

p 91 WEEK 12: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We will conclude our study of Joshua by summarizing the big picture of God's message through Joshua as a whole. Then we will consider several questions in order to reflect on various *Gospel Glimpses*, *Whole-Bible Connections*, and *Theological Soundings* throughout the entire book.

The Big Picture of Joshua

Between the death of Moses and the death of Joshua, Israel moved into the land. Joshua tells this story. This is clear from the very structure of the book: after making preparations and crossing into the land (Joshua 1–5), Joshua and Israel took the land (chs. 6–12), divided the land (chs. 13–21), and committed themselves to the Lord's service in the land (chs. 22–24).

However, while Joshua is a story about land, land is more than geography, for this is the land of promise—God's promise. Joshua is a story about the God who makes and keeps his promises, about the problem of sin that landed humanity outside of Eden, and about the just judgment sin deserves. In light of the fullness of God's revelation, Joshua is also a story about the kind of Savior Christ is, the kind of people Christ saves, and the kind of salvation Christ brings. Joshua takes Israel into the land with the ark. Jesus takes us into p 92 God's presence through a cross. Appropriately, Joshua's name is the Hebrew form of Jesus, meaning "Yahweh Saves."

Today, Christians enjoy the certain hope of a place more wonderful than Israel's land of promise: a new creation (Revelation 21–22). Even the best years in the land of promise would be characterized by sin and death. But in the New Jerusalem—another way to speak of the new creation—death and sin and pain will be no more. There, God's people will be perfected to rest in enjoyment of God's presence for all eternity. And all of this because Jesus, the new and better Joshua, came to "save his people from their sins" through perfect obedience to God's perfect Word (Matt. 1:21; Josh. 1:9).

Gospel Glimpses

The book of Joshua is rich with insight into God's gracious plan to save sinners. He saves through an obedient leader (Josh. 1:8); he saves those who demonstrate faith in God and his promises, including many Gentiles marked out for wrath; and his salvation leads into the enjoyment of his presence, as his people cling to him for rest. Joshua brings these things in part, but Jesus brings them in whole by taking on himself the judgment his people deserve. This is what rest in God's presence will ultimately require. This is the gospel.

How has Joshua brought new clarity to your understanding of the gospel?

What particular passages or themes in Joshua have led you to a fresh understanding and grasp of God's grace to us through Jesus?

p 93 Whole-Bible Connections

In our journey into the land with Joshua, we've seen many turns in the story: the Lord gave Israel the land, gave her victory in battle, and extended salvation to Gentiles. This is a story of great expectation and fulfillment. And yet along the way we've picked up reminders of the presence and persistence of sin. The Sinaitic Covenant, with its blessings and curses, Levitical priesthood, and tabernacle and ark, wasn't able to return humanity to Eden. The human heart remains sick. Thankfully, the book of Joshua is just one turn in the story of the whole Bible. In Christ's new covenant, the themes of land, rest, deliverance, and inheritance take on new dimensions.

How has this study of Joshua amplified your understanding of the biblical storyline of redemption?

What themes emphasized in Joshua helped you deepen your grasp of the Bible's unity?

What passages or themes expanded your understanding of the redemption Jesus provides, begun at his first coming and to be consummated at his return?

p 94 What connections between Joshua and the New Testament were new to you?

Theological Soundings

Joshua has much to contribute to Christian theology. Numerous doctrines and themes are developed, clarified, and reinforced throughout Joshua, such as the justice and mercy of God, the active obedience of Christ, the exclusivity of Christ, and God's promise of a new creation.

Has your theology shifted in minor or major ways during the course of studying Joshua? How so?

How has your understanding of the nature and character of God been deepened throughout this study?

p 95 What unique contributions does Joshua make toward our understanding of who Jesus is and what he accomplished through his life, death, and resurrection?

What specifically does Joshua teach us about the human condition and our need of redemption?

Personal Implications

Joshua is not just a story to know, or even just a story to understand in relation to Christ. Joshua is a story to put to work in our lives in order that we might enjoy our salvation more fully and obey Christ more faithfully. In this story we have examples of faith, warnings against disobedience, and a picture of salvation for those who believe.

God wrote the book of Joshua to transform you. As you reflect on Joshua as a whole, what implications do you see for your life?

p 96 What implications for life flow from your reflections on the questions already asked in this week's study concerning *Gospel Glimpses*, *Whole-Bible Connections*, and *Theological Soundings*?

What have you learned in Joshua that might lead you to praise God, turn away from sin, and trust more firmly in his promises?

As You Finish Studying Joshua ...

We rejoice with you as you finish studying the book of Joshua! May this study become part of your Christian walk of faith, day by day and week by week throughout all your life. Now we would greatly encourage you to study the Word of God on a week-by-week basis. To continue your study of the Bible, we would encourage you to consider other books in the *Knowing the Bible* series and to visit www.knowingthebibleseries.org.

Lastly, take a moment to look back through this study. Review the notes that you have written and the things that you have highlighted or underlined. Reflect again on the key themes that the Lord has been teaching you about himself and about his Word. May these things become a treasure for you throughout your life—this we pray in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.