

The Books of History



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Welcome

Welcome to *Guiding Word*. This six-volume collection will help you better read and understand the Bible, the most important book ever written. In it, we read and hear God's Word, which is written so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing we may have eternal life in His name (John 20:31).

Why have another Bible resource? First, the Bible is a complex library of books, and it is often intimidating for people to read on their own. Second, while there are many resources designed to help you read and understand the Bible, each has its own format and style and may not be suitable for every learner. We hope this resource will fill a gap and be useful for you.

Think of this series of books as a travel guide to the Bible. Just as a travel guide helps you prepare for and better enjoy a trip, this resource will enable you to better understand and appreciate the Bible as you journey through it. The sections have been designed to help you prepare for reading and understanding difficult passages, to explain the overall course of the Scriptures, to prompt you to reflect on the text as you read, to point out important milestones and events, and to guide you to Jesus' presence throughout the Bible.

If you are already familiar with the organization of the Bible, feel free to skip ahead to the section titled "What's in *Guiding Word*?"

What's in the Bible?

The Bible is all about God's plan to restore fallen humanity and His broken creation by sending His Son. But what's in the Bible? How do we look at it? How do we use it? Though we call the Bible a book, it's actually a collection of sixty-six books. These were written over a period of 1,500 years by many authors.

The Bible has two divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. We don't use the word *testament* too often today. It's related to words like *covenant* and *contract*.

The Old Testament includes the first thirty-nine books of the Bible. These are the books written about the events that happened before Jesus was born. They all point us toward Jesus. The name *Old Testament* is a little misleading because sometimes we think of old things as not important or out of style. Instead, these books can be thought of as the first covenant or promise that God made to His people to send the Savior, Jesus. And as you will see, Jesus is present throughout the Old Testament. The New Testament includes the last twenty-seven books of the Bible, which record Jesus' life and mission, as well as the life of Jesus' early followers in the church. These books point us back to Jesus and how He fulfilled all of God's promises made for us in the Old Testament. Again, these are all about Jesus.

The books of the Bible are organized in a way that may seem confusing at first but makes sense when you know the system. How are the books in a library organized? In libraries,

books are organized by their type. Fiction is in one section, and nonfiction is in another; magazines are in one spot and children’s books in another. The same goes for the Bible. Instead of the books being ordered by the date they were written or by their authors, the books of the Bible are put in categories, or genres; then the books are generally organized by date written within that genre.

NAVIGATING THE LIBRARY

The first five books of the Old Testament—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—are called the Books of Moses, or the Torah, meaning “Law of God.” They were written down by Moses and are covered in the first volume of this series.

The next books in the Old Testament are called the Books of History. These tell the history of God’s people from the time of Moses up to the time of Jesus and are covered in the second volume.

Next are the Books of Wisdom and Poetry. These poetical books were written at different times during the Old Testament history, mostly by kings David and Solomon. These are covered in the third volume.

The last group of Old Testament books are the Books of the Prophets. These books record God’s special messages to His Old Testament people, mostly during the second half of their history. They are discussed in the fourth volume.

The New Testament has five genres. The first four books—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are called the Gospels. Each Gospel tells of the life and mission of Jesus from a different writer and perspective. These accounts make up the heart of the Bible and are covered in the fifth *Guiding Word* volume.

Next is the book of the Acts of the Apostles (also known simply as Acts). This historical book records events from the early years of the Christian Church and the lives of the first Christians after Jesus ascended into heaven. The next books are called the Pauline Epistles (*epistle* means “letter”). These are letters that the apostle Paul wrote to the early Christians. Near the end of the New Testament are the General Epistles. These are letters that other people besides Paul wrote to the early Christians. The final book of the Bible is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament, the book of Revelation. This shows the vision Jesus revealed to the apostle John about life in the end times (that is, the time between Christ’s first and second coming) and the restoration of God’s creation. The books of Acts through Revelation are covered in the sixth and final volume of *Guiding Word*.

