

The Book of Joshua

Study Guide

LESSON
Two

VICTORIOUS CONQUEST



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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON AND STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video lesson. If you do not have access to the video, the study guide will also work with the audio and/or text versions of the lesson. Additionally, the lesson and study guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — In the Notes section of the study guide, the lesson has been divided into sections that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the study guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each section and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

The book of Joshua was written about Israel's victorious conquest, tribal inheritances and covenant loyalty in Joshua's day to address similar challenges facing later generations.

The first major division addresses the original audience's challenges associated with warfare by drawing attention to Israel's victorious conquest over Canaan.

II. Preparations for Victory, 1:1-18 (2:50)

A. Structure and Content (3:06)

The book opens with God commanding Joshua to prepare to lead Israel westward into victory over the land of Canaan.

1. God's Commands, 1:1-9 (4:13)

- "Arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people" (1:2).
- "Be strong and courageous" (1:6, 7, 9).

2. Joshua's Commands, 1:10-15 (4:48)

- “Prepare your provisions” (1:11).
- “All the men of valor [among the Transjordan tribes] ... shall pass over” (1:14).

3. Israel's Obedience, 1:16-18 (5:17)

- The tribes unanimously committed themselves to loyal service.
- “Wherever you send us we will go” (1:16).

B. Original Meaning (5:37)

Five themes appear throughout the book of Joshua:

1. Divine Authority (6:27)

The author of Joshua stressed the divine authority behind Israel's preparations:

- The phrase “the Lord said to Joshua” established that God was the authority behind Joshua's commands (1:1).
- God authorized Joshua as Moses' successor (1:5).
- Israel responded, “Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you” (1:17).

2. **God's Covenant (7:43)**

Joshua's preparations for victory highlighted the importance of God's covenant:

- Israel was not simply to receive Canaan, but to "inherit" it (1:6).
- God "swore to their fathers" (1:6) to give them the land (cf., Genesis 15).
- God's covenant with Israel's ancestors established that Canaan belonged not only to Israel in Joshua's day, but also to the original audience.

3. **Standard of Moses' Law (9:06)**

Observing Moses' law was necessary for Israel to have victory in warfare and to possess the Promised Land:

- "[Be] careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you... that you may have good success" (1:7).
- Obedience to Moses' law would lead to victory; disobedience would lead to defeat.

4. **God's Supernatural Power (9:51)**

God's supernatural power made the conquest of Canaan possible:

- "I will be with you" (1:5).
- "The Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (1:9).
- God's being "with" his people in battle meant he would fight alongside and for them with supernatural power (2 Chronicles 20:17).
- Only if God fought alongside and for Israel could they hope to succeed.

5. **All Israel (12:25)**

The opening chapter of Joshua introduces the importance of the participation of all Israel:

- "All the men of valor ... shall pass over" (1:14).
- "Whoever rebels against your commandment ... shall be put to death" (1:18).
- If the original audience hoped to have full success in the conflicts they faced, all of Israel must stand as one people.

III. Victories over Two Cities, 2:1–8:35 (13:19)

A. Structure and Content (14:19)

Joshua led Israel to victory over both Jericho and Ai, but the paths to victory were very different.

1. City of Jericho, 2:1–6:27 (15:08)

a. Joshua's Spies & Rahab (opening), 2:1-24

- Joshua sent spies to investigate Jericho.
- Rahab protected the spies and received a solemn promise of safety.
- The spies returned to Joshua with confidence that God was going to give Israel victory.

b. Joshua's Spies & Rahab (closing), 6:22-27

The closing of the story of Jericho parallels the opening.

- Joshua ordered the spies to honor their oath of protection for Rahab.
- Rahab and her family were adopted into Israel.

By starting and ending with Rahab and the spies, everything that occurs in Joshua 2:1–6:27 becomes part of the battle for Jericho.

c. Miraculous Crossing of the Jordan, 3:1-5:12

- Israel made ceremonial preparations, highlighting their devotion to God and God's approval.
- The priests stepped into the river with the ark of the covenant, and the Jordan parted.
- Halfway across, twelve men piled twelve stones next to the priests.
- After the crossing, the twelve stones were erected as a memorial at Gilgal.
- Paralleling the ceremonial preparations, Joshua consecrated the Israelites.
- Israel observed Passover and ate the produce of Canaan for the first time.

d. Miraculous Fall of Jericho, 5:13-6:21

- Joshua met an angelic figure who assured him of the support of heaven's army.
- God gave instructions for the attack on Jericho.
- Israel obeyed all of God's directives.

