

CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

A New Beginning—Worth Waiting For

Exodus 12:29–36, 40–42

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

A sense of exile—wandering without belonging—has plagued us all from the moment the Lord banished Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden . . . the moment humans became spiritual nomads looking for wholeness in a broken world. Without God, we'll do whatever we can using whatever it takes to find even a taste of that belonging, but all feelings of ease become only a mirage.

Thanks be to God that He did not confine us to our own machinations, but He stepped in to cease our wanderings. From Adam and Eve's animal-skin clothing to Noah's wooden ark to Abram's call from Ur, God proved Himself the God of new beginnings right from the start. Only God can change us from vagabonds with no clear direction to pilgrims who journey along the spiritual path to our eternal home.

In this series, Chuck Swindoll will lead our Bible study from the exodus to the promised land, inviting us to cease our wandering and join in worship of the one true God.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In these *Searching the Scriptures* studies, we follow Chuck's four-step method for studying the Bible as detailed in his book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*. We provide these studies to help you prepare from God's Word your own spiritual meals. Here's a chart to aid you in your Bible study.

Quotable

*The cross was
the gate that
took us from
slavery to freedom.
Celebrate.
Remember.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES Bible Study Review Chart	
OBSERVATION	
<i>Read the passage thoroughly</i>	<p>When we observe our passage, we examine:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The who, what, where, when, why, and how 2) What you can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell 3) The logical connections, flow of thoughts, and range of subjects 4) What's repeated, emphasized, related, alike, and unlike
INTERPRETATION	
<i>Understand the passage deeply</i>	<p>When we interpret our passage, we study:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The author's language and literary genre 2) The author's culture 3) The historical events 4) The biblical context 5) The author's beliefs about God and life
CORRELATION	
<i>Compare the passage carefully</i>	<p>When we correlate our passage, we compare:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Our passage's history with biblical texts addressing the same event 2) Our passage's theology with biblical texts addressing the same core truths 3) Our passage's application with biblical texts addressing the same principles
APPLICATION	
<i>Internalize the passage personally</i>	<p>When we apply a passage, we:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Look for ways to pray in light of what the passage teaches 2) Ask questions about your behaviors or thoughts that need to change 3) Heed our Lord's warnings 4) Obey our Lord's commands 5) Believe our Lord's promises
<p><i>Remember: we study the Bible to cultivate our relationship with our risen Lord—and as the great reformer Philip Melanchthon said, "To know Christ is to know his benefits."</i></p>	



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Because we're at the beginning of a new series, consider adding resources to your library. Chuck recommends adding one per month. You may want to add a:

- Study Bible—we recommend *The Swindoll Study Bible*
- Commentary—we recommend *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* or *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*
- Bible Dictionary—we recommend *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*
- Bible Atlas—we recommend the *Zondervan Essential Atlas of the Bible*

Chuck's series *Changing Wanderers into Worshipers* catapults us into Jewish history on the night of the Passover prior to the Israelites leaving Egypt through the front door. The Egyptians bid them *and their God* farewell after He struck dead all the firstborn sons in the land who had not been protected by the blood on the door posts. The Passover changed the course of history for the Jewish people and became the central event around which God created the Jewish calendar.

Exodus 12 contains the record of that night. Previously, God made a covenant with Abraham to restore the blessing forfeited by Adam and Eve. God said He would turn Abraham into a great nation but wouldn't do so until Abraham's progeny spent more than four hundred years enslaved in Egypt. After the centuries passed, the great I AM commissioned Moses to tell Pharaoh, "Let my people go!" We enter the scene when Pharaoh finally said, "Leave".

Before we commence, write a prayer asking God's blessing on your study.



Observation

We'll cover *Exodus 12:1–13:16* to lay a foundation for this series. Don't feel intimidated. We'll help you navigate the verses so you can ascertain the author's thrust and key theological principles for belief and practice.



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The First Passover—Exodus 12:1–28

Read through this passage slowly. Summarize it in a couple of sentences and note a few key observations.

How does 12:12 describe God's purpose for the last plague?

According to 12:14–17, how should the Israelites commemorate the event?

How did the people respond to God's commands through Moses and Aaron according to 12:27–28?



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Pharaoh's Release—Exodus 12:29–32

Read through this passage slowly. Summarize it in a couple of sentences and note a few key observations.

Don't forget to read as though you're walking through the homes, along the streets, and in the fields of the Egyptians so you can get a feel for the calamitous weight of the tenth plague.

The Departure—Exodus 12:33–42

Read through this passage slowly. Summarize it in a couple of sentences and note a few key observations.

What did the Israelites leave Egypt with according to 12:34–36?

Who left with the Israelites according to 12:38?



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Passover Instructions for Foreigners—Exodus 12:43–51

Read through this passage slowly. Summarize it in a couple of sentences and note a few key observations you see in the passage.

Dedication of the Firstborn—Exodus 13:1–16

Read through this passage slowly. Summarize it in a couple of sentences and note a few key observations you see in the passage.

Now that we've applied the blood to the doorposts, eaten the lamb, viewed the dead carcasses, and exited Egypt with the Israelites, let's dig a little deeper into the history and theology of Exodus 12:1–13:16.



Interpretation

Let's begin with our Bible dictionary. Look up *Passover* and record below notes you gleaned from your reading.



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Exodus 12:1–28 records the instructions for the first Passover. Then 12:43–51 restates and adds information regarding the celebration. Considering the presence of a “rabble of non-Israelites” that exited Egypt with the Israelites (Exodus 12:38), why is Exodus 12:43–51 important?

Exodus 12:2–3, 14–17, 24–27; 13:3, 5, 8–9, 16 all explain the importance of *remembering* and *celebrating* the work God had done for the Israelites. Based on your understanding of these passages, why is our act of remembering and celebrating important in our walk with God? What do we lose if we don't remember God's Word or His acts?

If you want to study further, we recommend perusing your commentary or visiting [Lumina](#), which has the NET Bible and Constable's Notes—both of which are free. We've provided space below for you to record any notes from your personal study.



Correlation

Because we'll spend about a third of our series in the book of Exodus, we'll use correlation to examine the core text for understanding this book and the Israelite journey to the promised land. In Exodus 6:6–8, God spoke to Moses and revealed what He was going to do for His people.



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“Therefore, say to the people of Israel: ‘I am the LORD. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt. I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the LORD!’”

Review the passage carefully and record the key ideas in the passage. Look for what God planned to do, why He was doing it, and His desired outcome.



Application

We’ve spent a lot of time observing and interpreting our passage in this study. For application, we’ll focus on only one principle: *the value of reflection*. Remembering is as relevant for the Christian life today as it was for the Israelites back then. That’s why we have holidays to celebrate our Lord’s death and resurrection as well as the meal He gave us to partake when we meet.

Reflect and record the importance of spiritual celebration in your own life. Have you thought much about this spiritual discipline? What are some ways you can add spiritual depth to your next holiday? Or perhaps you can create a special holiday to mark spiritually significant events, such as a celebration for the day you became a Christian or were baptized. What are some of your ideas?



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Is there something new you can do to enhance your awareness and appreciation of how God has worked in your life and what He's done for you through the work of His Son, Jesus Christ? You could make remembering a key part of your devotional time, prayer time at the dinner table, or schedule a short retreat to simply remember God's faithfulness.

Almost fifteen hundred years prior to Jesus' coming, God was preparing the world for His reception. The institution of the Passover reveals that God is a promise-keeping God who, through Jesus, redeems people from spiritual slavery so that they may know Him, worship Him, and gain hope in Him.

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16–17)



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, how amazing it is that we get to read of Your work that occurred thousands of years ago. We have Your words from Moses through which You have proclaimed that You are the great I AM—having no beginning or end. Thank You for preparing the world for Your Son in whom I've received a new beginning. Help me to remember this. I'm no longer wandering but living with Your unshakable joy that will only grow in my relationship with You, which also will have no end. In Jesus' name, amen.



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LET'S BEGIN HERE

With a mighty hand the Lord brought plagues that destroyed the pride of Egypt. With a mighty hand the Lord humbled Egypt's exalted Pharaoh to beg before Moses. With a mighty hand the Lord released the Jews from the house of slavery. But this was only the beginning.

Today we'll walk with the Israelites who followed the pillar of cloud by day and the column of fire by night. We'll feel their suspense as Egypt hemmed them in near the Red Sea. We'll feel the awe they experienced when they witnessed the mighty hand of God form walls out of the parted waters.

From Exodus 13:17–14:31, Chuck Swindoll teaches us to trust God even when life seems impossible and to let Him fight our battles, so we can rest in His victories.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Can you imagine sitting near the evening fire after carrying bricks for fourteen hours and listening to your grandpa recount God's promises to Abraham:

"You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. . . . I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from the border of Egypt to the great Euphrates River." (Genesis 15:13–14, 18)

I wonder if it's been four hundred years? would probably be the first question to come to mind. For centuries, many lived without seeing the mighty hand of God, but during the time of Moses, God said, "Now!" He didn't lie or bluff Abraham. He wasn't too weak or busy. He waited, and at the best time, He acted.

Quotable

*Our Lord does
His best work
in impossible
situations. Never
doubt that He will
guide you through
the unpredictable.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Before we study the works of our unrestrainable God, pray that He will bless you in this study—that He will give you clarity to witness His works afresh so you can grow in your understanding of Him and His will for your life.



Observation

In the first study, we provided a *Searching the Scriptures* review chart for your reference as you study the Bible. Refer to it as needed during each of the steps in this study. We've divided *Exodus 13:17–14:31* into four paragraphs. The link provides these divisions for you and presents Chuck's two favorite versions of the Bible: the New Living Translation and the New American Standard Bible.

Heading South—Exodus 13:17–22

Read this passage slowly and note key observations below.

Peruse this [map](#) to visualize the exodus routes. Jot down any notes if you want.

Note the two unusual ways God guided the Israelites mentioned in the passage.



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God's Purpose with Pharaoh—Exodus 14:1–4

Read this passage slowly and note key observations below.

What is unusual about God's instructions in this paragraph?

Fear Before Egypt—Exodus 14:5–14

Read this passage slowly and note key observations below.

What two commands from Moses in 14:13–14 demonstrate God's unusual leading?



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Through the Waters—Exodus 14:15–31

Read this passage slowly and note key observations below.

What was unusual about God's command to Moses and the Israelites?

How did the author characterize God's work in 14:31? (Reference the NASB footnote *n* for the literal translation of *power*.)

In epic fashion, God confirmed His promises to the Israelites and publicized His power as Moses led the Jews in the beginning of their journey. God likes to lead us in unusual ways because He specializes in remarkable results that only He can accomplish.



Interpretation

Sometimes the author of a book in the Bible will help us understand God's work by commenting directly on God's purposes. Let's begin by looking at these explicit comments.



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According to Exodus 13:17–18, why did God lead the Israelites south instead of northeast? What does this tell you about God's ways?

According to 14:3–4 and 17–18, why did God cause Pharaoh and the Egyptian army to chase after the Israelites? What does this tell you about God's ways?

Biblical authors also illustrate their theology through the actions and words of the people in the story. Compare what Pharaoh said about the Israelites in 14:5 with what the Israelites said to Moses in 14:12. What do their statements reveal about the necessity of God's influence in our minds and hearts to help us interpret His works?

How did the Egyptians' words in 14:25 accomplish God's plans mentioned in 14:3–4 and 17–18?



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What would be the evidence of Israel's faith if they obeyed Moses' commands in Exodus 14:13?

After God's unusual leading depicted in this passage, how did the Israelites have a change of heart according to 14:31?

If you want to dig deeper, consult your commentary, dictionary, or [Lumina](#) to read about Exodus 13:17–14:31, and record your notes.

Not long after God initiated the fulfillment of His promises, the Israelites wanted to return to slavery at the sight of Pharaoh's army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. "It's better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness," they cried out in fear (Exodus 14:12). They couldn't imagine if or how God would help them. But He did help them because He is the God who fights for His people.

Fast-forward more than 1,400 years, and we see God wrestle sin and death, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, to give us life and peace. Just as the Israelites worshiped God who made a way through the sea and defeated Pharaoh's army, take a moment to pause and sit in awe of the same God we also worship.



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Correlation

Israel's passing through the sea became a dominant theme in the minds of the biblical authors. They worshiped the God who divided the waters, led them to their own land, and formed them into a nation. Later, when the Israelites rebelled against God, He exiled them to foreign lands. However, God offered them hope that they would one day return. Writing about seven hundred years after the exodus event, the prophet Isaiah recorded these words from God:

*I am the LORD, who opened a way through the waters,
making a dry path through the sea.
I called forth the mighty army of Egypt
with all its chariots and horses.
I drew them beneath the waves, and they drowned,
their lives snuffed out like a smoldering candlewick.
But forget all that—
it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.
For I am about to do something new.
See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?
I will make a pathway through the wilderness.
I will create rivers in the dry wasteland. (Isaiah 43:16–19)*

About seven hundred years after Isaiah, John the Baptist probably quoted this passage when the Jews stepped into the water to be baptized and to prepare for the Messiah, whom we now know as Jesus Christ.

Later, the apostle Paul referenced the exodus overtones of slavery and freedom in [Romans 6](#), comparing Israel's redemption with the newer, more drastic redemption offered by God through Christ. Read Romans 6 and summarize what Paul said about life prior to accepting God's grace. Compare that to the freedom we find when we place our faith in Christ. See a pattern in God's work?



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Application

Chuck wrote, “Application is the crowning accomplishment of Bible study—the finishing touch, the ultimate setting of the diamond in the ring of truth.”¹

How do you respond when you’re in a pressing situation—even a pressing season of life? When you’re getting the squeeze, do you try to avoid or control the situation, or do you turn to God in prayer, requesting His comfort and guidance? What does this look like practically?

Notice what Moses commanded the Israelites: “Stand still . . . watch . . . stay calm” (Exodus 14:13–14). Perhaps you simply need a full night’s sleep. Or you may just need to sit still and ask God to help release the grip of anxiety. Reflect and consider how you can be still and watch God work in your life.

Do you know someone who’s living frantically without rest in Christ? Say a prayer that God would grant this person rest so he or she can see God's power as He works in our world.

