

Joshua

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Joshua, the son of Nun, was Moses' assistant and successor as Israel's leader. Joshua brought the young nation across the Jordan River into Canaan. He faithfully followed God's leadership.

Before Israel reached Mount Sinai, Joshua led Israel's warriors when Amalek attacked Israel. (Exodus 17:8-13) shortly thereafter, he was among the twelve men Moses sent to scout the Promised Land. (Numbers 13:8,16) Joshua and Caleb urged Israel to occupy Canaan immediately, (Numbers 14:6-9) and only they entered Canaan. (Numbers 14:30,38)

God directed Moses to designate Joshua as his successor. (Numbers 27:15-23; Deuteronomy 34:9)

After Moses died, Joshua led Israel across the Jordan River, (Joshua 1:1-18; Joshua 3:1-4:24) to the conquest of Jericho. (Joshua 6:1-27) When Israel suffered defeat at Ai, Joshua turned to the Lord and followed His instructions to purge Israel of sin: (Joshua 7:1-26) then Israel conquered Ai. (Joshua 8:1-29) Following God's instructions to Moses, (Deuteronomy 11:29-32; Deuteronomy 27:1-28:68) Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal (Joshua 8:30-32) and read the blessings and curses of the covenant. (Joshua 8:33-35) Joshua conducted campaigns against two coalitions of Canaanite kings, a southern and a northern coalition. (Joshua 10:1-43; Joshua 11:1-15) Joshua's victories in these campaigns opened the hill country to settlement by the Israelites.

After supervising the allotment of territories to the tribes of Israel, Joshua received his own portion in Ephraim. (Joshua 19:49-50) He established the cities of refuge (Chapter 20) and Levitical cities. (Chapter 21) As he grew old, Joshua charged Israel to remain faithful to God. (Chapters 23-24) His farewell message at Shechem summarized God's dealings with Israel and concluded with the familiar challenge, ***“Choose today whom you will serve ... But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”*** (Joshua 24:15) Joshua died at the age of 110 and was buried in Timnath-serah. (Joshua 24:29-30)

Joshua demonstrated exceptional faithfulness throughout his life, except in dealing with the Gibeonites. (Chapter 9) Israel served God faithfully under Joshua and the elders Joshua trained. (Joshua 24:31) Stephen mentions Joshua in his martyr's sermon, (Acts 7:45) and the writer of Hebrews uses Joshua's conquest of Jericho as an illustration of faith. (Hebrews 11:30) It is fitting that Joshua and Jesus are the same name in Hebrew: Joshua led Israel into physical salvation in Canaan; Jesus leads all who believe Him into eternal salvation.

Introduction

Joshua is the historical account of God's Covenant with Moses being fulfilled under the leadership of Joshua. When the Israelites were in the land of Egypt they were an enslaved nation. Egypt was at the time the most powerful, prosperous and secure nation on the earth. When Moses had go down to Egypt to under the command of God tell Pharaoh to let God's people go, Pharaoh had refused. Through Moses and his brother Arron God placed 10 Plagues upon Egypt devastating them. Finally Pharaoh let the Israelites go but then changed his mind and went after them to bring them back into slavery. When Pharaoh's army had pinned the Israelites against the Red Sea God parted the waters and the Israelites marched to safety upon dry land. When Pharaoh's army pursued the waters of the Red Sea caved in around them and the army was drowned.

After the Law was given to Moses at Mount Sinai Moses sent twelve spies into the Promised Land of Canaan and ten of them returned saying the land was as God had promised but they would not be strong enough to take it from their hand. Joshua and Caleb had said the land was truly the land of milk and honey and that it could be taken. Because of the disbelief of the Israelite people God said that none of that generation would be able to enter into the Promised Land. The Israelite nation wondered for forty more years in the wilderness until, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, a new generation of Israelites was ready to fulfill God's promise to them. Moses was not able to enter into the Promised Land either and in Deuteronomy 31:7-8 he passed the role of leadership to his assistant Joshua. ***"Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. "The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."*** (Deuteronomy 31:7-8)

The book of Joshua begins when he takes command of the Israelite nation and ends with his death and burial. This book is the record given to us in an orderly narrative to leadership and government of Joshua as he fulfills the commission given to him by God at the hand of Moses. The book of Joshua is divided into two divisions. The conquest of Canaan is described in the first twelve chapters and the partitioning of the land and last acts and words of Joshua in in the remaining Chapters.

The victories that were given to Joshua and the Israelite nation were accompanied by the repeated movements on their behalf by God. Because of this some commentators have treated the book of Joshua as not a historical book. We must remember that the miracles of God preformed in the Book of Joshua do not stand alone. They have grown from the interventions of God on behalf of the Israelite people from the previous days of Moses in the Book of Exodus. They are to be seen as the hand of God and continue to abound in the future with His dealing with the Jewish Church, and continues to be manifested in the Christian Church, and will continue unto until the end of all things. The conquest of Canaan by Joshua and the Israelite nation is more than an historical account but is just

as relevant to us today in God's dealing with the Christian Church and the glorious future that is just ahead of her.

Neither is this book to be considered as an account of a band of nomads from the Arabian deserts that somehow invaded and conquered a group of city states of superior force. It is a testimony of God who accomplished His purpose for the preservation of His Law, Will and Word among men. The Book of Joshua is to be seen in relation to the future dealing of God with mankind. Canaan was not a land that a band of nomads could have taken as the Israelite were ill equipped to become victorious over the states of Canaan. They had no weapons of war in comparison to the Canaanites. They lacked chariots and horses and all of the more modern equipment's of warfare.

God had promised the forefathers of this Israelite nation and God's Word is truth and He is faithful to His Word. The Book of Joshua is the sequel to the first five books of the Bible which tells the story of God fulfilling His promise to His chosen people.

Setting aside the theological characteristics of Joshua let us look to the historical facts that this book presents. First let us look at one of the problems that people have with the Israel's conquest of Canaan. May people have a hard time accepting that a God of Love would order the populations of the Canaanite people to be destroyed? The real problem for these people is accepting God's judgment upon evil. The non-acceptance of unbelievers in the Lord God Almighty is an acceptable one and understandable. For the unbeliever death is the final outcome of life and how could a God of Love take life away from a person of His creation? The real problem for the un-believer is that life does not end with death. Death is but the gateway into the spiritual life in the world to come. The question that is most pressing upon all is where one will spend eternity. Will eternity be spent in suffering God's eternal wrath or spent in intimate fellowship with Him in His kingdom? God will judge both the righteous and the unrighteous. For the unbeliever, ***"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds."*** (Revelation 20:12) For the believer, ***"Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."*** (Revelation 21:4)

Let us go back 400 hundred years before Israel invaded Canaan where we first see that the Canaanite people were evil. ***"Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."*** (Genesis 15:16) The Amorites were a tribe of the Canaanites. God was watching the wickedness of the Canaanites as their unrighteousness continued to grow over the years until the fullness of their time. Both their behavior and their religion was wicked. We can read of their fate

in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18:16-19:29. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah but for Lot's sake spared the city of Zoar. From this remaining city the wicked ways of the Canaanites spread throughout Canaan and even the Israelite tribe of Benjamin took up their evil practices. (Judges 18:9-20) The other Israelite tribes fought a war with the Benjamite tribe and nearly wiped them out. The evilness of the Canaanites would even be considered unacceptable even in our day and most civil people would find them detestable. The Canaanites practiced incest, homosexuality, had sex with animals, children, and burned their children as sacrifices all in the name of their gods. Although these behaviors are still present in the world today.

Israel was a new nation just out of Egypt, a chosen nation unto God as His people, a people to be holy and to be an example to all other nations in the world. (Deuteronomy 7:6 Deuteronomy 28:9 Leviticus 19:2) The Canaanites had been a nation for centuries practicing their depravity and were not about to change their ways. Therefore, the Canaanite people would have to be removed from the Promised Land of the Israelite nation.

God issued two commands concerning the removal of the Canaanites from the Promised Land. Concerning the Canaanites east of the Jordan. (Deuteronomy 2:26-36 Deuteronomy 3:1-1) These two commands concerned the conquest of the kingdoms east of the Jordan. Also there was a general command in Deuteronomy for the total destruction of the Canaanites. (Deuteronomy 7:1-5) Deuteronomy 20:10-18 qualifies this by stating the complete destruction of the Canaanite cities. The general commands for the Canaanites west of the Jordan were that they should be driven out of the land and their idols destroyed.

The time is soon to come when God's people will once again live in a purified land in complete righteousness. The whole of God's creation will be purged of unrighteousness and those of evil will be placed into the lake of fire for eternity. Is this an act of a God of Love? Let me ask another question, what is love without justice? God is love and He is a Just God. He gave His only Son that mankind can be reconciled unto Him. Not only that, mankind can be reconciled unto God at no cost. We are saved by grace through faith. It is the free gift of God. That is the love of God yet most reject His love for their love for this passing world. God is also just in that those who choose to follow Him shall not again be tainted by those who have chosen evil.

The invasion of Canaan

The Strategy for the invasion of Canaan came from the greatest general known to man, God. He did not send the Israelite nation as a horde of barbarians into the Promised Land to slaughter everyone in sight. We can see the bare bones strategy that God put forth in the following Scriptures. (Exodus 23:28 Deuteronomy 7:20 Joshua 24:12) God would use terror and panic to drive the Canaanites out of the land. (Exodus 23:27) The Israelites had a known reputation because of the mighty things that their God had done for them. In Egypt there was the 10 plagues that had brought Pharaoh down. The drowning of

Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. The Amorites destruction and the Israelite nation crossing the Jordan River on dry land. All of these known facts about the God of the Israelite people were known by the Canaanite people and would make them flee rather than fight. This would enable the Israelites to drive them from their land.

The strategy worked. Rahab, the Canaanite at Jericho who hid Israel's spies, said everyone was afraid of Israel (Joshua 2:11). This is repeated by the writer of the book of Joshua (Joshua 5:1). The vast majority of Canaanites were ready to flee. Isaiah 17:9 confirms Israel took over deserted cities.

The path that Joshua chose was skillfully conceived. To have attacked Canaan from the south would have meant being met by range after range of heights. At the time of Joshua these heights were filled with towns and fortresses. This would have been a slow and tedious for an army that was not well equipped for conquest. As they would have progressed along this line of attack they would have been met by better organized resistance in ever increasing numbers. Instead of this avenue the Israelite host marched to the south eastern corner and attacked from the defenseless eastern flank above the Dead Sea. Thus the strong positions of the hill country and the defenseless cities that lay within were taken in reverse order leaving them useless fortifications for their defense against the Israelite invasion.

It is also probable that the Canaanites of the south were in a weakened state because of the invasions of Thutmose III who had attacked the Gaza not many years before.

Thutmose III

Thutmose III was the sixth Pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty. During the first twenty-two years of Thutmose's reign he was co-regent with his stepmother and aunt, Hatshepsut, who was named the pharaoh. While he was shown first on surviving monuments, both were assigned the usual royal names and insignia and neither is given any obvious seniority over the other. He served as the head of her armies.

After her death and his later rise to pharaoh of the kingdom, he created the largest empire Egypt had ever seen; no fewer than seventeen campaigns were conducted, and he conquered from Niya in North Syria to the Fourth Cataract of the Nile in Nubia.

Officially, Thutmose III ruled Egypt for almost fifty-four years, and his reign is usually dated from April 24, 1479 BC to March 11, 1425 BC; however, this includes the twenty-two years he was co-regent to Hatshepsut. During the final two years of his reign, he appointed his son and successor, Amenhotep II, as his junior co-regent. His firstborn son and heir to the throne, Amenemhat, predeceased Thutmose III. When Thutmose III died, he was buried in the Valley of the Kings as were the rest of the kings from this period in Egypt. (Wikipedia)

When the Israelites advanced on the Jordan River it was at flood stage and the Canaanites no doubt thought for the Israelites to cross would be impossible. (Joshua 3:15) Gilgal was quickly seized and served as a foothold from which to launch forward

operations into Canaan. With the capture of Jericho and Ai Joshua was able to drive a wedge through the middle of land to near the western sea. By this cut in the land Joshua had driven a barrier between the Amorites on his left and the Hittites on his right by this action Joshua had placed the south into temporary subjection before the larger multitudes from the north could be mustered in aiding their defense. The northern forces did come together but shared the same fate as the southern and the Israelite host defeated them on the shores of Lake Merom. In the campaigns of Joshua it is impossible not to see the strategically skillful presence of divine suggestion which the Scriptural record records.

A leading character trait of Joshua is courage and faithfulness. Joshua was a close aide to Moses and was one of the twelve spies that went into the Promised Land to recon in preparation for the invasion. (Numbers 13:2) Of the twelve only Joshua and Caleb came with a positive report while the others had doubt and unbelief. As a result none of Joshua's generation would be allowed to enter the Promised Land except Caleb.

There is not enough evidence to name Joshua as the author of the Book of Joshua. Although it is probable that the author is Joshua. The author of this book would have to be an eye witness to the events described in the book. It is also arguable that an assistant of Joshua finished the work in regards to the comments of Joshua's death. Some have suggested that this assistant could have been the High Priest Eleazar, or perhaps his son Phinehas. Rahab was still living when Joshua was written. (Joshua 6:25) The Book of Joshua was completed before the reign of King David. The best likely period is 1405-1385 B.C.

Chapter 1

GOD'S COMMISSION TO JOSHUA

Let us continue to look back at the Biblical history leading up to the conquest of the Promised Land of Canaan. These are historical events but they are also more than that. God speaks through history today to give us the example of His deliverance to His people from the bondage of sin. Paul makes this clear in his letter to the Corinthian Church. ***“Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”*** (1 Corinthians 10:6 1 Corinthians 10:11) The act of redemption in the Old Testament was God's deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. By comparison the act of redemption in the New Testament is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Moses led the Israelite nation out of Egypt by the mighty hand of God and they began their journey to the Promised Land which had been promised by God to their father's Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. During that time Israel witnessed supernatural providence from God. God supplied manna from heaven to eat while they sojourned in the wilderness. God gave them water to drink which flowed from the rock. God led them with a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night just to mention the most notable. During that time they

received Divine revelation with the gift of the Mosaic Law which was God's holy standard that they were to live by.

Canaan is the Promised Land promised and given to Abraham. God lives in the future tense and therefore the land of Canaan belonged to the Israelite nation ever since God's Covenant between He and Abraham. Now the Israelites are free from the bondage of the Egyptians and journeying to the Promised Land. Today the Church Hymns suggest that the land of Canaan represents the Promised Land of Heaven.

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
I looked over Jordan, and what did I see
Coming to carry me home?
A band of angels, coming after me
Coming for to carry me home.

Biblically speaking the land across the Jordan, the Promised Land, does not speak of Heaven. In the book of Hebrews Canaan is described as a place of rest, a place of victory that every believer will enjoy. (Hebrews 3:1-19 Hebrews 4:1-16)

F. B. Meyer makes a connection between the Book of Joshua and Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Both are a description of a spiritual walk of promise, wealth and victory that are the believers in Jesus Christ.

Israel's deliverance from Egypt was a preparation for the enjoyment of the Promised Land in Canaan. This is also the example for us, the Christian believer that we are brought out from the bondage of sin so that we can have the abundant life. The wilderness is never our permanent home, we are just sojourners there traveling to the Promised Land. As a whole generation of Israelites died in the wilderness because of unbelief, so many Christians live today in a dry spiritual experience. They fail to walk in the fullness of a spirit filled life and miss the peace and joy that God has for them now.

