

September, October, November 2026
Fall Lessons



Pathway

Bible Studies for Adults



SUNDAY SCHOOL
PUBLISHING BOARD



Pathway

Bible Studies for Adults

Table of Contents

A Word from the Editor	2
Preview of the Contents of Each Lesson	2
Quarter's Introduction	3
Meet the Writer	4
The ABCs of Salvation	4

SEPTEMBER

Unit I—From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

6 Renewing Our Commitments	5
13 Family Legacies	10
20 Fighting among the Nations.....	15
27 Joining Forces with Unlikely Allies	25

OCTOBER

4 Do Not Conform to the World.....	31
------------------------------------	----

Unit II—Lacking Leadership and a Moral Compass

11 Choosing Badly.....	37
18 A Hero Who's Not a Hero	43
25 Religious but Not Righteous	49

NOVEMBER

Unit III—Samuel: Prophet, Priest, Judge, and King Maker

1 An Exemplary Discernment.....	56
8 Leadership Run Amuck.....	63
15 A Virtuous Leader	69
22 The Making of a King.....	75
29 Envisioning All-around Stability.....	81

Faith Pathway—Bible Studies for Adults (USPS 005-980), a publication of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., is published quarterly for \$23.00 per year by the Sunday School Publishing Board, P.O. Box 70990, Nashville, Tennessee. Periodical postage paid at Nashville, Tennessee. Printed in the United States of America.

Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version of the Bible. Those marked NIV are from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

The Uniform Lessons and the Home Daily Bible Readings from the International Sunday School Lessons Series are copyrighted by the Committee on the Uniform Series, 2022, Division of Education and Ministry, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission. Copyright © 2026 by the Sunday School Publishing Board.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Faith Pathway—Bible Studies for Adults, P.O. Box 70990, Nashville, Tennessee 37207-0990. E-mail: customercare@sspbncb.com • Web site: www.sspbncb.com

Boise Kimber

Convention President

George C. W. Lyons Jr.

Writer

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Derrick L. Jackson

Executive Director

Kathlyn T. Pillow

Associate Executive Director

EDITORIAL TEAM

Joe Tribble

Director of Publishing

Sophia Woodard

Editor

Tanae C. McKnight Murdic

Content Editor

Regina Hoosier

Content Editor

Antonia López

Copy Editor

CREATIVE SERVICES TEAM

Joyce Evans

Creative Services Director

Sharon Branch Barksdale

Cover/Layout Designer



**SUNDAY SCHOOL
PUBLISHING BOARD**
Equipping Today's Church to Serve

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

PREVIEW OF THE CONTENTS OF EACH LESSON

The Sunday School Publishing Board is excited about the new design for our Adult Curriculum resources. The three contiguous pieces of the adult curriculum are as follows:

Bible Studies for Adults (Ages 35 and Above)

Bible Studies for Adults (Large Print Edition)

Bible Studies for Young Adults (Ages 18-34)

Teacher's Guide—A Leadership Resource for Adult Bible Study

In our **Bible Studies for Adults**, the contents of each lesson are as follows:

Key Verse(s): The Key Verse(s) will be featured in the King James Version (KJV) and the New International Version (NIV)—thus providing the reader with a comparative picture of both versions.

The Lesson Aims: Each lesson's contents are designed to focus on the “know,” the “show,” and the “grow” of the student's experience/interaction with the lesson.

Key Terms: Each lesson will have a number of words (Word Study Supplement) that are given special focus, due to their relevance in providing additional insight to the student.

Introduction: Each lesson will begin with a “life-centered” story, illustration, or vignette, designed to serve as a connector between real life and the biblical content of the lesson.

The Biblical Context: The reader is provided with historical insights—placing the lesson in its proper cultural milieu and allowing the student to get a literary picture of where the lesson took place.

Analysis of the Biblical Text: This section is the heart of the lesson, in which the writer attempts to provide a theological and devotional exposition on the biblical text assigned for the lesson. The Scripture passage is divided into two or more subsections with an appropriate title for each subsection. The exposition will be devotional in nature, with adherence to theological accuracy.

