Joshua Introduction | Sunday June 28, 2026

This morning we will be starting a new book study of Joshua. Which will serve as a great continuation of what we have studied recently. In the gospel of John, we had a detailed look at who Jesus is and how we are to believe in Him for eternal life. Then in Leviticus we saw how God's people are to walk in fellowship with Him. We are called to reflect His holiness in every aspect of our lives. Then in 1, 2, and 3 John, we have seen what an active, abiding walk with Jesus looks like. We are to walk in the light and grow in our love for God and, in turn, our love for others. This is why Joshua fits so well. This book is all about taking possession of all that God has for His people.

Joshua 1:1-6 ESV

> (1) After the death of **Moses the servant of the LORD**, the LORD said to **Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant,**
> (2) "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore arise, **go over this Jordan**, you and all this people, **into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel**.
> (3) Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you**, just as I promised to Moses.**
> (4) From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun shall be your territory.
> (5) No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. **Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.**
> (6) Be strong and courageous, **for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.**

The book of Joshua starts with a huge moment for the nation of Israel. Their earthly leader, Moses, has died. They spent an entire month weeping for Him out of grief in Deuteronomy 34:8. Moses meant so much to them. He was the one who came to them when they were slaves. He was the one who confronted Pharaoh. He put His staff down, and the Red Sea parted, and he had led them for 40 years in the wilderness. I am always amazed **how easy it is for us to focus on the person God chooses to work through instead of the God who is actually doing the work.**

Israel's earthly leader, who had led them through so much, died, but in reality, it was always God leading them. God went to Moses at the burning bush. God empowered Moses to confront Pharaoh. It was God who split the Red Sea. God was affirming to His people that He was their true leader. **The God whom Moses served was still there and was still going to lead His people**. Their journey was not over; they needed to cross over the Jordan and go inherit all the promised land that God had given to them.

Moses had died, but God's promises lived on. It was time to inherit and take possession of what God promised. God had chosen Joshua, who had been Moses assistant, to become the new earthly leader. This morning we need to look at some background on who Joshua is before we can start looking at the calling God is giving to him. **Joshua was born a slave in Egypt**. He would have been around 40/45 years old at the time of the exodus. Meaning he was just a baby/child when Moses killed the Egyptian and fled to the wilderness. The book is most likely written by Joshua with some additions by the high priest Eleazar and his son Phinehas. Joshua is first mentioned in Exodus 17 as a general who led Israel in its first battle after the exodus.

Exodus 17:8-16 ESV

(8) Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.
(9) **So Moses said to Joshua**, “Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”
(10) So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.
(11) Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed.
(12) But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.
(13) **And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.**
(14) Then the LORD said to Moses, “**Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”**
(15) And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, **The LORD Is My Banner**,
(16) saying, “A hand upon the throne of the LORD! The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

Joshua would have been around 40 as he went out with the Israelites in this first battle. He had seen the plagues in Egypt and walked through the Red Sea on dry ground. Now in the very first battle he is a part of, success is only possible if Moses keeps his hands up. I wonder how long it took Joshua to realize the army's success was directly tied to Moses’s hands and ultimately God giving the victory. God gave Joshua the victory over the Amalekites. Then he specifically wanted Joshua to hear that God was promising to blot out the Amalekites permanently. At Joshua’s first mention, we have this important foreshadowing that God has plans to use Him. **Joshua had to learn early on that victory was directly tied to God.** No amount of strategy or valiant fighting could overcome God. Joshua’s training and Moses’ mentorship continued from here.

Exodus 24:12-15 ESV

(12) The LORD said to Moses, **“Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone**, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.”
(13) **So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God.**
(14) **And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you.** And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a dispute, let him go to them.”
(15) Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.

Joshua was Moses's assistant and stayed close to him. 70 of Israel’s elders were allowed to approach the mountain but were instructed to not go any farther. **Yet, Joshua rose and went up with Moses**. It is hard to tell how close Joshua came to the glory of the Lord, which looked like a devouring fire on the mountain. As Moses descended, it was Joshua who first heard the troubling noise from the camp.

Exodus 32:15-19 ESV

(15) Then Moses turned and **went down from the mountain** with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written.

(16) The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.
(17) **When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.”**
(18) But he said, “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but **the sound of singing that I hear.”**
(19) **And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf** and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.

Joshua heard the Israelites and thought it was the sound of a war cry. Moses recognized it as singing. Israel had made the golden calf and was throwing a huge party and committing all sorts of immorality as acts of worship to the calf (Ex 32:6). It is important to see that Joshua **was not a part of worshipping the golden calf**. **Instead, he was drawing near to God on the mountain.** Joshua would also draw near to God outside the tent of meeting.

Exodus 33:10-11 ESV

(10) And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.
(11) Thus the **LORD used to speak to Moses face to face**, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his **assistant** Joshua the son of Nun, **a young man**, **would not depart from the tent.**

Before the tabernacle was built, Moses would talk with God at the tent of meeting that was outside the camp. Israel stood and worshipped as they saw the pillar of cloud descend onto the tent. Moses had the unique position to talk with God like a friend, as if they were face to face. Do not miss who was leaning against the canvas of the tent eavesdropping on the conversation, Joshua. **He desired to be close to God** and would not depart from the tent as long as these conversations were happening. He was a rising leader among the people, so it was no surprise when it came time to pick out 12 spies to go into the promised land that Joshua was chosen.

