



BOOK VI · OLD TESTAMENT · HISTORY

The Book of Joshua

Conquest of Canaan — Faith, Courage, and God's Faithfulness

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

— Joshua 1:9

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THE BOOK OF JOSHUA: POSSESSION OF THE LAND

Faith, Obedience, and the Fulfillment of God's Promises

SECTION 1: CONQUEST & FAITH (CHAPTERS 1-12)

- ▶ **Commissioning of Joshua:**
"Be strong and courageous" (Josh 1:9).
- ▶ **The Spies & Rahab:**
Faith in Jericho (Josh 2).
- ▶ **Crossing the Jordan:**
Miraculous entry (Josh 3-4).
- ▶ **Consecration & Passover:** Gilgal, circumcision, and remembrance (Josh 5).
- ▶ **Fall of Jericho:**
Seven days, walls collapse (Josh 6).
- ▶ **Sin of Achan & Ai:**
Defeat and judgment (Josh 7-8).
- ▶ **Gibeonite Deception:**
A treaty made (Josh 9).
- ▶ **Southern & Northern Campaigns:**
"The Lord fought for Israel" (Josh 10-12).

SECTION 2: DIVISION & INHERITANCE (CHAPTERS 13-21)

- ▶ **Land Yet to Be Taken:**
God's command to inherit (Josh 13).
- ▶ **Allotment to the Tribes:**
Distribution by lot (Josh 14-19).
 - Judah, Ephraim, Manasseh (Josh 15-17).
 - Remaining Seven Tribes at Shiloh (Josh 18-19).
- ▶ **Cities of Refuge:**
Protection for the manslayer (Josh 20).
- ▶ **Levitical Cities:**
Scattered throughout the tribes (Josh 21).
- ▶ **Summary:**
"Not one word... of all the good promises... failed" (Josh 21:45).

SECTION 3: COVENANT RENEWAL & FAREWELL (CHAPTERS 22-24)

- ▶ **Eastern Tribes Return:**
Altar of Witness (Josh 22).
- ▶ **Joshua's Farewell Address:**
Warning against idolatry (Josh 23).
- ▶ **Covenant Renewal at Shechem:**
"Choose this day whom you will serve" (Josh 24:15).
- ▶ **Joshua's Death & Burial:**
End of an era (Josh 24:29-30).
- ▶ **Joseph's Bones & Eleazar:**
Final notes of faithfulness (Josh 24:32-33).

KEY VERSE & REFLECTION

KEY VERSE: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." – Joshua 1:9.

REFLECTION: The Book of Joshua is a testament to God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises. It challenges us to walk in obedience, trust in His power, and courageously claim the spiritual inheritance He has prepared for us. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." – Joshua 24:15.

Full-page visual overview — three phases, key events, and structural flow at a glance

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The Book of Joshua records the fulfillment of God's promise to give Israel the land of Canaan. Spanning approximately seven years of conquest and settlement, it divides into three movements: preparation (1–5), conquest (6–12), and inheritance (13–24). The book's central message is that God keeps His promises — every single one.

SECTION 1

Joshua 1–5 PREPARATION — CROSSING INTO THE PROMISED LAND



- 1:1–9** God's commissioning of Joshua: 'Be strong and courageous.' The command is repeated four times in nine verses — suggesting Joshua needed genuine reassurance. God promises His presence wherever Joshua goes.
- 2:1–24** Rahab hides the Israelite spies and confesses: 'The Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.' A Canaanite prostitute becomes a model of faith — and an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:5).
- 3:1–17** The Jordan River stops flowing as the priests' feet touch the water. The miracle mirrors the Red Sea crossing — a new generation receives the same God who delivered their parents from Egypt.
- 4:1–24** Twelve stones are set up as a memorial at Gilgal. 'When your children ask you what these stones mean, tell them...' Memory and testimony are central to covenant faithfulness.
- 5:1–15** Israel is circumcised at Gilgal, the Passover is observed, and the manna stops. The commander of the Lord's army appears to Joshua — a Christophany that echoes Moses at the burning bush.

SECTION 2

Joshua 6–12 CONQUEST — THE CAMPAIGN FOR CANAAN



- 6:1–27** The fall of Jericho: march silently for six days, then shout on the seventh. The strategy is militarily absurd — which is precisely the point. God's victory does not depend on human tactics.
- 7:1–26** Achan's sin at Ai: one man's secret disobedience brings defeat to the entire community. 'Israel has sinned.' The corporate nature of covenant life means individual choices have communal consequences.
- 8:1–35** After Achan's judgment, God gives Ai into Israel's hands. Joshua then reads the entire Law to all Israel at Mount Ebal — conquest is inseparable from covenant renewal.
- 9:1–27** The Gibeonite deception: Israel makes a treaty without consulting God. 'The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord.' A costly lesson about discernment.
- 10–12** The southern and northern campaigns. Joshua 10:14: 'There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the Lord listened to a human being.' The sun stands still over Gibeon.



