

March 19-25

Week 12

This week we will read the remainder of the book of Joshua. The story takes us from the entrance to the land to the death of Joshua once the land had been settled. Watch especially for God's role in the taking of the land. For God's people the land was a gift, not an achievement.

Joshua 13–21 describes the distribution of the land. Many Bibles have a map at the back that depicts the portions of land assigned to the various tribes. As you read about the distribution, consult this map to keep your bearings.

As you begin this week and as you reach the end of the book, notice the recurrence of themes we have seen so far in the biblical story.

Day 1**Read Joshua 3-6****Act 2 - Scene 4 - Reading 3**

Finally, the Israelites crossed into the promised land. In the reading for today, look for echoes from our reading of the first five books of the Old Testament: the ark of the covenant; the crossing of the Jordan, which echoes the crossing of the Red Sea; the renewal of circumcision; the keeping of Passover; the manna; and Joshua's standing on holy ground, as Moses did at the burning bush. Also notice the central place played by the ark, which represented God's covenant and presence.

How did God keep his covenant with the people of Israel?

How has God kept his covenant with you?

Day 2

Read Joshua 7-10

Act 2 - Scene 4 - Reading 4

As with the defeat of Jericho and Ai, the campaign against the five kings of the Amorites and the southern cities demonstrated that the battle was the Lord's and not the product of human ability and strategy. Miracles like panic of the enemy, a hailstorm, and the sun and moon's standing still show the victory was God's doing.

The last of these supernatural events, which cannot be scientifically explained, is especially significant, since the sun and moon were seen as two of the Canaanites' most powerful gods. Yet God demonstrated they are his creations, and he used them for his purposes.

The failure mentioned in this passage came when Joshua did not seek the Lord's counsel about the Gibeonites.

For what or whom are you trusting the Lord to provide guidance and help today?

Day 3

Read Joshua 11-14

Act 2 - Scene 4 - Reading 5

Joshua 11–12 recounts Joshua’s battle campaign against the kings of the north, who were led by the king of Hazor. Notice the Lord’s role in the conquest of the land.

Chapters 13–21 describe the distribution of the land to the tribes of Israel, fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham that his descendants would live in this land.

Today’s reading lays a very important foundation for the rest of the biblical story. Notice especially the passage describing Caleb’s inheritance and his great courage and loyalty. The passage stands at the beginning of the section on the distribution of the land both east and west of the Jordan, and Joshua’s inheritance closes that section (see Joshua 19:49-51). So Caleb and Joshua’s loyalty and courage at Kadesh (see Numbers 14:5-9) are an important focus in the book of Joshua.

In what areas do you need to grow in courage or loyalty?

Day 4**Read Joshua 15-18****Act 2 - Scene 4 - Reading 6**

The division of the land continued as God gave his people a place to live.

Notice in Joshua 18:1 that the tabernacle was set up at the center of the promised land, and this passage is also near the center of this section on the distribution of the land. God's presence was still to be central for his people.

Judah and Ephraim, the first two tribes to settle Canaan proper (to the west of the Jordan River), would play the most significant roles as the Old Testament story developed.

As you think about the way you live your life, is God at the center of all things for you?

Are worship and living by his ways the driving forces of your life? Is he your reference point in all things?

Day 5

Read Joshua 19-22

Act 2 - Scene 4 - Reading 7

After the remaining tribes of Israel received their divisions of the land in Joshua 19, chapter 20 focuses on the cities of refuge, chapter 21 on cities given to the Levites from among the various tribes, and chapter 22 on the return home of the tribes situated on the eastern side of the Jordan.

At the end of this passage a crisis arose when the eastern tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh built an altar. The key here is to grasp why this was a crisis and then to understand their motive for building the altar. They were not abandoning the Lord, who was to be worshiped only at the tabernacle in Shiloh, but rather setting up a memorial to remind their descendants to worship the Lord.

What memorials do you have in your life?

How does your church use memorials to remind successive generations of believers to stay true to the Lord?

Day 6

Read Joshua 23-24; Judges 1

Act 2 - Scene 4 - Reading 8

Joshua 23–24 not only forms a vitally important conclusion to the book but also wraps up much in the biblical story that began with Abraham in Genesis 12.

Notice that Joshua 23:6 echoes Joshua 1:8-9. In chapter 24 Joshua recounted Israel's history and then led the Israelites through a renewal of the covenant, the agreement with God that had been central to the biblical story thus far.

Joshua 24:12-13 focuses attention on God's role in taking the land. The land was given by his grace, not by the abilities of the Israelites.

On the other hand, Joshua 24:19-20 anticipates a key theme of much of the remainder of the Old Testament: Israel's failure to live up to the covenant.

Judges 1 continues the story told in Joshua, even overlapping it a little.

Spend time thanking God today for all he has given you by his grace.

Day 7

Reading Summary for Week 12

More than any other Bible book, Joshua demonstrates the theme of victory and conquest. We've seen God's people on the march throughout the land, subduing their enemies and claiming their promised possession. "None of the good promises the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled" (Joshua 21:45). Although the victories were mainly military, these readings have illustrated that God's people can "live in victory" as they trust in him—and as he gives the victory.

Prayer/Meditation

Lord Jesus, in your humanity you took the name of the hero of old, for "Joshua" and "Jesus" are simply variations of the same name. Thanks for using him to fulfill the promise the Lord made ages earlier to Abraham about a land for the covenant people. Help me trust in you to lead me to the eternal inheritance God has promised. May I always be confident that you will come again and bring everlasting victory to all God's people forever. Amen.
