



Topic

God's gifts and His glory

Theme

God's underlying purpose in all He does is to be glorified in the world.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will consider how his life might bring glory to God.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 5
- Small gift (unwrapped)

Gateway to Glory

► Scripture Focus

Joshua 1:10–18

Summary

God gave instructions to the tribes east of the Jordan as the rest of Israel prepared to enter the Promised Land and claim what God had given to them. He reminded them of their obligation to help their fellow tribes conquer the land to the west of the Jordan. The tribes pledged their obedience, rehearsed the punishment for rebellion, and encouraged Joshua. They understood the connection between God's gift and His glory. The Promised Land was a gateway to God's glory.

Outline

I. God's Plan for the Nation (1:10–15)

- A. God gave individual responsibilities (1:10, 11)
- B. God gave individual rest (1:12–14a)
- C. God gave national responsibilities (1:14b)
- D. God promised national rest (1:15)

II. Israel's Pledge to God (1:16–18)

- A. The tribes made a promise to obey (1:16, 17a)
- B. The tribes said a prayer for Joshua (1:17b)
- C. The tribes rehearsed the penalty for rebellion (1:18a)
- D. The tribes made a plea to their leader (1:18b)

Memory Verse

*"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD"
(Numbers 14:21).*

GETTING STARTED

LESSON 3

The Joy of Giving

ASK: Why do you give gifts? (Q1)

ASK: What is the greatest joy you have received in giving a gift? (Q2)

This lesson focuses on God's gift of the Promised Land to Israel. His purpose in giving such a gift was to bring glory to Himself and to use Israel as a means of magnifying His glory around the world. When a few of the tribes had reasons not to enter the Promised Land, God required that they join the rest of the tribes in receiving His gift for His glory was at stake.

Gifting Opportunity

Present a small gift such as a nice pen, a treat, or perhaps a five-dollar bill to your class. Tell them that you will lay it at the front of the class and allow one person to come up and give it to someone else in the class. Wait for someone to take the gift and give it away.

ASK: As you sat there and contemplated this situation, what captured your mind more, having an opportunity to give the gift away or the opportunity to get the gift? Why do you think that was so?

Ask the person who gave the gift away to describe his joy in doing so. Ask the person who got the gift to describe his joy in receiving it.

ASK: What might you say about a person who gives gifts?

There is a certain amount of glory that comes in giving a gift away. When someone rejects a gift, he essentially robs the person of that glory. Gift giving is the focus of this lesson. God planned to give the Promised Land to Israel as a present. Consequently He required all of the tribes to take part in receiving the gift. We will see in this lesson that His glory was on the line when a few of the tribes had reasons to not enter the Promised Land and assist the rest of the tribes in receiving God's gift of land.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

I. God's Plan for the Nation (1:10–15)

God gave His message to His new leader in the beginning of the book of Joshua. He then addressed the nation through Joshua, making sure the people understood they were responsible before Him to fight for one another. The conquest was not on a first come, first served basis. It was to be a joint effort. The fact that two and a half tribes had already settled on the east side of the Jordan meant there was a risk of those tribes developing an every-man-for-himself attitude. God made certain that attitude was not fostered for it would have been disastrous to the

conquest. Furthermore, it would have interrupted God's plan to glorify His name through giving the Promised Land to Israel.

A. God gave individual responsibilities (1:10, 11)

Joshua had a means of communication established that made talking to each Israelite efficient. He utilized *officers of the people* to carry messages down a chain of command so that all two million or so Israelites would get the message (1:10). Joshua communicated that God expected each Israelite family to get ready to cross the Jordan (1:11). Included in their preparation was the last collection of manna (5:12). Each family collected their own manna to provide for their own needs.

ASK: What did each Israelite learn about God from getting manna every day during the wilderness wanderings? (Q3) *That God cared for them as individuals and that He is faithful to His promises.*

The timing for the crossing was *within three days*, a phrase that meant *some-time in the next few days or the day after tomorrow*. Preparations also included collecting provisions for setting up a camp. All this was to be done while the question about how to get two million or so people efficiently across the flooded Jordan was still a mystery. Joshua didn't give a word about the how; he simply restated that their destination was the land that the *Lord your God giveth you to possess it* (1:11). So each Israelite exercised a measure of faith as they collected the manna and prepared to move forward into the new land. Perhaps some of them even did the calculations in their head about how long it would take so many people to ford the flooded Jordan. No doubt they concluded that God must be going to provide another way.