- 13–19** The land is divided among the twelve tribes. Caleb, at 85, claims his inheritance with full confidence: 'Give me this hill country.' His faith has not diminished in forty-five years of waiting.
- 20–21** Cities of refuge are established — places where those who kill accidentally can flee and receive a fair hearing. The law protects the vulnerable even in a culture of blood vengeance.
- 22:1–34** The eastern tribes return home and build an altar. The western tribes nearly go to war over it — until they discover it was built as a witness, not for rival worship. Listening prevents catastrophe.
- 23:1–16** Joshua's first farewell address: 'You yourselves have seen everything the Lord your God has done... He is the one who has been fighting for you.' A call to remember and remain faithful.
- 24:1–28** The covenant renewal at Shechem. Joshua's famous declaration: 'As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.' The people respond — but Joshua warns them: 'You are not able to serve the Lord.'

KEY THEMES

The Book of Joshua establishes four foundational themes that run through the entire Bible — from covenant faithfulness to the ultimate rest that awaits God's people.

⁰¹ GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PROMISES



01

Joshua 21:45 delivers the theological climax of the entire book: "Not one word of all the good **promises** that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass." The land promised to **Abraham** in Genesis 12 is now given to his descendants — four hundred years later. Joshua is the book of **fulfilled promises**, demonstrating that God's word does not return empty, no matter how long the wait.

MODERN APPLICATION

When God's promises seem delayed or impossible, Joshua invites us to look back at what He has already fulfilled. The same God who kept His word to Abraham keeps His word to us.

"Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass." — Joshua 21:45

⁰² COURAGE AND OBEDIENCE AS FAITH IN ACTION



02

God's command to Joshua — 'Be strong and **courageous**' — is repeated four times in the opening chapter alone. But this **courage** is not self-generated bravado; it flows directly from the promise of God's **presence**: 'The Lord your God will be with you wherever you go' (1:9). **Obedience** in Joshua is consistently linked to outcome: when Israel obeys, they advance; when they disobey (Achan, Gibeon), they suffer consequences. Faith is not passive — it acts.

MODERN APPLICATION

The courage God calls us to is not the absence of fear but the choice to act on His promises despite fear. Where is God calling you to take a step of obedience that requires courage?

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." — Joshua 1:9

⁰³ JUDGMENT AND MERCY — THE TWO SIDES OF GOD



03

The conquest of Canaan presents one of the Bible's most challenging theological tensions: the destruction of entire cities alongside the **salvation** of **Rahab** and the Gibeonites. Both are present in the same narrative. The **Canaanite** cities are judged for centuries of wickedness (Genesis 15:16). **Rahab** — a **Canaanite** prostitute — is saved by faith. The Gibeonites — through deception — are preserved. God's **judgment** is real; so is His **mercy**. Neither cancels the other.

MODERN APPLICATION

Reading Joshua honestly requires sitting with both God's holiness and His mercy. The same God who judges sin is the God who saves the unlikely — and we are all, in some sense, Rahab.

"Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, Joshua saved alive. And she has lived in Israel to this day." — Joshua 6:25



Joshua 24 is one of the most dramatic **covenant** renewal scenes in Scripture. Joshua gathers all Israel at Shechem and forces a **choice**: 'Choose this day whom you will **serve**.' His own declaration — 'As for me and my **household**, we will **serve** the Lord' — has become one of the most quoted verses in Christian households. But Joshua immediately follows it with a warning: 'You are not able to **serve** the Lord, for he is a holy God.' True **covenant commitment** requires honest self-knowledge.

MODERN APPLICATION

The covenant renewal at Shechem challenges us to move beyond inherited faith to personal, conscious commitment. What would it look like for you to make a deliberate, renewed choice to serve God in this season of your life?

"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." — Joshua 24:15

SYMBOLISM & IMAGERY

The Book of Joshua is rich with symbolic geography and objects that carry deep theological meaning about God's faithfulness, power, and covenant relationship with His people.



THE PROMISED LAND

SYMBOL 01

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Canaan was not an empty land — it was inhabited by multiple nations with established cities, armies, and religious systems. The Israelites were entering a world of real political and military complexity. The land itself was described as 'flowing with milk and honey' — a phrase indicating agricultural abundance and settled civilization.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

The Promised Land is the fulfillment of the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12 — a physical demonstration that God keeps His word across generations. In the New Testament, the author of **Hebrews** reinterprets the land as a type of the **ultimate rest** that remains for God's people — a rest not yet fully entered, pointing forward to the new creation.



THE JORDAN RIVER

SYMBOL 02

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The **Jordan River** formed the natural eastern boundary of Canaan. Crossing it during flood season would have been humanly **impossible** — the river was at its highest and most dangerous. The miracle of the waters stopping upstream at Adam is a specific, verifiable geographical detail.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

The Jordan crossing deliberately mirrors the **Red Sea** crossing — connecting the new generation to the Exodus generation and affirming that the same God who delivered Israel from Egypt now delivers them into their inheritance. In Christian tradition, the **Jordan** has become a symbol of **baptism** and the transition from the old life to the new.