At the end of his sermon, Chuck reminds us that we begin to be worshipers when we realize the sea opens and closes at God’s choosing—not before or after but only when and if He commands it. Take comfort that our God “*chose* to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us” (1 Thessalonians 5:9, emphasis added).



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, You are not a tame God who succumbs to the whims of Pharaoh or collapses beneath heavy waters. You are enthroned above the waters, and You steer the heart of Pharaoh. Thank You for softening my heart to see Your divine light and taste the new life I have in Your Son, Jesus. In His name I pray, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 160.



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From Eagles' Wings to Hornets' Stings

Exodus 19:1–20; 23:20–33

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Whether you're constructing a home that's three thousand square feet, organizing an event for five hundred people, hosting your friends for dinner, or building a dog house, you must prepare. All projects require preparation—and the bigger the project, the more groundwork you need.

The parting of waters and destruction of the Egyptians were only the beginning of the Israelites' journey from wanderers to worshipers. They still needed preparation, so God did not immediately march them north into the promised land after their rescue. Rather, He stationed them at Mount Sinai for nearly a year so they could prepare to be His holy nation.

Today, we'll land at the foot of Mount Sinai with the Israelites and encounter the fiery presence of God so that we, too, may learn to take God seriously and trust Him completely.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Imagine walking where Moses walked, near Mount Sinai, upon the sand, tending sheep. Then, out of the corner of your eye, you spot a flaming bush. Seeing no one around, you approach the bush, notice that it's engulfed in fire but isn't blackening, and then you hear a voice from within the bush call out your name and say, "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground."

We find that scene in Exodus 3 as God initiated the removal of His people from Egyptian tyranny. God said to Moses,

"I will be with you. And this is your sign that I am the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain." (Exodus 3:12)

After the frogs, the hail, and the days of night, God led the Israelites out of Egypt with the Egyptians' gold, took His people through walls of water, and brought them to Mount Sinai—the very mountain where Moses received His commission, the very mountain where all the Israelites would soon experience the same awesome fire and receive their own calling.

Quotable

*Take God seriously
and trust God
completely. The
Israelites then,
like us today,
needed these two
commitments
in place as they
became worshipers
of the one,
true God.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Observation

We begin our study of *Exodus 19:1–25 and 23:20–33* with a slow reading of each section. To aid you in each step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method, refer to the chart provided in the first study of this series, “A New Beginning—Worth Waiting For.”

Rendezvous at Sinai—Exodus 19:1–9

Slowly read this passage.

Where were the Israelites, and how long had it been since they left Egypt (Exodus 19:1–2)?

How did the Lord describe His deliverance in 19:4?

In 19:5–6, what three promises did the Lord offer Israel if they kept His covenant?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

In what form did the Lord say He would appear before the Israelites, and what did God intend for them to do once He appeared according to 19:7–9?



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Using your observation tools, record any other significant details you find.

God's Arrival—Exodus 19:10–25

According to Exodus 19:10–15, what were the instructions God gave the people via Moses to prepare for His coming?

What would happen to the people or the animals if they didn't follow God's instructions (Exodus 19:12–13)?

According to 9:16–20, what were the signs of God's presence?

According to 19:19, after Moses spoke to God, what did God's voice sound like from the mountain?



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S03
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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS
From the Exodus to the Promised Land
From Eagles' Wings to Hornets' Stings
Exodus 19:1–20; 23:20–33

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
STUDY

Using your observation tools, record any other significant details you find.

Looking Ahead to the Promised Land—Exodus 23:20–33

Slowly read this passage.

In Exodus 23:20–23, what did God say the angel would do for the Israelites? Describe the relationship between God and the angel.

Let's see what God promised to do if the people obeyed His commands. How many times did God say, "I will," and what accompanied each promise in 23:22–33?

Using your observation tools, record any other significant details you find.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

From Eagles' Wings to Hornets' Stings

Exodus 19:1–20; 23:20–33

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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Did you notice that God said, “I am sending an angel before you to . . . lead you safely to the place I have prepared for you,” (Exodus 23:20)? Makes you think of Jesus’ words to us:

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.” (John 14:1–3)

The exodus of Israel foreshadowed God’s later work of redemption in Jesus Christ.



Interpretation

During interpretation, we determine what our passage means and how it is significant for us today. Remember to consult your [Bible dictionary](#) and commentaries to look up key ideas. Also, Constable’s Notes are a wonderful free resource available on [Lumina](#).

In Exodus 19:3–10, why did God give the Israelites special instructions to prepare for His coming?

The Israelites came out of Egypt’s polytheistic milieu. What statement in Exodus 19:5 challenged the Egyptian worldview?

Why is this important even for you and me today?



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What did God mean when He said Israel would be His “special treasure,” “kingdom of priests,” and “holy nation” (Exodus 19:5–6)?

What should the Israelites have learned about God from His appearance to them in 19:16–20?

Record any additional interpretive notes, and summarize how Exodus 19 is important for us today as we think about God’s attributes and character.

According to Exodus 23:22, why should the Israelites have trusted that God would be with them and give them the promised land?

According to *Genesis 15:16*, why did God remove the tribes from the land as He mentioned in Exodus 23:23?



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Exodus 19:1–20; 23:20–33

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What did God mean when He said He would send “terror” or “hornets” ahead of the Israelites to drive out the peoples in the land (Exodus 23:28)?

What were the Israelites to guard against once they entered the land according to 23:24, 32–33?

Record any other important interpretive details in 23:20–33, and summarize why this text is important for you and me today?

They witnessed the mountain ablaze, heard the thunderous voice from the smoke, and felt the ground shake. That day, the Israelites learned that God controls more than drops of water in the sea. He’s the God who owns the earth. Astonishingly, this same God cares about our days and how we live our lives, and He wants to bless us—to do good things for us. Let’s never lose our sense of awe for God.



Correlation

During correlation, we compare our main passage with other biblical passages to better understand the topics our text addresses. Today, we’ll examine 1 Peter 2:1–12.

The apostle Peter wrote this letter a few decades after Jesus’ resurrection. Peter wanted to help Christians on their spiritual journey.



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STUDY

First, slowly read through *1 Peter 2:1–12*.

How does 1 Peter 2:1–3 relate to our main passage, and why are Peter's instructions significant for you and me today?

How did Peter describe the church in 2:5; 2:9; and 2:11? How does this relate to our main passage, and how does it differ? Why are the differences important?

By the grace of God, we can say that He's called us out of darkness into His marvelous light through Christ our Lord.



Application

Now let's internalize the text in our own lives so that we may "grow into a full experience of salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

Chuck Swindoll helpfully provided two key takeaways for today's lesson.

1. *Take God seriously.*
To take God seriously, we first need a heart that is holy—a heart consecrated to God, devoted to His ways, attentive to His instructions, and confident in His promises. Consider these four descriptions: *consecrated*, *devoted*, *attentive*, and *confident*. Which of these words stands out as an area in which you need improvement? Write down ways taking God seriously in this area can help you grow in holiness.



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2. *Trust God completely.*

Chuck says we can do this by focusing on the objective God has given us rather than the obstacles hindering us and by doing what's courageous rather than expecting a freebie. Do either of these principles strike your heart as you consider your season of life? Jot down what these would look like during your days as you seek to trust God completely.

We never move beyond our need to take God seriously and to trust God completely. As Peter mentioned, our worldly desires wage war against our very souls. So we fight this war with the power of God's Word by God's Spirit in order to remain vigilant in our walk with Him. He's promised to walk with us the entire journey.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, how awesome was Your presence at Mount Sinai before Moses and the people of Israel. How even more amazing it is to think of Your Son, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, hanging on splintered wood for my sins. Because of His sacrifice and through His resurrection power, please help me to take Your Word seriously and to trust You completely because You are worthy. I pray this in Jesus' name, amen.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Generosity: Willing Hearts, Stirred Within

Selections from Exodus 25–36

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

The Israelites witnessed plagues of gnats, flies, and locusts in Egypt. The children of Jacob followed a cloud by day and fire by night, traversed through walls of water, and beheld Mount Sinai emblazoned with flames. God displayed His glory before them, but that was only the beginning.

God wanted a place among His people where they could encounter His glory safely . . . glory that would dwell as a cloud in a portable tent rather than as an inferno on a mountain.

In this study, we'll explore with Chuck Swindoll selections of Exodus 25–36 and discover how God's call for the Israelites to build His tabernacle stirred their hearts to generosity. We'll see how God continues to stir the hearts of His people today and delights in cheerful givers. Have you had your heart stirred lately?



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

After all God accomplished before the Israelites, they knew He had the power to do whatever He wanted. After removing slave-driving Pharaoh, God determined to be near His people; rather than creating His own dwelling, which they knew He could have done with ease, He called the Israelites to participate in building it.

So we pick up our story where we left off in the previous *Searching the Scriptures* study—at the foot of Mount Sinai. Moses received the covenant and covenant law in Exodus 20–24. The covenant became their national code of conduct as the worshipers of the one, true God as well as their badge of identity as the people of the one, true God.

Now we turn to the tabernacle, which God used to show the Israelites He was not ignorant, aloof, or negligent of those under His care. He was close and ready to bless.

Quotable

*It's in times
of rest and reflection
that we give
serious and lengthy
thought to the
good hand of God
upon our lives.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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STUDY

Before this study, you may want to sit still before God—maybe even sing a favorite worship song—and ask God to stir your heart as you seek Him through His Word.



Observation

During observation, we read the passage thoroughly, merely focusing on reading the lines of the text rather than reading “between the lines.”

Instructions for the Tabernacle—Exodus 25–31:11

In *Exodus 25:1–2*, what was God’s clear directive to Moses for the people of Israel?

What’s unique about this directive compared to the directives the Israelites were accustomed to from Pharaoh?

In what way was God specific in His call to the Israelites according to *Exodus 25:3–7*?



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Generosity: Willing Hearts, Stirred Within

Selections from Exodus 25–36

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According to [Exodus 25:8–9](#), what was the contribution for, and how were they to accomplish God's directive?

After God outlined the tabernacle plans in Exodus 25:10–30:11—plans for the ark of the covenant, lamp-stand, altar, table, curtains, priestly robes, and so on—He then issued His final instructions . . . something we wouldn't have expected.

The Requirement to Rest—Exodus 31:12–18

The Israelites learned quickly that God ruled far differently from ruthless Pharaoh. While Pharaoh had commanded brick-laden work, God commanded worshipful rest.

Slowly read [Exodus 31:12–18](#).

According to 31:13 and 31:17, why did God command the Sabbath rest for the people of Israel?

According to 31:16, how did the Sabbath rest relate to the covenant?



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What were the people of Israel supposed to remember about the Lord during the Sabbath according to 31:17?

Jeopardizing the Covenant—Exodus 32–34

Slowly read *Exodus 32*. Briefly summarize the events of this chapter.

Slowly read *Exodus 33*. Briefly summarize the events of this chapter.

Slowly read *Exodus 34*. Briefly summarize the events of this chapter.



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God's Renewed Covenant and the Israelites' Renewed Obedience—Exodus 35:1–9

After Moses interceded for the people and God renewed the covenant, the narrative returns to the construction of the tabernacle right where we left off in Exodus 31:18.

Then Moses called together the whole community of Israel and told them, “These are the instructions the LORD has commanded you to follow. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day must be a Sabbath day of complete rest, a holy day dedicated to the LORD. Anyone who works on that day must be put to death. You must not even light a fire in any of your homes on the Sabbath.” (Exodus 35:1–3)

Imagine how the Israelites felt when they learned about God's willingness to continue dwelling among His people—the people who broke the covenant while God was engraving it onto stone.



Interpretation

The subject of our selections from Scripture focuses upon the completion of the tabernacle. So take a moment to look up *tabernacle* in your Bible dictionary and record what you find insightful.

Before the people handed over their scarlet thread, ram skins, and olive oil, God wanted them to rest—to keep His Sabbath. Look up *Sabbath* in your Bible dictionary and record what interests you.



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As the Israelites ceased their laboring, they reflected on God and demonstrated their obedience to the covenant. According to the stirring of each one's heart, they gave of their possessions. All the materials funneled toward the completion of the tabernacle which accomplished the intent of the covenant—communion with one another. This stirred their hearts so much, look at what happened:

So the whole community of Israel left Moses and returned to their tents. All whose hearts were stirred and whose spirits were moved came and brought their sacred offerings to the LORD. They brought all the materials needed for the Tabernacle, for the performance of its rituals, and for the sacred garments. Both men and women came, all whose hearts were willing. . . . Finally the craftsmen who were working on the sanctuary left their work. They went to Moses and reported, "The people have given more than enough materials to complete the job the LORD has commanded us to do!" So Moses gave the command, and this message was sent throughout the camp: "Men and women, don't prepare any more gifts for the sanctuary. We have enough!" So the people stopped bringing their sacred offerings. Their contributions were more than enough to complete the whole project." (Exodus 35:20–22; 36:4–7)

Can you imagine a pastor telling his congregants, "Don't give anymore; we have plenty," or a politician telling his constituents, "Our campaign funds are full; please stop donating"?



Correlation

God's command to build a tabernacle signified His desire to be among His people moving the hearts of the Israelites to contribute toward its construction out of their riches. They valued God's presence more than their gold and silver. Let's take a moment to simply reflect on our *riches* in Christ.

*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in **riches** for all who call on Him.* (Romans 10:12 NASB, emphasis added)

*You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you **rich**.* (2 Corinthians 8:9, emphasis added)

*And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious **riches**, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 4:19, emphasis added)

A hope that can't die, a body that can't perish, a relationship that can't fail, a new world that can't corrode, a peace that can't waver, a joy that can't fade—the Lord of the universe has placed His gaze upon your helpless state and empty hands. He has put His gold crown upon your head, set His purple robe on your back, slipped His ring upon your finger, and adopted you as His own. You are rich, indeed.



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Application

This week, schedule a time of Sabbath rest, even if it's just an hour or two, to reflect on God's goodness toward you. Consider what you've learned about God through our study today and the immense privilege we have as God's children. Use the space below to journal during this reflection time if you wish. Lastly, consider how God may be prompting you to give generously to His mission so others might receive the riches He's given you.



A FINAL PRAYER

Reflecting upon the construction of the tabernacle and your riches in Christ, write a prayer in response to your time in this study.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Investing in Things Eternal . . . Being Blessed

Selections from Exodus 38–40

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Stock markets may crash. Homes burn. Banks fail. Governments default. In this life, our investments accumulate atop a foundation as sturdy as wet sand. It may collapse. Maybe not.

