

Seeing Jesus in Every Story

**“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life;
and these are they which testify of Me.”**

John 5:39

Act 7

Joshua: Yahweh is Salvation

Joshua 2–5, 23–24

Prologue

After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord,
The Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant,
“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.
Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you,
just as I promised to Moses.
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.
Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land
that I swore to their fathers to give them.
Only be strong and very courageous . . . ”

Joshua 1:1–3, 5–7

Cast

Joshua, Rahab

Read Joshua 1:1–9 and Joshua 24:29–31. Briefly note what stands out to you at first reading.
Be prepared to share one of your impressions with your discussion group.

1. Thirty days after Moses' death (Deut.34:8) what did the Lord commission Joshua to do?
What did God repeat three times to Joshua?
2. Does Joshua's legacy show how faithfully he took God's command to heart? In what way?

Scene 1: The Scarlet Cord – Joshua 2

In this scene, Joshua tells the people to get ready—in 3 days they will cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land. Joshua knew that God had already given them the land, but he sends two spies to assess what the people of Jericho will do. In God's providence, they meet a woman named Rahab who proves to be their only ally in the city.

1. When the king of Jericho got word that Israelite spies were in the city, he sent men to arrest them. Rahab diverted the king's men and then she went up to the roof where the spies were hiding.
 - What did Rahab say she was certain the Lord was going to do? How did she first come to that belief?
 - What similarity do you see in Rahab's faith and what the Bible says in Romans 10:17?
2. The two men swore an oath to Rahab as she hatched a dramatic plan for their escape. What did she ask for in return for helping them safely out of the city?
 - What would be the "sure sign" that would safeguard her and her loved ones? What were the conditions of this promise to Rahab?
3. Give this some thought:
 - What did the scarlet cord represent to Rahab?
 - How is it similar to the doorposts of Jewish homes in Egypt during Passover?
 - How does it point to Jesus?

Additional thoughts and observations

It's been said that we never get a second chance to make a first impression. Rahab **the harlot** would certainly agree. Whenever she is mentioned in scripture, so is her past—as though "the harlot" was her last name! In the "Hall of Faith" (Hebrews 11) only Rahab's past is mentioned.

Why do you suppose God has allowed the stigma of Rahab's past to follow her through history? In the literary classic, *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne was forced to sew a scarlet "A" for adultery on her dress, condemned to publicly wear her shame the rest of her life. Is that what God intended for Rahab? Not at all. In truth, the letter Rahab would be wearing a scarlet **G** for Grace. God chose Rahab to be a shining example of His grace.

Scene 2: Crossing the Jordan – Joshua 3–5

Crossing the Jordan is told in three stages. The actual crossing (Joshua 3); the stones erected as a memorial of that crossing (Joshua 4); and the description of a new generation of Israelites who renew the covenant relationship with God (Joshua 5). As this scene opens, Joshua brings the people to the Jordan River. Nearly all of them were born in the desert or left Egypt as young children. The wait is almost over. At long last, they are ready to cross over to a new life!

1. In what way will this crossing be similar to what their parents experienced forty years ago at the Red Sea (Exodus 14)? In what way will it be different? No need to comb through all the details; just note any similarities or differences that come to mind.

2. Use Joshua 3 as your point of reference for these questions:
 - Who stepped into the swirling waters of the Jordan first? What were they carrying?

 - The most significant aspect of the Jordan crossing is the presence of the ark. What did the ark represent? Consider what this would mean for all the people to see this.

 - In what way would the ark's presence become crucial to victory and success in the new land?

3. Use Joshua 4 as your point of reference for these questions:
 - After everyone crossed through, what did Joshua send twelve men back to do? Briefly explain why this was important and how it would serve future generations.

 - Can you picture these twelve men heaving large stones out of the riverbed and up onto their shoulders? What was Joshua himself doing at the same time?

 - Where were the priests who shouldered the ark of God during all of this? What does this tell you about God's faithfulness?

After everyone was safely across the Jordan River, they camped at Gilgal. A memorial of their crossing was erected using the stones carried out from the river.

4. Use Joshua 5:1–12 as your point of reference for these questions:

- When news of how Israel crossed the Jordan River got around, what effect did it have on the Canaanites?
- Consider why it was essential and necessary for this new generation of Israelites to undergo circumcision (Genesis 17:11) and observe Passover as they prepared to enter the land God had promised to them. What were they demonstrating through obedience?