It is interesting that the Greek name for Jesus translates to the Hebrew name Joshua. They both carry the same identical name. What the Israelites received in the Promised Land they received by the hand of Joshua. Today whatever the Christian receives from God is received through Jesus Christ, our Joshua.

Verse 1

Moses has now died and a new leader must be appointed for the Israelite nation. Moses because of short comings was not allowed to lead the people into the Promised Land. Joshua, who we first see in Exodus being chosen by Moses to lead in the fight against Amalek. (Exodus 17:8-16) At the time of Moses' death Joshua is not a young man and had spent his entire career as Moses' servant. Now by God's call it is time for Joshua to lead the Israelite nation. As Moses' assistant Joshua was faithful in the small things. This is a great asset for many a great man or woman. They are most prepared by being faithful to the small things.

Verses 2-3

Entrance into the Promised Land was entrusted to Joshua. He was the trustee of the land for the people of Israel. In the same way Jesus Christ goes before us and what we will inherit from God we have through Jesus. The whole of the land was given to them but they could only possess what they claimed. The whole would have to be fought for as the Canaanites were a determined enemy. With a thought God could have defeated the enemy for the Israelite people but it was a partnership between God and His people that they must see His will done. This effort was not for the faint in heart. Taking control of the Promised Land would take effort on the part of the people. Even as the victory was assured by the promises of God the nation would have to display their faith by following His command. Like the Church today it is not for those who are content with the world but for those who desire to press on to what God has called them to be.

Verses 4-5

We see here a geographical description of the Promised Land, the land that belongs to the Israelites as ordained by God. These borders were true then and are just as true today. Israel today does not hold this territory but will someday soon. The borders were from the Great Sea, the Mediterranean to the Euphrates River west to east. From Lebanon to the wilderness over the Nile River in Egypt north to south.

The victory of conquest is not assured because Joshua is the great leader that he was, or because Israel is a great nation, the victory is assured because God is a Great God, and He say to Joshua, I will be with you. This promise is enough for any man seeking to do God's will.

Verses 6-9

Several times in Scripture Joshua is commanded to be Bold and courageous. This may expose a weakness in Joshua and therefore a need for this command. Even a great leader needs such a command. All of us may have a willing spirit but our flesh is weak. (Matthew 26:41) The bold courage that Joshua needed would not be in himself but would come from God. We can be full of self-confidence that will take us to our own ruin, we should be full rather of the genuine confidence that comes from God.

Joshua, as we, must take great care to observe God's law. God's Word and Joshua's commitment to obeying it would be the pillar of strength to support his success. Joshua not only needed to read God's Word day and night but to have His word on his lips and on his mind and he had to obey what God's Word told him to do. This was not only true for Joshua but for each one of us. God's Word so intertwined into our life is a guarantee to a successful Christian life. This does not promise us a life without problems but assures the Christian a life able to deal with life's problems. This is because that through God's Word we have the full advantage of God's presence and promises in our lives.

A Christian's success is not measure by the same standard of the world. Even if we are counted by the world as sheep for the slaughter, we are actually conquerors through Him who loves us. (Romans 8:36-38) The final encouragement from God is a repeated one

for Joshua 1:5. Here we are reminded that the success of Joshua depended upon Joshua keeping God's Word. Even more it depended on God's presence with him.

Verses 10-11

Sometimes the most difficult thing is to wait. The Israelites had been waiting now for forty years for the time to come to cross the Jordan River and possess the Promised Land. But now the command had been given that in three days they would cross and they must make provision. When those of us who are involved in God's kingdom work should not waste our time, we must always be preparing the provision for the task ahead.

Verses 12-15

The tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had already settled on the east side of the Jordan River. They were in the lands given to them by Moses but had promised to help the other tribes of Israel to conquer the lands on the west side of the Jordan River. (Numbers 32:16-32)

Joshua has reminded them that they are to aid their brother tribes in taking possession of the lands on the west side of the Jordan River. This principle applies to the body of Christ. When a Christian brother has a need it becomes the common need of the whole body of believers. (1 Corinthians 12:25-26)

Verses 16-18

We see here a unity within the tribes of Israel that was necessary for the conquest of the Promised Land. They overcame the temptation to see themselves as separate from the tribes that had not yet received their land. God had promised that He would reveal to the people that Joshua was the chosen leader to replace Moses. Here we see that the nation of Israel had accepted Joshua as their leader.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh now repeated the same message that the Lord had given Joshua in Joshua 1:6, to be strong and of good courage. This is a confirmation of God's Word to Joshua. God loves to confirm His word to us.

The People of the Promised Land

1. Amalekites: the descendants of Amalek, the grandson of Esau, (Genesis 36:12) who dwelt South of Palestine in the Negev.
2. Ammonites: The descendants of Ammon, the grandson of Lot by his youngest daughter, (Genesis 19:38) who lived East of the Jordan River and North of Moab.
3. Amorites: A general term for the inhabitants of the land, but especially for the descendants of Canaan who inhabited the hill country on both sides of the Jordan.
4. Canaanites: Broadly speaking, these are the descendants of Canaan, son of Ham, son of Noah, (Genesis 10:15-18) and included many of the other groups named here.
5. Edomites: the descendants of Esau who settled Southeast of Palestine (Genesis 25:30) in the land of Seir.
6. Gebalites: People of the ancient seaport later known as Byblos, about 20 miles north of modern Beirut. (Joshua 13:5)

7. Geshurites: The inhabitants of Geshur, East of the Jordan and to the South of Syria. (Joshua 12:5)
8. Gibeinites: The inhabitants of Gibeon and surrounding area. (Joshua 9:17)
9. Girgashites: A tribe descended from Canaan, which was included among the general population of the land without specific geographical identity.
10. Girzites: An obscure group which lived in the Northwest part of the Negev, before they were destroyed by David. (1 Samuel 27:8-9)
11. Hittites: Immigrants from the Hittite empire (in the region of Syria) to the central region of the land. (Genesis 23:10 2 Samuel 11:3)
12. Hivites: Descendants of Cannon who lived in the Northern reaches of the Land.
13. Jebusites: Descendants of Canaan who dwelt in the hill country around Jerusalem. (Genesis 15:21 Exodus 3:8)
14. Kenites: A Midianite tribe that originally dwelt in the Gulf of Aqabah region. (1 Samuel 27:10)
15. Horites: Ancient residents of Edom from an unknown origin who were destroyed by Esau's descendants. (Deuteronomy 2:22)
16. Moabites: The Descendants of Moab, the grandson of Lot by his eldest daughter, (Genesis 19:37) Who Lived East of the Dead Sea.
17. Perizzites: People included among the general population of the land who do not trace their lineage to Canaan. Their exact identity is uncertain.

Chapter 2

Rahab

Rahab, a prostitute and a woman of faith, remains enigmatic centuries after her brief appearance in Israel's history. Because she placed her faith in Israel's God and helped the two young Israelite scouts who came to her house, her life was spared when Israel captured Jericho. Because Rehab's house stood on the wall of the city, Joshua's scouts went there when they entered Jericho. Rehab might have been an innkeeper as well as a prostitute; other documents from the Old Testament era record women innkeepers who were also prostitutes. If Rehab's house was in fact an inn, it would have been a reasonable destination; Joshua's scouts could hope that they would not attract unwanted attention.

Rehab's arrangement with the scouts was a stirring declaration of faith in Yahweh, Israel's God. (Joshua 2:8-21) As a Canaanite woman, Rehab would have practiced the fertility cult of Baal, god of the storm and life giving rain, and his consort Asherah, the mother earth goddess. Yet based on Israel's progress toward her land, Rehab recognized that Yahweh, the God of Israel, is "the supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below. (Joshua 2:11)

After Joshua's conquest of Jericho, Rehab married Salmon of the tribe of Judah; she gave birth to a son, whom they named Boaz. (Ruth 4:21 Matthew 1:5) Thus, Rehab was the mother-in-law of Ruth, another foreign woman adopted into Israel. Rehab was King David's great-grandmother. She is listed with Moses, David, Samson, and Samuel as

examples of faith demonstrated by good deeds. (Hebrews 11:31 James 2:25) She is one of the five women, including Mary, mentioned in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, the human family tree of God's Son. (Matthew 1:5) Along with these outsiders and their stories, Rehab bears an especially poignant witness to the breathtaking scope of God's grace.

Verse 1

During the three days that Joshua had commanded the nation of Israel to wait on the banks of the Jordan River Joshua sent out two spies to recon the area and Jericho. God had a special purpose for His people to wait there at the Jordan River. Sending spies forth to learn of the possible difficulties that may be ahead of the Israelites was not a lack of faith on Joshua's part. We must trust in God's promises but that does not mean that He will do all for us. It is our lack of action on His promises that displays a lack of faith. The Promises of God should spur us into an active godly activity.

Joshua also shows wisdom by sending the spies out secretly. Moses had sent out twelve spies 40 years prior and the majority of them came back with unfavorable report. (Numbers 13:1-33) Joshua and Caleb were among those spies and only they had said that Israel could take the Promised Land of milk and honey. Now it is Joshua that is leading the conquest and he has chosen two men of faith to check out what lay ahead.

If this reconnaissance mission was for military purposes it was a failed mission. But God had a greater plan by sending them forward and in this greater plan they were successful. The two spies entered into the city of Jericho and went to the home of Rehab who was a prostitute. Throughout history Bible interpreters have been shy about the fact that Rehab was a prostitute but the Scripture is very clear that she was a harlot. Bible commentators considered Rahab to be an innkeeper, which solved their dislike of the harlot problem. It is quite probable that she was an innkeeper but it was a common practice of women innkeepers to practice prostitution. An inn would have been a logical place for strangers of a city to go. But the fact remains that the Scriptures say that Rehab was a harlot.

In the second century a commentator wrote, *"As the first Joshua sent his spies before him and they were received into the harlot's house, so the second Joshua sent his forerunners, whom the publicans and harlots gladly received"*. (Origen) The one who knows they are a sinner will receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour. It is a human tragedy that many deny their sinfulness and are unaware of what they are capable of apart from the Lord.

Rahab was a prostitute and possibly an innkeeper as well, either way the spies went there as it would have been the perfect place for strangers to go unnoticed by an uneasy population. The people of Jericho were aware of the Israelite presence only five miles away, and they were aware of their intention. The City of Jericho was on high alert and strangers to the city would have come under severe scrutiny.

Verses 2-7

It was the culture of the day that the host of the house was to care and protect their guest. It was an expected duty. Yet Rehab knew who they were by the dialect of this language. The Hebrew and the Canaanite spoke the same language but the dialect was distinctively different. She knew that they were Israelite. Therefore she knew why they were there, to view the city and know their fortifications. The king of the city was told that Israelites had entered into the city and probably suspected that they would go to a home as Rahab's. He sent men to demand their release unto him. Rahab went further than the expected tradition and risked her life by protecting them for the king's men.

Rahab admitted that the Israelite men had come to her but said that she did not know who they were or where they were from. This was of course a lie, as the Scripture records her lie. It is possible not knowing the Law of Moses she sinned unaware. If she had beforehand determined in her heart to be obedient to God's Law God would have made a way for her to save the lives of the spies without telling a lie. The lie that Rehab told is not justifiable but it does show great courage on her part. Rahab was a pagan sinner living in a city wholly given over to the worship of false gods. She was an immoral prostitute who had no previous contact with the Word of God. Her sin may not have been a conscious sin. In spite of the argument Rahab was being used by God to protect His children.

Verses 8-14

Because of Rahab's position in the Jericho society she would have been one that was privy to the talk of events around Jericho. Also she was a woman well aware of the history of events in the greater region. Therefore she knew of the Power of the Israelite God, Yahweh. And by the previous conquests of the Israelites she knew the weakness of the pagan gods of her people. With this opening up of her mind and heart to the truth of God she expresses her faith in God with these words to the spies, ***"I know that the LORD has given you the land."*** This knowledge that God had revealed to her also shows that it was God's plan to bring her and the spies together. This is the same way that God works with us to bring us into contact with likeminded believers or people who are open to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ.

With Rahab's declaration that He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath is a proof of her faith. It may not have been a strong faith and certainly not perfect but it is commendable. (Hebrews 11:31 James 2:25) Some may argue that Rahab was a prostitute and a liar and therefore could not be saved. But the truth is that none of us are saved by our works but by our faith. Rahab knew who she was, Rahab knew who God was and she trusted God for the saving of her life.

Along with Rahab's faith we should also notice that she had a heart of love. She had a strong desire out of her love to see her family saved as well and goes to great length to save them as well.

Like all, Rahab wanted assurance that her desires would be honored and asked for an oath. Rahab wanted to leave her sinful life behind and go with the people of God. She wanted this for her and she wanted this for her family as well.

Verses 15-21

The scarlet cord that the spies were let down with became the signal to the Israelite people that the inhabitants of that home were to be spared. No matter Rahab's desire, her faith or the promises of the spies, Rahab's salvation for her and her family came by the blood red cord cast down from her window. Without the scarlet cord Rahab would not have been saved. First century commentators, Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr and Origen saw the scarlet cord as a symbol of the blood of Jesus.

Rahab immediately placed her faith in the scarlet cord and bound it to her window. She also placed her faith in the promises of the Israelite spies. She spoke, "according to your words, so be it."

Joshua would be Rahab's savior, but for the rest of Jericho he would be the judge. To those who trust Jesus He is their savior but for those who reject Jesus He will be their judge. The destiny of Rahab was to marry a prince of Judah. As a result her name is found in the lineage of King David and that of Jesus Christ.

Verses 22-24

Considering the information that the spies brought back from Jericho it contained no information that had military value. Jericho was a strong and well-fortified city in the land of Canaan. If the Israelites took Jericho then the whole land would lay before them. As a military reconnaissance for the battle for Jericho the spies venture was not a profitable one.

Because fear had entered into the hearts of the Canaanites the report that the spies gave was positive, **"Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."** The reconnaissance may not have been helpful but it did produce an encouraging faith in the spies and to the nation of Israel. A willing heart is a greater asset than a good battle plan.

The more important purpose was the accomplishment of saving Rahab. Here we see the extent that God will go to save one of His to be in His house in heaven. It may have seemed an impossible task to go into a pagan city and find one willing to accept the gift of God's salvation, but then nothing is impossible with God. **"With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."** (Matthew 19:26)

Chapter 3

Verses 1-2

In Joshua 1:11 we read that God had commanded the Israelite nation to wait three days at the banks of the Jordan River. It was the time of the year when the Jordan River overflowed its banks and the people of Israel watched and saw the rushing waters of the

Jordan, which were swollen from the spring rains. I imagine they must have been asking how they would be able to cross over. It was one thing for two spies to cross over the swollen water but quite another for the whole nation to cross with all their possessions. Perhaps a few had doubts after all the wonderful talk of taking possession of the Promised Land. They had eagerly marched forward and now at the river they found a seemingly impossible barrier before them. Others must have been pondering how God would make this feat possible to them.