While the uncertainty of life can make earthly investments a shaky business, it doesn't mean all hope is lost. The impermanence of things doesn't have to rob us of meaning nor our bodies' natural deterioration stifle our lives from echoing in eternity's hallways. God has revealed Himself by stepping out of eternity onto earth; He's given us the blueprints, via His Word, for constructing a life of everlasting significance—a life that brings us blessing and God glory.

Let's join Chuck Swindoll in Exodus 38–40 to examine the eternal investments the Israelites made and then reflect on those we can make today.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In our last study, “Generosity: Willing Hearts, Stirred Within,” we looked at God's call for willing Israelites to give toward the construction of the tabernacle. God told Moses:

Here is a list of sacred offerings you may accept from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth; tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather; acacia wood; olive oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; onyx stones, and other gemstones to be set in the ephod and the priest's chestpiece. (Exodus 25:3–7)

When the Israelites learned that God desired to dwell among them, they gave generously toward the construction of the tabernacle. The bulk of Exodus 25–40 consists of the plans and assembly of God's tabernacle. The following chart references Exodus 25–40, which details the implementation of each component of the tabernacle.¹

Quotable

*When you invest
in things temporal,
the risks are high
and great and often.
When you invest in
things eternal, the
rewards eclipse the
sacrifice.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Investing in Things Eternal . . . Being Blessed

Selections from Exodus 38–40

THE TABERNACLE IN EXODUS		
COMPONENTS	INSTRUCTIONS	COMPLETION
Ark	25:10–22	37:1–9
Table	25:23–30	37:10–16
Lampstand	25:31–40	37:17–24
Tabernacle	26:1–37	36:8–38
Altar of Burnt Offering	27:1–8	38:1–7
Courtyard	27:9–19	38:9–20
Oil for the Lampstand	27:20–21	
Priestly Garments	28:1–43	39:1–31
Incense Altar	30:1–10	37:25–28
Bronze Washbasin	30:17–21	38:8
Anointing Oil and Incense	30:22–38	37:29

Bible scholar T. Desmond Alexander observes God's intended connection between the Mosaic law and the tabernacle:

The building of the tabernacle forms a natural sequel to the making of the divine covenant. Built according to divine instruction, the tabernacle became the focal point of the Lord's presence in the midst of the people, and reminded them, through its materials and structure, of God's sovereign, holy nature.²



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Investing in Things Eternal . . . Being Blessed

Selections from Exodus 38–40

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



Observation

The first step of Bible study is observation. We observe the text by simply reading it. Slowly. Thoughtfully. Assiduously. So we'll do that with selections from Exodus 38–40.

Their Investment

Begin by reading *Exodus 38:21–31*, and summarize the contents of this passage in a single sentence.

How many pounds of each material did the Israelites give? Note that the New Living Translation performs these calculations for you.

Gold _____

Silver _____

Bronze _____

Their Reward

Next, read *Exodus 39:32–43*. What does this passage summarize for the reader?

According to 39:42–43, what two ways did Moses respond to the completed work?

1. _____

2. _____



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STUDY

Lastly, read [Exodus 40](#). What do verses 1–33 summarize?

What does 40:34–38 convey? What visibly represented God's presence before the people?



Interpretation

During interpretation, we seek to understand what the text means historically so we can better grasp what it means theologically.

The exodus account reaches its climax in Exodus 40:34–38. God's glory filled the tabernacle, and He drew near to the people. To better understand how *glory* is defined in Exodus, let's use our concordance and look up every verse in which *glory* is used in Exodus—nine verses in the NLT. Don't forget to review the context if you need a better understanding of the verse. We've performed the search for you at [Bible Study Tools](#) for a quick reference. In what ways did God demonstrate His glory in the book of Exodus?

Now, look up the keyword *glory* in your Bible dictionary. In what other ways does God glorify Himself?



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Based on your review of God's glory in the book of Exodus and the dictionary entry, write your own definition of the word *glory* as it relates to God.

Exodus 40:34–38 records the manifest reward of the Israelites' generosity after the craftsman shaped the thousands of pounds of gold and silver into the dwelling place of the God who created the mountains, seas, and all living things. The reward? God's presence. Notice how the tabernacle creates both distance and nearness between the presence of God and the Israelites.

According to 40:35, why couldn't Moses enter the tabernacle?

The author commented on how a cloud not only formed a barrier but appeared before all the Israelites as their guide for the journey, assuring them that God resided with them. Now let's use our imagination to stand with the Israelites before the awesome glory of God. Based on your reading of the tabernacle components and the end of Exodus, witness the scene. Visualize the bronze washbasin, priestly garments, and the ark of the covenant. Put yourself in the Israelites' sandals and imagine your life in Egypt as it contrasted with life directed by God. After internalizing the scene, record below what you saw and how you felt.

Almost certainly, no Israelite stood before the tabernacle and thought his or her offerings toward the work weren't worth it. God's eternal rewards are always worth our temporal sacrifices.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Investing in Things Eternal . . . Being Blessed

Selections from Exodus 38–40



Correlation

During correlation, we compare our passage with other biblical passages that address a similar topic. We do this because God's work of redemption threads the entire biblical story to form a tight-knit tapestry. Because our text focuses upon God manifesting His glory to the Israelites, we'll turn to 2 Corinthians 3:7–18, which will help us develop our understanding of God's glory.

Take a moment to read [2 Corinthians 3:7–18](#). Note especially how Paul contrasted the glory that God showed during the time of Moses with the glory Jesus shows to you and me. Summarize this contrast in the table below.

Glory of the Old Way through Moses	Glory of the New Way through Christ



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Investing in Things Eternal . . . Being Blessed

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SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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Application

During application, we internalize the truths of our text, absorbing it like a sponge because God changes us from the inside out. God transforms us when His Word enters through the door of our minds to nestle in the home of our hearts—and it will always find ways to rearrange the furniture of our priorities.

In his sermon, Chuck emphasized the rewards of eternal sacrifice when he spoke about the Israelites watching the glory descend upon the tabernacle:

I would imagine those really lost in the worship of the moment had forgotten by then what they had given—because, you see, when you invest in things eternal, the rewards eclipse the sacrifice.

Eternal activities include practices such as giving, serving, mentoring, encouraging, and praying, to name a few. Reflect on your life and jot down some of the activities of eternal investment that you already do on a regular basis.

Now reflect and consider if there is an area of life in which you would like to increase your eternal investing. It could be volunteering in the children's ministry on Sunday mornings, cleaning the church building once a month, or increasing your church giving by two percent. Pick just one and imagine what life would look like if you invested more in that area. Then, record your plans—very specifically—for growing toward your investment goal.

Remember: no eternal investment is so small—not even giving a cup of cold water in Jesus' name—that it does not attract the attention of the King of Heaven.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Investing in Things Eternal . . . Being Blessed

Selections from Exodus 38–40

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for the blessing of eternal investments. As Your Son said, “It’s more blessed to give than to receive.” Please help me to grow in generosity, in my investing in things eternal. I know I have all I need in You, that I don’t have to concoct an arbitrary meaning of life with my own ingenuity, and that I don’t have to rely on my own hands to find a blessing. You’ve blessed me. You are blessing me. I just want to share what You’ve given me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Peter Enns, *Exodus*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 36, kindle; chart based on Enns’ outline.
2. T. Desmond Alexander, “Exodus,” *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, 4th ed., rev., ed. D. A. Carson and others (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity 1994), 93.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Priority One: Taking God Very Seriously

Selections from Leviticus and Numbers

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

After the Israelites spent nearly ten months constructing the tabernacle—adorning its features with gold, silver, and bronze along with scarlet thread, tanned ram skins, and acacia wood—God didn't tell them to pack up and depart from Mount Sinai.

God made them wait. He made them watch for His movement, listen to His words, follow His instructions, worship according to His dictates, and celebrate according to His calendar. Now that God had taken the Israelites out of Egypt, He needed to take Egypt out of the Israelites. God did this by teaching them how to take Him seriously.

In this study, we'll review with Chuck Swindoll selections of Leviticus and Numbers to reflect on how we can take God seriously in our walk with Him.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Typically, these *Searching the Scriptures* studies include four components that follow Chuck's Bible study method:

1. *Observation*: We read what the text says, perceiving how each word fits in sentences, how each sentence fits in paragraphs, and how each paragraph fits in the book.
2. *Interpretation*: We understand what the text means, delving into word studies, ancient cultural practices, history, and theology.
3. *Correlation*: We compare our passage with other biblical passages on the same topic to complement our understanding of the topic.
4. *Application*: We integrate into our lives the biblical truths and principles, obeying Jesus' commands, believing Jesus' promises, and walking with Jesus always.

Quotable

*The top
priority for us
all is that
we take God
very seriously.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Because this study will cover a longer section of Scripture, we'll focus only on observation, interpretation, and application. We'll explore Leviticus 1:1 through Numbers 10:10. While we'll cover only a small piece of these chapters in this study, we invite you to read through the book of Leviticus as well as Numbers 1:1–10:10, slowing down to interpret those passages you find interesting or confusing. To begin, let's gain an overview of both Leviticus and Numbers.

Leviticus

Get a bird's-eye view of the book of Leviticus with Chuck's overview chart below.

LEVITICUS

	The Way to God Access <u>The approach: offerings</u> <u>The representative: priest</u> <u>The laws: cleansing</u> <i>Physically</i> <i>Spiritually</i> CHAPTERS 1–17	The Walk with God Lifestyle <u>Practical guidelines</u> <u>Chronological observances</u> <u>Severe consequences</u> <u>Verbal promises</u> CHAPTERS 18–27
Emphasis	Ritual (for worship)	Practical (for living)
Location	Mount Sinai . . . one full year	
Key Word	"Holy" (appears 90 times)	
Theme	How sinful humanity should worship a holy God	
Key Verses	17:11; 19:2; 20:7–8	
Christ in Leviticus	Pictured in each sacrifice and ritual	

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After reviewing how Leviticus fits together, peruse this [book introduction](#) on the Insight for Living Ministries website. Record below what you learned about Leviticus that you didn't realize before.



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Numbers

Let's now get the big picture of Numbers with Chuck's overview chart.

NUMBERS

	Preparation Census Organization Sanctification CHAPTERS 1–9	Pessimism Complaining Doubting Promised Land rejected CHAPTERS 10–14	Punishment Wandering Old generation dies New census CHAPTERS 15–36
Location	Mount Sinai	En route to Kadesh-barnea	Wilderness wandering
Time	20 days	Several months	38 years
Key Word	Wilderness		
Theme	The price of disbelief and disobedience		
Key Verses	14:22–23		
Christ in Numbers	Pictured in manna (compare John 6:31–33); water from rock (compare 1 Corinthians 10:4); bronze serpent (compare John 3:14); in Balaam's prophecy (Numbers 24:17); pillar of cloud and of fire; cities of refuge		

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After reviewing how Numbers fits together, read this [book introduction](#) on the Insight for Living Ministries website. Record below what you learned about Numbers that you didn't notice before.



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Observation

Use your study time this week to read as much of Leviticus and Numbers 1:1–10:10 as you're able, or you can focus only on Leviticus 19:1–18 which we'll examine together below.

God gave the law through Moses to form the Israelites into a nation which would inherit the full blessings of Abraham—on the condition that the nation kept God's covenant. God gave the law to the Israelites so they would learn how to take Him seriously, to enjoy His presence, and to conduct themselves as a nation through which other nations could experience and come to know the one, true God.

Rightly Dividing the Law of Moses

Theologians have helpfully distinguished the law of Moses into three categories.

Judicial Law

God provided judicial law to instruct Israel how it must govern itself, politically and civically, as the nation of God. Examples of judicial law included regulating warfare (Deuteronomy 20) along with instructions on marriage, divorce, and business (Deuteronomy 24–25). We, as part of Jesus' church, are not a political entity, so we're not bound by these laws; nevertheless, they're still helpful for understanding God and His ways.

Ceremonial Law

God provided ceremonial law to instruct Israel how to approach and worship Him. This category of law included instruction for both individual and national worship. Examples like the sacrificial system (Leviticus 1–7), priestly instructions (Leviticus 16), and the annual feasts (Leviticus 23) fall within this category. Jesus' sacrificial and substitutionary death fulfills the ceremonial laws of Israel, thereby granting all Christians better, more intimate access to God. Though Christians are no longer bound by Mosaic law, these laws are still helpful for understanding God and His ways.

Moral Law

God provided moral laws to instruct the Israelites how to relate to each other, to foreigners, and to God. These laws reflect how morally fallen humans could live as representatives of God. Christ fulfilled the moral requirements of God's law, extending to Christians not only the righteousness God requires of His image-bearers but also newfound power through the Holy Spirit to help us live God-honoring lives. In the new heaven and earth, God will perfect Christians according to Christ's image.

As Christians, we can still learn about God and His ways through the moral instructions of the Mosaic law, which we'll explore below in Leviticus 19:1–18. This passage shows how the Israelites would need to reprogram their values, personal habits, and social practices to take God seriously and to live as His people.



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A New Way of Living—Leviticus 19:1–18

Slowly read *Leviticus 19:1–18*. Record any key observations you find.

Which verses contain moral instructions? _____

Which verses contain ceremonial instructions? _____

Which verses contain judicial instructions? _____

According to Leviticus 19:1–2, why did God want the Israelites to be holy?

Did you notice the last command in 19:18? It's part of the great commandment that Jesus taught throughout His ministry. The chief indication that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength shines through the way we love our neighbor.



Interpretation

For interpretation, we'll look up two key words found in our Leviticus passage. These will help us understand how the Israelites took God seriously in their relationship with Him.



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In your Bible dictionary, review the word *sacrifice*, and record notes below that help you understand why sacrifice was significant to the Israelites and how it is significant for us today.

Next, look up *holy*. The Israelites took God seriously by being holy; they had to understand the holiness of God before they could live holy lives. Record what you learn about God's holiness and how the command to be holy applies to us today.



Application

In his sermon, Chuck helpfully provided five principles for those who want to take God seriously today:

1. God occupies the first place, not another place.
2. God's Word is the final word, not another opinion.
3. Our worship is deep and meaningful, not superficial.
4. The values we embrace transcend culture, rather than being based upon it.
5. The integrity of the family is protected, not compromised.



