



JOSHUA

A GUIDE TO READ AND REFLECT ON
THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Introduction

Joshua is an epic narrative of God's people claiming the land God promised.

God promised Abraham that he would make his sons and daughter as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore in a land of their own. We see his descendants grow into a nation called Israel (Genesis 49-50; Exodus 1).

The Israelites were enslaved in Egypt for 400 years. God sent Moses to rescue them from slavery and lead them into a new life and land to rescue them. On the journey, God protected them and provided food, water and a law of life in the Ten Commandments.

Because Israel sinned against God, they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. God guided them day and night and promised to still give them a land of their own. On the edge of the promised land, Moses died and Joshua, his right-hand man, became their new leader.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA IS THE STORY OF HOW GOD FULFILLS HIS PROMISE TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE INTO A NEW LAND AND A NEW LIFE.

The book of Joshua is full of battles and unexpected turns. Their expedition requires faithfulness and obedience every step of the way. Through the entire story one thing is clear: God is the one fighting the battles, not Israel. God is working to fulfill His promise.

The name Joshua is the Hebrew version of the Greek name Jesus. Jesus and Joshua share the same name and mission: to lead God's people into the life God offers them. In both cases, people receive this new life through faith and obedience

Just like the Israelites, we are on the edge of an adventure that will lead us into the new life God promises. He has shown us that He is faithful. It's our turn to show Him that we will be faithful, too.

How to use this guide:

You'll need a Bible and a pen, a quiet space and a dedicated time to read and reflect. This guide is set up like a workbook and divides the Book of Joshua into four sections. Read the scripture at the top of the page and then spend time reflecting and answering the provided questions. At the end of each section you'll also find some devotional practices - scripture memorization, prayer and reflection. Set aside some time and try them out.



JOSHUA LEADS ISRAEL

Chapters 1– 5

Joshua 1

The Israelites went through a major change in leadership, from Moses to Joshua.

How do you feel about change? What makes it difficult?

Is there a change in your life (past, present or future) you need to talk about with God?

The Israelites had to put their trust in Joshua in order to enter the life God wanted to give them. For us, we have to put our trust in Jesus to enter the life God wants to give us. This takes courage.

What do you believe about the life God wants for you?

What fear do you need to overcome in order to get there?

How do you need to trust Jesus to lead you into a good and better life?

Joshua 2

What can Rahab's faith teach you about your own faith?

What does God's promise to Rahab teach you about His heart for all people?

In what way do you need to turn to God and trust Him today?

Joshua 3-4

The Israelites must trust God in order to cross the Jordan River. Joshua told them to consecrate themselves to the LORD in order to be ready for what He would do for them. But the Israelites needed to act and take the first step trusting that God would come through. Likewise, we need to take steps and trust that God will come through.

What has God asked you to do that requires you to trust that He will come through for you?

What do you hope God does in your life?

What scares you about all of this? Talk with God about it.

God told Joshua to make a memorial to remember their first step of faith in their journey.

What was your first step of faith? What can you do to remember what God has done for you?

Joshua 5

The Israelites dedicate themselves to God and celebrate Passover in the land God promised them. They had been waiting forty years for this!

What stands out to you from the passage?

What can this teach you about life with God?

