

Bible Study- Journey through the Bible

Joshua: Moving Forward in God's Promise – August 19, 2026

Joshua 1:1–9; Joshua 3:7–17; Joshua 6:1–20; Joshua 24:14–24

New Testament Connection: Hebrews 4:6–11; Hebrews 11:30

Transition: From the Law to the Historical Books

The first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, are known as the **Law, Torah, or Pentateuch**.

These books introduced us to:

- Creation and the fall
- God's covenant with Abraham
- Israel's deliverance from Egypt
- God's Law and covenant
- Israel's wilderness journey
- Preparation to enter the Promised Land

Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses.

Joshua begins with a new leader, a new generation, and the fulfillment of a promise God made centuries earlier.

Understanding the Historical Books

Joshua begins the section of the Old Testament commonly called the **Historical Books**.

In the Protestant Old Testament, the Historical Books are:

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles

- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther

These twelve books tell the story of Israel from their entrance into the Promised Land through the periods of the judges and kings, the division of the kingdom, exile, and eventually the return from exile.

The Historical Books are not simply a record of ancient events. They show God's relationship with His covenant people throughout their history.

As we study these books, we will repeatedly encounter themes such as:

- God's faithfulness
- Covenant
- Obedience and disobedience
- Leadership
- God's judgment
- God's grace
- The consequences of Israel's choices
- God's continuing redemptive plan

Important Bible Survey Insight

The Historical Books tell us **what happened**, but they also help us understand **what those events reveal about God and His people**.

Israel's history becomes a testimony to God's faithfulness even when His people are unfaithful.

The Historical Books at a Glance

Joshua: Israel enters and begins possessing the Promised Land.

Judges: Israel repeatedly falls into cycles of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance.

Ruth: God demonstrates faithfulness and redemption through an ordinary family during the period of the judges.

1 and 2 Samuel: Israel transitions from judges to kings, including the rise of Saul and David.

1 and 2 Kings: Israel's monarchy eventually divides, declines, and ends in exile.

1 and 2 Chronicles: Israel's history is retold with particular emphasis on David, the Temple, worship, and covenant faithfulness.

Ezra: God's people return from exile and rebuild the Temple.

Nehemiah: Jerusalem's walls are rebuilt and the community is spiritually renewed.

Esther: God preserves His people while they are living under foreign rule.

Opening Discussion

When you think about the historical books of the Bible, which people or stories immediately come to mind?

Why do you think understanding Israel's history is important for understanding the rest of the Bible?

Introducing Joshua

Big Idea

Joshua teaches that God is faithful to His promises, but His people must trust Him enough to move forward in obedience.

Icebreaker

When you think of the book of Joshua, what people, stories, or events come to mind?

Biblical Context

The book of Joshua begins immediately after the death of Moses.

Israel has spent forty years wandering in the wilderness because the previous generation refused to trust God and enter the Promised Land.

Now a new generation stands at the edge of Canaan.

Joshua, who had served alongside Moses and had been one of the twelve spies, is chosen by God to lead Israel into the land.

The book records Israel crossing the Jordan River, entering Canaan, defeating several enemies, receiving their tribal inheritances, and renewing their covenant commitment to God.

Joshua reveals God as:

- Promise Keeper
- Leader
- Provider
- Faithful
- Worthy of Trust

The central issue is not simply whether Israel can conquer Canaan.

The deeper question is:

Will Israel trust and obey the God who promised to give them the land?

Theme 1: God Is Faithful to His Promises

Scripture

Joshua 1:2–3 (NIV)

"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them, to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses."

Biblical Insight

The promise Joshua receives did not begin with Joshua.

God had promised this land to Abraham generations earlier.

After slavery in Egypt and forty years in the wilderness, Israel is finally preparing to experience what God had promised.

Joshua reminds us that God's promises may unfold across generations, but God's faithfulness does not expire.

Digging Deeper: A Promise Generations in the Making

In Genesis 12, God told Abraham to go to a land He would show him.

In Joshua, Abraham's descendants finally prepare to possess that land.

Hundreds of years passed between the promise and its fulfillment.

Joshua therefore continues a story that began long before Joshua was born.

The delay did not mean God had forgotten His promise.

Cross Reference

Genesis 12:7 (NIV)

"To your offspring I will give this land."

Discussion Questions

Why is it important to understand that the promise in Joshua 1 began generations earlier with Abraham?

What does the fulfillment of this promise teach us about God's faithfulness?

Why do you think waiting can make it difficult to trust what God has promised?

God's promise remained even though the previous generation failed to enter the land. What does this teach us about the difference between God's faithfulness and human faithfulness?

Reflection Questions

How does remembering what God has already done strengthen our confidence in what He will do?

How can we remain confident in God when what He has promised has not happened yet?

Theme 2: God's Presence Gives His People Courage

Scripture

Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Biblical Insight

Joshua was assuming responsibility after Moses, one of the greatest leaders in Israel's history.

He was also preparing to lead an entire nation into unfamiliar territory.

God did not promise Joshua that the journey would be easy.

Instead, God promised Joshua His presence.

Joshua's courage was not supposed to come from confidence in himself.

His courage came from confidence that God would be with him.

Digging Deeper: Courage Rooted in God's Presence

God repeatedly tells Joshua to be strong and courageous in Joshua 1.

This repetition suggests that Joshua had legitimate reasons to feel the weight of his assignment.

Biblical courage does not mean the absence of fear.

It means trusting God's presence enough to obey Him despite what we face.

Cross Reference

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV)

"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

Discussion Questions

Why do you think God repeatedly told Joshua to be strong and courageous?

What challenges do you think Joshua was facing as he assumed leadership after Moses?

How does knowing God is with us give us confidence beyond our own abilities?

