



THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

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INTRODUCTION

We are told in Joshua 24:31, 'Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua and had known all the deeds of the Lord which he had done for Israel.'

From this statement made at the end of Joshua's life, we know that he had a tremendous impact on the lives of God's people. For Joshua to have had this influence says that his character must have been above reproach, and the people respected him as a servant and leader of God.

His leadership abilities didn't come overnight. He went through a period of preparation just like other characters we find within the Scriptures, characters like Joseph, Moses, and even Jesus Himself, and if we can learn anything from this, it's simply this: if we are going to be useful servants of God, we too must be willing to go through a period of preparation.

I believe that Joshua's story begins way before he was even born. A careful reading of the Scriptures reveals that God had always had a plan, and this plan was revealed to Abraham. Remember that God made a promise to Abraham, and a part of that promise was the promise of land to His people, Genesis 12:1-3.

We see here that the promise was that Abraham would have a land, a seed which would become a great nation, which would be a blessing to all nations through him. Remember later that the Jewish race was constituted a nation when they received the law from God at Sinai, Exodus 19:6.

Sin, in effect, what started with God, was promised to Abraham, but it would be Joshua who would bring the land promise to completion and bring the people into that Promised Land.

GOD WAS GETTING JOSHUA READY FOR AN IMPORTANT TASK

Even as a boy, his life experiences were preparing him for the task that God had planned for him. We know he must have been born in Egypt, and he must have been a firstborn son, 1 Chronicles 7:27, and he was a servant of Moses from his youth, Numbers 11:28.

God was preparing him when he went to war with Amalek, Exodus 17:8-16, which incidentally is the first mention of Joshua in the Scriptures. You may remember that the Amalekites were making war against God's people, and they hadn't been a part of the promise made to Abraham. From Exodus 17:16, it seems that they weren't just fighting the Israelites, but God as well.

Moses instructs Joshua to select the men needed to fight and he leads them into battle and so God displays His power to the people, Moses, Aaron, and Hur go up to the top of the hill and as long as Moses held up his hands the Israelites prevailed, so Aaron and Hur stood at his sides holding his hands up until the Israelite's finally won the war, Exodus 17:12-13.

Joshua learned some important lessons that day. He learned that God was on Israel's side, God won't tolerate the rebellion of men against Himself, and finally and probably the biggest lesson he learned was that the power of victory always comes from God.

God was also preparing him when he went up the mountain with Moses, Exodus 24:13-18 / Exodus 24:32. Moses is instructed to return to the mountain whilst leaving behind the elders, Aaron and Hur, but Joshua went up with Moses, Exodus 24:13 / Exodus 32:17.

As we know whilst Moses and Joshua were up the mountain, the people below went ahead and built their golden calf. And once again, Joshua would have learned a few lessons during that time of his life.

He would have experienced the reality of God, he would have experienced the glory of God, and also, he would have learned another important lesson, and that is, the terribleness of sin.

God was also preparing him when he experienced the tabernacle, Exodus 33:9 / Exodus 33:11. We know that Moses had an intimate relationship with God; the Lord talked with Moses, even face to face, but once again Joshua is present during this time, where once again he experienced the glory of God and saw the leadership of God manifested.

God was also preparing him not to be jealous, Numbers 11:24-29. The people have been clamouring about not having meat to eat, and so God informs Moses as to what He's going to do. Moses then goes to tell the people, and then God caused seventy of the elders to prophesy.

However, there were two men who were prophesying in camp, and when Moses learns of it, Joshua wanted them forbidden to prophesy, but Moses told Joshua not to be jealous for his sake.

Once again, he learns that God's glory comes first and no man is to be elevated above his ministry, and he learns that everyone's abilities come from God. Later, he will realise this himself.

God was also preparing him when he became a spy, Numbers 13:1-14:10. The people had been out of Egypt for about fourteen months, and it's now time to enter the Promised Land, and so spies are sent in to check things out. Ten come back and say the land can't be taken, but only Joshua and Caleb say it can be taken. Sadly, the people agree with them and have come to the point where they even want to stone Joshua and Caleb to death.

It is during this time that Joshua's name is changed; originally, it was Hoshea, meaning he saves, but now his name, Joshua, means Jehovah saves. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua.

For nearly forty years, the people will wander in the wilderness, but once again, Joshua had learned a lot of lessons. He learnt that even when the majority is against you, you must take a stand for God, and he learnt that God always keeps his promises.

God was also preparing him when he was ordained, Numbers 26:65 / Numbers 27:18-23. God selected Joshua as the next leader, and he was marked in the presence of the people as God's choice. Just before Moses dies, Moses charges Joshua, Deuteronomy 31:2-8.

Moses tells him that he is not going to cross Jordan, but it is Joshua who will lead them across. A very important order is laid out, which is basically that God must go before, and then the people can go without fear.

And so, with all this preparation put in place by God for Joshua through his life experiences, he is finally ready to do what God needs him to do, Deuteronomy 34:9.

Notice that Joshua made the choice to follow God, which is the exact same choice people have to make today. Joshua is now ready to lead the people; they mourn greatly for Moses, Deuteronomy 34:7-8, but Joshua assumes command and will lead them.

Joshua was a man who lived much of his life in the shadow of the great Moses. Moses was such a towering personality that anyone who came immediately after him would seem small by comparison.

Incidentally, I must say that I find it rather strange that Hebrews 4:8 is the only chapter in the New Testament where we find the name of Joshua. I would have expected to find him mentioned in that great eleventh chapter of Hebrews where the 'heroes of faith' are enrolled. But he is only referred to by inference in Hebrews 11:30, whilst some other lesser-known people are mentioned by name, e.g., Jephthah, Barak, and Gideon.

However, in the life story of Moses, there is a sad chapter of personal failure, for which he paid very dearly, and it was because of this failure that he was not allowed to lead the people into the Promised Land.

He was allowed to see the land from the Eastern side of the Dead Sea, from the Hills of Moab, now in the State of Jordan. But not allowed to enter, or to lead the people into the land, Numbers 20:8-12. That had to be done by someone else and that someone was Joshua.

After looking out over the land towards which he had to lead the people, Moses died, and we read the touching words, ‘and he (God) buried him in the valley, in the Land of Moab; but no man knows the place of his burial to this day’, Deuteronomy 34:5-6.

But how much is generally known about Joshua? I think that the answer to that question would be, ‘very little!’ Summed up, it probably amounts to the following.

1. He was the servant of Moses. Numbers 11:28.
2. He was one of the only two spies who brought back a good report when sent to spy out the land, Numbers 14:6-10.
3. He led the people into Canaan, Joshua 1.
4. He won a great victory at Jericho and defeated some other cities, Joshua 6:1-27.
5. And, we might add to the list something that is usually forgotten, but which is surely significant.

When Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from God, Joshua went with him, at least part of the way, Exodus 24:13. That was a great honour when you remember that Aaron who had been appointed spokesman for Moses when Moses went to speak with Pharaoh, was left below with the people, and God called for Joshua to accompany Moses.

AUTHOR

The Bible Hub says the following.

‘Several passages within the Book of Joshua and other portions of the Old Testament suggest that Joshua, the son of Nun and Moses’ successor, Joshua 1:1, was the primary author for the majority of the text. Joshua 24:26 states: ‘And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God.’ This indicates that Joshua actively wrote and preserved authoritative records.

The first-person perspective regarding military campaigns, including the crossing of the Jordan, Joshua 3:1-17, and the covenant ceremony at Shechem, Joshua 24:1-27, is consistent with someone close to the events-likely Joshua himself.

The overall narrative tone and detailed descriptions of conquests, such as Jericho in Joshua 6:1-27, align with first-hand testimony, reinforcing the position that Joshua had a substantial role in composing and compiling these accounts.’

DATE

Bible To Life says the following.

‘Two dates for the book are ably defended by scholars. Some defend a date parallel with the 19th Dynasty of Egypt (1300s BC). The events, however, may be safely dated in the late 15th and early 14th century BC.

In 1 Kings 6:1, readers are told, ‘in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord.’

This date for the beginning of the temple construction would be the spring of 966 B.C. Counting backward 480 years to the exodus from Egypt and then adding 40 years for the wilderness wandering, one arrives at the date of 1405/6 for entrance into the land. This also fits the 300 years later indicated by Jephthah, Judges 11:26.’

THE HISTORY OF JOSHUA

1. He was born in Egypt, a slave, towards the end of the Egyptian bondage and just about the time that Moses was making up his mind to renounce his position as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.

Remember that at this time, the Hebrews were undergoing great suffering at the hands of the Egyptians. The favour they had been shown by the Hyksos rulers, that is, the kings of the fifteenth dynasty of Egypt, 1650–1550 BC, in the days of Joseph was long past.

The succeeding native Egyptian dynasty feared that the Israelites, who had multiplied greatly in numbers, might join forces with any invader who would come down from the North to the Nile Delta, ‘the Land of Goshen’, which Joseph’s Pharaoh had assigned to Jacob and his family, Exodus 1.

Slaving in the fields, building the store-cities of Pithom and Raamses and being beaten by the task-masters who were set over them, when Moses was born, the Israelites had no reason to love the Egyptians.

God actually told Moses, ‘I have seen the affliction of My People,’ Exodus 3:7. And yet, remarkably enough, when this baby was born, his parents gave him the name ‘Osea’, which means ‘salvation’. So, the parents of Joshua must have been very devout and faithful, and optimistic people.

2. It was in Egypt that the young man grew up, whilst Moses was undergoing his forty years of training and preparation, like a shepherd with the Midianites in the wilderness, Exodus 2:11-25.

This means that when Moses eventually returned to Egypt to demand that Pharaoh should let the people leave, he, Moses, was eighty years old, and Osea was forty years old, Exodus 4:18-31.

3. Osea, to use his first name, must have been a man of outstanding quality, because he became the personal servant and bodyguard of Moses, standing guard outside his tent, Exodus 33:11.

4. About two months after the exodus, Moses appointed him commander of the army when he won a great victory over the Amalekites, Numbers 27:18-23.

Moses later changed the young man’s name to ‘Jeoshua’ by adding a letter (Y) from the name of God, (YHVH), giving his name the meaning, ‘Jehovah is salvation’, Numbers 13:16.

About one thousand years later, in the days of the prophet Nehemiah, we find that the form of the name has become ‘Jeshua,’ Nehemiah 8:17. And the name we use today is ‘Joshua’ is the Greek form of that name. This, then, is the man who is introduced in Hebrews 4.

In Hebrews 4, the writer points out that, although Joshua led the people into the Promised Land, he did not succeed in giving the people rest. The word ‘rest’, in Greek, is ‘katapausis’ is the word he uses, which means ‘to settle down’, and it means that Joshua did not succeed in settling the people in the land, that is, he did not bring them to a settled, stable condition. In fact, the word used is the word used to describe colonising.

There is no doubt that Joshua was a tremendously effective leader and general. In the space of six years, he defeated six Canaanite tribes and thirty-one Canaanite kings and their cities.

But he did not give the people rest! Even after the land had been divided up among the various tribes of Israel, the conquest of the land fell far short of what God had prepared for them.

The reason for this was that they were persistently disobedient, and their enjoyment of rest depended on their obedience to God. Because the people were disobedient, God did not remove all their enemies. He allowed some of them to remain in the land to be thorns in their sides, [Joshua 23:12-13](#).

The Book of Judges records the whole sad story of that period. The book, the seventh in the Old Testament, records seven periods of servitude, when one or other of the tribes had to suffer oppression because of their disobedience.

When Joshua died, there was no one of his calibre to take control. There followed years of lawlessness, and two times we are told that ‘each man did that which was right in his own eyes, [Judges 16:6](#) / [Judges 21:25](#). In a word, the history of Israel in the Promised Land is the story of an incomplete conquest and imperfect rest.

This is what the Hebrews writer claims in Hebrews. [Hebrews 4:4](#) states that Joshua did not give them rest. In fact, this part of the letter is all about rest. The word occurs ten times in thirteen verses, and the assertion made by the writer of what Joshua of old failed to do, our Joshua succeeds in doing.

Let me remind you that Joshua is the Old Testament form of the name Jesus. Joseph was told, ‘You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,’ [Matthew 1:21](#).

God had promised His people rest. The promise is in [Deuteronomy 12:9](#), when you go over the Jordan and live in the land which the Lord your God gives you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you live in safety.’

Joshua failed to give them rest. Of all those whom Moses led out of Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb entered the land.

The others died in the wilderness because of disobedience, [Deuteronomy 1:34-39](#) / [Hebrews 4:6](#).

OUTLINE

Introduction, Joshua 1:1-9
 The Conquest of the Promised Land, Joshua 1:10-12:23
 The Division of the Promised Land, Joshua 13:1-22:34
 Joshua’s Farewell Addresses, Joshua 23:1-24:33

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

‘After the death of Moses, the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be

strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.’ Joshua 1:1-9

JOSHUA INSTALLED AS LEADER

Now Moses is dead, God tells Joshua to take up where Moses left off, [Joshua 1:1](#). Notice that Moses is described as a servant, [Joshua 1:1](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This was, above all other designations, the title of Moses, [Deuteronomy 34:5](#), and it was carried over into the New Dispensation by the author of Hebrews, [Hebrews 3:5](#). The meaning of the term ‘servant’ is very close to that of ‘slave,’ but it was the accepted designation of the highest plenary officers of kings and rulers of the world. Christ himself was prophetically presented in Isaiah as the ‘Suffering Servant’ of God, and Jesus stated that the greatest in God’s kingdom would be the servant of all, [Matthew 23:11](#).’

Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim, [Numbers 13:8](#) / [1 Chronicles 7:27](#). Joshua, whose name was originally Hoshea, [Numbers 13:1-20](#), meaning he saves, but now his name, Joshua, means Jehovah saves. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua.

What Joshua had been prepared for, he must now do, [Joshua 1:2](#) / [Joshua 3:15](#). In many ways, Joshua is like an athlete who must train, but then it comes time for the game.

He has been training for the game, yet he is stricken with fear. The coach must take the fear and turn it into the courage to win. That’s basically what God does here with Joshua: He gives him words of encouragement to win.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The nation had mourned Moses’ death for 30 days, [Deuteronomy 34:8](#). Now God instructed Joshua to prepare to enter the land. The death of any of His servants never frustrates or limits God, though this causes Him sorrow, [Psalms 116:15](#).’

The land gift is assured, [Joshua 1:3](#) / [Genesis 13:17](#) / [Genesis 15:18](#) / [Exodus 23:30-31](#) / [Deuteronomy 11:24](#), the extent is assured, the victory is assured, and his leadership is assured, [Joshua 1:2-5](#).

The Hittites, [Joshua 1:4](#), describe all the Canaanite tribes, [1 Kings 10:29](#) / [2 Kings 7:6](#) / [Ezekiel 16:3](#). Note that some translations don’t have the words, ‘all the land of the Hivites’.

Boling, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The MAJORITY of the ancient manuscripts have the words, and there is no logical reason for rejecting them on the basis of their omission in the Septuagint (LXX) and the Vulgate. A check of the Septuagint (LXX) shows that of the eighteen verses in this chapter, only seven of them, namely, [Joshua 1:3](#) / [Joshua 1:9-10](#) / [Joshua 1:12-14](#) / [Joshua 1:16](#), escaped mutilation in the LXX.’

As God was with Moses, so God will be with Joshua and God will never leave him nor forsake him, [Joshua 1:5](#).

Hess, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This text, [Joshua 1:2-5](#), summarises the book. [Joshua 1:2](#) describes the crossing of the Jordan as found in [Joshua 1:1](#) to [Joshua 5:12](#). [Joshua 1:3](#) outlines the ‘conquest’ of [Joshua 5:13](#) to [Joshua 12:24](#). [Joshua 1:4](#) implies the distribution of the land in [Joshua 13:1](#) to [Joshua 22:34](#). The emphasis on all the days of Joshua’s life in [Joshua 1:5](#) is found at the end of Joshua’s life in the final two chapters of the book. These verses also introduce the character of the LORD God of Israel. He is one of the main actors in the book. Here he reveals himself through his promises on behalf of Joshua and Israel.’

Joshua needs to be strong and courageous because he will lead God's people to inherit the land God swore to their ancestors to give them, [Joshua 1:6](#) / [Joshua 1:9](#) / [Joshua 1:18](#) / [Deuteronomy 31:6](#). As far as God is concerned, Joshua will win and get the land because God said he would.

Notice the five commands which God told Joshua regarding God's Word. He says to him, be careful to do according to all the law, [Joshua 1:7](#), do not turn from it to the right or to the left, [Joshua 1:7](#).

This book of the law shall always be on his lips, [Joshua 1:8](#), he is to meditate on it day and night, [Joshua 1:8](#) / [Psalms 1:2](#) / [Isaiah 59:21](#), and he is to be careful to do according to all that is written in it, [Joshua 1:8](#) / [Deuteronomy 5:32-33](#).

Interestingly, Joshua's leadership is based on God's word, and because it's based on God's Word, Joshua can be strong and courageous, [Joshua 1:9](#) / [Joshua 1:6](#) / [Joshua 1:18](#). He doesn't need to be afraid or be discouraged. Why? Simply because God is with him, [Joshua 1:9](#) / [Romans 8:31](#).

JOSHUA'S CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE

'So, Joshua ordered the officers of the people: "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now, you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.'" But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, "Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you after he said, 'The LORD your God will give you rest by giving you this land.' Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them until the LORD gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they, too, have taken possession of the land the LORD your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise.'" Joshua 1:10-15

Joshua's been encouraged by God and been charged up, so to speak; now he will charge up the others. We must remember that leadership doesn't drive or force people; leadership is at the forefront, leading the way, [Mark 10:43](#).

Notice Joshua ordered the officers of the people to go through the camp, [Joshua 1:10](#).

Unger, in his commentary, says the following.

'This order by Joshua also reveals that Israel, at this time, was no longer a haphazard and disorganised mob like that which came out of Egypt. 'It was a well-disciplined and united army ready to undertake the Lord's battles.'

The officers are to tell all the people to get ready, [Joshua 1:11](#). They tell them when they are going, where they are going and why they are going, [Joshua 1:11](#). Notice that they are told that in three days from now they will cross the Jordan, [Joshua 1:11](#).

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

'The Jordan River wanders about two hundred miles to cover the sixty-five-mile distance from the Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea, dropping an additional six hundred feet below sea level as it goes.'

Joshua speaks to the two and a half tribes and reminds them of the commands of Moses, [Joshua 1:12-13](#). Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh had been promised the land on the other side of Jordan, [Joshua 1:13](#) / [Deuteronomy 3:8-19](#).

They had agreed to Moses' condition, and so they must follow up on their agreement, [Joshua 1:14-15](#). And just in case they forgot, Joshua reminds them that God will give them the land, but they must help their brothers first, and then they can return, [Joshua 1:15](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Not all the warriors from the two and one-half tribes went with (not ‘before,’ [Joshua 1:14](#)) their brethren across the Jordan. Only 40,000 of the 110,000 did, [Joshua 4:13](#) / [Numbers 26:7](#) / [Numbers 26:18](#) / [Numbers 26:34](#). The remainder evidently stayed in Transjordan. We should understand ‘all’, [Joshua 1:14](#), in this limited sense.’

‘Then they answered Joshua, “Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!’ [Joshua 1:16-18](#)

Here we have the people’s response to Joshua’s charge, the people accept the challenge, they say they will do everything commanded and they will go wherever they are sent, [Joshua 1:16](#).

The people promise to obey and said, they obeyed Moses, so they will obey Joshua, [Joshua 1:17](#). Yes, their parents grumbled against Moses but hopefully, they will do better and learn from their parent’s disobedience.

The people pray for Joshua, and their desire is that God would be with Joshua just as He had been with Moses, [Joshua 1:17](#). There is no greater compliment than to know that people are genuinely praying for you.

It’s interesting that they too give the terms and conditions, they say if anyone disobeys, then they will be put to death, [Joshua 1:18](#). But Joshua needs to be a strong and courageous leader, [Joshua 1:18](#) / [Joshua 1:6](#) / [Joshua 1:9](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The pledge of the two and one-half tribes that any rebel against the commandments of Joshua should be put to death was certainly, for a time at least, literally carried out, as witnessed by the stoning of Achan soon after their entry into Canaan, [Joshua 7:25](#).’

CONCLUSION

It’s comforting to know that God understands our human weaknesses but our authority must be based on the word of God, because obedience brings blessings and one of those blessings is that God will never forsake us, [Joshua 1:9](#) / [Hebrews 13:5](#). We simply need to be strong and courageous, [Joshua 1:18](#) / [Joshua 1:6](#) / [Joshua 1:9](#) / [1 Chronicles 28:20](#) / [1 Kings 8:57](#) / [Deuteronomy 4:31](#) / [2 Timothy 1:7](#).

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

As we enter [Joshua 2](#), we read about an immoral woman named Rahab who found grace. She was a prostitute, despite some people who have tried to suggest that Rahab was merely an innkeeper, that was a role filled many times by women. The word translated as ‘harlot’ comes from a root word meaning ‘to nourish’.

However, this particular word can only have this meaning. She is described in the New Testament as a prostitute, [Hebrews 11:31](#) / [James 2:25](#). But the point is she found grace, and she was delivered when the city of Jericho was taken, [Joshua 6:22-25](#).

She later married a prince of Israel, [Matthew 1:4-6](#) / [Ruth 4:18-22](#) / [1 Chronicles 2:11-12](#) / [Numbers 7:1-12](#). She is included in the genealogy of Christ, [Matthew 1:4-6](#). It is interesting to note that there are four women mentioned there.

Tamar was guilty of incest, [Genesis 38:16](#). Rahab, who was a harlot, [Joshua 2:1](#). Ruth, who was a Moabite heathen, [Ruth 1:4](#), and Bathsheba, who was an adulteress, [2 Samuel 11:1-12:9](#). Surely the story of Rahab should give us great joy in realising that God's grace is extended to everyone.

RAHAB TAKES BIG RISKS

‘Then Joshua, son of Nun, secretly sent two spies from Shittim. “Go, look over the land,” he said, “especially Jericho.” So, they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there. The king of Jericho was told, “Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.” So, the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.” But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.” (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) So, the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.’ [Joshua 2:1-](#)

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Joshua sent two young men to spy out the land, [Joshua 6:23](#), but the text says they were sent secretly, [Joshua 2:1](#).