Verses 3-5

Joshua did not send a group of engineers ahead to find a way to cross the Jordan but sent the Priest in the lead with the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was the representation of God's presence with His people. The problem that faced them was not one of human engineering but a spiritual problem and therefore would take a spiritual God to provide the solution. God required that a space of 1000 yards be between the people and the Ark of the Covenant. There are two reasons for this command. One was to respect the holy nature of the Ark of the Covenant and the other was to assure that everyone had a clear view of the Ark of the Covenant. To know the way that you should go is to follow the Ark of the Covenant, to know the way is to follow the Lord. Israel would be able to accomplish what seemed impossible by setting their eyes upon the presence of God and follow Him.

Their battle was like that of ours, not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces. Before going into spiritual battle one must make spiritual preparation. One must sanctify themselves unto the Lord. We must turn from the common things of this world and look to the One who will lead us into the world to come. As we keep our focus upon God He will do wondrous things amongst His people.

Verse 6

Joshua issued the command to the priest to take up the Ark and move forward. His command was that of what the Lord had told him to do. Joshua had a deeply mature faith in God's word. In the days of his youth he was with Moses when God had parted the Red Sea freeing the people from the pursuing Egyptian Chariots. The success of Joshua depended upon and grew out of the promise of God in Joshua 1:8, ***"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."***

Even with the specific guidance from God and His Word the faith that Joshua displayed is impressive. To live and walk in the Promised Land requires this kind of faith. A slavish dependence upon the law or the works that we do will not grant us a personal relationship with God. Faith will lead us unto greater victories than law and works ever will.

Verses 7-8

Joshua has taken his step of faith in God's Word and now God encourages him. God has promised that Joshua will be respected by the people as Moses was and will be their

leader on God's behalf. God is always wanting to encourage those who are walking with Him in faith.

As the Red Sea displayed the power that God would use through Moses so the Jordan River would be used by Joshua to show the power of God through Him.

Verses 9-13

Joshua knew the way that the Lord works in the human events of our lives. God is about to move on behalf of the Israelite people and this movement is also a promise that He will move on their behalf with future blessings. Joshua knows that the Ark of the Covenant must lead the way. Man cannot fight spiritual battles by physical means. When in spiritual warfare the Lord must lead the way to victory. For the Israelites the flooding waters of the Jordan River may have seemed an impossible barrier to overcome but the words of Joshua must have been refreshing to them. So too it is for us that the impossible problems we face are not insurmountable but opportunities to see the mighty works of our God.

Verses 14-15

1000 yards in front of the people the priest made their march to the Jordan River carrying the Ark of the Covenant. They carried the Ark into the River and stood there. We don't know how long they stood there before the rivers flow ceased. It may have been for a long time or it may have been just for a moment. But in that type of a situation a moment would seem as a long time. In our prayers we may expect the ground to be dry before we step into the bed of a river, but God often expects us to step out in faith into the raging waters.

Verses 16-17

The waters of the Jordan River stopped. Some have said that it was possibly an earthquake the caused the waters to stop. Maybe, but I believe that the waters stopped at the command of God's Word according to the timing of His hand. Not only did the flow of the river cease but the Israelite nation crossed on dry ground. God miraculously dried the river bed so the people would not become bogged down in the marshy river bed.

How did this happen? By the demonstration of man's faith in the power of an Almighty God. By following God's lead of presence in our lives according to His plan. The Ark of the Covenant is mentioned 14 times in these 17 verses. This event was all about the trust in God's Word by Joshua, the priest and the Israelite people. The Ark of the Covenant cleared the way for the Israelite nation. This was a spiritual work, not the work of a group of engineers.

When we face impossible situations in our lives we must fix our eyes upon Jesus, our Joshua, to lead us on the way. Jesus is our Ark of the Covenant, He is Immanuel, "God with us." (Matthew 1:23) Jesus has cleared the way to victory in all things. ***"When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."*** (Colossians 2:15) I find it true that nothing is impossible for one who has complete faith in God. The Israelites followed the Ark of the Covenant and walked across the Jordan River on dry land. Peter followed

Jesus with eyes fixed upon Him and walked on the water of the Sea of Galilee. (Matthew 14:29)

Chapter 4

Verses 1-9

Life in the Promised Land was not a life of leisure. For the nation of Israel it was a time of battle. Most of all it was a time of trust. They knew that they would have to trust God in everything. The challenges that they would have to face would not only get bigger in the Promised Land but also would the blessings that they received. It may have been the tendency of the Israelite people to want to rush on and take Jericho. The time was ripe as the Canaanite people were afraid of the Israelites. But things must be done in God's time and not our own. God knows what is beyond us and at times we must wait upon the Lord when doing something for Him. It was now time for God to conquer Israel spiritually so that they could conquer Jericho under His guidance.

First the people must take twelve stones out of the Jordan River from where the priest were standing with the Ark of the Covenant. One stone for each tribe of Israel. They were undoubtedly large stones weighing up to 100 pounds each. These stones were to be set up as a memorial. These stones would be a teaching tool to remind their children the work that God had done. The Lord wanted His people to remember His great work for many generations to come. We often fail to remember the great things that God has done for us. This can cause the faith of our children to be weak because they do not know the great things that God has done. It is important to let the children know how God has worked in our lives.

Joshua also set up a pile of stones in the midst of the river bed so that when the river was in its low season of drought they could be seen. This would be a testimony of when God had completely dried up the river so the Israelite nation could cross over on dry land.

Verses 10-18

The priest stood with the Ark in the midst of the Jordan River bed until everything was finished. The Ark of the Covenant had to remain the entire time that it took the nation of Israel to cross over.

The tribes of Israel who were content to remain on the east side of the Jordan River and send their armies over to fight on behalf of the rest of the Israelite nation. This was a promise they had made. (Joshua 1:12-16) God now fulfilled His promise to Joshua (Joshua 3:7) and raised him up as the great leader of the Israelite nation, even as he had done for Moses.

Once all had crossed over the Jordan the river returned to its normal flow. This shows that this event was a supernatural event arranged by God.

Verses 19-20

The Israelites camped at Gilgal. Gilgal became the base of operations for the conquest of Canaan. It was appropriate that this is where the memorial was set up to commemorate the great works of God.

Verses 21-24

There is a great value in memorial stories. The obvious is that the Israelite people would never forget this work of God on their behalf. It is also so that the rest of the world will not forget the hand of God and His great miracles on behalf of His people.

We don't remember the great works and miracles of God so that we can live in a dreamland thinking of the best days of our Christian life. They are remembered as a point of faith, so that we can trust our God in the greater works that He will accomplish in the future. If we remember the great work that God has done then we will have the justification to trust Him in the greater work of the future.

Letting the children know of the work of God in the past cannot be over expressed in its importance. The history that we have had forges the future that our children will live in. If they do not know the victories of the past they will not know how to seek the victories of the future.

Remembering the past and making it known is important for our testimony before the world community. How else will they know that there is a God in heaven, who can work the miraculous, that they will know to seek Him and His Kingdom.

Chapter 5

Verse 1

If the hearts of the Canaanites had melted into a state of repentance this would have been an even greater victory for the Kingdom of God. But as it was they melted with fear that the God of the Israelites was stronger than any god they were worshipping. With some, when their hearts melt before the power of God they only harden and solidify against God. Such was the case for the Pharaoh of Egypt and now for the kings of Canaan.

It is also true that when our spiritual enemies see that our faith in God is obedient even when in the wisdom of the world it would seem crazy their confidence soon evaporates in the battle against the faithful of God. We of the army of God sometimes fail to remember that, **"If God is for us, who is against us?"** (Romans 8:31) They know that when we trust in the Lord their eventual defeat is assured.

Verses 2-8

This generation of Israelites were the children of the generation that lacked the faith to enter the Promised Land as God had commanded and therefore had wandered in the wilderness for forty years until all had perished. During this time the practice of circumcision had not been performed. Entering into the Promised Land was part of the covenant promise given to Abraham and therefore before they possessed the land the males had to be circumcised. Flint is found in a natural state and this is why Joshua was commanded to use flint for the circumcision. The flint did not need to be honed and therefore was pure and holy to the Lord.

This new generation of Israelites was raised up in place of the generation that was full of unbelief. God's will and work will be accomplished but those of unbelief will not be able to share in it.

Circumcision is a powerful committed act to show that you are consecrated unto God. It was a physical way to set one's self apart from the world. It was a faithful and obedient way to identify yourself as one who belonged to the Lord. It was an act of cutting away the flesh and the world, dying to self and living for the Lord.

From a military point of view this was a suicidal act to commit. All of the men of fighting age were now for several days unable to fight during the healing process. We remember the story of Simeon and Levi who tricked the sons of Hamor into being circumcised. Then when they were unable to fight properly they were slaughtered in retaliation for raping Dinah their sister. (Genesis 34:24-25) This could have been the fate of the men of Israel.

Not only did they cross the Jordan River at an undesirable place, right in front of the strongest military post in Canaan they incapacitated their army for several days. They trusted God and His directions rather than their own wisdom. They were in a bad place which left them to only trust in God alone. It was a hard place to be but it was in the right place, as it was of God's choosing. When we find ourselves in a hard place we must remember the great things God has done in our lives and trust Him with a steadfast obedience.

Verse 9

What reproach? What dishonor? It is the shame of their slavery in Egypt. As we travel through this world we are burdened down by our slavery to sin. By repentance, turning away from the worldly way and towards God's way we receive forgiveness and the burden of sin is rolled away. The meaning of the name Gilgal is rolled away.

Israel was now in a place where they could now see themselves as the children of God, His chosen people. By faith they had become an obedient and trusting people and they were no longer the slaves of Egypt past. As for the Christian, our sins have been washed away by His blood and we can see ourselves as we are in Jesus Christ.

Verses 10-11

The original Passover in Exodus before leaving Egypt could never be repeated. But it signified God's deliverance from the bondage of slavery. There is a great power in remembering the Passover. For the Israelites this was the first Passover celebrated since the Sinai. For the younger this was the first Passover they had celebrated and it is fitting that it was now as they prepared to take the Land of Milk and Honey that God had promised to their fathers.

In the same way there is power in the remembrance of our redemption through the work of Jesus Christ. We must always live our lives in the shadow of the cross at Calvary.

Verse 12

The people of Jericho had hurried to get behind the walls of the city for safety from the Israelites. So the Israelites harvested their crops and enjoyed the produce of the land. At this time God stopped the manna from heaven that they had eaten during all the days in the wilderness. They had the satisfaction of harvesting their own food. God was now providing for His people by other means, by giving them the land of milk and honey.

The place of Gilgal became the beachhead or point of operations for the conquest of Canaan. They returned there after battle as it was a place to find strength as they remembered in memorial often their obedience to their God and their redemption from Egypt and the wilderness. Like the Israelites it is good for us also to have a base of operation. A place where we come to remember the fulfilled promises and the promises that we have faith in that God has given us. it is a place of quite prayer, obedience and joy in our redemption.

Verses 13-15

Joshua was scouting the defenses of Jericho to plan the battle when he noticed a man with a sword drawn at the ready. In a courageous act Joshua approached and asked whose side of the coming conflict this man was on. The man answered “no” which was not a clear answer to who he was. Perhaps this was not the correct question to be asking. Neither may it have been the most important question to ask. The question should not have been if the man was on Joshua’s side but a statement that Joshua was on the Lord’s side.

The man identifies himself as the Commander of the Lord’s Army. Joshua was a great military commander, but he was not the Commander in Chief. There has been much discussion as to who this man was but it is obvious that he was a man of great power.

This being before Joshua could have been no other Being than God Himself. Some have argued that with the title of Commander of the Lord’s Army it could have been the Arch Angel Michael. (Revelation 12:7) but Joshua fell down and worshiped the Being and angels will not allow that a man should worship them. (Revelation 22:8) The term Army of the Lord implies that He commanded angelic beings as He was of a higher rank. Also Joshua addressed Him as Lord and then was told to remove his sandals. This would signify the humanity of Joshua and his contact with a sinful world. Joshua as the assistant of Moses knew of the encounter of Moses with God and the command to remove the sandals on Holy ground. (Exodus 3:4-6) The prevailing argument is that this was Jesus who is often referred to as the Angel of the Lord. (Genesis 18:16-33 Genesis 32:24-30 Judges 13:1-23)

Joshua’s submission to Jesus Christ shows that Joshua knew who he was in front of. Also his humility before the Lord assured the victory for Israel. When we submit to the Commander of the Army of the Lord there is none that can defeat us.

The purpose of this visit from the Christ was to instruct Joshua in God’s plan to capture Jericho. The plan given to Joshua is so improbable that it could only have found success by the direct will of God. Most of all the Lord had come to conquer Israel. For Israel to live in the Promised Land they had to be conquered by God and through Joshua’s submission it is shown that they were submitted to God’s will. This is a missing element in the life of many Christians. In order to have victory you must be and continually be conquered by God.

Chapter 6

Verses 1-5

The city of Jericho guarded two important entrances into the heart of the Canaanites hill country. The Israelites would have to conquer Jericho first or leave a mighty enemy between them and their families at Gilgal. Jericho itself was fortified by a double ring of walls. The outer wall was six feet thick and the inner wall was twelve feet. Across these were laid timbers to support houses. The city of Jericho was built on a hill and the opposing army would have to climb the hill to assault the city. This was a great disadvantage to any attacking army. The general practice of the day was to lay siege for several months in order to force surrender by starvation. Because of the history of the Israelites and past occurrences of battle and the known truth of what their God had done for them the city of Jericho was shut up. The people and the army within the walls of Jericho were on full alert. From a human point of view the Israelites, with inferior weapons, this would have been an impossible battle for them to win. But for God, who always issues His perspective in the future tense, the battle was already over and the victory was for the Israelite people. Therefore the Lord could say to Joshua that He had given Jericho into his hand.

Up to now everything they had done was preliminary in preparation for the conquest of Jericho. Now the task of conquering Jericho was before them and it must be disposed if the Israelites were to occupy the Promised Land. Jericho was the most formidable city that the Israelites would face in Canaan. If the Israelites took Jericho all the other city states in Canaan would be available to them. We see here the wisdom of God, different from worldly wisdom, that Israel face the most difficult obstacle first.

The battle plan given to Joshua made no military sense and was not a plan that showed any possible way to victory. What it did do is show that in our spiritual battles we are truly dependent upon God. The people of Israel show great faith in their obedience to the plan that God had given them. It also showed tremendous faith on Joshua's part because he had to reveal the plan to the Israelite people. Once the plan that the Lord had given to Joshua was revealed to the elders and the people of Israel it show great faith in their part to follow with complete faith and obedience.

The plan for victory was of such that it would clearly be the work of the Lord and a gift to the Israelite people. Yet, the armies of Israel were given something to do in order that they could work with God in partnership. God could have completed the battle and given the Israelites the victory without any effort on their part. But he wanted his people to be a part of His work. Just as God wants us to be a part of His work today.

Verses 6-7

First Joshua had to call the priest and inform them of what they were to do. It was not a normal thing for the priest to be involved in the battle and neither was it normal to take the Ark of the Covenant into battle. The Ark of the Covenant would be necessary for the Israelites to have the victory just as the Ark of the Covenant was necessary for them to cross the Jordan. The Ark was the presence of the Lord and the people had to be very mindful that the Lord was with them. When we are doing the Lord's work it is important to

focus on Him with our minds and hearts. We should not be distracted by the difficulty of the task ahead of us.

Joshua had to give the people very specific instructions as to what they were to do. This was a very unusual task they were being asked to do. It certainly was not the customary way to conquer a walled city.