What Do You Think?: Immediately following each expository subsection is a statement and/or a ques-

tion designed to challenge the reader to allow the biblical text to interact with his/her life experiences.

A Closing Thought: After the “Analysis of the Biblical Text” section, there is a brief statement designed to impress upon the reader's consciousness a relevant highlight of the lesson.

Your Life: The reader will be invited to reflect upon a statement and complete an assignment designed to challenge the student to “not let the lesson remain in the book.” It is important for each lesson to become “life-applied.”

Your World!: This is the evangelistic/missionally oriented activity, designed to challenge the reader to use the lesson as an affirmation of his/her faith journey or as an invitation to someone else to become a part of that faith journey.

Closing Prayer: Each lesson ends with an appropriate prayer, designed to seek God's zeal upon the teaching that has been imparted in the lesson session.

Conclusion (Preparing for Next Week's Lesson): This section will include a brief thought that provides a challenge to the reader as he/she begins to make preparation for the next lesson. It may also be a connector to the next session.

Home Daily Bible Readings: The Home Daily Bible Readings will be provided at the end of each lesson, in order to assist the reader in making devotional preparation for the next lesson. The reader is encouraged to read the biblical text for each of the days leading up to the Sunday of the lesson. Each of the readings is related in a devotional or theological way to the subject for that Sunday.

FALL QUARTER'S INTRODUCTION

The lessons of this Fall quarter emphasize the impact of disobedience to God and the influence of God's anointed transforming the believer's landscape.

Unit I, "From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People," explores Israel's transformation from a nomadic people to a nation-state. To begin, God renews God's covenant with Joshua and a new generation of Israelites (lesson 1) in Joshua 1. In moving into the land (Joshua 4), Joshua led Israel to remember all the ways and times God had provided for them, including crossing the Jordan (lesson 2). The book's core (chapters 6–12) outlines Israel's systematic defeat and destruction of other nations. This issue was problematic—as it has been used throughout the church's history to support imperialism and slavery. Lesson 3 offers an opportunity to unpack this violent narrative—the battles are not about Israel destroying other nations but about God fulfilling His promise of land (Joshua 11). While there is a thread of nationalism within the Bible, there is also a thread of universal love and acceptance, as represented by Rahab in Joshua 2–6 (lesson 4). Lesson 5 concludes the unit with the end of Joshua's life in Joshua 24, where he urged the people to remember their identity and remain faithful as the people of God.

Unit II, "Lacking Leadership and a Moral Compass," explores the theological and moral complexity of the book of Judges. Despite Joshua's warnings to remain faithful and remember their covenant identity, the Israelites fell into apostasy soon after his death. They recognized their sinful ways, repented, and called on God when trouble ensued. As soon as God intervened to save them, they turned away. Lesson 6 addresses the cyclical pattern of apostasy, repentance, and divine rescue that repeats throughout the book of Judges and is exemplified in chapter 2. Lesson 7 shows God's faithfulness in raising leaders despite Israel's unfaithfulness (Judges 3). Lesson 8 demonstrates the book's theme, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes," as depicted in chapter 17. Despite God's faithfulness, the people consistently fell back into religious impurity and lawlessness. The pattern of leadership in Judges highlights the fact that "Israel had no king," which ultimately formed the rationale for Israel's petition for a king in Samuel.

Unit III, "Samuel: Prophet, Priest, Judge, and King Maker," centers on Samuel as a model of faithful leadership. Throughout Israel's history and into the New Testament, Samuel exemplified one who walked faithfully with God (Jeremiah 15:1, Hebrews 11:32). Lesson 9 introduces Samuel (1 Samuel 3) as one who responded to God's call at an early age. Lesson 10 (1 Samuel 4) reflects Israel's continued struggle for control of Canaan. There is both spiritual and political significance to the Philistines' capture of Israel's sacred ark of the covenant. In the events of Lesson 11 (1 Samuel 7), the Ark was recovered, which marked an occasion in which Samuel showed his capacity to serve as God's prophet and judge by calling Israel to spiritual renewal and military readiness. Lesson 12 brings the study to a pivotal moment in Israel's history (1 Samuel 16) as Samuel clandestinely anointed David as God's chosen king. The unit concludes by leaping forward to David's coronation and his capture of Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 5, establishing the city as Israel's enduring center of worship and governance.

