

The Book of Joshua

**FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
9:30 PASTOR'S CLASS
SPRING 2020**

Introduction—The Book of Joshua

While this book mentions Joshua writing (8:32; 24:26), it does not claim he wrote the book. The repeated references to something existing “to this day” (see 4:9; 5:9; 6:25; etc.) seem to suggest that there was a significant lapse of time between the events recorded in the book and the time when the writing of the book was completed. The final writing may have taken place in the time of the exile (post-587 B.C.), but the writing probably began much earlier.

Joshua records part two of God’s grandest work of redemption in the Old Testament period. In part one (the Pentateuch), the Lord redeemed his people out of slavery in Egypt and formalized his covenantal love for them at Sinai under the leadership of Moses. Now in part two, under the leadership of Joshua, the Lord brings his people into the Land of Promise and gives them rest.

The book of Joshua recounts Israel’s conquest of the land of Canaan under Joshua’s command. The book opens with Joshua being commissioned by the Lord as the leader of the Israelites. It tells of his victories over the Canaanite kings and how he allotted the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel. The book ends with Joshua encouraging the people to remain faithful to the Lord. It seeks to explain God’s purposes in the events surrounding Israel’s capture of and settlement in Canaan. Those events are seen as the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such an account would have been relevant to ancient Israel from its earliest arrival in Canaan, and to every generation of God’s people to the present day.

The Book of Joshua comes immediately after the Pentateuch and in many ways completes its story. The theme of the first five books of the Bible is the progressive fulfillment of the “patriarchal promise,” made first to Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3) and repeated to his son Isaac (Genesis 26:2–4) and his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:13–15; etc.). The Lord promised Abraham and his descendants that they would be blessed and would become a blessing to others, that they would grow to become a great nation, that they would be given a land of their own—and that these blessings would be enjoyed within a close covenant relationship with God.

By the end of the Pentateuch, Israel has been brought into a covenant relationship with the Lord and has become a great people. But they remain outside the Land of Promise, on the plains of Moab. Forty years before, the Lord had chosen Moses to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt and to bring them to the land he had promised (Exodus 3:6–8; 6:2–8). Now, after so many years of wandering, Joshua, the “new Moses” (Joshua 1:1–9), is to lead God’s people into the land, take it, and divide it among them as their inheritance from the Lord.

Commentary

The commentary we will be using is *Joshua: No Falling Words (Focus on the Bible)* by Dale Ralph Davis. A limited supply will be available for sale on a first come, first served basis. It is suggested that you purchase your own commentary, which is available from a variety of online vendors.

Recommendations for Table Discussion

There will be some who are more eager to share around the table than others. Please be respectful and kind as the discussion unfolds, recognizing there are varying levels of Biblical proficiency and levels of comfort in sharing. Your table hosts are wonderful brothers and sisters who are there to love and support you, and will do their best to foster a safe, welcoming environment that is profitable and edifying for everyone present.

Thank you for spending the time to take this class, and for contributing to the fellowship and mutual learning around your table. Our hope is that the effort you put into this class will be rewarded many times over in your daily Christian walk and in the years to come.

Schedule—9:30 Pastor’s Class Joshua—Spring, 2020

Week	Date	Scripture
1	5-Jan	Introduction
2	12-Jan	Joshua 1
3	19-Jan	Joshua 2
4	26-Jan	Joshua 3 & 4
5	2-Feb	Joshua 5 & 6
6	9-Feb	Joshua 7
7	16-Feb	Joshua 8
8	23-Feb	Joshua 9
9	1-Mar	Joshua 10
	8-Mar	MISSIONS CONFERENCE
10	15-Mar	Joshua 11-12
11	22-Mar	Joshua 13:1—15:12
12	29-Mar	Joshua 15:13—17:18
13	5-Apr	Joshua 18 & 19
	12-Apr	EASTER
14	19-Apr	Joshua 20 & 21
15	26-Apr	Joshua 22
16	3-May	Joshua 23
17	10-May	Joshua 24

Week 1—January 5 Introduction

1. How would you summarize the theme of the Book of Joshua?
2. What facts do we know about Joshua's life apart from those recorded in the book which bears his name?
3. What three promises did God make regarding Abraham's descendants (Genesis 26:3-4) and how does the book of Joshua relate to these promises?
4. What is the relationship between God, Canaan, and the Israelites? Why is it vital to the Israelites to live in Canaan?