Verses 8-14

Joshua immediately obeyed the Lord's commands. Often people hesitate to obey and this shows a lack of faith and trust in the words that the Lord has spoken. So the army of Israel, the seven priest blowing trumpets, the Ark of the Covenant, and the rear guard marched around the city of Jericho. Jericho was not a large city and this could be done in a reasonable amount of time. The people of Jericho watched as the procession went around their city. They must have watched in awe and also with a sense of horror.

It would have been easy for the people of Jericho to attack the Israelites as they marched around the city. They had the advantage of the high city walls from which to throw down upon the Israelites. Israel displayed great courage in their obedience of God's command. Also this showed great endurance by their marching. They repeated this for six days, as they marched in silence they may have been thinking as to how this action made any sense. Also as the people marched around Jericho they must have looked at the high walls of the city, at how impenetrable they were. This gave them opportunity to realize that this battle was bigger than they were.

Verses 15-16

After six days of marching around the city of Jericho and on the Sabbath, the seventh day, they arose again to march around the city seven times. After the seventh time around the city Joshua commanded "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!" for six days they had marched in silence and now they let out a mighty shout. It was not their shout which would take the walls of Jericho down, it was a shout for what the Lord was going to do. It was the time that God would show that by His sovereign grace and power what He would do for His people. The shout of the Israelite people was a shout of rejoicing for now the Lord would fulfill His promise and give them the city.

Verses 17-19

Rahab the harlot and all those who were with her were to be spared. Everything and everyone else was to be destroyed. This was her reward for caring for the spies of the Israelite people. She had displayed faith in the God of the Israelite people and now had found support with God's people.

Joshua commanded the people to stay away from the things that were cursed. This was the idols and the things that were associated with their demonic and depraved worship. God's judgment against Jericho and the land of Canaan was not because they were in the way of the Israelite people, God's judgment came because the Canaanite people were in rebellion against God. It was their belief in the occult that caused God's judgment against them as artifacts that have been recovered have proven.

The silver, gold, bronze and iron were to be consecrated unto the Lord. These represented the first fruits of the Promised Land and therefore belonged to God. Jericho being the first city to be conquered in Canaan was the first fruit. The spoils of this city were to be placed in the treasury of the Lord.

Verses 20-21

The walls falling down flat may have also been just as much a surprise to the Israelite people as the people of Jericho. They were not told as to how God would deliver the city to the Israelite people.

Why was Israel to completely destroy the city of Jericho and its population? Because the sins of the Canaanites were spiritual sins. God did not want His people to be influenced by their evil practices. ***"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. "For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so."*** (Deuteronomy 18:9-14)

This only appears as a harsh judgment because it is. God has commanded such harsh judgment before this one at Jericho. The Judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah was just as harsh. (Genesis 19:24:25) The judgments to come at the end of the age will be even harsher. This is the result of the wrath of God against open rebellion and sin against His Word.

God had given the city to the Israelite people but by their obedience they had to take it as an act of faith. It is the same with all victory in the Christian life. The Christian has been given the life of Jesus but we must take it and live for Him in obedient, persistent faith.

Verses 22-25

Rahab remained true to what the spies had told her and the scarlet cord was in place and none destroyed her. Now Joshua commanded the spies to go and bring her out of the city. All other inhabitants of the city of Jericho were slain and the city was put to flame. We see in Rahab a contrast between judgment and salvation. All of Jericho had heard about the God of the Israelite people. Only Rehab responded with faith in the God of the Israelite people. Rahab dwelling with Israel to this day shows that this book was written at the time of Joshua. It is not a re-construction from an imaginative writer long after the fact. It also affirms the breadth and depth of God's grace. Rahab was not only accepted by the Israelite people but she was also an ancestor of the Messiah. (Matthew 1:5)

Verses 26-27

Joshua cursed the ground where Jericho stood and whosoever should rebuild Jericho would pay a heavy price. King Ahab violated this curse and paid that price of his first born and his youngest son. ***"Ahab also made the Asherah. Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him. In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundations with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun."*** (1 Kings 16:33-34)

Chapter 7

Verse 1

In Joshua 6:18 the Israelites were commanded not to take the accursed things. These were the things that the people of Jericho used in their worship of their false gods. Yet Achan, who was from the prominent family of Judah plundered some of these things. Israel had been sent by God not to plunder the land of Canaan but to take possession of it. To God they were a sacred instrument to be used for His purpose. God's purpose was to bring judgment to a society who were ripe for the judgment of God. Achan's plundering of the things of the Canaanites worship caused the anger of the Lord to burn against the children of Israel. Israel could not be defeated by the Canaanites but they could be defeated by alienating themselves from the plan of the Lord and His purpose.

Verses 2-3

Joshua accepting the recommendation to send only a few troops, this could have been a response to faith or an act of self-confidence. It was probably the latter as Joshua did not consult God before sending his men to attack Ai. But whether he sent the three thousand men or had sent one hundred thousand men it would have made no difference because of Israel's disobedience towards God's Word. The town of Ai had a population of 12,000 men, women and children. (Joshua 8:25) Israel cannot conquer their enemies unless they are first conquered to God. In order to have God on our side we must first be on His side. The Israelites must first be obedient to God's Word.

Verses 4-5

The spies had advised Joshua two or three thousand but Joshua sent the larger number. This was wise on Joshua's part but it made no difference as the defenders of Ai came out of the city and attacked them directly. The three thousand men of Israel fled from the defenders of Ai.

There losses at Ai was thirty-six which in military terms is an insignificant amount but it was thirty-six more that they lost at Jericho. Jericho was a much more difficult city for them to have conquered. What this showed the Israelites is that they could be defeated by the Canaanites in the Promised Land.

The lesson of Ai was the numbers of men is not where an army's strength lies. The strength lies in having God's help in all endeavors. If the Christian soldier marches forward

without the help of God he will be defeated by his foe. The hearts of Israel melted with fear and with good reason. If God was not going to fight the battle for them they had nothing to expect but defeat.

Verses 6-9

Joshua along with the elders of Israel tore their cloths and put dust on their heads. This was a common practice to express grief and dismay in the Far East. It was not just the mourning of the thirty-six men lost in the battle but the concern that they had lost the guidance of God.

Joshua was moving on the faith that victory was assured by God and now they had been defeated by a small town. To Joshua this was a national calamity. Being defeated by Ai is not something that Joshua and the elders were able to take in stride. Every battle is important in obtaining the final victory and to be defeated in what was to be a minor conflict must have a reason beyond his understanding.

Joshua does not really mean that they should not have crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land but that if God is not with them they would have been better off to remain where they had come from. His plea is that if God will not deliver them then all will be lost. As now the Canaanites know that Israel can be defeated and they will be emboldened. This is not different from Christianity today. We have become so dependent upon our own programs and power that we often do not accomplish that which is before us. We must not forget that we need the Lord's blessing and guidance in everything we do in His name.

The Christian must always be attuned that it is not for our glory but for God's glory. Joshua shows here that this is his greatest concern, the glory of God. This should be ours as well. That when we stumble and fall in our endeavors for the Lord we have possibly caused reproach to the name of God.

Verses 10-11

Joshua received a strong response for God. God commanded him to get up. If favor from God was to be restored to Israel that Joshua must act quickly. The good news was that God had not failed Israel. The bad news was that the defeat of Israel was because of sin. This is true in many circumstances we face in life. The problem is not that God has failed us but that we have failed God. So God tells Joshua to get up, as he doesn't need to beg God to change His heart towards Israel because God is faithful towards His people. Joshua must get up and change Israel's heart toward God.

It is God's plan for us to live a life of victory. But if we do not trust in Him completely He will allow defeat. Man has free will and therefore God has made it possible for man to sin against Him, which Israel did even though they did not have to.

It staggers the mind that the whole nation of Israel was found guilty of the sin that had happened through Achan and his family. That thirty-six men had lost their lives as a result. The Apostle Paul speaks to a similar problem in the Church. ***“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of***

dough?” (1 Corinthians 5:6) Even a small amount of sin in the Family or Church can affect the whole group. As a whole we cannot accept even a little sin as we often learn that this tolerance is worse than the sin itself.

We must understand the exact sin that Achan and his family had committed. They had taken the things that were devoted to God. The things they had taken from God were the things that were to be given to the Tabernacle or to be destroyed. The command that God had given was clear. Achan and his family had stolen from God in the same way that we might sin by not giving to God that which He has directed us to give. **“Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.”** (Malachi 3:8)

The following Scriptures teach that if you want to keep something that belongs to God you have to pay a 20% penalty. (Leviticus 22:14 Leviticus 27:15 Leviticus 27:19 Leviticus 27:31) This is the same penalty for restitution if you have stolen from your neighbor. (Leviticus 6:4-5) Also in the New Testament we are taught that our giving to God should be regular and in proportion to what He has given us. (1 Corinthians 16:1-2 2 Corinthians 9:6-8) If we do not abide in these commands of God then we are in need of repentance for our sin against Him. As we shall see the wages for sin is death.

Verses 12-13

Because of this sin, the theft of what belonged unto the Lord, Israel would not be able to stand before their enemies. Israel would not be able to stand and fight in the power and presence of the Lord unless they were obedient to His Word. The nation of Israel were in covenant with God which promised blessing for their obedience. For their disobedience the covenant promised curses. The Christian is under the New Testament and therefore it is not by works of the law but the work of Jesus on our behalf. To have God's power and presence in our battles we must keep the, line of fellowship with the Lord unhindered by sin in our lives. Our position with God is secure before God because of the work of Jesus but our fellowship with God is hindered by sin in our lives. **“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”** (1 John 1:6) Our wellspring of power is our fellowship with God in the Spirit of Truth.

It is a sobering thought to realize that we have no power before our enemies. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual evil forces, (Ephesians 6:12) and we need the power of His fellowship in the Spirit. Repentance is a daily need of the Christian as it keeps the power of God flowing in our Christian walk.

When God is working in our lives against a particular sin, and we resist His work, we lose His mercy and will fail in our battle. It is a most dangerous time for us when we think we are winning with our own self-efforts.

Communal Responsibility

Why did so many of Israel's soldiers die at Ai because of Achan's sin? Why did the Israelites stone Achan's family along with him? A significant part of the answer to these questions comes by understanding the concept of communal responsibility.

If Achan's family knew of his theft, they were accomplices and shared Achan's guilt. A community becomes responsible for sin when people either actively participate in an act of sin or silently condone sinful actions or attitudes.

But what about Achan's children who were too young to understand or these who had no knowledge of his theft? What about Israel's soldiers who died at Ai because Achan stole what belonged to God?

To understand, we have to go back to the beginning. The sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, (Genesis 3) was at least two fold. First they chose not to trust God, even though He was their true and intimate friend. Instead, they listened to the voice of a stranger. Second, though they were unsuccessful, they declared their independence from God by trying to become gods themselves. Because we all make the same choice for ourselves, no one is truly innocent.

Thus, we are all subject to consequences of sin in the world. We may die as a result of another's sin, carelessness, or ignorance, or as a result of our own. Because one person drives under the influence of alcohol, someone else might die on the highway. Because one person wants to maximize profits, others can suffer in wretched conditions. And because Adam sinned, others in Israel died at Ai. None of this is fair. However, God promises to bring perfect justice in His own time. God's justice will be mediated through His grace and mercy, brought to us through Jesus' death in our place.

Verses 14-15

Joshua did not know the identity of the family that had sinned, but God knew. Secret sin is scandalous to God. Therefore, our lives should be lived transparently that everyone can see our actions. If the Christian is a just person he should have no fear before man or God. Once the guilt was brought out and dealt with then the blessings of the Lord could once again fall upon Israel.

Verses 16-18

This must have been a stressful time for Achan as the lots were cast for each group until finally he was taken out. How much better it would be for a man to walk in obedience to God. For the day will come to each to give account unto God for our time, talent, treasure, word and deed. I am sure the value of what Achan had taken faded as the line of recognition came closer and closer to him. I am sure at one point Achan had wished that he had not taken what he did from the Lord. I envision this as the day the lost are judged. How then they will wish they had taken heed to the truth. How much better for us to regret sin before we sin rather than after we sin.

At the time of our temptation the sinful act before us may seem attractive and full of pleasure. Taking what Achan took may at the time seem good to possess and brought comfort to him. When we consider the penalty of sin, both within and upon us, it should outweigh the false profit of our sinful actions.

Verses 19-21

Joshua. As well as Achan, knew that the penalty of his sin would be death. Still in Joshua's compassion he implored Achan to give Glory to God and confess his sin. Even when we have a hidden sin we still can give glory to the Lord and confess our sin. Keeping our sins hidden has a special power over us.

The plunder of Achan was insignificant in comparison to the lives of thirty-six men and the welfare of the entire nation. To covet, our greed for things that are not ours, is a strong force against us and if we do not resist we will make fatal decisions. (1 Timothy 6:10) Man has the ability to reason and therefore is able to rationalize his actions. Achan may have thought, "No one will know. No one will miss these things. No one will be hurt by me having these things." The excuses we can make to cover our sinful deeds are endless. But they all fall short when we have to face the consequences. Many times I have said to myself, I wish I had that moment back. But we never can. It would be much better to think through our actions before we commit to them.

Verses 22-26

The sons and daughters of Achan had knowledge of what Achan had done. It would not be possible to bury that much under the tent without their knowledge. Therefore the family and all possessions were destroyed and buried beneath a pile of rocks. The place where they were buried was named the Valley of Achor. Which means the Valley of Trouble.

Once justice was done the Lord's anger ceased. Once sin is dealt with it can become a springboard to victory. Now once again Israel was in the position to walk in the presence and power of God. Now that they were once again conquered by God they would march forward under His guidance.

As Christians we need to be dead to sin. Only in death of sin can we receive victory. ***"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."*** (Galatians 5:24)

Chapter 8

Verses 1-2

When failing to accomplish what we have previously set out to do it is often to get ourselves composed and get back on the right track. If we are in the will of God then He will encourage us and we must trust what He says for us to do. Israel had stumbled through the sin of Achan but they had dealt with the sin in their midst and now was the time to move on. The past is a lesson for us to learn from and make better decisions from. When sin is the problem then repentance is the correct answer. With repentance and humility of self we can move forward to what God has for us. God will use our failures of

the past as a foundation for our future endeavors and by our obedience to God's way we will gain the victory.

God was not despondent neither was He unwilling to work through His people. If God is leading us, as He was Israel, and set our minds to gaining the victory that God will give as God is always faithful towards His people.

After God had received His first fruits from Jericho the Israelites are allowed to keep the spoils from the City of Ai. How foolish it seems now that Achan robbed God knowing now that if he had waited he would have gained his heart's desire in abundance. God requires the first fruits of our efforts and the rest are ours as a reward for our trust in Him. We are to wait upon the Lord.

The Lord gives Joshua the plan for defeating the City of Ai. They are to ambush the city from behind. The Lord always has the perfect plan and the wise will follow God's way.

Verses 3-8

This time under the direction of the Lord Joshua sends 30,000 men, not just three thousand as before under his own initiative. When doing the Lord's work it is always best to use all the resources that He has made available to us. We should always follow His instruction according to His plan that His purpose will be done. This assures us that we will accomplish His will and He will give us the victory. God had given Joshua the general plan but left it to Joshua to carry out the plan using the experience that he had gained from past battles for the Lord.