Home Daily Bible Readings (*August 31–September 6, 2026*)

MONDAY, August 31	"More than Victorious"	(Romans 8:31-39)
TUESDAY, September 1	"See What God Has Promised"	(Genesis 13:14-18)
WEDNESDAY, September 2	"The Promised Land Revealed"	(Deuteronomy 34:1-12)
THURSDAY, September 3	"God's Promised Rest"	(Hebrews 4:1-10)
FRIDAY, September 4	"God's New Covenant"	(Hebrews 10:14-18)
SATURDAY, September 5	"Whom Shall I Fear?"	(Psalm 27)
SUNDAY, September 6	"Be Strong and Courageous"	(Joshua 1:1-11)

Meet the Writer

The writer for this quarter of studies is **Dr. George C. W. Lyons Jr.**

Dr. George W. C. Lyons Jr. is the twelfth Senior Pastor of the historic Gillfield Baptist Church in Petersburg, Virginia.

Dr. Lyons is a native of Los Angeles and a graduate of the University of California- Los Angeles where he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree; The Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C. where he earned, with honors, the Master of Divinity degree and the Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. He has completed additional studies in the Department of Religion as a Ford Foundation fellow at Princeton University.

In a ministry that spans 36 years, Dr. Lyons has served congregations in California, Washington, D.C. and Tennessee. At each place of service, Dr. Lyons has found opportunities to serve in the community. He has held many positions within his denomination and with many other non-profit organizations.

Dr. Lyons and his wife are the parents of three young adult daughters. Most of all, Dr. Lyons is committed to carrying the good news message of Jesus Christ.

The ABCs of Salvation

Receiving Christ is as simple as ABC . . .

Admit that you have sinned.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “Since none of us are perfect, all of us are sinners” (see Romans 3:10-18).

The result of sin is spiritual death (Romans 6:23). Spiritual death means eternal separation from God. By God’s perfect standard, we are guilty of sin and therefore subject to the punishment for sin, which is separation from God. Admitting that we are sinners and separated from God is the first step of repentance, which is turning from sin and self and turning toward God.

Believe that Jesus Christ died for you.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Believe in Jesus Christ as God’s Son and receive Jesus’ gift of forgiveness from sin. God offers us salvation. Although we have done nothing to deserve His love and salvation, God provided salvation for all who would repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.

Confess your sin to God, and then confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life.

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to others.

Unit I: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

Renewing Our Commitments

DEVOTIONAL READING: Daniel 10:18-21

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Joshua 1

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1-11

KEY VERSE

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:9, KJV)

.....

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9, NIV)

Lesson Aims

Upon the completion of this lesson, the students will be able to do the following:

- Understand that God provides for His people.
- Realize that God develops leaders to guide believers.
- Live faithfully in covenant with God.

*Key Terms

Be strong (verse 6)—Hebrew: *châzaq* (khaw-zak’): to strengthen, prevail, harden, conquer; be courageous.

Commanded (verse 9)—Hebrew: *tsâvâh* (tsaw-vaw’): to [have] appointed, ordained, laid charge upon; gave orders.

Prosper (verse 7)—Hebrew: *sâkal* (saw-kal’): to be prudent, act wisely, have insight; “be successful” (NIV).

Servant (verse 1)—Hebrew: *’ebed* (eh’-bed): a slave, subject, worshipper; used in a special sense to refer to prophets and Levites—but in this case, it refers to Moses as the Lord’s servant.

Stand (verse 5)—Hebrew: *yâtsab* (yaw-tsab’): to set, place, or station oneself; to present oneself. The Lord promised the people of Israel that no one would be able to stand against them as He was with them.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Introduction

Transitions in life often bring both excitement and anxiety. Consider a moment when you took on a new responsibility like becoming a parent, leader, student, or employee. At first, the opportunity energized you, but as the duties became clearer, so did the weight of the assignment. Maybe you wrestled with questions like, “Am I prepared for this?” “What happens if I fail?” or lastly “How will I know what God wants from me?”