This could be in secret as far as the Canaanites were concerned, or it could mean that the Israelites themselves didn't know, although highly unlikely.

There were only two spies sent, [Joshua 2:1](#), possibly because Joshua remembered his own work as a spy and possibly because twelve men would leave too much chance for a difference of opinion, just like what happened last time.

Remember, only two of those first twelve gave the right report, Joshua and Caleb, [Numbers 13:25-33](#) / [Numbers 14:6-10](#). More likely, though, only two were sent to look over the land, especially Jericho, [Joshua 2:1](#), because it would be easier for two men to get the job done.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘He did not want a recurrence of the Kadesh Barnea rebellion, [Numbers 13-14](#).’

The spies went to the house of a prostitute and stayed there, [Joshua 2:1](#). Remember, they didn't go for immoral purposes but simply because at Rahab's house they could be inconspicuous. We don't know how they met Rahab; maybe they followed her on the street or met her outside the city. The point is that God is at work through people. The king of Jericho must have already been suspicious of the people across the river from them. He himself might have had his own spies, but word has gotten to the king that these spies are nearby, [Joshua 2:2](#), and maybe he knows why, and so Rahab gives the spies some protection.

The king sends word to Rahab to bring the men out, [Joshua 2:3](#), and the text says she had taken the two men and hidden them, [Joshua 2:4](#). She says, yes, the men came to her, but she didn't know where they had come from, [Joshua 2:4](#).

Then she lies about their presence saying at dusk, when it was time to close the city gate they had already left her place, [Joshua 2:5](#), but then she tells the king's messengers to go after them quickly because they may catch up with them, [Joshua 2:5](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Lying is a more serious sin in some circumstances than in others, but it is always a sin, [Exodus 20:16](#) / [Leviticus 19:11](#) / [Deuteronomy 5:20](#).’

The king's men didn't know that the spies were on the roof, hidden under flax, [Joshua 2:6](#). Flax was used for making fine linen, and sometimes it was laid out on the roof to dry.

Why Rahab was engaged in this business we don't know, but the point is that she hid the spies, the king's men believed her story and left pursuing the spies, closing the city gate behind them, [Joshua 2:7](#).

RAHAB'S LIE

Some people justify Rahab's lie on the basis of the culture in which she lived, whilst others justify her lie saying the safety of the spies depended on it. We have to remember that God doesn't overlook sin for His purposes, Rahab's faith is approved, not her sin.

Many people are confused regarding the story of Rahab, who, although she lied when she hid Israel's spies, was described as being 'justified', [James 2:25](#) / [Hebrews 11:31](#). Is this an inconsistency within the Bible or a contradiction?

The story regarding the Canaanite, whose name was Rahab, in no way sanctions lying. There are several factors that must be taken into account in examining the Old Testament record.

1. One would not even know of this event were it not for the fact that it is revealed in the biblical documents.

This is a clue as to the openness and integrity of the sacred account. Scripture makes no effort to conceal the episode. Her weakness is bluntly revealed.

2. Rahab's lie is never condoned anywhere in the Bible text.

The New Testament writers certainly do not claim that she was 'justified' by her misrepresentation of the facts regarding the Hebrew spies.

3. Lying is uniformly condemned throughout the Bible, [Leviticus 19:11](#) / [Proverbs 6:16-19](#) / [Ephesians 4:25](#) / [Revelation 21:8](#).

The fact is, apart from divine revelation, it cannot be proved that lying is wrong.

The case of Rahab is an example of God honouring a person due to her obedient faith, in spite of a personal character flaw. Rahab was a Canaanite, who were an ancient body of pagans that inhabited Palestine at the time Israel entered the land in the fifteenth century before Christ. They were a grossly wicked people, steeped in idolatry and immorality.

They even sacrificed their children on occasion as offerings to their gods, [Leviticus 18:21](#) / [Leviticus 20:2-5](#) / [Deuteronomy 12:30-31](#) / [Deuteronomy 18:9-12](#). By profession, Rahab was a 'prostitute,' and the scriptures make no attempt to hide that unsavoury lifestyle.

Without question, this woman needed considerable refinement. In spite of her sordid background, Rahab had generated in her heart a growing faith in the God of Israel. We should understand that this woman was from a pagan environment.

Her concept of morality and her personal lifestyle, as a prostitute, needed considerable refining. In spite of her sordid background, she had developed a sincere faith in Israel's God, [Joshua 2:9-11](#). This woman had come to believe in the true God and his power to deliver. She was of a different temperament than her heathen neighbours.

Accordingly, when the spies from Israel approached her, she was not 'disobedient,' like the others of Jericho who would perish in their pagan corruption.

Rather, she, through faith in Jehovah, received the spies in peace, [Hebrews 11:31](#), hid them and sent them out another way, [James 2:25](#). It was by these works of faith that she was delivered. Later, she was even incorporated into Christ's genealogy, [Matthew 1:5](#).

Admittedly, she lied in the process of hiding the spies, and that was wrong. But her faith and obedience allowed her to obtain pardon from her blemished history. It is for the former that she is commended, but the latter was never approved.

She was not 'justified' by lying, rather, she was justified by her faith and her works, in spite of her ignorance and or weakness. It would be a gross misuse of this narrative to employ it as proof that there are occasions when it is divinely permissible to lie.

We must not pass from this point without noting that the case of Rahab demonstrates the wonderful harmony between faith and works in the divine plan.

The writer of Hebrews states that Rahab didn't perish, as a result of her faith, [Hebrews 11:31](#). James declares that she was justified by her works, [James 2:25](#). These two requirements are not mutually exclusive from one another.

RAHAB'S FAITH

'Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear, and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.'" Joshua 2:8-11

Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof, [Joshua 2:8](#). She goes ahead and speaks of the fear of her people, [Joshua 2:9](#). Look at how she describes their fear: the terror of you has fallen on us; the inhabitants have melted away, [Joshua 2:9](#).

In other words, everyone is terrified, and there is no courage to be found anywhere, [Exodus 23:27](#) / [Deuteronomy 2:25](#) / [Deuteronomy 11:25](#). Her faith is very humbling indeed; she says first of all, 'I know that the Lord has given you the land', [Joshua 2:9](#).

Remember that Rahab didn't have, what the Israelites had, they had seen the plagues of Egypt, she didn't, [Joshua 2:10](#), they had seen the crossing of the Red Sea, she didn't, they had seen pillars of smoke and fire, she didn't, they had seen the quail and manna, she didn't, so if anyone should have great faith it should be the Israelites.

But Rahab responded in a way which reflected her faith; she speaks of the exploits of which her people were aware, the crossing of the Red Sea and the defeat of Sihon and Og, [Joshua 2:10](#) / [Numbers 21:21-35](#). Her faith is very humbling indeed, she says, 'the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath,' [Joshua 2:11](#).

RAHAB WAS CONCERNED

'Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers, and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death.'" "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land." So, she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. She said to

them, “Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return and then go on your way.” Now the men had said to her, “This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them. But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear.” “Agreed,” she replied. “Let it be as you say.” So, she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window’. Joshua 2:12-21

We see that Rahab makes a plea, not just for herself and her own possessions but for her father’s household, [Joshua 2:12-13](#). She wanted her father, mother, brothers, and sisters to be saved, [Joshua 2:13](#).

But she’s a prostitute, and who would listen to a prostitute? Well, the same could be said of the Samaritan woman, [John 4:28-30](#); people listened to her, and so did Rahab’s family, [Joshua 6:23](#) / [Joshua 6:25](#).

After some bargaining, Rahab makes a deal. She says, if she tells no one about the spies, they will live, [Joshua 2:13](#), and the two spies agree, [Joshua 2:14](#). She let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall, [Joshua 2:15](#).

She tells them to go to the hills so the pursuers will not find them and hide themselves for three days until they return and then go on their way, [Joshua 2:16](#). The two spies tell her that her oath will not be binding until the spies enter the land and they have tied a scarlet cord in the window through which she let them down, [Joshua 2:17-18](#).

The two spies tell her that her oath will not be binding unless she brings her father, mother, brothers and all her family into her house, [Joshua 2:18](#). If any of them go outside her house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads and Israel will not be responsible and as for those who are in the house with her, their blood will be on Israel’s head if a hand is laid on them, [Joshua 2:19](#).

However, if she tells what Israel are doing, Israel will be released from the oath she made them swear, [Joshua 2:20](#). Rahab agrees and says, Let it be as they say, [Joshua 2:21](#). So she sent them away, and they departed, and she tied the scarlet cord in the window, [Joshua 2:21](#). There have been numerous suggestions as to why the scarlet cord.

It would simply contrast with the wall of the city and be easily seen. It simply might have just been there, after all, scarlet was sometimes associated with prostitutes and therefore would go unnoticed by the people of the city, [Revelation 17:3-4](#) / [Jeremiah 4:30](#).

Scarlet was felt by some to be a protection against evil spirits. The early church fathers preached it as being typical of the blood of Jesus to be shed later and the blood sprinkled at the Passover previously. Whatever the reason, it served its purpose.

RAHAB DECLARES GOD, HER GOD

‘When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them. Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river, and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them. They said to Joshua, “The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us.’ Joshua 2:22-24

The spies followed Rahab’s instructions, and they went to the hill country where there would be many caves in which to hide, [Joshua 2:22](#) / [Joshua 2:15-16](#). They remained there long enough for their pursuers to give up on them, [Joshua 2:22-23](#).

The spies returned to Joshua and reported all that had happened to them, and they repeated Rahab’s words, [Joshua 2:23](#). They told Joshua that God had surely given the whole land into Israel’s hands, [Joshua 2:9](#), and all the people were melting in fear because of them, [Joshua 2:24](#) / [Joshua 2:9](#) / [Joshua 2:11](#).

This confirmed what God had promised back in [Joshua 1:2](#) / [Joshua 1:5](#). God used this same kind of proof for Gideon, [Judges 7:13-15](#). In other words, God really would keep His promises.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The report of these spies to Joshua must have been a source of infinite encouragement to the Commander. Up to here, Joshua could have supposed that a military assault would be necessary, but, after this report, he no doubt sought to know the will of God by every means open to him. In these circumstances, God spoke directly to Joshua, [Joshua 3:7](#), with specific instructions on how the conquest was to proceed.’

CONCLUSION

A lot of people struggle with the concept of God’s grace because it’s so vast and almost beyond comprehension, most of the time, we think we do well feeling the guilt of our sin, but we sometimes take that guilt too far and feel that God cannot forgive us because, as we put it, ‘I’ve been too bad.’ Paul knew he had been a sinner, yet he found grace, [1 Corinthians 15:9-10](#) / [Ephesians 3:8](#) / [1 Timothy 1:15-16](#).

We clearly see that God does forgive. Some commentators see four doors of salvation in the Bible. 1. The door of the ark. 2. The door of the Passover. 3. The door of Rahab’s house 4. Jesus as a door, [John 10:9](#). Whether this is true or not, we still see that God forgives.

Rahab also teaches us that we must live for God despite being surrounded by a world of sin, [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#) / [2 Corinthians 6:17](#), but at the same time, we need to be concerned about the salvation of others.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

‘Early in the morning, Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. After three days, the officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits between you and the ark; do not go near it.’ [Joshua 3:1-4](#)

CROSSING DEEP WATERS

Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over, [Joshua 3:1](#). The word ‘Jordan’ means ‘descender,’ and it does, about 1,000 feet from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea and so with that drop and being at flood stage, the water would be moving swiftly. So, Joshua and the people now really do face a great test.

We have already accomplished that Joshua was a real man of action, and on the basis of the report from the spies, they moved from Shittim to the edge of the Jordan, Joshua 3:1, and at least this time around, they are moving in the right direction.

They stayed at the river for three days, Joshua 3:2, and it was probably during this time that the instructions were being passed on to the people. The officers went throughout the camp, giving orders to the people saying when they see the ark of the covenant and the Levitical priests carrying it, they are to move out from their positions and follow it, Joshua 3:3.

Notice the ark is among them, and the people were to follow the ark now, Joshua 3:3, not the cloud which led them before.

Henry, in his commentary, says the following concerning the symbolism of following the ark.

‘Christians should follow their pastors, only as far as the pastors were holding up the Word of God. They (Israel) must follow the priests as far as they carried the ark, but no further, so we must follow our ministers only as they follow Christ.’

Israel will know which way to go when they follow the ark, since they have never been that way before, Joshua 3:4. The ark symbolised the Lord Himself, which was equivalent to saying that the Lord was leading them into Canaan, and it represented God’s character and God’s covenant.

They were to get no closer than two thousand cubits, or about one thousand yards. Joshua 3:4. This reminded them of the holiness of God, and this also allowed the largest number of people to see it, so that they followed it in the right direction.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following, concerning a number of other ‘special occasions’ upon which the priests replaced the Kohathites as bearers of the ark.

1. When they compassed Jericho, Joshua 6:7. 2. When they took it to war against the Philistines, 2 Samuel 15:25. 3. When David sent it back to Jerusalem. 4. When it was taken out of the tabernacle to be deposited in the temple, 1 Kings 8:6-11.’

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The ark of the covenant was a sacred portable chest which, along with its two related items, the mercy seat and cherubim, was the most important sacred object of the Israelites during the wilderness period. It was also known as the ark of the Lord, Joshua 6:11, the ark of God, 1 Samuel 3:3, and the ark of the Testimony, Exodus 25:22.

The ark of the covenant was the only article of furniture in the innermost room, or Holy of Holies, of Moses’ tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple. From between the two cherubim that were on the ark of the Testimony, God spoke to Moses. Once a year, the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, but only with sacrificial blood that he sprinkled on the mercy seat for the atonement of sin.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ARK

The Hebrew word translated as ark is also translated as coffin. In the last verse of the book of Genesis, this word is used of the coffin in which Joseph’s embalmed body was placed after he died in Egypt, Genesis 50:26.

The ark of the covenant was also a ‘coffin,’ or chest two and a half long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits deep or, in inches, about 45 by 27 by 27. The builder of the ark was a man named Bezaleel, [Exodus 37:1](#). The ark was made of acacia wood, the KJV uses the word shittim wood, and it was overlaid with gold. It had four rings of gold through which carrying poles were inserted, [Exodus 37:1-9](#). These poles were never removed from the rings, apparently to show that the ark was a portable sanctuary.

Even when the ark was placed in Solomon’s Temple, the poles stayed in place, and they could be seen from a certain point outside the inner sanctuary, [1 Kings 8:8](#).

The ark had a gold cover known as the ‘mercy seat’, [Exodus 25:17-22](#), because the Israelites believed the ark was God’s throne. The ark had a gold moulding or ‘crown’ surrounding the top edge.

The mercy seat was a slab of pure gold which fit exactly within the crown of the ark, so the mercy-seat could not slide around during transportation. Of one piece with the mercy seat were two angelic statues called cherubim.

They stood at opposite ends of the mercy seat, facing each other with wings outstretched above, and their faces bowed toward the mercy seat. They marked the place where the Lord dwelt as well as the place where the Lord communicated with Moses.

CONTENTS OF THE ARK

Within the ark were the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments, [Exodus 25:16](#) / [Exodus 25:21](#) / [Hebrews 9:4](#), considered to be the basis of the covenant between God and His people, Israel. Thus, the ark was often called the ark of the Testimony.

The golden pot of manna, which God miraculously preserved as a testimony to future generations, [Exodus 16:32-34](#) / [Hebrews 9:4](#), was also deposited in the ark. The third item in the ark was Aaron’s rod that budded to prove that Aaron was God’s chosen, [Numbers 17:1-11](#) / [Hebrews 9:4](#).

While the New Testament states that the ark contained these three items, [Hebrews 9:4](#), the ark must have lost two of them through the years. At the dedication of Solomon’s Temple, Aaron’s rod and the golden pot of manna were gone, [1 Kings 8:9](#).

HISTORY OF THE ARK

The ark was carried by the sons of Levi during the wilderness wanderings, [Deuteronomy 31:9](#). Carried into the Jordan River by the priests, the ark caused the waters to part so Israel could cross on dry ground, [Joshua 3:6-4:18](#). During the conquest of the land of Canaan, the ark was carried at the fall of Jericho, [Joshua 6:4-11](#); later it was deposited at Shiloh, which had become the home of the tabernacle, [Joshua 18:1](#).

Trusting the ‘magic power’ of the ark rather than God, the Israelites took the ark into battle against the Philistines and suffered a crushing defeat, [1 Samuel 4:1-11](#).

The Philistines captured the ark, only to send it back when disaster struck their camp, [1 Samuel 5-6](#). It remained at Kirjath Jearim until David brought it to Jerusalem, [1 Chronicles 13:3-14](#) / [1 Chronicles 15:1-28](#).

Solomon established it in the Holy of Holies of the Temple, which he built. Nothing is known of what became of the ark. It disappeared when Nebuchadnezzar’s armies destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC and was not available when the second and third temples were built.

Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.” Joshua said to the priests, “Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people.” So, they took it up and went ahead of them. And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’” Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the LORD—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap.’ Joshua 3:5-13

Just like Joshua had to be prepared for entering the Promised Land, God now requires His people to be prepared by way of consecration, [Joshua 3:5](#). Notice the people are instructed to consecrate themselves, [Joshua 3:5](#); they aren’t instructed to get their weapons ready. In other words, the people were to get themselves ready spiritually, [Exodus 19:10](#) / [2 Corinthians 7:1](#) / [2 Timothy 2:21](#) / [1 John 3:3](#).

Joshua tells the priests to take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people, and so they took it up and went ahead of them, [Joshua 3:6](#). This implies that God Himself is leading the way. God speaks to Joshua and says that He is going to exalt Joshua, [Joshua 3:7](#). God is going to show the people that just as He had been with Moses, [Joshua 3:7](#), so He will be with Joshua, [Exodus 34:10](#).

Whatever doubts and fears Joshua may have had at the beginning, surely, they were gone now. Joshua isn’t acting on blind faith, oh no, he will be acting on facts, God’s direct revelation to him and notice the priests are to carry the ark into the river, [Joshua 3:8](#) / [1 Chronicles 15:2](#).

So, Joshua speaks to the people come closer and listen to the words of God, [Joshua 3:9](#). He tells them that they will be shown that God is with them and how He is going to drive out the other nations, [Joshua 3:10](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The seven peoples enumerated here were the principal racial divisions of the fragmented city-states of the land of Canaan. Several times in the Old Testament, these lists appear, not always exactly as they are here. Similar lists are given in [Genesis 15:19-21](#) / [Exodus 3:17](#) / [Exodus 23:28](#) / [Deuteronomy 7:1](#).’

And so, the ark would cross over before them, and one man was to be selected from each tribe, [Joshua 3:12](#), and when the feet of those carrying the ark touch the water, it would be stopped, [Joshua 3:13](#).

‘So, when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So, the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.’ Joshua 3:14-17

When the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them, [Joshua 3:14](#). Too many times we go through life thinking this, or that is just too big and therefore, impossible to do. In many ways, I guess, the Jordan River looked like one of those impossible problems to the Israelites. The Jordan River is often pictured as an obstacle to be overcome. In songs and poems, it is the last cold barricade to cross before reaching heaven. To the Christian, it illustrates change. On one side is a desert, a life lived on its own, and on the other side is the Christ-filled life of faith and obedience.

But make no mistake about it, the Jordan was formidable, especially at this time of the year when it was flooding, [Joshua 3:15](#). In this particular area, it would probably be about 100 yards wide. Notice, however, that when the priest’s feet touched the water, a miracle happened.

The water flowing down piled up in a heap, [Joshua 3:15-16](#). This was all the way back to Adam, [Joshua 3:16](#). Some think this city was sixteen miles away, but we can't be sure. But what we do know is that the water passed that spot, and then it was cut off, [Joshua 3:16](#).

Bush, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Duty often calls us to take one step without knowing how we shall take the next; but if brought thus far by the leadings of Providence, and while engaged in his service, we may safely leave the event to him.’

Rivers serve to teach important lessons; even today, children learn about the great rivers of the world, the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Rhine, the Nile, etc. In the Bible, the river most thought of is the Jordan and what we see here is that by crossing the Jordan, the people committed themselves to follow God.

The people crossed over, and the ark went before them. The priests moved to the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, which is another miracle, [Exodus 14:21](#), and all the people passed over, [Joshua 3:17](#). Some commentators suggest there would have been around two million Israelites who crossed the river this day. Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This event bore many similarities to the crossing of the Red Sea, [Joshua 3:13](#) / [Exodus 14](#). In contrast, Moses had divided the waters of the Red Sea with his rod. Joshua divided the waters of the Jordan with the ark that had become the divinely appointed symbol of God's presence since God gave the Mosaic Covenant, [Joshua 3:8](#).’

CONCLUSION

When we read this account, there are several things which happened which are almost always overlooked. Several things happened at this crossing. God was glorified, Joshua was exalted, Israel was encouraged, and the Canaanites were terrorised.

I guess one big lesson is this: at what point did the waters stop flowing? When the priest's feet actually went into the water, [Joshua 3:15](#). So many times we want God to deliver the miracle first, and then we will trust Him, but here we clearly see the opposite.

We must step out in faith first and trust that God will show up to help us with the next step. That's what real faith is, real faith never stands still; it leads us to do something with it.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

‘When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.” Joshua 4:1-3

MEMORIALS

We love our memorials even today, Nelson's Column in London, the Arches of Constantine and Titus in Rome, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, and the Washington Arch in New York City. All these serve as reminders, and so, God wants His people to construct reminders, [Genesis 8:20](#) / [Genesis 12:7](#) / [Genesis 35:7](#).

When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, God instructed Joshua to set up a memorial. [Joshua 4:1](#). He is to ask twelve men, one from each tribe, to return to the centre of the Jordan and each pick up a large stone from where the priests are standing, [Joshua 4:2-3](#). These were to be carried to where they were lodging for the night, and they would serve as a reminder, [Joshua 4:3](#).

“So, Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, and said to them, “Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever.” Joshua 4:4-7

Joshua does what God asks and calls together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, [Joshua 4:4](#). He tells them to go over before the ark of God into the middle of the Jordan and each of them is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, [Joshua 4:5](#).

