



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

JOSHUA

Courageous Faith, Holy Judgment, and the God Who Keeps His Promises

The Short Answer

Joshua's story begins long before the walls of Jericho fall. He first appears as a young leader serving under Moses, fought against the Amalekites, explored the Promised Land as one of twelve spies, and - with Caleb - trusted God when almost everyone else was afraid. After Moses died, God appointed Joshua to lead Israel into the land promised to Abraham generations earlier. Joshua's assignment required courage, but the central message is not, "Be brave like Joshua and you can accomplish anything." The deeper message is: **God keeps His promises, and courage grows from trusting and obeying Him.**

Under Joshua, Israel crossed the Jordan, renewed covenant commitments, celebrated Passover, encountered the Commander of the LORD's army, saw Jericho fall, experienced victory and painful defeat, fought major battles, received portions of the land, and renewed its covenant commitment to God. Joshua also contains some of the Old Testament's hardest judgment passages. Those questions should be faced carefully, not ignored. Joshua ultimately points beyond himself: he brought Israel into a real measure of rest, but Hebrews explains that he did not give God's people their final rest. Jesus does something greater.

Exodus 17 • Numbers 13-14 • Numbers 27:12-23 • Deuteronomy 31 • Joshua 1-24 • Hebrews 3-4

Opening Memory Anchor

Biblical courage is not confidence that everything will be easy. It is confidence that God can be trusted enough to obey Him.



WELCOME

This guide is meant to send you back to Scripture

Joshua is often remembered for courage, Jericho, and the words "choose today whom you will serve." But the book is much larger than a collection of victory stories. It contains preparation, waiting, covenant renewal, judgment, mercy, land inheritance, leadership, difficult moral questions, and a final call to faithfulness.

Foundational truth

The hero of Joshua is not Joshua. The book repeatedly directs attention to the God who keeps His promises, judges evil, shows mercy, gives His Word, and remains faithful across generations.

How to use this study

- Open and read the cited passages rather than relying only on the summaries.
- Part One follows Joshua's story in straightforward language.
- Part Two slows down for the harder moral, historical, and interpretive questions.
- Where Scripture is explicit, believe it. Where Christians draw inferences, identify them as inferences. Where mystery remains, do not manufacture certainty.

PART ONE

BEGINNER GUIDE

Joshua, courage, covenant faithfulness, judgment, mercy, and rest

Memory Anchor

Biblical courage is not confidence that everything will be easy. It is confidence that God can be trusted enough to obey Him.

1. WHO WAS JOSHUA?

Joshua was from the tribe of **Ephraim**. His original name was **Hoshea**, but Moses called him **Joshua** (Numbers 13:8, 16). Hoshea is associated with salvation, while Joshua more explicitly connects that salvation with the LORD: "**The LORD saves.**" Scripture does not explain why Moses renamed him at that exact moment, so a motive should not be invented.

Joshua had been prepared for years before becoming Israel's leader. He served alongside Moses, experienced Israel's wilderness journey, saw the nation's failures, witnessed God's faithfulness, and learned leadership while someone else was leading.

Memory Anchor

Preparation is not wasted simply because it happens outside the spotlight.

2. WHAT WAS JOSHUA'S FIRST MAJOR ROLE?

Joshua first appears by name in Exodus 17:8-16 when the Amalekites attacked Israel. Moses told him to choose men and fight while Moses stood on a hill with the staff of God. Joshua was clearly a capable military leader, but even his first victory demonstrated that Israel's success ultimately depended upon God, not Joshua's ability.

3. WHY WERE JOSHUA AND CALEB DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER SPIES?

Read Numbers 13-14. All twelve spies saw the same fruitful land, strong people, and fortified cities. Ten concluded Israel could not succeed. Joshua and Caleb did not deny the obstacles; they believed the LORD could give Israel what He had promised. The difference was not what they saw, but where they placed their confidence. Because Israel refused to trust God, the wilderness generation would not enter Canaan. Joshua and Caleb were the exceptions.

