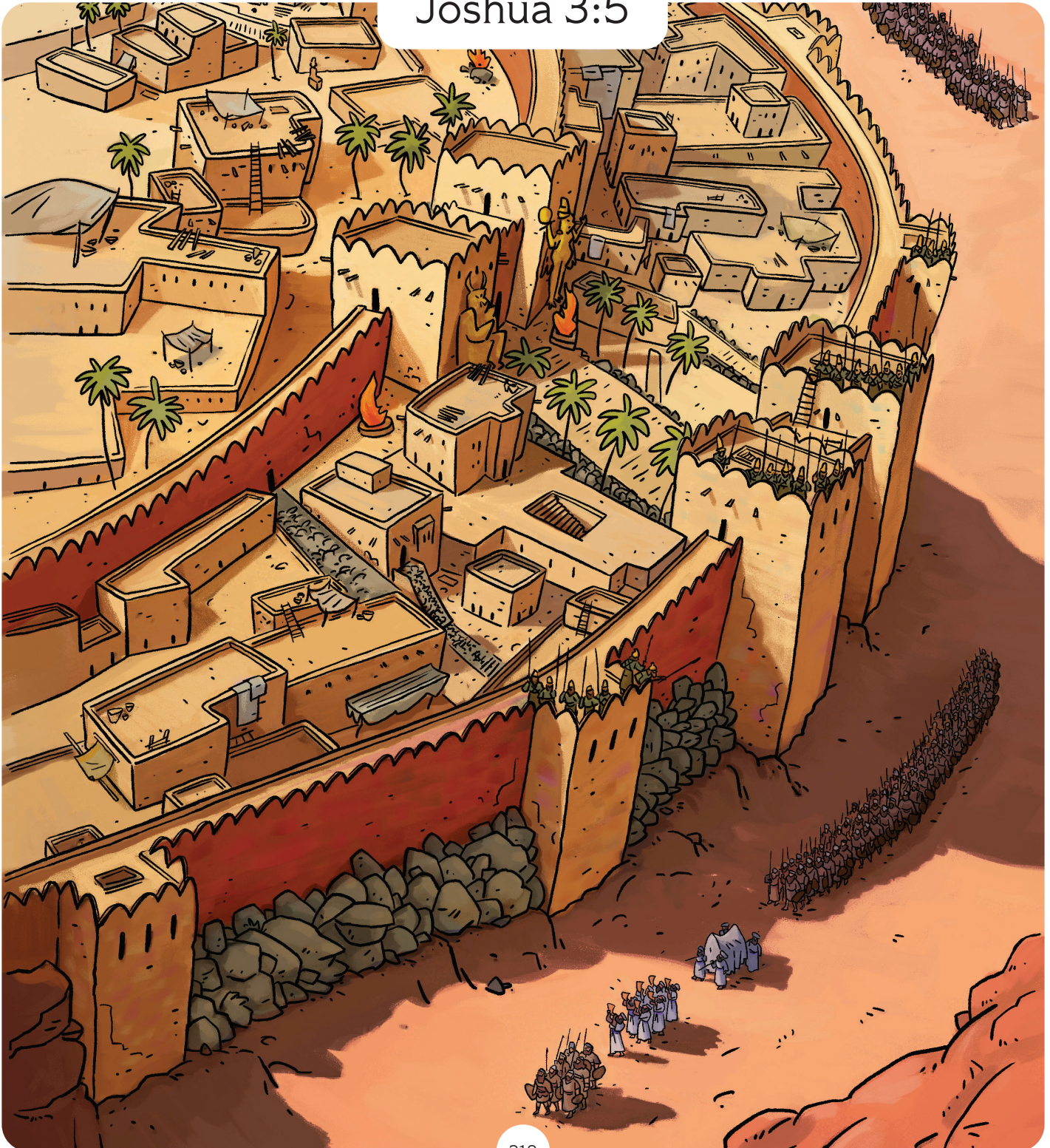


The Nation Enters the Land

KEY VERSE

Joshua 3:5



Lesson Overview (TEACHER)

TRANSITION

Lesson 31 detailed Joshua's divine commissioning and Rahab's faith, aiding Israel's conquest preparations. Lesson 32 narrates the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River, the reinstatement of circumcision and Passover, and the divine strategy for conquering Jericho, fulfilling God's promise to lead Israel into the promised land.

CENTRAL TRUTH

God's power ensures victory through obedience.

KEY TEXTS

Joshua 3:1–6:27

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GOSPEL

God provided for His people by allowing the Israelites to cross the Jordan River on dry ground. The LORD provided for His people in the greatest way by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross as the penalty for our sins. Repent of your sins and follow Him today!