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Think carefully over what you observed and interpreted in this study. Yes, we explored some foreign concepts and dozens of chapters, but they all point toward the single application: *take God seriously*. Also, consider Chuck's principles, and write about just one of them that is most meaningful to you in your current season of life. Write how your life might change for the better if you deeply implemented that one principle.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I pray that You bless and protect me. I want to take You seriously with my entire being, so I ask that You graciously strengthen me to do so because my flesh is weak and easily tempted to turn away. This week, please shower Your favor upon my life and give me peace. I pray this in the strong name of Your Son, amen.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

It's Time to Celebrate—Not Complain

Numbers 10:11–17; 11:1–6; 12:1–4, 9–10

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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LET'S BEGIN HERE

God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, provided water and manna to sustain them, wiped out the ruthless Egyptian pharaoh and his army, established a covenant so that He would be their God and they would be His nation, and then He dwelt among them in the tabernacle.

All of this occurred within the span of about two years. Despite all these miraculous events, the Israelites let their glass-half-empty mentality drag them into complaining just after they departed Mount Sinai.

Today, we'll explore this scene and more with Chuck Swindoll, so we can guard against a sour heart and live with gratitude for God's provision in our lives.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

First, review the timeline of events between the Israelites' departure from Egypt and their departure from Mount Sinai.¹ Notice the number of blessings in such a short period of time.

Year	Month	Day	Event	Biblical Reference
1	1	14	Exodus: departure from Egypt	Exodus 12:1–50
1	3	14	Arrival in Sinai Desert	Exodus 19:1
2	1	1	Tabernacle erected	Exodus 40:17
2	1	1–12	Israelite tribe dedication offerings	Numbers 7:1–89
2	1	14–22	Passover and unleavened bread celebration	Numbers 9:1–14
2	2	1	First tribal military census	Numbers 1:1–46
2	2	14	Passover alternative for unclean and distant	Numbers 9:6–13
2	2	20	Departure from Sinai Desert	Numbers 10:11

Quotable

Complaining impacts the complainer, those around the complainer, and the leaders. Instead of complaining, let us be grateful for what God has done and trust Him for what He will do.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Numbers 10:11–17; 11:1–6; 12:1–4, 9–10

Numbers 10–12 documents the spiral of discord and faithlessness displayed by the Israelites. This study combines observation and interpretation because our text extends across multiple chapters. Refer to [Lumina](#) or your [Bible dictionary](#) for help during interpretation. But before we begin, record a prayer below asking God's Spirit to quiet your heart before Him and open your mind to understand His truth so that you may be more conformed to the image of His Son through this study.

Pack 'Em Up and Move 'Em Out Numbers 10:11–28	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Slowly observe Numbers 10:11–28, and record your core findings below.</p>	<p>2a. What one word would you use to capture the theme of this section and why?</p> <p>2b. How does this passage reflect the faithfulness of the Israelites in the beginning of their journey?</p>

The Israelites were off to a promising start. They demonstrated the nature of God through their march: “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33).



CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS



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Numbers 10:11–17; 11:1–6; 12:1–4, 9–10

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The Lord's Leading Numbers 10:29–36	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Read <i>Numbers 10:29–36</i>, and record your key observations below.</p>	<p>2a. On what basis did Moses promise Hobab that Israel would treat him well (Numbers 10:29)?</p> <p>2b. What does 10:32 tell us about the nature of God?</p> <p>2c. How does 10:33–36 reflect what God continually did for Israel after leaving Egypt?</p>

The Israelites needed only to remember what God had done for them and tend to His Word because He promised to take care of them as His children. But that's not what happened.



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Numbers 10:11–17; 11:1–6; 12:1–4, 9–10

Desiring Cucumbers More Than the Creator Numbers 11:1–15	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Observe <i>Numbers 11:1–15</i>, and note below the core components of this text.</p>	<p>2a. How did the people disobey God in this passage, and what led them to do so?</p> <p>2b. How did the Lord respond to the people in this passage?</p> <p>2c. Put yourself in Moses' sandals in 11:10–15. How did he feel about their complaint?</p>

As the Israelites marched along, they let their minds hone in on their dry tongues. This led them to focus on the “good ole days” when they were slaves instead of the future bliss promised by God.



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Numbers 10:11–17; 11:1–6; 12:1–4, 9–10

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Timely Advice and a Spiritual Rebuke Numbers 11:16–30	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Slowly observe <i>Numbers 11:16–30</i>, and summarize your key findings below.</p>	<p>2a. How did Moses display a lack of faith in this passage, and how did the Lord respond?</p> <p>2b. Did Moses respond positively or negatively to God's rebuke (Numbers 11:23–24)?</p> <p>2c. How did Moses demonstrate humility in 11:25–30?</p>

How easy it is for leaders to let complaints or criticism dishearten them! But Moses let the Lord's strength lift him back up. What's more, Moses even shared the load of responsibility rather than hoard his power. He simply wanted to serve God's people.



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The Lord Vindicates Himself and Moses Numbers 11:31–12:16	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Lastly, read <i>Numbers 11:31–12:16</i>, and document your essential observations below.</p>	<p>2a. The Lord sent a plague upon His own people in 11:31–35, and they called the place Kibroth-hattaavah. What does this mean, and why did they need to remember what happened there?</p> <p>2b. How and why does 12:1–16 emphasize the Israelites' faithlessness?</p> <p>2c. How did the Lord demonstrate grace and mercy according to 12:10–16?</p>

Immediately after departing Mount Sinai, the Israelites' gratitude ceased, and they stopped celebrating. Instead, they focused on petty inconveniences and forgot God's grace and faithfulness.



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Numbers 10:11–17; 11:1–6; 12:1–4, 9–10

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Correlation

In the Old Testament narratives, Paul read about God's past work to understand God's more recent work through the gospel of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–13, Paul mentioned the Israelites' complaining along with other events from the exodus.

According to Paul's teaching in *1 Corinthians 10:1–13*, how do Christians today learn from God's work in the Old Testament?

What did Paul say in 10:12–13 that God will do for us when we're tempted?



Application

During application, we incorporate into our lives the truths and promises of God's Word. As Paul said to the believers in Colossae,

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.
(Colossians 3:16)

For this study, reflect on what you've learned and how it relates to your current season of life. Simply pause. Don't rush. Churn the passage over in your mind and pray in light of what you read. Ask God to seal His Word in your heart.



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Below are three questions to help you create your own takeaways from this portion of Scripture.

What's one thing you want to remember from Numbers 10–12?

What's one thing you want to remember about God?

How can you very specifically apply to your life what you learned in this study?



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I trust You are working in me, giving me both the desire and the power to do what pleases You. I long to live as a bright light in this crooked and dark world—to do everything without complaining or arguing. Thank You for shining the light of Your Word in my life. Help me hold fast to it until the day I die or Christ returns. In His name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 172.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

How to Fail—in Four Simple Lessons

Selections from Numbers 13 and 14

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Despite receiving warnings of icebergs, Captain Edward Smith sailed his ship at full speed on the clear night of April 14, 1912. The *RMS Titanic* carried more than two thousand passengers when it struck the ice near midnight. At least fifteen hundred people died when the *Titanic* sank early Monday morning on April 15, 1912.

Many of life's shipwrecks can be avoided if we simply heed the warnings—a statement as true today as it was for Moses and the Israelites as they began their wilderness wanderings from Mount Sinai.

Today, we'll join Chuck Swindoll in exploring the waters of Numbers 13–14, which contain the tragic story of the Israelite spies igniting fear and unbelief in their fellow sojourners. Nevertheless, we'll learn how God would not let their cowardice prevent His plan from sailing forward.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

As we continue in the book of Numbers for our series *Changing Wanderers into Worshipers*, we come upon the continued testing of God's faithfulness and forbearance by the rebellious wilderness generation found in Numbers 10:11–25:18.

First, the Israelites rebelled by murmuring about their misfortunes. Second, they complained about God's provision of manna. Third, they challenged Moses' authority. Today's passage, Numbers 13–14, covers their rejection of the promised land. They simply refused to believe God's promise to give them a good land of their very own, even after all He'd already done for them.

Quotable

*Keep in mind
that we're after
character, not
comfort, and that
the Christian life
is a faith walk not
based on sight.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Before we begin, pray that God would unite His Word with your heart. Really consider what you would like to learn today. Record your prayer below.



Searching the Scriptures Review Tip

Let's review the first step of our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method: observation. We observe the passage by reading it thoroughly. During this step we examine:

1. The who, what, where, when, why, and how
2. What you can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell
3. The logical connections, flow of thought, and range of subjects
4. What's repeated, emphasized, related, alike, and unlike



Observation: Reading Thoroughly

As you observe today's passage, note carefully the emphases throughout the dialogue. We've divided the text, according to our subheadings, on [Bible Gateway](#) with Chuck's two favorite Bible versions: the New Living Translation and the New American Standard Bible.

Numbers 13:1–16—God's Instructions to Moses

Observe Numbers 13:1–16. Record below the speaker and listener in this passage along with any other core observations.



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Summarize in one sentence the content of what was spoken.

Numbers 13:17–20—Moses' Instructions to the Scouts

Observe Numbers 13:17–20. Record below the speaker and listeners in this passage along with any other core observations.

Note below what Moses told the scouts to examine.

1. Are the people _____ or _____, _____ or _____?
2. Is the land _____ or _____?
3. Are their towns _____ or _____?
4. Is the soil _____ or _____?
5. Are there many _____?

Then Moses told them, “Don’t forget to bring back pickings from the crops!”

Numbers 13:21–24—The Scouts Spy in the Promised Land

Observe Numbers 13:21–24. In one sentence, summarize this passage by noting the subject and what the author said about the subject.



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Numbers 13:25–33—The Report from the Journey

Observe Numbers 13:25–33. Record below the speakers and listeners in this passage along with any other core observations.

How did Caleb's report contrast with the other spies' report?

Numbers 14:1–12—Congregational Conflict

Observe Numbers 14:1–12. Record below the speakers and listeners in this passage along with any other core observations.

How did Caleb and Joshua's response contrast with the response of the community?



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Numbers 14:13–19—Moses' Intercession

Observe Numbers 14:13–19. Record below how Moses appealed to God by referencing His reputation and character.

Numbers 14:20–45—God's Response

Observe Numbers 14:20–45. Summarize in one sentence God's response to Moses.

The Israelite scouts went to the land and focused only upon the obstacles. They neglected to remember the power God had displayed against Egypt and at Mount Sinai, so they didn't believe God's promise to be with them to take the land.



Interpretation: Understanding Deeply

During the interpretation step in our study on Numbers 13–14, we'll contrast the faithful and faithless Israelites along with the grace and judgment of God in His response to them.

The Faithful Israelites

Which characters in this passage demonstrated *faithfulness* to God?



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Specify the actions or attitudes that demonstrated the faithfulness of each of these characters.

The Faithless Israelites

Which characters in this passage demonstrated *faithlessness* to God?

Specify the actions or attitudes that demonstrated the faithlessness of each of these characters.

God's Judgment

What did God say that expressed His judgment?

What did God do that expressed His judgment?



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God's Grace

What did God say that expressed His grace?

What did God do that expressed His grace?

Consulting Your Resources

Lastly, refer to your Bible commentary, Bible dictionary, or the [NET Bible](http://www.netbible.org) website to answer any questions you may have on this passage as well as to dig deeper in your understanding of Numbers 13–14. Record your notes below.

The scouts placed their eyes on the giants, causing them to lose their eyes of faith. Then their fear-driven report impelled the congregation to let their emotions steer them; they nearly stoned Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb! Episodes like the one in this passage superbly prefigure both the severity of God's judgment and the majesty of God's grace as we see it in the person and work of Jesus Christ, our Lord.



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Correlation: Comparing Carefully

During correlation, we'll examine a passage in the letter to the Hebrews. The author of Hebrews mentioned in chapters 3:1–4:13 the scene we studied above. The author argued that the status of Jesus exceeded Moses and that Jesus' promise of rest eclipsed any kind of rest the Israelites may have entered after the exodus.

First, read [Hebrews 3:1–4:13](#).

How is Jesus greater than Moses?

How is Jesus' rest greater than God's prior promise of rest to the Israelites?

According to the author of Hebrews, how do God's people today obey God and keep from failing spiritually?



Application: Internalizing Personally

The Israelites focused on their obstacles rather than God's objective. They relied on themselves rather than remembered their God. They sought instant gratification and let their emotions get a hold of them rather than exercise self-control and develop character.



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In his sermon, Chuck provided four helpful lessons to help us avoid failing spiritually today.

1. Focus on your spiritually informed objectives.
2. Refuse to compare yourself with others.
3. Trust God's revelation over your emotion.
4. Choose character development over comfort.

Use this reflection time to either reexamine your goals in life or maybe develop new ones. Do any of Chuck's principles stand out as especially relevant to your season of life? You may need to intentionally save more money to get out of debt. Others may need to spend more time cultivating an important relationship with their spouse or child. Some may need to go to church more consistently. Record below the way you believe God is steering you as it relates to your goals.

Remember Paul's words:

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. (Philippians 2:12–13)

To close this study, record a prayer below incorporating what you learned about God's character and how you should respond to His leading.



A FINAL PRAYER



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LET'S BEGIN HERE

The failures of a spiritual leader will always affect—directly or indirectly—those he or she leads. These reverberating consequences bid all leaders to stay awake, avoid autopilot, and lead as God intends.

“It’s a serious price to pay when you, as a spiritual leader, fall.”
—Chuck Swindoll

While the world often relishes the failures of Christian leaders, God relishes His leaders’ successes. God wants His leaders to follow His Word closely and model the life of trust He wants us all to live. We’ll see that today through Moses’ wrongdoing.

In this study of Numbers 20 with Chuck Swindoll, we’ll glean wisdom from the failure of Moses so that we not only lead with more faithfulness but also encourage those who lead us to press on in zeal, integrity, and faith.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

The book of Numbers records God’s grace and mercy as well as His severe judgment toward the rebellious Israelites. They failed to trust God’s provision and follow His Word. The Israelites grumbled against God, rejected His manna, and then complained about His appointed leader Moses.