B. God gave individual rest (1:12–14a)

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh would not have necessarily sensed the need to prepare to travel. Instead, they would have felt the urge to put down roots, stake out a piece of property, and build their houses. After Israel defeated Og and Sihon on the east side of the Jordan, the two and a half tribes asked Moses if they could stay put. The land was perfect for grazing their large herds. Moses reluctantly granted them permission, acknowledging that God would give them rest east of the Jordan (Josh. 1:13, 14a).

ASK: If you were Moses, what might you think of the tribes' request to stay on the east side of the Jordan? (Q4)

C. God gave national responsibilities (1:14b)

The rest Moses granted to Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh was conditional; they had to be faithful to obey God by participating in the conquest of the Promised Land to the west (Josh. 1:14b). Joshua understood this condition and confronted the two and a half tribes as Moses had done. The change in Israel's leadership didn't change the special arrangement with the tribes. Joshua reminded the tribes that though God allowed them to stay on the east side of the Jordan and to build houses for their families, their obligations to the rest of the nation were not yet fulfilled.

At the heart of God's requirement for all the tribes to participate in the conquest was His desire that they enter the Promised Land by faith and for His glory. Physically stepping into the Promised Land would show Israel's willingness to trust God. It would be a demonstration of their faith to receive the gift of the Promised Land. If some refused to make that step of faith, they could cause grave consequences (Num. 32:7).

READ: Numbers 32:6, 7. **ASK:** What did Moses think might happen if the tribes stayed home and didn't volunteer to participate in the conquest? (Q5) *The two and a half tribes would discourage the other tribes from crossing the Jordan to possess the land.*

Though Moses did allow it, he was not happy with the idea of some of the tribes living outside the Promised Land. He likened their request to stay put with Israel's refusal to enter the Promised Land forty years earlier. God judged that generation by sentencing them to die in the wilderness.

READ: Numbers 32:14, 15. **ASK:** What did Moses call the tribes for wanting to stay on the east side of the Jordan? (Q6) *Sinful men.*

God had chosen Abraham and then the children of Israel in order to show them and the rest of the world His glory (Num. 14:21; Ps. 72:19; Hab. 2:14). Israel's possession of the Promised Land was to be the pinnacle moment for Israel to reflect God's glory, so refusing to take part in the opportunity was a serious problem. God's reaction to Israel's rejection of the Promised Land under Moses bares this out.

READ: Numbers 14:21. **ASK:** What did God say He would do after Israel refused to enter the land under Moses' leadership? (Q7) *He said all the earth would be filled with the glory of the Lord.*

God would not be prevented in showing His glory just because Israel rejected Him the first time He offered them the Promised Land (Num. 14:23). In fact, nothing could prevent God from realizing His ultimate purpose of filling the earth with His glory.

READ: Habakkuk 2:14. **ASK:** How prevalently will God's glory shine on the earth during Christ's millennial Kingdom on earth? (Q8) *It will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. In other words, not one person nor one place will be kept from God's glory during Christ's Kingdom.*

Sensing the seriousness of the situation, the eastern tribes promised Moses their warriors would go into the land to fight until the rest of the tribes had received their inheritances (Num. 32:16–19). Moses accepted their promise but again warned them that staying home was a sin against the Lord (32:20–23). Choosing to snub the Lord and rob Him of His glory was not an acceptable option.

In reality, God didn't *need* any of the Israelites to conquer the Promised Land. He could have won the victories Himself with just His words. Christ will actually do just that when He returns after the Tribulation to set up His millennial Kingdom in Israel (Rev. 19:11–15). But God's plan in Joshua's day was for all the tribes to

Proclaiming the glory of the Lord in all the earth was the topic of the praise song to God after the ark of the covenant was put in the tabernacle in Jerusalem for the first time in the days of king David (1 Chron. 16:1–36). Psalm 24, which also focuses on God's glory, may have been written in connection with this event.

participate in taking the Promised Land. God wanted them to be one nation that trusted Him and relied on Him for the conquest. As other nations observed the conquest, they would give God the glory recognizing that Israel would have never been able to make the transition from a slave nation to a sovereign nation on their own. Israel was to become a blazing light for God in a dark world. Isaiah 60:1–3 describes a day yet in the future when Israel will finally reflect God’s glory as God chose them to.