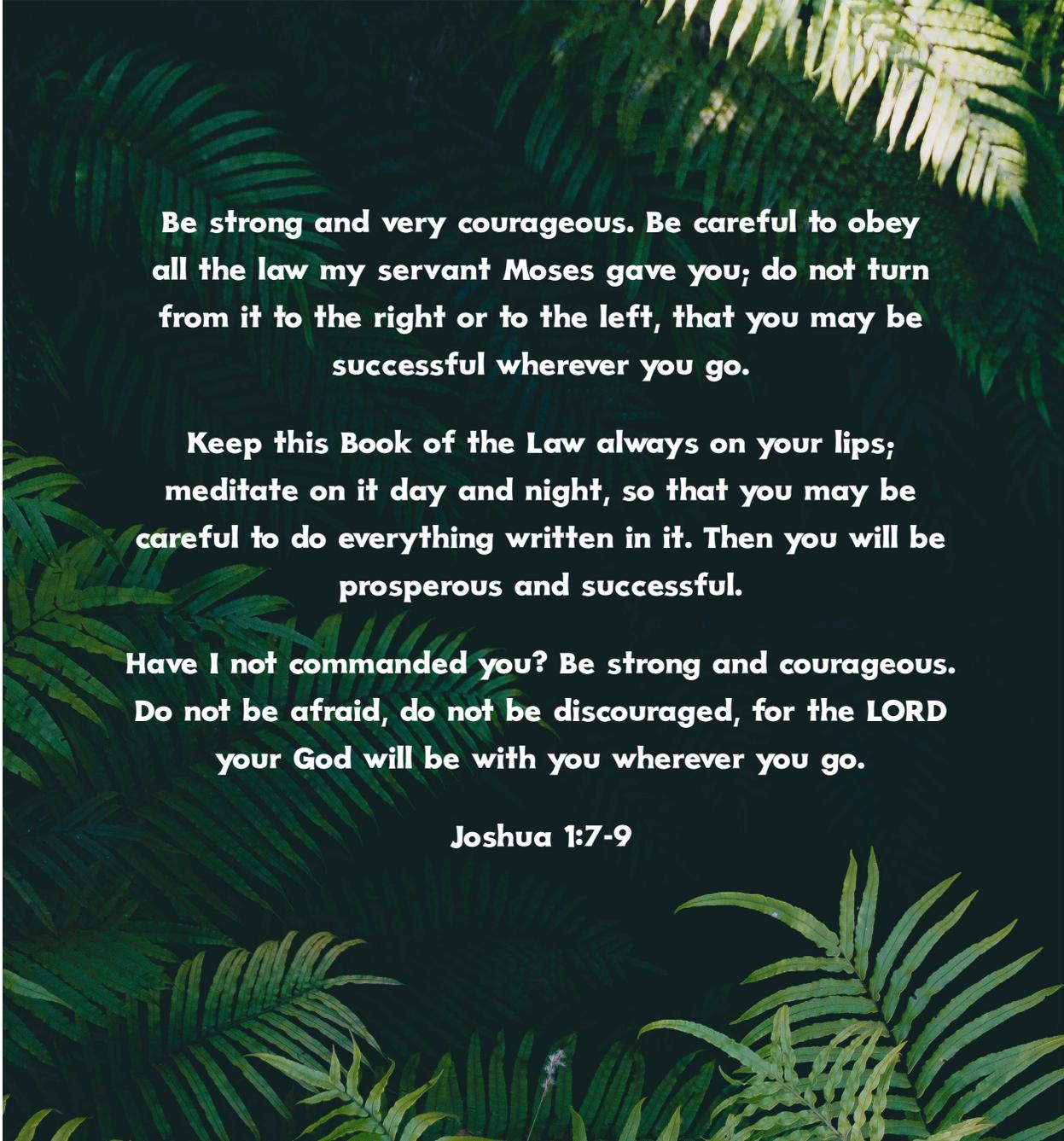
What have you had to wait patiently for God to provide?

Take time to express gratitude if you have received it or grief if you have not.

Practice: Scripture Memory

Memorizing scripture helps us keep God's Word on our minds and hearts at all times. This is a key practice as we mature in life with God.

Memorize Joshua 1:7-9.