Verses 9-10

With the order of battle given to his men of war, and the specifics addressed to the timing that would be needed to coordinate the two groups, the ambushing army and the fleeing army of people, Joshua spent the night among the people. It was important for the leader of the people to be near, that they would see that he was with them.

If we are to gain victory or regain victory from lost battles, then we must live and follow Jesus. For He knows the end from the beginning and will lead us the way through our trials and tribulations. In the good times as well as the crucial times in our life Jesus is always near to us in our Christian walk. Jesus never pushes us but leads us into battle in our spiritual warfare.

Verses 11-13

Israel must be on the offensive and the people of war drew near to the City of Ai. The Israelites did not want the people of Ai to bring the battle to them they wanted to bring the battle to Ai.

Often we see the battle against sin as what we should not do. As Christians in our walk with the Lord we must be on the offensive against the evil forces of darkness and temptation. Instead of thinking about what we should not be doing we must think about what the Lord would have us do.

Verses 14-17

As God had said the king of Ai and his army used the same strategy as before and went out in the morning to face Israel. Often Satan when using an effective strategy against us and will keep using it until it fails. If we have been defeated by Satan then we can plan a strategy based upon what Satan has showed us before.

As God had directed the people of Israel fled before the advancing army of Ai into the wilderness. Our God is an infinite God and His plan to defeat Satan in our lives is of infinite diversity of strategy. Each strategy of God is uniquely planned for our personal need as God is a personal God.

Verses 18-29

We must remember that Israel was taking the land that was promised to their Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That Israel was exacting judgment upon the Canaanites who were ripe for God's judgment because of their wickedness. The victory for Israel was complete and the judgment of God was complete. This was because of God's faithfulness to the Israelite people and their faithfulness to God. If Israel is to regain victory, then they can show no mercy to the enemies of God. They must destroy their enemies completely.

The keys to gaining victory through God can be seen in these bullet points:

1. Be encouraged.
2. Obeying the Lord's plan.
3. Use every best resource available.
4. Live and follow Jesus.
5. Always be on the offensive.
6. Show no mercy to the enemy.

So far in this Book of Joshua we have seen by Israel's experience an illustration of their whole history. It is also an illustration of the spiritual history of the Christian walk.

1. Victory follows obedience to God's Word.
2. Victory is followed by God's blessing.
3. Blessing is often followed by pride and disobedience.
4. Disobedience is followed by defeat.
5. Defeat is followed by judgment.
6. Judgment is followed by repentance.
7. Repentance is followed by obedience.
8. Obedience is followed by victory.
9. For many this cycle continues.

Verses 30-31

Joshua built an altar in accordance to the Law of Moses. (Exodus 20:24-26) This was to express their thankfulness to God that He had given them the victory over Ai. There at Mount Ebal they offered burnt offerings unto the Lord. This was done according to the Law of the peace offering. This was an appropriate act of worship to the Lord by the Israelite people as a consecration unto the God following the great victory over Ai. God

should and deserves that glory for all of our victories. The stones were to be uncut and no iron tool was to be used to create manmade design upon it. This was so when people looked at the altar no attention could be given to what man has done but all attention to what God has done. Too often men boast on their efforts forgetting that all of men's achievements come from the providence of God.

Verses 32-35

We see here the value of a good leader, a man of law. Joshua was a man of the Law of Moses obeyed the command given him in Joshua 1:8. We also see Israel as a nation of the Law of Moses ordering their lives according to God's Word. This was not a convenient thing for the Israelite people to do. The distance from Ai to Ebal and Gerizim was 20 to 25 miles. A long distance to move all the tribes of Israel.

It was important for the Israelite nation to perform this sacrifice between the Mounts of Ebal and Mount Gerizim. The area is a natural amphitheater and made possible for all the nation to hear the reading of the Law of Moses. The Israelites and the people that were with them who came out of Egypt with them.

This act was done according to the words written in Deuteronomy 27:1-26. The altar was built on the Mountain of cursing. At the point of our sin we need a covering sacrifice at the point where sins are revealed and God has pronounced the curse upon our sin.

Israel now controlled the middle of Canaan and the highlands. Conquering the rest of Canaan is a matter of taking advantage of this strategic location.

Chapter 9

Verses 1-2

The Canaanite kings of the land had reason to fear with the news of how the Israelites had Jericho delivered to them by their God. Now that the Lord had given them Ai they had become afraid. They had all gathered together to fight against Joshua and the Israelites with one accord. They were not to wait until the Israelites came to their city but proposed to fight them in the field with a frontal attack.

Verses 3-6

The Gibeinites came from the plateau just North of Jerusalem about fifteen miles from where the Israelites were. In this day long distance travel was dangerous and difficult. Their plan was to be deceptive to Joshua and the Israelite nation. In order to do so they needed to look as though they have traveled a great distance. The goal was to have Israel make a peace treaty with them. But this would not be possible as the Israelites were forbidden to make peace with any of the tribes in the land of Canaan. (Exodus 23:23-24)

The Gibeinites were crafty in their deception as they displayed false evidence with the old and worn sacks, their old wineskins and worn out sandals. Also in their deception they lied stating that they had traveled from a far country and their appearance only strengthened their deception.

Verses 7-13

The Gibeinites lied to the Joshua and the Israelite elders but they also showed respect towards their God. They made aware that they had the mighty things that the God of the Israelites had done for them. The Israelites may have checked the physical evidence to see if the Gibeinites were lying but if they had paused to think they would have known that their story did not make sense. Why would a country from a far off place come to make a treaty of protection if the distance between them and the Israelites was too far for them to be a threat?

Verses 14-15

Joshua had now made the same mistake that he first took with the City of Ai. He failed to seek God's council. The Gibeinites deception was clever and the leaders of Israel were taken in. They did not need the proof that man had to offer but only the wise council of their God. The Israelite nation had checked the evidence provided and in their own authority made a covenant with the Gibeinites swearing an oath in the name of their Lord. Joshua and the people of Israel were walking by sight and not by faith.

Israel made a peace treaty with the Gibeinites because they thought they were from a far country. It was against the will of God for them to make a treaty with anyone in the land of Canaan. God would have allowed treaties with distant countries but this was not the case.

Verses 16-20

Now that the Israelite people had found out that the Gibeinites were not from far off but were in their land the people murmured against the leaders. Still Joshua and the leaders had to do what was right in the eyes of the Lord. They had sworn an oath in the name of the Lord that they would not attack them. To violate this oath would do dishonor to the name of their God. This was a wise decision on the leader's part. To violate the oath would be a sinful act therefore they could not attack the Gibeinites, they had already sinned by making the oath without the council of God.

Not living up to their promise was not a possibility for the Israelite nation, this was a simple truth, and they could not touch them. Later in time King Saul did violate this oath and this sin brought famine to Israel. ***"Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David sought the presence of the LORD. And the LORD said, "It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death."*** (2 Samuel 21:1)

Verses 21-27

For their deception against Israel Joshua made the Gibeinites become what they had said, servants to the Israelite people. Joshua made the Gibeinites to be woodcutters and water carriers. Joshua could not kill them but did put them in perpetual bondage to the Israelite nation.

The Gibeinites did not complain about this arrangement that they found themselves in with the Israelites. They simply said here we are, do that which seems right. The

Gibeinites appeared to be happy to be incorporated into the Israelite culture and become servants of the God of the Israelite nation. The Gibeinites displayed the same heart as David in his Psalm, ***"For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly."*** (Psalms 84:10) Here the Gibeinites showed a proper fear of the Lord of Israel, and not out of weakness. It is written on the men of Gibeon, ***"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 10:2)

It was not that the Gibeinites were happy to be woodcutters and water carriers but they were happy to be doing this work for the Lord. Also they knew were they would be if they were not serving the Lord. It is a good lesson for us as well. Do we have the same heart? No matter what service we are in can we rejoice because we are accomplishing it for the glory of the Lord?

There are some comparisons here between Rahab and the Gibeinites to observe.

- Both Rahab and the Gibeonites came to the God of Israel as sinners, Rahab as a harlot, and the Gibeonites as liars.
- Both Rahab and the Gibeonites were willing at risk to forsake their former associations and be counted among God's people.
- The risk of Gibeon is explained in Joshua 10:4, where they are a target of attack for their dealings with Israel.
- Both Rahab and the Gibeonites, after they found salvation through the God of Israel, had a rich history.

Other mentions of the Gibeinites in Scripture.

- The Gibeonites became servants at the tabernacle, just as Joshua had commanded.
- Gibeon becomes a priestly city; the Ark of the Covenant stayed at Gibeon often in the days of David and Solomon (1 Chronicles 16:39-40 and 1 Chronicles 21:29).
- At least one of David's mighty men was a Gibeonite (1 Chronicles 12:4).
- God spoke to Solomon at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:4).
- These are examples of the great things God can do with people who are sinners, but come to Him in humility and love.

Chapter 10

Verses 1-5

The king of Jerusalem king Adoni-Zedek had heard of the victories of the Israelites and Joshua. He had also heard that the king of Gibeon had made a treaty with the Israelites. The king's name, Adoni-Zedek means "Lord of Righteousness" through in reality he is the exact opposite. He was not a believer in the Lord God of Israel. There was another king of Jerusalem of long ago named Melchizedek who was a priest of God Most High. We were introduced to him as a friend of Abraham. (Genesis 14:18-20) King Adoni-Zedek was not a friend to Joshua or the Israelites. In comparison king Adoni-Zedek was an example of the Anti-Christ whereas Joshua was representative to Christ. Adoni-Zedek, (the false Lord of Righteousness) as representing the anti-Christ leads many nations against Joshua and the children of Israel, a representation to the end times.

King Adoni-Zedek and the other five nations that came against Israel feared them greatly. But like the spiritual enemies of God and his people they do not retreat when they are afraid. Their attacks are even the more boldly as like a wild animal might be when it feels under attack. Even though they are afraid of Israel they still attack the Israelites vassal the Gibeonites.

The city state of Gibeon was not a weak city and the men of the city were called mighty. It is said that the city of Gibeon was a greater city than Ai and was as one of the Royal Cities. We must remind ourselves that the Gibeonites did not submit to Israel out of fear or a position of weakness but because of their honor towards the God of Israel. For this reason they were content to be in perpetual service to His tabernacle.

Verse 6

When the Gibeonites were attacked by King Adoni-Zedek and his allies the Gibeonites called upon Joshua to come to their aid. They were not too proud to call upon their protectors for help. Neither should we be too proud to call upon our protector the Lord God Almighty in time of need.

Verse 7

In Joshua 9:1-27 we saw that the leaders of Israel had made a bad vow to the Gibeonites but being faithful to their vow they were willing to come to the aid of the Gibeonites. Yet, in their faithfulness Joshua and the Israelite leaders went a step further. If they had allowed the Gibeonites to be destroyed they would have been released from the vow they had made with them. But this would have been dishonorable and a disgrace to their God.

We as Christians should have the same sense of honor. From time to time we also make vows that are not to our own advantage, yet, we should go on and honor them as this is pleasing to the Lord. His Word is true and as His representatives our word should also be true.

Verse 8

Joshua has good reason to fear as he now faces a confederation of five kings in battle. Yet God comforts him with the command "Do not fear them." Fear can cripple our ability to fight the battles that lay before us. Even as we will face strong enemies we must

remember the command of God, “Fear not, for I am with you always.” (Matthew 28:20) As we often see in Scripture the command of God is followed with a promise. “I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.” We need not fear when obeying God’s commands as we also have the promise of victory. Therefore, fear is unbelief. We are to trust God at His Word and act upon it in faith.

Verse 9

With the assurance of the Promise of God Joshua did not wait but moved his forces through the night towards their enemy. Joshua was confident that he was in the will of God and quickly worked out his participation in God’s will. Moving the Israelite forces through the night was hard work. The ground from Gilgal to Gibeon was a climb of 3,000 feet and a distance of about 20 miles. It was a hard forced march and took the whole of the night. God will often wait to see our initiative and our willingness to work with Him before He reveals what He will do. It is not the same as God will only help those who help themselves but rather God’s wants His people to work in partnership with Him.

Verses 10-15

The work of God in partnership with the Israelites routed their enemies before them. The hailstones which came down upon the Canaanites was obviously miraculous. It may have been a natural phenomenon but the timing and accurately was a clear display of the hand of God. “The Canaanites, who worshipped nature deities, must have thought that their own gods were aiding the Israelites.” (Madvig)

In Joshua’s partnership with God he did all that he could do and God did only what God can do. Joshua seeing the miraculous hand of God emboldened Joshua to ask for an even more amazing miracle. In order to have enough time to keep the battle going and prevent the enemy from regrouping Joshua asked God to lengthen the day by causing the sun and moon to stay still. This would allow Joshua and the Israelites time to gain the victory before the darkness of the night forced an end to the battle.

God answered Joshua’s request and the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and did not go down for a day’s length. By the hand of God Israel was able to complete its battle and gain the victory. Some have criticized the possibility of this unexplainable event. I myself would not attempt to speculate how this could have happened. Only to state the obvious truth, “Nothing is impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37)

Joshua had not asked God to do the fighting for him and the Israelites but God in His faithfulness did fight for His chosen people. All Joshua has asked was that God would provide the time to give him the opportunity to finish the fight.

When we stay in tune with God and hold onto our base like the place of Gilgal, the place where God has conquered us, then through us God can and will do amazing things. Then we too will be able to say, “There has been no day like that.”

Verses 16-27

Placing large stones lessened the need to spare men to guard the kings and the mighty men of Israel continued to pursue the enemy by attacking the rear guard. Joshua was not to allow anything to delay the completion of Israel's victory.

There is a similar story in the book of Revelation. There not only does a false lord of righteousness lead a group of nations against Joshua but in the midst of their defeat they hide in caves. (Revelation 6:15-16)

The people of Canaan now know that the God of Israel is a mighty God. Their fear and respect for the Israelite nation is so great that none spoke against the children of Israel. Just like Israel the Church should be feared and respected that in the same sense people should know that this is where people will be conquered by God. They should know that if they attend in God's Church He will eventually conquer them into submission. Too many Churches present God as a harmless God who does not demand the surrender of His people.

Joshua executes the five kings so that it is clear that no accommodation will be given to the kings of Canaan. According to this pattern we as Christians cannot allow any place in our lives for rest to our spiritual enemies. All ground belongs to Jesus and must be taken for Him. The idea that God will work in partnership with His people is repeated in Joshua 10:25. The promise of God is victory over all your enemies with whom you fight the good fight.

Verse 40-43

During several weeks Joshua saw six cities that were defeated without loss to Israel. Each battle was a test, as none were easy, but under the leadership of God and Joshua all were victorious.

It is the desire of God that we too should enjoy the same degree of victory in our lives serving Him. ***“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”*** (2 Corinthians 3:18)

All of this land in the southern part of Canaan and their kings was taken because the God of Israel fought for His people. The victories that the Israelites won were fought one battle at a time. So many times we want to obtain all the victory at once. We often give into Satan's strategy to bring us into a state of discouragement. We must remember that God operates in His time and not that of our own time. The Lord God Almighty knows the end from the beginning. (Isaiah 46:10) He knows which battles to fight and when to fight them in order to assure victory. These six cities were not the only cities in Canaan but they were the military strongholds of the region. God knew which cities to battle and when to battle them.

The most important key to remember is that the Lord God fought the battles for the Israelite people. This is also true in our spiritual battles. We as men are not able to battle

the evil spiritual forces but our Lord is able and will give us the victory if we partnership with Him.