The stone are to serve as a sign among them, [Joshua 4:6](#). In the future, children would ask about them, [Joshua 4:6](#) / [Joshua 4:21](#), and the fathers could tell them how God had cut off the waters so that the people could cross the Jordan, [Joshua 4:7](#) / [Joshua 4:22-23](#). The stones accomplished two things: firstly, they instructed future generations, [Joshua 4:7](#), and secondly, they instructed the surrounding nations, [Joshua 4:24](#).

“So, the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.” Joshua 4:8-9

The Israelites do as Joshua commanded, [Joshua 4:8](#). They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as God had told Joshua and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down, [Joshua 4:8](#).

Notice that Joshua set up the twelve stones in the centre of Jordan, at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood and they are there to this day, [Joshua 4:9](#).

Hess, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There were apparently two piles of 12 stones each, one at Gilgal, [Joshua 4:3-8](#) / [Joshua 4:20](#), and one in the Jordan Riverbed, [Joshua 4:9](#). Some scholars believe there was only one pile of stones, which the NIV translation also suggests.’

Unger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The stones left in the swirling Jordan to be overwhelmed by its waters are mementoes of Christ's death under judgment in the believer's place. Thus, it is the amazing symbolism of these events, as we found so frequently in Exodus, that bears eloquent and indestructible testimony of the divine nature of this narrative. It is beyond the power of any man who ever lived to have concocted a story like this, even if he had had one hundred prior sources to help him! The hand of the infinite God is in every line of this sacred narrative!’

“Now the priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything the LORD had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua. The people hurried over, and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the LORD and the priests came to the other side while the people watched. The men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over, ready for battle, in front of the Israelites, as Moses had directed them. About forty thousand armed for battle crossed over before the LORD to the plains of Jericho for war.” Joshua 4:10-13

The priests who carried the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything God had commanded Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses had directed Joshua, [Joshua 4:10](#).

The people hurried over and as soon as all of them had crossed, the ark of the LORD and the priests came to the other side while the people watched, [Joshua 4:11](#).

All the people got across, including the two and a half tribes who were ready for battle as Moses directed them. [Joshua 4:12](#). Forty thousand armed men from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over before God to the plains of Jericho for war, [Joshua 4:13](#).

“That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses. Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan.” So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before.” Joshua 4:14-18

That day God exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel and notice the respect they show Joshua, they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses, [Joshua 4:14](#).

God now tells Joshua, to command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan and Joshua then tells the priests to do so, [Joshua 4:15-17](#). The priests brought the ark onto the land, and the water began flowing again as it did before, [Joshua 4:18](#).

“On the tenth day of the first month, the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. He said to the Israelites, “In the future, when your descendants ask their parents, ‘What do these stones mean?’ tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’ For the LORD, your God, dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.” Joshua 4:19-24

On the tenth day of the first month, [Exodus 12:2](#), the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho, [Joshua 4:19](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

“The notation that the crossing took place on the tenth day of the first month, [Joshua 4:19](#), is significant. It was exactly 40 years earlier, to the day, that God instructed Israel to prepare to depart from Egypt by setting apart the paschal lambs, [Exodus 12:3](#).”

Notice that now Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan, [Joshua 4:20](#). In the future, their descendants would ask their parents about them, [Joshua 4:21](#) / [Joshua 4:6](#), and the parents could tell them how God had cut off the waters so that the people could cross the Jordan, [Joshua 4:22-23](#) / [Joshua 4:7](#). The stones accomplished two things: firstly, they instructed future generations, [Joshua 4:7](#), and secondly, they instructed the surrounding nations, [Joshua 4:24](#).

CONCLUSION

Faith is not a blind leap in the dark; Joshua's action was based on God's promises and God's direct revelation of facts. The Christian's faith is based on facts as well, that which God has revealed in His word. Experience or our inner feeling is no substitute for facts, Proverbs 14:12.

Parents need to take the lead in religious instruction, Ephesians 6:4. The memorial stones served as a reminder, but they also provided an opportunity for parents to teach their children.

Sometimes in life, we must face a Jordan; there appears before us what seems an impossible river to cross, but with God's strength, somehow, we can cross that river, Isaiah 43:2.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

'Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear, and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites. At that time, the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again." So, Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth. Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not. The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. So, he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed. Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So, the place has been called Gilgal to this day.' Joshua 5:1-9

CIRCUMCISION

When news got around about how Israel had crossed the Jordan River on dry ground, notice that the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast hearts melted in fear, and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites, Joshua 5:1.

Armerding, in his commentary, says the following.

'From the human standpoint, if ever there was a time to strike at the Canaanites, it was right after the Israelites had gained entrance to the land. Fear had taken hold of the inhabitants of Palestine. But divine plans are not made according to human strategy.'

Just as any modern army must make preparations before going into battle, so must Joshua's army. Back in Joshua 3:5, Joshua instructs the people to consecrate themselves.

They were dedicating themselves to holy use, and it was only then that they could cross the river. Now, further spiritual preparation must take place before the people can fully move ahead to possess the land.

Henry, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The church in the wilderness has now come up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved, and looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. How terrible she was in the eyes of her enemies, and how fair and clear she was in the eyes of her friends.’

Joshua is commanded to make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again, and so Joshua did as God commanded and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth, [Joshua 5:2-3](#) / [Joshua 1:7](#).

Fawver and Overstreet, in their commentary, say the following.

‘Flint knives, [Exodus 4:25](#), are sharpened by chipping away at the edge of the stone, so that clean, sterile stone is exposed, since bacteria and viruses cannot grow in rock. Circumcision was thus performed with an instrument possessing comparable sterility to today’s surgical scalpels. In view of the likelihood of infection following this operation with a contaminated instrument, use of the flint knife was enormously beneficial and therefore commanded by the Ultimate Healer.’

The reason why the Israelites hadn’t been circumcised is that all those who came out of Egypt, all the men of military age, died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt, [Joshua 5:4](#).

All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not, [Joshua 5:5](#). The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died because of disobedience, [Joshua 5:6](#).

God had sworn to them that they wouldn’t see the land He had solemnly promised their ancestors to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey, [Joshua 5:6](#).

It was God who raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised, [Joshua 5:7](#). They were still uncircumcised because they hadn’t been circumcised on the way, [Joshua 5:7](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Why did God wait to command the circumcision of the new generation until now rather than on the plains of Moab? Perhaps He did so because He wanted to bring the people into the land before enforcing this aspect of the Law. This is consistent with God’s dealings with humankind. He first gives and then asks, [Romans 12:1](#).’

When all the males of fighting age had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed, [Joshua 5:8](#). God tells Joshua, today He has rolled away the reproach of Egypt from them, [Exodus 32:12](#) / [Numbers 14:13-16](#) / [Deuteronomy 9:28](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:27](#), and so, the place has been called Gilgal to this day, [Joshua 5:9](#).

No male child in Israel could miss this constant reminder that he was different from male children who were not Israelites. No adult male would ever be able to forget God’s covenant. No wife in Israel would be able to forget.

Circumcision was the sign of God’s covenant with Abraham, [Genesis 17:10](#); it was to have a spiritual meaning, [Deuteronomy 10:16](#) / [Deuteronomy 30:6](#) / [Jeremiah 4:4](#) / [Jeremiah 9:26](#), and it served as a constant spiritual reminder.

Unfortunately, many today try to make baptism like circumcision and say that it is a sign of our salvation, we are baptised to show that we have been saved. That would be fine, except that the Bible nowhere makes that comparison.

Baptism is given for a purpose, in order to be saved, [Mark 16:16](#) / [Acts 2:38](#) / [Romans 6:1-4](#) / [Acts 22:16](#) / [Galatians 3:27](#) / [Colossians 2:11-13](#) / [Colossians 3:1-6](#) / [1 Peter 3:21](#). The only sign or seal that we are given is that of the Holy Spirit, [2 Corinthians 1:22](#) / [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) / [Ephesians 4:30](#).

PASSOVER AT GILGAL

‘On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.’ Joshua 5:10

The writer tells us that the people celebrated the Passover, [Joshua 5:10](#) / [Exodus 12:43-51](#). Without circumcision, one was excluded from the Passover, [Exodus 12:44](#) / [Exodus 12:48](#).

This is the third Passover recorded in the Bible; the first was in anticipation of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, [Exodus 12:1-20](#). The second was at Sinai just before the people broke camp for Canaan, [Numbers 9:5](#). The Lord’s Supper marks for us a type of deliverance today. In Christ’s death, we are delivered from the bondage of sin. In Christ’s death, we are delivered from the bondage of death. We remember this in the Lord’s Supper until He comes again, [1 Corinthians 11](#) / [1 Corinthians 5:7](#).

‘The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.’ Joshua 5:11-12

The day after the Passover, the people ate of the fruit of the land, [Joshua 5:11](#) / [Numbers 33:3](#). Many years earlier, the people had tasted of the fruit of the land, [Numbers 13:25-33](#), but they didn’t have the faith to go in and possess it. Here, the people have a foretaste of what they will enjoy. They ate unleavened bread and roasted grain, [Joshua 5:11](#) / [Leviticus 23:7](#) / [Leviticus 23:11](#) / [Leviticus 23:14](#).

Remember, at this time, the manna ceased, [Joshua 5:12](#). God had sustained them during this time miraculously, [Exodus 16:35](#), but now the people will eat of the land they are about to possess, [Joshua 5:12](#). In such a simple daily routine, they take the first step toward possession.

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER

‘Now, when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, “Are you for us or for our enemies?” “Neither,” he replied, “but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence and asked him, “What message does my Lord have for his servant?” The commander of the LORD’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.’ Joshua 5:13-15

Joshua was out surveying the city, [Joshua 5:13](#), but what was he doing? Was he praying? Was he saying, ‘God, what are we going to do’? Was he meditating? Was he checking out the enemies’ defences? Whatever Joshua was doing, we know he had a close encounter of the divine kind.

He saw a man standing with a sword drawn, [Joshua 5:13](#), and so, naturally, Joshua asked him whose side he was on, [Joshua 5:13](#). The man wasn’t on anyone’s side, but Joshua got quite an answer; he was the commander of the host of the Lord, [Joshua 5:14](#) / [2 Kings 6:8-17](#) / [Matthew 26:53](#).

At this, Joshua falls prostrate, asking what message there might be, [Joshua 5:14](#). Note the KJV says that Joshua bowed down and worshipped him. The message is that Joshua is to take off his sandals because he is standing on holy ground, and Joshua did as he was commanded, [Joshua 5:15](#).

This was the same message given to Moses at the burning bush, [Exodus 3:5](#). Joshua’s leadership is further confirmed, and God’s presence is confirmed, [Numbers 22:31](#).

Hess, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The strange confrontation of [Joshua 5:13-15](#) resembles that between Jacob and the man of God at Peniel, [Genesis 32:22-32](#), and that between Moses and the burning bush, [Exodus 3:1](#) to [Exodus 4:17](#). In each case, the human protagonist encounters a divine messenger before facing a life-and-death conflict.’

WHO IS THIS MAN?

He is the commander of the LORD's army, and most commentators suggest this is an appearance of the preincarnate Christ. We know he is a divine being because if he had been any created being, he would have stopped Joshua from worshipping him, as did the angel for the apostle John, [Revelation 19:10](#) / [Revelation 22:8-9](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The appearance was that of God manifested in the Person of His Word. Hence, the command of [Joshua 5:15](#). That the appearance was not in a vision merely is clear from the fact that Joshua ‘went unto Him’ and addressed Him.’

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It has been a very general opinion, both among the ancients and moderns, that the person mentioned here was no other than the Lord Jesus in that form which, in the fullness of time, he was actually to assume for the redemption of man. That the appearance was supernatural is agreed on all hands, and as the name Jehovah is given him, [Joshua 6:2](#), and he received from Joshua Divine adoration, we may presume that no created angel is intended.’

In other places, Christ is described as the angel of the LORD, [Genesis 16:7](#) / [Exodus 3:2](#) / [Exodus 23:20-21](#).

Remember that the word ‘angel’ in Hebrew is ‘malak’, and it simply means messenger. This is a Christophany, which suggests that this is a preincarnate appearance of Christ, [Genesis 12:7](#).

Haynes Jr, in his commentary, says the following.

‘A study of these passages reveals that the Angel of the Lord appeared in human form, [Genesis 18:2](#) / [Genesis 22:1-18](#) / [Hebrews 13:2](#), and performed normal human functions, [Genesis 32:24](#) / [Numbers 22:23](#) / [Numbers 22:31](#), yet he was an awe-inspiring figure, [Genesis 32:30](#) / [Judges 6:22](#) / [Judges 13:22](#), exhibiting divine attributes and prerogatives including predicting the future, [Genesis 16:10-12](#), forgiving sin, [Exodus 23:21](#), and receiving worship, [Exodus 3:5](#) / [Judges 13:9-20](#).’

CONCLUSION

God expects us to be His people inwardly as well as outwardly, and we must catch the true significance of the Lord's Supper and the reminder it serves to us, [Mark 14:22-25](#) / [Luke 22:18-20](#) / [1 Corinthians 11:23-25](#). We ought always to remember that we have God present with us for whatever battles we might face, [Deuteronomy 20:4](#) / [Hebrews 13:5](#).

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

All games have their rules for competition, and to play ‘by the rules’ is the only legitimate way to win. Not playing by the rules brings disqualification or forfeiture. So, in order for us to win in life, we must ‘play’ by God's rules.

Joshua and the Israelites had to realise that they could achieve victory over Jericho only by doing just exactly what God had said, no matter how crazy it seemed.

THE CITY OF JERICHO

The city was strategically located to control the ancient trade route from the east to Palestine. It only covered seven or eight acres, and it was the central fortified city of the Canaanites.

Originally, it was thought Jericho had two walls, one six feet thick and the other twelve feet thick, separated by a space of fifteen feet. Later discoveries seem to indicate the walls were made of mud-brick and have eroded away, leaving no real evidence of where they were.

It controlled the ascent into the mountains, the top of which was controlled by Ai. For Israel to move in and take control of Canaan, these two cities would have to be taken first.

It must be seen, though, that the victory here belongs completely to God as the old kid's songs say, 'Joshua 'fit' the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho, Joshua 'fit' the battle of Jericho, And the walls came a-tumblin' down!' However, Joshua didn't fight this battle at all.

God told Joshua that He had given Jericho into their hand; in other words, the victory was won without ever 'firing a shot.' All battles of life, all of our Jerichos, can be won if we fight according to God's instructions.

GOD'S WAYS ARE ALWAYS A WINNING FORMULA

'Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out, and no one came in. Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse, and the army will go up, everyone straight in'. Joshua 6:1-5

There is fear inside Jericho, a real fear that it would fall, and so the city was tightly shut, Joshua 6:1. The people had heard of the earlier events of Israel's leaving Egypt and their journey toward Canaan.

No doubt they had heard of the crossing of the Jordan, and now they have locked the city up tight because their fear was so great that no one went out and no one came in, Joshua 6:1.

Jericho will fall, God says, He has delivered Jericho into Israel's hand, Joshua 6:2. The tense of the Hebrew word for 'give' KJV, is what is called prophetic perfect, describing a future action as if it were already accomplished, and it was going to forcibly fall.

Joshua wasn't free to choose his own battle plan; if Joshua made all the plans, he would be the one considered to bring about the victory. If the army attacked and won, they would be tempted to trust in themselves, and so this has to be done God's way.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'Unlike Moses, who at the burning bush argued at length with the Lord about His plan, Exodus 3:11 to Exodus 4:17, Joshua obeyed without question.'

God laid out the plans; the men of war would circle the city once for six days, [Joshua 6:3](#), and seven priests carrying seven trumpets would march before the ark of the covenant, [Joshua 6:4](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Evidently, the whole Israelite nation did not march around the walls of Jericho. Only warriors and priests circled the city, [Joshua 6:3-4](#) / [Joshua 6:6](#) / [Joshua 6:9](#). The ‘people’ referred to in the context, [Joshua 6:7](#) / [Joshua 6:16](#), were these people, not all the Israelites. Probably representatives of the tribes participated in this march rather than all the soldiers of Israel. The line of march was as follows: soldiers, priests, the ark, and more soldiers, [Joshua 6:6-9](#) / [Joshua 6:13](#).’

Notice the text says the seven priests would carry seven ram’s horns, [Joshua 6:4](#).

Plummer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘There is no mention of ram’s horns in the original Hebrew.’

On the seventh day, they would march around seven times and when the trumpets were blown, [1 Corinthians 15:51-52](#) / [1 Thessalonians 4:13-17](#), the people would shout and the wall would fall, [Joshua 6:5](#).

In this, we see several sevens, the number seven often symbolised, completeness or perfection, [Exodus 24:16](#) / [2 Kings 3:9](#) / [Job 2:11-13](#) / [Ezekiel 3:15](#). This, it might be said, was the perfect plan for complete victory. The trumpets were jubilee trumpets used in connection with Israel’s solemn feasts to proclaim the presence of God, [Leviticus 25:9](#).

THE RECIPE FOR THE VICTORY

‘So, Joshua son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant of the LORD and have seven priests carry trumpets in front of it.” And he ordered the army, “Advance! March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD.” When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD’s covenant followed them. The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time, the trumpets were sounding. But Joshua had commanded the army, “Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!” So, he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the army returned to camp and spent the night there. Joshua got up early the next morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them, and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. So, on the second day, they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the army, “Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared because she hid the spies we sent. But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise, you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury.” When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so, everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, and donkeys.’ [Joshua 6:6-21](#)

Joshua passed the instructions on to the people, and the seven priests carrying seven ram’s horns were to go before the ark of the covenant, [Joshua 6:6](#). Joshua ordered the army to advance!

March around the city, with an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD, [Joshua 6:7](#). The people followed the instructions, and so, the seven priests blew the seven trumpets, and the soldiers marched before the ark and all the time the trumpets were sounding, [Joshua 6:8-9](#).

Joshua had commanded the army, not to give a war cry, or raise their voices, or say a word until the day he tells them to shout and then they should shout, [Joshua 6:10](#). After circling the city, they returned to camp, [Joshua 6:11](#). This went on for six days, [Joshua 5:12-14](#), but on the seventh-day things were different.

The people marched around seven times, [Joshua 6:15](#), instead of six, and when they finished the seventh time, Joshua told them, shout, for the Lord has given them the city, [Joshua 6:16](#). The city is under God's control, [Joshua 6:17](#), and Rahab, and all with her shall live, [Joshua 6:17](#).

Joshua commands them to keep away from the devoted things, so that they won't bring about their own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise, they will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it, [Joshua 6:18](#).

All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to God and must go into His treasury, [Joshua 6:19](#). The people shouted, and the walls fell, [Joshua 6:20](#), and the soldiers then went up into the city and destroyed everything, [Joshua 6:20-21](#).

They might have had some problems following the instructions; perhaps there were some wanderers who were saying by the end of the second day, nothing is happening, why are we doing this? The activists were probably saying, Let's just go up and attack the city.

Perhaps some questioned the strategy; what was to prevent the men from firing arrows at them from the wall? Or what was to prevent the men from coming out of the city and attacking Israel? But God's plan would work best. It tested the faith of Joshua, it tested the obedience of Israel, and it struck fear into the hearts of the people of Jericho.

The city is now God's, and they devoted the things to God, [Joshua 6:21](#) / [Joshua 6:18-19](#). This could be a type of firstfruits; the firstfruits were those that ripened first, these being looked upon as an earnest of the coming harvest. However, more than just the first fruits were dedicated to the Lord. Firstfruits could be offered by the nation, [Leviticus 23:10](#) / [Leviticus 23:17](#), or by individuals, [Exodus 23:19](#) / [Deuteronomy 26:1-11](#). Jericho was dedicated to the Lord in anticipation of receiving the whole land.

MORAL DIFFICULTIES

Some have argued that the account of Jericho's destruction places the Bible in a morally compromising position. It is alleged that the slaughter of the city's women and children, [Joshua 6:21](#), is the wrong reflection upon a benevolent God.

These objections simply are not valid. While the extermination of an entire population may seem excessively cruel when viewed as an isolated incident, other factors shed light on that situation.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

The destruction of Canaan's heathen tribes was justified in view of their utter abandonment of moral restraint. The ancient evidence indicates that they practised child sacrifice, religious prostitution, sodomy, etc. A people can reach a state of such deep depravity that the justice of God demands punishment.

Their destruction had not been rendered impetuously. Jehovah had been patient with them for more than five hundred years; finally, their cup of iniquity ran over, and the time for judgment came, [Genesis 15:16](#). This type of punishment was implemented on a rather limited basis, principally, upon the tribes of Palestine.

This was due to the fact that God had chosen Canaan as the place where the Hebrew nation was to be cultivated in view of the coming Messiah, the Saviour of the world. It was an example of moral surgery for the benefit of all mankind.

And it is still true that these Old Testament narratives illustrate the fact that innocent people, e.g., infants, frequently have to suffer the consequences of evil acts which others generate, due to the kind of world in which we live.

This should motivate us to want a better state wherein wickedness does not exist. And so, though such cases as the fall of Jericho may entail some difficulty, the problem is not impossible to understand why it happened.

AFTER THE VICTORY

‘Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, “Go into the prostitute’s house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her.” So, the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers, and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel. Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD’s house. But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day. At that time, Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: “Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: “At the cost of his firstborn son, he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest, he will set up its gates.” So, the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.’ Joshua 6:22-27

Joshua tells the two men who had spied out the land, [Joshua 2:1](#), to go into the prostitute’s house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her, [Joshua 6:22](#) / [Joshua 2:12-14](#).

So the young men brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers, and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel, [Joshua 6:23](#).

The city was burned, and everything was completely destroyed, [Deuteronomy 20:16-18](#). The items of silver, gold, bronze, and iron were put into the treasury of the Lord, [Joshua 6:24](#) / [Joshua 6:21](#) / [Joshua 6:18-19](#) / [Numbers 31:54](#). However, Joshua spared Rahab and her family, [Joshua 6:25](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Rahab and her family still being alive at this time.

‘This is one proof that the book was written in the time to which it is commonly referred; and it certainly might have been done by the hand of Joshua himself. Marginal notes, which may have crept into the text later, to superficial observers, give it the appearance of having been written after the days of Joshua.’