Family Devotional (PARENT)

This section explains what the Family Devotional covers for parents to use with their children each day of the week. Each devotional reinforces the lesson taught in Sunday School.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

- Day 1 **The Nation Enters the Land** (Sunday School review)
Joshua 3:1–6:27
- Day 2 **Crossing the Jordan**
Joshua 3:1–17
- Day 3 **The Memorial Stones**
Joshua 4:1–24
- Day 4 **Israel Is Circumcised and Celebrates Passover**
Joshua 5:1–12
- Day 5 **Joshua Meets the Commander of the LORD's Host**
Joshua 5:13–15
- Day 6 **The Plans for Conquering Jericho**
Joshua 6:1–14
- Day 7 **The Defeat of Jericho**
Joshua 6:15–27

LAST WEEK



NEXT WEEK



The Nation Enters the Land

CROSSING THE JORDAN AND THE MEMORIAL STONES

NOTE: Do not read this commentary aloud to the children. The commentary is designed to help educate and prepare the teacher for the lesson. The teacher's goal in studying the commentary is to better understand the lesson.

The encouraging report of the two spies (2:23–24) immediately led to preparations for the nation to cross the Jordan River and enter the land. The people assembled and received the instructions for the crossing (3:1–4). They were to keep their eyes on the ark (being carried by the priests) and follow it at a respectful distance (vv3–4); one man from each tribe would follow the priests into the Jordan (vv11–12). Joshua admonished the people to devote (consecrate, sanctify) themselves and to prepare to see the wonders the LORD was about to do for them (v5); this crossing was the culmination of the nation's entire journey, which had been planned, guided, and enabled by the LORD.

The LORD encouraged Joshua (see 1:5), telling him that as He had been with Moses so He would be with Joshua (3:7); Joshua relayed the LORD's words to the people (v9). The procedure for this crossing was meant to assure them that the LORD was with them and that they would defeat the Canaanites (v10). When the priests' feet touched the water of the Jordan, those waters would stop flowing and "stand in one heap" (v13). This is exactly what happened; the priests—carrying the ark (v6)—entered the river and it stopped flowing (vv14–16). This was remarkable because at this time of the year, the river usually overflowed (v15). The priests halted in the middle of the river, the riverbed became dry, and the entire nation passed over the Jordan River (v17). This great event was like a bookend to the wilderness wanderings; when Israel had passed through the Red Sea (see Exodus 14), they were a people passing into the wilderness, but now the nation was passing from the wilderness into the land of promise.

After "all the nation" (Josh 4:1) had crossed the river, the LORD instructed Joshua (who relayed the instructions) to have one man from each tribe select a stone from the riverbed and bring these stones to the place where the nation camped (vv1–3). These river stones would be a sign (v6) and a memorial (v7), so that in the future, when anyone asked why these stones were there—apparently in an unusual formation—they would be told the account of this marvelous event when the nation Israel crossed the Jordan (vv4–7,20–24). These instructions were precisely carried out (v8). Joshua also had a monument of stones erected in the middle of the Jordan exactly where the priests had stopped (v9). The priests carrying the ark had remained standing in the riverbed (v10a) while the people—all the tribes and the fighting men of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh—had quickly ("in haste," v10c) crossed over (vv11–12). This entire event served to elevate Joshua in the eyes of the nation (v14). Then the LORD commanded Joshua (vv15–16a)—and Joshua commanded the priests (v17a)—to bring the ark up out of the Jordan onto dry ground, and the river resumed flowing (vv17b–18). *The nation had taken its first steps in the land, and the surrounding nations would know that the LORD is mighty (v24).*

ISRAEL CIRCUMCISED AND PASSOVER CELEBRATED

The news of this momentous crossing by the nation of Israel spread quickly among the kings (and all the inhabitants) on the west side of the Jordan; it caused them to lose their heart and their courage (5:1; see Exod 23:27). However, before the conquest could begin, the nation had to care for some overlooked matters. Over the years, the practice of circumcision (the sign of the covenant; see Gen 17:9–14) had been neglected—this was a serious failure and showed a lack of obedience. The first generation of the people after the Exodus from Egypt had been circumcised (Josh 5:5a), but the second generation had not been circumcised (v5b). The first generation had been disobedient, and the LORD had judged

them—all (except Caleb and Joshua) died in the wilderness and would not enter the land of promise (vv4,6; see Num 14:20–35). Since circumcision—the sign of the covenant—was intended to remind Abraham’s descendants that they would be given the land of Canaan (see Gen 17:7–8), and since the first generation had forfeited their part in that covenant, they apparently reasoned, “Why perform a sign that only reminds us of what we will never enjoy?” So they failed to circumcise any of their male children.

The LORD instructed Joshua to reinstitute this covenant sign (Josh 5:2–3), which they did (v7). *This act “rolled away the reproach of Egypt” (v9); it answered the mocking taunts of the Egyptians (and other nations) that God had rejected His people and left them to wander in the wilderness (see Num 14:15–16; Deut 9:28).* Also at this time, it was deemed appropriate (even necessary) for the nation to celebrate Passover; this was the first Passover celebrated in the land of promise (Josh 5:10). In this Passover, they were able to use “the produce of the land” (v11), and for that reason the manna that had sustained them ceased (v12).



THE PLANS FOR CONQUERING JERICO

As the first encounter with the inhabitants of the land—the battle for Jericho (v13a)—approached, the LORD sent a messenger to meet with Joshua. In this mysterious meeting, there appeared a man with a “drawn sword in his hand” (v13b). Joshua did not recognize Him and asked Him if he was for them or against them (v13c). The man identified Himself as “the commander of the army of the LORD” (v14a). Joshua recognized Him as a superior, but more than that, he worshiped Him (v14b)! This commander then compelled Joshua to take his sandals off because the place was holy (v15). This was the same command the Angel of the LORD had given to Moses at the burning bush (see Exod 3:2,5); this mysterious messenger was the Angel of the LORD.

