

The Promised Land



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 6: April 22–28, 2017

Day 1

April 24



Pray / Ask for a heart that is loyal to God.

KNOWING GOD AND having been blessed by him, will we remain loyal?

In today's text Joshua gathers Israel and encourages them to be steadfast, to continue faithfully loving God. With a mighty hand, he had brought them into a land flowing with milk and honey. Many of us, like the Israelites, have experienced God's goodness as he straightened out our lives, bringing us into a place of rest. However, as Israel experienced, finding God's rest does not eliminate the distractions and temptations of the world we still live in. In light of all we have received from the Lord, we need to be strong and remain faithful to him. One thing is certain: we cannot do it alone. We need help from above!



Read / Joshua 23:1–16



Reflect / Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

The Lord gives promises through Joshua of continued success in taking the land. Because of this encouraging promise, Israel is told to be “be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses” (verse 6). We also have precious promises given to us. In what areas might God want you to be very strong?

Temptation to the ways of the world can be really enticing. What do you struggle with most? Humble yourself and pray for his grace and strength. He truly wants to give you the strength to overcome.

When everything is going well, and we find rest on all sides, it’s tempting to forget God, thinking it was our own skill and abilities that brought us success. What steps can you take to ensure that you continue to follow Christ during the good times?

Day 2

April 25



Pray / Ask that you remember the goodness of the Lord.

REMEMBER!

Being reminded of all that God has done is good medicine for the soul. We all tend to forget, don't we? In today's reading, God reminds the people, through prophecy, of all the good things he has done for their forefathers, their fathers, and for them personally as they have taken the land. This is their story. We each have a story! Psalm 139:16 says, "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them."



Read / Joshua 24:1–13



Reflect / Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

What do you think stirred in the hearts of the Israelites as they listened to the prophecy? What would stir in your heart if someone recited all the times God has saved and fought for you?

From God's perspective, what do you think his purpose was in reminding Israel of his involvement in their roots and how they got to the place where they stood on that day?

Your story—take a few moments to consider how God has and is working in your life. Here's the beginning of your story: Before you were even born, all your sins, grief, and disease went in Christ's body on the cross, and they were swallowed up as he died in your place. What does this stir in your heart?

Day 3

April 26



Pray / Ask to be blessed with a proper fear of the Lord.

“THE FEAR OF the LORD is clean, enduring forever.” (Psalm 19:9)

After the prophecy that reminded Israel of all that God had done, Joshua said, “Now therefore fear the LORD” (Joshua 24:14). Here are a few, of many, verses that describe the fear of the Lord:

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.”

(Proverbs 1:7)

“In the fear of the LORD, one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.” (Proverbs 14:26)

“The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life.” (Proverbs 14:27)

“The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied, he will not be visited by harm.” (Proverbs 19:22)

“The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him.”

(Psalm 25:14)

“He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; He also hears their cry and saves them.” (Psalm 154:19)



Read / Joshua 24:14



Reflect / Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Having read the verses on the fear of the Lord, what stood out to you or surprised you?

Almighty God truly is to be feared. However, unlike a fear of something evil, the fruits of the fear of the Lord are good things. Why is this so?

Lest we think the fear of the Lord is just an Old Testament mindset, we should consider Matthew 10:28, where Jesus says, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” We are also told in Philippians 2:12–13 to “work out [our] salvation with fear and trembling.” What things in your life demonstrate the fear of the Lord?

Day 4

April 27



Pray / Ask for grace to keep choosing the Lord.

KEEP CHOOSING CHRIST!

In Joshua 24:1, it mentions the specific place where Joshua gathered the people: Shechem. It is interesting that Shechem is the place where Jacob, many years before, commanded his household to “put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves” (Genesis 35:2). Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree near Shechem. It is notable that he didn’t destroy them. Shechem may have been a reminder to Israel of their ambiguity toward God. Joshua says to the people, “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt.” Strangely, even though Joshua is speaking of that particular day, the tense he uses for “choose” implies continuous ongoing action—keep choosing!



Read / Joshua 24:14–18



Reflect / Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Do you think it was a mistake for Israel to boldly declare their faithfulness to God? What do you think their motive was?

What disciplines or routines can you establish in your life that will help you *keep choosing* to follow the Lord?

What are the “idols” that hinder you most from wholehearted devotion to Jesus? Humble yourself and pray for God’s help in that area of weakness. His grace is sufficient for us!

Day 5

April 28



Pray / Pray to hear his voice and not harden your heart.

ADMONISHED

In today's verses, Joshua admonishes Israel after they commit themselves verbally to the Lord. Joshua and his household had successfully served God; he loved God and had a spirit of faith. His response to the people may seem harsh, but several factors influenced it: (1) he knew them and their history, (2) he knew some were still clinging to other gods, (3) he knows personally that without divine help, a relationship with God, and dependence on him, it is impossible to live a holy life, and (4) he knows that God is the source of forgiveness and cleansing, but if they forsake him, who is left to forgive and wash away their sins?



Read / Joshua 24:19–28



Reflect / Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Rather than brashly committing verbally to serve the Lord, what do you think Israel's response should have been? What would your response be if you were in the Israelites' shoes?

God promises to help us follow him. He hasn't left us alone. In Philippians 2:13 it says that God works in us to will and to work for his good pleasure. One of the ways he does this is by giving us his righteousness as a gift when we cross the line of faith. It's a form of self-idolatry to try to establish our own righteousness. Take a close look at your life. Are there ways you are being self-righteous rather than depending on the gift of God?

Israel received a Promised Land from God but often forsook him. If we have a relationship with God, we have received permanent forgiveness of sins, a new nature—firstfruits of the new creation. Considering this, reflect on ways you can demonstrably live out your faith this week.

Portions of this study were adapted from Ed Stetzer and Trevin Wax, eds., The Gospel Project Chronological: God Delivers, Vol. 2, Adult Personal Study Guide ESV (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2015). Used by permission.

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