The promise to Rahab was kept, [Joshua 2:12-14](#), and everyone with Rahab was brought outside the city safely, [Joshua 6:25](#). Her faith resulted in her own salvation as well as that of several other people, and so she dwelt with the children of Israel.

But notice the city was cursed; no one was to ever rebuild the walls of the city again, [Joshua 6:26](#). This did not occur until the time of King Ahab, about five hundred years later.

Hiel the Bethelite tried to rebuild the walls, but as Joshua’s curse says, his two sons died as a result, [Joshua 6:26](#) / [1 Kings 16:34](#). Note that Joshua’s fame spread through the land, [Joshua 6:27](#).

THE PROPHETIC CURSE

Following the destruction of Jericho, Joshua pronounced an imprecation upon the ancient city. Some writers have assumed that this prophecy failed, for not many years after Jericho's fall, one reads of people living in Jericho, Joshua 18:21 / Judges 3:13 / 2 Samuel 10:5.

In fact, it is specifically called 'the city of Jericho.' And yet, there is no record of the 'curse' being fulfilled in those times proximate to Joshua's invasion. Several factors need to be noted. First, the prophetic curse did not state that Jericho was never to be inhabited. It does not even indicate that the city was never to be rebuilt.

The divine prediction was simply this: the man who attempts to rebuild Jericho, as a fortress city, 'set up the gates of it,' Joshua 6:26, would be the recipient of the divine curse. The fact of the matter is, five and a half centuries later, during the reign of Ahab of Israel, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho as a fortress.

And, precisely as Joshua had declared, he lost his oldest son when the foundation was laid, and his youngest son when the gates of the city were set up, 1 Kings 16:34. The prophecy was fulfilled, and so there is no discrepancy in the Bible record.

CONCLUSION

God expects us to do our part, God expects reverent obedience, Exodus 19:5 / Deuteronomy 11:1 / John 15:9 / 2 Corinthians 10:5 / Ephesians 6:1-3, and God expects us to be patient, Nahum 1:3 / Ephesians 4:2 / Colossians 3:13-15 / 2 Peter 3:9.

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION

'But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So, the LORD's anger burned against Israel. Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So, the men went up and spied out Ai. When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there." So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this, the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water. Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. And Joshua said, "Alas, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! Pardon your servant, Lord. What can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this, and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?" Joshua 7:1-9

ACHAN'S SIN

There's a new channel in the US which is famous for using this phrase, 'The thrill of victory, the agony of defeat.' Truly, victory is thrilling and truly, defeat can be agony.

I will never forget watching Scotland lose once again to qualify for the football World Cup. The television cameras focused on the supporters and then zoomed in on the manager, Walter Smith, who was still sitting in the dugout in dismay, crying. How he must have felt the agony of defeat in his life at that time.

This chapter begins with the word 'but', [Joshua 7:1](#), for it stands in contrast to the previous chapter. [Joshua 6](#) tells of the overwhelming victory of Israel over Jericho.

Surely the people were excited beyond their wildest dreams over the events of the day. Recounts of the events of the day probably lasted well into the night. It was the thrill of victory. This chapter tells just the opposite, expecting Ai to be a pushover, they are routed, and Israel experiences the agony of defeat.

Jericho had been put under a ban, meaning it and everything in it was dedicated to the Lord, [Joshua 6:17-19](#). To take anything was a sin and would bring trouble to the camp, [Joshua 6:18](#).

However, Achan acted unfaithfully and disobediently; we don't really know why, but whatever his reasons, he sinned, [Joshua 7:1](#). He took some of the things under the ban and as a result, the Lord became angry with Israel, [Joshua 7:1](#).

We usually tend to think of God's love, mercy, and grace; we don't like to think of God as being intolerant of sin. True, God is patient, [2 Peter 3:9](#), but what is equally true is the fact that one day God is going to punish evildoers, [2 Thessalonians 1:6-9](#).

As with Jericho, Joshua sent spies to Ai, and the spies returned with great confidence, [Joshua 7:2](#). Don't let all the people go, only two thousand or three thousand men will do, they said, [Joshua 7:3](#), in other words, 'it's a pushover.' But sadly, things did not go as planned; Israel wound up fleeing with thirty-six Israelites dead, [Joshua 7:4-5](#). The people's hearts melted, [Joshua 7:5](#). Remember this was what was said of the Canaanites in Jericho! [Joshua 5:1](#). Davis and Whitcomb, in their commentary, say the following.

'It is strange indeed that the description which was originally used for the Canaanites about to be defeated now describes the heart of the Israelites.'

There were two reasons for this: firstly, because of Achan's sin and secondly, because of Israel's pride; notice they didn't consult God. And so, Joshua is stunned at what takes place; he and the elders tore their clothes and put dust on their heads, [Joshua 7:6](#), which was a sign of mourning.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

'Joshua had fallen on his face once before, when he confronted the divine messenger, [Joshua 5:14](#). That was in the humility of worship. This is in the humility of defeat and shame.'

Then Joshua God asked three questions, why did you deliver us from Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites? [Joshua 7:7](#). What can I say since Israel ran from their enemy? [Joshua 7:8](#).

What are you going to do for your great name? [Joshua 7:9](#). His questions to God are similar to Moses' questions to God, [Exodus 32:11-12](#) / [Numbers 14:13](#) / [Deuteronomy 9:28](#).

Unfortunately, we see Joshua slip here; he used the thinking of the ten spies, [Numbers 14:2-3](#), and forgot what he had told the people concerning the things under the ban and why trouble would come, [Joshua 6:17-19](#).

'The LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction. "Go, consecrate the people. Tell them,

‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them. “In the morning, present yourselves, tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the LORD chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the LORD chooses shall come forward man by man.

Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done an outrageous thing in Israel!’ Joshua 7:10-15

God’s answer to Joshua is abrupt. He tells him to stand up. Why have you fallen on your face? [Joshua 7:10](#). Joshua comes crying to the Lord, wanting to know why the people were routed, [Joshua 7:7-9](#), and so God tells Joshua he ought to know why, the people have sinned, [Joshua 7:11](#).

They’ve broken the covenant, [Joshua 7:11](#). They’ve taken things under the ban, [Joshua 7:11](#), and they’ve concealed the stolen goods, [Joshua 7:11](#). As a result of the sin, God will not be with them in their present condition, [Joshua 7:12](#). They must destroy whatever among them is devoted to destruction, [Joshua 7:12](#).

The people are to consecrate themselves again, [Joshua 7:13](#), the things under the ban are to be removed, [Joshua 7:13](#), and they are to pass by until the sinner is found, [Joshua 7:14-15](#).

God tells Joshua that in the morning, they are to present themselves tribe by tribe. The tribe God chooses will come forward, clan by clan, and the clan God chooses will come forward, family by family, and the family God chooses will come forward, man by man, [Joshua 7:14](#).

Whoever is caught with the devoted things will be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him, [Joshua 7:15](#). The reason for such a punishment is that they have violated God’s covenant and have done an outrageous thing in Israel, [Joshua 7:15](#).

THE ELIMINATION PROCESS

‘Early the next morning, Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was chosen. The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites were chosen. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was chosen. Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan, son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen. Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and honour him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.” Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath. So, Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and spread them out before the LORD. Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today.” Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. Over Achan, they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore, that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.’ Joshua 7:16-26

Early the next morning, Joshua did as God asked all the tribes to pass by, and Judah was chosen, [Joshua 7:16](#). All the clans of Judah pass by, and the Zerahites are chosen, [Joshua 7:17](#). All the Zerahites pass by, and Zimri is chosen, [Joshua 7:17](#). Zimri’s household is brought by, and Achan is chosen, [Joshua 7:18](#).

Joshua pleads with Achan to confess what he had done, [Joshua 7:19](#), and eventually Achan, after all of this, tells of his sin, [Joshua 7:20](#). He saw, he coveted, and he took, [Joshua 7:21](#). This is reminiscent of Eve, [Genesis 3:6](#), and David, [2 Samuel 11:2-4](#) / [2 Samuel 11:8](#) / [1 John 2:16](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Israel resorted to the casting of lots when no eyewitness could testify against a criminal, [1 Samuel 14:41-42](#) / [Jonah 1:7](#) / [Proverbs 18:18](#). Probably the high priest used the Urim and Thummim to identify Achan, [Numbers 27:21](#).’ Joshua sends messengers to Achan’s tent, and sure enough, the things are there, [Joshua 7:22](#). The messengers bring all the found items to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before God, [Joshua 7:23](#). Josephus, in his writings, says the following.

‘One shekel weighed about four ounces, and the mantle from Shinar that Achan took was a royal garment woven entirely of gold.’

Then Achan and all his family and all his possessions are carried outside the camp to a valley of Achor, [Joshua 7:24](#). Joshua asks him why he has brought this trouble on them. God will bring trouble on him today, [Joshua 7:25](#). Notice that all of Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them, [Joshua 7:25](#) / [Leviticus 20:14](#) / [Deuteronomy 13:15-16](#). A great heap of stones was raised over Achan, serving as a reminder to the people, [Joshua 7:26](#). The good news is God turned from His fierce anger, [Joshua 7:26](#). A memorial in the Jordan stands as a reminder of the great things God has done for the Israelites, [Joshua 4:19-24](#), and now we have another reminder to the Israelites that God won’t tolerate sin, [Joshua 7:26](#).

CONCLUSION

Achan’s biggest issue was covetousness, [Joshua 7:21](#), and it cost him and his family’s lives. Instead of lusting after God, he lusted over things. As Christians, we should not be controlled by covetousness, [Hebrews 13:5](#), but simply be content with what God has given us, [Philippians 4:12](#). He blesses us every day with everything we need for that day, [Lamentations 3:22-23](#) / [Matthew 6:33](#). Achan thought that he could get away with his sin and thought no one saw him, but how wrong he was because God sees all, [Genesis 4:10](#) / [Genesis 16:13](#) / [Proverbs 28:13](#).

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

‘Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city.” Joshua 8:1-2

GETTING THINGS RIGHT AT AI

Joshua is told not to fear or be discouraged, [Joshua 8:1](#), and this is not the first time God has said this, [Deuteronomy 1:21](#), when the spies are sent out, [Deuteronomy 31:8](#), when Moses passed the leadership to Joshua, [Joshua 1:9](#), when God spoke to Joshua.

Joshua is told to take the whole army, [Joshua 8:1](#), which is in contrast to what the spies had thought, [Joshua 7:3-4](#). This is God's instructions, and so the victory is assured, [Joshua 8:1](#). Israel is going to Ai and its king, as they did to Jericho and its king, [Joshua 8:2](#) / [Joshua 6:1-21](#). This time, however, they can have the booty, [Joshua 8:2](#).

“So, Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night with these orders: ‘Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don’t go very far from it. All of you be on the alert. I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them. They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, ‘They are running away from us as they did before.’ So, when we flee from them, you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The LORD your God will give it into your hand. When you have taken the city, set it on fire. Do what the LORD has commanded. See to it; you have my orders.” “Then Joshua sent them off, and they went to the place of ambush and lay in wait between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai—but Joshua spent that night with the people.” [Joshua 8:3-9](#)

Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai and notice he chooses thirty-thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out, [Joshua 8:3](#). He commands them to set an ambush behind the city but don’t go very far from it and they must remain on alert, [Joshua 8:4](#).

Joshua and those with him would come toward the city and the men of Ai would come out against them, when they did Joshua and his men would run, [Joshua 8:5](#).

They will pursue Joshua and his men until they have lured Ai’s army away from the city, for they will say, they are running away from us as they did before, [Joshua 8:6](#) / [Joshua 7:4](#).

So when Israel flees from them, Israel is to rise up from ambush and take the city, [Joshua 8:6-7](#). Joshua reminds his men that God will give it into their hands, [Joshua 8:7](#).

When Israel have taken the city, they are to set fire to it, [Joshua 8:8](#). Israel must do what God has commanded and they must see to it, they have Joshua’s orders, [Joshua 8:8](#).

Joshua sent the men off and they went to the place of ambush and lay in wait between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai and notice that but Joshua spent that night with the people, [Joshua 8:9](#).

Boling, in his commentary, says the following about the words ‘that night’, [Joshua 8:9](#).

‘That night means the night previously mentioned in [Joshua 8:3](#). This is the first of two nights. During this first night, the men who were in the ambush were sent on ahead so as to be already in a concealed position when the main force arrived the next day. There is NO contradiction between [Joshua 8:9](#) and [Joshua 8:13](#); they refer to TWO successive nights. The first night, Joshua spent with the main force; the next night, he was in the valley.’

“Early the next morning, Joshua mustered his army, and he and the leaders of Israel marched before them to Ai. The entire force that was with him marched up and approached the city and arrived in front of it. They set up camp north of Ai, with the valley between them and the city. Joshua had taken about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. So, the soldiers took up their positions—with the main camp to the north of the city and the ambush to the west of it. That night Joshua went into the valley.” [Joshua 8:10-13](#)

Joshua now gets his army together and notice that he and the leaders of Israel took the lead, [Joshua 8:10](#). They headed to Ai, approached the city, and arrived at the front of it, [Joshua 8:11](#). They set up camp north of Ai, with the valley between them and the city, [Joshua 8:11](#).

With five thousand men, Joshua set up the ambush, [Joshua 8:12](#). The soldiers take up their positions with the main camp to the north of the city and the ambush to the west of it and notice that Joshua went into the valley, [Joshua 8:13](#). Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Out of the 40,000 Israelite soldiers, Joshua chose 30,000 for this battle. Of these, he sent 5,000 to hide in ambush west of the town. The remaining 25,000, double the population of Ai, Joshua 8:25, approached Ai from the north.’

“When the king of Ai saw this, he and all the men of the city hurried out early in the morning to meet Israel in battle at a certain place overlooking the Arabah. But he did not know that an ambush had been set against him behind the city. Joshua and all Israel let themselves be driven back before them, and they fled toward the wilderness. All the men of Ai were called to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city. Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who did not go after Israel. They left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel.” Joshua 8:14-17

God’s plan is now coming into effect, as the king of Ai sees what is happening and so he and his army come out to fight Israel at a certain place overlooking Arabah, Joshua 8:14.

The king had no idea they were walking into an ambush, Joshua 8:14. Joshua and all Israel intentionally allowed themselves to be driven back and fled toward the wilderness, Joshua 8:15 / Joshua 8:5.

As predicted, all the men of Ai chased after Israel and pursued Joshua and were lured away from the city, Joshua 8:16 / Joshua 8:6. No man remained in Ai or Bethel, and they left the city open and went in pursuit of Israel, just as God said would happen, Joshua 8:17.

“Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Hold out toward Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for into your hand I will deliver the city.” So, Joshua held out toward the city the javelin that was in his hand. As soon as he did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward. They entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire.” Joshua 8:18-19

God now tells Joshua to hold out toward Ai the javelin that is in his hand, for into his hand God will deliver the city, and Joshua obeyed His command, Joshua 8:18. When Joshua did this, the men in the ambush rose quickly from their position and rushed forward and they entered the city and captured it and quickly set it on fire, Joshua 8:19 / Joshua 8:7-8.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Stretching out his javelin, Joshua 8:18, was Joshua’s prearranged signal to his men in ambush to attack. It symbolised that victory came from the Lord, Exodus 14:16 / Exodus 17:8-12.’

“The men of Ai looked back and saw the smoke of the city rising up into the sky, but they had no chance to escape in any direction; the Israelites who had been fleeing toward the wilderness had turned back against their pursuers. For when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that smoke was going up from it, they turned around and attacked the men of Ai. Those in the ambush also came out of the city against them, so that they were caught in the middle, with Israelites on both sides. Israel cut them down, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives. But they took the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.” Joshua 8:20-23

Despite seeing the smoke from the city, Ai’s men had nowhere to go, they were trapped, Joshua 8:20. And now Israel who were pretending to run away turned towards the Ai army, Joshua 8:20. When Joshua and his men saw that the smoke from the city and the ambush was successful, they turn and fight against the army of Ai, Joshua 8:21.

Those in the ambush also came out of the city against Israel; however, they were stuck in the middle, and so Israel killed them all, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives, Joshua 8:22. And notice they took the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua, Joshua 8:23.

“When Israel had finished killing all the men of Ai in the fields and in the wilderness where they had chased them, and when every one of them had been put to the sword, all the Israelites returned to Ai and killed those who were in it. Twelve thousand men and women fell that day—all the people of Ai. For Joshua, did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai. But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua.” Joshua 8:24-27

After the battle, Israel returned to Ai and killed everyone who remained, [Joshua 8:24](#), a total of twelve thousand men and women, [Joshua 8:25](#). This whole time, Joshua didn't draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai, [Joshua 8:26](#) / [Joshua 8:18](#).

Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as God had earlier instructed Joshua, [Joshua 8:27](#) / [Joshua 8:2](#). God's plan worked beautifully; the city was completely burned, the people were utterly destroyed, and the booty was eagerly enjoyed.

“So, Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day. He impaled the body of the king of Ai on a pole and left it there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take the body from the pole and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day.”
Joshua 8:28-29

Joshua burns Ai and makes it into a permanent heap of ruins, [Joshua 8:28](#). Joshua obeys God's earlier command, [Joshua 8:2](#), and impales the body of the king of Ai on a pole and leaves it there until evening, [Joshua 8:29](#) / [Joshua 6:21](#).

At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take the body from the pole and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate, [Joshua 8:29](#) / [Numbers 25:4](#) / [Deuteronomy 21:22-23](#), and once again, another memorial was built as a reminder, [Joshua 8:29](#) / [Joshua 7:26](#).

THE COVENANT RENEWED AT MOUNT EBAL

“Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings. There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses. All the Israelites, with their elders, officials, and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing the Levitical priests who carried it. Both the foreigners living among them and the native-born were there. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel.” Joshua 8:30-33

Joshua built an altar to the Lord on Mount Ebal as Moses, the servant of God, had commanded the Israelites, [Joshua 8:30-31](#). He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, [Deuteronomy 27:5](#), an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used, [Joshua 8:31](#).

On it they offered to God burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings, [Joshua 8:31](#) / [Deuteronomy 27:5-6](#). In the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote a copy of the law of Moses, [Joshua 8:32](#).

All the Israelites, with their elders, officials, and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant, facing the Levitical priests who carried it, [Joshua 8:33](#).

Both the foreigners living among them and the native-born were there, [Joshua 8:33](#). Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel, [Joshua 8:33](#).

“Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them.” Joshua 8:34-35

Joshua reading the Law, including the blessings and the curses to the people, including the women, children, and foreigners, [Joshua 8:34-35](#), must have taken some time, but once again, the Israelites have no excuse for not knowing what God's will is.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘What a glorious event this whole extravaganza must have been to the people of Israel, having come at last to inherit the ancient promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their formal acceptance here of their duties under the covenant was perhaps the grandest moment in the whole history of the Chosen People.’

CONCLUSION

Time and time again, we are reminded of the importance of not only reading God’s laws but hearing His laws, and like Israel, because we now have the complete revelation of God in the form of the Bible, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 / Jude 3, we too have no excuse for not knowing His will for us, 2 Peter 1:3.

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION

‘Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—the kings in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)—they came together to wage war against Joshua and Israel. However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and mouldy. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the Israelites, “We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us.” The Israelites said to the Hivites, “But perhaps you live near us, so how can we make a treaty with you?” “We are your servants,” they said to Joshua. But Joshua asked, “Who are you and where do you come from?” They answered: “Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the LORD your God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroath. And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, ‘Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; make a treaty with us.”’ This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and mouldy it is. And these wineskins that we filled were new, but see how cracked they are. And our clothes and sandals are worn out by the very long journey.” The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD. Then Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath.’ Joshua 9:1-15

THE GIBEONITE DECEPTION

Sometimes Satan attacks us when we least expect it; the same occurs to Israel. They had gotten themselves realigned with God and had taken Ai, and following the defeat of Ai, the people went on a type of spiritual pilgrimage.

Joshua built an altar at Mount Ebal, and sacrifices were offered, with half the people on Mount Gerizim and half on Mount Ebal; all the words of the law were read to the people, Joshua 8:30-35. With this law, fresh on their minds,

they still fell into the trap of the Gibeonites' deception. Though the people stumbled, God still turned it into a blessing.

News of Israel's victories was spreading quickly; the news had gotten to Canaan before Israel arrived, and also the news of the victories over Jericho and Ai travelled quickly, [Joshua 9:1](#).

It seems that some kings decide to join together, [Joshua 9:2](#), which is interesting because normally these kings would have been warring against each other, but here, they feel a common threat.

Henry, in his commentary, says the following.

'Oh that Israel (the Church) would learn this of the Canaanites, to sacrifice private interests to the public welfare, and to lay aside all animosities among themselves, that they may cordially unite against the common enemies of God's Kingdom among men.'

Evidently, this was not just an opportunity to fight against an invading army, but to defeat God as well. And so, the Gibeonites try something different; maybe, the Gibeonites had somehow gained knowledge of Israel's law, [Joshua 9:3](#).

Cities outside Canaan could be offered terms of peace, [Deuteronomy 20:10-12](#), and cities inside Canaan were to be utterly destroyed, [Exodus 23:31-33](#). Maybe, the Gibeonites felt that it would do no good, no matter how large the army, to fight against these people called Israelites, but whatever their reasoning, 'they acted craftily.'

This was their plan; they gathered up worn-out sacks and wineskins, [Joshua 9:4](#); they put on worn-out clothes and sandals, and they gathered up crumbly old bread, [Joshua 9:5](#).

Their story would be that they had come from a far country and wanted to make peace, [Joshua 9:6](#), and so, their plan was carried out. They came to Joshua at Gilgal, [Joshua 9:6](#), Joshua and the people are at first sceptical, [Joshua 9:7-8](#), but the Gibeonites lay it on thick, they say they have come from a very far country, [Joshua 9:9](#).

They say they have heard of the fame of God, what He did in Egypt, what He did to the Amorite kings, [Joshua 9:9-10](#). Notice, neither Jericho nor Ai is mentioned, which would have betrayed them. They say that because of this, their people have sent them to make a covenant of peace with them, [Joshua 9:11](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'Here the Gibeonites were confronted with the crucial question regarding their actual identity. The artful manner of their skilful deception in the answers they gave is truly a marvel. They felt themselves obliged to give a detailed answer, and they did it very artfully with a mixture of truth, falsehood, and hypocrisy.'