Memory Anchor

Faith does not require pretending the obstacles are small. It remembers that God is greater.

4. WHY DID JOSHUA REPLACE MOSES?

God chose Joshua to succeed Moses (Numbers 27:12-23; Deuteronomy 31). Moses publicly commissioned him. After Moses died, God told Joshua: "**I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.**" Joshua's confidence was not supposed to come from becoming another Moses. It came from trusting the same God who had been with Moses.

5. WHAT DOES "BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS" REALLY MEAN?

Joshua 1 repeatedly tells Joshua to be strong and courageous. The command is connected to **God's presence, God's promises, and God's Word**. Joshua was told to obey the Law and meditate on it continually. Biblical courage is therefore not reckless self-confidence. It is obedient trust.

Memory Anchor

Courage is not "I know I can do this." Biblical courage says, "God can be trusted, so I will obey."

6. WHO WAS RAHAB?

Before Israel crossed into Canaan, Joshua sent two spies to Jericho. They stayed at the home of Rahab, a prostitute (Joshua 2). Rahab hid the spies because she had heard what God had done in Egypt and confessed: "**The LORD your God is the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.**" She asked for mercy, and her household was spared.



Rahab was a Canaanite who turned toward Israel's God. Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 remember her positively, and Matthew 1:5 places her in Jesus' genealogy. Her story shows that the conquest cannot be reduced to simple ethnicity.

7. HOW DID ISRAEL CROSS THE JORDAN RIVER?

Read Joshua 3-4. As the priests carrying the Ark stepped into the Jordan, God stopped the river and Israel crossed on dry ground. The event echoes the Red Sea: Moses led Israel **out of Egypt**; Joshua led the next generation **into the Promised Land**. Twelve memorial stones were taken from the river so later generations could remember what God had done.

Memory Anchor

Remembering what God has done strengthens faith for what comes next.

8. WHY DID ISRAEL STOP AT GILGAL BEFORE JERICO?

Read Joshua 5:1-12. Instead of immediately preparing for battle, the story slows down. The new generation was circumcised, Israel celebrated **Passover**, and the manna stopped as the people began eating produce from the land. Before conquest, Israel was reminded of covenant identity. Circumcision recalled Abraham's covenant sign; Passover remembered rescue from Egypt.

The order matters: **remember who God is, remember what He has done, renew covenant faithfulness, then move forward in obedience.**

9. WHO WAS THE COMMANDER OF THE LORD'S ARMY?

Read Joshua 5:13-15. Joshua saw a man with a drawn sword and asked, "Are you friend or foe?" The answer was striking: **"Neither one."** The figure identified himself as the commander of the LORD's army, Joshua fell before him, and he was told to remove his sandals because the place was holy - language that recalls Moses at the burning bush.

Some Christians understand the Commander as a visible manifestation of God; some identify Him more specifically as a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. The text does not explicitly say, "This was Jesus," so that identification should not be treated as certain. **Whatever conclusion is reached about His precise identity, His authority and the holy-ground language make clear that Joshua was experiencing an extraordinary encounter with the divine presence.**

Joshua's question was effectively, "Whose side are you on?" The response reframed the issue. The conquest was not about getting God to support Joshua's agenda. Joshua had to submit to God's authority.

Memory Anchor

The most important question is not whether God is on a person's side, but whether that person is faithfully standing under God's authority.

10. WHY DID THE WALLS OF JERICO FALL?

Read Joshua 6. God gave unusual instructions: Israel marched around Jericho once daily for six days and seven times on the seventh day, priests blew trumpets, the people shouted, and the walls fell. This was not normal siege warfare. Jericho's fall emphasized that victory came from **God**, not merely military strategy. Rahab and those with her were spared.

