



The Bible at 30,000 Feet The Story of Israel

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SUNDAY 18 May 2025

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THE BIBLE AT 30,000 FEET:

The Story of Israel

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GETTING STARTED

The story of Israel from Joshua to Esther traces a dramatic arc of triumph, failure, exile, and restoration. These historical books reveal God's unwavering faithfulness to a people who often forget Him. They document Israel's entrance into the Promised Land, their moral and spiritual decline, the rise and fall of kings, and ultimately, God's redemptive movement through ordinary, flawed people. Throughout these books, God shows that He keeps His promises—even when His people do not. From conquering Canaan under Joshua to the quiet courage of Esther in Persia, God's presence weaves through the chaos, calling His people back to Himself

- What comes to mind when you think of the books from Joshua-Esther? Is there a story or person who you can resonate with?
- Why is it important to understand the history of God's people as seen through the nation of Israel?

INTO THE WORD

Joshua

Joshua leads Israel into the Promised Land, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham. Victories like Jericho show God's power, but obedience is critical. The call is clear: inherit the land by following the Lord.

Judges

Israel repeatedly forgets God. Each generation turns from Him, doing "what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25). God raises judges to deliver them, but the cycle of sin, oppression, and temporary rescue continues.

Ruth

Set during the dark times of Judges, Ruth is a glimpse of light. God is hardly named, yet His providence shines. Ruth's loyalty and Boaz's integrity lead to David's lineage—pointing to a Redeemer beyond Israel.

1 & 2 Samuel / Kings

Israel demands a king, rejecting God as their true ruler. Saul fails; David rises as a king after God's heart. David's son Solomon builds the Temple but drifts into idolatry. The kingdom divides, and kings increasingly lead the people away from God. Prophets rise, pleading with the people to return to the Lord.

1 & 2 Chronicles

A retelling of Israel's history with emphasis on God's covenant and hope in future kingship—ultimately pointing to Jesus. It ends with Cyrus sending the exiles home, signalling restoration.

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

These books recount the return from exile. Ezra restores the Law, Nehemiah rebuilds Jerusalem's walls, and Esther risks her life to save her people. Even in foreign lands, God is working

- How do we see God's faithfulness throughout the history of Israel, even despite the unfaithfulness of his people at times?
- What major themes do you see repeated throughout the books of Joshua to Esther? What does this tell us about God?

GOING DEEPER

These books ask: Will God's people trust Him? Often, they fail. But God remains faithful. He uses warriors, widows, prophets, and queens to carry out His plan. His covenant endures.

- What does God's ongoing faithfulness to Israel tell you about His heart toward you?
- Where do you see God working behind the scenes in your own life?

PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank You for showing us Your faithfulness in the stories from Joshua to Esther. Even when Your people forgot You or made mistakes, You never gave up on them—and You never give up on us. We're sorry for the times we try to go our own way. Please help us trust You more and follow You with obedient hearts. Thank You for using ordinary people—like Ruth, David, and Esther—to do great things. Help us to be brave like them and to believe that You have a purpose for our lives too. Even when life is hard or You seem quiet, remind us that You are still with us and still working for our good.

Make us a people who love You and live for You every day. In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.