In our last study on Numbers 13–14, we saw the spies induce fear among the whole congregation and dissuade them from entering Canaan. God disciplined the people for their lack of faith and sentenced that generation to die in the wilderness.

After forty years of wandering, “the whole community of Israel arrived in the wilderness of Zin and camped at Kadesh” (Numbers 20:1). During the first five months of that fortieth year, just prior to Aaron’s death (33:38), the children of the faithless first generation sang the same faithless refrain, prompting Moses and Aaron to sin as well. Numbers 20 captures these tragic events.

Quotable

*If Moses didn’t
trust God,
then the people
of Israel wouldn’t
trust Him.
Spiritual leaders
must model
trust in God.*

—Charles R. Swindoll



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Before we dive into the nuts and bolts of today's passage, take a moment to quiet your heart before your Father in heaven, and write a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to give you clarity and spiritual strength through this study. As Chuck said, "There are times that a spiritual leader is required to do things that the flesh absolutely would not do."



Observation: *Searching the Scriptures* Step One

You don't need a master's degree in theology or the aptitude of a forensic scientist to spiritually profit from your Bible study. God revealed Himself through the plain languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek which we can sufficiently translate into English. How amazing is the thought that we can peruse God's Word in our own language to grasp the bone and marrow of what God wants us to know for life and faith. We begin by first performing a slow reading of the text, tending to each word rather than sprinting past them.

Numbers 20:1–13—The Lord Shows Himself Holy

Carefully observe *Numbers 20:1–13*. Record important findings below.

The Israelites rebelled. How did the congregation compare the land in which they resided with the land God promised?



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How did Moses and Aaron respond to the congregation's complaining, and what happened to them while in the tent of meeting?

List the three commands God gave to Moses? (Numbers 20:7–8)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How did Moses disobey God? (20:11)

How did God describe Moses' disobedience? (20:12–13)

"He strikes the rock. He doesn't care what they think. He doesn't care what God thinks. Right now he is lost in his own uncontrolled fury or wrath, maybe borderline rage. . . . I think Moses is disappointed with God." —Chuck Swindoll



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Numbers 20:14–21—Israel Rebuffed by Edom

Slowly read *Numbers 20:14–21*, and list the top five observations you find in this text.

Numbers 20:22–29—When Aaron Joined His Ancestors in Death

Carefully read *Numbers 20:22–29*. Record your top five observations below.

Where was Aaron buried, and who took over his role as high priest?

In Exodus 23:22, God promised the Israelites He would be an enemy to their enemies and oppose those who opposed them so long as they followed all His instructions. As we see in Numbers 20 and the previous passages, they didn't obey His voice, so we read of the consequences of their rebellion: hostility with Edom and the death of Aaron. Moses' angry overreaction had drastic consequences for the whole congregation as well as his own future.



Interpretation: *Searching the Scriptures* Step Two

During interpretation, we seek to understand what the author meant. Interpretation gets to the heart of the biblical text so we can know how God is working today. We must interpret the passage before trying to apply it to our lives lest we do what God no longer wants us to do.



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Searching the Scriptures Review Tip: Interpretation

During interpretation, we use additional resources like a Bible commentary or Bible dictionary. Bible dictionaries contain articles written by scholars summarizing their research on pertinent topics for understanding the Bible. If you don't own a Bible dictionary, we recommend you buy *The New Unger Bible Dictionary*, Chuck's favorite. Also, we provide links to free online dictionaries in case you don't have one on hand.

Begin interpretation by looking up the following names in your Bible dictionary. Record what you learned that is especially insightful.

Aaron

Miriam

Edom



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In Numbers 20:10, Moses said, “Must we bring you water from this rock?” But the water came out not because of Moses’ power. It came from God’s. Perhaps due to the duress from the loss of his sister, Moses let anger drive him into irrational disobedience against God’s command which we read in Numbers 20:11. Scholar R. Dennis Cole says,

Moses’ actions were tantamount to that of an idolatrous pagan magician, and thus Milgrom notes, “Here, in a direct address to his people, Moses ascribes miraculous powers to himself and Aaron. Indeed by broadcasting one word, *nôšî*, ‘we shall bring forth’”—Moses and Aaron might be interpreted as having put themselves forth as God.¹

Using this cultural insight, how did God’s response to Moses in Numbers 20:12 counter the significance of Moses’ actions before the people of Israel?

“Moses . . . modeled unbelief. . . . He was now an out-of-control leader acting in unbelief. . . . He assaulted the holiness of God.” —Chuck Swindoll

In his sermon, Chuck said Moses might have reached the third or fourth level of the five levels of anger. Here are the five:

1. *Mild irritation* creates in us an uneasiness brought on by an unpleasant disturbance.
2. *Indignation* develops as a reaction to something that seems unfair or unreasonable.
3. *Wrath* impels us to express our anger through revenge or defense.
4. *Fury* occurs when we introduce acts of violence. Moses probably expressed fury.
5. *Rage* drives people to lash out with the most intense anger—brutal violence or murder without the slightest remorse or self-awareness.



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Because Aaron disobeyed God as Moses did, God punished him. While Numbers 20:22–29 depicts God’s judgment upon Aaron, how does it also convey God’s grace—both to Aaron and the people of Israel?

Moses and Aaron defied God. They would have to endure their punishment—Aaron on Mount Hor and Moses on Mount Nebo. God’s grace abided even amidst His punishment of the two exodus leaders. Did you read how long Israel mourned the death of Aaron? The average period of mourning for the death of an Israelite lasted seven days. For Aaron, they mourned thirty.



Correlation: *Searching the Scriptures* Step Three

The self-aware and spiritually sensitive leader remains painfully alert to his or her shortcomings—from major sins to petty mistakes. Psalm 25 has been a spiritual refuge for men and women of God, whether great leaders or obscure servants.

Take time to bathe your mind and heart in the prayer of [Psalm 25](#).

Using even just a short section from this psalm, record below a prayer in the same spirit of humility, uttering the same need for direction and wisdom to lead well.

Now consider your leaders. Using the language of this psalm, write a prayer for them. Afterward, consider sending a quick note to let them know you’ve prayed for them.

Tragically, some leaders fall. The article “[What to Do When a Leader Falls](#)” offers guidance to those who have experienced the failure of a Christian leader.



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Application: *Searching the Scriptures* Step Four

In his sermon on Numbers 20, Chuck provided four helpful application principles for incorporating the truth of this passage into our lives.

1. *Serve others patiently . . . even as they irritate you.* When you sense the signs of impatience, such as feelings of frustration or urges to lash out, stop! Don't let impatience drive you to make a terrible mistake.
2. *Obey God completely . . . even if the reason be unclear.* Even though you can't make sense of every part of God's plan, do what God says without questioning.
3. *Accept God's plan willingly . . . even during your skepticism.* Doubts may plague you, but don't let them stop you from receiving God's instructions and following through.
4. *Submit to the Lord continually . . . even when it creates discomfort.* Obedience flows from a heart of surrender. Find peace by doing what God says and leaving the results with Him.

Using one of Chuck's principles or one you've created based on your study of Numbers 20, reflect on what needs to change in your life, and record below what the Lord brings to mind. This could include thoughts or behaviors. Perhaps you need to ask someone for forgiveness or keep your mouth closed when you get frustrated.

Record one verse you want to remember from our passage today.



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Record below what you learned about God from this study.

Let's end our study with a quote from Hebrews 12:1–2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, please keep my eyes always upon You and my heart set always toward Your ways. How tempting it is to turn to comfort and convenience rather than doing the right thing, the loving thing. Help me to lead well, to trust You fervently, and to love others diligently. I pray that Your Son might be glorified in my life. In His name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, The New American Commentary, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 329.



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Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–16

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LET'S BEGIN HERE

The Israelites neared the end of their fortieth year of wandering the same way they began their journey: complaining. They made it a habit. As Chuck Swindoll said in his message,

If you keep a careful record of the whining and complaining and the grumbling of these Hebrews, you will find yourself shocked, as I was. . . . I numbered them. . . . Eleven times they complained and God dealt with them.

They grumbled against God, and they grumbled against Moses. Even though God's judgment came much swifter than previously, His gracious remedy exceeded the petitioning of the Israelites.

Today, we'll study with Chuck the eleventh episode of rebellion, found in Numbers 21, using his *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method. As if we're looking at yet another side of the same diamond, we'll examine the disobedience of the Israelites, but we'll also get to see the multifaceted grace of our glorious God.

Quotable

*The Israelites
allowed
overexposure to the
things of God to
harden their hearts
rather than soften
them. Let's stay
alert that we might
not do the same.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Let's begin our study with an overview of the Israelite journey from Egypt to Canaan. We've adopted the chart below from Michael A. Grisanti. It documents the forty-year period from the first celebration of the Passover in Egypt to the first celebration of the Passover in Canaan.¹

Chronology of Israel's Journey from Egypt to Canaan					
Year	Month	Day	Reference	Event	Elapsed Time Since Previous Event
1	1	14	Exodus 12:1–6	Passover and death angel; beginning of Exodus	
1	2	15	Exodus 16:1	Arrival at Wilderness of Sin	1 month, 1 day
1	3	14	Exodus 19:1	Arrival at the Wilderness of Sinai, at base of Mount Sinai	29 days
2	1	1	Exodus 40:17	Tabernacle erected; events of Leviticus begin	9 months, 16 days
2	2	1	Numbers 1:1–2	Events of Leviticus conclude; instruction to the number of people	1 month
2	2	20	Numbers 10:11–12	Numbering finished; departure from Wilderness of Sinai	20 days
40	1	?	Numbers 20:1	The death of Miriam	
40	5	1	Numbers 20:23–29; 33:38	The death of Aaron	
40	11	1	Deuteronomy 1:3	Moses' last words 39 years, 11 months, 26 days since the Passover	38 years, 8 months, 11 days
41	1	10	Joshua 4:19	Crossing of the Jordan 39 years, 11 months, 26 days since the Passover	1 month, 9 days
41	1	14	Joshua 5:10	Celebration of the Passover	4 days



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Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–16

The events we'll study in Numbers 21 today take place between Aaron's death and Moses' last words to the second generation recorded in Deuteronomy. Sometimes, performing observation and interpretation together on smaller passages makes for a smoother Bible study experience.

But first, take a moment to still your mind and set your heart toward Christ. Read Psalm 119:33–35, and write a prayer below asking His blessing on your Bible study.

*Teach me your decrees, O LORD;
I will keep them to the end.
Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions;
I will put them into practice with all my heart.
Make me walk along the path of your commands,
for that is where my happiness is found.*



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Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–16

The Israelites' Foretaste of Their Promised Victory Numbers 21:1–3	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. List your top five observations of <i>Numbers 21:1–3</i>.</p>	<p>2a. Based on what we've learned in previous studies, how does Numbers 21:1 signify God's judgment, and what might have been the cause of this judgment?</p>
<p>1b. What did the Israelites ask of God, and what did they promise they would do if He granted their request?</p>	<p>2b. In Numbers 21:2, what actions signified Israel's return to obedience to God and to God's grace?</p>

Stop. That's the first step of turning around and growing up. . . . This is the first sign or glimpse or hint of maturity emerging. —Chuck Swindoll



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Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–16

That Bunch of Complainers Numbers 21:4–6	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. List your top five observations of <i>Numbers 21:4–6</i>.</p>	<p>2a. The Israelites complained about their “long” journey and “boring” food. But how were these two things actually gifts from God?</p>
<p>1b. Against whom did the Israelites speak and why?</p>	<p>2b. Using your Bible dictionary, commentary, or the <i>NET Bible</i> website, record the species of snake you believe the Lord sent and why He sent these snakes.</p>
<p>1c. How quickly and in what way did God respond to the Israelites’ complaints?</p>	

As a leader, you will be criticized by those who will later need your help. . . . Step up and give it to them. —Chuck Swindoll



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God told them to simply *look* and be healed, which prefigured the call He promised to the world and offered through Jesus Christ: “Let all the world look to me for salvation! / For I am God; there is no other” (Isaiah 45:22).



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Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–16



Searching the Scriptures Review Tip: Correlation

In his book *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Chuck says, “When we carefully compare one Scripture with others, we are accurately handling the Word of God.”² The Bible’s most important subjects surface throughout the biblical narrative, from Genesis through Revelation. We learn more about that subject by discovering how its importance and meaning unfold as the biblical revelation progressively develops—like a rose that slowly blooms.



Correlation

One night, a Jewish scholar named Nicodemus let his curiosity compel him to talk with Jesus. Jesus challenged some of the doctrines and practices that many of the Jews held sacred. We read of their conversation in the gospel written by John in chapter 3:1–21.

Carefully read [John 3:1–21](#), and note where Jesus spoke of the events we just studied in Numbers 21:4–9.

Who is the Son of Man according to John 3:14–15, and why must He be “lifted up”?

How does one express belief in God according to John 3:14–15?

How does John 3:16 relate to John 3:14–15? (Note the logical conjunction.)



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Numbers 21:4–9—merely six verses—fits like a tiny, insignificant puzzle piece among 20,000 when compared to the library of Old Testament writings. But Jesus recalled the short story to Nicodemus to teach the most profound truth anyone can learn:

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16–17)

Some of you are still outside of Christ because you have made it difficult. You've had the key analyzed. You've had the car inspected. You've checked out fourteen different versions. . . . And the gift awaits. Take it. . . . Anybody can have it. —Chuck Swindoll



Application

The Israelites' complaining demonstrated their hardened hearts toward the blessings of God. Do you ever let yourself grow numb to God's blessings—church, clothes, a nice home, or friends—that you start focusing on the negatives rather than positives? Take a moment to reflect and write a prayer of gratitude for the good things God does for you.

Let's go a step further. Do you sometimes let yourself grumble about the negatives? If so, write down what areas of your life you tend to complain about, and then make a resolution not to do so. Instead, give thanks for the good things in that area of life.



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Even though the Israelites complained against Moses, he responded with grace and mercy. Do you find yourself in a similar situation where those whom you lead have recently complained against you? If so, take a moment to write how you can demonstrate to them the grace and mercy God has demonstrated to you.

Never forget: look beyond the many gifts we receive in this life, and give thanks to the gracious Giver, our Father.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, from the sun which gives light to our eyes which give us sight, You are the Creator of all good things, the Creator of life. That life is good and beautiful because You are good and beautiful even when we turn light to darkness and make repulsive that which you've made beautiful. Create in me a gracious heart, O Lord, that I may embody Your ways before a world unfamiliar to grace. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Eugene Merrill, Mark F. Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti, *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2011), Kindle location 8450–8600.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 143.