11. WHY DID ISRAEL DESTROY JERICO?

Joshua 6 describes Jericho as being **devoted to destruction**. The text presents the conquest as divine judgment rather than ordinary warfare for personal expansion. That does not make the moral questions disappear. Why so severe? What about women and children? How does this fit with God's goodness? Part Two addresses those questions more fully.

For now, the beginner-level foundation is this: the Bible presents the conquest as a **specific historical judgment within a unique period of Israel's covenant history**. Israel was not given unlimited permission to conquer anyone it wanted, and Christians are not authorized to imitate the conquest today.

12. WHO WAS ACHAN, AND WHY DID ISRAEL LOSE AT AI?

Read Joshua 7. After Jericho, Israel attacked smaller Ai and expected an easy victory. Instead, Israel was defeated and thirty-six soldiers died. God revealed that Achan had secretly taken items devoted to God from Jericho. His hidden disobedience affected the larger covenant community. Achan confessed, judgment followed, and Israel later defeated Ai under God's direction.

The contrast is deliberate: at Jericho Israel obeyed an unusual command and won; at Ai Israel assumed victory while covenant disobedience remained hidden and lost. God's presence could not be reduced to a formula for success.

13. WHY DOES ACHAN'S STORY FEEL SO SEVERE?

Achan's judgment included his household and possessions (Joshua 7:22-26). The passage does not explain every detail about what members of his family knew or how they participated. Readers should therefore be cautious about claiming more than Scripture states.

Important safeguard

Achan's story does not authorize parents, churches, governments, or Christian leaders to punish family members for another person's sin. Scripture elsewhere explicitly teaches individual moral responsibility (Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20).

14. WHO WERE THE GIBEONITES?

Read Joshua 9. The people of Gibeon feared Israel and deceived its leaders by pretending to come from far away. Joshua 9:14 identifies the crucial failure: **"they did not consult the LORD."** Joshua made a treaty, discovered the deception three days later, and nevertheless honored the oath. The Gibeonites lived. Their story reinforces the need for God's wisdom and again shows that Canaanite identity alone did not automatically mean death.

15. DID THE SUN REALLY STAND STILL?

Joshua 10 describes Joshua praying, "Let the sun stand still over Gibeon," and says the sun and moon stopped while Israel fought. Some readers understand this straightforwardly as a miraculous extension of daylight; others propose different ways of understanding the ancient language. The text's main claim is clear: **God extraordinarily intervened on Israel's behalf**. Joshua 10:14 emphasizes, "Surely the LORD fought for Israel that day!" Part Two returns to the physical-mechanism question.

16. WHAT DOES CALEB'S STORY TEACH ABOUT LONG-TERM FAITHFULNESS?



Read Joshua 14:6-15. Caleb had trusted God when Israel refused to enter the land. Forty-five years later, at about eighty-five years old, he still trusted God's promise and asked for the hill country associated with Hebron. His faithfulness had endured through decades of waiting. Biblical faithfulness is not always one dramatic moment of courage. Sometimes it is steady trust while a promise remains unfulfilled.

Memory Anchor

Faithfulness is not only courage in one moment. It can be steady trust across decades.

17. DID JOSHUA CONQUER ALL OF CANAAN?

Joshua 11:23 says Joshua took control of the entire land, yet Joshua 13:1 says much land remained, and Judges later describes Canaanite populations still present. This is not necessarily contradictory. Joshua describes the breaking of major organized resistance and broad control of the land, while occupation and removal remained incomplete. The conquest had a **decisive phase under Joshua** and an **incomplete phase afterward**.

18. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROMISED LAND AFTER THE BATTLES?

Joshua 13-21 describes distribution of the land among Israel's tribes. These chapters may feel less dramatic, but they are central to the book's message. Joshua 21:43-45 declares that not one of God's good promises failed.