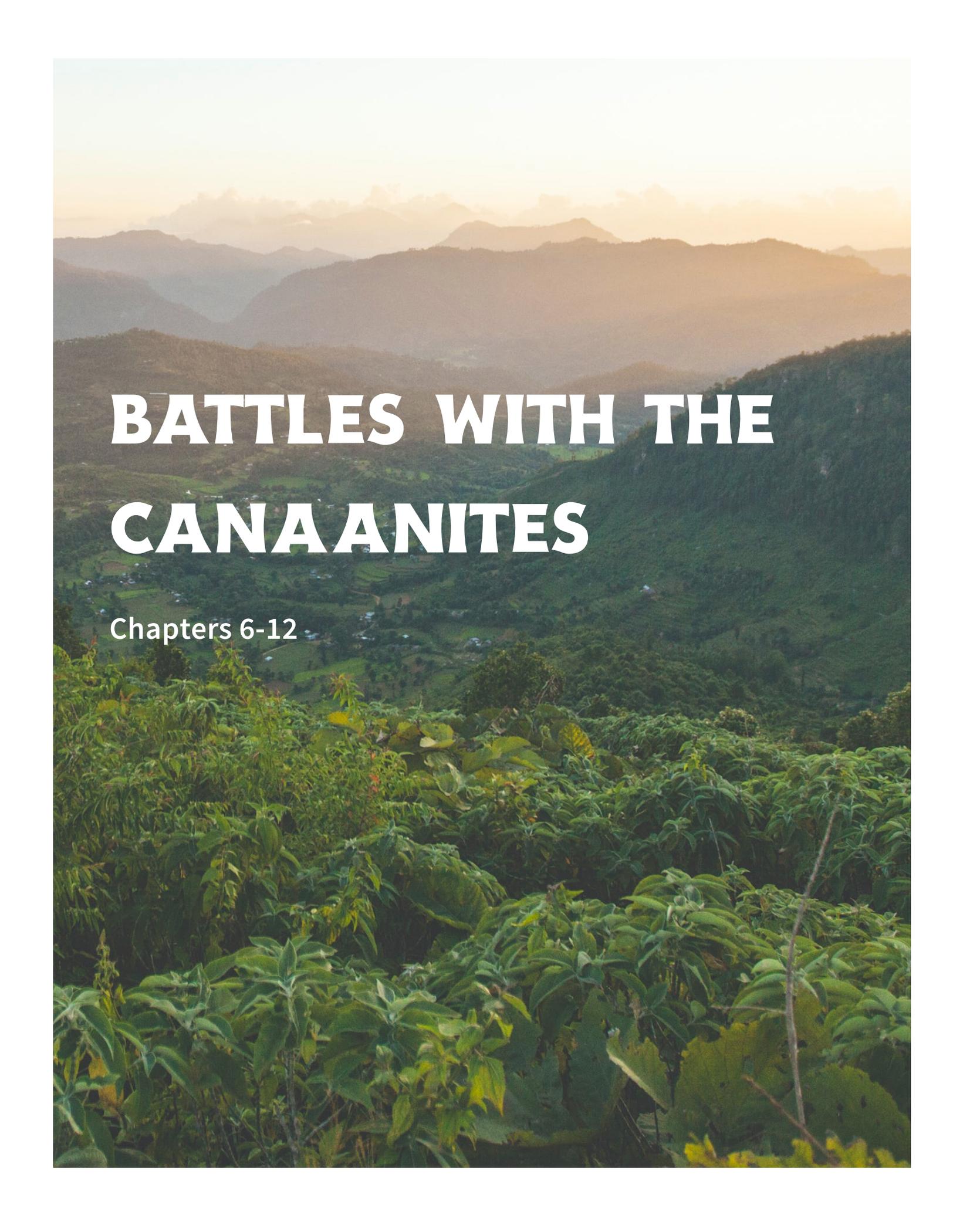


Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go.

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

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

Joshua 1:7-9



BATTLES WITH THE CANAANITES

Chapters 6-12

God's Justice on Human Evil

Let's be honest. There are a lot of battles and bloodshed in the book of Joshua. Why would God put a stamp of approval on killing people? Does God want people to die? Why would God single out the Canaanites? What does this mean for God today as we follow Jesus?

We don't have all the answers, but here are some points to consider.

Why the Canaanites?

God wanted the Canaanites to come to know Him. We see multiple examples in Genesis through Joshua about God welcoming people who turn to Him. However, God could not allow the culture of the Canaanites to affect the Israelites. Canaanite culture was marked by two distinctives: moral corruption and child sacrifice. Check out Leviticus 18 to see their immoral practices. God never wanted His people to adopt this ritual or other evil practices.

Did God initiate a genocide?

We see phrases like "totally destroy", "no survivors" and "all that breathed". Did the Israelite's literally kill everybody? Note that later in Joshua we see the Israelites conducting business and marrying people from the towns where they left no survivors. (Check out Joshua 10:36-39 vs 15:13-15). How is this possible? Joshua uses the common literary technique of hyperbole, or extreme exaggeration, from ancient battle accounts to illustrate Israel's decisive victory over their enemies. Remember, the Bible is a library of literature.

A unique moment in history.

God's desire is for Israel to have peace with the nations so they, too, will enjoy the life God offers. He gives people time to turn from their wicked ways. But God works within the bounds of human history to accomplish His purposes. Is God a god of war? No. Did God accept the limitations of the Israelites, a tribe of warriors, to accomplish His redemptive purposes? Yes. Check out Revelation 22 to see the global good that God is working towards.