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When Sandy knelt over yet again to show her young daughter how to tie a shoe, she said, “Honey, begin by grabbing one shoelace with each hand so you can. . . .” Likewise, legendary football coach Vince Lombardi took his team to practice late one night after an embarrassing loss and told them, “Now, gentlemen, this is a football,” as he showed them the leather ball.

Whether tying a shoe or competing for the national championship, a mastery of the basics fosters the freedom to grow, to excel, to succeed—to do what we mean to do. More importantly, this same truth reigns supreme in our spiritual lives. As Chuck Swindoll said in his message,

There's something reassuring about coming back to basics. And every once in a while, we need to do it as Christians.

Today, we'll join Chuck Swindoll in our study of Deuteronomy 6, the charter of the nation of Israel, as it reflects God's heart for His people and His plan for our world. In doing so, we'll revisit the basics of our faith.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy contains sermons from Moses to the second generation of Israelites, delivered around 1407 BC, while they encamped in Moab. In short, Moses rehearsed and theologically framed what God had done for the Israelites—from the time of Abraham to the Exodus—to fuel their confidence in what God would do for them in Canaan just across the Jordan. Moses stipulated what it meant for Israel to be in a covenant relationship with the living God.

Quotable

Jesus Christ is first. He's our top priority. He is the focus of our worship and the foundation of our life.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Before you read this passage, take a moment to look over Chuck's helpful chart of Deuteronomy, which offers a big picture of the book.

DEUTERONOMY

	Looking Back	Looking Up	Looking Ahead
	REMEMBER! Failure at Kadesh-barnea Faithfulness of God CHAPTERS 1–4	REMEMBER! Blessings accompany obedience Compromises weaken distinctives Consequences follow disobedience CHAPTERS 5–26	REMEMBER! The land is yours; possess it! The Lord is holy; obey Him! CHAPTERS 27–34
Location	Everything occurs on the edge of the Promised Land of Canaan.		
Leadership	At the beginning of the book, MOSES is the leader (34:5) by the end of the book, JOSHUA is the leader (1:38; 34:9)		
Time	The sermons recorded in Deuteronomy were first spoken (1:6) then written (31:24) during a period of 40 days (compare Deuteronomy 1:3; 34:8; Joshua 4:19).		
Theme	Remember to love the Lord your God and keep His commandments.		
Key Verses	6:4–9; 10:12–13; 30:19–20		
Christ in Deuteronomy	“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him” (18:15); Moses himself is also a type of Christ.		

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Now that you have the big picture, look up the entry *Deuteronomy* in your Bible dictionary, and jot down a few key notes to help you understand the richness of this majestic work.



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Prior to perusing Deuteronomy 6, take a moment to still your mind and write a prayer asking God to bless you as you seek Him through His Word.



Observation: Reading Slowly

During our first *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study step—observation—we reference only the Bible. We simply read it. We examine it thoroughly. We do this to see all the details of the scene and characters the author painted.

The Lord Our God, the Lord Is One—Deuteronomy 6:1–13

Slowly read [Deuteronomy 6:1–13](#). Consider reading it multiple times in different translations. Chuck's favorite Bible versions are the New Living Translation and the New American Standard Bible. Note your top ten observations.



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According to Deuteronomy 6:1–3, what three promises did God give Israel?

How does Deuteronomy 6:6 logically connect with Deuteronomy 6:4–5?

Summarize Deuteronomy 6:7–9 in one sentence.

According to Deuteronomy 6:10–13, list the good things the Lord would give the Israelites. What was the risk they faced once they received these blessings?

Moses has a great skeleton in his thoughts of verses 1 to 13. . . . Verse 4: Hear the truth continually. . . . Verse 5: Love the Lord fervently. . . . Verse 7: Teach the young diligently. . . . And finally, fear the Lord greatly. . . . What a splendid outline: hear, love, teach, fear. He starts very personally within as you hear and as you love. And he turns to the expression of it as you teach and as you fear.
—Chuck Swindoll



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Do What Is Right and Good in the Lord's Sight—Deuteronomy 6:14–25

Now slowly read *Deuteronomy 6:14–25* using multiple translations. Record the top ten observations you make.

Moses restated and expanded upon what he said in Deuteronomy 6:1–13. What three subjects did he revisit in Deuteronomy 6:14–25 that he had already mentioned? In what way did he expand upon these topics?



Interpretation: Understanding Clearly

Sometimes, the original languages of the Bible or the cultural context of the writing distances us from fully understanding the text, even after a thorough reading of the passage. Thus, we must rely on historians, philologists, and theologians to help us grasp the specific meaning of the text more quickly. We do this during interpretation, the second step in our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method.



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If you don't own a commentary, we recommend you purchase *The Swindoll Study Bible*, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, or *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. If you want a single-volume commentary on Deuteronomy, we recommend *Deuteronomy* by Eugene H. Merrill in the New American Commentary series. Dr. Constable has provided a wonderful, free online commentary called *Constable's Notes* at the NET Bible website. Now let's go deep!

What did Moses mean when he told the Israelites to “fear” the Lord in Deuteronomy 6:2, 6:13, and 6:24?

What does the Hebrew word for “heart” mean (Deuteronomy 6:5–6)?

Why would the commands of Deuteronomy 6:4–5 along with 6:14–15 have been radical in the ancient Near East?

Relationship lies at the heart of God's message to His people in Deuteronomy. From the days that Adam and Eve walked the garden (Genesis 2), to Moses' words at Moab (Deuteronomy), to Jesus' final words in the upper room (John 14–16), to God's final dwelling with His people in the eternal city (Revelation 21–22), God wants a relationship with us. He wants to bless us. He wants to do good to us and through us. Our Lord Jesus Christ looks upon you with the eyes of love.

May the truth that you have heard seep deep within your being so that as decisions are made, the decisions square with the truth, the triangles are congruent, and you can defend the decision based on truth. —Chuck Swindoll



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Correlation: Comparing Carefully

Our third step in our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method, correlation, stems from the motto, “Scripture interprets Scripture.” What God says in one passage often helps us interpret other passages because the Bible contains one story and, ultimately, has one Author.

Not long before the Roman emperor Nero martyred him, Peter wrote the epistle we know as Second Peter. He wrote it around AD 66, just over thirty years after Jesus resurrected. False teaching crept throughout Asia Minor into some of the churches whose members probably served as Peter’s recipients. In [2 Peter 1](#), Peter told them to return to the basics, pairing well with our passage from Deuteronomy.

According to 2 Peter 1:1, how does our faith compare with Peter and the other apostles’ faith?

According to 2 Peter 1:3–7, what does God give us by His divine power, and how does it affect our life?

According to 2 Peter 1:8–11, why did Peter want us to focus on these basics of the Christian faith, and what will be the outcome of our lives as we persevere in them?



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Can you sense Peter's mood as he instructed the church struggling with false-teaching? It's reminiscent of Moses preparing the Israelites to go on without him. In fact, according to 2 Peter 1:12–15, why did Peter write this epistle?

How does 2 Peter 1:16–21 undergird the authority of Peter's teaching?

Peter didn't want these churches to depend upon him for their faith. He wanted them to look to Jesus, to cultivate their relationship with Him, and to persist in the basics of their faith.



Application: Receiving Personally

During the fourth and final step of our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method, application, we want to adopt a new way of thinking, amend our attitude, adjust our affections, or alter our practices so that our lives better reflect what we believe about Jesus and how Jesus wants us to live as members of His family.

Throughout Deuteronomy 6, Moses told the Israelites to cultivate their relationship with God. In what ways do you already cultivate your relationship with Jesus? By the way, we applaud you for doing these studies which can be rigorous at times. We, too, pray that God would bless you through them.



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After studying Deuteronomy 6, in what ways do you need to grow in your relationship with God? Do you find yourself approaching God out of obligation or fear of punishment rather than adoration and gratitude? Do you obey to receive rather than obey out of love? Ask God to reveal any dark way in your heart and then to guide you in His everlasting way.

If you have a family, in what ways do you worship God together? Even adding prayer before eating or reading a passage from the Bible after eating can go a long way as you and your family seek to grow together spiritually.

I have found that it is virtually impossible for parents to convince children that truth is truly truth if they live a lie. —Chuck Swindoll

To end this study, write your own closing prayer below asking God to keep your mind and heart focused on the spiritual basics. Faith, hope, love—in these three abide—of which the greatest is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). The nails of Jesus' cross reveal it. His risen, new body confirms it.



A FINAL PRAYER



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How to Kick-Start a Whole New Beginning

Joshua 1:1–9

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

After suffering the wilderness for forty years, the Israelites encamped at the plains of Moab near the River Jordan poised for entry into the land God promised them. Moses orated his final sermons, led Israel to renew their covenant with God, and then journeyed up Mount Nebo where he died.

Now, God tasked Joshua with leading the nation, telling him how to kick-start Israel's new beginning.

Timeless principles leap from the page of this first chapter of Joshua—principles for following God and living faithfully during new beginnings. Today we'll join Chuck Swindoll in studying Joshua so we can carry these principles with us no matter the lands we find ourselves in or the seasons we enter.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Joshua, the sixth book of the Bible, records the history of Israel following the death of Moses. What Moses began, Joshua continued. As A. W. Tozer wrote, "Nothing of God dies when a man of God dies."¹

When someone who has been very significant in your life passes away, nothing of God has passed away. Nothing of God has changed when a man of God changes. Nothing of God falls when a man of God falls. Nothing of God moves on when a man of God moves on.

—Chuck Swindoll

Quotable

*To kick-start
a new beginning,
have courage.
Don't be afraid of
the unknown.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Joshua 1:1–9

Begin this study of Joshua by examining Chuck's overview chart below. Do you see anything about Joshua you didn't realize before?

JOSHUA

	Commissioning the Leader Preparing the People	Conquering the Enemy		Dividing the Spoil			Warning the Victors
	Invasion of land	Subjection of land		Distribution of land			The Conclusion
		CENTRAL CAMPAIGN		PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE	
	OUTSIDE CANAAN / PROMISES GIVEN						INSIDE CANAAN / PROMISES FULFILLED
	The commission (1) The spying (2) The Jordan (3) The memorials (4) The consecration (5)	Jericho (6) Defeat at Ai (7) Victory at Ai (8) Gibeonites (9)	Southern campaign (10) Northern campaign and survey (11) Summary by kings (12)	Rueben, Gad, ½ Manasseh (13) Caleb's autobiography (14) Judah (15) Ephraim (16) ½ Manasseh (17)	Benjamin (18) Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Joshua (19)	Cities of refuge (20) Levites — 48 towns (21) Civil war threat (22)	Separation (23) Service (24)
	CHAPTERS 1–5	CHAPTERS 6–9	CHAPTERS 10–12	CHAPTERS 13–17	CHAPTERS 18–19	CHAPTERS 20–21	CHAPTER 22 CHAPTERS 23–24
Theme	Obedient faith brings abundant blessing.						
Key Verses	1:8; 24:14–15						
Christ in Joshua	Typified by Joshua, a victorious leader whose name means “Yahweh is salvation”; pictured in Rahab's scarlet cord, which symbolizes safety through Christ's blood						

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Now take a moment to look up the [entry](#) for the book of Joshua in your Bible dictionary. Also, consider reading Chuck's summary [article](#) of Joshua along with any other source you may have in your library. Why is the book of Joshua important in biblical history? Why is it important for Christians today? Answer these questions below, and record any other notes you find interesting in your research.



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Joshua 1:1–9

Before we delve into the text, take a moment to pray that God gives you a soft heart and a receptive mind to understand and internalize His Word.

We learn so many great things from You, Father. With natures that are prone to wander, we learn from You obedience and holiness. Because we are selfish, we learn from You how to release. Because we are by nature shortsighted, we learn to see farther and to think deeper and to understand in a whole new way of life from that other dimension—the dimension of the divine. —Chuck Swindoll



Observation: Tending Closely

We begin the first step of our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method with a slow reading of the passage. We observe the Bible by asking basic questions of its contents. Do that now with *Joshua 1:1–18*, and record your key findings below.

The Lord's Charge to Joshua—Joshua 1:1–9

What promises did God give Joshua in Joshua 1:1–9?

Why did God tell Joshua to be strong and courageous?



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Joshua 1:1–9

What did God tell Joshua to do to ensure his success?

Joshua Assumes Command—Joshua 1:10–18

How soon were Joshua and the Israelites to cross the Jordan after God had spoken to him?

What specific charge did Joshua give the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and why was this charge given?

What did the Israelites promise Joshua as he led them, and how did they encourage him as their leader?

With God's crystal-clear plan and rock-solid promises, Joshua addressed the people. They pledged their obedience and encouraged their new leader. You couldn't ask for a better start.



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Joshua 1:1–9



Interpretation: Dividing Rightly

During interpretation, we dig into the details of the history and culture of the biblical text to understand its theology. Theology builds the bridge from the ancient world to ours. In this section, we'll use Chuck's six theological guidelines to walk through the passage together.

Guideline One: Face Reality

God didn't sugarcoat the new reality facing Joshua in Joshua 1:2. What did God first tell Joshua and why? Also, why is it important for Christians today to face the reality of the past before they can kick-start a new beginning?

Guideline Two: Move On

After pointing Joshua's gaze to the past, God then told him to set his eyes to the future (Joshua 1:2). Not only must we see the past accurately, we also must have a clear direction for our future—temporally and eternally. What do we—and what did Joshua—risk by not having a clear plan for what lies ahead and moving on from what lies behind?

Remember the words of Paul? “For in this hope we were saved” (Romans 8:24 NIV). When God saved us, He told us where to look: ahead. While we don't literally see our eternal home now, one day we will. That's God's promise.



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Joshua 1:1–9

Guideline Three: Don't Be Afraid

The unknowns, lack of resources, or enemies typically accompany new beginnings. These obstacles can paralyze us if we let them. How would God's presence have alleviated Joshua's fear of the future (Joshua 1:5, 9)?

How does God's presence alleviate our fears today?

