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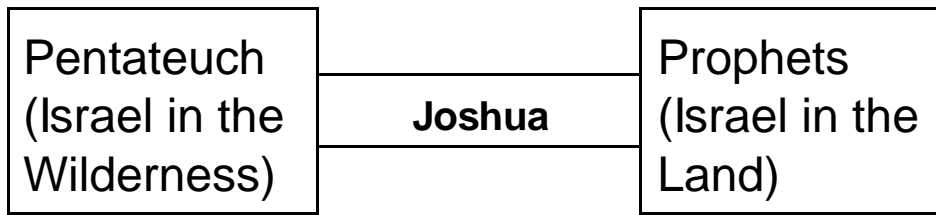
# JOSHUA

## The Book of the Conquest

### THE PLACE OF JOSHUA IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The book of Joshua heads the Nabi'im - the collection of books known as "the Prophets." These books cover the period of Israel's history from the entrance into the promised land to the Babylonian Exile.

Joshua is the bridge which brings the people of God from the Wilderness wanderings into the land.



### THE SCOPE OF THE BOOK

The book of Joshua takes up where Deuteronomy leaves off with the Israelites about to enter the promised land.

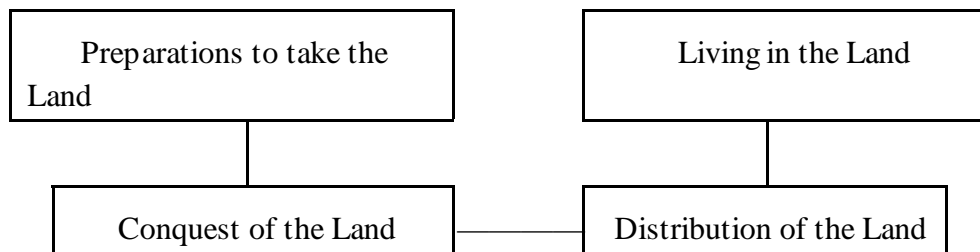
<b>Deuteronomy</b>	<b>Joshua</b>
Israelites in the Wilderness.	Israelites entering into the Promised Land.
A vision for faith.	A venture of faith.
Israel promised an inheritance.	Israel takes possession of its inheritance.
Faith in principle.	Faith in action.
Possibility.	Realization.

Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses. Joshua will end with the death of Joshua. As the book of Joshua opens, Moses has just died. Before his death, he had laid his hands upon Joshua who was to be the new leader. This book can be divided into two parts.

1. The first part details the actual taking of the land.
2. The second part deals with the distribution of that land to the various tribes of Israel.

<i>Joshua - The Book of Conquest</i>			
1:1	6:1	13:1	22:10
Preparations to take the Land	CONQUEST of the Land	DISTRIBUTION of the Land	Living in the Land
Remembrance	Action	Inheritance	Remembrance
Initial Appeal	In the Land		Closing Appeal

This book is actually arranged in the format of a large Chiastic parallel. Thus, it can be seen that this book begins and ends with a focus upon the Covenant of the Lord with His people.



This is the message of the book of Joshua. It is that God has been faithful to keep His promises regarding a land and an inheritance for His people. Because God has been faithful in the keeping of His covenant relationship, so also the people of Israel are to be faithful in keeping the terms of the covenant.

## **AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK**

The author of the book is not specifically identified within the book, although there is the occasional use of the plural pronoun (“we”), indicating his identification with the Israelites coming into the land.

*For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, that is, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the Lord, to whom the Lord had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give US, a land flowing with milk and honey. (Joshua 5:6).*

This could be an editorial “us” and does not automatically mandate that the writer had been in the wilderness (verse 1 of the same chapter has a similar plural pronoun, but only in certain Hebrew manuscripts).

1. Likewise, there is an indication that Rahab was still living at the time of the writing of this book (Joshua 6:25).
2. The Talmud states that this book was written by Joshua himself, that Eleazar wrote the section detailing Joshua's death and that Phinehas added the verses telling of Eleazar's death.
3. However, there are several other events about which Joshua could not have written, since they took place after his death.
  - a. Caleb's conquest of Hebron (Joshua 15:13-14 with Judges 1:1, 10, 20).
  - b. Othniel's capture of Debir (Joshua 15:15-19 with Judges 1:1; 1:11-15).
  - c. The migration of Dan to Leshem (Joshua 19:47 with Judges 17:18 indicates that this was a time when idolatry was permitted; this did not take place until after the death of Joshua - Joshua 24:31).
  - d. The town of Zephath had its name changed to Hormah in the days of the Judges (Joshua 12:14; 15:30 with Judges 1:16-17).
4. There are also certain factors which indicate later editorial additions to the book. On several occasions we are given the modern equivalents for older names of places (Joshua 15:9,49,54).

Joshua 6:24 makes reference to "silver and gold and vessels of bronze and iron" that were saved for the "House of the Lord." This phrasing has been taken to indicate that Joshua was written after the building of the Temple. However, it is possible that the BEYTH-YAHWEH (בֵּית יְהוָה) is merely used to describe the "dwelling-place of the Lord."

An example of this type of usage is seen in instances where Abraham describe his house (Genesis 14:14; 15:2-3; 17:12-13) and in Exodus 23:19 soon after the construction of the Tabernacle.

The book also gives an evaluation of the elders who outlived Joshua.

*And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, and had known all the deeds of the Lord which He had done for Israel. (Joshua 24:31).*

5. The book of Joshua also makes reference to other written documents in the book of Jasher (10:13) and of a written description of the land which Joshua ordered to be written (18:9).

## **JOSHUA AS THE SECOND MOSES**

The book of Joshua seems to contain a number of deliberate parallels that are meant to make us see Joshua as the successor to Moses. The following parallel is pointed out by Dale Allison (1997:27).

Moses	Joshua
Sends spies into the land (Numbers 13)	Sends spies into the land (Joshua 2)
The song of the Sea: "All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away, terror and dread fall upon them" (Exodus 15).	Rahab says: "The fear of you has fallen upon us and... all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you" (Joshua 2).
Israel celebrates the Passover and shortly afterward eats manna (Exodus 12).	Israel celebrates the Passover and afterward the manna dries up (Joshua 5:10-13).
Moses has a vision and is told: "Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground (Exodus 3:5).	Joshua has a vision and is told: "Put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground (Joshua 5:15).

When Moses, with the staff of God, holds up his hands, the battle goes to Israel (Exodus 17)	When Joshua stretches out his hand with its sword, the victory goes to Israel (Joshua 8).
Moses delivers a farewell speech that includes a reference to his old age (Deut 31:2), promises future victory over people of the land (31:3-5), calls for obedience to the Torah (31:12-13), and sets forth the alternative of serving God or other gods and the consequent blessings and curses (30:15-20).	Joshua delivers a farewell speech that includes a reference to his old age (Josh 23:2), promises future victory over people of the land (23:4-5), calls for obedience to the Torah (23:6), and sets forth the alternative of serving God or other gods and the consequent blessings and curses (23:6-16).
Moses mediates a covenant; the people say: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient" (Ex 24:7).	Joshua mediates a covenant; the people say: "The Lord our God we will serve him we will obey" (Joshua 24:24).

## **JOSHUA THE MAN**

1 Chronicles 7:27 mentions Joshua as the only son of his family. It is possible that he was trained in Egyptian culture, perhaps even serving for a time in Pharaoh's army and learning about military matters.

1. Joshua is first introduced to us in Exodus 17:9.  
The incident takes place soon after the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea into the Sinai Wilderness. The Israelites were being attacked by Amalek and it is Joshua who is commissioned to lead the army of the Lord in defense of this attack.
2. Joshua is described as the servant of Moses (Exodus 24:13) and as a young man (Exodus 33:11).  
He accompanied Moses onto Mount Sinai to receive the Law, during which time Joshua was left alone for 40 days as Moses met with the Lord.
3. When 12 spies were chosen to go into Canaan, Joshua was chosen to represent his tribe, the tribe of Ephraim. It seems to be at this time that Joshua was given this name by which we know him.
  - a. He was originally named Hoshea (Numbers 13:8). This name means "salvation."

- b. It was Moses who changed his name to Joshua (Numbers 13:16). The name Joshua means “Yahweh saves.”

It was Caleb and Joshua who returned with the minority report. While the other 10 spies said, “The people in that land are too big,” Joshua and Caleb said, “It is a wonderful land and our God is bigger than they are!”

As a result of Israel's unbelief, that entire generation was condemned to die in the Wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb would be permitted to enter into the land.

- 4. One of the provisions of the covenant was for a dynastic succession - that the mantle of leadership would be passed from Moses to Joshua.

This was accomplished through a rite of ordination. It is described here in the words “Moses had laid his hands on him.”

*Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. (Deuteronomy 34:9).*

This event has a corresponding pattern in the New Testament when Jesus breathed upon His disciples and told them to receive the Holy Spirit.

<b>Moses and Joshua</b>	<b>Jesus and His disciples</b>
Took place prior to the death of Moses.	Took place in the Upper Room.
Moses laid his hands upon Joshua.	Jesus breathed on His disciples.
Joshua was filled with the spirit of wisdom.	The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and with power.

When Moses died, Joshua took over as leader. In the same way, the apostles continued to serve as the leaders of the church in the physical absence of its head - Jesus. The pattern between Joshua and Acts continues throughout the early period of the church.

<b>Joshua</b>	<b>Acts</b>
God told the people to prepare for the conquest.	Jesus told the disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
Israel crossed the Jordan and circumcised themselves.	The Holy Spirit baptized the church.
Jericho was conquered.	Jerusalem witnessed the power of God as many came to faith.
Achan stole from the Lord and was punished.	Ananias & Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and was punished.
The Gentile Gibeonites joined with Israel.	Hellenistic Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles came into the church.

While there are some parallels, there are also some differences. In Joshua we see Gentiles sneaking in versus Gentiles welcomed into the Kingdom in Acts 10-11. In Joshua, the movement is to bring God’s people INTO the land - In Acts the people of God begin in the land and the movement is to disperse them OUT of the land and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

## **THE AMARNA TABLETS**

A series of letters were discovered at the ancient Egyptian city of Akhenaton, located on the east bank of the Nile midway between Giza and Thebes. The city has since become known as Tell el-Amarna by the combining of two names:

- a. El-Til is the name of the modern-day village in the area.
- b. El-Amarna is one of the Arab tribes which has settled in the area.