THE WALLS OF JERICHO

SYMBOL 03

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Jericho was one of the oldest and most fortified cities in the ancient Near East. Its walls were formidable. The strategy God gave Israel — marching silently for six days, then shouting on the seventh — was **militarily absurd** by any ancient standard. No siege engine, no battering ram, no military tactic.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

The walls of Jericho represent every human barrier that appears impenetrable. Their collapse at a shout demonstrates that God's power operates through means that confound human wisdom. Paul echoes this in 2 Corinthians 10:4: 'The **weapons** we fight with are not the weapons of the world.' The victory belongs to God, not to **human strategy**.



THE MEMORIAL STONES

SYMBOL 04

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After crossing the Jordan, Joshua commanded **twelve men** — one from each tribe — to take a stone from the riverbed and set them up at **Gilgal**. This was a common ancient Near Eastern practice: setting up standing stones to mark significant events and serve as visual reminders for future generations.

THEOLOGICAL MEANING

The memorial stones represent the importance of intentional **remembrance** in the life of faith. 'When your children ask you what these stones mean, tell them...'. **Faith is transmitted** through story and symbol. The stones challenge us to ask: what memorials — practices, stories, rituals — do we maintain to pass on what God has done to the **next generation**?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

These 8 questions are designed for a 60–90 minute small group session. Begin with the icebreaker, then work through observation, interpretation, and application questions. Close with the prayer prompt.

ICEBREAKER

Have you ever faced a situation where you had to take a leap of faith before you could see the outcome — like the priests stepping into the Jordan? What happened?

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01

OBSERVATION

Read Joshua 1:1–9 aloud. How many times does God tell Joshua to 'be strong and courageous'? Why do you think God repeated this command so many times?

Leader's Note:

The repetition (4 times in 9 verses) suggests Joshua — and the people — genuinely needed this reassurance. Fear is not a sign of weak faith.

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02

OBSERVATION

Compare Rahab's story (Joshua 2) with Achan's story (Joshua 7). What do these two contrasting characters reveal about how God responds to faith versus disobedience?

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03

INTERPRETATION

Joshua 21:45 states: 'Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed.' What does this tell us about God's character? How does this promise apply to believers today?

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04

INTERPRETATION

The battle of Jericho required Israel to march silently for six days and then shout on the seventh. How does this unusual strategy challenge our tendency to rely on our own methods and wisdom?

Leader's Note:

Deeper question: What 'walls' in your life might require a strategy that looks foolish by worldly standards?

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05

APPLICATION

Joshua 24:15 presents a clear choice: 'Choose this day whom you will serve.' In what areas of your life are you currently facing a similar choice between serving God and serving other priorities?

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06

APPLICATION

Caleb, at 85 years old, still claimed his inheritance with full confidence (Joshua 14:12). What 'hill country' — a dream, calling, or promise — have you been waiting to claim? What is holding you back?

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07

PRAYER PROMPT

Close by reading Joshua 1:9 together: 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' Have each person share one area where they need courage this week, then pray for one another.

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08

KEY CHARACTERS

Joshua

Moses' successor and the leader of the Israelite conquest. Joshua's name means 'The Lord saves' — the Hebrew form of Jesus. His life models the integration of courage, obedience, and dependence



Rahab

A Canaanite prostitute in Jericho who hid the Israelite spies and confessed faith in Israel's God. Her scarlet cord becomes the sign of her salvation. Rahab is listed in the Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11:31), in the



Caleb

One of the two faithful spies from Numbers 13, Caleb waited forty-five years for his promised inheritance. At 85, he says: 'I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out... Give me this hill country.' His



Achan

The Israelite who secretly took forbidden plunder from Jericho, causing Israel's defeat at Ai. His story is a sobering reminder that hidden sin has communal consequences. 'Israel has sinned' — the corporate



PRACTICAL APPLICATION — LIVING IT OUT TODAY



Trust God's Promises Even When They Seem Delayed

The Israelites waited 400 years for the Promised Land. Joshua 21:45 confirms every promise was kept. When God's promises seem slow, Joshua invites us to look back at His track record and trust His timing.



Choose Courage Over Comfort

God's repeated command to 'be strong and courageous' is not a personality requirement — it is a choice grounded in His presence. Identify one area where fear is preventing obedience, and take one step forward this week.



Build Memorials of Remembrance

The twelve stones at Gilgal were designed to prompt the question: 'What do these stones mean?' Create intentional practices — journaling, annual reviews, family traditions — that keep the story of God's faithfulness alive.



Make a Conscious Covenant Commitment

Joshua 24:15 is not a passive statement — it is a deliberate, public declaration. Consider writing out your own 'as for me and my household' declaration: what specific commitments define your household's service to God?

My Bible Journal & Reflection

My Reflection

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 Key Verse I'm Memorizing

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How I'll Apply This 

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 Prayer Response

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“Be strong and courageous!”

— Joshua 1:9