

**Fearless Fools-
Following When God Seems
Absurd**

July 11– July 15, 2005

Scripture: Joshua 6 - 8

Engage

Connecting Scripture with Everyday Life

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness

• Faithfulness

**"I am faithful to fulfill
God's will for my life."**

- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

MEMORY VERSE

Joshua told the people,
"Consecrate yourselves, for
tomorrow the LORD will do
amazing things among you."

Joshua 3:5

As we continue in this great book, we come to one of it's most well-known stories- The "Battle" of Jericho. The battle, of course, was mostly fought by God, in supernatural and unique ways. This is one of those biblical moments that I hope to see replayed on heaven's video screens! My encouragement to you this week is to not let familiarity with the account cause you to miss important details in the Scripture. Ask God to give you fresh eyes to see His Word and to allow Him to speak to you. This account has wonderful application for us today, so I pray that God will speak clearly to you this week!

In His Grace,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

If you are new to using the Engage for our Joshua series:

Included in the *Engage* for July 10th is an Appendix to our series in Joshua. You may access it through the Grace Community Church web site (www.gracecommunityaz.com) under "This Sunday", simply click on the "Learn More" button and "Download Study Guide" for July 10th. You can then print the final three pages, which contain the appendix. In the Appendix you will find three items that have been a part of previous lessons, and are necessary for understanding and completing the daily assignments in the *Engage*. The first part is a brief introduction to using the *Engage* study guide and contains some basic instructions, techniques, and suggested tools. Please read through this before beginning your study time! Secondly is a Reading Plan for the entire book of Joshua, since we will only be looking in depth at thirteen of the twenty-four chapters. Lastly is a map entitled "Occupying the Land."

Review from last week's study in Joshua 3 and 4

Last week we looked in depth at God's direction for the children of Israel to cross the Jordan River. We saw that His presence (the Ark of the Covenant) went before them, and that His power was mightily displayed before their very eyes. We saw the faithfulness that was required of each of them to follow, and that God directed them to erect a memorial to His mighty hand, so that they and all the peoples of the earth would reverence the LORD God forever.

Reading Plan Assignment for this week: Joshua 6, 7, and 8

Day 1 (Joshua 5 and 6)

As with every day that we go to God's word, begin your time in prayer asking Him to reveal His truth to your mind and your heart and to transform your life by that truth.

Read through the chapters listed above without doing any marking of your text, simply noting the people and events involved in this passage. Then note your first impressions of the events that are recorded here.

Reflect on what has just happened in the lives of the children of Israel (you may need to review chapters three and four). What might have been some of their thoughts and feelings going into the events that transpire in chapters five and six?

Read once more through the fifth and sixth chapters of Joshua marking every reference to geographical locations. One easy way to mark these references is simply to underline them with a brown or green colored pencil. The geography is an important part of this study, therefore, as you mark the text, consult the map "Occupying the Land" and locate the various sites referred to.

Day 2 (Joshua 5 and 6)

Pray first!

Today we will read through our main text several times, marking key words each time (these words are based on the New International Version). Remember to actually read the text, not just look for certain words! The marking of these words aids your study in at least three ways: it forces you to read the passage multiple times, it slows down your reading so you can more carefully observe the details, and because you have more carefully observed the details, it helps you to more accurately interpret the meaning of the passage within the context. Mark the following key words (including synonyms and pronouns) as you have in the previous lessons and chapters.

LORD (God), Joshua, command, Rahab, ark, any expressions of time (including words such as then or after)

When we began our study on the book of Joshua, we also began two lists on separate paper. We will continue to add to these lists throughout our study of Joshua. The first is ***God's Character and His Ways*** and the second, entitled ***Joshua***, contains insights about his character and experiences. If this is your first week, you may at some point want to go back and list what you see about Joshua and the LORD from the previous chapters of Joshua, but for now begin your lists with chapters five and six.

Mark with distinctive colors or symbols the following words in Joshua five and six (these are new key words, so remember to record these on your personal bookmark with the marking of your choice):

Circumcise(circumcised), manna, devoted

This passage includes the well-known story of the fall of Jericho, as well as other notable events. Read through the passage one more time, listing below each event that is included in this passage.