In 1887, a peasant woman found some tablets in the ruins of Tell el-Amarna. She sold them for ten piastres. The tablets were offered to European scholars, but were suspected of being forgeries and were rejected. The tablets were taken to Luxor and sold to tourists. By the time that scholars realized the tablets were genuine, a number of the tablets had

been sold.

Excavations began in 1891 and a total of 400 tablets were eventually uncovered. The tablets date to the 18th dynasty of Egypt, specifically during the reign of Akhenaton. These tablets consist correspondence between the Pharaoh of Egypt at the kings of the cities of Jerusalem, Gezer, Lachish, Jarmuth and Eglon. However, they are written in Akkadian, demonstrating that this was the language of international diplomacy.

In several of these letters, there are complaints and requests for protection from invading Hapiru, a nomadic people who were overrunning the land. Some of these Hapiru had been joined by the Canaanites and some had offered their services as mercenaries.

The interesting thing about these Amarna Tablets is what they do not mention. There are no letters from Jericho, Ai, Bethel, or Gibeon - those cities which were destroyed by Joshua.

## **LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF JOSHUA**

1. Joshua teaches us about the Lord.
  - a. It teaches us about the faithfulness of God. In this book we see that God keeps His promises. God had promised the land to Moses (Exodus 6:4) and promised that Joshua would lead the people into it (Deuteronomy 3:27-28).
  - b. It teaches us about the will of God. Joshua emphasizes that God wanted his people to take full possession of the land (Joshua 13:1; 18:3).
  - c. It teaches about the power of God. Joshua shows that the Lord is more powerful than the armies and cities of the land. He is even greater than His people's disobedience or other people's trickery.
2. Joshua teaches us about the People of God. They need to be...
  - a. People with an aim. We need to determine what is the will of God for us and then attain that goal.
  - b. People of obedience (1:7-8).

- c. People of faith (3:15; 6:16,20).
- d. People without compromise. One of the most dangerous traps that faces us is compromise with the enemy. When the Israelites did not totally drive out the Canaanites, this compromise led to their eventual defeat.

# JOSHUA 1-5

## Preparations to Take the Land

The first five chapters of the book of Joshua deal with the preparations of the people as they ready themselves to take the land.

Joshua - The Book of Conquest			
1:1	6:1	13:1	22:10
Preparations to take the Land	CONQUEST of the Land	DISTRIBUTION of the Land	Living in the Land
Initial Appeal	In the Land		Closing Appeal

This section is made up of five parts, corresponding to the first five chapters of the book.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Charge to Joshua	Spying Jericho	Crossing Jordan	Memorial Stones	Circumcision & Passover
Preamble	Preparation	Passage & Remembrance		Precepts
<b>Task identified</b>	<b>Enemy studied</b>	<b>Barrier crossed</b>	<b>Crossing memorialized</b>	<b>People prepared</b>

Joshua is a tremendous type of Christ. We will see a continuing flow of parallels throughout this book.

Joshua	Jesus
Servant to Moses	Took on the role of a servant
His public ministry begins at the Jordan	His public ministry began at the Jordan
He proclaims death to the nations	He proclaims the gospel to the nations

All against whom this message is directed are under the ban	All to whom this message is proclaimed are called to be baptized
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## THE CHARGE TO JOSHUA (JOSHUA 1)

*"Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them." (Joshua 1:6).*

Four times in this chapter, Joshua is told to "be strong and courageous." But that is not all. Before Moses died, he told Joshua twice to "be strong and courageous" (Deuteronomy 31:6-7). And again, when the Lord commissioned Joshua, He told him to "be strong and courageous" (Deuteronomy 31:23).

And now, in this opening chapter of Joshua, the Lord tells him three times to "be strong and courageous" (1:6,7,9) and then the people of Israel respond by charging Joshua to "be strong and courageous" (1:18). When this sort of repetition takes place in the Scriptures, one can be certain that there is a reason for it.

1. Why is this repeated so many times? It is because Joshua was going to need strength and courage.

a. First, God told Joshua to be strong and courageous because he would have to take the land (1:6).

The good news is that God had given Him the land; the bad news was that He gave it to someone else, first. Joshua was facing a land of walled cities. And to make matters worse, he had no siege engines.

b. Secondly, God told Joshua to be strong and courageous because he would have to obey God's law (1:7).

It takes courage to obey God when everybody else isn't. It takes even more courage to obey God as a leader and to condemn sin when public opinion says it's okay.

c. Thirdly, God told Joshua to be strong and courageous because the Lord would be with him (1:9).

A leader has to fake it, even when he doesn't feel it. Inside, the leader is often scared to death. But it helps a leader to know that he is not alone.

Joshua was called to conquer a land. We have been called to conquer the world. Our calling is to make disciples of every nation. Our weapons are different, for we do not fight against flesh and blood. But the need for strength and courage is no less.

2. Second Best.

In the midst of this charge to Joshua, there is also a charge and a call to the two and a half tribes which had chosen lands on the east bank of the Jordan to be their inheritance.

*And to the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, 'The Lord your God gives you rest, and will give you this land.' Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them, until the Lord gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, and they also possess the land which the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise." (Joshua 1:12-15).*

This is the story of the two and a half tribes who took God's second best. In Numbers 32, these tribes looked at the land to the west of the Jordan River and they said to themselves, "This sure is a lot better than the wilderness." And so, they sent representatives to Moses and asked for this land as their inheritance. This was God's second best. It was to cost them dearly.

- a. First, it was not flowing with milk and honey. It was better than the wilderness, but it was not as good as the promised land.
- b. Secondly, they were to serve as a buffer state between Israel and the other nations of the world.

This meant that every time the Moabites or the Ammonites or the Edomites or the Assyrians or the Babylonians got mad, they first attacked these two and a half tribes.

- c. Third, they had to go into the promised land and fight for land that would not be theirs. While they were there, they would see what they had given up.

I have seen far too many girls who married the first guy who came along and who, in doing so, got God's second best. Don't take second best. And don't BE second best.

## **SPYING OUT THE LAND (JOSHUA 2)**

1. Rahab.

*Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there. (Joshua 2:1).*

A lot of Christians have trouble accepting the fact that there is a prostitute in the Bible. Not only that, but in the New Testament she is praised.

*By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace. (Hebrews 11:31).*

Not only is she praised, her name is found in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:5). She is said to be the mother of Boaz and the wife of Salmon.

Some commentaries have tried to suggest that Rahab was only an innkeeper. But that isn't true. This woman was a prostitute. She was an *ISHIH ZONAH* - a woman of harlotry. There is a lesson here. It is that the church is not a gathering for good people. The church is a hospital for sinners. We say we believe that, but our actions often show that we don't. We become proud of our own righteousness.

2. Rahab's Deception.

*And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land."*

*But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it came about when it was time to shut the gate, at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them."*

*But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. (Joshua 2:3-6).*

Rahab lied through her teeth. And yet, she is praised in the New Testament and held up as an example of faith. How can we reconcile this?

Rahab is never commended for her lying. She is commended for her faithfulness. The heroes (and heroines) of the Bible are real people who had real problems just like you and me. They are not stained-glass saints. They are real people.

David is described as a man after God's own heart. He was the greatest king of Israel. His reign was considered the golden age. He wrote beautiful songs of worship to the Lord. There are a lot of good things that the Bible tells us about David. But the Bible never commends him for his affair with Bathsheba.

Peter was a great apostle. He stood up for the faith and was imprisoned for preaching the gospel. Jesus gave to him the keys of the kingdom. But the Bible never praises Peter for denying Jesus.

We live in a fallen world. That means that sometimes decisions are grey. Sometimes it is not a decision between good and bad. Sometimes it is a decision between two bad things. Sometimes you have to decide which is the worst.

This does not mean that I believe in situational ethics. The Bible does not teach that the end justifies the means. Wrong is still wrong. But it DOES teach that I live in a fallen world. Sometimes I may have to choose between what is bad and what is worse.

However, it is important when making such a grey decision to never call it anything less than sin.

3. Rahab's Reason.

*Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.*

*"For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.*

*"And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath." (Joshua 2:8-11).*

The Exodus from Egypt had taken place 40 years earlier. But it had not been forgotten. It was still the topic of discussion in Canaan. They recognized that the God of Israel had devastated the greatest and most powerful nation on earth.

Rahab had come to believe in the God who divided the Red Sea and who preserved the Israelites in the wilderness.

And so, she seeks to join herself to the covenant community. She asks for salvation both for herself and for her family.

4. The Scarlet Cord.

*And the men said to her, "We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear, unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window through which you let us down, and gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household." (Joshua 2:17-18).*

The very rope that provided a way of escape for the two spies would also be the sign of salvation for Rahab and her family. It enabled the spies to escape from Jericho and it would enable Rahab and her family to escape the destruction of Jericho.

Matthew tells that Rahab was a part of Jesus's genealogy through Joseph, which was His claim to the throne of David. Also a part of that genealogy was a Canaanite woman named Tamar. When she gave birth to twins, the midwives tied a scarlet thread to the hand of the firstborn. It was this same firstborn whose descendants later went on to sit on the throne of Israel.

The use of this cord also has strong similarities with the covenantal sign of Passover, that of the blood on Israelite houses on the night of the slaughter of the firstborn in Egypt (Exodus 12:7, 13, 22-23).

There is a scarlet cord running from Genesis to Revelation. It is the picture of the shed blood of the Messiah of Israel. Archaeologists tell us that as far back as we can go in human history, man has always felt that something ought to be sacrificed as a substitute and as an appeasement for sin. It is rooted in all of society. God has given a universal consciousness of the need for a sacrifice. It all comes to focus upon a hill called Golgotha where a Jewish carpenter turned rabbi was nailed between two crossbeams.

5. The Report of the Spies.

*And they said to Joshua, "Surely the Lord has given all the land into our hands, and all the inhabitants of the land, moreover, have melted away before us." (Joshua 2:24).*

Joshua had picked his spies carefully. He had learned from his previous experience. Forty years earlier, 12 spies had been sent into the land of Canaan. Only 2 had returned with a positive report. This time, only 2 spies are sent. I can't help but wonder if 10 others were interviewed and told, "Don't call us, we'll call you."