66 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT	GENESIS		
	EXODUS		
	LEVITICUS		
	NUMBERS		
	DEUTERONOMY		
BOOKS OF MOSES (Torah)	JOSHUA		
	JUDGES		
	RUTH		
	1 SAMUEL		
	2 SAMUEL		
	1 KINGS		
	2 KINGS		
	1 CHRONICLES		
	2 CHRONICLES		
	EZRA		
NEHEMIAH			
ESTHER			
HISTORY	JOB		
	PSALMS		
	PROVERBS		
	ECCLESIASTES		
	SONG OF SOLOMON		
	ISAIAH		
	JEREMIAH		
	LAMENTATIONS		
	EZEKIEL		
	DANIEL		
HOSEA			
JOEL			
WISDOM & POETRY	AMOS		
	OBADIAH		
	JONAH		
	MICAH		
	NAHUM		
	HABAKKUK		
	ZEPHANIAH		
	HAGGAI		
	ZECHARIAH		
	MALACHI		
NEW TESTAMENT	MATTHEW		
	MARK		
	GOSPELS	LUKE	
		JOHN	
		HISTORY	ACTS
			ROMANS
	1 CORINTHIANS		
	2 CORINTHIANS		
	GALATIANS		
	EPHESIANS		
	PHILIPPIANS		
	COLOSSIANS		
	1 THESSALONIANS		
	2 THESSALONIANS		
	1 TIMOTHY		
	2 TIMOTHY		
	TITUS		
	PHILEMON		
	PAULINE EPISTLES (Letters)		HEBREWS
			JAMES
			1 PETER
			2 PETER
			1 JOHN
			2 JOHN
			3 JOHN
			JUDE
			GENERAL EPISTLES
END TIMES			

NAVIGATING THE BIBLE

When you open up a Bible, you'll see chapter and verse numbers scattered throughout the pages. Did you know that those numbers were not originally there? As people used the Bible more and more and made copies, later scholars eventually put in these numbers to help people quickly find sections or passages. We call these Bible references.

UNDERSTANDING BIBLE REFERENCES
The following diagram illustrates how a common Bible reference to **John 3:16** breaks down.

Book Title	Chapter Number	Verse Number
John	3:	16

Using the Bible's table of contents, look up the book of John. Then find chapter 3 and finally verse 16.

What's in *Guiding Word*?

Each volume of *Guiding Word* is laid out in a similar fashion. After this series introduction is an introduction for that specific volume. Then, each book of the Bible has its own introduction, which will help you better understand and dig into that particular book.

Each book of the Bible follows an outline, which breaks the book into major divisions and then each division into sections. The section heads were not included in the original biblical text but were added later to help clarify how the text flows from narrative to narrative or idea to idea. In *Guiding Word*, these correspond to the subheadings in the ESV translation of the Bible. From here on out, we will refer to these subhead sections as “passages.”

Following the pattern of a travel guide, *Guiding Word* includes some features to help you read through, better understand, and reflect on each passage of the Bible. These features include the following:

(1) Orientation. This is a short summary of each passage. Just as a travel guide gives you a glimpse of where you will be going on your journey before you arrive, the summary will help orient you to where you are in the Bible and where you are going. After reading the summary for each passage, read the text itself in your Bible. Alternatively, if you are skimming a book of the Bible, previewing the book, or only want to understand the high points before reading deeper, these summaries are a good place to start.

(2) Observation Points. In the side margins, you will find open-ended questions. Use these reflection questions to help you slow down, observe, and reflect on the passage. There is room in the side margin for recording reflections, thoughts, and notes as you go. Just as a travel guide will prompt you to look out for specific things on your way, the reflection questions will help you better observe what's going on in the text.

(3) **Landmarks.** These special features, interspersed in the text, will help you appreciate the overall journey through God’s Word. In any journey, you will encounter landmarks of all types that pop out to you, may interest you, or may even make you scratch your head. Landmarks in *Guiding Word* are identified by icons and colored bars, and can be read before or after you read the corresponding passage. Landmarks include the following categories:

VISUALIZE

This feature includes maps, diagrams, pictures, or infographics to help you visualize scenes, locations, and concepts in a passage.

PICTURE OF THE SAVIOR

This Old Testament feature highlights people, places, or events that set the stage for the coming of Jesus and help reveal His work of salvation.

LINK BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS

In the Old Testament, this Landmark highlights people or events that Jesus or His apostles will discuss, explain, or fulfill in the New Testament. In the New Testament, this feature points the reader back to the Old Testament person or event that set the stage for the New Testament passage.

CLEAR THE CONFUSION

This Landmark clarifies passages that are likely to leave the reader confused and fills the gaps—providing backstories, describing future developments, or discussing the significance of the event.

SET THE SCENE

This feature explains important cultural or historical themes that help you better understand the context of the passage.

WAYPOINT

This feature is designed to be a longer stopping point. When you travel, you will likely stop at notable locations for an extended period of time to really experience the destination. Waypoints in *Guiding Word* function like stopping points that are worth investigating along the journey through God’s Word. Each Waypoint has a three-part structure:

- What does this text show us?

- What does this text reveal about God’s plan of salvation?
- What does this text uncover about our identity and calling as God’s people today?

Each Waypoint also has reflection questions associated with it. The Waypoints can be considered on your own or in a group study. However you choose to use the Waypoints is up to you, but use the summaries and reflection prompts to help guide you through a deeper reading of the text.