Joshua 20 establishes **cities of refuge**, protecting those responsible for accidental deaths until cases could be heard and distinguishing accidental killing from murder. Joshua 21 assigns **Levitical cities** to the tribe set apart for worship-related responsibilities. Their distribution across the land reinforced that the inheritance was to be lived under God's presence, instruction, and worship.

The land was therefore not merely divided as military spoils. It was organized as the home of a covenant people with structures for **justice, worship, community life, and remembrance of God**.

19. WHAT DID JOSHUA MEAN BY "CHOOSE TODAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE"?

Read Joshua 24. Near the end of his life Joshua reviewed what **God** had done - calling Abraham, bringing Israel from Egypt, preserving the people, and giving them the land. Then he challenged Israel: **"Choose today whom you will serve."** The verse does not present every god as equally valid. It confronts Israel with the absurdity of abandoning the God who had faithfully rescued and provided for them.

20. HOW DID JOSHUA'S LIFE END?

Joshua died at 110 (Joshua 24:29-31). Israel served the LORD during Joshua's lifetime and during the elders who outlived him, but Judges shows how quickly later generations drifted. Joshua had led faithfully, but he could not permanently transform Israel's heart. Israel needed more than land. It needed lasting faithfulness, transformed hearts, and ultimately a greater Savior.

SEEING THE WHOLE BOOK

ENTRY Joshua 1-5	Israel prepares and crosses into the land.
CONQUEST Joshua 6-12	Major Canaanite resistance is defeated.
INHERITANCE Joshua 13-22	The land is distributed and covenant life is organized.
COVENANT RENEWAL Joshua 23-24	Joshua calls Israel to continued faithfulness.

Only part of Joshua is warfare. The larger story is about **entering, receiving, living within, and responding faithfully to what God had promised**.

PART TWO

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INTERMEDIATE

The questions below require more theological, historical, or interpretive explanation. Readers do not need to master every issue to understand Joshua's central message.

21. WHY DID GOD COMMAND THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN?

The conquest cannot be reduced to, "Israel wanted land, so God let them take it." In Genesis 15:13-16 God told Abraham that his descendants would spend centuries outside the land because the Amorites' sin had not yet reached the point of judgment. Generations passed.

Later Scripture associates Canaanite culture with serious practices including idolatry, sexual immorality, and child sacrifice (Leviticus 18:24-30; Deuteronomy 12:29-31). The conquest is therefore presented as **divine judgment after prolonged patience**, not ordinary expansionism. Israel was also warned that if it practiced the same sins, Israel itself would face judgment - and eventually did through Assyrian and Babylonian exile.

Memory Anchor

The Judge of Canaan was also the Judge of Israel. God's holiness showed no ethnic favoritism.

22. WAS THE CONQUEST GENOCIDE?

Modern genocide normally refers to destroying a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group because of its identity. Joshua's conquest certainly involved warfare, killing, displacement, and divine judgment; those realities should not be minimized. But the biblical rationale is not racial superiority.

Rahab was Canaanite and spared because she turned toward Israel's God. The Gibeonites were Canaanites and survived. Israel itself was threatened with removal if it embraced Canaan's sins. The text therefore presents a specific divine judgment within a covenant-historical event



rather than simple ethnic hatred. Whether someone uses the modern word *genocide* often depends partly on how that term is defined.

23. WHAT DOES "DEVOTED TO DESTRUCTION" MEAN?

The Hebrew concept often translated "devoted to destruction" is commonly associated with the term *herem*. Something placed under herem was devoted irrevocably to God, often through destruction in judgment. Joshua also uses sweeping warfare language such as "completely destroyed" and "left no survivors."

Some Christians and scholars understand these as straightforward descriptions of comprehensive destruction in the locations involved. Others note that ancient Near Eastern military accounts often used sweeping victory language that did not necessarily mean every individual in an entire region had died. Joshua itself speaks both of taking the whole land (Joshua 11:23) and much land remaining (Joshua 13:1).

