



PRELUDE

the leader

## *the leader*

Egypt—Joshua knew it too well. The crack of the overseer's whip cut through the air, driving him into another day of forced labor. Dust clung to his skin. Day bled into day under that relentless heat, his muscles aching deep into the bone, until night brought only the muffled sobs of his people, voices rising in desperate pleas to the God of Abraham.

Then Moses appeared among them, his face weathered by years in the desert. He spoke of a bush that blazed without consuming, of a voice thundering the name Yahweh, of the staff in his hand turning to a serpent. Then, in obedience, walked straight into Pharaoh's court.

The plagues ensued, relentless, brutal. On the final night, Joshua smeared the warm, sticky lamb's blood across his doorposts and lintel, the metallic scent sharp in the cool air. Screams shattered the silence outside—raw, piercing cries as death passed through the streets, claiming every unmarked firstborn. Without the mark, judgment swept past every home, but as the Lord had said, He preserved Israel.

Haste gripped them at dawn at Pharaoh's furious pursuit. The waters loomed ahead, a churning wall, until Moses lifted his staff. Joshua's sandals sank into damp sand as millions crossed, the roar of held-back waves thundering on either side.

Thirst clawed at their throats in the wilderness until Moses struck the rock, cool water gushing forth in a sudden rush, splashing over parched lips. Each dawn, fine flakes like frost covered the ground—manna, sweet as honey wafers, gathering in baskets to sustain them. A pillar of cloud shaded them by day, and fire guiding by night.

For forty years, Joshua was the student, the watcher, the man being shaped in the background while God forged him into the leader Israel would need.

*faith* WAS NOT *formed* IN A DAY

In the unseen places he learned dependence, because what waited across the Jordan required more than skill—it required trust in the One who fought for His people.

The wilderness stretched vast and unforgiving, yet in its hidden trials, a leader emerged—ready for the river ahead, for the

LAND *promised* LONG AGO

# *the leader*

## homework

### remember

The book of Joshua is an epic tale of conquest for the nation of Israel. It is rich in imagery and profound in its application to our walks of faith with Jesus. The story that brought Israel to the Promised Land is one of miraculous protection and provision over a people who had trouble trusting in the Lord.



### answer the questions

Name the two spies who had faith \_\_\_\_\_

What does the Promised Land typify? \_\_\_\_\_

Which New Testament book does Joshua typify? \_\_\_\_\_

## homework

During his wilderness years, Joshua learned important lessons—three in particular that would shape him into a leader of God’s people.

When he first appears on the pages of Scripture, there is no introduction and no ceremony. He explodes into the story with boots already on the battlefield, sword in hand, thrust headlong into war.

### decode the text

Read | Exodus 17:8-13

## Lesson #1 | The Power of Prayer

Go Boots on the Ground! In the space provided, draw a picture of the battle scene. No need to win any drawing contests, but it helps to see the layout. Label: Moses, Aaron, Hur, and Joshua. Analyze the location and activity of each participant.



Exodus 17 presents a deliberate picture: Moses on the hill with the raised staff represents prayer, while Joshua in the valley represents action. The sword only prevailed when the staff remained lifted. The battle below was shaped by the prayer above.

The mountain of intercession  
brings victory in the  
valley of interaction

Read Deuteronomy 25:17–19, where Moses gave more detail about what Amalek did to Israel. What enemy tactic do you observe in this passage, and how does our enemy employ the same strategy against us today?

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The victory over the enemy in Exodus 17 was primarily credited to what was happening on the hill above the battle. What was happening that gave Joshua the upper hand?

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Joshua's strength and military strategy were needful, but did not solely influence the outcome of war. Prayer made his sword effective.

*Without prayer, Joshua could do nothing. This he would remember.*

## **wield the sword**

Consider the following passages and record your thoughts.

Daniel 9:20-23

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James 5:16-18

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Ephesians 6:18-20

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“Prayer is fundamentally a warfare activity”

C.S. Lewis

Our greater than Joshua, Jesus Christ, fights our battles, both in combat and in intercession.  
Consider the following verses.

Hebrews 7:25

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Romans 8:26-27

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# THE *battle* OF THE *flesh*

Exodus 17:14–16

Israel had stopped at Rephidim—a place whose name meant rest, refreshment. They were weary from the journey, thirsty, worn thin. And it was there, in that vulnerable place, that Amalek attacked, these “dwellers in the valley.” The flesh always rose where strength was lowest, where resolve had softened, where exhaustion made resistance harder.