Although Jericho was a well-fortified city (Josh 6:1), the LORD promised victory (v2); however, He gave Joshua a strange battle plan. For six days (vv3c,14b), seven priests were to march around the city with the ark and with trumpets (vv4,6,13a). In front and behind these seven priests were “the men of war” (v3b; armed men, v7b) to act as guards (vv9a,13b); then came the people (v7). Each day, they were to make one circuit (v3a) around the city and return to camp (v11). On the march, the trumpets were to be blown continually (vv9b,13c), but there was no shouting (v10). On the seventh day, this procession was to make seven circuits around the city (vv4b,15). On the final circuit, there was to be one long blast of the trumpets (v5a), and then all the people were to shout (vv5,10b,16b). At this, the walls of the city were to “fall down flat,” and the city would be open to the assault of Israel (v5b). *This bizarre plan was executed precisely, and on the seventh day after the people shouted, “the wall fell down flat,” and the city was captured (v20). This battle was won by the LORD’s power.*

Certain “rules of engagement” were ordered for this battle. First, Rahab and her family were to be protected; the two spies made sure that they were protected (v17b), and Rahab lived with Israel for the rest of her life (v25). Also, everything was to be destroyed (v17a); nothing was to be preserved for personal use (v18); and finally, all precious metals were to be given to the “treasury of the LORD” (vv19,24b). These rules were to be carefully observed (v24). After this great victory, Joshua pronounced a curse on the city (v26; see 1 Kgs 16:34).

LESSON SUMMARY

Joshua 3:1–6:26 describes Israel’s crossing of God parting the Jordan River, led by the ark of the covenant. Memorial stones in the river and on the bank commemorated the event. Circumcision and Passover are reinstituted, which affirmed the covenant and the people’s faith. The Angel of the LORD gave Joshua a divine plan for Jericho’s conquest. Israel’s obedience in the form of marching and shouting caused the walls to fall, securing victory.

Personal Preparation

The following section is provided for you to use as a devotional. This will help you prepare for your upcoming Generations of Grace lesson time. *Check off your progress as you go.*

- ☐ **PRAY** for wisdom to understand what you are about to read and to effectively teach the lesson.
- ☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth.
- ☐ **IDENTIFY** this week's central truth along with the transition, key texts, and key verse(s) from this lesson's title page.
- ☐ **READ** this week's key texts from Scripture and choose which passages you want to read aloud to the children during your lesson time. Record on the right hand page under **READ**.
- ☐ **STUDY** the commentary and identify the italicized sentences to summarize the lesson and central truth below.

- ☐ **SUMMARIZE** your notes from above into the **LESSON OUTLINE** on the right hand page. Add any additional questions that you want to reference while teaching your lesson (one question provided per point).
 - ☐ **PREPARE** your activity, craft, or coloring page for this week's lesson by visiting our website's additional resources page. Select the introduction, illustration, or application that you would like to use in your classroom along with any visual aid you may decide to use while teaching.
 - ☐ **PLAN** your music time by choosing songs that pertain to this week's narrative theme. Check the additional resources on our website for recommendations.
 - ☐ **RE-WRITE** this week's spotlight on the gospel in your own words on the teaching outline under **CONCLUDE** on the right hand page.
 - ☐ **PRAY** about how you can apply this lesson to your life and that you would communicate the central truth and spotlight on the gospel clearly in your lesson.
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**Additional
Resources**
gracecurriculum.org



Additional Resources

gracecurriculum.org

Teaching Outline

This section is designed to be used as a clean copy of your notes for teaching the lesson. Follow the teaching outline below as a step-by-step guide during your Sunday School lesson.

- ☐ **PRAY** with your class that the children would understand the central truth and gospel message, and that you would teach the children effectively.
- ☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth to begin your lesson.
- ☐ **INTRODUCE** this week's lesson and the central truth using the selected introduction, illustration, or application from our additional resources page.



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- ☐ **READ** the key texts from Scripture you selected that connect to the central truth.

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- ☐ **TEACH** your class using your summarized notes and questions from the **LESSON OUTLINE**. The points provided are the main headers from the commentary. Use the visual aid you selected and always connect your lesson back to the central truth.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **CROSSING THE JORDAN AND THE MEMORIAL STONES (JOSHUA 3:1-4:24)**

- How many stones were in the memorial?

2. **ISRAEL CIRCUMCISED AND PASSOVER CELEBRATED (JOSHUA 5:1-15)**

- What is Passover meant to remember?

3. **THE PLANS FOR CONQUERING JERICHO (JOSHUA 5:13-6:26)**

- How many times did the people march around Jericho?

- ☐ **CONCLUDE** this week's lesson with the spotlight on the gospel and tie it into the central truth and the lesson you just taught.

- ☐ **PRAY** for the children hearing this lesson that they would be saved and follow the LORD.