

Joshua

Study questions for small groups

"The dramatic climax to the bible's epic saga called the exodus"



Introduction

After 400 years as slaves to the Egyptians, the grand promises that God made to Abraham about the nation of Israel all those generations ago must have been feeling a bit distant. It was at this moment, however that God rescued his people in the bible's epic story known as the exodus. God brought them out of Egypt, made them a nation and a people, his people. He promised to be their God and gave them his law...And they set out toward the promised land.

It was on the banks of the Jordan river, with the long-awaited promised land in sight when the faith of the Israelites failed. Only two of the entire nation trusted that God would lead their occupation of the land and so the people were punished. 40 further years were spent wandering in the desert where God waited for the unfaithful generation to die out and taught them how to trust him.

It is at this point where we pick up the story. Israel has a new leader, one of the faithful two: Joshua, son of Nun. The people are camped, once again on the banks of the Jordan river, about to see God's promise fulfilled. The promise of the land, and indeed the whole exodus saga will become one of the Bible's most familiar parallels to the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

These study questions were originally for our small groups, to accompany a sermon series on Joshua. We hope that you find them helpful for your study of Joshua.



1 - Joshua 1

1. What is the significance for Israel of what God is doing for them in giving them the land described vv. 2-4?
2. What basis did Joshua have for believing God's promise to him in v. 5?
3. In vv.6-8 God's command to Joshua to be strong courageous is linked with the command to obey the law. What about obeying God's law would require strength and courage?
4. What was the reason Joshua was not to be scared or discouraged v.9? Does this assurance of God apply to us today?
5. What are things can cause you to become discouraged or scared in your Christian walk?
How does knowing that God is with us v.9 and will not forsake us v.5 help?
6. In what way do we as Christians have access to the promised rest? How has God obtained it for us?
7. What does it mean for us as Christians to live in God's rest?

2 - Joshua 2

1. Why would Rahab be an unlikely hero for the Jewish people in terms of seeing God's purposes achieved?
2. What is significant about Rahab's plea to the spies? What does Hebrews 11 teach us about how to interpret her words?
3. What are we to learn about the nature of salvation from what happens to Rahab?
4. How does the example of Rahab relate to Ephesians 2:8-10?
5. How does your faith in God cause you to live and act differently to what you otherwise would?
6. Are there other areas of life that need to be changed in light of your awareness of who God is and what he has done?
7. This is not the first time spies were sent out to discover the promised land. Check out Deuteronomy 1:19- 40 What happened last time? What was the difference this time v23-24?

3 - Joshua 3-4

1. In v.5 God promises to do an amazing thing. What is he referring to? Does he do it?

2. What other event in Israel's history is this amazing event similar to? (Ex 14:21-22)

3. In the passage there is mention of the ark (3:13,14,15,17; 4:5,7). What is the ark and what does it mean or symbolise? (cf. 1 Sam 4:3-7 & 2 Sam 6:2.)

4. Why did God want the ark to be the first thing to go across the Jordan?

5. Why were the Israelites to make a mound of stones? (4:20-24)

6. What great act has God done so that we could enter into the great promise of eternal life?

7. While we don't have a mound of stones what do we have as a reminder and assurance of the effectiveness of his work?

8. Are you certain of your standing before God based upon what he has done for you, or are you tempted to think that salvation is about what you have done?

4 - Joshua 5:13-6:27

1. What are we to make of the messenger who comes speak with Joshua?
2. How would you have felt as an Israelite walking around the city shouting with no weapons?
3. How did the Israelites win the city of Jericho?
4. What effect do you think the fall of Jericho had upon the Israelites who were there
5. What do we have to learn about living a life of faith in action?
6. What might it mean for you to trust God's way as opposed to the obvious way?

5 - Joshua 7

1. What did Joshua expect when he sent his men against the city of Ai?
2. What was his response when he hears what happens? (vv. 6-9)
3. In what way is Joshua guilty of letting his experience cause him to doubt the promise of God? (ch 1)
4. Have there been times when you have been guilty of the same thing?
5. What is the reason God gives for Israel not taking the city of Ai vv.10-12?
6. What does this teach us about obedience to God and experiencing the blessings of the Kingdom?
7. Who was it that sinned? Who was it that suffered the consequences of the sin? What does this teach us about the nature of sin?
8. What does the severity of the punishment teach us about the seriousness of sin?
9. Does our sin deserve the same punishment? How and when is this punishment administered?
10. Is there sin that you need to repent of in order to take hold of God's blessings?

6 - Joshua 14:6-15

1. Read about Caleb in Numbers 13:26-32 & Deuteronomy 1:34-36. What does this teach us about Caleb?
2. What has changed about Caleb 45 years later?
3. Why is it that Caleb inherits the land, while no one else of his generation did?
4. Do you really believe the promises of God and are you committed to doing God's work, and trusting God's promises the way Caleb did?
5. What is significant about the land having rest from war v.15?
6. Read Hebrews 4:1-11. How do these verses relate?
7. What is the rest that we as Christians enter into? What is required in order to experience that rest?

7 - Joshua 23:1-15

1. What evidence does Joshua give to the people of God's faithfulness to them? (vv.3-4, 9-10)
2. What must Israel do in order to continue to enjoy the rest God has won for them?
3. What does Joshua mean when he tells the people to 'be careful to Love the Lord'?
4. In v. 14 Joshua reminds Israel that every promise God has made has been fulfilled. What promises would he have been referring to?
5. What will happen to Israel if they are unfaithful to their faithful God?
6. Why is it easier to be obedient to God if we are confident of his faithfulness?
7. Are there promises God has made to us in Jesus that you are sometimes caused to doubt? If so what causes you to doubt God's faithfulness?

8 - Joshua 24:1-27

1. What do we learn about the character of God from the list of what He has done for Israel vv.3-13?
2. In what way does the God of the Israelites contrast with the God's of the nations vv. 14-15?
3. What reasons do the Israelites give for choosing God above the other God's?
4. What does Joshua mean in v. 19 when he says to them 'you are not able to serve the Lord?'
5. What does it mean in v. 25 that Joshua made a covenant for the people?'
6. What is the basis of the covenant we are living under as Christians? (Lk 22:25)
7. Are you willing to serve God faithfully on the basis of the new covenant?
8. In what ways are you tempted to be unfaithful to God?
9. Are the consequences of our unfaithfulness the same as that which were outlined to Israel vv.19-20? Why/Why not?