Scene 3: Commander of the Lord's Army – Joshua 5:13 – 6:1–17

Joshua stood by himself, looking at the towering walls of Jericho, wondering how to proceed. He carried God's pledge in his heart. "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you . . . be strong and courageous." A fortified city was no match for the God of Israel—but as of yet, Joshua had no strategy to follow. Israel's arsenal of knives, slings and arrows weren't sufficient. As Joshua pondered their predicament, he was startled to see a Man standing before him brandishing a sword.

1. What indication does the Scripture give that this is no ordinary warrior? Who is this and how did His presence affect Joshua?
 - What did this personal encounter with the Angel of the Lord accomplish for Joshua?
 - While Joshua desperately needed a clear course of action for the challenge ahead of him, his first response was worship. Is there a takeaway lesson here for us? Share your thoughts.
2. Use Joshua 6:1–5 as your point of reference for these questions.
 - Jericho was the ancient equivalent of an urban, upscale city with travelers and merchants constantly passing through. So why was Jericho in lockdown?
 - What unusual strategy did the Lord give Joshua for taking the city?

3. Joshua repeats God's instructions to the people (vs. 7) but he doesn't tell them in advance how many days they will have to do this or what would happen after seven days. The men are given their orders and follow through on them one day at a time.

‣ Can you picture it? Israel's fighting men are told to march in complete silence (vs.10) followed by 7 priests blowing trumpets (vs. 4) and behind them the priests carrying the ark. The rest of the people would silently bring up the rear guard (vs.9)

What happened after they did this on the first day?

After six days?

4. Outwardly, nothing happened but what about inward changes? Consider what challenges and/or benefits of God's strategy could develop as time passed and they persevered. Note what comes to mind.

‣ Silence:

‣ Obedience:

5. What happened on the seventh day? In a thought or two, explain how this was a day of reckoning for Jericho, a day of salvation for Rahab and her family, and a day of victory for the Israelites.

Explore key words and phrases

The **trumpet** that figures so prominently in this chapter is a ram's horn (*shophar*) that can only produce a few notes. It is mainly used as a signal instrument. A trumpet blast signaled God's descent to Mt. Sinai to give His Law to the children of Israel. In this chapter, it signals God's presence with Israel and announces Jericho's doom. The scene that day in Jericho points to a future day when another trumpet blast will awaken joy for some and terrify others. What will make the difference?

‣ 1 Corinthians 15:52

‣ Matthew 24:31

‣ Joel 2:1, 11–13

Intermission: Pause – Ponder – Pray

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJ)

As you memorize this passage, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea . . . satisfying as it is savored. So give yourself time to savor God's Word. Write the scripture in the space provided and meditate on what it says.

Ask the Lord to open your eyes and increase your understanding. Jot down what He points out to you; keep returning here and adding your thoughts throughout the week.

Ponder what this says about God. Consider His character, attributes, work, promises . . .

Consider what else this verse implies . . . that with faith it is possible to please Him.

Write your response to Him in worship and praise . . .

Epilogue: Seeing Jesus in the Story

Search to See . . .

Joshua's life points to Jesus in many ways. Their common name means "Yahweh is Salvation." And in God's unfolding plan of Redemption, our Creator chose a uniquely personal role for Joshua to play. His distinct honor is being a prefigure of Christ in conquering enemies, leading God's people into the Promised Land and giving them rest from their enemies.

Note some similarities in the chart below. Read the statement about Joshua and note what is similar in the box next to it. Follow the example given.

Joshua	Jesus
Joshua's began his conquest at the Jordan River	John 2:29 Jesus began His "conquest" at Jordan River
Joshua led Israel into battle against enemies (Deut. 18:10–14)	Eph. 2:2–3, 6:11–13
Joshua led God's army to destroy God's enemies. Joshua 15:13–15	Revelation 19:14–15
Joshua made kings into a footstool as a sign of their defeat. Joshua 10:24	1 Corinthians 15:25–28
Joshua brought the people into rest. Joshua 21:44	Matthew 11:28 & Hebrews 4:8–9

Make it personal . . .

- › For you personally, what is the most significant insight you've gained from the story of Joshua: Yahweh is Salvation? How will you apply this insight in your life?

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