

Yahweh's Charge to Joshua (c. 1 Nisan [March/April] 1406 BC)

Joshua 1:1–9

1 After Moses the LORD's servant died, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant:

2 "Moses my servant is dead. Get ready! Cross the Jordan River! Lead these people into the land which I am ready to hand over to them.

3 I am handing over to you every place you set foot, as I promised Moses.

4 Your territory will extend from the wilderness in the south to Lebanon in the north. It will extend all the way to the great River Euphrates in the east (including all of Syria) and all the way to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

5 No one will be able to resist you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not abandon you or leave you alone. [\[Heb 13:5\]](#)

6 Be strong and brave! You must lead these people in the conquest of this land that I solemnly promised their ancestors I would hand over to them.

7 Make sure you are very strong and brave! Carefully obey all the law my servant Moses charged you to keep! Do not swerve from it to the right or to the left, so that you may be successful in all you do.

8 This law scroll must not leave your lips! You must memorize it day and night so you can carefully obey all that is written in it. Then you will prosper and be successful.

9 I repeat, be strong and brave! Don't be afraid and don't panic, for I, the LORD your God, am with you in all you do."

Joshua Sends Two Spies to Jericho (4–9 Nisan [March/April] 1406 BC)

Joshua 1:10–3:5

Day 1—Joshua Gives Instructions to Prepare to Cross the Jordan (4 Nisan)

1:10 Joshua instructed the leaders of the people:

11 "Go through the camp and command the people, 'Prepare your supplies, for within three days you will cross the Jordan River and begin the conquest of the land the LORD your God is ready to hand over to you.'"

12 Joshua told the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh:

13 "Remember what Moses the LORD's servant commanded you. The LORD your God is giving you a place to settle and is handing this land over to you.

14 Your wives, children and cattle may stay in the land that Moses assigned to you east of the Jordan River. But all you warriors must cross over armed for battle ahead of your brothers. You must help them

15 until the LORD gives your brothers a place like yours to settle and they conquer the land the LORD your God is ready to hand over to them. Then you may go back to your allotted land and occupy the land Moses the LORD's servant assigned you east of the Jordan."

16 They told Joshua, "We will do everything you say. We will go wherever you send us.

17 Just as we obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. But may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses!

18 Any man who rebels against what you say and does not obey all your commands will be executed. But be strong and brave!"

Day 1—Joshua Sends Two Spies to Jericho (4 Nisan)

2:1 Joshua son of Nun sent two spies out from Shittim secretly and instructed them: "Find out what you can about the land, especially Jericho." They stopped at the house of a prostitute named Rahab and spent the night there.

2 The king of Jericho received this report: "Note well! Israelite men have come here tonight to spy on the land."

3 So the king of Jericho sent this order to Rahab: "Turn over the men who came to you—the ones who came to your house—for they have come to spy on the whole land!"

4 But the woman hid the two men and replied, "Yes, these men were clients of mine, but I didn't know where they came from.

5 When it was time to shut the city gate for the night, the men left. I don't know where they were heading. Chase after them quickly, for you have time to catch them!"

6 (Now she had taken them up to the roof and had hidden them in the stalks of flax she had spread out on the roof.)

7 Meanwhile the king's men tried to find them on the road to the Jordan River near the fords. The city gate was shut as soon as they set out in pursuit of them.

8 Now before the spies went to sleep, Rahab went up to the roof.

9 She said to the men, "I know the LORD is handing this land over to you. We are absolutely terrified of you, and all who live in the land are cringing before you.

10 For we heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt and how you annihilated the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, on the other side of the Jordan.

11 When we heard the news we lost our courage and no one could even breathe for fear of you. For the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below!

12 So now, promise me this with an oath sworn in the LORD's name. Because I have shown allegiance to you, show allegiance to my family. Give me a solemn pledge

13 that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all who belong to them, and rescue us from death."

14 The men said to her, “If you die, may we die too! If you do not report what we’ve been up to, then, when the LORD hands the land over to us, we will show unswerving allegiance to you.”

15 Then Rahab let them down by a rope through the window. (Her house was built as part of the city wall; she lived in the wall.)

16 She told them, “Head to the hill country, so the ones chasing you don’t find you. Hide from them there for three days, long enough for those chasing you to return. Then you can be on your way.”

17 The men said to her, “We are not bound by this oath you made us swear unless the following conditions are met:

18 When we invade the land, tie this red rope in the window through which you let us down, and gather together in your house your father, mother, brothers, and all who live in your father’s house.

19 Anyone who leaves your house will be responsible for his own death—we are innocent in that case! But if anyone with you in the house is harmed, we will be responsible.

20 If you should report what we’ve been up to, we are not bound by this oath you made us swear.”

21 She said, “I agree to these conditions.” She sent them on their way and then tied the red rope in the window. [\[James 2:25\]](#)

22a They went to the hill country

Day 2—Hiding in the Hills (5 Nisan)

22b and stayed there for three days, long enough for those chasing them to return. Their pursuers looked all along the way but did not find them.

Day 3—The Spies Return (6 Nisan)

23 Then the two men returned—they came down from the hills, crossed the river, came to Joshua son of Nun, and reported to him all they had discovered.

24 They told Joshua, “Surely the LORD is handing over all the land to us! All who live in the land are cringing before us!”

Day 4—Journey to the Jordan River (7 Nisan)

3:1a Bright and early the next morning Joshua and the Israelites left Shittim and came to the Jordan.

Day 5—Beside the Jordan (8 Nisan)

1b They camped there before crossing the river.

Day 6—Preparations for the Crossing (9 Nisan)

2 After three days the leaders went through the camp

3 and commanded the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried by the Levitical priests, you must leave here and walk behind it.