How to Use *Guiding Word*

You can use this resource in multiple ways:

- Read through the Bible on your own, passage by passage. The summary of each passage will help orient you to where the narrative is taking you, and the reflection questions are observation prompts that will help you pay closer attention to what you’re reading. The interspersed Landmark features will help you visualize important images or concepts, or understand and connect key themes to the overall story of the Scriptures.
- Read through the Bible in a small group or Bible study setting. The guided summaries and reflection questions make good prompts if you are reading through the Scriptures as a group, providing some reflections along the way. The Waypoint sections also serve as great places to stop and reflect on key narratives.
- Read a good thirty-thousand-foot summary of the Bible. *Guiding Word* includes summaries of passages, and if you have never read certain books of the Bible or are intimidated by their length, you can take a few minutes to get introduced or oriented to them via summaries and graphics.

Whether or not you’ve read through all or parts of the Bible before, *Guiding Word* will serve as your companion and guide through the journey.

The Books of History

The twelve Old Testament books that follow the Books of Moses trace God’s dealings with Israel after Moses’ death. Covered are the conquest of the Promised Land; the four hundred years of the judges; the united kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon; and the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, which ended with exile and the return of a remnant of Judah.

These books show us God’s faithfulness despite His people’s unfaithfulness. God sends prophets, faithful judges, and kings to deliver His people from their enemies. But evil kings, faithless priests, and lying prophets lead God’s people into worshipping false gods and abandoning the Lord their God. Finally, after the people of Judah are conquered and exiled for seventy years in Babylon, God brings them back to the Promised Land to rebuild the temple and await the birth of the Child first promised to Adam and Eve so many years before.

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE BOOKS OF HISTORY

These twelve Books of History teach us much not only about God’s grace, mercy, and patience but also about His holiness and vengeance. The book of Joshua describes the conquest of the Promised Land. Judges describes the sad downward spiral of God’s people as they abandoned Him over and over, even though God had raised judges to deliver them. The book of Ruth focuses on one family God had preserved from extinction and chosen as He extended the line from Adam and Eve to the promised Christ. The books of 1 and 2 Samuel relate Israel’s demand for a king and the first two kings God had provided for Israel, including David, the most famous ancestor of the Christ.

The books of 1 and 2 Kings relate the disintegrating reign of David’s son Solomon, which ultimately led God to divide the kingdom into two. Despite many faithless kings ruling both kingdoms, God faithfully sent His prophets, until He had to punish the ever-increasing wickedness of His people with captivity. The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles retrace the history of God’s people from the very beginning, then focus especially on the descendants of King David, the importance of Solomon’s temple, and the temple’s destruction by the Babylonians.

The last three historical books highlight the return of Judah’s exiles to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and await the birth of God’s Son. Ezra describes how God returned the exiles to Jerusalem and helped them overcome great challenges and opposition in order to rebuild the temple and restore worship. Nehemiah describes the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem through which God protected His people and made them secure from the threats of their enemies. Finally, Esther recounts how God saved His people from annihilation. Israel’s twisting and turning history not only warns us of the dangers of the enemies who surround us but also reminds us that our God is faithful to protect and deliver us.

These books are filled with great suspense, but there are a few difficult passages—like the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles, with their endless genealogical lists, or the early chapters of Ezra, with their comprehensive listing of the returned exiles. Though it may at times feel like you are reading a phone book, remember that God knew each of the individuals behind these obscure names. They were all dear to Him, and no joy, worry, or fear escaped His careful, watching eye. Through all of human history, His burning desire has been and still is to save all people through the life, death, and resurrection of David’s promised Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. That includes the countless unnamed saints from Adam and Eve to Christ’s return whose life stories have been lost to history—even you and me.

THE BOOKS OF HISTORY, WITH THEIR GENERAL DIVISIONS

- **Joshua**
 - The Lord Prepares Israel to Inherit the Land (1:1–5:12)
 - Israel Captures the Land (5:13–12:24)
 - The Lord Allots the Land to Israel (13:1–21:45)
 - Israel to Live in the Land (22:1–24:33)
- **Judges**
 - Prologue to the Period of the Judges (1:1–2:23)
 - The Judges Cycle (3:1–16:31)
 - The Dual Epilogue (17:1–21:25)