God is a god of justice, which is good news. We don't want to follow a God who excuses evil. We follow a just and loving God who always fights for what is true and good, and gives people and opportunity to join His side. If you want to understand who God is, the clearest picture we have of Him is Jesus, God in the flesh. Jesus willingly became human to take on the punishment of sin and the pain of death. The justice of God took human evil upon Himself so He could claim victory over evil and death forever. The God of unwavering justice is also the God of undeserved mercy and love.

Joshua 6

Joshua has to surrender to God's will in order to experience God's power. Why is it necessary to surrender before we experience God's power?

We can only claim the life God has for us by His power. What battles have you been trying to win by your own power?

How can you begin fighting with God's power through faith?

Ask God to bring His power into your battle today.

Joshua 7-8

What was the heart behind Achan's sin?

Why does God take this kind of sin so seriously?

How does this make you feel about hidden sin in your life?

Is there sin in your life? Ask God to reveal it to you. Be strong and courageous. Confess your sin to God and confess it to someone you love and trust. Take whatever steps necessary to eliminate it from your life. We are free from the power of sin because of Jesus.

Joshua 9

What mistake did the Israelites make?

What can you learn from their encounter with the Gibeonites as you follow Jesus?

What is challenging about waiting on God?

What part of your life do you need to consult with God about? Do that now.

Joshua 10-12

We see the theme of this section in Joshua 10:14, “Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!” That statement is true for us too.

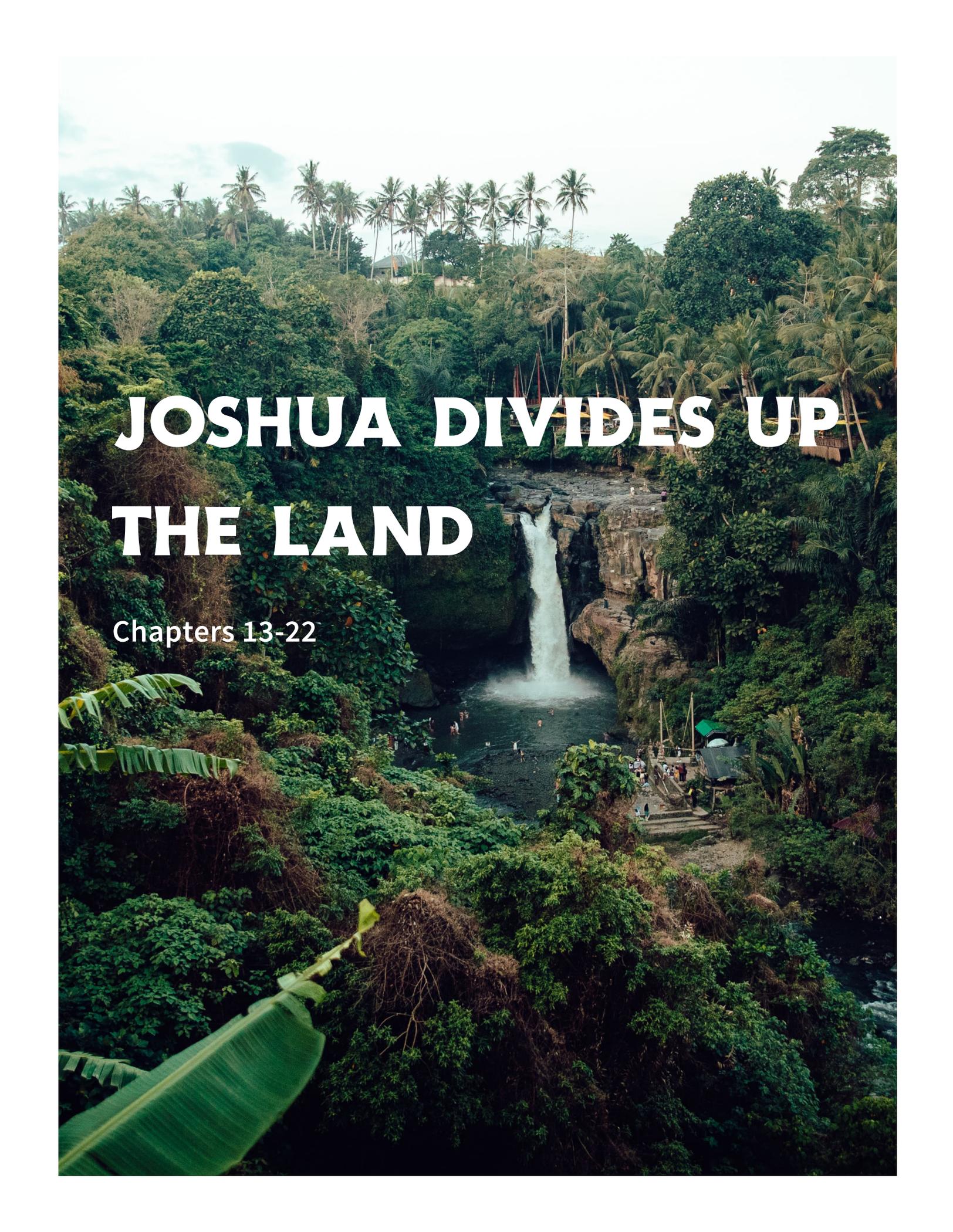
How does it feel to know that the LORD is fighting for you?