Chapter five starts out recording the impact on the countries and kings as they observed the crossing of the Jordan River. If you had been one of the people in the town of Jericho, aware of the events of chapter five and six, what might you have been thinking and feeling?

Now record in your Bible how you would title or summarize each chapter from your personal observations. This practice can be an invaluable tool for helping you to remember what is contained in the various chapters of the book of Joshua.

Day 3 – (Joshua 5 and Genesis 17)

Pray first!

Today we will look a little more closely at the details of the events recorded in chapter five of Joshua. Verses two through nine deal with the circumcision of all the sons of Israel. Read through these verses and observe as many details as you can. Remember to use the 5W's and an H to help you glean the truths recorded here.

Now, in order to gain a more thorough understanding of circumcision and its significance, read through Genesis 17:1-14 and 22-27. Record your insights below.

What do you see as the significance of circumcision at this time and place (as recorded in Joshua 5)?

As you think about the physical implications involved, and the close proximity of the city of Jericho, what does this tell you about the people's trust and dependence upon God?

Read verses ten through twelve and then through the following insights from Warren Wiersbe in his commentary on the book of Joshua. Record below the details included in this significant event, and reflect on the meaning you believe this might have held in the hearts and lives of the children of Israel.

No male could participate in the annual Feast of the Passover unless he had been circumcised and was a true son of the covenant (Ex. 12:43-44,48). Forty years before, Israel had celebrated the Passover on the night of their deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 11-14). They also celebrated Passover at Mt. Sinai, before leaving for Kadesh Barnea (Num. 9:1-14); but there is no evidence that they commemorated the Passover at any time during their years of wilderness wandering. The fact that the new generation wasn't circumcised prevented them from participating, and God had temporarily suspended His covenant with His people because of their rebellion at Kadesh Barnea. That one act of unbelief had cost Israel dearly.

The Passover was followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread when for a week the Jews avoided leaven (yeast) and ate unleavened bread (Ex. 12:15, 18-20). When Israel entered Canaan, it was time for the barley harvest; thus grain was available. No doubt the inhabitants of the area had left grain behind when they fled to Jericho for safety; thus that grain was also available. The Lord prepared a table for His people in the presence of their enemies, and Israel didn't have to be afraid (Ps. 23:5).

On the day after Passover, the manna ceased; and thus ended a forty-year miracle (Ex. 16). If the Passover reminded the Jews of their redemption from Egypt, the manna reminded them of their desire to go back to Egypt! "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full" (Ex. 16:3). God fed His people the bread of heaven, the food of the angels (Ps. 78:23-25); and yet they still lusted for the food of Egypt (Num. 11:4-9). God easily took His people out of Egypt, but it was difficult for Him to take Egypt out of His people. ¹

The last event of this chapter is recorded in verses 13-15. Note below the details (5W'a and an H) and why you believe this event is significant in the life of Joshua.

As you reflect on all three of these events and their importance to the children of Israel, what principles and truths do you think God would have you to learn and personally apply to your heart and life?

Day 4 – (Joshua 6)

Pray first!

Today we will concentrate our time in the sixth chapter of Joshua. Read through the chapter once more and draw out below a simple diagram to show the arrangement and the instructions that God gave for the march around Jericho.

¹Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1993). *Be strong* (Jos 5:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Remember that last week we noted the significance of the Ark of the covenant (the ark of the LORD) to be the place where God dwelt among the people. It also contained His words of the covenant and the words of His testimony (Exodus 25:10-22). What significance does its presence and place have in this event?

Per God's instructions, conveyed through Joshua in verse 10, those marching around Jericho day after day were to do so in silence, with the only sound being the trumpets blown by the priests. If you had been one of those in the march, what might your thoughts have been? As you returned to camp each night, what would you want to say and share about your experience?

In verses 17-19 there is an interruption in the details of the fall of the walls of Jericho for specific instructions as to what is to happen to Jericho and its inhabitants. List the specific instructions contained in these verses.

Verse 18 gives specific warnings concerning the results of disobedience. What are they?