- Joshua ordered that Jericho and everything in it “be devoted to the Lord for destruction” (6:17).

“To be devoted” translates the Hebrew term *charam*:

- Outside of war – the permanent dedication of people, animals, or land to services of worship (Leviticus 27:28)
 - In the context of war – killing animals and people and devoting select precious metals to the Tabernacle
- The inhabitants of Canaan were devoted to God as an act of worship acknowledging that the victory was God’s (Deuteronomy 20:16).

2. City of Ai, 7:1–8:29 (21:37)

a. Israel’s Defeat, 7:1-5

- Spies wrongly advised Joshua that Ai would be an easy victory.
- Joshua sent only some of his army.
- Achan had secretly kept plunder from Jericho.
- Under God’s judgment, 36 Israelites were killed and the rest were routed.

b. Israel's Repentance, 7:6-26

- Joshua lamented to God.
- God revealed the reason for Israel's defeat.

Achan's sin was so egregious that God announced, "Israel has ... transgressed my covenant" (7:11).

- Achan, his family, and all that he had were "devoted to destruction," as God had commanded.

c. Israel's Victory, 8:1-29

- God instructed Joshua to set up an ambush.
- Joshua commanded the people accordingly.
- The people obeyed.
- God gave Israel victory through supernatural intervention.

3. **Covenant Renewal, 8:30-35 (24:59)**

- Israel traveled to Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim in the heart of the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 11:29).
- Joshua read all of Moses' law, and the entire nation renewed their commitment to obey God's covenant.

B. **Original Meaning (25:38)**

The original audience was to apply the lessons of Jericho and Ai in ways that were appropriate for their own day.

1. **Divine Authority (26:22)**

The author of Joshua emphasized the divine authority behind the events in these chapters:

- The phrase, "the Lord said to Joshua" established God's authority over everything Joshua commanded the people to do (3:7; 6:2; 7:10; 8:1, 18).
- Joshua was Moses' successor (4:14, 23; 5:15).

2. God's Covenant (28:27)

Israel's initial victories reinforced that God's covenant established Canaan as Israel's homeland (2:9, 24; 5:6; 6:16).

References to God's covenant assured the original audience of their divine right to the Promised Land.

3. Standard of Moses' Law (29:35)

Obedience to Moses' law was necessary for victory in battle (4:10, 12; 5:2, 10; 6:22, 24).

Disobedience to Moses' law explained the defeat at Ai (7:1, 13, 15; 22:20).

Israel's covenant renewal after Israel's victories emphasized the standard of Moses' law (8:31-33).

4. God's Supernatural Power (33:21)

Israel's initial victories highlighted God's supernatural power:

- God displayed supernatural power against Israel's enemies by striking fear into their hearts (Joshua 2:9, 24; 5:1; Deut. 11:22-25).

- God declared, "I will be with you," indicating that he was fighting with supernatural power for Israel (3:7, 10).

- The fall of Jericho illustrates God's supernatural power:
 - The wall of Jericho "fell down flat" (6:20).

 - "The Lord was with Joshua" (6:27).

- God's supernatural power wasn't present in Israel's battle with Ai until Israel repented and dealt with Achan's sin (7:5, 12; 8:18).

The original audience could not win their battles in human strength; victory came only through God's supernatural power.

5. All Israel (36:23)

Israel's victories over Jericho and Ai emphasized the importance of all Israel's participation in the conquest (3:1, 17; 4:14):

- The “twelve men” and the “twelve stones” at the crossing of the Jordan represented the twelve tribes of Israel (4:4, 4:8-9, 20).
- The whole nation of Israel was circumcised at Gilgal (5:8).
- God commanded Joshua to march with “all the men of war” at the fall of Jericho (6:3).
- When only some went to Ai, they were defeated, but with all Israel's participation, they had victory (7:3, 23-25).
- All Israel stood before God at the covenant renewal (8:33).