The land of Canaan had not changed. The people were not any shorter. The walls of the cities were not any lower. But these spies knew that they could win. Sometimes we need to be told that we can win. We look at our situation and it seems to be hopeless. That is when we need a word of encouragement. That is when we need to be told that we can win.

"Hang tough!"  
"You can win!"

## **INCIDENT AT THE JORDAN (JOSHUA 3-4)**

As we come to these two chapters, there is a hermeneutical rule of which we need to be aware. It is that the amount of space devoted to a subject is indicative of the importance that God has given to that subject.

You will notice that the writer of Joshua gives two chapters to the crossing of the Jordan. He does this because God sees that particular act as very important to His redemptive program. The writer could have covered this in four sentences. He could have said...

They came to the Jordan.  
It was flooded.  
God stopped the waters.  
They crossed over.

But He didn't do this. We should not do it either. You can apply this rule to the entire Bible. The importance of a passage can be determined by the amount of space given over to it. This provides an important caution to believers. It is that you need to be careful not to major in the minors.

How many times do you find the Millennium mentioned in the Bible? One part of one chapter. And yet, churches have split over whether people are premillennial, post millennial or amillennial.

When God was writing the Bible, He didn't include any "filler material." How much space did He spend on tongues? How about Pretribulational rapture?

There is a corollary to this. The amount of time you devote in your life will give evidence to the subjects that YOU think are important. How much time do you spend with your family? How about time in the Word? How much do you pray?

### 1. Following the Ark.

*And it came about at the end of three days that the officers went through the midst of the camp; and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.*

*However, there shall be between you and it a distance of*

*about 2,000 cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before." (Joshua 3:2-4).*

The ark of the covenant is mentioned a number of times in this chapter. The Hebrew word for "ark" is 'ARON. It is the same word which describes the coffin into which the body of Joseph was placed (Genesis 50:26). It describes a box or a chest. In modern Hebrew, it is used to refer to a closet.

The ark was a wooden box overlaid with gold. It was the symbolic representation of the presence of God among His people. Inside the ark were the tablets of the Law. The ark was covered with a top of pure gold. It was known as the "mercy seat." This was the throne of God.

As the Israelites prepare to enter into the land, it will be the ark which leads them. For the past 40 years, they have followed the presence of God in a pillar of fire and a column of smoke through the wilderness. Now they will continue to follow the presence of God. But now it will be in the form of the ark.

They are instructed to keep a distance of about 1000 yards from the ark. There is to be no familiarity with it. It is to be considered holy and set apart from the ordinary. We would have been making little arks and selling them as souvenirs. We might have been tempted to place the ark in a fence and set out television cameras around it and charged an admission to come and see it.

If there is a danger in American Christianity, it is that we tend to forget that we worship the God of the universe. He is not Santa Claus. He is not sweet. He is not a genie in a bottle that you rub and get three wishes. He is not a sweet little old man who is slightly hard of hearing. He is GOD.

## 2. The Preparation of Consecration.

*Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." (Joshua 3:5).*

The phrase "consecrate yourselves" is translated from *HITHKADASHU* - the Hithpa'el imperative of *KADASH*, to make holy. The Israelites were called to be holy - set apart to God. They were cut out from the rest of the world and separated to be a special people. They ate different food. They wore different clothes. They

worshiped a different God. We are called to be different. We have been sanctified - set apart to God.

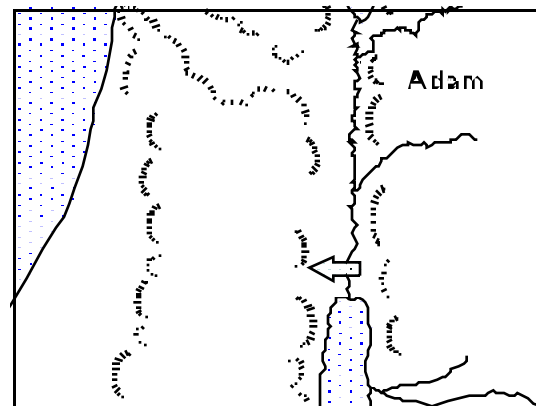
3. The Stopping of the Waters..

*So it came about when the people set out from their tents to cross the Jordan with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people, and when those who carried the ark were dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the days of harvest), that the waters which were flowing down from above stood and rose up in one heap, a great distance away at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those which were flowing down toward the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. So the people crossed opposite Jericho. (Joshua 3:14-16).*

Notice that the passage does not say that the waters were parted, but that the upstream waters stopped flowing (the downstream waters continued on their way, leaving dry land).

What is more, the location at which the waters stopped is the city of Adam. This city was located 16 miles upstream, near the point where the Jabbok flows into the Jordan.

At this point, there are high clay banks reaching some 40 feet over the river. This area is subject to landslides. It has been reported that during an earthquake in 1927, these banks collapsed, damming the river for a period of nearly 24 hours.



4. Memorial Stones.

*"Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan at the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant*

*were standing, and they  
are there to this day."  
(Joshua 4:9).*

As the Israelites crossed through the dry riverbed of the Jordan, Joshua had two groups of stones set up. They were a group of memorial stones. They were to be a constant reminder of the power of God which was able to stop the waters of the Jordan so that they could cross over.

Remembering is important. Nostalgia can be good. It is good to remember God and His faithfulness. We need reminders.

The Lord's Supper is such a reminder. The real danger in Christianity is that we forget. That is how we fall into sin.

Every time a Jew walked past that stack of rocks, he would be reminded of the power and the goodness of God.

There were actually TWO stacks of rocks. The first group is seen in verse 8. They are twelve stones taken from the riverbed and placed outside the river.

The NIV translates this differently in order to suggest that there was only a single stack of rocks. However, if the stones in Joshua 4:8 were meant to be understood as the same stones as those mentioned in Joshua 4:9, then we would have expected to see the article with the word "stones." Instead the syntax suggests that verse 9 is disjunctive, indicating a contrast with verse 8.

But there is also a second group. This group is seen here in verse 9. This group is also composed of twelve stones. But they are not placed outside the river. They are placed "in the middle of the Jordan." It seems like a funny place to place memorial stones, doesn't it? After all, who is going to see them at the bottom of the river?

Let me suggest that, in the same way that the first group was to remind the Israelites of the faithfulness and the power of God, so also this second group of stones would also be a reminder to the Israelites.

But when would they see this second group? Only in the dry season when the level of the river lowered. During the dry season, when the crops were in danger of dying and the people were praying for the coming rains, these stones in the middle of the river would become visible. They would be a reminder that God is faithful - even in

the dry season.

5. The Crossing: *...and the people hurried and crossed (Joshua 4:10b).*

Notice that the people went across QUICKLY. Why quickly? Why did they hurry? I think that it was because they were afraid. These people had grown up in the desert and I don't think they knew how to swim. They were afraid to cross the Jordan. But they crossed anyway. It is okay to be afraid to cross the Jordan. But it is not okay to stay on the wrong side.

6. The Results of the Crossing.

*Now it came about when all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard how the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the sons of Israel until they had crossed, that their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer, because of the sons of Israel. (Joshua 5:1).*

When the Israelites saw the miracle of the Jordan River, they were impressed. They thought that the reason God had done this was so that they could cross over. That was one reason. But there was also another. It was so that the other nations would see the miracle and they would fear the Lord.

Do you see the application of this? WE are some of the nations who have heard of that miracle. And WE should fear the Lord as a result.

## **CIRCUMCISION & PASSOVER (JOSHUA 5)**

1. Circumcision.

*At that time the Lord said to Joshua, "Make for yourselves flint knives and circumcise again the sons of Israel the second time." (Joshua 5:2).*

The covenant sign of circumcision had been given to Abraham. When the Israelites had come out of Egypt in the Exodus, they had reintroduced this covenant sign. But there is now a new generation. And they had not partaken in the sign of the

covenant. They are called to do so now. This was a sign of their FAITH (Romans 4:11).

This event put the army of Israel in a vulnerable position for several days. And to make matters worse, they were right under the shadow of Jericho. But when you are obeying the commands of the Lord, it is okay to be vulnerable.

2. The Passover.

*While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal, they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. (Joshua 5:10).*

God's army had taken the sign of the covenant (circumcision) and now ate at the Lord's Table (Passover). These preparations were necessary for them to go forth and to conquer the land.

The church today has a similar preparation to undergo. We must take the sign of the covenant (baptism) and eat at the Lord's Table before we can take the sword of the Spirit forth to conquer the nations.

3. The Manna Removed.

*And the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year. (Joshua 5:12).*

When the people moved into the promised land, were circumcised, and partook of the Passover, the manna stopped. There is a principle here.

God helps those who can't help themselves. God also helps those who can help themselves, but He helps them in a different way. When I was a new believer, everything just seemed to fall into my lap. I would walk up to someone and ask, "Do you want to meet Jesus?" and they would answer, "Yes, will you tell me how?" I didn't know anything about apologetics. I wasn't particularly good at explaining my faith. But that was okay because God could use me where I was.

But I want you to know that it isn't as easy as it used to be. Nowadays God sends

me the agnostic and the hardened atheist. Why? Because He knows that I can handle it.

4. Confrontation with an Angel.

*Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" (Joshua 5:13).*

Joshua issues a challenge to this unknown warrior. It is in the form of a question: "Whose side are you on?" Joshua knew that it is impossible to remain neutral in God's battles. You always choose sides. And even if you try to remain neutral, the truth is that you have chosen a side.

*And he said, "No, rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?" (Joshua 5:14).*

The captain of God's army does not say that he is on Joshua's side. Rather it is Joshua who is on HIS side. Here is the principle. The battle is the Lord's. It is HIS conflict. We are merely soldiers under His command.

# CONQUEST OF THE LAND

## Joshua 6-12

The Israelites had entered into a covenant with God. That covenant defined who they were and it defined their relationship with the Lord. It also outlined certain promises which God had given to them.

- The promise of a multiplied nation.
- The promise of a blessing from the Lord.
- The promise of a land.

The nation had been multiplied in Egypt. But now was the time for the promise of the land to be fulfilled. The good news was that God was going to give them the land. The bad news is that He had given it to someone else, first. They would have to fight for that land. Joshua 6-12 relates the account of that fight.