- **Ruth**
 - The Dilemma (1:1–22)
 - The Hope (2:1–23)
 - The Risk (3:1–18)
 - The Solution (4:1–22)
- **1 Samuel**
 - The Birth and Calling of Samuel (1:1–3:21)
 - The Ark and the Lord’s Presence (4:1–7:2)
 - Changing Leadership (7:3–12:25)
 - King Saul’s Crisis (13:1–15:35)
 - Saul and David (16:1–31:13)
- **2 Samuel**
 - David Becomes King of Judah (1:1–4:12)
 - David Becomes King of All Israel (5:1–10:19)
 - David’s Sin and Family Troubles (11:1–18:33)
 - David Is Restored and Completes His Reign (19:1–24:25)
- **1 Kings**
 - David’s Reign Ends (1:1–2:12)
 - Solomon’s Reign and Disobedience (2:13–11:43)
 - Division of the Kingdom of Israel and Jeroboam’s Reign (12:1–14:20)
 - Kings of Israel and Judah and the Prophet Elijah (14:21–22:53)
- **2 Kings**
 - Jehoram’s Reign in Israel and the Prophet Elisha (1:1–8:15)
 - Kings of Israel and Judah Until Israel’s Defeat and Captivity (8:16–17:41)
 - Judah’s Last Kings (18:1–24:20)
 - Judah’s Fall and Exile (25:1–30)
- **1 Chronicles**
 - Nations and Israel in God’s Plan of Salvation (1:1–9:34)
 - The Establishment of David’s Reign and the Centrality of the Ark of the Covenant (9:35–17:27)
 - David’s Military Campaigns (18:1–20:8)
 - David Prepares for Location and Building of the Temple (21:1–22:19)
 - David Organizes Temple Worship (23:1–26:32)
 - David Leaves the Kingdom to Solomon (27:1–29:30)
- **2 Chronicles**
 - History of Solomon and Building of the Temple (1:1–9:31)
 - Division of the Kingdom of Israel (10:1–12:16)
 - The Davidic Dynasty Before the Assyrian Invasion (13:1–26:23)
 - Invasions and the Fall of the Davidic Dynasty (27:1–36:23)
- **Ezra**
 - First Return of Exiles and Rebuilding of the Temple (1:1–6:22)
 - Second Return of Exiles Under Ezra (7:1–8:36)
 - Ezra’s Reforms Ban Intermarriage (9:1–10:44)
- **Nehemiah**
 - Nehemiah’s First Visit and Rebuilding of Jerusalem’s Walls (1:1–12:47)
 - Nehemiah’s Second Visit: Problems and Solutions (13:1–31)
- **Esther**
 - Threat to Judeans (1:1–5:14)
 - Deliverance of Judeans (6:1–10:3)

JOSHUA

Welcome to Joshua

The book of Joshua begins with the people of Israel camped on the banks of the Jordan, preparing to cross into the Promised Land. The book of Joshua shares its name with the lead character and author, Joshua the son of Nun. Before dying, Moses had commissioned Joshua to lead the children of Israel. Now Joshua receives God's directions as he leads the people across the Jordan River and into the land promised to their ancestor Abraham.



What are your first impressions of the book of Joshua? What narratives or images come to your mind when you reflect on this book? What are specific things you'd like to learn more about?

Joshua at a Glance

- **Start:** Following the death of Moses, Joshua takes on the leadership of the children of Israel as they prepare to enter the Promised Land.
- **End:** The book of Joshua ends with the death of Joshua as the people settle into everyday life in the Promised Land.
- **Theme:** God guides His people to take possession of the land He had promised to Abraham.
- **Author and Date:** Joshua, and perhaps others, wrote this book between 1406 and 1375 BC.
- **Places Visited:** The Jordan River, Jericho, Shiloh, and other places in the Promised Land
- **Journey Time:** The twenty-four chapters of Joshua can be read in about one hour and forty-five minutes.
- **Outline:**
 - The Lord Prepares Israel to Inherit the Land (1:1–5:12)
 - Israel Captures the Land (5:13–12:24)
 - The Lord Allots the Land to Israel (13:1–21:45)
 - Israel to Live in the Land (22:1–24:33)

Five Top Sights and Spectacles of Joshua

Crossing the Jordan River (3:1–17) Walk with the Israelites across the dry riverbed of the Jordan and enter into the Promised Land.

Circumcision and Passover Renewed (5:1–12) Celebrate with the tribes of Israel as they renew the covenant of circumcision and remember God’s mercy in the Passover.

Conquering Jericho (5:13–6:27) Hear the trumpet blast and the sound of crumbling walls as God’s power brings down the mighty walls of Jericho.

The Sun Stands Still (10:1–15) Shade your eyes from the sun, which stops moving across the sky as the Lord gives His people extra daylight to complete their victory.

Settling the Land (13:1–21:45) Follow along as each of the tribes learns the location of the land they will occupy.