This caution works both ways: ancient warfare conventions should not be ignored, but neither should they be used to pretend nothing severe happened. The text describes **real warfare and real death**.

24. WHAT ABOUT WOMEN AND CHILDREN?

This is often the hardest moral question in Joshua. Some conquest texts use comprehensive language that includes men, women, young, and old. There is no responsible way to make that emotionally easy.

Christians have emphasized different considerations: God's unique authority as Creator and Judge; the corporate nature of ancient societies; the unique judicial setting of the conquest; and, for some passages, the possibility of conventional totalizing warfare language. These may help explain aspects of the text, but Scripture does not answer every modern emotional or philosophical question.

Biblical boundaries remain: **God is just. Human life bears God's image. The conquest was a unique divine judgment, not ordinary permission to kill. Israel later came under judgment itself. Christians are never commanded to reproduce the conquest.** Faithfulness to Scripture does not require pretending hard passages are easy.

25. DO RAHAB AND THE GIBEONITES CHANGE HOW WE UNDERSTAND THE CONQUEST?

Yes. Rahab confessed the LORD's supremacy and received mercy. The Gibeonites deceived Israel but survived and became attached to Israel. Neither story removes every conquest question, but both challenge a purely ethnic reading. Rahab did more than survive: Hebrews remembers her faith, James her actions, and Matthew places her in Jesus' genealogy. **Judgment was real. So was mercy. And mercy crossed ethnic boundaries.**

26. WHY WAS ACHAN'S FAMILY PUNISHED FOR HIS SIN?

Joshua 7 clearly identifies Achan as the person who stole the forbidden items but does not explicitly explain how much his household knew or participated. Because the items were hidden beneath his tent, some interpreters infer family knowledge or participation. That is possible, but it remains an inference.

Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18 emphasize individual moral responsibility. Joshua 7 should therefore not be converted into a general principle of family punishment. Where Scripture does not give every detail, certainty should not be invented.

27. DID THE SUN LITERALLY STOP MOVING?

Joshua 10:12-14 presents the event as extraordinary. Some understand God to have miraculously prolonged daylight. Some discuss the language from ordinary human observation, much as people still speak of sunrise and sunset. Others have proposed unusual atmospheric or astronomical mechanisms. The text does not explain the physical mechanism.

Believing the passage does not require treating Joshua as a modern astronomy textbook. The theological claim is clear: **God intervened extraordinarily so Israel could prevail.** The miracle belongs to God; the mechanism is not the point.

28. DOES ARCHAEOLOGY PROVE OR DISPROVE THE BOOK OF JOSHUA?

Archaeology related to the conquest is complicated. Jericho has generated debate over the dating and interpretation of destruction layers. At Ai, a major question is identifying which ancient site best corresponds to the biblical city. Hazor contains significant ancient destruction evidence, but its date and relationship to Joshua remain debated.

Some archaeologists and biblical scholars argue that evidence fits important aspects of the account. Others argue that the evidence does not support a rapid, unified conquest exactly as they understand Joshua to describe it. Still others propose combinations of conquest, settlement, population movement, and gradual occupation.

Archaeology can illuminate ancient places, cultures, destruction, and settlement, but interpretation depends on site identification, chronology, dating methods, and what one thinks Joshua actually claims. The responsible conclusion is: **the relationship between the archaeological record and Joshua's conquest remains debated.** Readers need not resolve every archaeological question to understand the book's theological message.

29. DOES JOSHUA CONTRADICT JUDGES ABOUT HOW MUCH LAND ISRAEL CONQUERED?

Joshua contains sweeping victory statements, while Judges describes Canaanites and territories still remaining. But Joshua itself already acknowledges unfinished work (Joshua 13:1-6; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13). The simplest reading distinguishes **major military dominance from complete settlement and removal of every remaining population.** Joshua emphasizes decisive victories and fulfillment of promise; Judges emphasizes Israel's incomplete obedience afterward.