We have to come to realize that the victory was won at the Cross. God is able to disarm our spiritual enemies. **“When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”** (Colossians 2:15) God loves His Children and will give us the victories that He has won for us. **“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”** (Romans 8:37) If in our daily battle we find disappointment it is because we have trusted in ourselves. It shows that we tried to fight the battle our self and with our own resources and not the Lord’s already won victory.

Joshua and the Israelite nation then returned to Gilgal which remained their base of operation. All the victories of Israel came out of Gilgal. This was the place where they renewed their total faith in the Lord. Here they reinforced their commitment to God and had fellowship with Him. Gilgal was their sanctuary and the place where God had conquered them.

Chapter 11

Verses 1-5

King Jabin was the King of the city state of Hazor. Hazor was the principle city to the north. It was located on the international trade route and was the most populace in Northern Canaan. News of Israel’s victories in the south had been heard by the leaders of the north. The King of Jabin called together a coalition to defeat the threat of the Israelite invasion into the land of Canaan. The northern kings had superior forces and arms than the southern kings and would present a greater challenge to the Israelites.

The armies that Joshua and the Israelites would face were of greater number, referred to in the Scripture as numbered with the sand. Also they had a technological advantage over the south as well. Because the ground that Israel would be fighting on was flatter the use of Chariots were the heavier weaponry of the north. Israel had not thus far faced armed men in Chariots. These Chariots of the north had armed the wheels with scathes which when driven into the opposing forces would mow them down as wheat in the field. They were very effective against infantry which is all the Israelite army was.

From the first battle at Jericho to the battles in the south the challenges were great for the Israelites which had no real formal trained army. Now as they set their sights upon the north the challenges are going to be much more difficult. This is also true in the walk of the Christian. As we walk with the Lord each step may present greater challenge. God will use previous victory to springboard us into greater victories. What we have in faith faced in the past will be the lesson learned for the greater challenges of the future.

Verse 6

In spite of the new and greater challenge facing Israel Joshua needed confirmation from God that He would deliver the enemy into Israel’s hand. God is faithful and He pledged

that the victory would be given to Israel by His hand. Often we will find ourselves in seeming impossible situations, yet if we step out in faith upon God's Word we will see that He is faithful and true.

God told the Israelites not to fear. This must have meant that He knew they were fearful of the present danger of attacking such a mighty force. Therefore, God's reassuring word must have been a great encouragement to the people of God. Also Joshua was told to hamstring the horses and to burn the Chariots. Hamstringing the horses was to cripple them by cutting the sinew on the back of their legs thus making them useless for further use against them or any enemy. Burning the Chariots was to lose a great asset that would have come into their possession. The further engagements of the Israelite's would then be dependent upon God for victory and not that of their own achievement. God wants us to know that it is by His hand that we are victorious, least we should boast.

Verses 7-9

King Jabin wanted to gather all the forces available to him at Merom and then move southward to better ground for battle. Joshua and the Israelites moved quickly and attacked before the armies were fully ready and surprised them with an unexpected ambush.

Joshua did as the Lord had instructed enjoying the fruits of obedience to the Lord. Joshua destroyed all the chariots with fire and crippled their horses. There is a lesson here for the Christian to learn by this example. Many Christians today are tempted to take the horse and chariots of the devil for their own use. Taking the devil's spiritual tools for our own use against what God has told us to do is always a serious mistake. The battles ahead may not be fought on the same levels of the battle of this day. Any spiritual battle we face can only be fought on one level, the level of complete trust in God.

Neither did Joshua leave work undone. He fought with commitment and passion. He did not contain nor degrade the enemy but destroyed them so there were none left remaining. When we do the Lord's ministry we must complete the work which He has given us to do. That which we leave undone can either be a loss for His kingdom, which we will be held accountable for, or a snare which we have to our rear that can cause us pain and suffering in the future.

Verses 10-15

The work of Joshua and the Israelites was complete according to what God had told them to do. There were none left of the kings of the north or their people. All had been destroyed. The reward was that all the plunder was for the use of the Israelite people. Only the city of Hazor was burned and the rest became a possession of the Israelite people. Thus, they had cities which they had not built and vineyards with they did not plant. This is a good example of the completeness of God's judgment. The destruction of the depraved Canaanites and the reward for obedience to God's Word.

Verses 16-20

In the defense of the Canaanites some will say that because God had hardened their hearts they were not given the free choice to submit to the Israelites. For many years God had allowed the Canaanites the opportunity to return unto Him and they refused. Much as to day all have the opportunity to turn to God yet they remain in rebellion to His Word. Let us be clear on what the hardening of the heart is. If man desires to live in a sinful manner with no conviction to return to the truth then God will give them over to their own sinful desire. (Romans 1:24-28) Also living in this manner opens the door for Satan to come in and blind the heart of man against the Word of God. Only through a heart of repentance can a man's heart be reawakened to the truth of God's Word. God does not prohibit a man from repentance, or prohibits man from seeing the truth, man does this himself by his own love affair with his sinful actions. The Canaanites hearts were hardened by God in that they had been given over by their own desires.

We need not think that God had purposefully set the Canaanites aside for destruction but they by their own choice had done so. God is not partial to any man, He deals with the hearts of men in the same way towards all men. God's grace either hardens the heart or softens the heart of men, it is their choice as to how they respond to the grace of God.

Verses 21-22

Joshua now was to deal with the Anakim. It was the Anakim that ten of the twelve spies were afraid of back in the days of Moses. Their fear persuaded the Israelites to not want to capture the Promised Land and therefore were to wander in the wilderness for forty years. (Numbers 13:27-33) Now the foes of forty years ago fall to the Israelites under Joshua and the direction of God.

The Anakim were saved to the last. Perhaps so that God could train the men of war by the campaigns of the past years in battle for Canaan. The Israelites of the past had refused to take on the challenge of the Anakims and God had managed their conquest so at last they would have to meet this difficult challenge. God knows how to manage the battles in our lives. With each battle we are in training for the next battle to come. This perhaps is so we can face the greater challenges ahead. As we gain the victory through Jesus the adversary will place greater tasks before us. This is why we should always let God manage when and where. If we in our own self-sufficiency go off to fight the Anakim first we may not have the value of the lessons learned from the lessor foes.

When this final leg of the conquest of Canaan was complete the Anakim only remained in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. From the Anakim the giant Goliath came. (1 Samuel 17:4)

Verse 23

All of the kings of Canaan had been defeated. The Israelites were now the nation in power in the land of Canaan. Therefore Joshua had taken the whole land as God had directed Moses, and Moses had directed Joshua. Yet, not every town and village had been subdued. This would be the responsibility of the individual tribes of Israel. Each tribe would be responsible to clean out any remaining resistance.

“Much territory was yet to be possessed, but it was left to each tribe to possess what potentially it had received through the conquest of the whole people in which it had taken part. Each tribe was to apply individually the lessons it had learned in united war if it was to possess its inheritance. That the tribes failed to do so was not a reflection on the power of God, but on the failure to take for themselves what Joshua had given and allotted to each one of them.” (Redpath)

Chapter 12

Verse 1

The kings listed here are the kings that occupied the Promised Land east of the Jordan River and beyond towards the rising sun. The list was given and may not seem so important to us today but it was to the Israelites. These kings occupied the lands that were promised to Abraham in His covenant with God and passed down to the Israelite nation. This list was an essential matter to the Israelite people as it identified the land that belonged to them.

Verses 2-24

The kings defeated by Joshua and the Israelites.

The King of Jericho, Ai, Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon, Gezer, Debir, Geder, Hormah, Arad, Libnah, Adullam, Makkedah, Bethel, Tappuah, Hopher, Aphek, Lasharon, Madon, Hazor, Shimron-meron, Acshaph, Taanach, Megiddo, Kedesh, Jokneam in Carmel, Dor, Goyim, and Tirzah.

It is also to list these kings as it makes it clear that these events actually happened in real time. This was not a fairy tale, this is actual history with specific places and names. It is also history that the Israelite people could always remember, that which God had done for them. *“Sometimes in the course of human experience it is good to sit down and reflect on what has been conquered by the grace of God.”* (Redpath) This done the land truly belonged to the Israelite people. There still was much to do for the individual tribes of the nation to fully possess the land.

Chapter 13

Verse 1

Joshua was now advanced in years. It is said that at this time he was 95 years old. Still, God has more for him to do as all the Promised Land is not yet conquered. This is true for the Christian today. We cannot be satisfied with the measure of that we have accomplished for the Lord and His kingdom business. Until He returns there is much to be done.

For the Israelites there is still land that has not been taken and still pockets of resistance that needs to be subdued. We cannot be ever be satisfied with a partial inheritance, we have been promised the full inheritance and we must work until we have received it.

What the Promised Land was to Israel Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior is to us. We must strive to possess all of Him and to keep on keeping on till we have all of Jesus, till we have grown into the image that He has set before us. There are things we must consider when we feel we are at the end of our work journey. How much of Jesus do we really have? Have we fully received the blessing of leading others to Jesus? Have we prayed fervently enough to have our prayers answered? Do we always meet the needs of our Christian brethren?

Verses 2-7

The continuance of the conquest of the Promised Land will fall upon the tribes to complete. God gives the promise to Joshua and he is to pass it down to the leaders and elders of each tribe.

Each tribe is responsible to possess the land fully that has been allotted to them. God does not do our work for us, God works with us. The Lord expects His people to take responsibility and initiative to complete the task that He has set before us. Not that this is the only way for accomplishment but that those who are involved in the work of God enjoy the blessing of their labors.

Verses 8-13

This section of Scripture describes the lands allotted to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. It was the land of the king of Sihon of the Amorites and the king of Og of Bashan.

The Israelites had not driven out the Geshurites and the Maachathites and they were not displaced by the Israelites and remained in the land they possessed. King David later married a princess from the Geshurites who gave birth to his son Absalom. (2 Samuel 3:3) Absalom eventually returned to Geshur and from there plotted against his father King David. (2 Samuel 13:37-38 2 Samuel 14:23 2 Samuel 14:32) It is probable that the Maachathites came from Maachah which is mentioned in (Genesis 22:24) Maachah was a nephew of Abraham. When Sheba rebelled against King David she fled and may have taken refuge in a city of the Maachathites. (2 Samuel 20:14-15)

Verse 14

The Levite tribe was given the priestly duties as an inheritance, therefore, they were not given any land. They were given certain cities. (Joshua 20-21) Instead of a land inheritance they were given the sacrifices of the people and this became their financial security.

Verse 33

Not only did the Levites receive the sacrifices of the people to God but more than that they received God as their inheritance. It is interesting to note that if there is a tribe that the Christian has a common trait towards it is the Levite tribe. As Christians we are called to be priest as well. (1 Peter 2:5) The Christian also has a special inheritance in God like the Levites. (Ephesians 1:11 Colossians 1:12 1 Peter 1:4)

Inheriting the Land

Is the material world evil? Are spirit, soul and energy the pure good which we are striving on our earthly journey? Will we only be truly spiritual and truly happy when we are finally free from the prison of this earth-bound flesh?

The Bible answers these and singular questions with an emphatic “No!” The universe, including this earth and all its bodily creatures, came perfect and holy from the skilled and expert hand of the loving Creator. (Genesis 1:31) As a result of our sin, this material world needs redeeming, and by God’s grace, it will have its share in God’s redemption at the end time.

One of the ways Scripture affirms this is by a prominent theology of land. All land belongs to God. God evicted the Canaanite peoples from the Promised Land because of their wickedness. He brought Israel into that land because of His promises to the Patriarchs and because He wants the earth to be under human stewards who are attuned to its Maker.

In Ancient Israel, this stewardship was provided through the allotment of a livable portion to each household. Strictly speaking, the allotment of the land, rather than the land itself, was the stewardship trust. The allotment passed down from fathers to son as the main part of most family inheritances. Following these principles and God’s specific instruction, Joshua divided the land among the tribes, and the tribes divided it among the clans, families, and individual households. God’s gift of stewardship over a specific portion of land was the gift of life to each household.

Chapter 14

Verses 1-2

Joshua and Elazar, the High Priest and the fathers of the tribes of Israel came together to supervise the casting of the lots which was directed by the Lord.

The practice of casting lots is seen 70 times in the Old Testament and 7 times in the New Testament. We do not really know what the actual lot is but it is possible that, according to the historian Josephus, that it was the Urim and Thummim that was carried in two pouches of the Breastplate of the Priest. This breastplate is known as the Breastplate of Judgment. Though this is not a good example of casting lots the practice is much like today with the flip of a coin to make a judgment.

This practice is used here in Joshua Chapter 14 but this is not the first time in Israel’s history. God revealed this practice to the Israelite nation in Numbers 25:55, 33:54, 34:13, and 36:2. God allowed the Israelites to cast the lots in order to determine His will in certain given situations. Different offices and functions in the Temple were also settled by the casting of lots. (1 Chronicles 24:5, 25:8-9, and 26:13-14) We also see the practice used in the book of Jonah where the sailors cast lots to determine who God’s wrath was placed upon their ship. (Jonah 1:7) The remaining eleven disciples also cast lots to learn God’s decision on who should replace Judas. (Acts 1:26) The practice also fell upon the secular

world as the Roman soldiers cast lots for the garments of Jesus at the foot of the cross. (Matthew 27:35)

With the New Testament, the new Covenant, we are no longer instructed to cast lots to determine God's will. The Christian now has the indwelling Holy Spirit to council us to know God's will in our life. Thus, there is no use in games of chance to make decisions. The Word of God, the Spirit of God, and prayer are sufficient to discerning God's will.

Verses 3-5

Joseph was given to portions of land through his sons Manasseh and Ephraim. Even though we speak of the twelve tribes of Israel there were thirteen. There were twelve sons of Jacob (Israel) but he received to portions one for each of his sons.

Therefore, there were two and one half tribes on the east side of the Jordan and nine and one half tribes on the west side. The Levites were given no land as they were the Priestly tribe and will have God for their inheritance.

Verses 6-9

Caleb, who is from the tribe of Judah, was one of the twelve spies that were sent out by Moses to scout the Promised Land. It had been forty-five years since that time when Israel was on the threshold of the Promised Land. (Numbers 13:1-25) Caleb and Joshua were the only two spies that came back with a god report. They came back with a report of faith that God had given the Promised Land to the Israelite nation. (Numbers 13:26 Numbers 14:9) The other ten spies believe that if Israel had tried to take the land they would have been destroyed. The people of Israel believed the ten and God caused them to wander in the wilderness for another forty years.

The difference in the reports of Joshua and Caleb was that the ten had measured the giants against their own strength and Joshua and Caleb had measure the giant's strength against the strength of God. God would not allow a generation of unbelief to enter in to the Promise Land so He waited until that generation had passed away. (Numbers 14:26-38) The only ones who were of age that were allowed to enter into the Promised Land was Joshua and Caleb.

For this reason it was fitting that the tribe of Judah be the first to receive their allotment of land on the west side of the Jordan. Also it was fitting that Caleb be the first of the tribe of Judah to receive his inheritance. The Lord God spoke His judgment with these words, ***"Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, because he has followed the LORD fully."*** (Deuteronomy 1:35-36) When Caleb spoke that he had followed the Lord his God it was not an act of pride, he was just repeating what Moses had said to him.