Are there any battles you need God to fight for you? Ask Him to do that.

Practice: Prayer as a Battle

Jericho falls in Joshua 6. Various battles are won through God’s power and presence. The Israelites lose because they do not consult God. All of this points to our need to seek God during our battles in life. The life that God wants to give us comes through dependence on Him.

Set aside 30 minutes to pray to God. For this practice, try praying out loud while walking. This could be on a hike, in your neighborhood or at your house. Talk with God about battles you’re facing, where you need Him in your life and where you want to see Him move. Become a person who seeks God and trusts Him in your battles.



JOSHUA DIVIDES UP THE LAND

Chapters 13-22

Real People.

Real Places.

Real Promise.

When you start reading this section of Joshua you'll notice something quickly. There are a lot of names of people and places that are hard to pronounce. It's easy to gloss over this section of Joshua, but we encourage you to persevere. It might be easiest to read this quickly in one sitting. Look for patterns and consider why these details could have mattered.

Remember, these are real people and places which point to a real promise. When you see a genealogy or a name in Scripture, it points to the fact that the Bible is a book rooted in history.

At this point in Joshua, the battle is won and the people are finally in the land. Now, each tribe, family and person of Israel, down to the family, get to experience God's promise! For the first time, Israel has a home of its own. They were slaves in Egypt and nomads in the desert. After hundreds of years God came through on His promise to provide a land for His people.

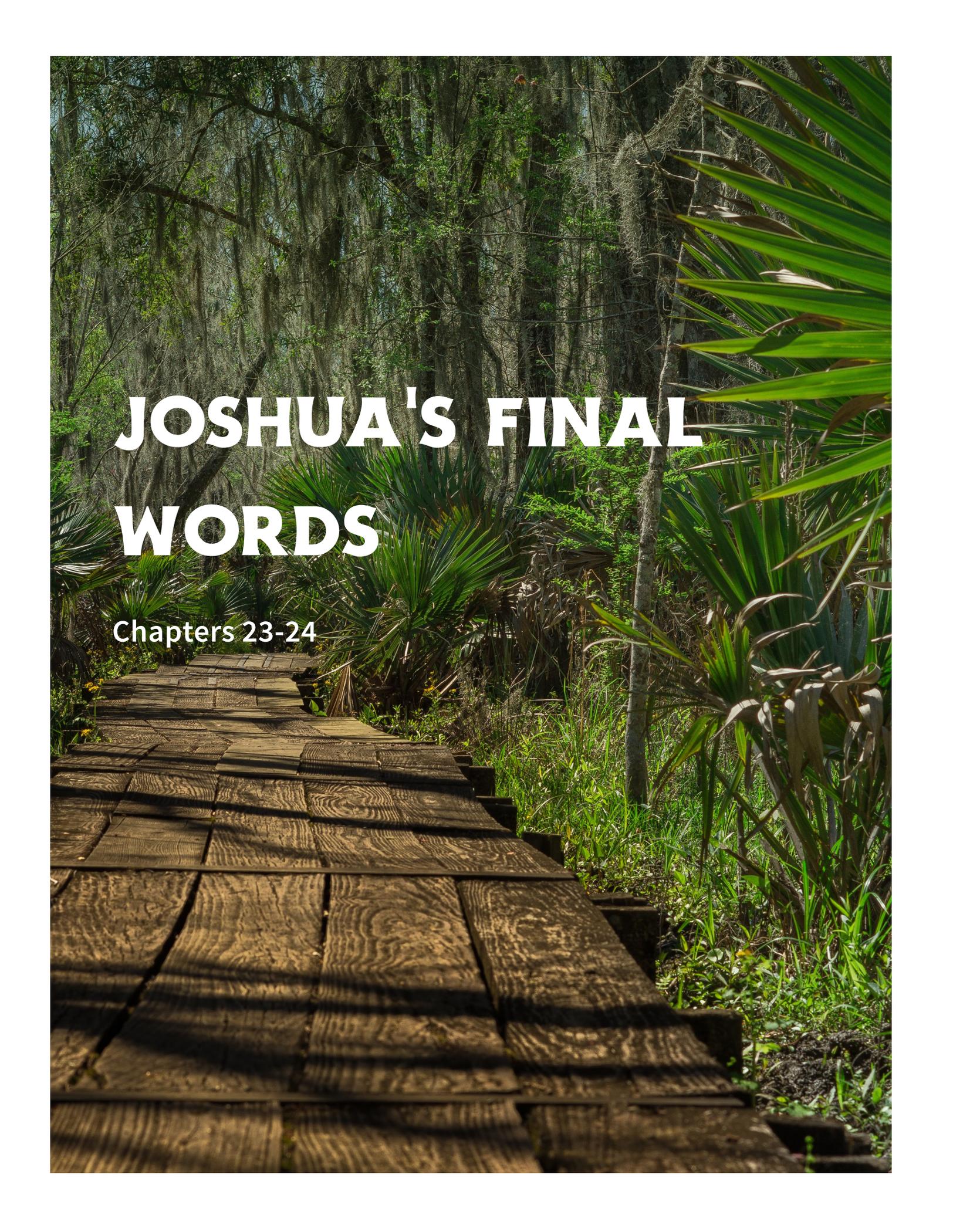
Sometimes, we have to wait a long time for God's promises. Maybe we won't even see them in our lifetime. This was true for hundreds of thousands of Israelites. But we know God will eventually come through. We know God is faithful. We know that God is the promise-keeper.