Joshua went down into the valley with the sword, engaging in hand-to-hand combat. It was brutal, exhausting work. Meanwhile, Moses climbed the hill and lifted the rod of God over the battle. As long as the rod remained raised, Israel prevailed. When Moses’ arms dropped under the weight, Amalek gained ground. Intercession on the hill determined victory in the valley.

It was a picture the people would live out again and again. At Rephidim, the flesh would always press in—when rest was needed most, when defenses were down. This was not a single battle but a lifelong war. Flesh against Spirit. Valley against hill.

Others had faced this enemy and failed. Saul encountered Amalek generations later and, in a moment of weakness, spared what God commanded him to destroy. He did not conquer the flesh; he accommodated it. That failure cost him everything (1 Samuel 15).



“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”  
—Galatians 5:17

The Lord commanded that this battle be written and recited in Joshua’s ears. Amalek would not have the final word. The Lord Himself would ultimately blot out the enemy. Christ broke the power of the sin nature, nailed it to the cross, and ended its dominion.

And yet, as long as believers remain on this side of glory, the conflict continues. “The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

Moses built an altar and named it Jehovah Nissi—The Lord is my banner. It is the only time Scripture used this name. The people did not fight under their own strength or strategy. They fought under the banner of the Lord of Hosts.

The war is not yet over, but the outcome is sure. Until the final victory, the fight is waged the same way—prayer lifted high, the Word wielded faithfully, and trust anchored in the One who goes before them. Under His banner, we stand.

IN HIM  
*we overcome*

## Lesson #2 | The Necessity of Abiding

### decode the text

Read | Exodus 33:7-11

From where did the people watch and worship according to verse 10?

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In contrast, describe Moses' relationship with the Lord from verse 11 (see also James 2:23). Moses had a shadow, an observer. Where was Joshua?

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This was the first mention of God as a friend, specifically a friend to Moses. Moses found satisfaction in the Lord's presence in the Tent of Meeting, spending face time with Him. That intimacy was rare and special, and Joshua recognized it. Though the text does not record the Lord speaking to Joshua, he remained. He lingered at the tent because the Lord was there, and in that place Joshua learned to love the presence of God.

**Without abiding, Joshua could do nothing. This he would remember.**

### wield the sword

The purpose of the cross was to reconcile us to His heart, to draw us into His presence in an intimate relationship.

Psalm 65:4

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Psalm 16:11

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Friend of God—Jesus extends that same intimate relationship to us. In John 15, He calls us to abide in Him. According to John 15:11–17, who does Jesus call His friends, and what marks that friendship?

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### Lesson #3 | The Requirement of Faith

#### decode the text

Read | Numbers 13:25-33

Just two years after leaving Egypt, Israel reached the Promised Land. Twelve spies were sent to explore it, but ten returned with a bad report. How did those ten spies perceive the Promised Land?

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According to Numbers 14:1-4, how did Israel respond?

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How did Joshua and Caleb respond differently (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9)?

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In Numbers 14:9, what did Joshua tell the people not to do?

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*Without faith, Joshua could do nothing. This he would remember.*

## **wield the sword**

Consider these few examples. How do the characters' perspectives affect what they saw?

2 Kings 6:8-17

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Matthew 14:22-31

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In every case, what was the crippling emotion? \_\_\_\_\_

Consider Psalm 27:1. Record the attributes of the Lord. How do these keep our hearts from fearing?

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Write | 2 Timothy 1:7

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Fear is the enemy of faith  
Faith is the antidote to fear

stepping forward



The wilderness wandering years were not wasted motion for Joshua. While the horizon never changed, the man inside Joshua was being transformed.

When the day came and Joshua was commissioned, he stood as a man who had learned to follow, who knew the power of prayer, and who loved the presence of the Lord. His trust rested wholly in God.

If we have eyes to see, the same is true for us.

Those seasons that feel like endless circling, the years that look like delay, the nights that seem forgotten—God is not stalling. He is forging. In the unseen furnace of waiting, He is hammering out a faith that will not flinch.

The God who trained Joshua in the shadows is the same God preparing you.

SO *lift* YOUR *eyes*

Beside you right now walks the same God who turned a lifetime of desert into a morning of conquest.

When your time to cross the Jordan arrives, you will cross not by strength, but by faith in Him who has already gone before you.