Seeing Jesus in Joshua

The name *Joshua* means “the Lord saves,” the same name the Greek New Testament records as *Jesus*. Joshua’s life and service among the children of Israel reflect the life and ministry of Jesus among all nations. Jesus gives His own life to forgive the sins of all people and drives out our enemies so that we might inherit the land He has promised in the new heavens and the new earth.

The Lord Prepares Israel to Inherit the Land (1:1–5:12)

God makes final preparations for Israel to cross the Jordan and inherit the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God commissions Joshua, a Canaanite woman protects two spies, Israel crosses the Jordan River, and the Israelites are circumcised and celebrate their first Passover in the Promised Land.

GOD COMMISSIONS JOSHUA (1:1–9)

Following the death of Moses, God commissions Joshua to lead His chosen people into the Promised Land. In this commission, God repeatedly encourages Joshua with the words “Be strong and courageous” (vv.



When is a time you’ve longed to hear God’s encouragement to “be strong and courageous”?

6–7, 9) as He lays out the plan to give the people a land of their own. Like Joshua, we can trust in God’s promise to be with us wherever we go (see v. 9).

JOSHUA ASSUMES COMMAND (1:10–18)

Joshua sends the leaders out among the people, telling them to prepare their provisions because within three days they will cross the Jordan into the land promised to them by God. Trusting God to protect the families they leave behind, the bold warriors from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh set out with their brother Israelites. The troops promise their loyalty to Joshua as their new leader.

RAHAB HIDES THE SPIES (2:1–24)

Joshua sends two men to spy on Jericho and the surrounding territory. The spies find lodging in the house of Rahab, a prostitute. When the king of Jericho demands that Rahab turn over the spies, she sends the king’s men to search the countryside while she hides the spies on her roof.

Rahab tells the spies that the men of Jericho are terrified by God’s great deeds for Israel. Confessing faith and trust in the true God of Israel, she asks the spies to protect her and her extended family when the Israelites return to capture the city. The men instruct Rahab to hang a red cord from her window in the city wall and promise to keep her family safe when the Israelites come to destroy Jericho. Trusting in their promise, Rahab lowers the men from the window, and they escape.



Consider the risks Rahab took in hiding the Israelite spies. When you look back in history, what other times have individuals or groups defied their governments because it was the right thing to do?



CLEAR THE CONFUSION

Why did the spies choose the home of Rahab the prostitute?

While Rahab was a prostitute, the spies did not come for her professional services. Because of her occupation, two strangers did not stand out from other men in the house. Rahab’s house was built into the city wall, providing a quick escape for the spies.

Rahab reported that the people of Jericho remembered God’s great deeds for Israel in Egypt and at the Red Sea and were terrified. She recognized the power and greatness of the true God and chose Him over the gods of Jericho.

 VISUALIZE

The Promised Land

The Promised Land was far from empty; the Canaanites fully occupied the land. But God would deliver thirty-one kings into Joshua’s hand.



 PICTURE OF THE SAVIOR

Rahab Risked Her Life for the People of Israel

Rahab risked hiding the spies even though the king was alerted to their presence. In His great mercy, God included Rahab in Christ’s bloodline. Just as Rahab risked her life to protect the spies, her descendant Jesus laid

down His life for our sake when we didn't deserve it and were unlovable by all accounts, showing the greatest love of all by dying to atone for our sins.

ISRAEL CROSSES THE JORDAN (3:1–17)

WAYPOINT

What does this text show us?

Joshua tells the people to keep their distance from the ark of the covenant. The priests take up the ark and, when they step into the flooded Jordan, the waters pile up, leaving dry ground for the people to cross. The ark remains until all the people pass safely to the other side.



What does this text reveal about God's plan of salvation?

Forty years earlier, God opened a dry path through the waters of the Red Sea. Now He brings Israel into the Promised Land through the waters of the Jordan River. One day, His own Son—the promised Savior—will be baptized in these waters as He begins His public ministry.

What does this text uncover about our identity and calling as God's people today?

Our heavenly Father washes away our sins as we pass through the waters of Holy Baptism. Through Baptism, our sins are cleansed and we are made new, ready to serve God through our vocations.



Review the details of this Bible account. What things cause you to marvel at the work of our God?



Think about a time when you witnessed a Baptism—perhaps one of your children or another family member. What do you recall about that experience? How did you see God at work in that event?



How does God use you in service to others?

CLEAR THE CONFUSION

Why did the God of love demand the destruction of the Canaanites?

The Canaanites were descendants of Noah's son Ham (Genesis 10:15–19). Ham's descendants were cursed after he dishonored his father in Genesis 9:24–25. The Canaanites lived between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

The seven nations of Canaan each rejected God's grace. They practiced child sacrifice, divination, sorcery, occult practices, and sexual depravity. In mercy, God brought Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to sojourn among them and declare His message of repentance and salvation. Despite these three generations living in their midst, the Canaanites continued to defy God.

