

**The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe**  
**Week #6 – Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026**

**Discovering the Bible**

**October 14 & 15, 2025**

---

**Review**

1. The Journey
  - a. God's people live for forty years as nomads in the desert
  - b. Why do they take so long to get to the Promised Land?
    - i. As punishment for their distrust in God...
    - ii. As a time of growing and strengthening for what lies ahead...
    - iii. As a time of becoming a new people, with an older generation mostly passing from the scene and a new generation rising to take its place
  - c. Familiar Scenes: Ten Commandments, Golden Calf, the people's complaints and God's provision, Moses is succeeded by Joshua
  - d. The Great Commandment

**The Conquest**

2. Joshua 1:1-18 – Crossing the Jordan River
  - a. Finally, after decades of wandering, God's people will be led into their promised homeland
  - b. Joshua will be the leader: a great general blessed by God
  - c. But...it is God who actually leads and empowers the people
  - d. 1:5b – "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you."
  - e. 1:9 – "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
  - f. 1:11b – Joshua to the people – "Go in to take possession of the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess."
3. Joshua 6:1-27 – The Battle of Jericho
  - a. Jericho – the oldest city in the world
  - b. 7 Priests with 7 Trumpets of Ram's Horns and the Ark of the Covenant marching around the city 7 Times over 7 Days – then a great shout – and the walls fall down
  - c. Rahab (the prostitute) and her family are saved
  - d. The Hebrew people have a great victory – but it will not always be so
4. Joshua 24:1-28 – The Covenant at Shechem
  - a. Shechem – the first center of worship of the Hebrew people
  - b. Joshua is soon to die, but before he does he will remind the people of the faithfulness of their God to them and they will commit themselves (again) to follow God
  - c. Joshua retells the story of the people, beginning with Abraham, up to the present
  - d. 24:14 – "Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (for "the Lord" read "Yahweh" – God's name that is not spoken)
  - e. Joshua establishes the covenant by setting up a stone as proclamation and reminder
  - f. Joseph's bones are buried here
  - g. In a sense, the deliverance of the people from Egypt is now completed: they have taken up residence in the Promised Land

5. Judges 2:6-23 – Israel Forgets God
  - a. No sooner does Joshua die than the people forget their covenant with God
  - b. 2:11 – “Then the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and worshiped the Baals, and they abandoned the Lord...”
  - c. Baal(s) – Canaanite fertility god(s) – the male version, with Asherah the female version
  - d. Israel alternately worships God and worships other gods
  - e. God raises up “judge” to lead the people – and things will go well for a while – but then they will relapse into the ways of the peoples around them
  - f. This pattern – of faithfulness and faithlessness – will continue throughout Israel’s history
6. Judges 6:1-40 – Gideon and the Altar of Baal
  - a. The Tribes of Israel are at war with the Midianites...and the Midianites are winning
  - b. Finally, the Israelites call on the Lord, and the Lord answers by calling Gideon to be their leader
  - c. Gideon destroys the local altar of Baal, and the townspeople call for Gideon to die, but instead, Gideon rallies some of the Tribes
  - d. Gideon asks for a sign from God, asking God to make a fleece wet, and then dry, and it is so, and Gideon therefore trusts God, and he wins the victory against the Midianites
7. Judges 13:1-5 & 16:4-31 – Samson and Delilah
  - a. Israel again is unfaithful to God, and this time they do battle with the Philistines
  - b. From the Tribe of the Danites, God raises up a new champion for the people: Samson
  - c. Samson is a Judge, dedicated to God as a Nazirite, known for his unusual strength
  - d. Samson successfully fights against the Philistines, until he falls in love with Delilah, who betrays him, finding the source of his strength (his hair). The Philistines capture Samson, destroy his eyes, and imprison him. But his hair grows back, and he pulls down the pillars of a house where the Philistine leaders are, killing them all. He also is killed, and buried with his ancestors.
8. I Samuel 3:1-21 – Samuel the Prophet
  - a. Yet another story of a great Judge or Prophet raised by God to protect and save the people
  - b. Eli is a good leader, but he does not restrain his faithless sons, so God calls Samuel to become the new Judge/Prophet
  - c. For a long time, “The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread,” (v1b), but now in Samuel, God is again on the move
9. I Samuel 7:3-17 – Samuel Rules Israel
  - a. The people again commit to faithful worship and obedience to God
  - b. Samuel’s wisdom and blessing from the Lord makes him a wise and good ruler
  - c. After a final victory over the Philistines, Samuel erects a stone and calls it “Ebenezer” – which means “Stone of Help”
  - d. Samuel would yearly visit all the territory of Israel
  - e. From his home at Ramah, he would “administer justice”

### Questions for Your Life Today

- A. The period of the conquest and settlement of the Promised Land lasts at least 200 years. Over that time, how is God faithful to the people? And how are they faithless to God? And what does this teach us about our own history, our own story?
- B. What do we learn in the “wilderness” periods of our own lives? What do those periods look like for us?
- C. What other “gods” tempt us in our own day to forsake the worship and ways of the one, true God?
- D. Are there significant places in your own journey of faith, like Shechem?
- E. Who are the Joshuas, Gideons, Samsons, and Samuels of our own day? Do they exist at all?
- F. What do we learn about us from these stories?
- G. What do we learn about God?

*Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California*

*Primary Source: Discovering the Bible: A New Generation, published by The Kerygma Program, Pittsburgh, PA. Boyd Lien, author.*