Why do you think God's promise to be with Joshua was more important than giving Joshua every detail about what would happen next?

Reflection Questions

Why does God's presence matter when we cannot predict what comes next?

Why do you think God often promises His presence rather than promising an easy journey?

Theme 3: Faith Requires Obedient Action

Scripture

Joshua 3:13 (NIV)

"And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."

Biblical Insight

Before Israel could enter the Promised Land, they had to cross the Jordan River.

God promised to stop the water, but the priests carrying the Ark first had to step into the river.

The people had God's promise, but they still had to respond in obedience.

The crossing of the Jordan demonstrates that biblical faith is more than believing what God says.

Faith acts on what God says.

Digging Deeper: Stepping Before Seeing

At the Red Sea, Israel saw the waters divide before crossing.

At the Jordan, the priests were instructed to step toward the water before it stopped flowing.

This new generation was being called to exercise trust in God's instructions.

Sometimes God's provision becomes evident only after His people begin moving in obedience.

Cross Reference

James 2:17 (NIV)

"Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

Discussion Questions

Why do you think God required the priests to step into the Jordan before stopping the water?

What does this story teach us about the relationship between faith and obedience?

How was crossing the Jordan different from Israel's experience at the Red Sea?

Why is it sometimes difficult to act on God's direction before we know how everything will work out?

Reflection Questions

What is the difference between saying we trust God and making decisions that demonstrate our trust?

Why do you think God sometimes allows us to take a step of faith before showing us what comes next?

Theme 4: God's People Must Choose Covenant Faithfulness

Scripture

Joshua 24:15 (NIV)

"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Biblical Insight

Joshua ends very differently from how it begins.

At the beginning, Joshua must decide whether he will trust God enough to lead Israel forward.

At the end, Israel must decide whether they will remain faithful to the God who brought them there.

Joshua reminds the people of everything God has done for them before calling them to make their choice.

God's faithfulness demanded a response.

Digging Deeper: Remember Before You Choose

Joshua 24 begins with Joshua recounting Israel's history.

He reminds them of Abraham, Egypt, deliverance, the wilderness, and the Promised Land.

Only after reminding them of God's faithfulness does Joshua say:

"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve."

Their commitment to God was supposed to be rooted in remembering what God had already done.

Cross Reference

Deuteronomy 6:12 (NIV)

"Be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Discussion Questions

Why do you think Joshua reviewed Israel's history before asking them whom they would serve?

Joshua reminded Israel of God's faithfulness throughout their history before asking them to recommit themselves to Him. Why do you think remembering what God had done was important?

What does Joshua's challenge to "choose" teach us about personal responsibility in our relationship with God?

Reflection Questions

What are some things that can compete with our commitment to God today?

How can remembering God's faithfulness strengthen our commitment to Him?

New Testament Connection

Hebrews 4:6–11; Hebrews 11:30

Biblical Insight

Joshua led Israel into the land God had promised, but the New Testament teaches that the physical land was not the final fulfillment of God's promise of rest.

Hebrews points beyond Joshua to the greater spiritual rest God provides through Christ.

Hebrews 11 also remembers the fall of Jericho as an example of faith:

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days."

Hebrews 11:30 NIV

Joshua therefore points us beyond military conquest and physical territory toward a larger biblical truth:

God's promises are ultimately fulfilled through faith in Him, and the fullness of God's saving purposes is found in Jesus Christ.

Final Reflection Questions

What's one thing you have learned about God's faithfulness through the book of Joshua?

What does Joshua teach us about the relationship between faith and obedience?

When circumstances change, what does Joshua's story teach us about what we can still depend on?

Reading for Next Week

Judges: When Everyone Does What Is Right in Their Own Eyes

Read:

- Judges 2:6–23
- Judges 4:1–24
- Judges 6:1–24
- Judges 21:25

New Testament Connection

- Hebrews 11:32–34

Preview

Joshua ends with Israel committing themselves to serve the Lord.

Judges shows what happens when succeeding generations fail to maintain that commitment.

The book follows a repeated cycle:

Sin → Oppression → Crying Out → Deliverance → Peace → Sin Again

God's people repeatedly turn away from Him, experience the consequences of their choices, cry out for help, and receive deliverance through judges whom God raises up.

Yet even when Israel repeatedly fails, God continues to demonstrate mercy.

Big Idea for Next Week

Judges teaches us what happens when God's people abandon His direction and begin determining right and wrong for themselves.

Bible Study Biblical Survey

Old Testament Sections (39 Books)

- **The Five Books of The Law -The Pentateuch / Torah (5 books):** Genesis to Deuteronomy. Covers creation, the patriarchs, and the giving of the Law.
- **The Historical Books (12 books):** Joshua to Esther. Covers Israel's conquests, kings, civil war, exile, and return.
- **The Poetry & Wisdom Literature (5 books):** Job to Song of Solomon. Focuses on worship, suffering, and practical life advice.
- **The Major Prophets (5 books):** Isaiah to Daniel. Longer prophetic books warning Israel and foretelling the Messiah.
- **The Minor Prophets (12 books):** Hosea to Malachi. Shorter prophetic books focusing on justice, repentance, and the coming Day of the Lord.

New Testament Sections (27 Books)

- **The Gospels (4 books):** Matthew to John. Four distinct perspectives on the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- **Church History (1 book):** Acts. The birth of the early church and the spread of Christianity.
- **The Pauline Epistles (13 books):** Romans to Philemon. Letters written by the Apostle Paul to churches and individuals regarding theology and practical living.
- **The General Epistles (8 books):** Hebrews to Jude. Letters written by other leaders (like Peter, John, and James) to the broader church.
- **Prophecy / Apocalypse (1 book):** Revelation. The final victory of God and the culmination of history.