They show the evidence to back up their story: the dry and mouldy bread, cracked wineskins, and worn-out clothes and sandals, [Joshua 9:12-13](#). Their plan worked, and the men of Israel looked at their provisions, [Joshua 9:14](#).

Boing, in his commentary, says the following.

'The men mentioned here were the princes of Israel, the leaders of the people. Their eating of the provisions of the Gibeonites was not a casual thing at all, because this seems to refer to the meal that was a part of the treaty-making process in those days.'

Notice the men of Israel didn't consult God again, just like they didn't when they first went to take Ai. The people had their Urim and Thummim, [Exodus 28:30](#) / [Leviticus 8:8](#) / [Numbers 27:21](#) / [Deuteronomy 33:8](#) / [1 Samuel 28:6](#) / [Ezra 2:63](#) / [Nehemiah 7:65](#), and they could have gone directly to the high priest and gotten an answer, [Numbers 27:18-21](#), and so, Joshua made a covenant with them to let them live, [Joshua 9:15](#).

'Three days after they made the treaty with the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they were neighbours, living near them. So, the Israelites set out and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath Jearim. But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the assembly had sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. The whole assembly grumbled against the leaders, but all the leaders answered, "We have

given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now. This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, so that God's wrath will not fall on us for breaking the oath we swore to them." They continued, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly." So, the leaders' promise to them was kept. Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said, "Why did you deceive us by saying, 'We live a long way from you,' while actually you live near us? You are now under a curse: You will never be released from service as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God." They answered Joshua, "Your servants were clearly told how the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So, we feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever seems good and right to you." So Joshua saved them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them. That day, he made the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers for the assembly, to provide for the needs of the altar of the LORD at the place the LORD would choose. And that is what they are to this day.' Joshua 9:16-27

Three days later, the deception is discovered, the Gibeonites are found to be neighbours, and their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim, [Joshua 9:16-17](#). Israel didn't strike them because the oath had been made in the name of the Lord, [Joshua 9:18](#).

Once again, Israel sinned in making the covenant, but to have broken it would have compounded the sin. Several hundred years later, in the time of David, God sent a famine on the land because Saul had broken this covenant, [2 Samuel 21:1](#) / [Psalm 15:1](#) / [Psalm 15:4](#). Notice that Israel now grumbled against the leaders, [Joshua 9:18](#).

Henry, in his commentary, says the following concerning why they grumbled.

'The Israelites desired the prey, or booty, that they would receive from the slaughter of the Gibeonites, being much more "jealous for their profits than for fulfilling God's Word.'

The leaders say, they have given the Gibeonites our oath by the God of Israel, and they cannot touch them now, [Joshua 9:19](#). And so they come up with a plan which is to allow them to live, so that God's wrath will not fall on them for breaking the oath they swore to them, [Joshua 9:20](#).

They say let them live but let them be woodcutters and water carriers in the service of the whole assembly and so, leaders' promise to them was kept, [Joshua 9:21](#).

Cook, in his commentary, says the following.

'This was considered the lowest class of work in ancient societies. The curse of Noah, [Genesis 9:25](#), on the children of Ham was thus fulfilled to the letter in the case of these Hivites.'

Joshua calls for an explanation and asks why they deceived the Israelites, [Joshua 9:22](#), and then pronounced a curse on them, [Joshua 9:23](#). The curse was that they would forever be slaves; their work was to be cutting wood and drawing water, [Joshua 9:23](#).

The Gibeonites explained that they knew of the commandment given to Moses and that they feared for their lives, [Joshua 9:24](#). However, the Israelites could do with them as they saw fit, [Joshua 9:25](#), and so, Joshua let them be, and the Gibeonites did become servants, [Joshua 9:26-27](#).

Though in all of this the men of Gibeon were deceptive, yet in all of their future associations with God's people, they will be blessed, [Psalms 84:4](#). Their work was on behalf of the worship of God, [Joshua 9:27](#), and in the next chapter we will see that it was for the Gibeonites that God performed the incredible miracle of the battle of Beth-Horon, [Joshua 10:7-15](#).

One of their cities was given to the line of Aaron, [Joshua 21:17](#). David put the tabernacle in Gibeon, [1 Chronicles 21:29-30](#), and one of David's mighty men was a Gibeonite, [1 Chronicles 12:4](#).

When Solomon ascended the throne, he offered burnt offerings at Gibeon, [1 Kings 3:4](#). Solomon had his vision at Gibeon, [1 Kings 3:5-15](#). In the time of Zerubbabel, a list of the Gibeonites was included in the genealogies of those returning from captivity, [Ezra 2:43](#) / [Ezra 8:20](#) / [Nehemiah 7:25](#).

Some who claimed to be Jews, but whose names were not found in the registry, were not allowed to be a part of the Jewish nation. In the time of Nehemiah, the Gibeonites were among those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah 3:7.

CONCLUSION

The Gibeonites weren't the first people to resort to deception to secure their safety and God's blessings. Jacob did this with his brother to ensure the blessing reserved for Esau, Genesis 27:35. I guess we could say that Israel's inclusion in God's covenant began with deception, just as these Gibeonites did.

Although the Gibeonites would receive a blessing from God, we must remember Israel had made this covenant before the Lord, and they had to honour their agreement with the Gibeonites, Joshua 9:18-19. Sadly, in later years, they had to live with the consequences of their mistake, 2 Samuel 21:1-14.

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION

'Now Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had taken Ai and totally destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and that the people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace with Israel and had become their allies. He and his people were very much alarmed at this, because Gibeon was an important city, like one of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were good fighters. So Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem, appealed to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish and Debir king of Eglon. "Come up and help me attack Gibeon," he said, "because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites. Then the five kings of the Amorites—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon—joined forces. They moved up with all their troops and took up positions against Gibeon and attacked it." Joshua 10:1-5

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'This king of Jerusalem, unlike his famous predecessor, Melchizedek, the king of Salem, **Genesis 14:18** (Salem here being understood as an earlier name for Jerusalem), was an evil man. And like every wicked man, he was utterly blind to the presence and purpose of God, which promulgated the invasion of Canaan. Notice that Adoni-Zedek did not fear God, but only Joshua. He failed to see that Joshua was not his primary enemy, but that God Himself was the Person who would drive the wicked Canaanites out of Palestine, and that Joshua was only God's INSTRUMENT in that operation.'

Adoni-Zedek, the king of Jerusalem, is quite disturbed because he knows Ai has been utterly destroyed, just as Jericho was, **Joshua 10:1**, and he also knew that the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel, **Joshua 10:1**.

Gibeon was one of the royal cities, and Gibeon had many mighty men, **Joshua 10:2**. Therefore, in all of this, he greatly feared Joshua, **Joshua 10:2**, and he then sent word to four other kings to come up and fight against Gibeon, **Joshua 10:3-5**.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'Hoham was situated in the mountains, southward of Jerusalem, from which it was about thirty miles distant. It fell to the tribe of Judah. There were two cities of Piram named, one belonging to the tribe of Issachar, **Joshua 21:29**, which

is mentioned here fell to the tribe of Judah, **Joshua 15:35**; it is supposed to have been about eighteen miles distant from Jerusalem.’

Clarke, in his commentary, continues and says the following.

Japhia is celebrated in Scripture, in that city Amaziah was slain by conspirators, **2 Kings 14:19**. It was besieged by Sennacherib, **2 Kings 18:14 / 2 Kings 18:17**, and without effect by the king of Assyria, as we learn from **Isaiah 37:8**, it was also besieged by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, see **Jeremiah 34:7**, it also fell to the lot of Judah, **Joshua 15:39**. Where Debir was situated is very uncertain but we learn from **Joshua 15:39**, that it fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah.’ Unger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘When Israel entered Canaan (about 1400 B.C.), there were more than 25 of these city-states (like the ones mentioned in this chapter), but by 1390 B.C., Israel had swallowed up many of them. The Tel El-Amarna letters reveal that by 1375 B.C., there remained only four main independent states.’

“The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: “Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined forces against us.” So, Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his entire army, including all the best fighting men. The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.” Joshua 10:6-8

Now the people of Gibeon are disturbed, and they send for Joshua for help, and they plead, as servants, to be saved, **Joshua 10:6**. Joshua responds immediately to their plea, **Joshua 10:7**; this time, he remembered to consult God. God tells him not to be afraid of them because He has given them into Israel’s hand, and He tells Joshua that not one of them will be able to withstand Israel, **Joshua 10:8**.

“After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise. The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon. Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.” Joshua 10:9-11

After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise, **Joshua 10:9**. The Lord confused them before Israel, and so there was a great slaughter, **Joshua 10:10**.

Notice that as they fled on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, **Joshua 15:35-41**, the Lord performed two miracles to aid Israel. Firstly, He sent large hailstones, **Joshua 10:11**. As a result of this, more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

Unger, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Joshua chased them down the steep descent between Beth-Horon the Upper (altitude of 2,022 feet) to Beth-Horon the Lower (altitude of 1,210 feet). On that terrible descent, the Lord sent that disastrous storm of darkness and hail, killing more by the hail than Israel slew by the sword.’

Henry, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The attackers of Gibeon had affronted the true God and robbed him of his honour by worshipping the host of heaven, giving that worship to the creature, which is due to the Creator only, and now the host of heaven fights against them, and that part of the creation which they had idolised is at war against them!’

THE SUN STANDS STILL

“On the day, the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: “Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.” So, the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel! Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.’ Joshua 10:12-15

On that same day, God gave the Amorites over to Israel, and Joshua said to God in the presence of Israel sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon, **Joshua 10:12**.

Here is the second miracle: God caused the sun to stand still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar, **Joshua 10:13**. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day, **Joshua 10:13**.

Some people might question this miracle, but why can't the one who created the sun and the moon, **Genesis 1:16**, not be able to stop it in its tracks for a whole day? I read somewhere something interesting about this, whether it's true or not, I don't know, but it is interesting to say the least.

Apparently, Mr Harold Hill, President of the Curtis Engine Company in Baltimore, Maryland and a consultant in the space program, says the following.

‘They were checking the position of the sun, moon, and planets out in space, where they would be 100 years and 1000 years from now. They ran the computer measurement back and forth over the centuries, and it came to a halt.

They found there is a day missing in space in elapsed time, and after scratching their heads, they couldn't come up with an answer. Finally, a Christian man on the team said, ‘You know, one time I was in Sunday School, and they talked about the sun standing still.’

While they didn't believe him, they didn't have an answer either, so they said, ‘Show us,’ and so he took them to this event in the Book of Joshua. The astronauts and scientists said, ‘There is the missing day.’

They checked the computers going back to the time it was written and found it was close, but not close enough. The elapsed time that was missing back in Joshua's day was 23 hours and 20 minutes, not a whole day. They read the end of **Joshua 10:13**, and pointed out that the sun stopped for ‘about a full day.’

As the Christian employee thought about it, he remembered somewhere in the Bible where it said the sun went backwards. The scientists told him he was out of his mind, but they got out the Bible again and read the words in **2 Kings 20**, which told of the following story.

Hezekiah, on his deathbed, was visited by the prophet Isaiah, who told him that he was not going to die. Hezekiah asked for a sign as proof. Isaiah said in **2 Kings 20:9-10**, “This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: Shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or shall it go back ten steps?” “It is a simple matter for the shadow to go forward ten steps,” said Hezekiah. “Rather, have it go back ten steps,” Isaiah spoke to the Lord, and the Lord brought the shadow ten degrees backwards!’

Guess what! Ten degrees is exactly 40 minutes. Twenty-three hours and 20 minutes in Joshua, plus 40 minutes in **2 Kings**, make the missing day in the universe.’

So not only does the Bible agree that this miracle actually happened, but if this story is true, then even scientists also have to believe it because they have no other explanation.

We are told that there has never been a day like it before or since, a day when God listened to a human being, which was proof that God was fighting for Israel, **Joshua 10:14**. Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal, **Joshua 10:15**.

‘Now the five kings had fled and hidden in the cave at Makkedah. When Joshua was told that the five kings had been found hiding in the cave at Makkedah, he said, “Roll large rocks up to the mouth of the cave and post some men there to guard it. But don’t stop; pursue your enemies! Attack them from the rear and don’t let them reach their cities, for the LORD your God has given them into your hand.” Joshua 10:16-19

The five kings who fled and hid in the cave at Makkedah, **Joshua 10:16**. When Joshua found out about where they were hiding, he told his men to roll large rocks up to the mouth of the cave and post some men there to guard it, **Joshua 10:17-18**.

He tells his men to keep pursuing their enemies and attack them from the rear and don’t let them reach their cities, for God has given them into their hands, **Joshua 10:19**.

“So, Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely, but a few survivors managed to reach their fortified cities. The whole army then returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah, and no one uttered a word against the Israelites. Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings out to me.” So, they brought the five kings out of the cave—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. When they had brought these kings to Joshua, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the army commanders who had come with him, “Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings. So, they came forward and placed their feet on their necks.” Joshua 10:20-24

Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely; however, a few survivors managed to reach their fortified cities, **Joshua 10:20**. When the army then returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah, no one uttered a word against the Israelites, **Joshua 10:21**.

Joshua now asks to remove the rock from the cave, which he ordered to be put in place earlier, **Joshua 10:18**, and bring out the five kings, **Joshua 10:22**. The five kings brought out of the cave were the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, **Joshua 10:23**.

Notice that Joshua summons all the men of Israel and tells the army commanders who had come with him to put their feet on the necks of these kings, and they did so, **Joshua 10:24**.

Morton, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The purpose of this ceremony of placing their feet upon the necks of the kings was no doubt designed to encourage the whole people. It was certainly commendable that Joshua should have assigned his chief leaders to enact this ceremony instead of taking the honour unto himself, as most of the military leaders of that era would surely have done. One may see many examples of this type of ceremony in the sculptures and artistic depictions frequently uncovered by the excavations of the archaeologist. It serves here as a token of encouragement, symbolising what the Lord will do to all the enemies of Israel, **Psalms 110:1**.’

“Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.” Then Joshua put the kings to death and exposed their bodies on five poles, and they were left hanging on the poles until evening. At sunset, Joshua gave the order, and they took them down from the poles and threw them into the cave where they had been hiding. At the mouth of the cave, they placed large rocks, which are there to this day.” Joshua 10:25-27

Joshua tells them not to be afraid or discouraged but be strong and courageous, **Joshua 10:25**, because this is what God is going to do with all their enemies, **Joshua 10:25**.

Then Joshua put the kings to death and exposed their bodies on five poles, and they were left hanging on the poles until evening, **Joshua 10:26 / Deuteronomy 21:22-23**.

The bodies were to be removed from the poles at sunset and then thrown into the cave where they had been hiding, **Joshua 10:16**, and at the mouth of the cave, they placed large rocks, which are there to this day, **Joshua 10:27**.

SOUTHERN CITIES CONQUERED

“That day Joshua took Makkedah. He put the city and its king to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it. He left no survivors. And he did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho. Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it. The LORD also gave that city and its king into Israel’s hand. The city and everyone in it Joshua put to the sword. He left no survivors there. And he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.” Joshua 10:28-30

After the search and capture of the five kings, they were executed, **Joshua 10:22-27**. The campaign was carried to other cities in Canaan, Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This city was near Makkedah, **Joshua 15:42**, and fell to the tribe of Judah, **Joshua 10:20 / Joshua 10:42**, and was given to the priests, **Joshua 21:13**. Sennacherib besieged it, after he had been obliged to raise the siege of Lachish, **2 Kings 19:8 / Isaiah 37:8**.’

That day Joshua took Makkedah, destroyed the city and everyone in it, **Joshua 10:28**. He left no survivors and did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho, **Joshua 10:28 / Joshua 6:1-20**.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Of interest in this verse is the fact that Makkedah was not mentioned as a member of the coalition formed by Adoni-Zedek, yet the city was utterly destroyed. Note too that it is not recorded that Jerusalem was destroyed, despite the fact that Adoni-Zedek was the leader of the anti-Israelite coalition.’

Joshua and all Israel now move on from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it, **Joshua 10:29**, and once again, God gave that city and its king into Israel’s hand, **Joshua 10:30**.

The city and everyone were totally destroyed, and there were no survivors, and Joshua did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho, **Joshua 10:30 / Joshua 6:1-20**.

“Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Libnah to Lachish; he took up positions against it and attacked it. The LORD gave Lachish into Israel’s hands, and Joshua took it on the second day. The city and everyone in it he put to the sword, just as he had done to Libnah. Meanwhile, Horam, king of Gezer, had come up to help Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army—until no survivors were left.” Joshua 10:31-33

Joshua and all Israel now move on from Libnah to Lachish, **Joshua 10:31**. He took up positions against it and attacked it, **Joshua 10:31**, and once again God gave Lachish into Israel’s hands, and Joshua took it on the second day, **Joshua 10:31-32**.

The city and everyone were totally destroyed, just as he had done to Libnah, **Joshua 10:32**. However, Horam, the king of Gezer, had come up to help Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army, until no survivors were left, **Joshua 10:33**.

“Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Lachish to Eglon; they took up positions against it and attacked it. They captured it that same day and put it to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it, just as they had done to Lachish. Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it. They took the city and put it to the sword, together with its king, its villages and everyone in it. They left no survivors. Just as at Eglon, they totally destroyed it and everyone in it. Then Joshua and all Israel with him turned around and attacked Debir. They took the city, its king, and its villages, and put them to the sword. Everyone in it they totally destroyed. They left no survivors. They did to Debir and its king as they had done to Libnah and its king and to Hebron.” Joshua 10:34-39

Then Joshua and all Israel now move from Lachish to Eglon, **Joshua 10:34**. They took up positions against it, attacked it and captured it that same day, destroyed the city and everyone in it, just as they had done to Lachish, **Joshua 10:34-35 / Joshua 10:31-32**.

Then Joshua and all Israel moved from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it, Joshua 10:36. They took the city and killed its king, destroyed its villages, and killed everyone in it and left no survivors, Joshua 10:37 / Joshua 15:11-17. Just as at Eglon, they totally destroyed it and everyone in it, Joshua 10:37 / Joshua 10:34-35.

Then Joshua and all Israel turned around and attacked Debir, Joshua 10:38. Once again, they took the city, killed its king, destroyed its villages, and left no survivors, Joshua 10:39. They did to Debir and its king as they had done to Libnah, and its king, Joshua 10:29-30, and to Hebron, Joshua 10:39 / Joshua 10:36-37.

“So, Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills, and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. Joshua subdued them from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon. All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.’ Joshua 10:40-43

All the land and hill country was taken, the Negev, the lowland, and the slopes, and so, the southern campaign is now complete, Joshua 10:40. Joshua left no survivors, and he totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the God of Israel had commanded, Joshua 10:40.

Joshua subdued them from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon, Joshua 10:41. All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, which was only possible because the God of Israel fought for Israel, Joshua 10:42. Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal, Joshua 10:43.

CONCLUSION

As Christians, we must learn to fight our battles with God’s help, which sometimes involves us just being still, Exodus 14:14. Even when we feel afraid, we must turn to God as our refuge, Deuteronomy 3:22 / Joshua 23:10 / Isaiah 41:10 / 2 Corinthians 10:4 / 2 Chronicles 20:17.

It’s all so easy to give in when difficult battles come our way, but God wants to go before us, He wants us to be like Joshua, courageous and strong, Joshua 1:9. He wants us to be on our guard, He wants us to stand firm in the faith, and He wants us to be courageous and strong, 1 Corinthians 16:13.

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

‘When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the kings of Shimron and Akshaph, and to the northern kings who were in the mountains, in the Arabah south of Kinnereth, in the western foothills and in Naphoth Dor on the west; to the Canaanites in the east and west; to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites in the hill country; and to the Hivites below Hermon in the region of Mizpah. They came out with all their troops and a large number of horses and chariots—a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. All these kings joined forces and made camp together at the Waters of Merom to fight against Israel.’ Joshua 11:1-5

THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGN

It seems that every time a nation goes to war, it has someone whom it recognises as the enemy. It may be one who has attacked them, it may be one who has threatened to attack, or it may be one who can become just another pawn in the hand of a tyrannical ruler.

Israel had her enemies as well; she had the physical enemy of Canaanites, and she had the spiritual enemy of sin, pride, self-sufficiency, and covetousness. Christians today face these too, and we all have to face our own spiritual warfare, [Ephesians 6:10-18](#).

Here we find another troubled king, Jabin, king of Hazor, who hears of Israel's victories and so, he sends for other kings to form an alliance against Israel, [Joshua 11:1-3](#). The army they gathered was as great as the sand on the seashore, [Joshua 11:4](#).

Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, estimated that there were 300,000 infantry soldiers, 10,000 cavalry troops and 20,000 chariots. And so, the odds against Israel were tremendous, but the confederation camped at the Waters of Merom to fight Israel, [Joshua 11:5](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Merom lies between Lake Huleh and Lake Tiberias, some ten miles west of Jordan, where copious springs feed a tributary to Jordan.’

‘The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them, slain, over to Israel. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots.” So Joshua and his whole army came against them suddenly at the Waters of Merom and attacked them, and the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel. They defeated them and pursued them all the way to Greater Sidon, to Misrephoth Maim, and to the Valley of Mizpah on the east, until no survivors were left. Joshua did to them as the LORD had directed: He hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots.’ [Joshua 11:6-9](#)

As has occurred already so many times in the book, God assures Joshua of victory, [Joshua 11:6](#), the one condition was that the chariots and horses were to be made inoperable, [Joshua 11:6](#).

Joshua and his whole army came against them suddenly at the Waters of Merom and attacked them, and once again God gave them into the hand of Israel, [Joshua 11:7-8](#).

God was with them, and no survivor was left, [Joshua 11:8](#), and again, Joshua did all that the Lord told him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots, [Joshua 11:9](#) / [Joshua 11:6](#).

Cook, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Taken by surprise and hemmed in between the mountains and the lake, the chariots and horses had no time to be deployed and no room to act effectively and then, in all probability, the host of the coalition fell into hopeless confusion.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘[Deuteronomy 17:16](#) plainly warned Israel and their rulers NOT to go into the horse business, despite the fact that horses, being in that period, were a prime element of military strength. When Solomon multiplied horses (having forty thousand of them), it was displeasing to God.’