Practice: Reflection

Sometimes we move through life so fast we do not take time to slow down and look back to see what God has done. Reflect on the following questions.

Where have you seen God provide for you, protect you or keep His promise?

What are some of the things you hope God will do in the future?



JOSHUA'S FINAL WORDS

Chapters 23-24

Joshua 23-24

Joshua urges Israel to be faithful but they will have to decide for themselves whether or not they will obey. God offers us eternal life with Him but our faithfulness will determine whether we enter into that life.

How would you like your faith in God to be described at the end of your life?

What do you need to choose to do now to move toward that?

Who do you want to be impacted by your faith in God? Write their name someplace in your home. Pray for them now and every day.

Practice: Scripture Meditation

In Joshua 1 Israel is told to meditate on God's Word. (Joshua 1:7-9) Meditation simply means to think deeply or to focus one's mind on. When we deeply focus on God's truth, it becomes real to us in ways it couldn't through simply reading it.

We invite you to meditate for ten minutes on the verse below. Find a quiet place, set a timer, and sit in a comfortable position. Read the verse repeatedly and ask God to speak to you. If you get distracted that's okay. Just bring your mind back to God.

You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

Joshua 23:14

Conclusion

What are you going to do? That's the question the book of Joshua leaves us with. Will we choose to be faithful to God or will we choose to do our own thing?

The book of Joshua reveals that God is worthy of our faithfulness. He is worth following because He keeps His promises. In Joshua we see a God who fights our battles and will do whatever it takes to keep His word. He always comes through.

Jesus is the best example of God keeping His promises. For hundreds of years, Israel waited for a Messiah. God provided a Savior from their sins in Jesus, our new Joshua. He fights our battles, leads us into a better life, and lays out the path for new faithfulness to God.

Will you choose to be faithful to Jesus? Will you be strong and courageous and do whatever it takes to enter the life he wants to give you?

THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

Jesus is with you in the battle. In fact, Jesus already won the battle. He died in your place and defeated death so you can experience a full life both now and ever.

The invitation to all is this: enter the Kingdom of God. The King is good, His rule is right and He provides the life you've always wanted.

YOU'RE INVITED.

If you haven't accepted the invitation, reach out to a believer and ask them what it would mean for you to follow Jesus. If you're in the Kingdom, keep living for the King and keep sharing God's love so that One more would join you.



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