30. CAN CHRISTIANS USE JOSHUA TO JUSTIFY WAR, TERRITORIAL CONQUEST, OR NATIONALISM TODAY?

No. Joshua describes a specific command to ancient Israel within a unique covenant setting. God had promised a particular land to Abraham's descendants and specifically announced judgment upon the peoples occupying it. No modern nation - even one with many Christians - occupies Joshua's covenant role.

The Church has not been commanded to seize territory for Christ. Jesus said, **"My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom"** (John 18:36) and told Peter to put away his sword (Matthew 26:52). The New Testament describes the Church's mission through Gospel proclamation, discipleship, prayer, service, love, and spiritual warfare - not territorial conquest.

Important safeguard

Joshua must never be used to give Christians, churches, political movements, or nations a supposed divine mandate to kill enemies, seize territory, force conversions, or treat political opponents as modern "Canaanites." **The conquest of Canaan was not a standing authorization for religious violence.**



31. HOW DOES JOSHUA POINT TO JESUS?

The names **Joshua** and **Jesus** are closely related forms associated with the meaning, "The LORD saves." But the strongest connection comes from Hebrews 3-4. Hebrews says that if Joshua had given God's people their final rest, God would not have spoken of another rest still to come (Hebrews 4:8).

Joshua truly led Israel into Canaan and Israel received a measure of rest, but the rest was incomplete. Sin, enemies, death, rebellion, and eventual exile remained. Jesus provides something greater: reconciliation with God and ultimately the complete rest of God's eternal kingdom. Joshua brought Israel into **a land**. Jesus brings His people into **God's ultimate rest**.

Memory Anchor

Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land. Jesus leads His people into the greater rest only God can give.

A CLOSER LOOK AT JOSHUA'S JOURNEY

Joshua's Life	What God Was Teaching
Served under Moses	God often prepares leaders before making them visible
Fought Amalek	Victory ultimately depended upon God
Spied out Canaan	Faith trusts God without denying real obstacles
Waited through wilderness years	God's promises remained true despite delay
Succeeded Moses	God's work did not depend upon one human leader
Crossed the Jordan	The God of the Exodus was still with Israel
Renewed covenant signs at Gilgal	Identity and worship came before conquest
Met the Commander	Joshua served God's purposes, not the other way around
Saw Jericho fall	Victory came through God's power
Experienced defeat at Ai	Israel could not treat God's presence as a formula
Encountered Rahab	God's mercy reached beyond ethnic Israel
Was deceived by Gibeon	Leaders still needed to seek God's wisdom
Saw Caleb receive Hebron	Faithfulness can endure across decades
Distributed the land	God kept promises made generations earlier
Established refuge and Levitical cities	Inheritance included justice and covenant life
Renewed the covenant	Receiving God's gifts did not eliminate the need for faithfulness
Died after leading Israel	No human leader could permanently transform God's people
Pointed beyond himself	Joshua gave limited rest; Jesus gives the greater rest

Joshua's story is not simply, "**A courageous man conquered Canaan.**" It is the story of God remaining faithful to promises made long before Joshua was born - while Joshua learned to trust, obey, wait, remember, seek God, and lead within that larger story.

WHAT JOSHUA'S STORY DOES - AND DOES NOT - TEACH

Joshua's story teaches:

- God keeps His promises.
- Biblical courage grows from trust in God and obedience to His Word.
- Faith does not require denying real obstacles.
- Preparation and waiting can be part of God's formation.
- Remembering God's past faithfulness strengthens present trust.
- God's people need His wisdom even when circumstances seem obvious.
- Spiritual victory does not eliminate the need for continued dependence.
- God is holy and judges evil, yet also shows mercy across ethnic boundaries.
- Faithfulness can endure across decades, as Caleb demonstrates.
- Biblical inheritance included justice, worship, and ordered community life - not merely possession of territory.
- Joshua's rest was real but incomplete; Jesus provides the greater rest.