IV. Victories over Two Alliances, 9:1-12:24 (38:21)

Alliances formed against Joshua from all over Canaan, first in the south and then in the north.

A. Structure and Content (39:36)

This section divides into four main parts:

1. Overview of Alliances, 9:1-2 (39:54)

“All the kings who were beyond the Jordan ... gathered together as one to fight against Joshua and Israel” (9:1, 2).

2. **Overview of Victories, 11:16-12:24 (40:35)**

Joshua destroyed all that God had commanded him to destroy, and God gave Israel rest from war (11:16-23).

This division ends with a list of kings and lands that Israel acquired through victories (12:1-24).

3. **Victories over Southern Alliance, 9:3-10:43 (41:36)**

- Gibeonite treaty (9:3-27)
 - Gibeonites from within Canaan deceived Israel into making a peace treaty.
 - Treaty prompted a large-scale conflict in the southern region.
- initial southern victory (10:1-15)
 - An alliance of five southern kings attacked the Gibeonites.
 - Israel was obligated to help the Gibeonites.
 - God gave Joshua a miraculous victory.
- widespread southern victories (10:16-43)

Joshua had victories in various places over the entire southern alliance (10:40).

4. Victories over Northern Alliance, 11:1-15 (43:09)

- The king of Hazor formed an alliance against Israel consisting of “a great horde” (11:1-11).
- God gave Israel victory over the northern alliance.
- Joshua won decisive victories throughout the northern region (11:12-15).

B. Original Meaning (44:00)

The original audience faced enemies with sizable armies, so the author of Joshua focused on Joshua’s large-scale victories.

1. Divine Authority (44:46)

Divine authority undergirded Joshua’s victories over alliances (10:8; 11:9).

Joshua’s victories offered guidance as the original audience faced conflicts in their own day.

2. **Standard of Moses' Law (45:42)**

Israel's victories over two alliances emphasized the standard of Moses' law:

- Joshua followed Moses' law by upholding Israel's treaty with the Gibeonites (9:20).
- Joshua obeyed Moses' commands when he devoted everything to destruction in his victories (10:40; 11:12).
- Joshua did everything that the Lord commanded Moses (11:15, 20).

The Israelites needed to be reminded that victories would be theirs only when they were faithful to Moses' law.

3. **God's Supernatural Power (47:33)**

Israel's victories over two alliances resulted from God's supernatural power. God himself:

- threw the southern alliance into a panic (10:10)
- threw large stones down on them (10:11)
- made the sun stand still so that Israel could win the battle (10:13)
- fought for Israel (10:14, 42)
- spread fear among the alliance (10:21)
- assured Joshua of victory over the northern alliance (11:6)
- hardened the hearts of Israel's enemies so that they would be defeated (11:20)

Israel's hope for victory against their foes was that God would intervene on their behalf with supernatural power.

4. All Israel (51:30)

Throughout his account of Israel's victories over two alliances, the author of Joshua stressed the participation of all Israel:

- Joshua went to war with:
 - “all the mighty men of valor” (10:7)
 - “all the people of war” (10:21)
 - “all the men of Israel” (10:24)
 - “all his warriors” (11:7)

- “All Israel” returned from battle with Joshua (10:15, 43).

- Five times, the author repeated the phrase, “Then Joshua and all Israel ...” (10:29-38).

The author of Joshua stressed the blessings of being united to call the original audience to stand together as they faced their enemies.

V. Christian Application (53:10)

A. Inauguration (54:02)

With Jesus' first advent, he and his apostles and prophets accomplished even more than Joshua did in God's ongoing conflict against Satan:

- They directly confronted and overcame Satan and evil spirits (Luke 10:18).

- Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension defeated Satan and evil spirits (Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14, 15, Ephesians 4:8).