This section is made up of three major campaigns, followed by a summary. The fact that there is such a summary statement seems to indicate that there were other campaigns conducted by Joshua, but that only these three are chosen for this narrative.

6:1	<b>Central Campaign</b>	Jericho	Victory through Faith
7:1		Ai	Defeat through Sin
8:1			Restoration
9:1	<b>Southern Campaign</b>	Gibeon	Deception
10:1		Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon	The Sun & Moon Stand Still
11:1	<b>Northern Campaign</b>	Hazor, Madon, Shimron, Achshaph	Surprise attack by the Waters of Merom

11:16	<b>Summary</b>	<i>"There was not a city that made peace"</i>	<i>"It was of the Lord to harden their hearts"</i>
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We should note that we are not given a chronology as to how much time passed between these various campaigns. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that considerable time passed from the outset of the taking of Jericho to the final destruction of Hazor.

## THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST JERICHO

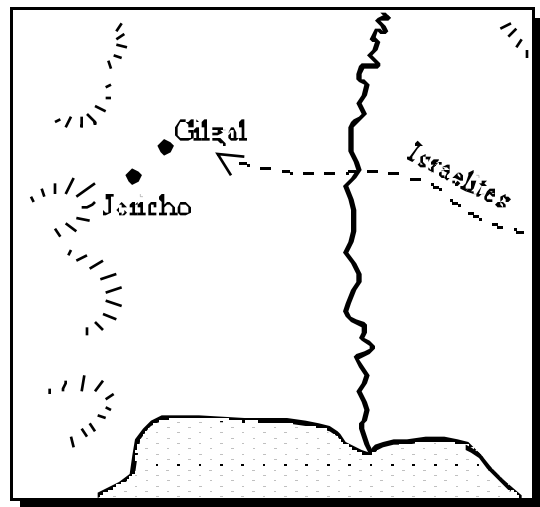
### 1. The City of Jericho.

As the Jordan River nears the Dead Sea, the river valley widens to a width of about 10 miles. On the western edge of this wide valley lies the ancient city of Jericho.

Jericho is one of the oldest known cities in the world, its earliest ruins dated at 7,000 B.C.

The site of the Old Testament city is a mound rising up 50 feet above the surrounding bedrock of the southern Jordan valley (Jericho is 825 feet below sea level). It is located about 10 miles to the NNW of the mouth of the Dead Sea and directly west of fords which make it possible to cross the Jordan except during the rainy season.

There is a natural spring known as Ain es-Sultan which originally attracted settlers to this site. This oasis gave the city its nickname, "City of Palm Trees."



The city was fairly small (only 6 acres), but held a strategic position at the hub of four major roads radiating outward to Bethel, Jerusalem, Hebron, and westward to the fords across the Jordan.

Archaeology digs have been conducted by...

a. Austro-German archaeologists Ernst Sellin and Deutsche Orientgesellschaft from 1907-1909.

b. John Garstang from 1930-1936.

He found scarabs of Hatshepsut, Thutmose 3 and Amenhotep 3 in a cemetery at Jericho, indicating that the city was intact in the period from 1450 to 1400 B.C. (a scarab of Hatshepsut would have been especially rare).

c. Kathleen Kenyon, director of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem from 1952-1958. She disagreed with the dates assigned by Garstang (her tendency was to deny any correlation between archaeology and the Bible). In more recent times, Bryant Woods has gone back over her notes and has shown how her observations can be understood in light of the Biblical fall of Jericho.

The following history was outlined by Garstang for the city of Jericho.

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Undesignated	Neolithic occupation (prior to 4500 B.C.). Already at this time the city was defended by a wall 12 feet high and 6 feet wide.
Undesignated	Chalcolithic occupation saw a number of successive cities (4500-3000 B.C.).
City A	3000 B.C.
City B	Founded around 2500 B.C. Destroyed in 1700 B.C.
City C	Hyksos period. Larger than its predecessors. High walls and a moat. Destroyed around 1500 B.C., presumably by pharaohs of the 18th Dynasty.

City D	Constructed around 1500 B.C. Double wall system with a space of 12-15 feet between the walls. Walls were about 30 feet high. City only comprised about 6 acres. Evidence of violent destruction - outer wall has fallen down the slope.
City E	Constructed in 860 B.C. (1 Kings 16:34). The city was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.

The city was eventually abandoned and the New Testament city of the same name was built at a nearby location. There is today a village by the same name that occupies the valley floor.

2. Instructions to March around the City.

The first battle within the Promised Land is one which the Lord Himself would fight, completely apart from the strength of the Israelites.

The instructions given to Joshua were limited to marching orders. I can't help but to think that the Israelites might have been tempted to think they were a bit foolish for merely marching around the city each day and then going home. But they obeyed the word of the Lord. This is what obedience is all about. Obeying even when you do not see the reason for it.

3. The Falling of Jericho's Walls.

*So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets, and it came about, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city. (Joshua 6:20).*

No siege engines were needed to take this city. This is a good thing because siege machines were largely unknown at this time in history. The Lord brought the walls down. Some have speculated that an earthquake was involved (the area is prone to earthquakes). But the passage does not mention any such additional

phenomenon. It merely says that the walls fell.

This was no small breach in the wall. These walls fell in such a way so that every Israelite warrior surrounding the city could go straight into the city.

4. The Destruction of the City.

*And they burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. (Joshua 6:24).*

How could a good God do such terrible things to the city of Jericho? Our sensitivities are offended by this account. What is the answer? We must be very careful in judging a different culture by 20th century standards. Life was harsh in those days. The standards were different.

There are several fallacies which we have bought into and which need to be dispelled.

- a. There is a noble primitive savage and we shouldn't try to destroy their culture.

Margaret Mead was an anthropologist who wrote about the nobility of the savages of New Guinea. She described them as wonderful, gentle people without guilt or harshness. But this has since been revealed to be completely false. The primitive aborigines were brutal and harsh.

The culture of Jericho was equally harsh. They would murder their children in religious orgies by throwing their screaming bodies into flames of fire. They were a plague on the landscape.

- b. God is sweet, kind and gentle and will always forgive every misdeed.

We are idolaters. We think of a god of our own making and we put him up on a shelf and take him down to worship him once in a while. Spiro Agnew once said, "The vice president is like adding maternity benefits to social security - it's there but you don't need it." We look at God that way. He is there but we don't need Him. And that is blasphemy.

- c. Sin is only a manifestation of our humanness. It means very little to God and therefore should not mean very much to us.

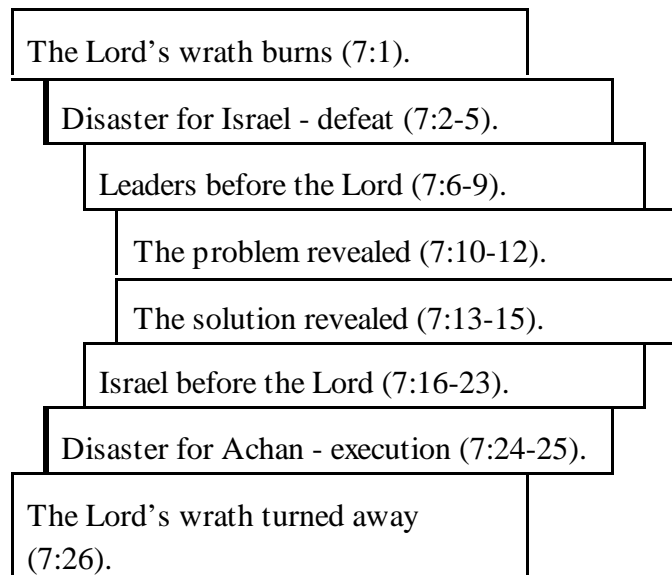
God had given a prophecy of the judgment of the Amorites in Genesis 15:15-16. He said that judgment would be a long time coming because “the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.” God waited until the badness of the people of Canaan had reached its maximum limits.

- d. Sin is your own business. It doesn't affect others.

God told His people to destroy everything in the land because He knew that if they didn't, it wouldn't be long before they were infected with the same sin. Sin is a cancer. It spreads.

## THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST AI

If Jericho was a great victory for the Israelites, then Ai marked their first defeat under Joshua's command. The chapter is given in a chiasmic format.



1. The Sin of Achan.

*But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son*

*of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel. (Joshua 7:1).*

God had said that everything in Jericho was to be burned as a sacrifice to Him. Nothing was to be taken from it. The entire city was to be a first fruit offering to Him.

But Achan decided to take some of the valuables for himself. Verse 21 says that he took an ornate Babylonian robe along with some silver and gold..

By doing so, Achan was transferring his allegiance and his love from Israel to Jericho - from God to gold.

Notice that the passage says that “the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel.” The stolen treasures were supposed to be burned as a sacrifice to the Lord. And when the sacrifice was withheld, that "burning anger" which would have been appeased in the sacrifice was now directed toward the people of Israel.

This is a picture of Jesus. HE is the perfect sacrifice who has appeased the anger of God (we call this doctrine "propitiation"). Without the sacrifice of Jesus, we are left to face God's anger.

There is a lesson here. It is a dangerous thing to rob God. Achan was killed for it. And so were Ananias and Saphira in the New Testament. In both cases, their sin was an attempt to rob the Lord and then to hide their sin and lie about it.

2. The City of Ai.

The city of Ai is always found in the Hebrew with the definite article, “the heap” or “the ruin.” Joshua 7:2 indicates that Ai was “east of Bethel.”

The modern site of Et Tell is generally thought to be the location of the ancient city of Ai (it is within a mile and a half of Bethel).
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3. Israel’s Defeat at Ai.

Ai was so small that it was considered to be not worth the mobilization of the entire force of the Israelites. The spies who went in and observed it advised that only a token force of 2000 to 3000 men would be needed to take the city.

*And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water. (Joshua 7:5).*

The battle at Ai goes the exact opposite of what had taken place at Jericho. At Jericho, everything had gone completely right. At Ai, everything goes completely wrong. Why did the Israelites suffer such a setback? A number of reasons have been offered.

It has been pointed out that there is no mention of prayer prior to the attack on Ai.

Furthermore, it is obvious that the Israelites exhibited an overconfidence.