‘At that time, Joshua turned back and captured Hazor and put its king to the sword. (Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms.) Everyone in it they put to the sword. They totally destroyed them, not sparing anyone that breathed, and he burned Hazor itself. Joshua took all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. Yet Israel did not burn any of the cities built on their mounds—except Hazor, which Joshua burned. The Israelites carried off for themselves all the plunder and livestock of these cities, but all the people they put to the sword until they completely destroyed them, not sparing anyone that breathed. As the LORD commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.’ [Joshua 11:12-15](#)

Joshua turns back and captures Hazor and kills its king, and we are told that Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms, [Joshua 11:12](#) / [Joshua 11:1](#). Everyone in the city was killed, leaving no one alive, and Hazor was burned, [Joshua 11:11](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Hazor.

‘It was given to the tribe of Naphtali, [Joshua 19:36](#), who it appears did not possess it long, for though it was burnt by Joshua, [Joshua 11:11](#), it is likely that the Canaanites rebuilt it, and restored the ancient government, as we find a powerful king there about one hundred and thirty years after the death of Joshua, [Judges 4:1](#). It is the same that was taken by Tiglath-Pileser, together with Kadesh, to which it is contiguous, [2 Kings 15:29](#).’

Other royal cities and their kings were attacked and destroyed, as Moses the servant of God had commanded, [Joshua 11:12](#). However, Israel didn’t burn any of the cities built on their mounds except Hazor, which Joshua burned, [Joshua 11:13](#) / [Joshua 11:19](#). The spoil was taken for the people, and everything was completely destroyed, [Joshua 11:14](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following about the spoils.

‘With the exception of those things which had been employed for idolatrous purposes, [Deuteronomy 7:25](#).’ Joshua’s obedience to God and Moses is seen in the fact that, as God had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that God commanded Moses, [Joshua 11:15](#).

‘So, Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah, and the mountains of Israel with their foothills, from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and put them to death. Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time. Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, not one city made a treaty of peace with the Israelites, who took them all in battle. For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.’ Joshua 11:16-20

Joshua took this entire land, including the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah, and the mountains of Israel with their foothills, from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon, [Joshua 12:7](#). He captured all their kings and put them to death, [Joshua 11:16-17](#). Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time, [Joshua 11:18](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The whole of these conquests was not effected in one campaign: they probably required six or seven years. There are some chronological notices in this book, and in Deuteronomy, by which the exact time may be nearly ascertained. Caleb was forty years old when he was sent from Kadesh-Barnea by Moses to search out the land, about A.M. 2514; and at the end of this war he was eighty-five years old; (compare [Joshua 14:10](#) with [Numbers 13:16](#), and [Deuteronomy 1:36](#), consequently the war ended in 2559, which had begun, by the passage of Jordan, on the tenth day of the first month of the year 2554. From this date to the end of 2559, we find exactly six years, the first of which Joshua seems to have employed in the conquest of the southern part of the land of Canaan, and the other five in the conquest of all the territories situated on the north of that country.’

Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, no one made peace with them, [Joshua 11:19](#), and the Lord had hardened their hearts, in order that He might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, [Joshua 11:20](#).

‘At that time, Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod did any survive. So, Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.’ Joshua 11:21-23

God utterly destroyed them, [Joshua 11:20](#), even the Anakims were defeated, [Joshua 11:21](#). These giants had frightened the people the first time, [Numbers 13:28](#) / [Numbers 13:33](#).

This time they were attacked and defeated except for some in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, [Joshua 11:22](#). This would come back to haunt them though because Goliath from Gath would mock and frighten them years later, [1 Samuel 17:23](#).

Joshua took the entire land, just as God had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions, and then the land had rest from war, [Joshua 21:23](#) / [Hebrews 4:8](#) / [Revelation 3:21](#).

CONCLUSION

Why did God harden the hearts of God's enemies? Behind this question for many is the idea that they didn't have any free will, and therefore, they had no choice but to do what God wanted them to do.

This question is often applied to God hardening Pharaoh's heart, [Exodus 4:21](#) / [Exodus 7:3](#) / [Exodus 9:12](#) / [Exodus 10:1](#) / [Exodus 10:20](#) / [Exodus 10:27](#) / [Exodus 11:10](#) / [Exodus 14:4](#) / [Exodus 14:8](#) / [Exodus 14:17](#).

However, what is often overlooked is that Pharaoh actually hardened his own heart too, [Exodus 7:13](#) / [Exodus 7:14](#) / [Exodus 7:22](#) / [Exodus 8:15](#) / [Exodus 8:19](#) / [Exodus 8:32](#) / [Exodus 9:7](#) / [Exodus 9:34](#) / [Exodus 9:35](#) / [Exodus 13:15](#).

As Pharaoh's part in hardening his own heart was an active part, he chose not to obey the will of God. God's part was simply to empower Pharaoh to exercise that choice.

The same principle may be applied when we think of God hardening Israel's enemies' hearts. We know that God hardened Israel's enemies' hearts, but maybe we should also ask the question, how did God do it?

Adam Clarke, in his commentary, has the following useful thought.

'God does not work this hardness of heart in man; but it may be said to harden him whom refuses to soften, to blind him whom refuses to enlighten, and to repel him whom refuses to call.' It is but just and right that He should withhold those graces which were repeatedly offered, and which the sinner had despised and rejected.'

That old saying, 'the same sun that melts wax also hardens clay,' is very applicable to this study. Through the Gospel, God hardens the hearts of some and melts the hearts of others.

Those who accept the offer and obey its requirements are saved, selected, and favoured. Those who reject it are lost, hardened, and rejected. The same idea is shown in God sending powerful delusions to those who refuse to love the truth, [2 Thessalonians 2:9-12](#).

The writer of Hebrews warns believers today not to harden their hearts when they hear the voice of God in His Word, [Hebrews 3:8](#) / [Hebrews 3:13](#) / [Hebrews 3:15](#) / [Hebrews 4:7](#).

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION

‘These are the kings of the land whom the Israelites had defeated and whose territory they took over east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon, including all the eastern side of the Arabah: Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon. He ruled from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge—from the middle of the gorge—to the Jabbok River, which is the border of the Ammonites. This included half of Gilead. He also ruled over the eastern Arabah from the Sea of Galilee to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea), to Beth Jeshimoth, and then southward below the slopes of Pisgah. And the territory of Og, king of Bashan, one of the last of the Rephaites, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salekah, all of Bashan to the border of the people of Geshur and Maakah, and half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the Israelites conquered them. And Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh to be their possession.” Joshua 12:1-6

LIST OF DEFEATED KINGS

East of Jordan, two kings were defeated east of the Jordan, [Joshua 12:1-5](#). Sihon and Og, Moses led this victory, [Joshua 12:6](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning the Rephaites, [Joshua 12:4](#).

‘These were one of the various tribes of giants, like the Anakims, Zuzims, Emims, of whom we read in the land of Canaan.’

The land was given to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, [Joshua 12:6](#).

“Here is a list of the kings of the land that Joshua and the Israelites conquered on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir. Joshua gave their lands as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel according to their tribal divisions. The lands included the hill country, the western foothills, the Arabah, the mountain slopes, the wilderness, and the Negev. These were the lands of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.” Joshua 12:7-8

West of Jordan, the Canaanites were defeated from east to west and from north to south, [Joshua 12:7-8](#). These were the lands of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, [Joshua 12:8](#).

“These were the kings: the king of Jericho one the king of Ai (near Bethel), one the king of Jerusalem, one the king of Hebron, one the king of Jarmuth, one the king of Lachish, one the king of Eglon, one the king of Gezer, one the king of Debir, one the king of Geder, one the king of Hormah, one the king of Arad, one the king of Libnah, one the king of Adullam, one the king of Makkedah, one the king of Bethel, one the king of Tappuah, one the king of Hopher, one the king of Aphek, one the king of Lasharon, one the king of Madon, one the king of Hazor, one the king of Shimron Meron, one the king of Akshaph, one the king of Taanach, one the king of Megiddo, one the king of Kedesh, one the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one the king of Dor (in Naphoth Dor), one the king of Goyim in Gilgal, one the king of Tirzah one, thirty-one kings in all.’ Joshua 12:9-24

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The identification of several of these places is still uncertain: the same name (e.g., Aphek, [Joshua 12:18](#)) being applied to various places in various parts of Palestine. Geder, or Gedor, [Joshua 15:58](#), a city in the mountain district in the south of the territory of Judah, is no doubt the modern ‘Jedur’.’

Cook, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Those cities mentioned in [Joshua 12:10-18](#) either belonged to the league of the Southern Canaanites, the power of which was broken in the battle of Beth-Horon or were at any rate conquered in the campaign following the battle. Those mentioned in [Joshua 12:19-24](#) were in like manner connected with the northern confederates who were defeated at the Waters of Merom.’

In all, thirty-one kings are listed as being defeated, [Joshua 12:9-24](#). God had truly been with them.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The description was not complete. Shechem is not mentioned, and the hills of Ephraim are sparsely represented, as is the territory north of Hazor. Completeness is not the object. The writer seeks to compile a list that will impress the readers with the greatness of the feat of God in working for Israel and of the greatness of the leadership of Joshua in following the example of Moses and completing the task first given to Moses. Still, the writer is aware that much remains to be done.’

CONCLUSION

God has the right to punish sin, and men deserve it, [Leviticus 18:1-30](#). He’s done it before, [Genesis 6:1-8](#) / [Galatians 6:13](#) / [Genesis 18:16-33](#). Sin demands it, [Romans 1:18-32](#) / [Romans 6:23](#) / [Galatians 5:19-21](#), and surely judgment is coming again.

Christians must be prepared to fight today, and they must realise they are soldiers, [2 Timothy 2:3-4](#) / [2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#). All Christians must be dressed in battle attire, [Romans 13:12](#) / [2 Corinthians 10:4](#) / [1 Thessalonians 5:8](#) / [Ephesians 6:10-18](#). The whole enemy must be defeated; God’s instructions to His people had been to utterly destroy the Canaanites.

In some instances, this was not always done, and as a result, the people suffered for it. So sin must be completely eliminated from us, [James 1:21](#) / [Ephesians 4:22](#) / [1 Peter 2:1](#).

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION

“When Joshua had grown old, the LORD said to him, “You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over. “This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites, from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite though held by the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the territory of the Avvites on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek and the border of the Amorites; the area of Byblos; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath. “As for all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, that is, all the Sidonians, I myself will drive them out before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you, and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh.” Joshua 13:1-7

LAND STILL TO BE TAKEN

What do you think of when you hear the word ‘inheritance’? You might think of money, land, furniture, or some valuable object that someone would leave to you. Sometimes we inherit things that are not so pleasant to us.

A new administration in the government usually inherits a few problems from the former administration. Sometimes people complain about the personality traits they feel they inherited from their ancestors. ‘Inheritance’ can mean many things.

Now it is time for the ‘real estate’ to be divided among the tribes. This was an important time for the people, for this was the fulfilment of God’s promise to His people. And there are lessons for us to learn today from these texts.

We shouldn’t waste time. God reminded Joshua that he was old, [Joshua 13:1](#). Some people don’t know what to do with that word ‘old,’ some fear it, some resent it, some redefine it, and some overcome it.

But sometimes we make a mistake with it; anyone who is beset by infirmities of age is allowed to function when he or she shouldn’t, and anyone who is strong and still capable of great service is put out to pasture. The one thing that matters in life when one comes to the time of old age is one’s faithfulness to the Lord.

When my dad turned 68, I went to visit him one afternoon, and he said he felt like an old 68. I then made the remark that the closer I get to the 60’s age bracket, the younger it seems. But whether you look at another birth year as young or old doesn’t matter.

After telling Joshua he is very old, God reminds him that there are still very large areas of land to be taken over, [Joshua 13:1](#). The land that remained were all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites, [Joshua 13:2](#) / [1 Samuel 27:8](#) / [Joshua 12:5](#) / [Joshua 13:13](#).

It was a vast area stretching from the Sihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite though held by the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron, [Joshua 13:3](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Sihor, [Joshua 13:3](#).

‘Sihor is derived from a root signifying ‘to be black,’ and is suitable enough as an appellative of the Nile, [Isaiah 23:3](#). Here it most probably stands for ‘the river of Egypt’, [Numbers 34:3](#), the modern ‘Wady El Arish’.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Ekron, [Joshua 13:3](#).

‘Ekron, ‘Akir’, lay on the northern boundary of Judah, [Joshua 15:11](#), and was actually conquered by the men of that tribe, [Judges 1:18](#), though assigned in the allotment of the land to Dan, [Joshua 19:43](#). It seems to have fallen again into the hands of the Philistines in the days of the Judges, [1 Samuel 5:10](#), was reconquered by Samuel, [1 Samuel 7:14](#), but figures in subsequent times as a Philistine city only, [1 Samuel 17:52](#) / [2 Kings 1:2](#) / [2 Kings 1:16](#).’

Butler, in his commentary, says the following concerning Sidon, [Joshua 13:4](#).

‘Sidon may represent the inhabitants of the Phoenician coast and of the Lebanon mountains.’

There was also the territory of the Avvites on the south, [Deuteronomy 2:23](#), and all the land of the Canaanites, [Joshua 13:4](#), from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek, [Joshua 12:18](#) / [1 Kings 20:26](#) / [2 Kings 13:17](#), and the border of the Amorites, [Joshua 13:3-4](#).

There was land in the area of Byblos and all Lebanon to the east, [Joshua 11:17](#), from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath, [Joshua 13:5](#). Note the KJV uses the place ‘Giblites’, instead of Byblos, [Joshua 13:5](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning the Giblites.

‘This people dwelt beyond the precincts of the land of Canaan, on the east of Tyre and Sidon, [Ezekiel 27:9](#) / [Psalms 83:7](#), their capital was named Gebal.’

God Himself says He will drive out all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, [Joshua 13:6](#) / [Joshua 11:7](#), that is, all the Sidonians, [Joshua 13:6](#) / [Joshua 1:6-7](#).

Joshua is reminded to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as God has instructed him, and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh, [Joshua 13:7](#).

DIVISION OF THE LAND EAST OF THE JORDAN

“The other half of Manasseh, the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan, as he, the servant of the LORD, had assigned it to them. It extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge and included the whole plateau of Medeba as far as Dibon, and all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, out to the border of the Ammonites. It also included Gilead, the territory of the people of Geshur and Maakah, all of Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salekah—that is, the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. (He was the last of the Rephaites.) Moses had defeated them and taken over their land. But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day. But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the food offerings presented to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them.” Joshua 13:8-14

The other half of Manasseh, the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan, [Joshua 13:8](#). This land extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, [Joshua 12:2](#). And from the town in the middle of the gorge, and included the whole plateau of Medeba as far as Dibon, and all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, out to the border of the Ammonites, [Joshua 13:9-10](#). This included Gilead, the territory of the people of Geshur, [Joshua 12:5](#), and Maakah, all of Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salekah—that is, the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei, [Joshua 13:11-12](#).

We are told Og was the last of the Rephaites and Moses had defeated them and taken over their land, [Joshua 13:12](#). Notice the Israelites didn’t drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day, [Joshua 13:13](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

“The peoples the Israelites did not annihilate, and their land that they did not possess, were in the northern part of this area, [Joshua 12:5](#). Gilead, [Joshua 13:11](#), included land on both sides of the Jabbok River east of the Jordan.’

The tribe of Levi received no inheritance because the food offerings were presented to God, and God Himself was their inheritance, [Joshua 13:14](#) / [Joshua 13:33](#) / [Deuteronomy 18:1-5](#).

“This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Reuben, according to its clans: The territory from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and the whole plateau past Medeba to Heshbon and all its towns on the plateau, including Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley, Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth—all the towns on the plateau and the entire realm of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled at Heshbon. Moses had defeated him and the Midianite chiefs, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—princes allied with Sihon—who lived in that country. In addition to those slain in battle, the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practised divination. The boundary of the Reubenites was the bank of the Jordan. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Reubenites, according to their clans.” Joshua 13:15-23

Moses gave the tribe of Reuben according to their clans, [Joshua 13:15](#) / [Joshua 13:23](#). The land they were given was from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and the whole plateau past Medeba to Heshbon and all its towns on the plateau, including Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, Jahaz, which was given to the Levites, [1 Chronicles 6:78](#).

Kedemoth, [Deuteronomy 2:26](#), Mephaath, which was given to the Levites, [Joshua 21:37](#), Kiriathaim, Sibmah, [Isaiah 16:8-9](#) / [Jeremiah 48:32](#), Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley, Beth Peor, [Numbers 25:3](#), the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth, all the towns on the plateau and the entire realm of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled at Heshbon, [Joshua 13:16-21](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Bamoth-Baal, [Joshua 13:17](#).

‘The high places of Baal, probably so called from altars erected on hills for the impure worship of this Canaanitish Priapus.’

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Kiriathaim, Joshua 13:19

‘This city, according to Eusebius, was nine miles distant from Medeba, towards the east. It passed from the Emim to the Moabites, from the Moabites to the Amorites, and from the Amorites to the Israelites, Genesis 14:6 / Deuteronomy 2:20. Calmet supposes the Reubenites possessed it till the time they were carried away by the Assyrians and then the Moabites appear to have taken possession of it anew, as he collects from Jeremiah 48:1, and Ezekiel 25:9.’

Moses had defeated Sihon and the Midianite chiefs, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba, who were princes who allied with Sihon and lived in that country, Joshua 13:21 / Numbers 31:1.

In addition to those slain in battle, the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination, Joshua 13:22 / Numbers 31:8 / Joshua 13:22. The boundary of the Reubenites was the bank of the Jordan, Joshua 13:23.

“This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Gad, according to its clans: The territory of Jazer, all the towns of Gilead and half the Ammonite country as far as Aroer, near Rabbah; and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir; and in the valley, Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Sukkoth and Zaphon with the rest of the realm of Sihon king of Heshbon (the east side of the Jordan, the territory up to the end of the Sea of Galilee). These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Gadites, according to their clans.”
Joshua 13:24-28

Moses gave the tribe of Gad according to their clans, Joshua 13:24 / Joshua 13:28. The territory of Jazer, all the towns of Gilead and half the Ammonite country as far as Aroer, near Rabbah and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah, which was one of the cities of refuge, Joshua 20:8 / Deuteronomy 4:47, and Betonim, and from Mahanaim, Genesis 32:2, to the territory of Debir, 2 Samuel 9:4 / 2 Samuel 17:27.

And in the valley, Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Sukkoth, Genesis 33:17, and Zaphon with the rest of the realm of Sihon king of Heshbon, Joshua 13:25-27. We are told that the east side of the Jordan, the territory up to the end of the Sea of Galilee, Joshua 13:27.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Rabbah, Joshua 13:25.

‘Rabbah was a border fortress, the principal stronghold of the Ammonites, Numbers 21:24, and the residence of their king. It was attacked and taken by Joab, 2 Samuel 11-12 / 1 Chronicles 20:1, but appears in later times again as an Ammonitish city, Jeremiah 49:3 / Ezekiel 25:5 / Amos 1:13-15.’

“This is what Moses had given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, that is, to half the family of the descendants of Manasseh, according to its clans: The territory extending from Mahanaim and including all of Bashan, the entire realm of Og king of Bashan—all the settlements of Jair in Bashan, sixty towns, half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei (the royal cities of Og in Bashan). This was for the descendants of Makir, son of Manasseh—for half of the sons of Makir, according to their clans. This is the inheritance Moses had given when he was in the plains of Moab across the Jordan east of Jericho. But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them.” Joshua 13:29-33

Moses gave the tribe of the half-tribe of Manasseh according to their clans, Joshua 13:29. The territory extending from Mahanaim and including all of Bashan, the entire realm of Og king of Bashan, all the settlements of Jair in Bashan, sixty towns, half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei which we are told was the royal cities of Og in Bashan, Joshua 13:30-31.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning the settlements of Jair, Joshua 13:30.

‘These were sixty cities; they are mentioned afterwards, and in 1 Chronicles 2:21, they are the same as the Havoth-Jair mentioned, Numbers 32:41. Jair was the son of Segub, grandson of Esron or Hezron, and great-grandson of

Machir by his grandmother's side, who married Hezron of the tribe of Judah. See his genealogy, [1 Chronicles 2:21-24](#).'

This was for the descendants of Makir son of Manasseh, for half of the sons of Makir, according to their clans, [Joshua 30:31](#). This is the inheritance Moses had given when he was in the plains of Moab across the Jordan east of Jericho, [Joshua 13:32](#) / [Numbers 32:33](#).

Once again we are reminded that the tribe of Levi was given no inheritance because God Himself was their inheritance, [Joshua 13:33](#) / [Joshua 13:14](#) / [Deuteronomy 18:1-5](#).

Campbell, in his commentary, says the following.

'The two and one-half tribes chose, as Lot did, on the basis of appearance, [Genesis 13:10-11](#), and their inheritance was ultimately lost to them, [1 Chronicles 5:26](#). On the other hand, the Levites, requesting no portion, were given an inheritance of abiding spiritual significance.'

CONCLUSION

God reminded Joshua that there was still much to be done, there was still land to be conquered and the land needed to be divided among the tribes. After all, this was their inheritance, and this was what God was giving them.

Christians today need to be reminded of that same thing because we, too, have an inheritance coming, [1 Peter 1:4](#) / [Hebrews 9:15](#) / [Colossians 1:12](#) / [Ephesians 1:11](#). The time is drawing closer for the dividing out of the inheritance, [Ephesians 5:16](#) / [John 9:4](#), but we get caught up in our little fusses and fights and feuds.

We forget about the task at hand. I guess we really never have died to ourselves, [Luke 14:26](#) / [Galatians 2:20](#). Don't waste opportunities; the tribes received their inheritance.

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION

"Now these are the areas the Israelites received as an inheritance in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the tribal clans of Israel allotted to them. Their inheritances were assigned by lot to the nine and a half tribes, as the LORD had commanded through Moses. Moses had granted the two and a half tribes their inheritance east of the Jordan but had not granted the Levites an inheritance among the rest, for Joseph's descendants had become two tribes—Manasseh and Ephraim. The Levites received no share of the land but only towns to live in, with pasturelands for their flocks and herds. So the Israelites divided the land, just as the LORD had commanded Moses." Joshua 14:1-5

DIVISION OF THE LAND WEST OF THE JORDAN

The Israelites received as an inheritance in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and the heads of the tribal clans of Israel allotted to them, Joshua 14:1 / Numbers 34:19-28. Notice the nine and a half tribes' inheritance was assigned by lot, Joshua 14:2 / Joshua 18:6 / Numbers 26:55.