As Christians we should also be bold in asking for what God has promised us. We need not be timid in making theses request. God appreciates this kind of boldness.

Caleb repeats the statement, "but I followed the LORD my God fully." This shows that following the Lord God fully had made a deep impression upon him. Rightly so as it is of great importance to follow God with a complete commitment. The people who achieve the greatest success are the one who have given themselves over completely to following God.

Verses 10-15

Caleb was a strong at the age of 85 as he was when 40 at the first time he had spied out the land of Canaan. Now his age was advanced but his strength had remained and was able to lead in the fight. It was not a fight just against anyone but against the Anakim, the giants that had placed fear in the other ten spies.

Though he is advanced in age, his strength is undiminished. At eighty-five he was out leading the fight, and not against just any foe, but against the Anakim.

Caleb was willing and able to fight. Caleb could have asked for an easier place in the land for an inheritance but he knows the Anakim must be faced and believed that he was the one to face them. Caleb didn't leave the work to someone else even though he could have, he felt it not only his duty but also his desire.

What if all the mighty men of Israel had the heart of Caleb? What if none of the men of Israel had a heart like Caleb? The secret of Caleb's determination is that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. Caleb was totally committed to His God.

Caleb

Caleb stands as an inspiring example of faith in God. He was the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite. (Numbers 32:12) The Kenissites lived in the Negev, the southern desert region of Canaan. (Genesis 15:18-21) Jephunneh apparently married into the tribe of Judah a generation before Israel left Egypt.

Caleb first appears as one of the twelve spies Moses sent out to scout out the land of Canaan. Upon returning, all twelve confirmed the land's magnificence, but ten of the scouts focused on the land's fearsome inhabitants. (Numbers 13:31-33) Only Joshua and Caleb believed that God would enable Israel to conquer the Canaanites, (Numbers 14:6-9) advising that the Israelites immediately take the land. (Numbers 1s:30) Although the people wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua, (Numbers 14:1-4) God protected them and punished the people. (Numbers 14:11-38) God ultimately rewarded Caleb and Joshua for their faithfulness. Among all those who left Egypt, they were the only ones to enter the Promised Land.

After many years in the wilderness, Joshua and Caleb received their personal inheritance in the land. Caleb's faith did not diminish in the intervening forty-five years; his testimony reveals his character and rock solid faith in God. Although Caleb was 85 years old, he was still strong and able to fight. Caleb drove out the Anakites to acquire Hebron. Caleb's city of Hebron, about twenty miles south of Jerusalem, was occupied by giant Anakites

who had terrified the earlier scouts. (Numbers 14:6-15 Numbers 13:28) Hebron later became a Levitical city of refuge. (1 Chronicles 6:55-57)

Caleb looked beyond serious obstacles to God's unbreakable promise that Israel would occupy Canaan. With unabated vigor, he stood ready to conquer the territory Joshua had assigned him. Caleb's staunch confidence in God's reliable promises earned him an honored place among the faithful. Even when outnumbered by enemies, Caleb trusted God, and God richly rewarded him.

Chapter 15

Verses 1-12

The land allotted to the tribe of Judah was described in more detail than for the rest of the tribes of Israel. The description of the land and its borders may seem tedious to us today but the Tribe of Judah it was important.

Verses 13-19

Caleb showed himself to be a great warrior in driving out the children of Anak. Caleb now challenged others in his band to show the same courage. To anyone one who attacks Kirjath Sepher he would give his daughter Achsah to them in marriage. This was Caleb's way of encouraging his followers to do great and bold things as well. In that day this was a good reward to have the hand of a leader's daughter in marriage in exchange for conquering of the city of Kirjath Sepher.

The land they had received was a dry land with little water. Caleb's daughter asked for a blessing imitating the same boldness of her father. She asked for the blessing of the springs of water so they would be able to live on the land that had been given to them.

Verse 63

The city of the Jebusites, Jerusalem, sat on a hill and therefore was an advantage for its defense. The children of Judah were not able to drive them out for this reason. God is faithful and willing to help in our struggles. It is hard to explain why the children of Judah allowed the Jebusites to remain in Jerusalem until the time of King David. (2 Samuel 5:6-10)

Chapter 16

Verses 1-4

To the sons of Joseph the territory was double in size. Manasseh and Ephraim had for their inheritance land stretching over a large portions of the central area in the Promised Land.

Verses 5-10

Not all of the Promised Land was conquered in the campaigns of Joshua and the remaining Canaanites were to be driven out by the individual tribes of the Israelite nation. The failure of the tribes of Israel to do this was typical of all the tribes. Throughout the Promised there remained work to do and battles to be fought and won.

The tribe of Ephraimites compromised and most likely because they wanted to use the Canaanite people in forced labor. Even so this is not a good excuse for their disobedience to the command of God. If the Ephraimites had the power to force the people of Gezer into hard labor, then they certainly had the power to completely defeat them. To add to this certainty is the fact that Joshua had already conquered Gezer. (Joshua 10:33 Joshua 12:12) This may seem as a justifiable compromise but the long term effect was the immoral worship that resulted within the Israelite people. This fault was the foundation for the struggles we see in the days of the Judges.

There may be two reasons that the Israelite people did not fully conquer the Promised Land. One is that they were war weary and wanted peace at all cost. The other reason may be the lure of easy wealth. With the uses of forced labor they would be able to profit much better for their efforts. For these reasons they disobeyed the command of God and allowed the pagan Canaanites to remain in their land. Are we not also guilty in our own way to the commands of God?

Chapter 17

Verses 3-6

Zelophehad did not have any sons but only daughters. It was not the custom to give inheritance to the daughters and this is why in that day it was important for a man to have sons. Because of the importance of the land to remain in the ancestral families this custom was excused and the daughters of Zelophehad inherited their father's land. This decision had already been made by Moses. (Numbers 27:1-11)

Verses 7-10

The failure of Manasseh is of the same reasoning of Ephraim in Joshua 16:10. The Canaanites themselves were willing to remain in the land. What were lacking was the determination of the Israelite people to drive them out. They were much more satisfied to use the Canaanite people as forced labor.

Verses 14-18

The combined tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim were a large tribe in the Israelite nation. They numbered larger than any other single tribe. This was the reason for their complaining as their numbers were large for the land they had received.

Joshua's reply to their complaints was wise. He tells them, "If you are a great people, then go and get the land for yourself; fully occupy what the LORD has given you." These tribes had not taken the land which had been allotted to them. Their land was mountainous and hard to settle and because of this it was hard and dangerous work.

See the difference of their attitude than that of Caleb's in Joshua 14:11-2! They wanted easy land given to them instead of being satisfied with the promise of God and taking what God has allotted to them. This is a good principle for our Christian living today. If we want more than the first thing we must be do is to be faithful with what we have already received.

Chapter 18

Verses 1-3

The base for the Israelite people shifted from Gilgal to Shiloh. Shiloh now became the spiritual and political center of the Israel nation and remained so until the Philistines captured it and took the Ark of the Lord from them. (1 Samuel 4:10, 17)

There remained seven tribes of the Israelite nation that had not yet taken possession of their inheritance. The question becomes why would they not want to possess their land? Why would Joshua need to prod them into taking the land? A possible reason may be that people tend to be comfortable with the situation that they are in. The generation of Israelites had been living in the wilderness for forty years and had never had permanent dwellings before. People sometimes are afraid of something new even if it is for the good.

No matter what the reason was the problem was neglect. They were neglecting to fulfill what God had called them to do, possess the Promised Land.

Chapter 20

Verses 1-3

Now to fulfill what God had commanded Moses to do God also commanded Joshua as well. Joshua was commanded to appoint six cities as a refuge for persons who had not purposefully killed another man. The Family was obligated to avenge the death of a family member. The man who had committed manslaughter could flee to a city of refuge where he would be safe until he was judged.

God is a just God and if one was found guilty of murder then the final responsibility for the punishment fell to the goel. Goel was a Hebrew word which meant the representative of the family of the victim. It would be the responsibility of the goel (avenger of blood) to carry out the proper punishment. Murder was punished by the loss of the murderer's life. This goes back to requirement for capital punishment found in Genesis 9:6. ***"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man."*** Also in God's Law we read, ***"Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death ... So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 'You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.'" (Number 35:31, 33-34)*** I can't but help wonder how long our nation will be stained by the blood of unpunished murders. The Blood of the slain cries out before God, much like Abel's. ***"What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground."*** (Genesis 4:10)

Verse 4

The manslayer would go to the gate of the city of refuge. There the elders would come and hear his case. Accordingly the elders spent much time at the gates of the city of refuge. After hearing the case of the manslayer the elders would allow him into the city where he would stay under their protection. If he left the city he did so at his own peril.

Verse 5

If and when the goel came to the city of refuge the elders could not deliver him over and were obligated to protect him. The reasoning behind this is the sophisticated legal system that the Israelites had. The judgments of the congregation were based upon the intent of the accused and on if there was premeditation.

Verse 6

The manslayer was to stay in the city until he faced trial before the congregation or until the death of the current High Priest. If the manslayer was declared innocent of murder or after the death of the High Priest he could return home to his family and remain protected from the goel.

Verses 7-8

The cities of refuge were well spaced out in the nation of Israel. None were more than a day or two's travel from anywhere in the nation. Also in Scripture it was stated that proper roads were to be built to each of these cities. (Deuteronomy 19:3)

Verse 9

Not only did the Israelites benefit from this law but also strangers that traveled in their nation. The justice of God applies to all without partiality.

In the Bible we see a picture of Jesus as a city of refuge.

- ***“God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.”*** (Psalm 46:1)
- ***“So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.”*** (Hebrews 6:18)

Other points of similarity between the cities of refuge and Jesus.

- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge are within easy reach of the needy person; they were of no use unless someone could get to the place of refuge.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge are open to all, not just the Israelite; no one needs to fear that they would be turned away from their place of refuge in their time of need.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge became a place where the one in need would live; you didn't come to a city of refuge in time of need just to look around.
- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge are the only alternative for the one in need; without this specific protection, they will be destroyed.

- Both Jesus and the cities of refuge provide protection only within their boundaries; to go outside means death.
- With both Jesus and the cities of refuge, full freedom comes with the death of the High Priest.

There is a distinction between the cities of refuge and Jesus which is the cities only helped the innocent. But to Jesus, the guilty can come and find refuge.

Chapter 21

Verses 1-3

According to the word of the Lord the Levite tribe was given no land to call their own. It was as the Lord had instructed Moses, ***“The cities which you shall give to the Levites shall be the six cities of refuge, which you shall give for the manslayer to flee to; and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities.”*** (Numbers 35:6) Each of the other tribes gave cities to the Levites and the common land around them for their cattle. These cities were placed throughout the Promised Land so that the people would have access to each of them. The Levites were the priest and it was their responsibility to teach the Torah, the Law of God, to the people.

It was the responsibility of the Priest to be the intermediary between the people and God. Also the priest were responsible for the duties of the Temple and maintained the sacrifices for the people for the pardoning of their sin against God’s Word. Today Jesus is our High Priest and mediates between us and God. Jesus is also our sin sacrifice in that He died on the cross and shed His blood for the remission of our sin. Jesus is our advocate between us and God.

Therefore, the Levites received no inheritance of land as their service to God was their inheritance.

Verses 4-42

God never intended for there to be a Levite state. The Levite tribe was to be spread out though the whole land of Israel. Each tribe was to have a priestly presence amongst them. In the same way there was never to be a Christian state. Christians today are to be a holy priesthood throughout the world. (1 Peter 2:5 1 Peter 2:9) In that was every nation and every society would have a Christian influence where people could come to know God through Jesus Christ.

There is a significance that the Levites were given their cities last. The Priest were to be servants of the people, not to be served by the people. This is the example of our Lord, Jesus came to minister to the people and not be ministered to by the people. (Mark 10:45)

Verse 43

God had fulfilled His promise to the seed of Abraham. (Genesis 12:7) God had given the Israelite the land and had delivered their enemies over to them. There was now peace throughout the land of Canaan as the Canaanites were in military check. It was the

responsibility for the individual tribes to finish the work and drive out the remaining Canaanites from their land, the land God had promised them. God had provided everything necessary for them to accomplish this but they failed to do so and trouble came to the people of God later because of their disobedience.

Verse 44

The Land of the Israelites was now at rest. There was peace as the Lord had given their enemies over to them. At this point in their history the Jewish nation stopped celebrating the Passover while on the move. (Exodus 12:11) Their days of travel were now over. They now celebrated the Passover at rest reclining at the table. (John 13:23)

Verse 45

God is faithful to His word and everything He had promised had come into being. The Israelite people, however, were not faithful to their side of the covenant. Their failure to fully possess the Promised Land was not because God had failed to keep His promises. God had made adequate provision for the people to have full possession of the land. The failure was on the part of the Israelite nation for not taking full possession and allowing some Canaanite people to remain in their land.

The Lord is also completely faithful to us and has made provision to each of us to have complete victory in our lives. If we have not done so, it is not because God has been unfaithful but because we have.

“In the light of the Cross, is it not true that the enemy has no right to dwell in the land? Is it not true that Satan’s claim to your life was taken from him at Calvary? Is it not true that sin has no right to a foothold in the life of the child of God? Is it not true that Satan has no power in the presence of Omnipotence? Is it not true that by virtue of His blood and His resurrection, Jesus Christ is pledged to destroy the enemy utterly? Is it not true that in the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit there is strength for every temptation, grace for every trial, power to overcome every difficulty?” (Alan Redpath)

Chapter 22

Verses 1-4

Joshua bids farewell to the tribes of the Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh. These are the tribes that possessed the land east of the Jordan River. They had been commissioned to help the other tribes to conquer the lands west of the Jordan. They had now been helping conquer the land for seven years and had been completely obedient to the commands of Moses and Joshua. Even as these three tribes had already taken possession of their inheritance they remained faithful to their brethren as God had commanded them to do. Now Joshua is releasing them to return to their land as the work had been done.

Verses 5-6

Joshua gives his final instruction to these tribes to ***“to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him***

and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." Joshua reminds them to love their Lord. This is a matter of the heart and it is the command that Jesus also said when quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures. (Matthew 22:37 Deuteronomy 6:5) Joshua also tells them to obey His commandments and hold fast to the Lord and serve Him with all their heart and soul.

Looking at the order of this exhortation we see that we are to first hear the Lord. Then we are to love Him and walk with Him in obedience. To not follow this order of the command is to venture into heresy, loving without hearing of legalism, obeying before loving.

Joshua then gives them a blessing before sending them off to their home. It is important for us to bless people before they depart from us.

Joshua may have used Aaron's Benediction to the Israelites. ***"Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.' "So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.***" (Number 6:23-27) This is a demonstration of faith in God from a faithful leader to the Lord's faithful people.

Verses 7-9

The returning tribes to the east of the Jordan left with many riches of plunder from the conquered enemy. Their obedience to God and their brethren had been rewarded. Through our obedience to God the rewards will always exceed the sacrifice. We may be blessed while here in the world but the blessings of His riches in glory will far exceed our finite imaginations. In our service to our Lord we will never be losers but always gainers of proportions beyond are dreams.

The departure of the Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh was most likely an emotional experience. For the past seven years they had fought side by side with their brothers of the Israelite nation. Members of an army develop a unique bond as they fight and lived together. It is more than fighting to defeat an enemy, it is fighting to save the life of your brother. This is the bond that we also can form together with our fellow Christian Soldiers as we fight to good fight for the souls of the lost.