The Biblical Context

This chapter marks a defining moment for Israel. Moses, the great leader who brought the people out of Egypt, has died, and Joshua now assumes leadership. Joshua's appointment represents continuity rather than disruption. God uses Joshua to carry forward the covenantal mission shaped during Moses' leadership, emphasizing that Israel's future remains grounded in God's faithfulness. Leadership does not begin anew but is formed by obedience to God's enduring covenant expectations (Wray Beal, 39-41).

Joshua's task involved both military responsibility and spiritual leadership. The generation that left Egypt had died in the wilderness due to disobedience. This new generation, shaped by years of dependence on God's provision, now stood ready to claim the promise their parents had forfeited. The Book of Joshua presents Israel's past through a theological lens, emphasizing that success in the land depends on obedience to God's law rather than reliance on human strength or strategy. Faithfulness, not power, becomes the defining measure of leadership and community life (Brueggemann, 112-115). The command to meditate on the law "day and night" highlights the importance of God's instruction for Israel's future.

When God declares, "I will be with you," that promise becomes the foundation for Joshua's courage. Thus, the transition from Moses to Joshua allows Israel to renew its covenant commitments and loyalty to God.

Communities face similar moments. A new pastor arrives, a ministry changes direction, or families and churches move into new seasons that require fresh commitments. These times invite us to reexamine our relationship with God, rediscover our purpose, and seek God's guidance more.

Joshua and the Israelites experienced their own transition. After 40 years of wandering, they stood at the edge of the Promised Land. Moses was gone. Joshua was newly appointed and assigned by God to lead the Israelites into a new season of life. The people faced challenges that were not just geographic or political but also spiritual.

God's words to Joshua remind us that strength and courage come from God. As you explore this lesson, consider how God may be inviting you into renewed obedience, deeper trust, and fresh commitment in this season.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Joshua's Call into Leadership

(Joshua 1:1-4)

KJV

NOW AFTER the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

NIV

AFTER THE death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide:
2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites.

3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

4 Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

These verses introduce a significant leadership transition from Moses to Joshua. Moses, the leader of the Hebrew people through liberation from Egypt and forty years of wilderness wandering, is dead. God empowers Joshua to lead, not as a reward for personal achievement, but as a gracious calling rooted in

covenant faithfulness. This transition ensures continuity between God, the prophetic leadership, and the Hebrews as they prepare to enter the Promised Land. Joshua steps into a role already shaped by God's promises and purposes, reaffirming that leadership among God's people is grounded in divine initiative and enduring covenant commitment (Wray Beal, 42-44).

God defines the boundaries of the land, extending from the wilderness to Lebanon and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea. This description reaffirms the breadth of the promise first given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The land is presented not simply as territory to be possessed, but as the setting in which Israel is called to live faithfully in covenant with God and in right relationship with one another (Brueggemann, 116-118). By promising, "Every place the sole of your foot shall tread," God emphasizes partnership. Joshua must act in faith while trusting God to fulfill His promises. Leadership, therefore, begins with hearing God's voice, remembering God's past faithfulness, and stepping forward with dependence rather than self-reliance. Joshua understood his commitment to God as the new leader and was dedicated to serving God's people. This passage teaches that God equips and calls. Joshua's transition mirrors the moments when we, too, must embrace new roles, relying on God's presence and promises.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What new assignment or season of change are you facing? How might Joshua's call encourage you to trust God as you step forward in faith?

Courage to Live God's Law (*Joshua 1:5-9*)

KJV

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

NIV

5 No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

6 Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

7 "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

God reassures Joshua with a powerful promise: “I will be with you.” Divine presence, not military strategy, becomes the true basis of Israel’s strength (Coogan & Chapman, 199–200). Joshua’s courage must arise from God’s faithfulness, echoing Moses’ own experience of divine companionship. The repeated command to be strong and courageous teaches that courage is a response to God’s nearness and reliability, not merely a personality trait or natural confidence. Meditating on the Book of the Law anchors Joshua’s leadership in obedience. The “Book of the Law” refers to the instructions God had already given His people through Moses, meant to guide how the Israelites were to live as God’s covenant people in the land (Burch & Dozeman, 559–561). When Joshua keeps God’s Word close, it shapes his heart and directs his choices. In this passage, success is not defined by conquest but by faithfulness to God’s will.