Wood, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Apparently, the casting of lots established the general location of each tribe within Canaan, but the population of that tribe affected the size of each tribe’s inheritance, Numbers 26:52-56.’

The two and a half tribes received their portion east of Jordan: Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua 14:3-4.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This was ascertained by the prophetic declaration of their grandfather Jacob, Genesis 48:5-6, and as Levi was taken out of the tribes for the service of the sanctuary, one of these sons of Joseph came in his place, and Joseph was treated as the first-born of Jacob, in the place of Reuben, who forfeited his right of primogeniture.’

The Levites received no share of the land but only towns to live in, with pasturelands for their flocks and herds, Joshua 14:4 / Deuteronomy 12:12. The tribe of Levi received God as their inheritance, Numbers 18:23-24 / Deuteronomy 10:9 / Joshua 13:33. And so, the land was divided up, Joshua 14:5.

ALLOTMENT FOR CALEB

“Now the people of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, “You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses, the servant of the LORD, sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly. So on that day Moses swore to me, ‘The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.’” Joshua 14:6-9

Caleb comes to Joshua to remind him that land had been promised to him years earlier, Joshua 14:6 / Deuteronomy 1:36 / Numbers 14:24-38.

Campbell, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Caleb was a member of the clan in Judah called the Kenizzites, Joshua 14:6 / Joshua 14:14. He was probably not a descendant of the Kenizzites who were early inhabitants of Canaan, Genesis 15:19. Another view is that the early Canaanite Kenizzites joined the tribe of Judah before the Exodus.’

Caleb had been one of the spies sent out to inspect the land, and when they returned with their report, only he and Joshua had the faith that the land could be taken, Numbers 14:6-10. He gave his report from his heart, Joshua 14:7, the other ten spies report made the Israelites hearts felt in fear, but Joshua followed the Lord fully, Joshua 14:8.

Caleb was promised that the land that he had walked on would be his and so, God rewarded his obedience, Joshua 14:9 / Numbers 14:24. Joshua would receive a personal allotment later, Joshua 19:49-50.

“Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.” Joshua 14:10-12

Here we read of Caleb's request and notice he explained away his age. He was forty-five years old when Moses made the promise, but he was now eighty-five years old, [Joshua 14:10](#) / [Numbers 14:24](#).

The Israelites wandered for something like thirty-eight years, and so, it's taken seven years to do the conquering thus far, but Israel wasted thirty-eight years. However, he's just as strong now as forty-five years ago, [Joshua 14:11](#).

Caleb then requested the land that had been promised to him, [Joshua 13:12](#). He reminded Joshua of what he heard: that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but with God's help, he would drive them out just as God had said, [Joshua 14:12](#).

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

'Caleb referred to the very things that the unbelieving spies had pointed out to discourage the Israelites from entering the land: hill country, Anakim, and large fortified cities, [Numbers 13:28-29](#).'

"Then Joshua blessed Caleb, son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So Hebron has belonged to Caleb, son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, ever since because he followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites.) Then the land had rest from war." Joshua 14:13-15

Joshua blessed Caleb and the land of Hebron was given to him, [Joshua 14:13](#), and he took it, [Joshua 14:14](#) / [Joshua 15:13-19](#) / [Judges 1:20](#), because he followed God wholeheartedly, [Joshua 14:14](#).

We are told that Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man among the Anakites, [Joshua 14:15](#). The land had rest from war, [Joshua 14:15](#).

CONCLUSION

Do you know who the following people are? Shammua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, and Geuel. You would be forgiven for not knowing these people, but they are, in fact, the names of the other ten spies who were sent out with Joshua and Caleb to spy on the land of Canaan, [Numbers 13-14](#).

Isn't it interesting that hardly anyone remembers these ten spies' names, but most people remember Joshua and Caleb. I believe the main reason most people remember Caleb is simply because of his commitment to God. Three times it is stated that God's blessing on Caleb was based on the fact that he had 'followed the Lord fully,' [Joshua 14:8](#) / [Joshua 4:9](#) / [Joshua 14:14](#).

Caleb's obedience was in the context of a minority report, and Caleb's obedience was in the context of group rejection. Caleb's obedience continued for forty-five. Caleb's obedience was eventually honoured and rewarded, even though it was forty-five years later.

JOSHUA 15

INTRODUCTION

"The allotment for the tribe of Judah, according to its clans, extended down to the territory of Edom, to the Desert of Zin in the extreme south. Their southern boundary started from the bay at the southern end of the Dead Sea, crossed south of Scorpion Pass, continued on to Zin and went over to the south of Kadesh Barnea. Then it ran past Hezron up

to Addar and curved around to Karka. It then passed along to Azmon and joined the Wadi of Egypt, ending at the Mediterranean Sea. This is their southern boundary.” Joshua 15:1-4

ALLOTMENT FOR JUDAH

Here we read of the allotment for the tribe of Judah, which extended down to the territory of Edom, to the Desert of Zin in the extreme south, [Joshua 15:1](#). Their boundary started from the bay at the southern end of the Dead Sea, crossed south of Scorpion Pass, continued on to Zin.

And went over to the south of Kadesh Barnea and then it ran past Hezron up to Addar and curved around to Karka, [Joshua 15:2-3](#). Then it passed along to Azmon and joined the Wadi of Egypt, ending at the Mediterranean Sea, [Joshua 15:4](#).

“The eastern boundary is the Dead Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan. The northern boundary started from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan, went up to Beth Hoglah and continued north of Beth Arabah to the Stone of Bohan, son of Reuben. The boundary then went up to Debir from the Valley of Achor and turned north to Gilgal, which faces the Pass of Adummim south of the gorge. It continued along to the waters of En Shemesh and came out at En Rogel. Then it ran up the Valley of Ben Hinnom along the southern slope of the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem). From there, it climbed to the top of the hill west of the Hinnom Valley at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim. From the hilltop, the boundary headed toward the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, came out at the towns of Mount Ephron and went down toward Baalah (that is, Kiriath Jearim). Then it curved westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, ran along the northern slope of Mount Jearim (that is, Kesalon), continued down to Beth Shemesh and crossed to Timnah. It went to the northern slope of Ekron, turned toward Shikkeron, passed along to Mount Baalah and reached Jabneel. The boundary ended at the sea. The western boundary is the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

These are the boundaries around the people of Judah by their clans.” Joshua 15:5-12

The eastern boundary is the Dead Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan, [Joshua 15:5](#). The northern boundary started from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan, went up to Beth Hoglah and continued north of Beth Arabah to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben, [Joshua 15:5-6](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the Stone of Bohan, [Joshua 15:6](#).

‘This stone perhaps commemorated some deed of valour belonging to the wars of Joshua, [1 Samuel 7:12](#). The stone was erected on the slope of a hill (see the marginal reference), no doubt one of the range which hounds the Jordan valley on the west. But its exact site is wholly uncertain.’

The boundary then went up to Debir from the Valley of Achor and turned north to Gilgal, which faces the Pass of Adummim south of the gorge and it continued along to the waters of En Shemesh and came out at En Rogel and then it ran up the Valley of Ben Hinnom along the southern slope of the Jebusite city, that is, Jerusalem, [Joshua 15:7-8](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the Valley of Ben Hinnom. [Joshua 15:8](#).

‘It was in this ravine, more particularly at Tophet in the more wild and precipitous part of it toward the east, that the later kings of Judah offered the sacrifices of children to Moloch, [2 Chronicles 28:3](#) / [2 Chronicles 33:6](#). After these places had been defiled by Josiah, Tophet and the whole valley of Hinnom were held in abomination by the Jews, and the name of the latter was used to denote the place of eternal torment, [Matthew 5:22](#).’

From there it climbed to the top of the hill west of the Hinnom Valley at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim, and from the hilltop the boundary headed toward the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, came out at the towns of Mount Ephron and went down toward Baalah, that is, Kiriath Jearim, [Joshua 15:8-9](#).

Then it curved westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, ran along the northern slope of Mount Jearim, that is, Kesalon, continued down to Beth Shemesh and crossed to Timnah.

And it went to the northern slope of Ekron, turned toward Shikkeron, passed along to Mount Baalah and reached Jabneel, 2 Chronicles 26:6, and the boundary ended at the sea, Joshua 15:10-11. The western boundary is the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea. These are the boundaries around the people of Judah by their clans, Joshua 15:12. Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Judah was the southernmost tribe west of the Jordan. Caleb’s family and the Simeonites lived within Judah’s territory. Simeon was the smallest tribe, except Levi and lost its territorial identity within Judah shortly after the conquest, Genesis 49:5-7. For this reason, some maps of the tribal allotments do not include Simeon.’

“In accordance with the LORD’s command to him, Joshua gave to Caleb son of Jephunneh a portion in Judah—Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron. (Arba was the forefather of Anak.) From Hebron, Caleb drove out the three Anakites—Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai, the sons of Anak. From there, he marched against the people living in Debir (formerly called Kiriath Sepher). And Caleb said, “I will give my daughter Aksah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher.” Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb’s brother, took it; so Caleb gave his daughter Aksah to him in marriage. One day, when she came to Othniel, she urged him to ask her father for a field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What can I do for you?” She replied, “Do me a special favour. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water.” So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.” Joshua 15:13-19

Joshua gave to Caleb, son of Jephunneh, a portion in Judah, Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron, and we are told that Arba was the forefather of Anak, Joshua 15:13. From Hebron, Caleb drove out the three Anakites, Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai, the sons of Anak, and from there he marched against the people living in Debir, who were formerly called Kiriath Sepher, Joshua 15:14-15.

Caleb says he will give his daughter Aksah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher, and Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb’s brother, took it, and so, Caleb gave his daughter Aksah to him in marriage, Joshua 15:16-17.

Othniel was one of Israel’s prominent judges, Judges 3:9, probably the first whom God raised up in Israel after Joshua’s death. One day, when she came to Othniel, she urged him to ask her father for a field, and when she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, What can he do for her? Joshua 15:18.

She asks for a special favour and says, since Caleb has given her land in the Negev, can he give her the springs of water too? So, Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs, Joshua 15:19.

Hess, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Acsah’s request for the springs is reminiscent of Rebekah’s meeting with Isaac, Genesis 24:61-67, in which she also (1) approaches riding on an animal; (2) descends; (3) makes a request; and (4) receives the desired result from the person whom she approaches. Both accounts involve an inheritance of the blessing that God had promised to Abraham. This is probably the reason for the inclusion of this particular note.’

“This is the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, according to its clans: The southernmost towns of the tribe of Judah in the Negev toward the boundary of Edom were: Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, Hazor Hadattah, Kerioth Hezron (that is, Hazor), Amam, Shema, Moladah, Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, Baalah, Iyim, Ezem, Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain and Rimmon—a total of twenty-nine towns and their villages.” Joshua 15:20-32

We are told what the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, in the southernmost towns of the tribe of Judah in the Negev toward the boundary of Edom, was, Joshua 15:20-21.

Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, Hazor Hadattah, Kerioth Hezron, that is, Hazor, Amam, Shema, Moladah, Joshua 19:2-3 / 1 Chronicles 4:28 / Nehemiah 11:26-27.

Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, Baalah, [Joshua 19:3](#), Iyim, Ezem, Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain and Rimmon, which is a total of twenty-nine towns and their villages, [Joshua 15:21-32](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the number of towns and villages, [Joshua 15:32](#).

‘The King James Version gives 34 names. The difference is due either to the confusion by an early copyist of letters similar in form which were used as numerals, or to the separation in the King James Version of names which in the original were one, e.g. [Joshua 15:25](#).’

“In the western foothills: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, Jarmuth, Adullam, Sokoh, Azekah, Shaaraim, Adithaim and Gederah (or Gederothaim)—fourteen towns and their villages. Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, Kabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish, Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah and Makkedah—sixteen towns and their villages. Libnah, Ether, Ashan, Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, Keilah, Akzib and Mareshah—nine towns and their villages. Ekron, with its surrounding settlements and villages; west of Ekron, all that were in the vicinity of Ashdod, together with their villages; Ashdod, its surrounding settlements, and villages; and Gaza, its settlements, and villages, as far as the Wadi of Egypt and the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.” [Joshua 15:33-47](#)

In the western foothills, there were fourteen towns and villages. They are, Eshtaol, Zorah, which were later assigned to the tribe of Dan, and inhabited by Danites, [Judges 13:25](#) / [Judges 18:2](#) / [Judges 18:8](#) / [Judges 18:11](#). Ashnah, Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, Jarmuth, Adullam, Sokoh, Azekah, Shaaraim, Adithaim and Gederah or Gederothaim, [Joshua 15:33-36](#).

Another sixteen towns and their villages are mentioned, they are, Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, Lachish, [Joshua 10:3](#), Bozkath, Eglon, Kabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish, Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah and Makkedah, [Joshua 10:10](#) / [Joshua 15:37-41](#).

Another nine towns and their villages are mentioned, they are Libnah, [Joshua 10:29](#), Ether, Ashan, Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, Keilah, Akzib and Mareshah, [Joshua 15:42-44](#).

Ekron, with its surrounding settlements and villages and west of Ekron, all that were in the vicinity of Ashdod, together with their villages, Ashdod, its surrounding settlements and villages and Gaza, its settlements and villages, as far as the Wadi of Egypt and the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea, [Joshua 15:45-47](#) / [Joshua 13:3](#).

“In the hill country: Shamir, Jattir, Sokoh, Dannah, Kiriath Sannah (that is, Debir), Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, Goshen, Holon, and Giloh—eleven towns and their villages. Arab, Dumah, Eshan, Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, Humtah, Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) and Zior—nine towns and their villages. Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, Kain, Gibeah and Timnah—ten towns and their villages. Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, Maarath, Beth Anoth and Eltekon—six towns and their villages. Kiriath Baal (that is, Kiriath Jearim) and Rabbah—two towns and their villages. In the wilderness: Beth Arabah, Middin, Sekakah, Nibshan, the City of Salt and En Gedi—six towns and their villages.” [Joshua 15:48-62](#)

In the hill country, there were eleven towns and villages. They are Shamir, Jattir, Sokoh, Dannah, [Joshua 21:14](#) / [1 Chronicles 6:57](#) / [1 Samuel 30:27-28](#), Kiriath Sannah, that is, Debir, Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, Goshen, Holon and Giloh, [Joshua 15:48-51](#).

Another nine towns and villages are mentioned, they are Arab, Dumah, Eshan, Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, Humtah, Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron and Zior, [Joshua 15:52-54](#).

Another ten towns and villages are mentioned, they are, Maon, [1 Samuel 23:24](#) / [1 Samuel 25:2](#), Carmel, [1 Samuel 25:2](#), Ziph, Juttah, Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, Kain, Gibeah and Timnah, [Joshua 15:55-57](#).

Another six towns and villages are mentioned, they are Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, Maarath, Beth Anoth and Eltekon, [Joshua 15:58-59](#). Another two towns and villages are mentioned, they are Kiriath Baal, that is, Kiriath Jearim and Rabbah, [Joshua 15:60](#).

In the wilderness, another six towns and villages are mentioned. They are Beth Arabah, Middin, Sekakah, Nibshan, the City of Salt, 2 Samuel 8:13, and En Gedi, Joshua 15:61-62.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the wilderness, Joshua 15:61.

‘This district, including the towns in ‘the wilderness,’ the scene of David’s wanderings, 1 Samuel 23:24 / Psalms 63:1-11, and of the preaching of the Baptist, Matthew 3:1, and perhaps of our Lord’s temptation, Matthew 4:1-11, extended from the northern limit of Judah along the Dead Sea to the Negeb; it was bounded on the west by that part of ‘the mountains’ or highlands of Judah, which adjoined Bethlehem and Maon. It abounds in limestone rocks, perforated by numerous caverns, and often of fantastic shapes. It is badly supplied with water, and hence, is for the most part barren, though affording in many parts, now quite desolate, clear tokens of former cultivation. It contained only a thin population in the days of Joshua.’

“Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah.” Joshua 15:63

Sadly, the tribe of Judah didn’t take this part of their inheritance. They couldn’t drive the Jebusites out, and as a result, they ended up living with them, Joshua 15:63.

CONCLUSION

Israel suffered because they didn’t take what God had given them, Judges 1:16-2:4. The Lord had promised to be with the people and fight for them and that He would drive the Canaanites out before them, Deuteronomy 11:23 / Joshua 13:6.

Time and again, the people failed to drive out the Canaanites even though they were able to do so, Joshua 15:63 / Joshua 17:13 / Judges 1:19-36. Therefore, God said he would help them no longer, Judges 10:13. Perhaps the Israelites failed for two reasons: they sought peace at any price, and they wanted wealth, Joshua 17:13. Why do we fail? Luke 8:14.

We get caught up in the worries of life, and we get caught up in the riches and pleasures of life-wealth, Matthew 13:1-9 / Mark 4:1-9 / Luke 8:4-8. Because when we do, we lose the opportunity to receive something far greater.

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION

“The allotment for Joseph began at the Jordan, east of the springs of Jericho, and went up from there through the desert into the hill country of Bethel. It went on from Bethel (that is, Luz), crossed over to the territory of the Arkites in Ataroth, descended westward to the territory of the Japhletites as far as the region of Lower Beth Horon and on to Gezer, ending at the Mediterranean Sea. So Manasseh and Ephraim, the descendants of Joseph, received their inheritance.” Joshua 16:1-4

ALLOTMENT FOR EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH

The allotment for Joseph began at the Jordan, east of the springs of Jericho, and went up from there through the desert into the hill country of Bethel, Joshua 16:1.

It went on from Bethel, that is, Luz, crossed over to the territory of the Arkites in Ataroth, descended westward to the territory of the Japhletites, whom we know nothing about, as far as the region of Lower Beth Horon, Joshua 10:10, and on to Gezer, ending at the Mediterranean Sea, Joshua 16:2-3.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Luz, Joshua 16:2.

‘From Genesis 28:19, it appears that the place which Jacob called Beth-el was formerly called Luz; see the note there, but here they seem to be two distinct places. It is very likely that the place where Jacob had the vision was not in Luz, but in some place within a small distance of that city or village, Genesis 28:12, and that sometimes the whole place was called Beth-el, at other times Luz, and sometimes, as in the case above, the two places were distinguished. As we find the term London comprises, not only London, but also the city of Westminster and the borough of Southwark, though at other times all three are distinctly mentioned.’

And so Manasseh and Ephraim, the descendants of Joseph, received their inheritance, Joshua 16:4.

Dummelow, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The territory of the two tribes, described in Joshua 16:1-4, comprised the central and most fertile part of Palestine. The south border ran from Jericho to Bethel and Beth-Horon to the sea (the Mediterranean); and the north border ran from Mount Carmel, along the southern border of the plain of Esdraelon to the Jordan.’

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Despite the fact of Ephraim’s border reaching the Mediterranean at a point coinciding with the northwest corner of Judah’s territory, it appears that Dan also had a stake in the towns around Joppa, Joshua 19:45-46, thus sharing that part of the seacoast with Ephraim.’

“This was the territory of Ephraim, according to its clans: The boundary of their inheritance went from Ataroth Addar in the east to Upper Beth Horon and continued to the Mediterranean Sea. From Mikmethath on the north, it curved eastward to Taanath Shiloh, passing by it to Janoah on the east. Then it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Naarah, touched Jericho and came out at the Jordan. From Tappuah, the border went west to the Kanah Ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Ephraimites, according to its clans. It also included all the towns and their villages that were set aside for the Ephraimites within the inheritance of the Manassites.” Joshua 16:5-9

The territory of Ephraim was the boundary of their inheritance, which went from Ataroth Addar in the east to Upper Beth Horon and continued to the Mediterranean Sea and from Mikmethath on the north it curved eastward to Taanath Shiloh, passing by it to Janoah on the east, Joshua 16:5-6.

Then it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Naarah, touched Jericho and came out at the Jordan, and from Tappuah the border went west to the Kanah Ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea, Joshua 16:7-8. It also included all the towns and their villages that were set aside for the Ephraimites within the inheritance of the Manassites, Joshua 16:9 / Joshua 17:9.

“They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day, the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labour.” Joshua 16:10

Sadly, just like Judah, Joshua 15:63, Manasseh and Ephraim didn’t drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, and as a result of this, they lived among them but were required to do forced labour, Joshua 16:10.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It appears that the Canaanites were not expelled from this city till the days of Solomon, when it was taken by the king of Egypt his father-in-law, who made it a present to his daughter, Solomon’s queen, 1 Kings 9:16 / Joshua

10:33. The Ephraimites, however, had so far succeeded in subjecting these people as to oblige them to pay tribute, though they could not, or at least did not, totally expel them.’

CONCLUSION

Judah, Manasseh, and Ephraim failed in their attempts to drive out the people living in their inheritance, and the results were disastrous for Israel, Judges 1:16-2:4.

Despite God promising them that He would be with His people and fight for them and that He would drive the Canaanites out before them, Deuteronomy 11:23 / Joshua 13:6, they failed.

We can’t claim to love God, if we choose to ignore his commands, John 14:15. We love God because He first loved us, 1 John 4:19. And it is God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure, Philippians 2:13.

However, as we were created with free will, in His love for us, He will never force us to obey Him, and so we must choose, God’s will or our own, Joshua 24:15 / Matthew 6:24 / Luke 22:42.

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION

“This was the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh as Joseph’s firstborn, that is, for Makir, Manasseh’s firstborn.

Makir was the ancestor of the Gileadites, who had received Gilead and Bashan because the Makirites were great soldiers. So this allotment was for the rest of the people of Manasseh—the clans of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hephher and Shemida. These are the other male descendants of Manasseh, son of Joseph, by their clans.” Joshua 17:1-

2

Here we read of the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh as Joseph’s firstborn, that is, for Makir, Manasseh’s firstborn Joshua 17:1.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It was necessary to mark this because Jacob, in his blessing, Genesis 48:19-20, did, in a certain sense, set Ephraim before Manasseh, though the latter was the first-born; but the place here shows that this preference did not affect the rights of primogeniture.’