Joshua's story does NOT teach:

- Christians should conquer territory for God.
- Modern nations can identify political enemies as "Canaanites."
- Religious violence is permitted when someone believes God is on their side.
- Israel was morally superior because of ethnicity.
- Every war can be labeled God's judgment.
- God promises Christians victory in every earthly conflict.
- Courage means ignoring danger or wise counsel.
- Leaders are above accountability.
- One past victory guarantees continued success without dependence on God.
- Hidden sin gives churches permission to punish entire families.



- Archaeology offers simple proof for every historical detail.
- Difficult texts should be ignored because they are uncomfortable.
- Joshua was Israel's ultimate Savior.

REVIEW

1. Who did Joshua serve under before becoming Israel's leader?

Moses.

2. What did Moses change Joshua's name from?

Hoshea.

3. Which other spy joined Joshua in trusting God?

Caleb.

4. What did God repeatedly tell Joshua after Moses died?

"Be strong and courageous."

5. Where was Joshua's courage supposed to come from?

God's presence, promises, and Word - not self-confidence.

6. What happened at Gilgal before Jericho?

The new generation was circumcised, Israel celebrated Passover, and covenant identity was renewed.

7. Who was the Canaanite woman who protected Israel's spies?

Rahab.

8. Why did Israel lose its first battle against Ai?

Achan violated God's command concerning what was devoted to God at Jericho.

9. What mistake did Israel's leaders make with the Gibeonites?

They examined the situation but did not consult the LORD before making a treaty.

10. According to Hebrews 4, why was Joshua's rest incomplete?

Joshua could bring Israel into Canaan, but only God through Christ provides the greater and final rest His people need.

THINK ABOUT IT

Use these questions for personal reflection or group discussion.

1. Joshua spent years serving under Moses. What might his story teach about seasons of preparation that feel less important than a hoped-for assignment?

2. Joshua and Caleb saw the same obstacles as the other ten spies. What made their response different?

3. Caleb waited forty-five years before receiving what had been promised. What does that teach about long-term faithfulness?

4. How is biblical courage different from confidence or risk-taking?

5. Why did Israel renew covenant signs and celebrate Passover before attacking Jericho?

6. Why is the Commander's refusal to simply say, 'I am on your side,' an important correction to assuming God automatically supports personal plans?

7. What are healthy ways believers can remember God's faithfulness without living only in the past?

8. What warning does Ai give about assuming yesterday's spiritual victory guarantees tomorrow's success?

9. Where is the line between using wisdom and becoming self-sufficient, as seen with the Gibeonites?

10. How do the cities of refuge broaden the picture of life in the Promised Land?

11. How should Christians respond when conquest passages raise questions they cannot completely resolve?

12. Why is the safeguard against turning modern enemies into 'Canaanites' so important?

13. What is the difference between the rest Joshua gave Israel and the greater rest Jesus provides?

FINAL MEMORY ANCHORS

Memory Anchor

Preparation is not wasted simply because it happens outside the spotlight.

Memory Anchor

Faith does not require pretending the obstacles are small. It remembers that God is greater.

Memory Anchor

Courage is not "I know I can do this." Biblical courage says, "God can be trusted, so I will obey."



Memory Anchor

Remembering what God has done strengthens faith for what comes next.

Memory Anchor

The most important question is not whether God is on a person's side, but whether that person is faithfully standing under God's authority.

Memory Anchor

Faithfulness is not only courage in one moment. It can be steady trust across decades.

Memory Anchor

The Judge of Canaan was also the Judge of Israel. God's holiness showed no ethnic favoritism.

Memory Anchor

God's judgment is real. God's mercy is real. Rahab's story displays both.

Memory Anchor

The conquest of Canaan was not a standing authorization for religious violence.

Memory Anchor

Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land. Jesus leads His people into the greater rest only God can give.