Verse 10

Before the two and a half tribes crossed over the Jordan to return to their land they built an altar. The size of the altar is not significant but it was the meaning of the altar that caused a stir. An Altar is a place of sacrifice and it was disturbing because both the Israelites and the pagans used altars.

Verses 11-12

When the Israelites heard of the altar being built on their side of the river there was no debate of the matter but a quick reaction. They formed together and prepared to make war against the eastern tribes. This was not of Joshua's decision as they did this on their

own accord. It is believed that their reaction was one out of fear. They feared that the eastern tribes were doing this as a sign of allegiance to the pagan gods of the region.

This action on the western tribes is a sign of courage to go against their eastern brothers. They were quickly prepared to wage war in belief that they were fighting against a rebellious brotherhood towards their God.

Verses 13-15

The High Priest Phinehas led the delegation because of his position of authority. He was not only the High Priest of the eastern tribes but also for the western tribes. His purpose was to give correction to the error of the western tribes for building this pagan altar. It was his duty to protect the nation and to drive out all evil. Their readiness to go to war demonstrates how God reacts to un-holiness but their personal meeting with their western brothers shows the character of God's love.

Verses 16-18

God's tabernacle was at Shiloh and now the western tribes had built an altar on the east side of the Jordan River. The sons of Israel thought that this altar was a place of worship and sacrifice to a pagan god. It was the command of God that there was only one place of worship and sacrifice for Israel. As we read in Leviticus, **"Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.'** **"So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them."** (Leviticus 17:8-9) The message here is that we cannot worship God in any manner that we please or in a way that is just pleasing to ourselves. First and always the manner in which we worship God must be pleasing to Him. Our worship of God must be in Spirit and Truth. (John 4:24)

The High Priest, Phinehas, reminded the eastern tribes that Israel had been punished before during the rebellion of Peor as the example. It was at Peor that the men of Israel had relations with the Moabite women. They also worshiped the Moabite gods. God punished them by sending a plague that killed 24,000 of the people. (Numbers 25:1-9) Phinehas knew of this incident well as he was the one who stopped the plague by making a strong stand for the return to righteous behavior in result of their sin. The fear that Phinehas had was that God's anger would reflect upon the whole of the Israelite nation.

Verse 19

Phinehas did not want to see any of the Israelites fall into rebellion unto God. So he said to the eastern tribes that if there was uncleanness in the land of their possession they could remain with them on the eastern side of the Jordan. This was a sacrificial offering as the land available to the eastern tribes would have been smaller if the western tribes remained with them. Still the offer was made in order to keep their brothers from falling into sin against the Lord. This is a fault revealed here on the part of many. We are quick to point out the sin of others but will not help them if it will cost anything.

Verse 20

Phinehas reminds them of the sin of Achan, how he had taken the first fruits of Jericho and caused men to die in battle and his whole family to perish because of his greed.

Verses 21-23

The first appeal of the western tribes was to God because He knows the hearts of men. They knew that the eastern tribes had misunderstood their intentions. When we face the misunderstandings of others our first appeal should be to God as He knows our true intentions. God is our refuge. It is first for us to find the peace of God before justifying ourselves before men.

They also knew that the intentions of those who had come against them were right. They did what we should all do when there is conflict between us and others. We should first try to understand the intention of those who oppose us. If we understand why they may see a situation then we can better resolve the issue.

Verses 24-29

The Jordan River stood between the western and eastern tribes of Israel as a barrier between them. So they explained that the altar was not for worship or sacrifice but as a memorial to show unity between the tribes of Israel. They built it big and strong that it would last into the generations to follow to show that the tribes on both sides of the river worshiped the same God. In this explanation the western tribes made it known to the eastern tribes that they had misunderstood their intentions.

Verses 30-31

The High Priest was pleased with this explanation of the western tribes. If time is taken to understand the position of others many an argument can be averted. When facing adversaries we should gain an understanding of their position before making rash actions. Phinehas knew that the Lord was with them as there had been reached an understanding of each other's intention and peace was now restored between the tribes of Israel. This is the marvel of the passage in Psalm 133:1, ***“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity!”***

Verses 32-34

Phinehas reported back to the congregation of the Israelites and all was now at peace. It is a rightful thing for the people of God to have a peaceful relationship. The tribe of Reuben and Gad named the altar “Witness.” It was given this name as the altar was a witness that the eastern and western tribes of the Israelites stood in unity. Also that the tribes worshiped the same God faithfully.

- We see here in this chapter a method to resolving misunderstandings with our fellows.
- Respond with a concern for God's holiness.
- Respond with the courage to confront in love.
- Respond with an attempt to reconcile before you fight.

- Determine that you are willing to sacrifice to help them; don't confront unless you are willing to help.
- Determine that you will see the situation from the perspective of the other person.
- Determine that you will believe the best of one another.

Chapter 23

Verses 1-3

Joshua, who was well over the age of 100 when he called for the leadership of the people of Israel to gather together, as Joshua was going to give them a farewell address. In Joshua's address he spoke of the things that were dear to his heart and felt that it was important for the people of Israel to hear. It would not have been possible for Joshua to speak to all the people of Israel so he called all the leaders of the nation to come. The elders, heads, judges, and officers. It then would be their responsibility to give his message to the people they represented.

At the start of Joshua's message he first gives God the glory for what has been done for the people. Joshua had been a great military leader for the people of Israel and it would have been easy for him to give himself the glory but his focus was to give God the glory for all that God had accomplished through him.

Verses 4-5

Not all of the land that Joshua had assigned to the tribes of Israel had been fully conquered. There were three reasons that the land was to be conquered. There was an ecological reason, (Exodus 23:29-30) a military reason, (Judges 1:19) and a theological reason. (Judges 2:20-3:4) Through the leadership of Joshua the Israelite military had broken the back of the Canaanite military occupation. Each of the individual tribes was to finish the conquest but that had not happened.

God gives every believer an inheritance. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians, ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”*** (Ephesians 1:3) God has a definite plan for each of us to play a part in receiving that inheritance.

Verse 6

To live in service to God takes courage on our part to be obedient to God's plan. This is not a journey for the faint of heart. Joshua reminds them that they must do all that is written in the Law of Moses. Many will focus only on the parts of God's Word that they like and skip the parts that they dislike. Joshua also reminds them to stay on the path that God has ordained for them. They are not to stray off to the left or the right of the path. Satan does not care to which side we stray, legalism or licentiousness, as long as we stray off the path is the accomplishment that Satan desires.

Verses 7-8

Joshua tells the people not to even mention the name of the false gods of the Canaanites. This is good advice for us as we should not allow the evil thoughts to enter into our minds

that we may be tempted by them. They should keep their minds focused upon their true God. As Christians we are not to become experts on false religions, we are to be an expert on our faith in Jesus Christ.

Verses 9-13

Israel has seen God do mighty things for them as they abided in His commands. Joshua is telling them that if they continue to abide in God's Word He will continue to derive out their enemies before them. Joshua again tells the people that they must love the Lord. In the letter of Jude we read, ***“Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.”*** (Jude 1:21) Keeping ourselves in love with the Lord is a process that takes diligence. There are many things within ourselves that can distract us as well as many things outside of us that can distract as well. We love God by an act of our will. It is a decision we make to love the Lord, even if the feelings do not come first.

God called Israel to be a holy nation. This is the same call to the Christian, we are to be holy. As the Israelites we are to separate ourselves from the rest of the world. We are to be a part from the ungodly influences around us. The Christian strives to be unstained by the world about us. (James 1:27)

If we indulge in the evil practices of the ungodly these acts will become snares to us. We will have opened a door that is very hard to close. Remember the battles you have fought against evil temptations and God has given you the victory. Even so you do not want to have to fight those battles again. What may seem like a small thing in our life is more than a little sin or distraction to the holiness we are to achieve. It is a crack in our armor that can only grow until it becomes a large stone around our neck. *“How often we see that the temptation we have pampered and encouraged and indulged in has become a scourge and a thorn in our side. The compromising Christian is not a happy man. Let the enemy remain in a Christian life, let him have one foothold, and he soon becomes a scourge.”* (Redpath) These little temptations may not seem all that bad at first, but we must see past the outset and see past the outcome. What can start as a little tick can become an instrument of torture.

Verse 14

Joshua now tells the people to search their memories and determine if there was ever a time when God was not faithful to all His promises. God does not operate in circumstance. God declares that which is to happen and by His will it comes to pass. ***“Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’”*** (Isaiah 46:10)

Verses 15-16

Here Joshua repeats the principle of blessings for obedience and cursing for disobedience as set for in Leviticus 26:1-46. The point is that God has been faithful to bless the Israelite people and He will be just as faithful to judge for their disobedience.

The Christian is now under the New Covenant which is better than the Old. (Hebrews 8:6-7) Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law. (Galatians 3:10-14) The difference is that we no longer experience God's faithfulness to curse us for disobedience as Israel knew it. But we do face God's faithfulness to correct us. (Hebrews 12:6) We may also experience a lack of blessing if we do not abide in Jesus.

Chapter 24

Verse 1

It is possible that this farewell address is inclusive of the farewell that Joshua gave in chapter 23:1-16, or it may be another farewell given at a later time as a result of a greater message given to Joshua by the Lord. In the Chapter 23 farewell no specific location was given for that address but here we know that Joshua gathered the leaders at Shechem. Shechem was the location of the first affirmation of God's covenant shortly after they had entered into the land of Canaan.

Verses 2-13

This passage may not be seen as a prophecy but it is. Prophecy is not always a statement of coming events in time. Prophecy is also a spontaneous word from God that is unique and direct. We have a tendency to overstate the meaning of the word prophecy. Prophecy is powerful but often works in a natural way. The word prophecy is defined as an inspired utterance of a prophet, viewed as a revelation of divine will, a prediction of the future, made under divine inspiration, such an inspired message or prediction transmitted orally or in writing, and the vocation or condition of a prophet.

This is also considered a prophecy because Joshua opens with the words, "Thus says the Lord." Before the Lord issues His challenge to the people He reminds them of His faithfulness of the past. Remembering from where we have come in particular to matters concerning our relationship with the Lord is important to us and our remembrance is important to God. The word remember appears 121 times in the Old Testament. Joshua gives the people a brief history lesson that they should remember all the Lord has done for the Israelite people.

It is noticeable that the failures of the Israelite people are missing from the account of the history that Joshua reminds the people of. In Jeremiah we read, **"And their sin I will remember no more."** (Jeremiah 31:34) In the history lesson that Joshua recites to the people their failures are omitted as God does not remember their sin. However, Joshua does remind them that their father Abraham started as an idol worshiper in the land across the Euphrates. Jewish history omits this fact and states that Abraham served the Lord from his youth. That Abraham went into his father's idol shop and smashed all the idols. There is not Biblical Scripture nor is there historical evidence to support this so it is mere speculation.

Verse 14

For the Israelite nation serving the Lord God was not a blind leap of faith. Many of them were children when they were led by Moses out of the land of Egypt. They had seen the parting of the Red Sea, been fed on the manna from heaven, seen the parting of the Jordan River, and witnessed how God had delivered their enemies into their hand in the Promised Land. It would seem unthinkable that the Israelite people would worship any other God.

Yet, living in this world it is difficult to serve the Lord and Him only. The Israelites had received much blessing from God but the blessing can become a stumbling block in remaining faithful. The abundance of the Lord's blessing can become a subtle enemy to the serving of God in a sincere and truthful way. *"The best test of sincerity is not always the open hostility of foes, for this often braces up the energies of combat, while at the same time it makes the path of duty clear. Still less is it at the hour of triumph over our foes, then there is no temptation to rebel. The real test of our faithfulness to God is in most cases is our power to continue steadfastly in one course of conduct when the excitement of conflict is removed, and the enemies with which we have to contend are the insidious allurements of ease or custom amid the common place duties of life."* (Redpath)

Verse 15

The command of Joshua is to choose who they will serve not if they will serve. All will serve something or someone. In the grander picture we will serve either the devil, intentionally or not, or we will serve the Lord. There is no other option, all will serve one or the other.

Joshua provides the wisdom of his choice and in turn the best example for his people. Joshua states, **"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."** It was also the responsibility of Joshua as the priest of his household to ensure that his whole house served the Lord. It is the responsibility of the husband, as the spiritual leader of the household, to represent the whole house before God. (1 Peter 3:7)

Joshua also shows his determination to secure his whole household in the will of God in spite of what others thought, in spite of whatever the pop culture of the people was, as his relationship with the Lord was not based upon the opinion of any man but on the Lord alone. Joshua was also making it clear to the people that he would serve the Lord and serve the Lord alone. There would not be any other gods in the household of Joshua's family.

Verses 16-18

With Joshua revisiting the history and that the majority of the Israelite nation had lived through that history the people readily agreed to serve the Lord God. It would be well also for us to remember and meditate on the abundance of blessings that the Lord has given to us. God being faithful and true to His children how can it be that we at times fall away from our service to Him?

The Disciples of Christ also reflected this same attitude. (John 6:66-69) In this passage of Scripture Peter said, **“You have words of eternal life.”** When we find it hard sometimes to serve the Lord we should remember the alternatives.

Verses 19-21

Many people take serving the Lord too lightly and Joshua is trying to discourage this. The Israelite nation was serving the Lord under a covenant that they had agreed and promised to obey. If they were not faithful in their obedience to that covenant promise then they would be cursed for their disobedience. Our walk of faith with Jesus requires a full commitment to His service. In the Gospel of Luke we read this, **“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? “Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ “Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? “Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.”** (Luke 6:26:32) Jesus wants all to follow Him but our following is not a decision to be taken lightly and our Lord does not want decisions that result in broken commitments.

The people of the Israelite nation reaffirmed their commitment to service the Lord and by Joshua’s word they were fully aware of the consequences of a failed commitment.

Verses 22-28

In the Law of Moses for a statement of truth to be accepted there had to be two witnesses. Joshua had made the people to reconfirm their commitment to serve the Lord and entered them into a covenant. This Covenant required that there be two witnesses. Joshua declared that the witnesses of this covenant was the people and a large stone. By this action the covenant was binding before the Lord. (Deuteronomy 19:15) By the same token it would be well worth the rededication of our own lives to the service of the Lord. In doing so we are re-establishing our own Covenant with the Lord. Our rededication to God, when needed and often is, becomes a powerful and wonderful experience.

Verses 29-31

Joshua, as Joseph, lived to be 110 years old. His body was laid to rest in the land of his inheritance. So powerful was the legacy of Joshua as the leader of the Israelite nation that they remained faithful to the Lord God beyond Joshua and as long as the elders lived which survived him.

Verses 32

Joseph had expressed that he wanted his remains buried in the Promised Land. The Israelites buried the bones of Joseph in Shechem as this was the land that his father Jacob had bought for one hundred pieces of silver. This may after all these years from the time of Joseph seem a moot point but it fulfilled the Scripture in Genesis. ***“Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.”*** (Genesis 50:25) The Lord God does not leave loose ends and His work is always complete. ***“By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.”*** (Hebrews 11:22)

Verse 33

With the death of the High Priest Eleazar the last link of the wilderness generation had passed away. Now the son of Eleazar became the High Priest who was Phineas.

From then till the time of Jesus the generations that followed were each challenged to conquer the Promised Land that God had given to them. Which they did as they placed close heed to the witness of Joshua.