With the background of God’s glory in mind, Joshua communicated that the *mighty men of valour* (Josh. 1:14) from Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh were required to cross the Jordan to fight. Most likely the *mighty men* were the soldiers who were most qualified to fight. They were the best warriors and perhaps those who were also free from family obligations. Of the 136,390 soldiers available from the two and a half tribes, only 40,000 of them crossed over the Jordan to join the conquest (Num. 26:7, 18, 34; Josh. 4:13). The rest most likely stayed home to care for and protect the women, children, and livestock. Apparently this was acceptable to the Lord (Josh. 22:1–4).

D. God promised national rest (1:15)

The tribes from the east were to participate in the conquest until all the other tribes took possession of their land and rested (Josh. 1:15). The emphasis in this instruction from Joshua was on God’s *giving* of the land and Israel’s *enjoyment* of it to the glory of God. The land was theirs to take and then enjoy to its fullest. But neither of those would happen if all the tribes didn’t take a step of faith to enter the land to possess it.

ASK: How would participation in the possession of the land help to enhance Israel’s enjoyment of it? (Q9) *They would understand the value of the land and learn to appreciate it.*

ASK: How would participation in the possession of the land affect Israel’s faith in God? (Q10) *Their faith would grow stronger as they witnessed God demonstrate His attributes, including His faithfulness, holiness, and power.*

Had God simply given the Promised Land to Israel, their appreciation for the land would have been low and their faith in God would have been shallow. God wisely chose to have all the tribes, including those on the east of Jordan, participate in the conquest. In the end their faith in Him and their enjoyment of the land were both greatly enhanced and His glory would be more brightly magnified.

II. Israel’s Pledge to God (1:16–18)

A. The tribes made a promise to obey (1:16, 17a)

Leaving behind their inheritances and setting aside the desire to enjoy their land immediately, the tribes from the east of Jordan made a promise to obey all that Joshua commanded them (1:16). They even went so far as to say that they would do whatever Joshua commanded them and go wherever he commanded them to go. They were completely willing to serve him. This sentiment was most

likely echoed by all the tribes. The pronoun *they* (1:16) probably refers to all of the officers of the people mentioned in verse 10.

The tribes added a promise concerning Joshua's leadership. They said they would heed him just like they had heeded Moses (1:17). They would give him their loyalty and recognize that his commands came from the Lord as Moses' commands had. They would not be suspicious of Joshua nor try to usurp his authority.

B. The tribes said a prayer for Joshua (1:17b)

The tribes went a step further and requested that the Lord would be with Joshua as He had been with Moses (1:17b).

ASK: What three words would you use to describe God's presence with Moses? (Q11) *Perhaps faithful, powerful, personal, and gracious.*

God's presence would make all the difference in Joshua's life. Israel realized that and wanted him to be successful. Humanly speaking, Joshua was battle smart, wise, and strong. But none of those skills would be adequate to take the Promised Land.

Praying that God would be with Joshua was also a way of reminding him that he needed God's presence and that he should never forget to rely on God. The people were at the mercy of their leader. If Joshua had made the conquest all about himself, the results would have been disastrous for Israel.

ASK: Who usually gets the glory when a leader is keenly aware of God's leading and power in his life? (Q12) *God does.*

ASK: What would you predict for the success of a leader who is self-reliant? (Q13) *The leader will define success as anything that makes him look good. The leader will determine his actions based on his ego rather than God's glory.*

C. The tribes rehearsed the penalty for rebellion (1:18a)

READ: Joshua 1:18. **ASK:** What do you think of such a promise? (Q14)

The tribes agreed that all those who disobey Joshua were to be put to death. This part of their pledge seems rather harsh. But remember that Joshua was about to lead Israel into battle.

ASK: How strictly would you expect generals to treat their soldiers while on the battlefield? (Q15)

Obedying Joshua was a life and death situation militarily, but it was also that way spiritually. Israel was about to embark on a completely new beginning in their history. They were to have a land of their own for the first time in their history. It was important for them to understand the seriousness of obeying God as they began to occupy the land. In Joshua 7, Achan decided to test God's faithfulness to punish Israel's disobedience. As we will learn in lesson 7, Achan lost his life as a result of his rebellion. A similar event happened at the beginning of the church.

