



March 12th - March 18th

WEEK 11 BE STRONG & COURAGEOUS | JOSHUA 1-24

The Israelites stood at the edge of Canaan, on the verge of claiming the promise of land God had made to Abraham centuries earlier (Genesis 12:1-7). The task ahead was both exciting and sobering. Crossing the Jordan and conquering the land posed a serious challenge. Israel would have to drive out the strong people who lived in Canaan's well-fortified cities (Numbers 13:28-29).

The Israelites stood at the end of one era and the beginning of another. Moses, Israel's great leader, had died and Joshua has assumed leadership. This role carried great responsibility, and many probably wondered if Joshua had the necessary skills to complete the job Moses began.

The Book of Joshua describes how God's people faced the Canaanite challenge, conquered the land and divided it among the tribes. They succeeded partly because of Joshua's obedience to the Lord; he was the strong and courageous leader God had empowered for the task. For us, this book is prophetic in the sense that it records Israel's history with the purpose of instructing and explaining, from the divine perspective, how and why things went the way they did.



Group Resources

Read: Joshua 1 - 24*

Video: [Joshua](#)

Sermon: The Full Measure | A Line None of Us Want to Cross

Proposed Group Agenda (2 hrs)

Fellowship/Connection Time (30 min.)

Welcome & Opening Prayer (5 min.)

Warm Up (10 min.)

Video (15 min.)

Dig In (45 min.)

Grow (10 min.)

Closing Prayer (5 min.)

* The individual reading plan for this week covers Judges 4 - Ruth and Psalms 71-77.



Warm Up

Discussion Value - Examen

This week we will begin by examining how well our group is relating, sharing, interacting and loving one another as we journey through the Scriptures together. We will then consider any communal celebration, repentance, or reform that may be necessary.

Over these past weeks, our time together has shaped our group's culture for better or for worse. Therefore, it's important that we pause to reflect on what kind of community we're developing and make any necessary corrections. Remember, small groups are meant to be more than just bible studies; they are a kind of Christian gymnasium where we practice being the godly community and people we are called to be. Our ability to ask questions, share answers, navigate differences, give grace, and extend forgiveness determines if we will be together in the future. And to a some extent, determines how well we as individuals are able to exhibiting those same godly characteristics and behaviors in the world.

Each one of us has a way of relating to God, the Scriptures, others and the world around us. These ways of being are often based on unspoken assumptions and attitudes that typically go unchallenged and unaddressed. Over time, this means we can develop some ungodly habits and not even realize it.

Open with the following prayer, then take the time to discuss both the positives and negatives of your group's interactions. Celebrate the ways you are relating well together, while listening for any need of communal and/or individual reform.

Note: This time is intended for you and your members to clear the air and address any conflicts or concerns that may have come up during your time together the last few week. This is NOT a time to tear one another down or share anything that is inappropriate for a group setting. Rather, think of this exercise like a family discussion. You will be hashing out differences and difficulties in love and respect in order to come to a place of reconciliation and continue on your journey together in love and harmony.

Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, inspire us to speak with honesty, vulnerability, tenderness and mercy. Help us to consider our own imperfections before we judge or challenge the thoughts and ways of our brothers or sisters. We come before you painfully aware that we often judge ourselves on our intentions while judging others on their actions. Teach, guide and direct our thoughts, reflections, and conversation from beginning to end we pray. May your grace and mercy inspire, correct, strengthen and help us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Opening Questions

1. As individuals are we keeping our commitment to regular attendance knowing that strong relationships and communities cannot be build without it?
2. As individuals are we participating wholeheartedly and contributing to the overall growth and welfare of the group (i.e. by inviting a friend or perhaps taking on a small roll in the area of hospitality, administration, or leadership etc.)?
3. As individuals, do we show up mainly concerned about our needs, wants and desires, or are we also concerned about the needs of others and the group as well?
4. As individuals, are our thoughts and communications with others primarily filled with life and grace or judgment and criticism?
5. As a community, what are we doing well?
6. As a community, what areas can we improve upon?
7. Are there any changes that need to be made to our structure or administration to better support our group and/or time together?
8. Choose two (2) or three (3) words to describe what your experience has been like in this group since we began the Jesus 365 study.

 Dig In

Q. The Book of Joshua holds up its namesake as the “New Moses.” Long before the mantle of leadership is passed, we see him following in Moses footsteps and receiving God’s approval and training for his greater Kingdom purpose. In whose footsteps would you like to follow? Why? Where do you suspect they would lead you? Are you willing to go through the process of training and approval? What if it takes 40 years to complete?

1

Joshua - a leader in training.