TWELVE MEMORIAL STONES FROM THE JORDAN (4:1–24)

Joshua assembles a stone memorial in the river where the priests stood with the ark. He sends one man from each tribe to pick up a stone from the dry riverbed and carry it to the shore where he will assemble a memorial to remind future generations of what God had done at that place.

VISUALIZE

Memorial Stones

The two stone memorials erected in and alongside the Jordan River were reminders of God’s work in that place. We see similar stone memorials in Genesis 28:18, at the place where Jacob had dreamed of a stairway stretching to heaven; in Genesis 35:14, at the place God had met with Jacob and changed his name to Israel; and in Genesis 35:20, to mark Rachel’s tomb.



What event in your life so transformed everything that it could be marked with a memorial for your future generations to remember?

THE NEW GENERATION CIRCUMCISED (5:1–9)

When the Canaanite kings hear God has brought the Israelites across the flooded Jordan, “their hearts melted” (v. 1) with dread. The Lord orders Joshua to circumcise the men born in the wilderness, as they renew the covenant established with Abraham.

CLEAR THE CONFUSION

Why did God command a second circumcision?

Evidently the faithless first generation of Israelites had neglected to circumcise their sons born during the forty years in the wilderness. Having crossed into Canaan, Joshua gathered all of these men and circumcised them.



After a forty-year lapse, the Israelites once again celebrated the Passover. What special celebrations do you look forward to? How do you celebrate special occasions with your family?

FIRST PASSOVER IN CANAAN (5:10–12)

Israel had only celebrated two Passovers, the first in Egypt and the second a year later in the desert. Now they celebrate for the first time in the Promised Land. The next day, the manna ceases. From this point they will eat the produce of the land of Canaan.

Israel Captures the Land (5:13–12:24)

In this section, Joshua meets the commander of the armies of the Lord, who will defeat the Canaanites. Jericho falls, Joshua fights the kings of central Canaan, and Joshua defeats kings in southern and northern Canaan.

THE COMMANDER OF THE LORD’S ARMY (5:13–15)

As Joshua views Jericho, he encounters a man with a drawn sword. The man identifies Himself, “I am the commander of the army of the LORD” (v. 14). Joshua falls on his face before the man.



PICTURE OF THE SAVIOR

The Commander of the LORD’s Army

In other places in the Scriptures, angels take on the appearance of humans to deliver messages or protect God’s people. However, the man’s order to Joshua to take off his shoes because he is on holy ground points to a different identity.

When Moses approached God in the burning bush, he was told to remove his shoes because he was on holy ground. Angels do not make the ground holy; only God’s presence does. So, Joshua encountered the Son of God in His preincarnate state as the commander of the LORD’s army.



THE FALL OF JERICHO (6:1–27)

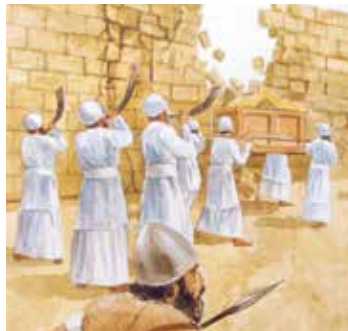


WAYPOINT

What does this text show us?

Israel marches around Jericho once each day for six days. On the seventh day they march seven times around the city, raise their voices in a shout, and God breaks down the walls. The Israelites go straight in and kill all the people of Jericho.

Rahab and her family are rescued by the spies whom she had sheltered in her



The people of Jericho trusted in their walls to protect them. What things are you sometimes tempted to trust in?



The residents of Jericho put their trust in their walls, but their stones were no match for God's power. What kinds of walls do we foolishly construct? How does God break down the walls in our hearts?



How does the assurance of salvation given to you in Christ help you live your life every day?



Consider Achan's response to being confronted by Joshua. How do you react when confronted with your own sin?

house. The gold, silver, and other valuables from Jericho are placed in the treasury of the house of the Lord. The remaining people and livestock of Jericho are devoted to destruction (killed) as God had commanded.

What does this text reveal about God's plan of salvation?

God gives victory to His people through a seemingly impossible method. His rescue of Rahab and her family from the complete destruction of Jericho points ahead to God's deliverance of His people from the final destruction of all creation. When Christ returns, He will take all believers to Himself, while the unbelievers will suffer eternal condemnation.

What does this text uncover about our identity and calling as God's people today?

In Christ, we will be rescued from the threat of eternal death and destruction. At the Last Day, our heavenly Father will remove all evil from His creation and we will live with Him forever in the new heavens and the new earth.