Week 2—January 12.....Joshua 1

1. List the promises God made to Joshua.
2. What conditions of success were given?
3. What pictures of Joshua are given in this chapter?
4. What principles, warnings or encouragements are found here which we can apply to our lives?

Week 4—January 26.....Joshua 3 & 4

1. What part was played by God and what part was played by the people as they entered the Promised Land?
2. What principles of progress in the Christian life are illuminated by looking at the parts played by God and man?
3. Compare and contrast the position and attitude of the people here with that of their fathers in Numbers 14:1-10.
4. In what ways can the Israelites' use of the 12 stones be applied to our own spiritual lives?

Week 5—February 2.....Joshua 5 & 6

1. What is the significance of the events recorded in chapter 5?
2. What can we learn here concerning the conditions and demands of conquering enemy strongholds by faith?
3. What truth does Rahab illustrate concerning God's ways of dealing with men?
4. How does the rest of Rahab's life help us understand the ways of God?

Week 7—February 16Joshua 8

1. What principles of victory emerge from chapters 6 and 8 for the people of God?
2. With Deuteronomy 11:26-27 providing the background to verses 30-35, how are we to understand the purposes of the dedication service?
3. Following their defeat, why were the king and his people treated as they were?
4. Why were the spoils from the city of Ai used in the way described in 8:27-29?

Week 8—February 23Joshua 9

1. With Deuteronomy 7:1-6 as the background for this chapter, what factors can we discern which led to the disobedience of Joshua and his leaders?
2. Having realized their error, how did the Jewish leaders deal with the situation?
3. How do we understand the explanation given by the Gibeonites for their deceit?
4. What principles can we draw from this episode for our own lives?

Week 10—March 15Joshua 11-12

1. To what causes was Joshua's final victory attributed?
2. Why was such a harsh treatment necessary?
3. What spiritual lessons can we learn from this?
4. In what ways does this history provide encouragement and challenge to us today?

Week 11—March 22 Joshua 13:1—15:12

1. Reflecting on how the Lord amplifies the statement at the end of 13:1, how are we to consider life's blessings which are promised in Christ and yet not possessed?
2. What enemies remain to be subdued?
3. What reasons were given for the difference in inheritance between Levi and Caleb?
4. What does this say about the nature of faith that Joshua divided the unconquered land?

Week 12—March 29Joshua 15:13—17:18

1. Explain the attitude of Achsah to her environment and compare it with Luke 11:13.
2. What attitudes were shown by the tribes and by Joshua?
3. How did the tribe of Ephraim fail to fulfill God's commandments even though they had received his blessing?
4. What reminder does Joshua give to Manasseh? Why does he give it?

Week 13—April 5 Joshua 18 & 19

1. How does Joshua's pointed question address the attitude of the people in the early part of chapter 18?

2. What evidence do we find in these chapters that God's promised blessings in Christ still need to be claimed?

3. What does this passage teach us concerning the nature of Christian leadership?

4. How are we to understand God's way of giving rewards?

Week 15—April 26..... Joshua 22

1. What was Joshua able to commend concerning the conduct of these tribes?
2. What charge was given to the tribes?
3. What provoked the anger of some tribes?
4. Was there justification (see Numbers 25:1-9)?

Week 17—May 10..... Joshua 24

1. In what ways did Joshua seek to make this occasion impressive and memorable?
2. What evidence is given in this chapter of the superficiality and instability of the religious life of the Israelites?
3. What encouragements and warnings for living the Christian life are found in this chapter?
4. What are we taught concerning the character of God and his purposes for his people?