Guideline Four: Stand Tall

No one likes to follow a bedraggled, slouching leader who slogs his emotional feet toward a new beginning. God told Joshua, "Straighten up!" Three times God said, "Be strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9). How does this demeanor and attitude reflect faith in God?

I challenge us as we face the future that we not only face reality and move on and not be afraid, but that we stand tall when we come to those times. —Chuck Swindoll



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Joshua 1:1–9

Guideline Five: Stay Focused

According to Joshua 1:7–8, how was Joshua to stay focused during the Israelites' mission?

What does it look like today for God's people to stay focused in their walk with Christ?

Guideline Six: Enjoy Success

According to Joshua 1:8, God told Joshua he and the Israelites would enjoy success if they followed His instructions. Based on our previous studies, what would success have looked like to them?

What action not only gave them success for taking the land but also ensured their success once they inhabited it?

Remember the major statement of the Westminster Confession, the very first question? "What is the chief end of man? . . . The chief end of man . . . is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." . . . Let me ask you a question. Are you enjoying the Lord? —Chuck Swindoll



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Joshua 1:1–9



Correlation: Collating Critically

After enduring hardships like poverty and flogging, traveling to dozens of cities such as Derbe and Lystra, and persevering in decades of ministry to the Gentiles, the apostle Paul awaited execution in Rome under Emperor Nero. Tradition states that the Romans beheaded Paul circa AD 67. Less than a year or two before his death, Paul wrote 2 Timothy. In this epistle, we find some of the loftiest writing about the Word of God itself. As Joshua had to persevere in God's teaching, so, too, must we. In 2 Timothy 3:14–17, we read why.

First, read [2 Timothy 3:14–17](#).

According to this passage, what makes God's Word unique?

In what ways is the Bible profitable, and what is the end goal of our profiting from it?

To run well and to finish well, one cannot cultivate a casual relationship with Scripture. Listening to expository preaching is a great start. Purchasing a study Bible is a wonderful next step. Devoting time to a commentary . . . takes you deeper. Don't stop! . . . I want to join Paul in urging you to set aside time-wasting activities to devote yourself to training in the Scriptures. Hear it. Read it. Study it. Memorize it. Meditate on it. Live it.² —Chuck Swindoll



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Joshua 1:1–9



Application: Cultivating Personally

For this study, we encourage you to engage in one, simple application: enjoy the presence of the Lord. Draw near to Him because He is near to you.

- Set aside an ample amount of time.
- Find solitude.
- Praise Him, adore Him, and thank Him.
- Cast any burdens you have upon Him.



A FINAL PRAYER

In the final prayer below, we've provided a fitting hymn for you to meditate on, written in 1867 by William Walsham How.

O Word of God Incarnate

O Word of God incarnate, O wisdom from on high,
O truth unchanged, unchanging, O light of our dark sky;
We praise thee for the radiance that from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

The church from her dear Master received the gift divine,
And still that light she lifteth o'er all the earth to shine.
It is the golden casket, where gems of truth are stored;
It is the heav'n-drawn picture of Christ, the Living Word.

It floateth like a banner before God's host unfurled;
It shineth like a beacon above the darkling world.
It is the chart and compass that o'er life's surging sea,
'Mid mists and rocks and quicksands, still guides, O Christ, to thee.

O make thy church, dear Savior, a lamp of purest gold,
To bear before the nations thy true light, as of old.
O teach thy wand'ring pilgrims by this their path to trace,
Till, clouds and darkness ended, they see thee face to face.³



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2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014), 242.
3. As quoted in Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 72.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Watching Those Walls Tumble Down

Selections from Joshua 6

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

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LET'S BEGIN HERE

God specializes in the impossible. He spread the waters for the fleeing Israelites and closed them upon the pursuing Egyptians who were nipping at their heels. He used David's little stone to knock down Goliath, a fierce warrior twice David's size. Through Jesus' death, God defeated death and made possible eternal life for all. God chooses surprising methods to gain His victories!

As for us? Facing impossible odds, we often grow tempted to outsmart with our wits, overpower with our will, turn away in fear, or inflict pain from rancor. A decision always accompanies the battles we face—to fight God's way or our own.

In today's study, Chuck Swindoll takes us through Joshua 6 to show us how Joshua precisely followed God's unconventional war tactics to reap a spectacular victory—a foretaste of the many victories that would follow.

God specializes in those occasions where you are overwhelmed and easily intimidated and outnumbered and outmanned and outmuscled and outsmarted, so that He might win it His way and get the glory. This is not just preaching fodder—this is truth to live by.
—Chuck Swindoll



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Like a meticulous architect, God laid out the specifications Joshua and the Israelites were to obey for receiving the promised land. We studied that plan in Joshua 1. Then came the following events:

- **Joshua 2:** Because of her faith, God spared the Jericho harlot, Rahab, and her family. While God used Israel to judge the inhabitants of Canaan, He extended grace to those who wanted it.

Quotable

*God is God—
who does the
unusual to
accomplish the
impossible.*

—Charles R. Swindoll



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- **Joshua 3–4:** God enacted another water-parting miracle to assure the Israelites that the same powerful God who had resided among their fathers was with them.
- **Joshua 5:** Israel obeyed the covenant stipulations God had established through Moses.

Did you catch the end of Joshua 5?

When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and demanded, “Are you friend or foe?” “Neither one,” he replied. “I am the commander of the Lord’s army.” At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. “I am at your command,” Joshua said. “What do you want your servant to do?” The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did as he was told. (Joshua 5:13–15)

God confronted Joshua. Joshua bowed before the real Leader responsible for Israel’s impending victories.

Take a moment to prepare your heart to learn from God’s Word. When the Bible speaks, God speaks. We need God’s empowerment to hear from Him and enjoy His presence through His Word. Below, express your desire for God to teach you, change you, and equip you to fight your battles His way rather than your own.



Searching the Scriptures Tip: Observation

Often, the biblical narrative conveys emphases by the space it designates to a subject. We see that in today’s passage. The author could have easily summarized the events at Jericho in Joshua 6. Instead, we get a play-by-play. So, as you read the details, ask yourself what the author is emphasizing.



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Observation

Thoroughly observe *Joshua 6*. For each of the three sections in Joshua 6, list the details of that section along with any other key observations, and then write a single-sentence summary of its emphasis.

The Instructions—Joshua 6:1–7

Details	Emphasis

God lives in another realm. His game plan is of another sphere. He operates according to principles that are not familiar to this world. They are higher than this world, and they are beyond flesh.

—Chuck Swindoll

The Implementation—Joshua 6:8–21

Details	Emphasis



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With God, nothing is impossible. Because of God, impressing isn't important. How long it takes us to learn and believe these two truths! —Chuck Swindoll

The Aftermath—Joshua 6:22–27

Details	Emphasis

The best battles God wins are won when we find ourselves absolutely overwhelmed, intimidated, outmanned, and outmuscled. —Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation

Now it's time to consult your sources so you can better understand the historical context of Joshua 6.

First, use your Bible dictionary to look up *war* or *holy war* so you can understand the theological significance of this unique period in biblical history. Jot down your notes below. Consider answering this question: What was the purpose of war for the Israelites under Joshua?



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Using your dictionary or Constable's Notes [online](#), why did God command Joshua to carry the ark around Jericho?

What did the priests signify?

With the impregnable walls of Jericho serving as the first of Israel's battles, what did Joshua and the Israelites learn from their victory? What is the significance of Joshua 6:27?

You will never fight the Lord's battles the Lord's way until you have time alone with Him. When you are alone with Him, it is amazing what He can do to break your pride, to get your attention, to treat you . . . as one of His subjects, and to show you His plan. —Chuck Swindoll



Correlation

The subject of war surfaces throughout the biblical narrative. It develops the meaning of God's title for Moses' song, "The Lord is a warrior" (Exodus 15:3). In their book *God Is a Warrior*, Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid note five stages of God's battling.¹

Stage one: God fought Israel's flesh-and-blood enemies. Both the Joshua 6 account and the Israelites' exodus from Egypt exemplify stage one.



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Stage two: God fought against unfaithful Israel. Israel had to follow God's covenant stipulations, but the people failed. Nearly eight hundred years after the time of Joshua, God sent Jeremiah to prophesy to the faithless nation. How does [Jeremiah 21:1–5](#) portray stage two?

Stage three: Israel's prophets promised a Divine Deliverer who will return and restore all. The prophets coupled their judgment against the Jews with hope for them, as well as the whole world. Chaos will not reign forever. Evil will not endure. God will conquer. Read [Zechariah 14:1–9](#) and record below how it describes stage three.

Stage four: Jesus fought the principalities and powers during His first coming and will again during His second coming. In his gospel, Mark portrayed this stage as Jesus conquered forces of nature ([Mark 4:35–41](#)), demons ([5:1–13](#)), and death ([5:35–43](#)). Read these passages and summarize how Jesus conquered the powers of evil.

Stage five: The Divine Warrior defeats all evil once and for all. Jesus will remake this world. His people will inhabit it eternally, and His presence will abide with all. How does [Revelation 20:11–15](#), [21:1–8](#), and [22:1–5](#) portray stage five of the Divine Warrior thematic development?



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Jesus is like our Joshua, who leads us to victory over our spiritual foe, the devil. Until the ultimate battle, God's Spirit gives us power to reign over the sin that once dominated us (Romans 6) and fight against the forces of evil (Ephesians 6:10–20).



Application

What fight do you face right now? A cooled marriage? A rebellious child? A mountain of debt? Do you feel like an impossible wall looms before you, and you don't know how to break through? Using what you learned in this study, take a moment now to focus on the actual battle you are in. Write it down below.

How have you fought this battle in the past? In what ways are you tempted to face this battle with your own power?

You know what happens when God uses the unusual to accomplish the impossible? When our faith shifts from the horizontal to the vertical? He becomes our all in all. —Chuck Swindoll

What would it look like to fight this battle with the spiritual weapons God has given you? Make a plan below to follow how God would want you to fight.

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for giving me the power I need. Thank You that I don't have to fight battles with only the world's knowledge, using only the world's methods. Eventually, death seizes everyone. But You have conquered death and the works of evil. I look to You for my strength, my joy, my hope, and my endurance. I pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), chap. 1, EPUB.



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Defeat on the Heels of Victory

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LET'S BEGIN HERE

We hardly ever incur more vulnerability than after a great victory—a maxim that reigns true in the annals of military history . . . just as it reigns true in our spiritual lives. But the Israelites didn't take it seriously after their miraculous victory at Jericho, which we read about in Joshua 6.

Joshua 7 contains the account of one man, Achan, whose choices made his name infamous. His story dramatically illustrates the truth of a principle found in God's Word: people reap what they sow (Galatians 6:7).

Today, we will study with Chuck Swindoll the sobering report of Joshua 7 so we might avoid any entangling sins and run with endurance the race set before us.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

We'll begin by reviewing our *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method. It's the same method Chuck uses when he studies the Bible, and it includes four components that equip us to make nourishing spiritual meals. The four steps are:

1. **Observation:** We read what the text says, perceiving how each word fits in sentences, how each sentence fits in paragraphs, and how each paragraph fits in the book.
2. **Interpretation:** We understand what the text means, delving into word studies, ancient cultural practices, history, and theology.
3. **Correlation:** We compare our passage with other biblical passages on the same topic to complement our understanding of the topic from our main passage.
4. **Application:** We integrate into our lives the biblical truths and principles, obeying Jesus' commands, believing Jesus' promises, and walking with Jesus always.

Quotable

*If God brings to
your attention
that which needs
attention, I plead
with you: face it,
confess it, forsake it,
and repent.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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While these mechanics help us ascertain spiritual truth, God's Spirit must anchor His Word in our minds and wed His Word to our hearts that we may walk in His power. Below, write a prayer asking God to bless your study.



Observation

In observation, we will place our gaze upon the tree of *Joshua 7* to inspect both leaf and branch. Remember: no rushing. First, simply read through the chapter.

The Setback—Joshua 7:1–15

How does Joshua 7:1 function in relation to the rest of the chapter?

The most secretive sins on this earth are seen clearly by the eyes of our God. He saw it all.
—Chuck Swindoll

How many Israelite warriors went to conquer Ai, and why (Joshua 7:2–5)?

Summarize the response of Joshua and the Israelite elders to Ai's victory (7:6–9).



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How did the Lord reply to Joshua in 7:10–15? How did the Israelites break God’s covenant?

How do the Israelites’ sin, God’s presence, and the battle outcome all correlate in this passage?

Sin Exposed and Punished—Joshua 7:16–26

Whom did God single out, and what tribe did he belong to (Joshua 7:16–18)?

Note the four commands Joshua gave to Achan in 7:19. How do the first two relate to the last two?



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Notice the four verbs Achan used to describe his spiral into sin (Joshua 7:21). List the progression below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

At that moment, Achan failed to stay with reality and believed the rationalization. — Chuck Swindoll

What happened to Achan and his family in Joshua 7:24–26?

How does the last statement about God in verse 26 relate to the first statement made about God in verse 1?

On a day when the Israelites should have been singing songs of victory, they returned from a bloody defeat singing songs of lament. Achan had privately sown seeds of greed and caused Israel to bear the brunt of his poor judgment.



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Interpretation

Begin interpretation by looking up key names and terms in the text such as *Achan* and the tribe of *Judah* in your Bible dictionary. Below, record notes on these entries along with any other terms you review.

The Israelites returned from Ai with their report to Joshua (Joshua 7:3). Did their report express faith in God or arrogance? Why do you think this? (Remember to consult a commentary or two during interpretation.)

In 7:6–9, how did Joshua demonstrate faith? How did he demonstrate doubt toward God?

How did God rebuke Joshua in 7:10–13?



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How does Joshua's concern in 7:9 reflect God's purpose for Israel? How does Joshua's command to Achan in 7:19 reveal Joshua's intention to advance this purpose? Why is this important for the Christian today?

After the Israelites dealt God's justice upon Achan and his family for breaking God's covenant, they piled a great heap of stones over his body. What did the succeeding generations learn about God from Achan's memorial? Why is this important for us today?

Surprising and strange defeats can often be traced back to secret sins. —Chuck Swindoll



Correlation

Joshua 7 contains a sobering narrative of the consequences of sin before a holy God. Achan submitted to his desires, taking and hiding what God said not to. Achan let temptation lead him to sin and death. Temptation's phases have existed ever since Eve saw the fruit, wanted it, grabbed it, ate it, and gave some to Adam. Then they both hid from God and suffered God's judgment.