The word devoted ("under the ban" in the New American Standard Version) is a key word that you marked earlier this week. The Hebrew word is *cherem* and has the meaning of usually a doomed object, consecrated possession, i.e., a thing devoted to the LORD, a thing set apart to utter destruction, given to the ban, i.e., a thing or person that will be destroyed as a consecration to the LORD. This Hebrew word is used eight times in the book of Joshua (6:17, 18; 7:1, 11, 12, 13, 15; 22:20), and will play a major role in chapter seven. We will study its significance further next week.

Spend the remainder of your time today, reflecting on three persons or groups from these chapters.

#1 God - what did you learned about His character and ways from these two chapters that has impact in your relationship with Him.

#2 Joshua – what lessons from Joshua's life and experience can be applied to your life?

#3 children of Israel – As they experienced the events of these two chapters, what did they see of the character and ways of God? What was required of them? How does this translate to your life in relationship to the LORD your God?

Day 5

Pray first!

Today we will reflect on the truths that we have seen from this portion of scripture and how it can encourage us in the core belief of the **Authority of the Bible**. Our creed states, "I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action." Our key verse is 2 Timothy 3:16,17 – "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Our assessment statements that help us to evaluate the presence of this belief and its' evidence in our lives are as follows:

1. I believe the Bible is absolutely true in matters of faith and morals.
2. I believe the words of the Bible are words from God.

3. I believe the Bible has decisive authority over what I say and do.
4. I believe the Bible is relevant to address the needs of contemporary culture.

The children of Israel had in the ark of the covenant, the testimony of God, the words of His covenant with Him, and this is where He spoke with them and commanded them through His chosen leaders. As you have seen all that God commanded and directed in these two chapters, do you see evidence that the children of Israel believed that God, through His word to them, had the right to command their beliefs and actions?

In light of the examples we saw this week, I invite you to allow God's word and His Holy Spirit to penetrate your mind and your heart and to speak to these areas of your life.

As you evaluate your life, your belief and actions, and the authority of the bible over you, what does God want to teach you?

Are there areas deserving of rebuke?

How has God used His Word this week to correct your belief or actions?

What training can you receive from your study of God's Word this week?

What good work might God want to be equipping you for?

Review the passages you have been committing to memory (Joshua 1:6-11, Joshua 2:11, Joshua 3:3-5), and begin today to memorize Joshua 6:20. Remember that as we store God's Word in our minds and our hearts, we are doing that which is necessary to be strong and courageous, prosperous, and successful.

The following quotes are included to inspire and encourage you in your study of God's Word. ²

George Mueller, who was known for his strong faith, confided. "The first 3 years after conversion, I neglected the Word of God. Since I began to search it diligently, the blessing has been wonderful. I have read the Bible through one hundred times and always with increasing delight!"

John Bunyan, who wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*, testified, "Read the Bible, and read it again, and do not despair of help to understand something of the will and mind of God, though you think they are fast locked up from you. Neither trouble yourself, though you may not have commentaries and expositions; pray and read, and read and pray; for a little from God is better than a great deal from man."

Martin Luther said, "God is everywhere. However, He does not want you to reach out for Him everywhere but only in the Word. Reach out for it and you will grasp Him aright. Otherwise you are tempting God and setting up idolatry. That is why He has established a certain method for us. This teaches us how and where we are to look for Him and find Him, namely, in the Word.

The new minister was asked to teach a boys' class in the absence of the regular teacher. He decided to see what they knew, so he asked who knocked down the walls of Jericho. All the boys denied having done it, and the preacher was appalled by their ignorance.

At the next deacons' meeting he told about the experience. "Not one of them knows who knocked down the walls of Jericho," he lamented. The group was silent until finally one seasoned veteran of disputes spoke up. "Preacher, this appears to be bothering you a lot. But I've known all those boys since they were born and they're good boys. If they said they didn't know, I believe them. Let's just take some money out of the repair and maintenance fund, fix the walls, and let it go at that."

Commentary

5:1-8

- ♦ Circumcision was the outward mark of Israel's covenant with God (Gen 17; 21:4; Exod 12:43-49; Lev 12:3). Israel's uniqueness among the nations sprang out of this covenant God had made with their ancestor, Abraham. In Genesis 12:1-3 God had established a covenant. Later in Chapter 15, God enacts this covenant. Then in

²Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

Genesis 17 circumcision, the mark of the covenant is begun. Jeremiah 9:24-25 alludes to the fact that other nations probably practiced circumcision, including Egypt, but they did not do it for the religious reasons.