CONTINUE STUDYING

Exodus 17:8-16 - Joshua's first recorded battle

Exodus 24:12-18 - Joshua accompanies Moses

Numbers 13-14 - Joshua and Caleb spy out Canaan

Numbers 27:12-23 - Joshua chosen as Moses' successor

Deuteronomy 31; 34 - Joshua commissioned; Moses dies

Joshua 1-5 - Commissioning, Jordan crossing, Gilgal, and the Commander

Joshua 6-12 - Jericho, Achan, Ai, Gibeon, and major conquest campaigns

Joshua 13-14 - Tribal inheritance and Caleb

Joshua 20-21 - Cities of refuge, Levitical cities, and promise fulfillment

Joshua 23-24 - Final words and covenant renewal

Judges 1-2 - The unfinished conquest and the next generation

Matthew 1:1-6 - Rahab in Jesus' genealogy

Hebrews 3-4 - Joshua, unbelief, and God's greater rest

Hebrews 11:30-31; James 2:25 - Jericho and Rahab remembered by faith



CLOSING THOUGHT

Joshua spent much of his early life standing near someone else. Moses led; Joshua served. Moses went up the mountain; Joshua waited. Moses spoke to Israel; Joshua listened. Then twelve spies entered Canaan. Ten returned saying the obstacles were too great. Joshua and Caleb saw the same fortified cities, warriors, and danger - but remembered that God had made a promise.

Israel refused to trust Him, so Joshua waited. Caleb waited too. Year after year passed in the wilderness until Moses died and the servant became the leader. God did not tell Joshua that long preparation meant he no longer needed God. He told him: **"Be strong and courageous."** Why? Because the LORD would be with him.

Joshua stepped forward. The Jordan opened. Memorial stones were raised. Before Jericho, however, Israel stopped. The new generation received the covenant sign, Passover was celebrated, and the manna stopped. Israel was reminded who they were and who had brought them there. Then Joshua encountered the Commander of the LORD's army. Joshua was not leading God into Joshua's mission; Joshua was being called to serve **God's** mission.

Jericho fell. Ai followed. Victory was followed by defeat. Joshua learned that yesterday's miracle did not make Israel spiritually invincible. The years that followed included judgment, mercy, mistakes, miracles, victories, unfinished work, and difficult questions. Rahab survived. Achan was judged. The Gibeonites deceived Israel and lived. Caleb waited forty-five years and still trusted God. Land was distributed. Refuge cities were designated. The Levites received cities across the land.

Eventually Joshua could look across Israel and see something larger than his own leadership: God had kept promises made centuries before Joshua was born. Yet Joshua's victories were not the end. Canaanites remained. Israel's obedience remained incomplete. Joshua grew old and died. The book ends with Israel in the land - but not with humanity's deepest problem solved.

Sin remained. Death remained. The human heart remained unchanged. Even the Promised Land could not provide the final rest God's people needed. Centuries later Hebrews looked back at Joshua and said there was still a greater rest. Joshua's name carried the message: **The LORD saves**. Then another came whose name carried that same truth: **Jesus**.

Joshua brought Israel into an earthly inheritance. Jesus gives His people an inheritance that cannot perish. Joshua gave Israel a measure of rest. Jesus offers the greater rest of reconciliation with God and, ultimately, life in His eternal kingdom.

So Joshua's story does not ultimately teach, **"Be brave enough and you will conquer your obstacles."** It teaches something stronger: **God keeps His promises. God can be trusted when the obstacles are real. God forms faithfulness through waiting as well as action. God must be sought, not merely assumed. God is holy even when His judgments are difficult to understand. God shows mercy to those who turn toward Him. God's purposes are larger than any one leader or generation.**

Joshua led Israel into the land.

Jesus leads His people home.

Final Memory Anchor

Joshua trusted the God who keeps His promises. Jesus is the greater Joshua who brings God's people into the rest no earthly land or human leader could ever provide.