But the real reason for the defeat has nothing to do with these two surface reasons. The real reason is because God's command had been ignored and there was sin in the camp. A little sin goes a long way.

### 3. The Prayer of Joshua.

*And Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord God, why didst Thou ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan!" (Joshua 7:7).*

These words sound familiar. The Israelites had said the same thing to Moses by the edge of the Red Sea. This time, it is Joshua who is saying it. He was discouraged (remember all those times he had been warned to be strong and courageous?). Joshua complains to God. There is nothing wrong with such a prayer. It is one thing to complain to God; it is quite another to complain about God. Joshua goes to the Lord with his complaints and the Lord answers his prayer.

*So the Lord said to Joshua, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things." (Joshua 7:10-11).*

Notice the corporate nature of sin. God doesn't single out Achan. He considers the entire nation to be guilty. Here is the principle. Your sin affects others. There is no

such thing as a solitary sin.

This is why church discipline is so important. Sin is a cancer that infects the entire body. It must be cut out.

4. The Execution of Justice.

Armed with this information, Joshua used a system of casting lots to determine the guilty party. In this instance, the lot fell upon Achan and a search of his tent revealed the stolen goods.

*And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. (Joshua 7:25).*

This punishment seems unduly harsh. This guy and his family are put to death for stealing a few tidbits. The problem is that we have an inadequate view of justice.

- a. A total of 36 men had just died for Achan's sin.
- b. His family had participated in his crime (he buried the items in their midst).
- c. Achan had ample time to confess and to seek the Lord's forgiveness. He was standing quietly by, hoping that someone else would be punished for his sin. When they started throwing stones, Achan and his family would have been up there throwing stones, too.

Here is the principle. In the midst of the battle, you cannot afford the luxury of leniency. Treason is bad at any time. But it is worse when you are fighting for your life. We are fighting for ETERNAL life.

*And they raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day. (Joshua 7:26).*

There is a play on words here. The phrase in verse 25, "Why have you troubled us?" is literally "why have you *ACHORED* us?" He goes on to say the "the Lord will trouble you this day (*ACHOR*). And so, the valley was given the name, the

Valley of Trouble (*ACHOR*). This valley is mentioned in a prophecy given by the prophet Hosea. It is a prophecy of HOPE.

*"Then I will give her vineyards from there,  
And the valley of Achor as a door of hope.  
And she will sing there as in the days of her youth,  
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt." (Hosea 2:15).*

God is talking about the same place. He promises to make the Valley of Achor a Valley of Hope.

There is a lesson here. It is that there is no sin that is so horrible that God cannot take it and make it into a Valley of Hope.

5. Second Campaign at Ai.

*Now the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not fear or be dismayed.  
Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I  
have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his  
land." (Joshua 8:1).*

We are given more details on the military strategy of the taking of Ai than any other battle in Canaan. Joshua's plans are careful and detailed.

There is a reason for this. It is because Joshua knew that it is always harder to reclaim lost ground. Once you have been defeated, it is always harder to win that victory.

When I was a lot younger, I used to be able to do handstands on a high bar. One of the most impressive parts was a dismount in which I would bring my legs over the bar and then fall backwards, swinging out and doing a flip in the air before landing on my feet.

I was doing this on a tree one day when I overcompensated and landed flat on my back. It was a rather high tree and I hit hard enough

Most archaeologists identify Ai with the modern site of Et-Tel, about two miles southeast of Bethel. There is a problem with this identification. Et-Tel was uninhabited from 2200 to 1200 B.C. Furthermore, in the early Bronze Age when Et-Tel was inhabited, it was a city covering 27 acres with a stone wall 25 feet wide and 30 feet high. This does not match the description given by the spies that this was a town of only a few men. When the spies had checked it out, they had suggested that Joshua only send in a few troops (Joshua 7:3). I am forced to conclude that the site of Ai is still unknown.

to knock the wind out of me. It hurt and it hurt badly. I want you to know that I was never able to do that flip again. I would get ready for it and then I would freeze. Why? Because it is always harder to reclaim lost ground.

Even now, Joshua didn't really need 30,000 men to take Ai. He could have taken himself and two toddlers and it would have been enough. But in Joshua 8:1, the Lord tells him, "Take all the people of war with you." Why? Because it is always harder to reclaim lost ground.

*So Joshua rose with all the people of war to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose 30,000 men, valiant warriors, and sent them out at night.*

*And he commanded them, saying, "See, you are to ambush the city from behind it. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city. And it will come about when they come out to meet us as at the first, that we will flee before them.*

*"And they will come out after us until we have drawn them away from the city, for they will say, 'They are fleeing from before us as at the first.' So we will flee before them.*

*"And you shall rise from your ambush and take possession of the city, for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand." (Joshua 8:3-7).*

The taking of Ai was to be through a carefully laid trap. It would involve a pretended rout in which the enemy would be tricked into pursuit while a much larger force would come in from behind and take the undefended city. Yet with all of these elaborate plans, it is the Lord who is going to deliver Ai into the hand of Israel.

With the power of God, even the great city of Jericho could be taken. Without the power of God, not even the little town of Ai could be taken.

6. Altar at Ebal.

*Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal" (Joshua 8:30).*

We would think that this is a bad time for prayer of revival. They were involved in a major military campaign. They are surrounded by enemies. But this really is the best time.

- a. The necessity for definition.

*...Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the sons of Israel... (Joshua 8:31).*

The great danger of the church is that, as we become involved in our society, that we become like our society. God tells His people that they are different. He gives them a new identity.

You are not like the world. Go down to Shechem and you will find an altar there. It will remind you of who you are.

- b. The necessity of remembering.

Have you noticed how many times Joshua has said, "These stones are here to this day" (4:9; 4:21-22; 7:25; 8:29)? In each case, the stones were there to remind you of what God had done. God knows that we will forget unless there are reminders. That is why we have the Lord's Supper. It is a reminder to us of what God has done.

- c. The necessity of rededication.

The 2nd Law of Thermodynamics says that things run down. This takes place in every area of life. It works in life itself. You get older and your body begins to break down. If you have owned a car, then you know that things run down. Cars break down.

Commitments run down, too. You will always tend to take the point of least resistance as your commitment runs down. You cannot run your spiritual engine on yesterday's gasoline.

- d. The necessity of reaffirmation.

You need to constantly reaffirm the truths that we hold. In a society which bombards you with all sorts of ungodly thinking, you need to tell yourself and remind yourself what you believe.

- e. The necessity of emotion.

Sometimes we neglect the emotional content of our faith. But God created emotions. We are to worship the Lord with our heart as well as with our mind. Christianity is not merely an intellectual exercise. If you have never been excited about God, then you probably have never met Him.

The Mountains of Ebal and Gerizim faced one another. Between them lay an ancient well which had been excavated by Jacob - it was known as Jacob's Well. It would be here that Jesus would one day spend an afternoon talking to a Samaritan woman.

*And all Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark before the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as the native. Half of them stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had given command at first to bless the people of Israel. (Joshua 8:33).*

This was a solemn memorial. Half of the people standing on Mount Gerizim. Half of them standing on Mount Ebal. One side reading the blessings of the covenant. The other side reading the curses of the covenant (see the instructions given in Deuteronomy 27:11-14).

## **THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE KINGS OF THE SOUTH**

### 1. The Deception of the Gibeonites.

The city of Gibeon was the next in line from Ai and Bethel. It would be the next to fall if the Israelites continued their westward march. And so, the people of Gibeon came up with a plan. They determined to deceive the Israelites.

They had several of their ambassadors dress up in their oldest clothes and they gathered some moldy bread and they set out for the Israelite camp, all of five miles away.

When they arrive, they told a yarn about how their clothes and the food had been new at the outset of their journey and, on this basis, they negotiated a peace treaty with Israel. Joshua and the people were properly suspicious and they went on to conduct a proper and careful investigation.

*“Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?” (9:7).*

*“Who are you, and where do you come from?” (9:8).*

They asked all the right questions. That is not the problem. The problem is that they did not ask of the Lord. The Israelites, for their part *“did not ask for the counsel of the Lord”* (Joshua 9:14). They did not utilize the heavenly resources. They figured that they could handle this one on their own.

The problem is a lack of faith. Here is the question. Do you only ask of God as a means of last resort? Or do you go to God as a means of first resort? This sin is the sin of independence from God.



Pool of Gibeon

When they found out how they had been deceived, the Israelites were in something of a quandary as to what to do.

*And the sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders.*

*But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, “We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. 20 This we will do to them, even let them live, lest wrath be upon us for the oath which we swore to them.” (Joshua 9:18-20).*

There are those who were in favor of ignoring the oath and attacking the Gibeonites. But the leadership prevails. This cannot be done because it would involve breaking an oath that had been made in the name of the Lord. It would involve bringing dishonor upon the name of the Lord.

Do you hold the honor of God in such high esteem that you are willing to suffer loss

rather than to see His name dishonored by your actions? You should.

There is a lesson here. It is that there are times when Christians are called to live with the results of their folly. Israel made a poor decision and now Israel would have to live with those results.

There are Christians today who have made bad decisions. Perhaps it was in entering into a marriage with an unbeliever. That is one of the worst possible decisions one can make. But if you have done this, you are called to remain in that marriage as long as you are able. You are called to be a faithful and loving marriage partner in that marriage and to make every attempt to make that marriage work. What is at stake in your marriage is nothing less than the honor of God.

In the case of the Gibeonites, it was determined that the oath be honored and that they become servants of Israel.

*But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, to this day, in the place which He would choose. (Joshua 9:27).*

## 2. The Battle of Gibeon.

It was not long before this new treaty between Gibeon and Israel brought a swift retaliation from the kings of southern Canaan.