James 1:12–15 defines how temptation works, which correlates well with our main passage. This paragraph falls in James' longer section on faith and endurance. Read [James 1:2–18](#).

Write an expanded paraphrase of James 1:12–15 below.



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It's called temptation. At the time of temptation, we are blinded and made deaf. We are blinded to reality and deafened to the consequences. —Chuck Swindoll

James mentioned a few spiritual weapons to combat sin and temptation in James 1:2–18. Note those especially meaningful to you and record them below.



Application

At the end of Psalm 139, David prayed:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23–24)*

A fitting request even for us at this hour as we integrate into our lives the spiritual truth of Joshua 7. Take a moment and pray in your own words Psalm 139:23–24.

Very private sins can lead to very public consequences. —Chuck Swindoll

Have you let sin wrap its tentacles around you? Has it come through your wallet? The screen? A relationship heading in the wrong direction? God gives us the power to fight sin so you don't have to let it squeeze the life out of you. Write below any grievous path you might be on.



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Now how do you plan to beat your temptation? Have you prayed to conquer it? Have you sought support from your church family? Record what you believe needs to change to help you defeat that private sin and how you need the Spirit to aid you in battle.

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:5–9)



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, what gratitude fills my heart to know that You delight in giving me life. Sin destroys. But You have conquered sin by sending Your Son to receive the wrath that I have earned. Jesus died the death that I deserve that I may be clean and blameless before You, that I may I enjoy fellowship with the living God, and that I may overcome the sin that once entangled me. Thank You. In Jesus' sweet name, amen.



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From the Exodus to the Promised Land

The Secret: An Attitude of Fortitude

Joshua 14:6–14

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LET'S BEGIN HERE

Spend decades working for full-time pay . . . enjoy your last years in full-time play. Sadly, many believe this lie, adopt it as their attitude, and pledge allegiance to it as their purpose. But many find their enthusiasm waning, especially in their final years, because that pervading creed leaves them empty. We exist for more than *all* work or *all* play.

Today, we'll study the life of an 85-year-old man, Caleb, whose faith in God gave him a higher purpose and transformed his attitude. From Joshua 14, Chuck Swindoll shows us what it takes to have that abiding enthusiasm that lasts into our final days.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In Rahab's story (Joshua 2), we saw a Canaanite prostitute display faith in God and become a covenant member of Israel. In Achan's story (Joshua 7), the last study, we saw a covenant member of Israel trivialize God's instructions and receive God's sweeping judgment. Afterward, in chapters 8–12, God used Joshua and the Israelites to conquer the kings of Canaan. Then, God allotted the land. Joshua 13 recalls the distributions across the Jordan River to Rueben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The allocations in the promised land began with the tribe of Judah, specifically with Caleb.

Before we dive into God's Word, take time to pray, asking God to bless your study, grow your understanding of His ways, and shape your attitude.

Quotable

It isn't age that bothers us; it's the lack of enthusiasm regarding life that grieves us.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Preparing to Distribute Joshua 14:1–5	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. In <i>Joshua 14:1–5</i>, who oversaw the allotting of land to the nine and a half tribes?</p>	<p>2a. What theological significance did the presence of the priest Eleazar and the use of lots hold for the distribution?</p>
<p>1b. By what means would these leaders allot the land?</p>	<p>2b. Using your resources, record why God did not apportion the Levites' territory.</p>
<p>1c. What tribe did not receive territory?</p>	<p>2c. What truth(s) do we learn about God in this passage?</p>

After the Israelites' seven battle-filled years in Canaan, God began preparing them to be wanderers no more.



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Joshua 14:6–14

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Caleb's Past Joshua 14:6–9	
 Observation	 Interpretation
1a. Where do the events of <i>Joshua 14:6–9</i> take place?	2a. Why is the Israelites' location important? (Hint: use your Bible dictionary.)
1b. What past event did Caleb recall to Joshua?	2b. In what way did Caleb display faithfulness to God? (Review <i>Numbers 13:25–33</i> if needed.)
1c. What did Moses promise Caleb and why?	

No doubt the two veterans shared a deep connection as they remembered what had happened nearly forty-five years prior. Now wrinkled but not weary, their faith remained firm in God.



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Joshua 14:6–14

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Caleb's Request Joshua 14:10–14	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. How did Caleb describe himself in Joshua 14:10–14?</p>	<p>2a. How did Caleb's self-description testify to God's faithfulness?</p>
<p>1b. What did Caleb ask for, and how did Joshua respond?</p>	<p>2b. In what way did Caleb express confidence in God and display his understanding of God's purpose for his life? How did this give him an attitude of fortitude?</p>

Forget your age. Promise yourself and promise me right now that you'll never mention your age. . . . Age means nothing! —Chuck Swindoll



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Joshua 14:6–14

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Correlation

Again and again, we hear that Caleb faithfully followed the Lord (Numbers 14:24; 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:36; Joshua 14:9, 14). In fact, God told Moses, “But my servant Caleb has a different attitude than the others have” (Numbers 14:24).

Caleb persevered in his walk with God because he remained confident in God’s provision. He didn’t waver. He stayed focused and knew the goal. With an attitude of fortitude, Caleb received God’s promise.

A similar theme surfaces in the New Testament. The book of Revelation records Jesus’ urgent letters to seven churches exhorting them to refocus and persevere so they can inherit His promises. Below, take a moment to read the letter to each of these churches. Then, write a single-sentence summary of Jesus’ call to faithfulness as well as His unique promise to each church.

Church	Call	Promise
Ephesus Revelation 2:1–7		
Smyrna Revelation 2:8–11		
Pergamum Revelation 2:12–17		
Thyatira Revelation 2:18–29		
Sardis Revelation 3:1–6		
Philadelphia Revelation 3:7–13		
Laodicea Revelation 3:14–22		

Jesus tailored each promise with each church’s unique call to persevere. *What bliss awaits God’s people in eternity!*



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From the Exodus to the Promised Land

The Secret: An Attitude of Fortitude

Joshua 14:6–14

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



Application

Have you let a poisonous attitude creep into your heart? Have you become too focused on the improbable, life's messiness, or even your own guilt? Fight it! Don't let it make its home in you. You are a child of God Most High.

Consider your season of life. Can you think of any attitude changes that would help you follow the Lord wholeheartedly like Caleb? Do you need to change your focus in any way? Jot down your notes below.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless. (1 Corinthians 15:58)



A FINAL PRAYER

Now, Lord, do a deep work within our hearts. Help us to come to terms with attitudes that have been anchors. Forgive us for the sour responses that we have been participating in and encouraging in others. Give us eyes of faith to see beyond the facts and figures. Open us to a whole world of possibilities because You are the God of the impossible. —Chuck Swindoll.



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CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Grace and Truth Worth Remembering

Joshua 24:1–28

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Dreams realized. Desires satisfied. Hope turned to touch. We all enjoy that moment at the end of the journey where we can say, “We made it!”

But complacency, even carelessness, often follows that sense of arrival. Success tempts us to take our hand off the wheel and coast when we transition from one season to the next.

That’s why Joshua addressed the Israelites near the end of their conquest and why we today would do well to study his exhortation. God wants us all to transition well. So, we’ll join Chuck Swindoll as we enter the last passage of our series, Joshua 24, when the Israelites transition from tent-pitching wanderers to land-owning worshipers.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Doorposts covered with lamb’s blood. Walls of water. Bushels of quail. Snakebites. Crumbling stone walls. “How far we have come!” The Israelites surely celebrated as they reflected on their journey.

Today, we will enter into the time when the Israelites could say, “We made it!” In Joshua 23:1, we read, “The years passed, and the LORD had given the people of Israel rest from all their enemies.” Despite the gulf of millennia separating us from Joshua’s day, we can still feel the Israelites’ relief.

Yet, there’s no time for spiritual laxity!

As Joshua’s time of leadership came to an end after the Israelites defeated their enemies, he urged the Israelites to stay faithful in their devotion to the Lord.

If the enemy is defeated, and if the Israelites are able to move into all this abundance, why would that be difficult? Because then the warfare becomes invisible. —Chuck Swindoll

Quotable

People who understand the grace of God live their lives not in pride but in humility.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Joshua 24:1–28

In his final speech, Joshua led the Israelites in a covenant renewal. Before we step into the ancient world amidst the victorious tribes to hear their godly leader, record a thoughtful prayer below asking our Lord's aid as you study His Word.



Observation

Begin observation with a slow reading of *Joshua 24:1–28*. Do so in two translations. Take notes below as you read each one. While Chuck likes to use various translations, the New Living Translation and the New American Standard Bible sit at the top of his list.

Translation Used:	Translation Used:
_____	_____

Who was speaking in Joshua 24:2–13?

Did you notice all the first-person pronouns in 24:2–13? How many can you count? Also, read aloud the passage to feel the emphasis.



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Joshua 24:1–28

Did you see the “So” at the beginning of Joshua 24:14? How does 24:14–15 logically follow 24:2–13?

Who began speaking in 24:16?

What was the call to the Israelites in 24:14–15?

How many times did the Israelites respond to Joshua in 24:16–24? How did they answer each time?

We don't break with idols slowly. We break with idols in a moment of time—at a time of decision.
—Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation

Now let's dig deep. Begin by looking up *Shechem* (Joshua 24:1) in your Bible dictionary to understand its significance in Israel's history leading to Joshua 24. Record your notes below.



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Joshua 24:1–28

What should God's recollection in Joshua 24:2–13 have done for the Israelites? What is the value of *remembering* in the Christian's spiritual life? If we follow the pattern of 24:2–13, what specifically should Christians consistently reflect upon?

After the Israelites said they would follow God (Joshua 24:16–18), Joshua told them they were not able to (24:19–20). What did Joshua mean in 24:19–20, and what relevance does this have today as we reflect on God's nature? (Don't forget to consult your commentaries or [online resources](#).)

Fear is a wholesome, worshipful respect for God accompanied by a hatred for sin. . . . To serve is a willing, available obedience based on love and devotion. When I serve Him for His glory, I am willingly available, obeying Him out of love and devotion. —Chuck Swindoll



Correlation

“I gave you land you had not worked on, and I gave you towns you did not build—the towns where you are now living. I gave you vineyards and olive groves for food, though you did not plant them” (Joshua 24:13). This incredible truth foreshadows the celestial city God is building for His people.

To inhabit a city built by God—a thought that will make you pause!

The writer of Hebrews developed this theme in the last three chapters of the letter. The gospel of Jesus Christ gives greater clarity to the Old Testament promise of an eternal city. To better understand how, let's look at these three passages from the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews.



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Joshua 24:1–28

First, read [Hebrews 11:8–16](#). Describe what God promised Abraham. Did Abraham ultimately receive what God promised?

Now, read [Hebrews 12:14–28](#). How do Christians today relate to God's city, and how did the Israelites relate to it (Hebrews 12:18–23)?

How does Jesus relate to this city (12:24)?

Because we have this relationship, how should we respond to God according to 12:25–28?



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Joshua 24:1–28

Lastly, read *Hebrews 13:8–16*. How does 13:14 complement our understanding of the city mentioned in 12:18–24?

According to *Hebrews 13:8–13*, how does this hope give us strength to endure?

It was John Chrysostom in the fifth century AD who said, “You are but a poor soldier of Christ if you think you can overcome without fighting and suppose you can have the crown without conflict.”
—Chuck Swindoll



Application

Chuck draws three timeless principles from Joshua 24 that especially aid those making a transition. Do you find yourself in that season? These principles help us recognize God’s work in our lives and strengthen us as we press forward in God’s will.



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Joshua 24:1–28

The Past

When we look to the past, we see God's grace and are grateful for it. Take a moment to look to your past now, and write down three ways God has graciously worked. Express your gratitude.

The Present

When we look to the present, we hear God's truth and are challenged by it. Did God's Spirit challenge you in any way today? Record a verse from this study that was especially meaningful or challenging for you. Explain why.

The Future

When we look to the future, we remember our commitment and are strengthened because of it. Write down one way you could be tempted to shed any of your spiritual commitments and how you plan to uphold them.



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Joshua 24:1–28

After his conversion, John Newton (1725–1807) wrote that indelible hymn which now rings from the pews on Sunday mornings as Christians worship the Lord Jesus Christ. It's called "Amazing Grace"—a fitting title for an appropriate prayer as we close this series, *Changing Wanderers into Worshipers*. Take time to meditate upon it and pray through it.



A FINAL PRAYER

Amazing Grace¹

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

The Lord has promised good to me;
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come.
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.



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Grace and Truth Worth Remembering

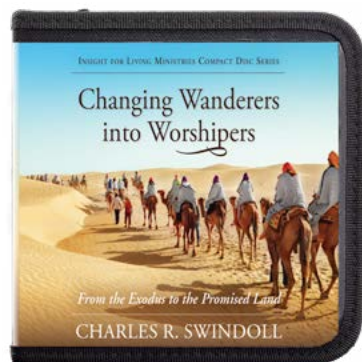
Joshua 24:1–28

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

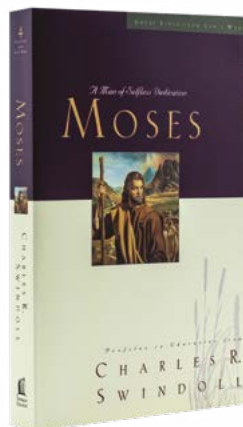
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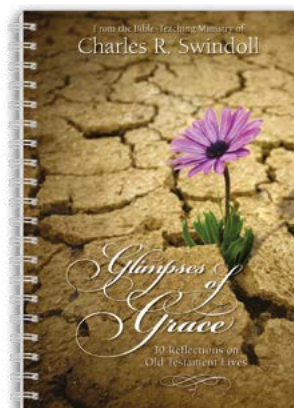
Tools for Digging Deeper



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ENDNOTE

1. John Newton and John P. Rees, “Amazing Grace,” in *The Celebration Hymnal: Songs and Hymns for Worship* (n.p.: Word Music/Integrity Music, 1997), hymn 343; fifth stanza incorporated from Christian Classics Ethereal Library, original hymn, https://www.ccel.org/ccel/newton/olneyhymns.Book1.iCH.h1_41.html.

For the 2018–2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages.



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