- ◆ During the forty years of exile, the men of Israel had not been circumcised. This was for religious reasons, symbolizing they were in the wilderness and not in the covenant land, as well as for practical reasons, difficulty in continuously moving throughout the wilderness while recovering from the operation. At any rate, this moment of covenant renewal was quite significant for the people as they were recommitted to the LORD.

5:10-12

- ◆ Now that Israel has been circumcised, it is time to celebrate the Passover. Circumcision was a requirement for celebrating the Passover, “The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover: no foreigner is to eat of it; but every man’s slave purchased with money, after you have circumcised him, then he may eat of it.” (Exodus 12:43-44).
- ◆ Carson’s comments on this event are helpful: “The celebration of Passover on 14 Nisan at the end of their journey reminded the Israelites that they began this marvellous journey with God through his Passover. This is a forerunner of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5:7), whose blood provides Christians with salvation from God’s judgment on Satan’s world (cf. Ex. 12:1–7) and whose flesh, symbolized by bread, provides for their sanctification (Ex. 12:8–11). On the very next day (the phrase comes three times in vs 11–12), they began to enjoy the long anticipated food in the promised land. The tiresome forty years of eating manna in the desert were now behind them (cf. Nu. 11:4–9).”³

6:1-27

- ◆ Chapter 6 begins the detail of Joshua’s wars with the nations who inhabited the land of promise. We must realize that Palestine was (as it is now) a prime piece of real estate. There were mighty nations living on the land that Joshua and Israel were seeking to possess. The description of the battles last until Chapter 12. We read in 11:18 that the wars were quite lengthy and must not be thought of as a quick, painless experience, “Joshua waged war for quite a long time with these kings.”
- ◆ Jericho was an important city in the ancient near east. It was inhabited as early as 9000 B.C. By 7000 B.C., it had a wall around it and is known as the oldest walled city in the world. The following from Harper’s dictionary gives more detail, “Jericho is six miles north of the Dead Sea. Its broad plain, irrigated from the copious spring of modern ‘Ein es-Sultan, just east of the ancient city, is extremely fertile. A ford near the city carries an important east-west road and makes Jericho a strategic entrance point from Transjordan into the highlands of Judah. The city of OT times is represented today by a mound 70 feet high and 10 acres in area. The tropical climate and vegetation of the Jordan Valley earned Jericho the title ‘city of palm trees’ (Deut. 34:3).”⁴
- ◆ Butler wonderfully summarizes the enduring meaning of the Jericho event for Israel, “The Jericho story provided an illustration of God’s promises fulfilled. He had promised to Joshua that he would receive the gift of the land and the presence of God if he were obedient to the command of God (chap. 1). Chapter 6 shows that Joshua listened to the command of God, carried out the command of God, received the land of God, experienced the presence of God, and enjoyed the acclaim of the people. What God said, he did.”⁵

³Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Jos 5:10). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

⁴Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper’s Bible dictionary*. Includes index. (1st ed.). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

⁵Butler, T. C. (2002). *Vol. 7: Word Biblical Commentary : Joshua*. Word Biblical Commentary (Page 72). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Reading Plan for Joshua

Week	Sermon Date	Study Chapters	Reading Assignment
1	June 26	Joshua 1	Joshua 1
2	July 3	Joshua 2	Joshua 2 and 3
3	July 10	Joshua 3 and 4	Joshua 4 and 5
4	July 17	Joshua 5 and 6	Joshua 6, 7, and 8
5	July 24	Joshua 7 and 8	Joshua 9, 10, 11, and 12
6	July 31	Joshua 10 and 11	Joshua 13, 14, and 15
7	August 7	Joshua 14	Joshua 16, 17, and 18
8	August 14	Joshua 23	Joshua 19, 20, and 21
9	August 21	Joshua 24	Joshua 22, 23, and 24

MEMORY VERSE

Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you." Joshua 3:5