Obedience also helps the community grow in healthy ways, shaping the Hebrews into a society guided by fairness, compassion, and faithfulness (Brueggemann, 118–120). Joshua’s courage is seen in his commitment to live God’s instructions openly and consistently. Joshua’s dedication to serving and leading the Israelite’s was a testament to his desire and dedication to serving God with his whole heart and taking seriously the responsibility the Israelite’s into the Promised Land so that they could fulfill their purpose as ordained by God. For believers today, this passage reminds us that God’s presence gives strength for challenges.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How might God be inviting you to practice courageous obedience? How could regular reading and reflection on scripture strengthen your determination during moments of uncertainty or fear?

Preparing the People to Enter God’s Promised Land (*Joshua 1:10-11*)

KJV

**10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,
11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.**

NIV

**10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people:
11 “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.’”**

Joshua moves from listening to God to acting in obedience. He instructs the officers to help the people prepare supplies and get ready to cross the Jordan within three days. Leadership here is shown through readiness, obedience, and shared responsibility, as the entire community prepares to move forward together (Wray Beal, 45–47). God’s promise becomes real only when the people respond with trust and preparation. Entering the land involves more than changing locations; it requires becoming a different kind of people (Burch & Dozeman, 562–565). The Israelites are called to shape their lives around faithfulness to God as they step into the future God has promised. Joshua’s instructions create a rhythm of faith in motion: God speaks, Joshua obeys, and the people prepare. Their readiness reflects a community united in purpose, trusting that God’s promise will unfold as they move forward. The three-day timeline creates urgency while also allowing time for thoughtful preparation. This balance between immediate action and careful planning reflects wisdom in spiritual leadership. Joshua does not rush the people impulsively, nor does he allow endless

delay. This final section invites believers to consider what spiritual or practical steps prepare us for the next phase of God’s work. Preparation might involve prayer, renewed commitment, or reorganizing priorities. Faith is active, requiring steps toward God’s promises even when the outcome is unseen.

 WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What practical or spiritual preparations might help you enter the next season of God’s purpose in your life, church, or community? What first step could you take this week?

A Closing Thought

Joshua’s commissioning shows that God calls and equips leaders to guide communities through times of transition. Strength and courage arise from God’s presence, while obedience to God’s Word shapes faithful living. As the Israelites prepared to enter the Promised Land, they were invited to renew their commitment and trust in God’s guidance. Today, we are called to embrace new responsibilities with confidence, trusting that God leads us into each new season with purpose and provision.

Your Life

Reflect on a moment when you sensed God inviting you into a new season. Identify one meaningful step you can take this week toward renewed obedience. Write a short prayer asking God to strengthen your courage and deepen your commitment to follow His guidance faithfully.

Your World!

Think about someone facing uncertainty about a life change. Share how God’s presence has strengthened you during transitions. Offer encouragement based on Joshua’s story and enthusiastically share your testimony. Your testimony may help them recognize God’s faithfulness and explore a deeper relationship with Jesus.

 Closing Prayer

Lord, guide us as You guided Joshua. Strengthen our hearts to trust Your presence, obey Your Word, and embrace each new season with courage and faith. Lead us forward. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week’s Lesson)

The lesson for Sunday, September 13, 2026, is “Family Legacies.” The Devotional Reading is Luke 8:35-39, the Background Scripture Joshua 4, and the Printed Passage is Joshua 4:14-24.