ISRAEL DEFEATED AT AI (7:1–9)

When the people send spies to evaluate the next city, Ai, the Israelites decide that they only need a small band of fighting men to go up against it. When Israel goes up against the forces of Ai, they suffer great loss of life. Joshua falls on his face in dismay before the Lord.

THE SIN OF ACHAN (7:10–26)

God tells Joshua to address the sin of the people. As Joshua draws lots, God reveals that an Israelite named Achan has taken a cloak, silver, and gold from Jericho that belonged to God. Achan's family and livestock are taken to the Valley of Achor, where the people stone them to death.



PICTURE OF THE SAVIOR

Priestly Leaders

While he was not a priest, Joshua's approach to Achan was both priestly and pastoral. Rather than coming with threats of violence, Joshua called him "son" and offered Achan the opportunity to confess his sin. Joshua sought Achan's repentance and to give glory to God the Father.

THE FALL OF AI (8:1–29)

God tells Joshua to make another assault against Ai. This time, they will ambush the overly confident enemies. God allows the soldiers to

plunder the possessions of the city for themselves. Tragically, if Achan had waited one more battle, he could have taken possession of the Canaanite plunder with God's blessing.

JOSHUA RENEWS THE COVENANT (8:30–35)

Following the victory against Ai, Joshua builds an altar to God and offers sacrifices of burnt offerings to Him. Joshua reminds the people of their commitment to the Law by rereading all that Moses had written for them and their posterity.

THE GIBEONITE DECEPTION (9:1–27)

In a desperate ploy to avoid the fate of Jericho and Ai, the Canaanites in Gibeon successfully fool Israel, who fail to seek God's counsel. Saving their lives through their successful deception, the Gibeonites are servants of the lowest class but still alive among God's people.

THE SUN STANDS STILL (10:1–15)

WAYPOINT

What does this text show us?

Five kings from central Canaan combine their military might to attack Gibeon for its covenant with Israel. God fights valiantly for Israel and even grants Joshua's prayer to make the sun stand still high in the sky to give Israel the time to complete the rout of its enemies.

What does this text reveal about God's plan of salvation?

God sends Joshua to rescue the Gibeonites from the attack by the Canaanite kings and even suspends the laws of nature to provide daylight to complete the battle. When Christ Jesus hung on the cross, God miraculously made the sun stop shining in the middle of the day, providing a miraculous victory over our enemies of sin, death, and the devil.

What does this text uncover about our identity and calling as God's people today?

Though the Gibeonites were not part of God's covenant with the Israelites, He still protects them since the Gibeonites have allied themselves with His people. They foreshadow God's acceptance of Gentiles in the New Testament church. As His witnesses in the world today, we can share the message of His love for all nations through His Son, Jesus Christ.



The Canaanite kings thought they could combine forces to defeat God's army. How did God help His people defeat their enemies?



How did the darkness on Good Friday testify to what God was doing through His Son's suffering and death on the cross?

FIVE AMORITE KINGS EXECUTED (10:16–28)

During Israel's complete victory over the Canaanite forces, Joshua traps five kings in a cave, leaving guards to prevent their escape. Then, after overthrowing their cities, he returns to execute each of them in obedience to God's command.

CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN CANAAN (10:29–43)

Having defeated Jericho, Ai, and five kings in central Canaan, Joshua records God's conquests in the southern region of Canaan. In each case, he fully commits to each city's destruction, and God delivers him and the Israelite forces through each endeavor.



CLEAR THE CONFUSION

What was divine warfare like during Israel's conquest?

Divine warfare was the instrument God wielded to destroy Satan's hold over mankind. The Lord used divine warfare to punish the sins of the unfaithful Canaanites. At the same time, He showed His chosen people His continuing love and care for them. Through Israel, God will send His Son, Jesus, to achieve the final and complete victory over death and Satan through His death and resurrection.

CONQUESTS IN NORTHERN CANAAN (11:1–23)

In a familiar scene, the northern kings band together in an attempt to repel Israel, but Joshua leads Israel to overwhelming victory by God's direction once again. After the main forces fall, Joshua swiftly captures and destroys the cities of Canaan's northern region.

KINGS DEFEATED BY MOSES (12:1–6)

Joshua sums up the complete Canaan campaign, including the Canaanite kings Sihon and Og, who had been overthrown under Moses' leadership. These territories east of the Jordan River had already been given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

KINGS DEFEATED BY JOSHUA (12:7–24)

Next, Joshua lists the thirty-one kings on the west side of the Jordan River who fell by God's hand while he led the Israelites.

The Lord Allots the Land to Israel (13:1–21:45)

In this section, Joshua lists the land still to be conquered. He records the land each tribe will inherit, describing portions both east and west of the Jordan River, and lists the towns each tribe must allot to the priests and Levites.