Numbers 13:1-3; 6; 8; 16 ESV

(1) **The LORD spoke to Moses**, saying,
(2) “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, **which I am giving to the people of Israel.** From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, **every one a chief among them.”**
(3) So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the LORD, **all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel.**

(6) from the tribe of **Judah, Caleb** the son of Jephunneh;

(8) from the tribe of **Ephraim, Hoshea** the son of Nun;

(16) These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. **And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua.**

Each of the 12 spies was recognized as a chief, or head, among the people of Israel. Caleb and Joshua being included is remarkable as they were only in their forties. Also notice that Moses changed Joshua’s name from his given name of Hoshea. This is important because **Hoshea means “he saves.”** Yet Moses changes it to **Joshua, which means “The Lord (Yahweh) is**

salvation." Moses wanted Joshua to constantly be reminded that he was not the one who could save, but the Lord alone is the one who brings salvation. This is such an important name because it is the same name given to Jesus. **The Greek version of Joshua, "The Lord is salvation," is Jesus.**

Matthew 1:21 Hebrew Name Version

> (21) She shall bring forth a son. You shall call His name **Yeshua**, **for it is He who shall save His people from their sins."**

Joshua was given the name to remind him that it is the Lord who gives salvation. **Jesus is given the name to declare that He is the Lord who will give salvation**. It is no accident that Moses, who received the law and represents the law, could not lead the people into the promised land. Yet Joshua, who is given the name "The Lord is salvation," which points directly to Jesus, leads the people into the promised land and into inheriting what God had for them.

Deuteronomy 1:37-38 ESV

> (37) Even with me the LORD was angry on your account and said, **'You also shall not go in there.**
> (38) Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter. **Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.**

Moses struggled with God's punishment that he would not be allowed to go into the promised land. Here he blames the Israelites. Their grumbling caused the situation, yet it was **Moses' disobedience** at Meribah (Num 20:8-13) by striking the rock to cause it to give water instead of speaking to it that caused him to be restricted from the promised land. Under the law, which Moses represents, just one infraction is enough to condemn. Israel, God's people, will only be able to enter into the promised land as they are led by **Joshua, "The Lord is salvation."**

This has so much application for us today because of what the promised land represents. Despite what so many older songs infer, **the promised land does not represent heaven**. **The promised land is the spirit-filled life.** It represents an abiding, close intimacy with God. It is taking ownership and inheriting the promises that God has given to His people. Throughout this study we will expand on this idea. **The book of Joshua will serve as an example of how we as God's people are to take hold of and inherit all that God has for us.** This should be important to us as believers because God has given so much to us to inherit and take possession of.

Ephesians 1:3 ESV

> (3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ **with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,**

We have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ. Just like Israel had been given the promised land. Now comes the very practical question: **how do we make these promises ours?** This is the very question in front of Joshua. It is a question that each of us as believers face on a daily basis. For instance, we have been promised wisdom.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 ESV

> (30) And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, **who became to us wisdom from God**, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
> (31) so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Jesus has become our wisdom from God. Jesus, true wisdom, has been given to us. If this was not enough, God is so gracious that He even promises to give us wisdom when we ask for it.

James 1:5 ESV

> (5) **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God**, who gives generously to all without reproach, **and it will be given him.**

This means that whenever we need God's wisdom, we simply have to ask for it. Based on these two promises, no believer should ever lack wisdom. Yet just because we have these promises and have access to wisdom does not mean that we use it.

Galatians 3:1 ESV

> (1) **O foolish Galatians!** Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

Like the Galatians, we know that we act foolishly and not in wisdom. **This means that we are not inheriting; we are not taking possession of God's promise to us.** Taking possession of His promises will never be done through the flesh or through the law. It can only be done as we walk in unity with the Holy Spirit and live based on His power. Joshua learned this lesson over and over again. From the battle that could only be won if Moses had his hands up to the walls of Jericho. **Victory in the promised land comes from walking in God's power, not our own**.

My hope is that as we study Joshua, we would learn as believers how to take possession of and inherit these amazing spiritual blessings and promises that have been given to us. Joshua is a great example for us because he helped lead Israel to take possession of the promised land. There were setbacks along the way and still more to be done after Joshua's death, yet **6 nations and 31 kings will be conquered throughout the book.** Joshua led well and helped Israel take possession of what God had promised.

Joshua 24:31 ESV

> (31) **Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua**, **and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua** and had known all the work that the LORD did for Israel.

Israel continued to walk with God after Moses' death and then after Joshua's death. **This is a very rare occurrence** of when one generation passed truth on to the next. Unfortunately, we have many more examples in scripture of the next generation turning from walking with God. My hope is that God would teach us in Joshua how to lay hold of and take possession of our spiritual blessings and that He would help us to instill that desire in the next generation.