Home Daily Bible Readings		
MONDAY, September 7	“Hold Fast to the Traditions”	(2 Thessalonians 2:13-17)
TUESDAY, September 8	“Victory at the Sea”	(Exodus 14:21-31)
WEDNESDAY, September 9	“The Lord Goes Before Us”	(Numbers 10:29-36)
THURSDAY, September 10	“Do Not Be Afraid.”	(John 6:15-21)
FRIDAY, September 11	“Remember God’s Mighty Deeds”	(Psalm 77:11-20)
SATURDAY, September 12	“Remember Jesus’ Saving Work”	(1 Corinthians 11:23-27)
SUNDAY, September 13	“Crossing into the Promised Land”	(Joshua 4:14-24)

Unit I: From Nomadic Tribes to Settled People

Family Legacies

DEVOTIONAL READING: Luke 8:35-39

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Joshua 4

PRINT PASSAGE: Joshua 4:14-24

KEY VERSE

When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. (Joshua 4: 21-22, KJV)

.....

“In the future when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’” (Joshua 4:21-22, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Adhere to the instruction to remember God’s saving actions.
- Recognize memorials and rituals established to commemorate God’s goodness.
- Fully understand God’s steadfast love for us.

*Key Terms

Camped (verse 19)—Hebrew: *chânâh* (khaw-naw’): pitched tents, dwelled, rested; “encamped” (KJV).
Command (verse 16)—Hebrew: *tsâvâh* (tsaw-vaw’): to charge, appoint, ordain, give charge over, set in order.

Covenant (verse 18)—Hebrew: *berîyth* (ber-eeth’): a treaty, alliance, league, ordinance, pledge. God’s covenant with the Israelites included making Israel God’s treasured possession.

Stones (verse 20)—Hebrew: *’eben* (eh’-ben): weights; sacred objects (as memorials); plummets. Twelve stones were taken from the Jordan to be used as a reminder to the Israelites of how they crossed the river on dry land.

Waters (verse 18)—Hebrew: *mayim* (mah’-yim): watercourses; streams of water.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Introduction

Family stories can shape how we see ourselves. Many people remember hearing grandparents talk about the old days and how they had to travel or work through hardship. These stories become like an inheritance, reminding us where we come from and what values matter most. Today, many families keep memories through photographs, keepsakes, recordings, or spoken traditions that are passed down from one generation



The Biblical Context

Joshua 4 records a key moment in the Israelites' journey into the Promised Land. After God held back the Jordan River so the people could cross on dry ground, Joshua chose twelve representatives, one from each tribe, to gather stones from the riverbed. This act preserved the memory of what happened and served as a shared confession that God saved and carried them forward (Wray Beal, 73-75). Joshua set the stones at Gilgal as a memorial, marking God's faithfulness at a turning point. The memorial turned a miracle into a message for all.

In Israel's story, memorials helped the community remember the past in light of God's covenant promises (Brueggemann, 120-122). The stones at Gilgal stood as a public sign that the people's identity and future rested on God's continuing presence and guidance. The story was meant to be told again and again to offer remembrance of God's power and faithfulness. Joshua 4 shows how remembrance, storytelling, and worship practices shape the spiritual life of God's people..

to another. These practices keep us connected to our roots and to those who came before us.

The Israelites relied on similar practices. Standing at the Jordan River, they experienced a monumental act of God, crossing over on dry ground into the Promised Land. This moment was not just a historical event but a spiritual milestone that taught them and future generations about God's power and faithfulness. To help them remember, Joshua instructed twelve men to take stones from the riverbed and set them up at Gilgal.

These stones served as a visible reminder for parents and children alike. When future generations asked, "What do these stones mean?" Families would have an opportunity to share the story of God's deliverance. As you study this lesson, consider how your own stories of faith can inspire and strengthen those who follow.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

God Confirms Joshua's Leadership (Joshua 4:14-18)

KJV

14 On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

15 And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

16 Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan.

18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of

the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

NIV

14 That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses.

15 Then the LORD said to Joshua,

16 "Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan."

17 So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan."

18 And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before.

These verses show God confirming Joshua's leadership in a way the whole community can see. On that day, the Lord "magnified" Joshua before the Israelites, and the people stood in awe of him, much as they had stood in awe of Moses. The point is not that Joshua replaces Moses as a celebrity, but that God remains faithful from one season of leadership to the next (Burch & Dozeman, 587-589). Joshua's authority is grounded in God's call and God's presence, not in personal charisma or a title.