LAND STILL TO BE CONQUERED (13:1–7)

God crushed the might of the Canaanites and gave Israel the core of Canaan. Now He identifies what land remains in Canaanite hands. As the Israelites continue to increase and multiply in the coming generations, God promises to be with them and drive out these remaining enemies.

THE INHERITANCE EAST OF THE JORDAN (13:8–33)

Joshua describes the inheritance of each Israelite tribe. He opens with a general overview of the lands Moses allotted to Reuben, Gad, and one half of Manasseh on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

THE INHERITANCE WEST OF THE JORDAN (14:1–5)

Joshua identifies the division of all lands west of the Jordan River. He reminds them they may be divided geographically, but all the tribes of Israel are to remain one people.

CALEB'S REQUEST AND INHERITANCE (14:6–15)

VISUALIZE

Ready for Battle

Joshua allots Hebron as a special inheritance to Caleb, who, along with Joshua, had been one of the faithful spies who first explored the Promised Land forty-five years earlier (Numbers 13). The aged Caleb set out to win his inheritance with God's help. (His nephew Othniel will be Israel's first judge and deliverer in Judges 3.)



Why do you suppose Joshua takes the time to list the territories that the people have yet to conquer? How does planning for the future, even if we are not part of that future, prove helpful for the church overall?



How did Caleb demonstrate both incredible patience and trust as he laid claim to the promise made years before? When have you needed to demonstrate extreme patience and trust?



Tribal allotments were divided between families and became the inheritance passed down from generation to generation. Does your family have any property that has been handed down from generation to generation?

THE ALLOTMENT FOR JUDAH (15:1–63)

Judah receives the first and largest share of land because Jacob's three older sons had forfeited this inheritance by their sins. (Reuben slept with Rachel's servant, Bilhah, in Genesis 35:22, and Simeon and Levi murdered the men of Shechem in Genesis 34:25–26.) From this tribe will come the promised Savior.

THE ALLOTMENT FOR EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH (16:1–17:18)

The two tribes from the sons of Jacob's favored son, Joseph, are allotted lands. The tribe of Ephraim, the descendants of Joseph's second son, is the first to receive land as ordained in Genesis 48:17–20. Both tribes share in the double portion of material blessing.

ALLOTMENT OF THE REMAINING LAND (18:1–10)

Further plans are necessary to divide the rest of the land among the seven remaining tribes. Joshua leads them through the next stages of the allotment process to ensure they follow God's promises unto completion.



SET THE SCENE

Shiloh

The seven remaining tribes gathered at Shiloh as Joshua divided the unallocated territory among them. Shiloh lies about twenty miles north of Jerusalem in the heart of the Promised Land. The tent of meeting was set in Shiloh, which served as the center of worship for the Israelites for the next three hundred years.

THE INHERITANCE FOR BENJAMIN (18:11–28)

The first lot drawn was for the tribe of Benjamin. Their land inheritance was small but would become the hot spot and central point for many of the nation's most important events.

THE INHERITANCE FOR SIMEON (19:1–9)

The second lot went to the tribe of Simeon. Their allotment was located within the large territory of Judah as a result of Jacob's curse on Simeon, but the land was a blessing for many years to come.

THE INHERITANCE FOR ZEBULUN (19:10–16)

Zebulun won the third lot. This tribe set up camp west of the Sea of Chinnereth (called the Sea of Galilee in Jesus' time). Their descendants would be the first recipients of the Gospel from Jesus.

THE INHERITANCE FOR ISSACHAR (19:17–23)

Issachar claimed the fourth lot. Their land lay just south of Zebulun's, and their southern border ran neatly along the Kishon River.

THE INHERITANCE FOR ASHER (19:24–31)

Asher received the fifth lot. This land ran along the coast of the Mediterranean up to Sidon and encompassed Tyre. God gave the responsibility of a politically and religiously hostile border territory to a tribe that would falter in holding firm against the tides of conflict.

THE INHERITANCE FOR NAPHTALI (19:32–39)

The sixth lot fell to Naphtali. The location along the northern border would expose them to much strife over the years, but it would also position them to be some of the first to hear the Gospel of Christ years later.

THE INHERITANCE FOR DAN (19:40–48)

Dan received the seventh and final inheritance. Because of their unfaithfulness, however, they never claimed these cities (Judges 1:34). In the alternative home they found far to the north, they would soon be overrun by pagan worship (Judges 18).



Tribal allotments and inheritances that stayed in families for generations gave a sense of permanence to the Israelites. How can this help you picture eternal life with Christ in the new heavens and earth?

 VISUALIZE

Allotments for the Twelve Tribes of Israel