4 But stay about three thousand feet behind it. Keep your distance so you can see which way you should go, for you have not traveled this way before.”

5 Joshua told the people, “Ritually consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will perform miraculous deeds among you.”

Crossing the Jordan (10 Nisan [April] 1406 BC)

Joshua 3:6–4:24

Day 7—Crossing the Jordan (10 Nisan)

3:6 Joshua told the priests, “Pick up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So they picked up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.

7 The LORD told Joshua, “This very day I will begin to honor you before all Israel so they will know that I am with you just as I was with Moses.

8 Instruct the priests carrying the ark of the covenant, “When you reach the bank of the Jordan River, wade into the water.”

9 Joshua told the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God!”

10 Joshua continued, “This is how you will know the living God is among you and that he will truly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites.

11 Look! The ark of the covenant of the Ruler of the whole earth is ready to enter the Jordan ahead of you.

12 Now select for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one per tribe.

13 When the feet of the priests carrying the ark of the LORD, the Ruler of the whole earth, touch the water of the Jordan, the water coming downstream toward you will stop flowing and pile up.”

14 So when the people left their tents to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them.

15 When the ones carrying the ark reached the Jordan and the feet of the priests carrying the ark touched the surface of the water—(the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest time)—

16 the water coming downstream toward them stopped flowing. It piled up far upstream at Adam (the city near Zarethan); there was no water at all flowing to the sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea). The people crossed the river opposite Jericho.

17 The priests carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan. All Israel crossed over on dry ground until the entire nation was on the other side.

Memorial Commemorating the Crossing

4:1 When the entire nation was on the other side, the LORD told Joshua,

2 “Select for yourselves twelve men from the people, one per tribe.

3 Instruct them, ‘Pick up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests stand firmly, and carry them over with you and put them in the place where you camp tonight.’”

4 Joshua summoned the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one per tribe.

5 Joshua told them, “Go in front of the ark of the LORD your God to the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to put a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the Israelite tribes.

6 The stones will be a reminder to you. When your children ask someday, ‘Why are these stones important to you?’

7 tell them how the water of the Jordan stopped flowing before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the water of the Jordan stopped flowing. These stones will be a lasting memorial for the Israelites.”

8 The Israelites did just as Joshua commanded. They picked up twelve stones, according to the number of the Israelite tribes, from the middle of the Jordan as the LORD had instructed Joshua. They carried them over with them to the camp and put them there.

9 Joshua also set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan in the very place where the priests carrying the ark of the covenant stood. They remain there to this very day.

10 Now the priests carrying the ark of the covenant were standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the Lord had commanded Joshua to tell the people was accomplished, in accordance with all that Moses had commanded Joshua. The people went across quickly,

11 and when all the people had finished crossing, the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed as the people looked on.

Eastern Tribes Keep Their Word

12 The Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed for battle ahead of the Israelites, just as Moses had instructed them.

13 About forty thousand battle-ready troops marched past the LORD to fight on the plains of Jericho.

14 That day the LORD brought honor to Joshua before all Israel. They respected him all his life, just as they had respected Moses.

15 The LORD told Joshua,

16 “Instruct the priests carrying the ark of the covenantal laws to come up from the Jordan.”

17 So Joshua instructed the priests, “Come up from the Jordan!”

18 The priests carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the middle of the Jordan, and as soon as they set foot on dry land, the water of the Jordan flowed again and returned to flood stage.

First Camp at Gilgal

19 The people went up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and camped in Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho.

20 Now Joshua set up in Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken from the Jordan.

21 He told the Israelites, “When your children someday ask their fathers, ‘What do these stones represent?’

22 explain to your children, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry ground.’

23 For the LORD your God dried up the water of the Jordan before you while you crossed over. It was just like when the LORD your God dried up the Red Sea before us while we crossed it.

24 He has done this so all the nations of the earth might recognize the LORD’s power and so you might always obey the LORD your God.”

Circumcision of the New Generation (April 1406 BC)

Joshua 5:1–12

Fear Grips the Enemy Nations

1 When all the Amorite kings on the west side of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the seacoast heard how the LORD had dried up the water of the Jordan before the Israelites while they crossed, they lost their courage and could not even breathe for fear of the Israelites.

The New Generation Circumcised

2 At that time the LORD told Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites once again.”

3 So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites on the Hill of the Foreskins.

4 This is why Joshua had to circumcise them: All the men old enough to fight when they left Egypt died on the journey through the desert after they left Egypt.

5 Now all the men who left were circumcised, but all the sons born on the journey through the desert after they left Egypt were

uncircumcised.

6 Indeed, for forty years the Israelites traveled through the desert until all the men old enough to fight when they left Egypt, the ones who had disobeyed the LORD, died off. For the LORD had sworn a solemn oath to them that he would not let them see the land he had sworn on oath to give them, a land rich in milk and honey.

7 He replaced them with their sons, whom Joshua circumcised. They were uncircumcised; their fathers had not circumcised them along the way.

8 When all the men had been circumcised, they stayed there in the camp until they had healed.

9 The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have taken away the disgrace of Egypt from you." So that place is called Gilgal even to this day.

First Passover in Canaan (14 Nisan)

10 So the Israelites camped in Gilgal and celebrated the Passover in the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the plains of Jericho.

11 They ate some of the produce of the land the day after the Passover, including unleavened bread and roasted grain.

12 The manna stopped appearing the day they ate some of the produce of the land; the Israelites never ate manna again.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) The chronological headings in today's reading follow the arrangement suggested by David M. Howard in his article, "Three Days' in Joshua 1–3: Resolving a Chronological Conundrum," *JETS* 41/4 (Dec 1998): 539–550.