The ark is central in this scene. The priests carry the ark out of the Jordan at God's command, and the river returns to its flood stage as soon as their feet touch dry ground. This teaches the people that God's presence makes the crossing possible (Burch & Dozeman, 590). The ark is not a lucky object, and the priests are not performing a magic trick. Instead, God is showing the community that the Lord is active, powerful, and able to lead them forward.

Many of us have watched leadership change in a family, a church, or a workplace, and we know how uncertainty can rise. Joshua 4 reminds believers that God does not abandon God's people when a leader changes. God equips those God calls, and God's work continues through obedience. God's presence provides stability, trust, and direction for the community and through these provisions God calls us to pray for our leaders, to follow with unity, and to keep our focus on the God who leads us all.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How have you seen God affirm a leader in your life or community? What qualities helped you recognize God's presence working through them?

Stones That Teach Us to Remember (*Joshua 4:19-22*)

KJV

19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

20 And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal.

21 And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones?

22 Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.

NIV

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

20 And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan.

21 He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?'

22 "tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.'"

After the crossing, the people camp at Gilgal, and Joshua sets up twelve stones taken from the Jordan. Those stones become a memorial, a visible reminder that God made a way when there was no way. Memorial stones were used to help God's people remember what the Lord had done and to reflect on how those acts shaped their life with God (Wray Beal, 76). Joshua also explains the purpose of the memorial. One day, children will notice the stones and ask, "What do these stones mean?" That question opens the door for parents and elders to tell the story. The stones themselves are ordinary, but they point to an extraordinary

moment. They represent God's power and God's faithfulness. Remembrance is not only personal. It is something a community practices together. When people regularly remember God's faithfulness, they are less likely to forget God when life is comfortable and less likely to lose hope when life is hard (Brueggemann, 122-124). Stories of God's help strengthen the next generation before they face their own trials.

As believers in the twenty-first century we are to build simple "memorials" of God's work. It might be a written testimony, a family tradition, a song, a photo, a date circled on a calendar, or a quiet prayer of thanks. The goal is not to collect objects, but to keep God's faithfulness in view and to pass that faith forward with love.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are specific situations in your life that have led you to pause and remember God's faithfulness in your life? Share it with someone as encouragement today.

Remembering God for the Generations to Come

(Joshua 4:23-24)

KJV

**23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over:
24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.**

NIV

23 "For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over.

24 "He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God."

Joshua closes the memorial story by explaining why God dried up the Jordan. First, the miracle was meant to reveal God's power to "all the people of the earth." God was not only helping the Israelites; God was also making God's name known to the nations (Chapman & Coogan, 202). The crossing of the Jordan echoes the earlier crossing of the Red Sea, showing a consistent pattern of deliverance in Israel's history.

Second, the event was meant to shape the hearts of God's people "for ever." To "fear the Lord" does not mean to live in panic, but to live with deep reverence, worship, and respect. Joshua is teaching the people that remembering God's mighty acts should lead to lifelong trust and obedience. When communities remember what God has done, they grow in identity, gratitude, and faithful living.

In this sense, remembrance is active. Families retell the story, not to impress one another, but to keep faith alive and to prepare the next generation to trust God in new challenges. The memorial stones turned one day's miracle into a lasting lesson. When we share how God has helped us, we strengthen faith in our homes, encourage the church, and offer hope to those who are searching. Consider choosing one story of God's help and telling it this week. Keep it simple, honest, and God-centered, so others can see the Lord at work.

? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Who in your life needs to hear how God has worked for you? How could sharing your story strengthen their faith or spark hope?

A Closing Thought

The twelve stones at Gilgal remind us that remembering God’s faithfulness is part of living as God’s people. Israel learned to tell the story so future generations would trust God’s power and love. Today we are invited to preserve and share the ways God has worked in our lives, in our families and churches. Memorials, whether large or small, can anchor gratitude, strengthen faith, and encourage others to seek the Lord with hope and confidence.