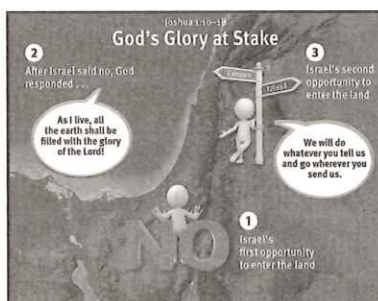
Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit about their giving to the church. God struck them dead for their sin (Acts 5:1–11). As a result, a great respect for God fell on the church. Achan’s sin resulted in a heap of stones in the Valley of Achor (Josh. 7:26). That pile of stones was an ongoing reminder to Israel to respectfully fear God.

D. The tribes made a plea to their leader (1:18b)

The tribes ended their response to Joshua with a plea that he be strong and of good courage (1:18). They were ready to move forward. They understood the sinfulness of refusing to step into the land. *Lead us, Joshua, to the Promised Land*, they essentially plead.

Israel’s plea was essentially a spiritual decision. They put their faith in God and trusted Him to give them what He promised. This attitude is what was missing forty years earlier when Israel first came to the Promised Land. Those generations denied they had the strength and courage to enter the Promised Land (Numb. 13:31–33). Their graves proved to be serious illustrations that entrance into the land was *not* optional. We could say for Israel to deny God the opportunity to give the Promised Land to them was a *grave* miscalculation. For the new generations, the land was a gift they had to *open* or it would metaphorically *explode* in their hands. For the new generation to refuse to enter the land would have been an even bigger sin than their parents committed in refusing to enter the land.

Joshua was concerned about how the tribes of Israel influenced each other. If the tribes in the east had decided to stay out of the Promised Land, they would have threatened to discourage the other tribes from entering. If none of the Israelites decided to enter the land, they would have robbed God of another opportunity to reflect His glory. This threat to God’s glory was why both Moses and Joshua confronted the tribes on the east of the Jordan so strongly.



RESOURCE: Display resource 5 to summarize the connection between entering the land and God’s glory.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

For the Glory of the Lord

God wanted Israel to reflect His glory. And God wants believers today to reflect His glory too (1 Cor. 11:31; Eph. 3:20, 21). Both living for selfish purposes and refusing to follow God by faith keep us from bringing glory to God as we ought.

ASK: What threatens to keep you from bringing glory to God? (Q16)

ASK: How might we bring glory to God by our words? (Q17) *Praising God for His faithfulness, power, and love. Giving God the credit for accomplishments in our lives. Encouraging others by talking about God’s greatness.*

Encouraging Others

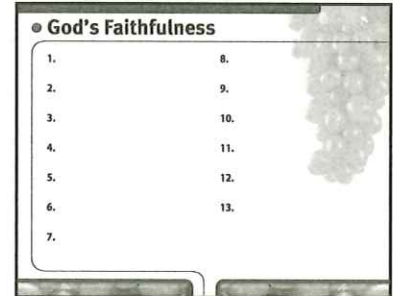
ASK: How does your life influence people? Does it encourage them or discourage them from reflecting the glory of the Lord? (Q18)

ASK: What might you do to encourage others to live by faith in God and thereby reflect His glory in the world? (Q19)

Summary and Memory Verses

RESOURCE: Display resource 1. Add the following statement about God's faithfulness: God's faithfulness is worthy of glory.

Encourage learners to memorize Numbers 14:21. Give them an opportunity to say the verse in class next week.





Topic

God's sovereign power

Theme

God's displays of His sovereign power provoke both fear and faith.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will respond to God's sovereign power with faith and a readiness to serve Him.

Materials

- Resources 1, 2, and 6
- Access to the Internet
- Notecards and pencils

Three Responses to Amazing

► Scripture Focus

Joshua 2

Summary

God's sovereign power is the focus of the account of the spies' visit to Jericho. The people of Jericho responded to God's sovereign power with dread and fear. Rahab responded with faith in God. The spies responded with confidence in God's ability to give them the Promised Land.

Outline

I. Jericho Responded to God with Fear (2:1–11)

- A. Jericho's weakness (2:1–7)
- B. Jericho's cowardice (2:8–11)

II. Rahab Responded to God with Faith (2:12–21)

- A. Rahab's request (2:12–14)
- B. Rahab's test (2:15–21)

III. The Spies Responded to God with Confidence (2:22–24)

- A. The spies' account (2:22, 23)
- B. The spies' certainty (2:24)

Memory Verse

"And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua 2:11).