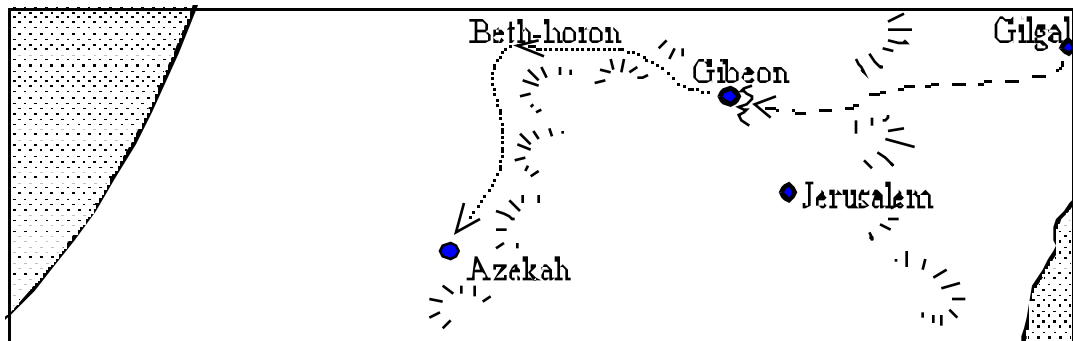
*Now it came about when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai, and had utterly destroyed it (just as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king), and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were within their land, that he feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty. (Joshua 10:1-2).*

The kings of the south determine to make an example of Gibeon for having entered into an alliance with the Israelites.

The cities of Gibeon sent messengers to Joshua, asking that they honor their covenant and come to their aid. Joshua responds by making a forced all-night

march and attacking this federation.

*And it came about as they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, that the Lord threw large stones from heaven on them, as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword. (Joshua 10:11).*



This Amorite League was thrown into a panic by the unexpected appearance of the Israelites in their rear and they fled westward down the pass of Beth-horon before turning southward. As they retreated, they were confronted with an even more terrifying enemy - great stones falling from the sky.

- (1) These stones were MIN-HaSHAMAIM - "from heaven."
- (2) They were thrown by Yahweh.
- (3) This phenomenon took place "as far as Azekah."
- (4) These stones caused a great loss of life upon the enemies of Israel. We are not told whether any Israelites were killed by the falling stones.

However, later in the same verse there is a slightly different phrase. It is translated "hailstones." The question is whether the "large stones" mentioned in the first part of the verse are the same as the "stones of hail" described at the end of the verse.

*Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,*

*"O sun, stand still at Gibeon,*

*And O moon in the valley of Aijalon."  
So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,  
Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies.*

*Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. (Joshua 10:12-13).*

There have been several different interpretations offered for this passage.

a. Poetical Interpretation: Both the command and its fulfillment are seen as poetical language consisting in an appeal for renewed strength and vigor for the warriors of Israel.

- (1) The command to "stand still" is the Hebrew Qal Imperative of *DAMAS*. It can mean both "be still" or "be silent."
- (2) The fact that the moon is also called to stand still is seen as an indication of the poetical nature of the passage. The moon would have been no help in providing light if the sun remained in the sky.

On the other hand, if the sun literally set leaving only the light of the moon, then the call for the moon's light to assist them would make sense.

- (3) An alternate poetic interpretation is that Joshua was calling for the sun to be still in shining so brightly. This interpretation says that the last thing Joshua wanted was MORE sunlight - rather, he was seeking relief from the heat of the day.

Joshua's prayer was answered by an icy hailstorm which both

Some have suggested that this is descriptive of a solar eclipse, but we are able to plot which solar eclipses were visible in Palestine and none of them fit the date of Joshua.

The solar eclipses in Palestine between the years 1500 to 1000 B.C. were as follows:

August 19, 1157 B.C.  
September 30, 1131 B.C.  
November 23, 1041 B.C.

cooled the attackers and destroyed many of the enemy.

An obvious problem with this interpretation is that the moon is also said to have stayed. There would be no reason for this since the moon gives off no heat.

- b. **Literal Interpretation:** The passage explains the words of Joshua by saying that "the sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day." The phrase "the sun stopped" can carry the idea of standing still.

Furthermore, the passage goes on to explain its terms by describing how that the sun "did not hasten to go down for about a whole day" (literally, "did not hurry to go for a complete day").

If we adopt the literal interpretation, then we are still left with another question: Is this a localized phenomenon, or was it caused by a stopping of the rotation of the entire planet?

- (1) A localized phenomenon could have been caused by refraction of the light of the sun and the moon (a mirage) in which they APPEARED to be out of their regular phases.
- (2) The other way for this miracle to have taken place would have been for the earth to stop its movement. Considering that the earth rotates at a speed of about 1000 miles per hour at the equator, this would have caused massive earthquakes and seismic disturbances of epic proportions.

Such a phenomenon would have resulted in a long afternoon, a long evening, a long night, depending upon what part of the world the observer stood.

No matter which interpretation we choose, it should be recognized that this was seen as an unprecedented miracle.

*And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel. (Joshua 10:14).*

You cannot believe the Bible without also believing in miracles. Many people want to take the miracles out of the Bible.

- a. Whether one believes in miracles or does not believe in miracles has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not miracles are true.

Philosophers have said that the supernatural cannot take place. And so, they have tried to define miracles out of existence.

But that doesn't make miracles go away. Reality has nothing to do with public opinion.

- b. To deny miracles is to deny the Bible.

There is a great debate on the date of the book of Daniel. The critics want to date it in the 2nd century B.C. Why? Because it clearly predicts things that did not happen until the 2nd century B.C. They have already decided that there is no such thing as predictive prophecy. Since Daniel records prophecy and since there is no such thing as prophecy, then Daniel could not have written this prophecy and it must have been written after the fact.

Question: Do you live a supernatural life? If you woke up one morning to find that God had left, how would it affect your life? What is it in your life that can only be explained in the terms of the supernatural?

Sometimes we get what we expect. We don't expect to receive power from God and so we don't.

God intervenes in history. You look at your present situation and you ask, "Why doesn't He intervene now?"

- (1) God intervenes when a great promise has been made. God has given promises and He will move heaven and earth to fulfill those promises. God is very concerned about His good name. He does not want His name blemished by an unfulfilled promise.
- (2) God intervenes when great faith is present. Remember the story of David and Goliath? The people said, "He is too big to hit." And

David replied, "He is too big to miss." Jesus spoke about mountain-moving faith. If you believe, then nothing is impossible.

*And it came about when they brought these kings out to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." So they came near and put their feet on their necks. (Joshua 10:24).*

This was done to increase the faith of the people. It was a public presentation that God was stronger than the kings of Canaan. Here is the lesson - it is that God is bigger than your problems.

- (3) God intervenes when a great cause is attempted. He gears the degree of His intervention to the degree of your commitment.
- (4) God intervenes when a great emphasis is needed.

*And Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the Lord, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. (Joshua 10:42).*

Notice why Joshua won. It was because the Lord was on his side. God is doing something with Joshua which will teach us something about God for the next 3000 years. The point is that God does supernatural miracles for HIS benefit, not for yours.

- (5) God intervenes when a great grace is manifested.

*"The Lord did not set His love on you nor chose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples." (Deuteronomy 7:7).*

God didn't choose Israel because they were so wonderful. He chose Israel because HE is so wonderful. It was grace. The same is true of us.

## **THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE KINGS OF THE NORTH**

### 1. The Northern Alliance.

Just as the Amorite Kings of the south had formed an alliance, so also the kings in the area of Galilee also formed an alliance. The leader of this coalition is said to have been Jabin, king of Hazor. This is not too surprising. Hazor was the largest city in all of Canaan. It had massive ramparts of beaten earth and a heavily protected wall surrounded by a deep ditch.

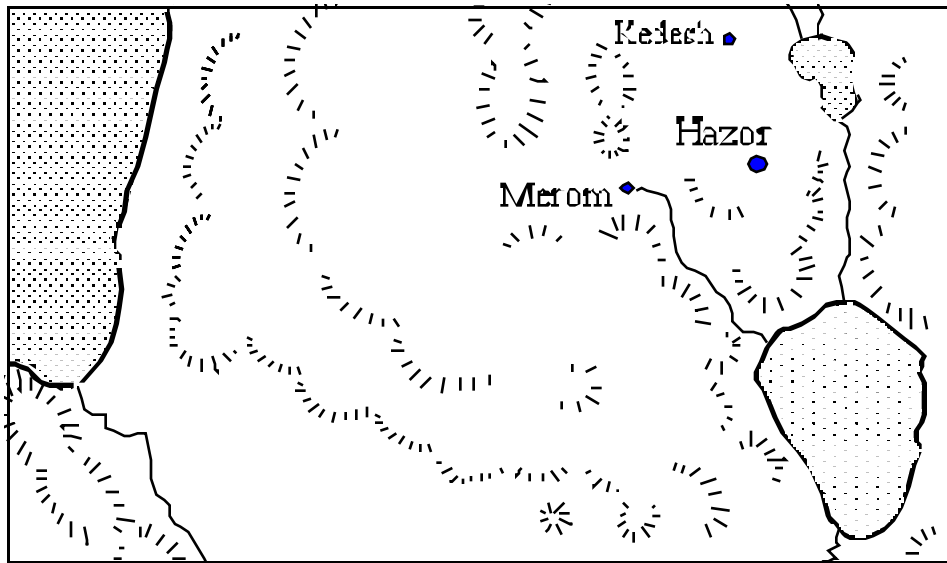
To make matters worse, the Northern Federation was able to field horse-drawn chariots. These were light chariots with spoked wheels and had an incredible mobility. They were to ancient warfare what the armored tank was to modern warfare.

### 2. The Battle of Merom.

*So Joshua and all the people of war with him came upon them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and attacked them.*

*And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, so that they defeated them, and pursued them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and the valley of Mizpeh to the east; and they struck them until no survivor was left to them. (Joshua 11:7-8).*

Merom was centrally located among the cities of the Northern Federation. Its disadvantage lay in the fact that this was an area of rolling hills and thick forests, thus negating the strength and mobility of their chariot corps.



It seems likely that they had intended to use this area only as a rendezvous for their combined forces (Joshua 11:7 indicates that this was a surprise attack).

3. Destruction of the Chariot Corps.

*And Joshua did to them as the Lord had told him; he hamstrung their horses, and burned their chariots with fire. (Joshua 11:9).*

God ordered Joshua to destroy the best military weapons he had ever seen. Joshua was a general. When he saw these weapons, his mouth started watering. He said to himself, “Boy, if I had a few hundred of those chariots and horses, there isn't anything I wouldn't be able to do.”

But God told him to destroy the chariots and to render the horses useless. This goes against all human logic.

There is a principle here. If you have chariots and horses, you begin to depend upon chariots and horses instead of depending upon the Lord. If you have only God, then you will depend upon God.

