



# Entering the Promised Land

Joshua 1 - 4

This week we will see God fulfill a promise He had made to Abraham many years before. We will see God raise up a new leader for His people, and a faithful generation will inherit what God wanted them to have.



## Day #1: Moses

In Genesis, we learned that God made many wonderful promises to Abraham. God promised that Abraham would have many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who would grow into a great nation. God promised to bless Abraham, and He promised Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to his descendants (Genesis 12:2-3, 6-7). God later said this land was good and spacious, and it would be flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8). The land was not a land without people, though. The land was already home to the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jesusites. These people had homes, cities, and armies.

When Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, were held as slaves in Egypt, God chose one of those Israelites, Moses, to rescue them. Moses willingly gave up a luxurious life as a prince to live among his own people as a slave (Hebrews 11:24-25). When God chose him to lead the Israelites, Moses obeyed God's every word because Moses had great faith in God (Hebrews 11:27). The Bible says there has never been another leader for Israel like Moses.

*Since then, Israel has never had a prophet like Moses. The Lord knew him face to face. Moses did many miraculous signs and wonders. The Lord had sent him to do them in Egypt. Moses did them against Pharaoh, against all of his officials and against his whole land. No one has ever had the mighty power Moses had. No one has ever done the wonderful acts he did in the sight of all of the people of Israel.* - Deuteronomy 34:10-12

After the Israelites came out of Egypt, God called Moses to the top of Mt. Sinai and gave Moses the Law. The Law contained the Ten Commandments and many other rules. Moses then led God's people for many years. Because the Israelites did not obey God while they were in the wilderness, God did not lead them straight into the land He had promised them. The trip from Egypt to their new home should have taken the Israelites only DAYS, but instead, they wandered in the desert for 40 YEARS. All of that time, God PROVIDED everything the Israelites needed (Deuteronomy 29:5-6). By this time, Moses was 120 years old. The time had come for God to bring in a NEW leader for His people. We will look at this new leader tomorrow.

God instructed Moses to climb a mountain. There he could see across the Jordan River to the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. But Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because on one occasion he had disobeyed God in front of all the Israelites (Numbers 20:8-12). So, Moses saw the promise was about to be fulfilled. On top of the Mountain, Moses died at the age of 120 (Deuteronomy 34:7).

God promised Abraham that He would give his descendants the land of Canaan. God ALWAYS keeps His promises! Whenever you need help, look to God's word to find His promises. You can be sure He will do whatever He says He will do.

*The Lord is faithful and will keep all of His promises. He is loving toward everything He has made.* - Psalm 145:13b

## Day #2: Joshua

Joshua had been Moses' helper since Joshua was a young boy (Numbers 11:28). Joshua was born into slavery in Egypt and was delivered from slavery in the great Exodus. With his own eyes, Joshua saw the miracles God did in Egypt and in the wilderness. Joshua was a warrior (Exodus 17:8-13) and a man who followed God completely (Numbers 32:12). Joshua went with Moses, at least part of the way, to receive the Law on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32:17).

God told Moses that he would die without entering into the Promised Land. Moses asked God to appoint another man to lead the Israelites (Numbers 27:15-17). God instructed Moses to lay his hands on Joshua, in front of all the people so they would obey Joshua (Numbers 27:18-20). When Moses did this, Joshua received the spirit of wisdom (Deuteronomy 34:9). God told Joshua that he would be the one to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 31:23). Joshua was nearly eighty years old by this time, but he was still very strong (Joshua 14:10-11). Moses spoke to all of the Israelites:

*He said, "I am now 120 years old, and I am no longer able to lead you. The Lord has told me, 'You will not cross the Jordan River.' But the Lord your God Himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy the nations living there, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua will lead you across the river, just as the Lord promised.* - Deuteronomy 31:2-3 (NLT)

Moses told the people to be strong and brave, because God would not fail and God would never leave them.

*Then Moses called for Joshua, and as all Israel watched, he said to him, "Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the Lord swore to their ancestors He would give them... Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; He will neither fail you nor abandon you."* - Deuteronomy 31:7-8 (NLT)

God warned Moses that after the Israelites were in the Promised Land and their lives were going very well, they would turn from God and begin to worship other gods. God said He would burn with anger and many disasters would come upon the people (Deuteronomy 31:16-18). After Moses died, God spoke directly to Joshua and told him three times to be strong and courageous. Joshua would have many battles to fight, but God promised to be with him every step of the way (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9).

*"I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will never leave you. I will never desert you."* - Joshua 1:5b

When you are following God and obeying His word, be brave. Remember that you have nothing to fear. God will always be with you!

## Day #3: Rahab & the Spies

When you think of a spy, what do you think of? A spy is someone who goes in secret to find out information. A military spy goes under cover to the enemy's side to find out how strong the enemy is, and find out the enemy's plans. If one army knows the plans of another army, they can be far better prepared to fight them.

### Day #3 continued:

Joshua sent two spies to check out the new land, especially the city of Jericho. The two spies crossed the Jordan River to get to the Promised Land. They went to the home of a woman named Rahab. The king of Jericho heard there were Israelite spies in his city. The king sent an urgent message to Rahab.