- A LEADING ISRAEL'S ARMY TO VICTORY OVER THE AMALEKITES.** Exodus 17:9 - 14
- B STANDING AT THE FOOT OF MT. SINAI AS MOSES RECEIVES THE LAW.** Exodus 24:13
- C GUARDING THE TENT OF MEETING WHEN MOSES RETURNED TO CAMP.** Exodus 33:11
- D ONE OF THE TWELVE MEN SENT BY MOSES INTO CANAAN TO SPY OUT THE LAND.** Numbers 13:8, 16
- E URGING THE PEOPLE, WITH CALEB, TO TAKE THE LAND BY FAITH.** Deuteronomy 14:1 - 10
- F APPOINTED AS THE NEW LEADER OVER ISRAEL.** Deuteronomy 31:3, 7-8, 14 & 23

Q. The Israelites are just across the Jordan River from Jericho and poised to invade the Promised Land. In spite of great risk, two spies are sent in to scout out the situation. As part of their cover, they stay at the home of a prostitute. What does the interaction with Rahab reveal about God and the people He chooses to fulfill His purposes? How binding should a promise made by God’s people be? Did Rahab’s acts and admissions constitute a saving faith?

Q. Given Rahab’s disreputable occupation and obvious lies, how do you feel about her being allowed to join the Israelites after the fall of Jericho (Joshua 6:22-25)? What do you make of the New Testament’s affirmation of Rahab (Hebrews 11:31 & James 2:25)? What about the later biblical witness affirming her as a member of Jesus’ line of ancestry (Matthew 1:5)?

Q. How do you respond knowing that God uses and grants favor to people “on the other side,” even disreputable prostitutes? With fear? Contempt? Inspired faith? Vicarious joy? Which people living “on the other side” do you need to reach out to with grace and mercy?



Q. Chapters 3 - 5 focus on Israel's preparation for conquering the land. Why do you think God inaugurates Joshua's leadership with a miracle similar to the one he gave Moses at the Red Sea? Why would God want the Israelites to set up stone monuments and celebrate covenant memorials like circumcision and the Passover on the other side? Remember, these rituals hadn't been practices for the last 40 years. When did the manna from heaven stop? What does eating the produce of the land symbolize?

Q. How is God's preparation for war different than how military personnel is usually trained? What is His preparation mainly concerned with? If the concern is turning the soldiers hearts and minds towards remembering God's mighty acts in history and obedience to their covenant obligations, who do you think the victory will belong to? God or man?

Q. The melting of the winter snow caused the river to overflow its banks, but the Lord stopped the water and Israel crossed on dry ground. What impact did the miraculous river-crossing have on the Israelites? The neighboring kings?

Q. Israel crossed the Jordan "on dry ground," but armed for war, signifying the battle is just beginning. Are you more battle-ready or battle weary these days? How significant would a visit from a heavenly messenger be if you were battle-ready? What about battle weary?

3

Israel's preparation for conquering the land.

Joshua 3 - 5

Israel's miracle crossing of the Jordan River demonstrates God's hand on Joshua, His new leader.

Joshua 3:7 - 8, 4:14

The two covenant memorials - circumcision and passover - along with the cessation of manna, signified the beginning of a new era. Israel was home at last!

Joshua 5:2 - 12

Joshua established the 12 stones so future generations would see the power of God and put their faith in Him.

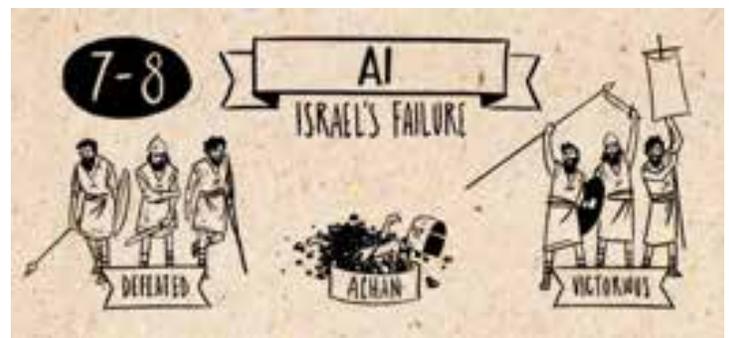
Joshua 4:6 - 7, 21 - 24

Joshua visits from a heavenly messenger further links him to Moses (Exodus 3:5) and encourages him for the battle at Jericho.

Joshua 5:13 - 15

Q. Joshua 6 - 12 tell the story of the partial conquest of the Promised Land. Featured here are the divine overthrow of two cities - Jericho & Ai (chapters 6 & 7 respectively). It is clear from the start this is God's holy war, not Israel's. What does it mean to be on God's side rather than Him being on yours? Why is it better for us to take direction from God instead of trying to get Him to align with our plans?

Q. Once again, everything is predicated on the people's obedience and loyalty to the covenant with Yahweh. How many seemingly "ridiculous acts" did the Israelites have to go through before the walls of Jericho fell? Would you have hung in there long enough to enjoy the fruition and bounty of His promises? How has disobeying God's law kept you from enjoying victory over something in your life (e.g. the freedom that comes with forgiveness)? How are you like Joshua - obedient in spite of your fears or complete understanding of God's plan? How are you like Achan? Do you think it's fair for God to punish all of Israel because just one person sinned? Why or why not? Compare and contrast the acts of Rahab with those of Achan? Why did Achan and his family lose all inheritance in the land, while Rahab the foreigner and her family gain an inheritance?



