel” for his glory?

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## Day 3 • Miracles

It is hard to imagine the type of miraculous event we are told about in Joshua 3. Partly because it is hard to imagine a river just simply drying up and partly because we are subjected to an aggressive worldview that is skeptical to anything that cannot be explained naturally. It is important to remember that Jesus, our Lord and Savior, viewed the miraculous accounts of the Old Testament as historical and factual (*Matthew 12:38-42*). If Christ saw the biblical accounts in such a matter of fact manner, then it is integral for us, as his disciples, to follow in his example.

- 1) What thoughts initially go through your mind when you read of the river being stopped and the people of Israel crossing on dry ground?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How might an acceptance of the miraculous change your disposition today?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) The first three chapters are filled with a reminder to be strong and courageous. How might this miracle help you be strong and courageous through the obstacles in your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) What do these miracles say about God and his capacity to intervene?



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Israel has just crossed the Jordan river. This chapter recounts in greater detail how Israel crossed the Jordan, as well as what the Israel did immediately following their crossing. As a matter of first importance the LORD commanded Israel to set up a memorial so that they might never forget how He had acted on their behalf. By his mighty hand, the LORD had stopped the river and they had walked across on dry ground. Joshua 4 is a glimpse into how God sometimes works in amazing miraculous ways to demonstrate his power so that all may know and fear Him. This chapter clearly reminds us that we are to memorialize those moments and tell them to our children and others in order that He may be glorified through His past acts.

## **Day 1 • Memorials, Read Joshua 4:1-24**

The LORD instructed Joshua to set up an altar in Gilgal to remind the Israelites of the wonder He had just performed. Although Israel may have felt invincible after crossing the Jordan on dry ground, there was plenty of danger ahead. The LORD commanded Israel to create the memorial in Gilgal so that when times got tough and Israel began to lose hope, they might be reminded that they served a mighty God.

- 1) In your mind, list all the challenges and struggles you are currently facing. Now reflect for a moment on the times in your life when you have seen God move in incredible, miraculous ways. Do your current struggles seem less daunting in light of what God has done in your life in the past?
  
- 2) One possible way to remember what God has done is to keep a journal, and record times of deep struggle, but also times of great victory. Then you can read of these times when you lose hope in the future.
  
- 3) Many people wear crosses around their necks or have them tattooed on different areas of their bodies. We see these crosses so often that we have become immune to their significance. Today, if and when you see a cross, may it to remind you of the price Christ paid to cleanse you of your sins. Thank God for working in such an incredible way to save you from your sins and offer you an eternal home in heaven.

## Day 2 • The Next Generation

One of the main reasons the LORD instructed Israel to set up the memorial altar in Gilgal was to ensure that the next generation of Israelites would hear the story of how God brought Israel across the Jordan river on dry ground. In *Exodus 12:26-27* Moses also instructed the Israelites to tell their children about the LORD: *“When your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ You shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’”* The LORD desires that all generations might hear of his mighty works and fear his name, thus Christian parents have a responsibility to share the gospel with their children, and even share personal stories of God’s power to them.

- 1) While Joshua specifically commanded parents to share what God had done with their children, in modern application this responsibility is not limited to only those who have children. All Christians have this responsibility. We are all to share with others the things that God does/has done in our lives. Sharing testimonies can serve as an encouragement for other believers, or it can serve as an evangelistic tool towards non-Christians. What stories do you have that you can share with others? How has God moved in powerful ways in your life?
  
- 2) How often do you share those stories with others?
  
- 3) If you are a parent, how are you sharing God with your children?

## Day 3 • The LORD's Presence Leads The Way

One of the overarching motifs of the book of Joshua is the leading of the Presence of the LORD. While it may be easy to focus on the miracle of the Jordan river being stopped up and Israel crossing on dry ground, let's not forget how it happened: it was the Presence of the Lord through the ark of testimony that caused the waters to stop. Throughout the entire Old Testament it is never Israel that secures its own success, but rather the LORD. It was the LORD that brought Israel across the Jordan, and it will be the LORD that hands the foreign nations living in Canaan into Israel's hands. Israel has no right to claim ownership of their success. Following the LORD's leading is key to living a victorious Christian life.

- 1) Israel succeeded in crossing the Jordan because they followed the Lord's leading. How do you practically follow God's leading in your life? Do you respond obediently to the nudges of the Holy Spirit when He asks you to do something that would make you uncomfortable?
  
- 2) An important part of following God's leading is asking Him to help and guide us by His Spirit. How do you acknowledge your need for God's help in your everyday life?
  
- 3) The book of Joshua starts out with God's commission to Joshua. In *Joshua 1:9* the Lord assures Joshua with the following words: "*Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*" A similar promise to all Christians is found in *Matthew 28:19-20*... "*Jesus promises to be with us as we make disciples until the end of the age.*" How does this promise affect the way you think of the difficulties and struggles you face? How does this promise effect change in the way you live when you face struggles?

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