Jesus' inauguration was not God's time for him to take up arms against sinful human beings. Instead, Jesus:

- warned of God's coming judgment
- offered mercy to all who were willing to surrender to God

Jesus' first-century apostles and prophets in the New Testament:

- never called for physical attacks on people
- spread Jesus' gospel message of judgment and salvation:
 - warned unbelievers outside the church of God's coming judgment
 - warned of God's judgment against "false brothers" within the church (1 Corinthians 16:22, Galatians 1:8; cf., Achan's destruction)
 - called everyone to repentance so that they could escape God's coming wrath

Five main themes fulfilled in the inauguration:

- Divine authority – The victories of Jesus and his apostles and prophets were led by divine authority.
- God's covenant – The victories of Jesus and his apostles were rooted in the new covenant.
- Standard of Moses' law – The successes of Jesus and his apostles depended on their obedience to Moses and God's fuller revelation after Moses.

- God's supernatural power – The victories of Jesus and his apostles depended on God's supernatural power.

- All Israel –
 - Jesus called people throughout Israel to join with him.
 - At Pentecost, Jews from all over the world joined with him in his battle against evil.
 - Jesus' apostles and prophets added large numbers of Gentiles to the early church.

B. Continuation (1:00:40)

During the continuation of his kingdom, Jesus has successfully advanced his worldwide conquest through his church to nearly every nation on earth.

The New Testament calls on the church, despite its failures, to advance the cause of Christ in the power of his Spirit day by day. We are to:

- continue in spiritual warfare by fully engaging Satan and evil spirits (Ephesians 6:13-18)

- continue to engage human beings as Jesus and his apostles did:
 - oppose those who resist the ways of Christ, but not with physical attacks

 - proclaim the judgment and mercy of the Christian gospel

Applying the five themes of Joshua's conquest to our daily lives:

- Divine authority – We are to be led by divine authority as we advance Christ's kingdom.
- God's covenant – We can have even more confidence for victory than Joshua did because of the new covenant in Christ.
- Standard of Moses' law – Success in our Christian battles depends on our submission to the standard of *all* of Scripture.
- God's supernatural power – Our victories today come only through the supernatural power of God's Spirit at work.
- All Israel – We are to fight our battles today as one people from every tribe and language and nation.

C. **Consummation (1:04:24)**

The record of Joshua strengthens our hopes for the day when Christ returns at the consummation of his kingdom.

When Jesus returns, he will come back as a victorious king (Revelation 19:11).

Jesus' final victory will bring to fruition the ultimate hope of Christ's worldwide conquest:

- Jesus will supersede every act of destruction and every positive benefit from Joshua's day.

- Satan will be utterly defeated and will have no power to deceive or harm us anymore (Romans 16:20).
- God's mercy toward rebellious humans will end (Revelation 21:8).
- Everyone who has surrendered to Christ will enjoy the glorious victory of eternal salvation in the new heaven and new earth.

The five main themes in the consummation of the kingdom:

- Divine authority – God's authority will direct the great and terrible day of Jesus' return.
- God's covenant – The final victory of Christ is certain because of God's solemn vow in the new covenant.
- Standard of Moses' law – Jesus' final victory will succeed because he is without flaw.
- God's supernatural power – Jesus' return will be the greatest display of God's supernatural power that the world has ever seen.
- All Israel – When Christ returns, God's people from every tribe and nation on earth will be one in celebration of his great victory.

VI. Conclusion (1:08:44)

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3. Describe the battle for Jericho starting and ending with Joshua's spies and Rahab and including the miraculous events that occurred between these two bookends. What does it mean that the city and everything in it were "devoted to destruction"?
4. Describe the events leading up to Israel's victory over the city of Ai. Why was Israel's first attempt to take the city unsuccessful?

5. What event followed the victories over Jericho and Ai? Where did this event take place, and what did the Israelites do there?

6. The same five themes appear in the account of Israel's victories over two cities that appeared in the account of Israel's preparations for victory. Give an example of each theme in relation to Israel's victories over Jericho and Ai. Use specific Scripture references to support your examples.

11. What will happen in the final victorious conquest at the consummation of Christ's kingdom? How will this compare to the conquest of Joshua's day?