Q. In Joshua 13 - 21 the land is divided, including some areas yet to be conquered. Although this part of the book is far from exciting reading, you need to be aware of it's importance - especially in the placement of the allotments made to Caleb and Joshua (see graphic below), and for the later biblical accounts concerning the lands still needing to be won (13:1-7). It is critical knowledge for reading both Judges and 2 Samuel 5 and 8, where David finally succeeds in subduing these people groups. Notice that Caleb's portion was the first allotted in Canaan and Joshua's was the last. What does this symbolic bookend say about their faithfulness and God's favor on those who are obedient?

Q. Review Joshua 14:6-15. What do Caleb's actions reveal about his character? Has Caleb changed much since he was originally sent as a spy into Canaan (vv. 10 - 12)? What area did Caleb want for himself? What does his request reveal about his confidence in God? Would you have had the faith to ask for a land that wasn't already conquered? Why or why not? Caleb was still going strong at the age of 85! Will you be? What quality of Caleb's life do you want to emulate?

5

Joshua divides the land.

Joshua 13 - 21



Caleb presents his testimony and is allotted Hebron as his inheritance for his years of faithful service.

Joshua 14: 6 -15

The tribes that came from Joseph's sons - Ephraim & Manasseh - each received their own inheritance.

Joshua 16 - 17; Genesis 48:21 - 22

Several tribes did not drive out the people in their territory and eventually accepted their religious practices with a devastating effect.

Joshua 15:63, 16:10, 17: 12 - 13

Three cities of refuge were provided west of the Jordan and three east of the Jordan.

Joshua 20:1 - 9

The Levites received forty-eight cities out of the inheritance of the other tribes.

Joshua 20:1 - 9

Joshua was allotted Timnathserah in the land of Ephraim as his separate portion.

Joshua 19:49 - 51



Where's Jesus?

The last key event in the preparation for Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan River into the land of Canaan is an encounter with the "Commander of the army of the LORD" (5:13-15).

With Joshua's mind engrossed in his concerns about the task before him and feeling the weight of the responsibility on his shoulders, he looks up and there stood a man with sword drawn. Joshua's response in verse 14b and the statement of the captain in verse 15 show this was a Christophany. A Christophany is a manifestation of the preincarnate Christ, who, as the Logos, is the one who reveals God. If only a man or an angel, he would certainly have repelled Joshua's worshipful response (compare the response of Paul in Acts 14:8-20 to those who wanted to make them into gods and the response of the angel to John in Revelation 19:10).

Here then, the preincarnate Christ appears to Joshua to teach, guard, and reinforce certain vital truths for God's people. It was not for Joshua to claim God's allegiance for his cause no matter how right and holy it might be. Rather, the need was for Joshua to acknowledge God's claim over him for God's own purposes. We tend to approach our battles and causes backwards; we turn things all around and try to marshal God to support us rather than to submit and follow Him. Certainly, the battle was a joint venture; God and the people of Israel under Joshua's leadership as appointed by the Lord (1:1-9). But Joshua, as with all of us in the army of the King, must follow the Lord, submitting to His authority, taking our orders from Him, and resting the battle in His hands because we realize it is really His.

Q. What effect did the vision have on Joshua - physically, emotionally, spiritually and psychologically? Can you think of any other places in the bible where we see this same kind of reaction? Given the above explanation, what is meant by the term "neither" (5:14) - The Lord is neutral? The Lord is holy? The Lord's side is what counts? Or something else? Explain your answer.

Q. Did you notice anything else about this passage that was familiar? How is verse 15 like Moses' encounter with the "burning bush" in Exodus 3:5? Is it coincidental that the battle plan given in 6:2-5 follows this encounter? How might this vision determine how well Joshua follows the plan? Whose battle is this really?

Works Cited:

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- Theme 1 | *Ibid.*, pages 168 - 169 (excerpted).
- Theme 2 | *Serendipity Bible for Groups: New International Version*. Littleton, CO: Serendipity House, 1989. Pages 318 - 319 (excerpted).
- Theme 3 | Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas K. Stuart. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2002. Page 64 - 66. (excerpted).
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- Where's Jesus? | Keathley, J. Hampton III. *The Captain of the Lord's Army (Joshua 5:13-15)*. Copyright 2004, bible.org, used by permission (excerpted).
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Grow

These questions and exercises are designed to help you look at yourself, be aware and honest about who you are in light of your interaction with Scripture, and consider any appropriate actions.

What crazy battle plan is the Lord calling you to? Are you willing to humble yourself to that plan no matter how silly or difficult it seems at the time? What if it takes many years before you see the result of your obedience and faithfulness? What if you don't see a result in your lifetime? Does that necessarily mean it wasn't God's plan?

Meditate on Isaiah 6:1 - 13 this week (be sure to read it all the way to the end). What does this passage say about our calling as Christians? Is a positive "outcome" or "result" always an indication that we heard correctly from God? Could our "reward" for faithfulness and obedience come in another way (think of Caleb and Joshua's inheritance after years of faithful service)?

What practical steps are you willing to take right now to wholeheartedly serve God despite what you see and feel?