Your Life

Think about a moment when you clearly experienced God’s help or guidance. Consider writing it down, sharing it with a loved one, or creating a simple reminder that helps you remember God’s faithfulness. This week, revisit that memory and thank God for the ways He continues to shape your journey.

Your World!

Share a story of God’s faithfulness with someone who feels uncertain or discouraged. Your testimony can offer a glimpse of God’s power and presence. Use it to strengthen your own walk with Christ and to invite them to consider the hope and strength found in relationship with Jesus.

Closing Prayer

God of our past and future, help us remember Your faithfulness and tell it to others. Shape our families with gratitude and trust as we follow You. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week’s Lesson)

Please be prepared for next week’s lesson. The lesson topic for Sunday, September 20, 2026, is “Fighting among the Nations.” The Devotional Reading is Psalm 108, the Background Scriptures are Joshua 6; 8:26; 10:28-43; 11:1-23; Deuteronomy 7:1-26, and the Printed Passage is Joshua 11:6-9, 16-23.

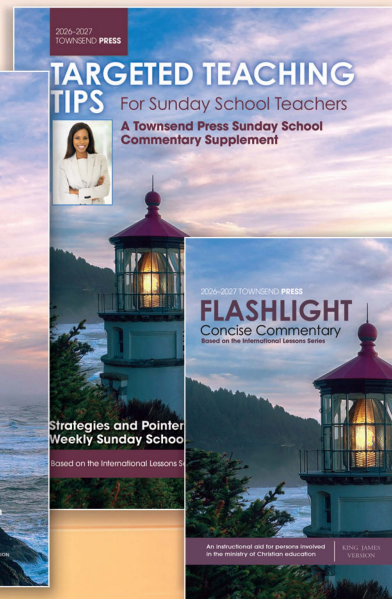
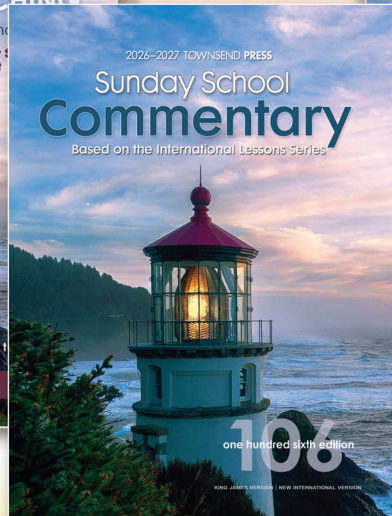
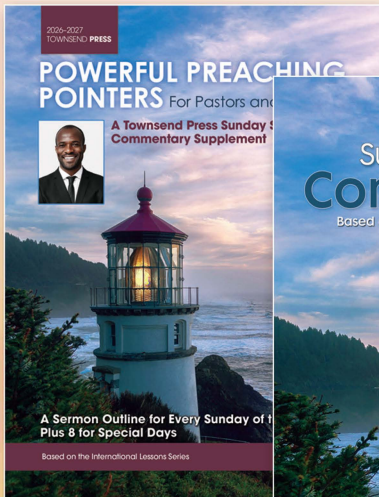
Home Daily Bible Readings		
MONDAY, September 14	“Live as God’s Treasured Possession”	(Deuteronomy 7:1-11)
TUESDAY, September 15	“God Will Love, Bless, and Multiply”	(Deuteronomy 7:12-26)
WEDNESDAY, September 16	“Strengthened in Every Circumstance”	(Philippians 4:10-19)
THURSDAY, September 17	“Armed for Spiritual Warfare”	(2 Corinthians 10:1-5, 15-18)
FRIDAY, September 18	“Christ Has Conquered the World”	(John 16:23-33)
SATURDAY, September 19	“God Fights for God’s People”	(Joshua 10:40–11:5)
SUNDAY, September 20	“God Brings Victory”	(Joshua 11:6-9, 16-23)

2026–2027

Townsend Press

Sunday School Commentaries and New Resources for Pastors, Ministers, and Teachers

BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSONS/UNIFORM SERIES



Order Today!