Application Questions

1. One of the biggest objections modern people have to the book of Joshua is God's call to completely destroy every living thing in Canaan. How might you answer someone who is struggling to reconcile a good God with the God who ordered the Canaanite's total destruction?
2. Read Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25. How does the New Testament's reflection on Rahab's life encourage you as a Christian today?
3. Obeying the standard of Moses' law was essential for Joshua, Israel and even Jesus. What does this mean for us? Why do we need to obey God if he's already given us grace and forgiveness?
4. God saved Israel time after time by his supernatural power. Do you believe he still uses this supernatural power today? If so, how?
5. How does the theme of "all Israel" relate to Christians today? How should this shape the way we view the worldwide church, particularly the persecuted church?
6. Because of his sin, even the Israelite Achan was "devoted to destruction." What are some of the consequences for deliberate sin in the Christian life today?
7. Jesus didn't bring the final victorious conquest at his first advent. How can someone who is suffering or mourning take real comfort in an incomplete, but promised, victory?
8. As we live in the continuation of Christ's kingdom, what does spiritual warfare look like in the following three realms: your life, your country, the world?
9. Jesus's return will at once be joyous and terrifying, and he will enact perfect justice. If you knew Jesus would return tonight, how would you spend the rest of the day? What does this choice say about how you should spend the remainder of your life?
10. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

Glossary

Achan – Israelite who secretly kept plunder from the defeat of Jericho and brought a curse on Israel; as a result, he and everything associated with him were destroyed

Ai – Canaanite city near Beth Aven; conquered by Joshua and the Israelites only after Israel repented of their disloyalty to God

anathema – A strong curse or a person or thing that is despised or cursed (originally from the Greek language)

ark of the covenant – A box made (as per God’s command to Moses) of acacia wood and overlaid with gold where the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments were kept

Canaan, land of – Region given to Abraham and his descendants as an inheritance in his covenant with God; encompasses present-day Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Jordan, the adjoining coastal lands and parts of Egypt and Syria

Canaanites – People descended from Canaan, the son of Ham, who lived in the land of Canaan before Joshua's conquest

charam – Hebrew verb (transliteration) meaning “to devote wholly to the Lord” or “to destroy in devotion to the Lord”

cherem – Hebrew noun (transliteration) meaning “devoted or dedicated thing” or “utter destruction”

Cisjordan – The lands to the west of the Jordan River (lit. “beside the Jordan”) that God promised to Israel as an inheritance

consummation – Third and final stage of inaugurated eschatology when Christ will return and fulfill God's ultimate purpose for all of history

continuation – Second or middle stage of inaugurated eschatology; the period of the kingdom of God after Christ's first advent but before the final victory

covenant – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

false brothers – Unbelievers within the church

Gibeonites – Inhabitants of the Canaanite city of Gibeon who tricked the Israelites into making a treaty with them

Gilgal – Literally “circle of stones”; name associated with several biblical places, including where the Israelites camped after crossing the Jordan River and where Saul was rejected as king after ignoring God’s commands

inauguration – First stage in inaugurated eschatology; refers to Christ's first coming and the ministries of his apostles and prophets

Jericho – Canaanite city that was conquered by Joshua and the Israelites through God’s miraculous intervention

Jordan River – River in the Middle East flowing between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea; known in biblical history for parting when Joshua and the Israelites crossed into the Promised Land, and as the place of Jesus’ baptism

Joshua – Leader of Israel after the death of Moses who brought the Israelites into the Promised Land and faithfully distributed Israel’s tribal inheritances

Moses – Old Testament prophet and deliverer who led the Israelites out of Egypt; man with whom God made a national "covenant of law" and who administered the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant to the Israelites; also appeared with Elijah at Jesus' transfiguration

Mount Ebal – Mountain in the heart of the Promised Land near Mount Gerizim and Shechem where Israel renewed their covenant with God in the days of Joshua

Mount Gerizim – Mountain in the heart of the Promised Land near Mount Ebal and Shechem where Israel renewed their covenant with God in the days of Joshua

nachal – Hebrew verb (transliteration) meaning “to inherit”

new covenant – The covenant of fulfillment in Christ; first mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31

Promised Land – The land that God promised to give as an inheritance to Abraham and his descendants

Rahab – Gentile woman who helped the spies when they entered the Promised Land; included as a part of the people of Israel after the conquest of Jericho

Transjordan – The lands to the east of the Jordan River (lit. “across the Jordan”) where the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh received permission to settle