*"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water*

*under the earth.*

*You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the father on the children, and on the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Deuteronomy 5:8-10).*

Every god that you have that isn't God, He will destroy. God wants to be your God. If you put anything else in first place, He will destroy it.

4. Joshua's Obedience.

*Just as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses. (Joshua 11:15).*

Joshua is a study in submission. He was successful because he did it God's way. He made it a point to do ALL of the Lord's commands and to leave nothing undone. Even though he was now the leader of Israel he took the commands that had been handed down from Moses and acted upon them.

*Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and concerning the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. (Hebrews 11:7).*

We are to submit to God's authority. He has set authorities over us... family, church, government.

5. Summary.

*Joshua waged war a long time with all these kings. (Joshua 11:18).*

It took a long time. Why didn't God wipe them out immediately? He could have, but He didn't. There is a principle here. It takes a long time to win a war. Cults promise a quick way. They promise instant answers. But there are no instant answers in the Christian life.

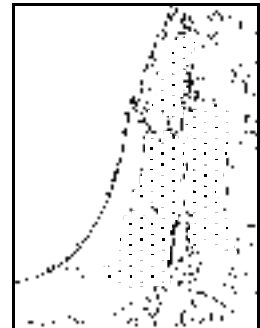
## SUMMARY OF THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

If we are not careful, we will fall into the trap of thinking that the conquest of the land took place within a very brief period of time. However, a closer look reveals that only a few key battles are recorded and that the conquest of Canaan took many years.

1. Even at the death of Joshua, there would remain a number of areas still to be taken. These strongholds of defense would include the following:
  - The territories of the Philistines (Joshua 13:1-13 with Judges 3:1-3).
  - Megiddo and the other cities of the Valley of Jezreel (Joshua 17:11 with Judges 1:27).
  - Dor, Gezer, and other cities along the Coastal Plain (Joshua 13:4; 16:10; 17:11; Judges 1:27; 1:29).
  - Jerusalem (Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21).

It has been noted that the Israelites had difficulties conquering the cities of the lowlands - possibly due to the fact that these cities often had both high ramparts and iron chariots.

2. There is no record of Egyptian interference, even though Egypt was still one of the leading world powers of the day. The Amarna Tablets bear witness of the lack of action taken by Egypt toward the threat of the Habiru.<sup>1</sup>
3. It has been noted that there is something of a correlation between the lands taken by Joshua and those taken by Israel in the Six Day War in 1967.



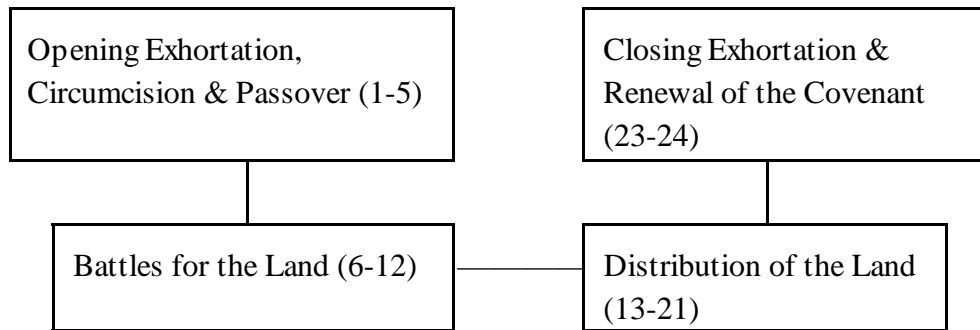
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<sup>1</sup> Among the inscriptions of the Amarna Tablets are a number of letters from the king of Jerusalem to Amenhotep 3rd asking for help against invaders known as the Habiru. At one point, this letter says: *The Habiru are plundering all the lands of the king. If no troops come in this very year, then all the lands of the king are lost.* (King of Jerusalem).

# JOSHUA 13-24

## Disposition of the Land & the Covenant

We have already suggested that this book is chiasmic in its arrangement, Our study in this section will be the last half of that chiasm.



As can be seen from this chart, the major portion of this section deals with the Distribution of the Land to the various tribes of Israel.

<b>The Distribution of the Land</b>			
13:1	Introduction	<b>Special Allotments</b>	East of the Jordan
13:8	Two & a half Tribes		<b>West of the Jordan</b>
14:1	Caleb		
15:1	Judah		
16:1	The Sons of Joseph	<b>Major Allotments to the nine Tribes</b>	
18:1	Remaining 7 Tribes		
20:1	Cities of Refuge		<b>Special Provisions</b>
21:1	Levi		
21:43	Summary Statement	Both Sides of the Jordan	

Reading through much of this portion of Joshua is a bit like reading through the telephone book. You don't know the names and they don't mean a lot to you. But it would be

different if you took an old personal address book and had a walk down “memory lane.” This would be full of old friends and would likely bring back many fond memories.

These chapters would have meant a lot more to the original recipients of the book of Joshua. After all, they were living in the land that was portioned out. It was their inheritance and their possession.

We also have an inheritance. It is not a physical inheritance, but one reserved in heaven for us.

*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (Romans 8:16-17).*

## **SPECIAL ALLOTMENTS (JOSHUA 13-14)**

1. We have already seen the story of the 2 ½ Tribes which chose for themselves the lands on the east bank of the Jordan and therefore took 2nd best.

Because of their impatience, they had fought for a land that they could not now inherit. As a result, there would develop something of a schism between those Israelites living on the west bank and those living on the east bank.

2. Caleb.

*Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which the Lord spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea." (Joshua 14:6).*

Caleb had some unique characteristics. He was...

- a. Scornful of danger.
- b. Submissive to the will of God and to the leadership of Joshua, even though he and Joshua had once been partners. Joshua and Caleb were the two oldest men in Israel. They had a friendship that went back over 40 years.

- c. Single-minded in desiring to obtain the inheritance of God. For 45 years Caleb had recognized that he was right and everyone else was wrong.
- d. Sure of God's ability to give him what had been promised.

*"Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out as the Lord has spoken." (Joshua 14:12).*

If I had been Caleb, I might have said, "Joshua, I'm not as young as I used to be. Why don't you give me a little peaceful place where I can live quietly?"

But Caleb didn't real the need to do that. Caleb had a big God. How big is your God? Perhaps the reason He only does a little is because you think so little of Him.

Caleb didn't have the best pedigree. His relatives had come into the Israelite community through the back door. He was the descendant of one of the sons of Judah and Tamar. He was part Canaanite. But he was given a portion from among the Jews.

*"And now behold, the Lord has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today.*

*I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in." (Joshua 14:10-11).*

Notice to what it is that Caleb attributes his long life. Not in the eating of health food. Not a regular program of exercise. Not good luck - or good genes. It is the promise of the Lord that has kept Caleb healthy and going strong.

<p>Caleb was a man who realized that every thing he got was from God. A turtle on a gatepost realizes that he didn't get there by himself .</p>
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*Every good thing*

*bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. (James 1:17).*

There is a saying that the Scots are a race of self-made men, thereby relieving the Almighty of a terrible responsibility. But the truth is that there are no self made men. God makes all men and, in the best of our accomplishments, we can give Him the credit.

## **MAJOR ALLOTMENTS (JOSHUA 15-19)**

One of the promises that was initially given to Abraham regarded an inheritance of the land of Canaan. In Genesis 13:14-15, the Lord had Abram look to the north and the south and the east and the west and told him that all those lands on which he could lay his eyes would be given to his descendants. In these chapters of Joshua we read of the fulfillment of that promise.

### **1. The Complaint from Joseph.**

*Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me only one lot and one portion for an inheritance, since I am a numerous people whom the Lord has thus far blessed?"*

*And Joshua said to them, "If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you."*

*And the sons of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are in Beth-shaen and its towns, and those who are in the valley of Jezreel."*

*And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, "You are a numerous people and have great power; you shall not have one lot only, but the hill country shall be yours. For though it is a forest, you shall clear it, and to its farthest borders it shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong." (Joshua 17:14-18).*

The double tribe of Joseph brought a complaint to Joshua. It was that their inheritance was too small.

I cannot help but wonder whether they thought they would get special privileges because Joshua was from Ephraim - one of the tribes of Joseph.

Complaint #1: The land is too small.	Answer: Clear the forests from the hill country.
Complaint #2: There is still not enough land and the Canaanites have iron chariots.	Answer: You are a numerous and a powerful people - use your numbers and your power to drive out the Canaanites.

A lot of Christians are like these two tribes. They complain that they have not been given enough.

- Enough money.
- Enough good looks.
- Enough ability.

What they often need to do is to use the gifts and abilities and resources that they HAVE been given.

2. Shiloh.

*Then the whole congregation of the sons of Israel assembled themselves at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them. (Joshua 18:1).*

We are not told why Shiloh was chosen as the site for the Tabernacle. Perhaps it was because this was a central location for all the tribes of Israel. Another possibility is that it was considered to be uncontaminated by pagan religion due to its having been deserted for such a long time. This was to be the center of worship until the time of Samuel.

Shiloh was the site of an ancient Canaanite town dating to the time of Abraham. It had been deserted for several hundred years by the time of the Israelite conquest.
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3. A Survey of the Land.

*Then the men arose and went, and Joshua commanded those who went to describe the land, saying, "Go and walk through the land and describe it, and return to me; then I will cast lots for you here before the Lord in Shiloh.*

*So the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities in seven divisions in a book; and they came to Joshua to the camp at Shiloh.*

*And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord, and there Joshua divided the land to the sons of Israel according to their divisions. (Joshua 18:8-10).*

The Israelites had no maps or drawings of the land. This made it rather difficult to divide the land among the various tribes.

And so, before such a distribution could be made, Joshua ordered that three men be commissioned from each tribe who would do the work of a surveyor, traveling through the land and writing out a detailed description.

It was also their job to divide the land into seven distinct parcels (two and a half tribes already had their land on the east bank of the Jordan). They would try to be as even as possible, since it was not known which parcel their own tribe would inherit.

When the job was completed, these descriptions were brought back to Joshua and he cast lots before the Lord. The implication was that the LORD was making the decision as to where each tribe would live.