*It said, "Bring out the men who came into your house. They've come to check out the whole land." - Joshua 2:3b*

But, Rahab hid the men under large bundles of flax plants on her roof. She told the king's men that the spies had already left the city. Rahab went up to talk to the spies. She told them that she and her neighbors had heard terrifying stories about the Israelites. She knew that God was going to give the land to them. All the Canaanites had heard about the mighty works God had done for the Israelites. They had all heard about God parting the Red Sea, and the times God made the Israelites able to conquer other people. It is interesting that forty years before, God told Pharaoh that the reason He was sending the plagues on Egypt was to show His power **so that people everywhere would know Who He was** (Exodus 9:16). That certainly happened! Listen to what Rahab told the spies:

*When we heard about it, our hearts melted away in fear. Because of you, we aren't brave anymore. **The Lord your God is the God who rules over heaven above and earth below.** - Joshua 2:11*

Rahab begged Joshua's spies to spare her life when the Israelites came to take the land, because she had protected them from the king. The spies promised never to harm her or anyone in her house as long as she did not tell anyone what they were doing. (Next week we will see if the spies kept their promise!) Rahab's house was built into the wall that went around the city, so she let the men down out of her window with a rope. The men ran into the hills and waited until it was safe to return to Joshua. When the men crossed back over the river to report back, they told Joshua everything that had happened.

*They said, "We're sure the Lord has given the whole land over to us. All of the people there are weak with fear because of us." - Joshua 2:24*

Rahab was a woman who knew how great and mighty God was. She obeyed God even though it was against the king's orders. Discuss other people in the Bible who obeyed God no matter what other people thought. (Noah built a huge boat in the desert, Moses' parents placed Moses in a basket in the Nile, Moses confronted Pharaoh, John the Baptist said the sin of Herod and others was wrong.) Be determined to care more about what God thinks than what people around you think (Luke 12:4-5).

## Day #4: Crossing the Jordan

God had made the Israelites wander in the desert for 40 years because of their disobedience. The very people who had been delivered out of Egypt mumbled and grumbled about God and His provision for them. God said none of those Israelites would enter the Promised Land, except Joshua and his good friend Caleb (Numbers 14:21-24, 30). For Joshua and Caleb followed God whole-heartedly (Numbers 32:12). The entire generation of Israelites who were delivered from slavery had died, except Joshua and Caleb. It was the children who had been born during the wilderness years who were left now.

Joshua and the Israelites camped next to the Jordan River for three days. The officers told the people that the priests would come by carrying the Ark of the Covenant. This was the golden box that was placed inside the Holy of Holies (or Most Holy Place), in the heart of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:34). When the priests passed by with the ark, the people were instructed to follow them.

### Day #4 continued:

*The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to honor you in the eyes of all of the people of Israel. Then they will know that I am with you, just as I was with Moses. Speak to the priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant. Tell them, 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan River, go into the water and stand there.'" - Joshua 3:7-8*

The Bible tells us that the river was at flooding stage. The water was extra high. But as soon as the priests who were carrying the ark touched their feet into the water, the water from upstream stopped flowing! The priests stood in the middle of the riverbed, on dry ground! The water piled up in a big heap and the all of the Israelites crossed to the other side. Once again, God miraculously parted water to provide safe passage for His people (Exodus 14:21).

We must learn a lesson from the grumbling Israelite generation! These people were in the very center of God's plan - the plan we still study thousands of years later. But they refused to see past their own creature comforts. They grumbled and complained at every turn. And they dared to test God (Numbers 14:22). They were not thankful for the great things God had done. Discuss what this Israelite generation missed out on because of their disobedience and grumbling. (Crossing the Jordan, receiving God's gift of the Promised Land.)

Now, take a moment to consider if you have a heart like those grumblers or a heart like Joshua and Caleb. Do you follow God wholeheartedly? Are you willing to follow Him even if you might have to go through a hard time? Will you follow God even if you might have to do without something you want? If you have been a grumbler, repent and ask God to make you pure (Philippians 2:13-15).

## Day #5: Always Remember

Have you ever been to visit a **memorial**? A memorial is something that helps us remember something important. There are war memorials, and there are statues that help us remember important people, such as presidents and kings. Today we will see a memorial to remember God's power and mighty actions.

While the river water was cut off, God gave instructions to Joshua:

*He said, "Choose 12 men from among the people. Choose one from each tribe. Tell them to get 12 stones from the middle of the river. They must pick them up from right where the priests stood. They must carry the stones over with all of you. And they must put them down at the place where you will stay tonight." - Joshua 4:2-3*

The men were to put them together to make a memorial. This memorial was made to remind the people of what God had done. All the people who witnessed the water parting were to tell their children and their grandchildren about the amazing thing God did that day. After everyone had crossed over, God told Joshua to call the priests who were carrying the ark to come out of the riverbed. The minute they stepped out of the Jordan, the great waters began to flow again!

Joshua told the Israelites why God had parted the waters:

*"He did it so that all of the nations on earth would know that He is powerful. He did it so that you would always have respect for the Lord your God." - Joshua 4:24*

How can you make a memorial to remember that God is always with you? One way is to do as the Israelites did. You can find a special place to start a pile of stones. Each time God answers a prayer or surprises you with a blessing, you can add a rock to your pile. Or you can make a memo board. On it, you can pin a card describing the things God has done. Be creative! Then when you are facing a hard time, look to your memorial and REMEMBER that God is powerful, He can do ALL things, and He will NEVER leave you.