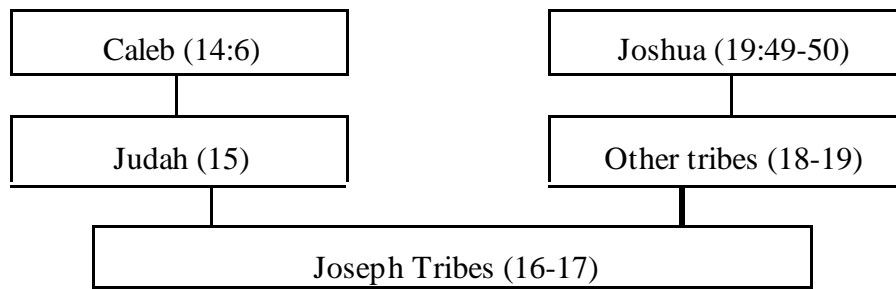
*The lot is cast into the lap,  
But its every decision is from the Lord. (Proverbs 16:33).*

4. A Portion Given to Joshua.

*When they finished apportioning the land for inheritance by its borders, the sons of Israel gave an inheritance in their midst to Joshua the son of Nun. <sup>50</sup> In accordance with the command of the LORD they gave him the city for which he asked, Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim. So he built the city and settled in it.*

(Joshua 19:49-50).

This section concludes with the inheritance that is awarded to Joshua. There is an interesting pattern that can be seen that begins and ends with Caleb and Joshua. It is made up of all of the portions that were given to the tribes on the west side of the Jordan.

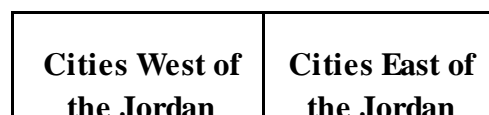


## SPECIAL PROVISIONS (JOSHUA 20-22)

### 1. Cities of Refuge.

*Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'Designate the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the manslayer who kills any person unintentionally, without premeditation, may flee there, and they shall become your refuge from the avenger of blood.'" (Joshua 20:1-3).*

The concept of the Cities of Refuge had been set forth in Numbers 35:6-34. Such a concept was needed to keep the peace in the absence of a police force. It was to be implemented in the case of manslaughter - when a man had been killed either by accident or in an unpremeditated altercation. In such a case, it would often be the inclination the friends and family of the deceased to see that justice was done. But to stop blood feuds from starting, six cities were designated as places of refuge. These were cities belonging to the tribe of Levi. No vengeance was to be taken within these cities.



Kedesh	Bezer
Shechem	Ramoth
Hebron	Golan

These cities were distributed throughout the length of Canaan. A person who had caused the death of another could flee here until a trial could be arranged.

*"And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment..." (Joshua 20:6a).*

The cities of refuge pointed to the value of human life as having been made in the image of God.

The life of the slayer was spared until the case could be heard.

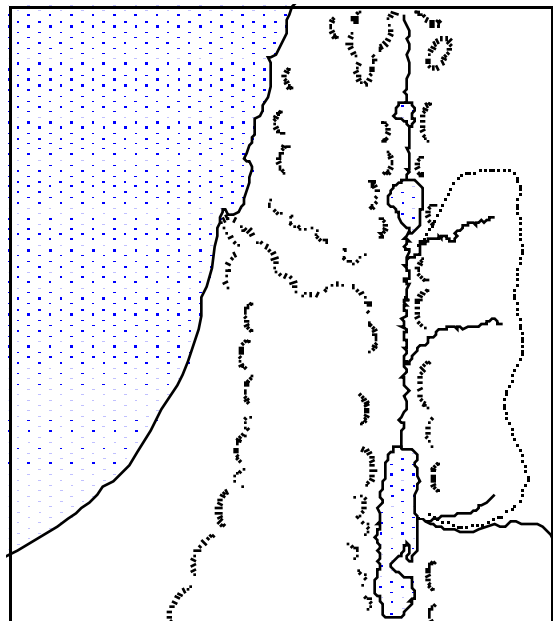
The city of refuge became a virtual prison for the one who had taken a life.

Verse 6 tells us that the party who was guilty of unintentional manslaughter was a prisoner in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. After that time, no vengeance could be taken against him. By the same token it is through the death of Jesus Christ, our high priest, that we are set free from our imprisonment.

2. An Offending Altar.

*And the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned home and departed from the sons of Israel at Shiloh which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession which they had possessed, according to the land of Moses. (Joshua 22:9).*

These are the two and a half tribes who had opted for second-best. They had asked for their inheritance to be the lands on the east side of the Jordan River. They were granted their request on the



condition that they first cross over and fight alongside the rest of Israel to take the land of Canaan. But now the fighting is finished. And so, they are permitted to return home.

*And when they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan, a large altar in appearance. (Joshua 22:10).*

When news of the construction of this altar reaches the other tribes of Israel, they jump to the conclusion that these two and a half tribes have apostatized. After all, the only proper place to build an altar is at the tabernacle - and there is only one tabernacle.

Therefore the Israelites prepare themselves for war against the two and a half tribes. But before they march, they send Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the high priest along with a representative from each of the 10 tribes.

When they meet, the leaders of the two and a half tribes explain that the altar which they have constructed is not an altar for burnt offerings or for sacrifice, but rather a mound of memorial stones. It is to remind the Israelites who live in Canaan that there are people of the covenant who do not live in the land of Canaan but that they are no less children of the covenant.

Instead of intending to divide the nation, this altar was to be a symbol of their unity. There is a lesson here. All too often, we tend to judge people's actions in the worst possible light. The better part of wisdom is that we make certain of all of the facts before passing judgment. We are called to be righteous in our judgments and that demands a care toward both accuracy and grace.

### **COVENANT RATIFICATION & CHARGE (JOSHUA 23-24)**

22:1	23:1	24:1
<b>An Offending Altar</b>	<b>Joshua's Final Charge</b>	
	<b>To the Elders</b>	<b>To the People</b>
People to People	Leader to Leaders	Leader to People

Take Care not to Offend Others	Be Certain to Warn Others	Be Faithful to Challenge Others
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1. Joshua’s Charge to the Leaders of Israel.

As Joshua is soon to die, he gathers the leaders of the nation together to give them a closing charge.

23:3	<b>What God Has Done</b>	Fighting for you
23:4		Giving you an inheritance
23:6	<b>What You Are To Do</b>	Be firm to keep what is written in the book of the Law
23:8		Cling to the Lord your God
23:11		Love the Lord your God
23:12	<b>A Warning Against Apostasy</b>	If you... go back cling to them intermarry with them They will be a snare and a trap to you
23:14		God's word has never failed
23:15		His word will not fail either for good or for bad

These are the reflections of an old man. They are lessons for leaders. And they are also lessons for life.

a. God is central.

Both this chapter and the next begin with what GOD has done. This is the basis for everything else Joshua has to say.

b. History is important (23:14).

Look at how much Joshua talks about remembering. He points to the

promises of God and shows how they have not failed.

c. Compromise is evil.

When Joshua names sin, he does not mention murder or stealing or fornication. He mentions compromise (23:11-14). The thing that Joshua feared the most for his people is that you wouldn't be able to tell the difference between them and the inhabitants of the land.

2. The Covenant Renewal.

Joshua 24 describes the renewal of the covenant. It was to take place at Shechem, the place where Jacob had first purchased a portion of land (Genesis 33:18-19). This was the first place where Abraham had built an altar to the Lord (Genesis 12:6-7).

*Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and their judges and their officers; and they presented themselves before God. (Joshua 24:1).*

This chapter follows the five-fold outline for a covenant (this same outline is seen in expanded form in the entire book of Deuteronomy).

a. The Suzerain is Identified (24:2).

b. The Historical Record of the past relationship between the Suzerain and His vassal subjects (24:2-13).

c. The Stipulations which the Suzerain imposes upon His vassals (24:14-15).

d. The warning of cursing for disobedience (24:19-20). The normal form called for both blessing in the case of obedience as well as cursing in the case of disobedience.

e. Witnesses are set forth - the people themselves serve as witnesses against themselves (24:21-24).

But that is not all. A memorial stone is set up which is to also serve as a witness of the covenant (24:26-27).

*So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day,*

*and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.  
(Joshua 24:25).*

The terms of this covenant were put in writing. Literally, the Hebrew says that “Joshua CUT a covenant...” This may have involved the sacrificing of an animal.

*And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God;  
and he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was  
by the sanctuary of the Lord.*

*And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall  
be for a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the Lord  
which He spoke to us; thus it shall be for a witness against you, lest  
you deny your God." (Joshua 24:26-27).*

Joshua set up a large stone near the tabernacle. It was to be a memorial-stone. The stone would serve as a witness of the covenant.

It is reminiscent of the time that Jesus was entering the Temple in Jerusalem to the praises of the people. When the Jewish authorities heard these praises, they objected. Jesus replied, "If these become silent, the STONES will cry out!" (Luke 19:40).

3. “I Sent the Hornet before you...” (Joshua 24:12).

In Joshua 24:12, the Lord is describing how He had fought for Israel and He says, *"I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you..."* There are two ways of looking at this:

- a. They could be literal hornets that God caused to swarm, chasing these Canaanites from their land. Interestingly enough, ancient historical accounts make this a possibility. There are ancient records of groups being chased from their country by swarms of wasps.
- b. This could be speaking figuratively to describe the aggressiveness with which God strengthened the Israelites as they drove out these Canaanites from their land. It would be a metaphor. The Israelites were "like hornets" in their swarming and stinging capability.

It should also be noted that this was a fulfillment of a prophecy given at the outset

of the Wilderness Wanderings.

*"I will send My terror ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.*

*"And I will send HORNETS ahead of you, that they may drive out the Heavyweights, the Canaanites, and the Heavyweights before you." (Exodus 23:27-28).*

4. Closing Notes.

24:29	24:32	24:33
<b>Death of Joshua</b>	<b>Burial of Joseph</b>	<b>Death of Eleazar</b>
Buried in the Hill Country of Ephraim	Buried at Shechem (inheritance of Joseph's sons)	Buried in the Hill Country of Ephraim

There is a sense in which the narrative begun in Genesis comes to a final completion here at the end of Joshua. Genesis ends with a promise that the bones of Joseph will be returned to the Promised Land. Joshua closes with the fulfillment of that promise.