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Though Ephraim took precedence of Manasseh, according to the prediction of Joseph, Genesis 48:20, yet Manasseh received ‘the double portion’ which was the special privilege of the first-born, Deuteronomy 21:17.’

Makir was the ancestor of the Gileadites, who had received Gilead and Bashan because the Makirites were great soldiers, Joshua 17:1. This allotment was for the rest of the people of Manasseh and the clans are named: Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hephher and Shemida. These are the other male descendants of Manasseh, son of Joseph, Joshua 17:2.

“Now Zelophehad, son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons but only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah. They went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders and said, “The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our relatives.” So

Joshua gave them an inheritance along with the brothers of their father, according to the LORD's command. Manasseh's share consisted of ten tracts of land besides Gilead and Bashan east of the Jordan, because the daughters of the tribe of Manasseh received an inheritance among the sons. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the descendants of Manasseh." Joshua 17:3-6

Zelophehad, son of Hepher, Numbers 27:1-7 / Numbers 36:1, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons but only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah, Joshua 17:3.

As a result of having no sons, they went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and the leaders and said that God commanded Moses to give them an inheritance among our relatives, and so, Joshua gave them an inheritance along with the brothers of their father, Joshua 17:4.

Manasseh's share consisted of ten tracts of land besides Gilead and Bashan east of the Jordan, because the daughters of the tribe of Manasseh received an inheritance among the sons, and the land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the descendants of Manasseh, Joshua 17:5-6.

"The territory of Manasseh extended from Asher to Mikmethath east of Shechem. The boundary ran southward from there to include the people living at En Tappuah. (Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah itself, on the boundary of Manasseh, belonged to the Ephraimites.) Then the boundary continued south to the Kanah Ravine. There were towns belonging to Ephraim lying among the towns of Manasseh, but the boundary of Manasseh was the northern side of the ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. On the south, the land belonged to Ephraim, on the north to Manasseh. The territory of Manasseh reached the Mediterranean Sea and bordered Asher on the north and Issachar on the east." Joshua 17:7-10

The territory of Manasseh extended from Asher to Mikmethath east of Shechem, and the boundary ran southward from there to include the people living at En Tappuah, Joshua 17:7.

We are told that Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah itself, on the boundary of Manasseh, belonged to the Ephraimites, and the boundary continued south to the Kanah Ravine, Joshua 17:8-9.

There were towns belonging to Ephraim lying among the towns of Manasseh, but the boundary of Manasseh was the northern side of the ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea, Joshua 17:9.

On the south the land belonged to Ephraim, on the north to Manasseh and the territory of Manasseh reached the Mediterranean Sea and bordered Asher on the north, Joshua 19:26, and Issachar on the east, Joshua 17:10.

"Within Issachar and Asher, Manasseh also had Beth Shan, Ibleam and the people of Dor, Endor, Taanach and Megiddo, together with their surrounding settlements (the third in the list is Naphoth). Yet the Manassites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labour but did not drive them out completely." Joshua 17:11-

13

Within Issachar and Asher, Manasseh also had Beth Shan, Ibleam and the people of Dor, Endor, which was the place where Saul went to consult the witch, 1 Samuel 28:7. Taanach and Megiddo, together with their surrounding settlements, and we are told that the third in the list is Naphoth, Joshua 17:11.

The Manassites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region; however, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labour but did not drive them out completely, Joshua 17:12-13.

Sadly, just like Judah, Joshua 15:63, Manasseh and Ephraim, Joshua 16:10, the Manassites didn't drive out the Canaanites in these towns, and so as a result of this, they lived among them but were required to do forced labour, / Joshua 17:12-13 / Joshua 16:10.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The writer of the Book of Joshua noted carefully the failures of the tribes to drive the Canaanites out of their territories, as well as their successes in doing so, e.g., Caleb. The extent of the occupation of their land depended on the extent of their ability to annihilate the Canaanites by God’s power.’

“The people of Joseph said to Joshua, “Why have you given us only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? We are a numerous people, and the LORD has blessed us abundantly.” “If you are so numerous,” Joshua answered, “and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites.” The people of Joseph replied, “The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots fitted with iron, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel.” But Joshua said to the tribes of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—“You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment but the forested hill country as well. Clear it, and its farthest limits will be yours; though the Canaanites have chariots fitted with iron and though they are strong, you can drive them out.” Joshua 17:14-18

The people of Joseph now come to Joshua and ask, Why has he given them only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? There are numerous people, and God has blessed them abundantly, **Joshua 17:14**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The children of Joseph seem therefore to exhibit here that arrogant and jealous spirit which elsewhere characterises their conduct, **Judges 8:1 / Judges 12:1 / 2 Samuel 19:41 / 2 Chronicles 28:7**. A glance at the map shows that their complaint was in itself unreasonable. Their territory, which measured about 55 miles by 70 miles, was at least as large in proportion to their numbers as that of any other tribe and moreover comprehended some of the most fertile of the whole promised land.’

Joshua tells them, if they are so numerous and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for them, **Joshua 11:16**, then go up into the forest and clear land for themselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites, **Joshua 17:15**.

The people reply and say, the hill country is not enough for them, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots fitted with iron, **Exodus 14:7**, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel, **Joshua 17:16 / Judges 7:1 / Judges 7:8**.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning **Joshua 17:16**.

‘We cannot possess the plain country, because that is occupied by the Canaanites and we cannot conquer them, because they have chariots of iron, that is, very strong chariots, and armed with scythes, as is generally supposed.’

And so Joshua replies and tells Ephraim and Manasseh that they are numerous and very powerful and they will have not only one allotment but the forested hill country as well, **Joshua 17-17-18**.

He tells them to clear it, and its farthest limits will be theirs though the Canaanites have chariots fitted with iron and though they are strong, they can drive them out, **Joshua 17:18**.

CONCLUSION

At the very beginning of Israel’s journey to take the land, God told Joshua to be strong and courageous, do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for your God will be with him wherever he goes, **Joshua 1:9**.

What Israel was about to do at the beginning needed a huge amount of faith. As we’ve seen so far, Judah, **Joshua 15:63**, Manasseh and Ephraim, **Joshua 16:10**, and the Manassites didn’t drive out the Canaanites from the land.

If God promises to be with us in whatever He asks us to do, maybe we should focus on God’s promises to be with us every step of the way as He did Joshua, **Joshua 1:5 / Hebrews 13:5**. Maybe we should trust his promises and just get on with the work at hand in His kingdom, **1 Chronicles 28:20 / 1 Kings 8:57**.

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION

‘The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The country was brought under their control, but there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance. So, Joshua said to the Israelites: “How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you? Appoint three men from each tribe. I will send them out to make a survey of the land and to write a description of it, according to the inheritance of each. Then they will return to me. You are to divide the land into seven parts. Judah is to remain in its territory on the south, and the tribes of Joseph in their territory on the north. After you have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, bring them here to me, and I will cast lots for you in the presence of the LORD our God. The Levites, however, do not get a portion among you, because the priestly service of the LORD is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh have already received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan. Moses, the servant of the LORD, gave it to them.”’
Joshua 18:1-7

DIVISION OF THE REST OF THE LAND

The people who keep up with such things used to tell us that the average British family moved approximately every three years. With interest rates, what they are now, I’m sure that could be just as true today.

We are a mobile society. And where that was said mainly of the younger generations in times past, more and more people in the golden years are travelling. Still, with all of our mobility, it’s nice to have a place where we can put down roots, a place we call home.

The Israelites had left their home in Egypt for the home God was to give them. Through unbelief, they could not have that home and had to wander for nearly forty years until the unbelieving generation died, Numbers 32:13. The next generation could then go in and possess the land. Now, after battling the Canaanites for approximately seven years, the next generation begins to divide the land.

At last, they will be settled in so that they can put some roots down, or so it seems anyway. The Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there, which is the tabernacle, Joshua 18:1. Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The tabernacle stood at Gilgal, Joshua 5:10 / Joshua 10:15 / Joshua 10:43, Shiloh, Joshua 18:1 / Joshua 18:9-10, Bethel, Judges 20:18-28 / Judges 21:1-4, Shiloh, 1 Samuel 1:3, Mizpah, 1 Samuel 7:5-6, Gilgal, 1 Samuel 10:8 / 1 Samuel 13:8-10 / 1 Samuel 15:10-15, Nob, 1 Samuel 21:1-9 / 1 Samuel 22:11 / 1 Samuel 22:19, and finally at Gibeon, 1 Chronicles 16:39-40 / 1 Chronicles 21:29 / 1 Kings 3:4 / 2 Chronicles 1:3. These may not be all the places where it stood, but these are the places that the text names. Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem then replaced it.’
Shiloh was which was north of Jericho and the name means ‘rest,’ Genesis 49:10. Here the tabernacle was set up, symbolic of God’s presence with the people, Deuteronomy 12:11.
This truly seems appropriate since God now grants rest to His people. In Deuteronomy 12:9, the people are told that they haven’t entered the land of rest yet. Deuteronomy 25:19 speaks of the rest to come.
Joshua 1:15 speaks of the rest as yet future, then we are told they had rest, Joshua 14:15 / Joshua 21:44 / Joshua 22:4 / Joshua 23:1. Similarly, today there is a rest that awaits us, Hebrews 4:1-11.

Yet, all the tribes had not taken possession of the land, and seven tribes hadn't divided the inheritance, [Joshua 18:1-2](#). Joshua questions them, how long will you put off entering to take possession, [Joshua 18:3](#). Joshua tells them to appoint three men from each tribe and he will send them out to make a survey of the land and to write a description of it, according to the inheritance of each and then they will return to him, [Joshua 18:4](#). They are to divide the land into seven parts but Judah is to remain in its territory on the south and the tribes of Joseph in their territory on the north, [Joshua 18:5](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘[Joshua 18:5](#), which mentions Judah on the south and the house of Joseph on the north, shows the wisdom of God in placing these two powerful groups in such a way as to protect all of Canaan.’

After they have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, they are to take them to Joshua and he will cast lots for them in the presence of God, [Joshua 18:6](#).

Joshua tells them that the Levites won't get a portion among them, because the priestly service of God is their inheritance, [Joshua 18:7](#) / [Numbers 18:23-24](#) / [Deuteronomy 10:9](#) / [Joshua 13:33](#). Moses had already given Gad, Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan, [Joshua 18:7](#) / [Joshua 13:8](#).

“As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua instructed them, “Go and make a survey of the land and write a description of it. Then return to me, and I will cast lots for you here at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD.” So, the men left and went through the land. They wrote its description on a scroll, town by town, in seven parts, and returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the LORD, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions.” [Joshua 18:8-10](#)

As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua tells them to go and make a survey of the land and write a description of it and then return to him, and he will cast lots for them at Shiloh, [Joshua 18:8](#) / [Joshua 18:6](#).

The men do as Joshua commanded writing the description of the land on a scroll, town by town, in seven parts, and returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh, [Joshua 18:9](#). As promised, Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh and he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions, [Joshua 18:10](#) / [Joshua 18:6](#).

Plummer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This survey was undoubtedly a more careful one than that made by the spies, [Numbers 13](#), and one result was that the undivided land was found to be too small for the needs of the seven tribes, while that apportioned to Judah was seen to be disproportionately large. To remedy this, a place was found for Benjamin between Judah and Ephraim, and the portion of Simeon was taken out of the southern portion of Judah, while both Judah and Ephraim had to give up some cities to Dan.’

ALLOTMENT FOR BENJAMIN

“The first lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin according to its clans. Their allotted territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph: On the north side, their boundary began at the Jordan, passed the northern slope of Jericho, and headed west into the hill country, coming out at the wilderness of Beth Aven. From there it crossed to the south slope of Luz (that is, Bethel) and went down to Ataroth Addar on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon. From the hill facing Beth Horon on the south, the boundary turned south along the western side and came out at Kiriath Baal (that is, Kiriath Jearim), a town of the people of Judah. This was the western side. The southern side began at the outskirts of Kiriath Jearim on the west, and the boundary came out at the spring of the waters of Nephtoah. The boundary went down to the foot of the hill facing the Valley of Ben Hinnom, north of the Valley of Rephaim. It continued down the Hinnom Valley along the southern slope of the Jebusite city and so to En Rogel.” [Joshua 18:11-16](#)

Men from each tribe were commissioned by Joshua to go in and map out the land, and when the men returned, the land was then assigned by lot, Joshua 14:2 / Numbers 26:55. The first lot came to Benjamin, whose territory lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph, Joshua 18:11.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This allotment for Benjamin was providential. It fulfilled the prophecy of Deuteronomy 32:12 by placing the ultimate site of the Temple within Benjamin, and it also made Benjamin a kind of buffer state between the two powerful and mutually jealous tribes of Judah and Ephraim. This arrangement contributed to the unity and glory of the kingdom during the early phase of the monarchy.’

The northern boundary began at the Jordan, passed the northern slope of Jericho, and headed west into the hill country, coming out at the wilderness of Beth Aven and from there it crossed to the south slope of Luz, that is, Bethel, Genesis 28:19, and went down to Ataroth Addar on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon, Joshua 18:12-13. The western side went from the hill facing Beth Horon on the south, the boundary turned south along the western side and came out at Kiriath Baal, that is, Kiriath Jearim, a town of the people of Judah, Joshua 18:14.

The southern side began at the outskirts of Kiriath Jearim on the west, and the boundary came out at the spring of the waters of Nephtoah, Joshua 15:5-9, and the boundary went down to the foot of the hill facing the Valley of Ben Hinnom, north of the Valley of Rephaim and it continued down the Hinnom Valley along the southern slope of the Jebusite city and so to En Rogel, Joshua 18:15-16.

“It then curved north, went to En Shemesh, continued to Geliloth, which faces the Pass of Adummim, and ran down to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben. It continued to the northern slope of Beth Arabah and on down into the Arabah. It then went to the northern slope of Beth Hoglah and came out at the northern bay of the Dead Sea, at the mouth of the Jordan in the south. This was the southern boundary. The Jordan formed the boundary on the eastern side. These were the boundaries that marked out the inheritance of the clans of Benjamin on all sides.” Joshua 18:17-20

Benjamin’s territory then curved north, went to En Shemesh, continued to Geliloth, which faces the Pass of Adummim, and ran down to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben, Joshua 18:17.

It continued to the northern slope of Beth Arabah and on down into the Arabah and then went to the northern slope of Beth Hoglah and came out at the northern bay of the Dead Sea, at the mouth of the Jordan in the south, Joshua 18:18-19.

The Jordan formed the boundary on the eastern side, and so, these were the boundaries that marked out the inheritance of the clans of Benjamin on all sides, Joshua 18:20.

“The tribe of Benjamin, according to its clans, had the following towns: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, Kephrah Ammoni, Ophni and Geba—twelve towns and their villages. Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah, Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, Zelah, Haeleph, the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah and Kiriath—fourteen towns and their villages. This was the inheritance of Benjamin for its clans.’ Joshua 18:21-28

The tribe of Benjamin had twelve towns and villages, they are Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, Kephrah Ammoni, Ophni and Geba, Joshua 18:21-24.

They also received another fourteen towns and villages, they are Gibeon, Joshua 10:1-14, Ramah, 1 Samuel 1:19 / 1 Samuel 25:1, Beeroth, Joshua 9:3-15, Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah, Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, Zelah, 2 Samuel 21:14, Haeleph, the Jebusite city, that is, Jerusalem, Gibeah and Kiriath, Joshua 18:25-28.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Emek Keziz, Joshua 18:21.

‘The ‘Valley of Keziz,’ or ‘Emek-Keziz,’ is perhaps the ‘Wady El Keziz,’ at no great distance east of Jerusalem.’

Cook, in his commentary, says the following concerning Ophrah, Joshua 18:23.

‘This is a different ‘Ophrah’ from that in [Judges 6:11](#). It is probably the ‘Ephraim’ of [2 Chronicles 13:19](#), and [John 11:54](#).’

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Geba, [Joshua 18:24](#).

‘Supposed to be the same as Gibeah of Saul, a place famous for having given birth to the first king of Israel; and infamous for the shocking act towards the Levite’s wife, mentioned, [Judges 19:16-30](#), which was the cause of a war in which the tribe of Benjamin was nearly exterminated, [Judges 20:29-48](#).’

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning Mizpah, [Joshua 18:26](#).

‘Here the people were accustomed to assemble often in the presence of the Lord, as in the deliberation concerning the punishment to be inflicted on the men of Gibeah, for the abuse of the Levite’s wife, [Judges 20:1-3](#). Samuel assembled the people here to exhort them to renounce their idolatry, [1 Samuel 7:5-6](#). In this same place, Saul was chosen to be king, [1 Samuel 10:17](#).’

CONCLUSION

With the land now being distributed and God’s people receiving their land, we are reminded that God keeps His promises. The promise He gave to Abram, where God makes a covenant with him specifying the boundaries of the land, [Genesis 17:8](#) / [Genesis 15:18-21](#).

As Christians, we too are blessed with the promise of eternal life, [1 John 2:25](#), but in the meantime, we are also promised to have life to the full, [John 10:10](#), while we wait for our eternal home.

As we go through life, we must never forget where our real citizenship is, and that is heaven, [Philippians 3:20-21](#). We must never forget that our real inheritance is eternal life with Christ, [Romans 6:23](#).

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION

‘The second lot came out for the tribe of Simeon according to its clans. Their inheritance lay within the territory of Judah. It included: Beersheba (or Sheba), Moladah, Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, Ziklag, Beth Markaboth, Hazar Susah, Beth Lebaoth and Sharuhen—thirteen towns and their villages; Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan—four towns and their villages—and all the villages around these towns as far as Baalath Beer (Ramah in the Negev). This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Simeonites, according to its clans. The inheritance of the Simeonites was taken from the share of Judah because Judah’s portion was more than they needed. So, the Simeonites received their inheritance within the territory of Judah.’ [Joshua 19:1-9](#)

ALLOTMENT FOR SIMEON

The second lot came out for the tribe of Simeon, and their inheritance lay within the territory of Judah, [Joshua 19:1](#). Their land included thirteen towns and villages.

They are, Beersheba or Sheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, Ziklag, Beth Markaboth, Hazar Susah, Beth Lebaoth and Sharuhem, [Joshua 19:2-6](#).

They received another four towns and their villages, they are Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan and all the villages around these towns as far as Baalath Beer, Ramah in the Negev, [Joshua 19:7-8](#).

The inheritance of the Simeonites was taken from the share of Judah because Judah's portion was more than they needed, and so, the Simeonites received their inheritance within the territory of Judah, [Joshua 19:9](#). The names of all these towns also occur in Judah's list, [Joshua 15:26-32](#) / [Joshua 15:42](#).

Simeon and Levi, through a colossal lie, killed Shechem and his people for the rape of their sister Dinah, [Genesis 34:25-26](#). Jacob had prophesied that they would be dispersed and they were, [Genesis 49:5-7](#).

ALLOTMENT FOR ZEBULUN

‘The third lot came up for Zebulun according to its clans: The boundary of their inheritance went as far as Sarid. Going west, it ran to Maralah, touched Dabbesheth, and extended to the ravine near Jokneam. It turned east from Sarid toward the sunrise to the territory of Kisloth Tabor and went on to Daberath and up to Japhia. Then it continued eastward to Gath Hephher and Eth Kazin; it came out at Rimmon and turned toward Neah. There, the boundary went around on the north to Hannathon and ended at the Valley of Iphtah El. Included were Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah and Bethlehem. There were twelve towns and their villages. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of Zebulun, according to its clans.’ [Joshua 19:10-16](#)

The third lot came up for Zebulun, [Joshua 19:10](#) / [Joshua 19:16](#) / [Genesis 49:13](#), and their boundary went as far as Sarid, [Joshua 19:10](#). Going west, it ran to Maralah, touched Dabbesheth, and extended to the ravine near Jokneam, and it turned east from Sarid toward the sunrise to the territory of Kisloth Tabor and went on to Daberath and up to Japhia, [Joshua 19:11-12](#).

Then it continued eastward to Gath Hephher, where the prophet Jonah was from, [2 Kings 14:25](#), and Eth Kazin, it came out at Rimmon, which was a Levitical city, [Joshua 21:35](#) / [1 Chronicles 6:77](#), and turned toward Neah.

And there the boundary went around on the north to Hannathon and ended at the Valley of Iphtah El, [Joshua 19:13-14](#). They received twelve towns and villages, including Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah and Bethlehem, [Joshua 19:15](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The territory of Zebulun accordingly would not anywhere reach to the Mediterranean, though its eastern side abutted on the sea of Galilee and gave the tribe those ‘outgoings’ attributed to it in the Blessing of Moses, [Deuteronomy 33:18](#).’

ALLOTMENT FOR ISSACHAR

‘The fourth lot came out for Issachar according to its clans. Their territory included: Jezreel, Kesulloth, Shunem, Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah and Beth Pазzez. The boundary touched Tabor, Shahazumah and Beth Shemesh, and ended at the Jordan. There were sixteen towns and their villages. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar, according to its clans.
[Joshua 19:17-23](#)

The fourth lot came out for Issachar, [Joshua 19:17](#) / [Joshua 19:23](#) / [Genesis 49:14-15](#). There were sixteen towns and villages. They are Jezreel, [Joshua 17:16](#), Kesulloth, Shunem, Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez.

Remeth, En Gannim, which is also a Levitical city, [Joshua 21:29](#), and called Ahem, [1 Chronicles 6:73](#). En Haddah and Beth Pazzez and the boundary touched Tabor, [1 Chronicles 6:77](#), Shahazumah and Beth Shemesh, and ended at the Jordan, [Joshua 19:18-22](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Shunem, [Joshua 19:17](#).

‘Here the Philistines pitched before the battle of Gilboa, [1 Samuel 28:4](#). The place is also known as the home of Abishag, [1 Kings 1:3](#), and in connection with Elisha, [2 Kings 4:8](#) / [2 Kings 8:1](#). It is identified with ‘Solam’ (or, Sulem), a small and poor village on the slope of Little Hermon.’

ALLOTMENT FOR ASHER

‘The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher according to its clans. Their territory included: Helkath, Hali, Beten, Akshaph, Allammelek, Amad and Mishal. On the west, the boundary touched Carmel and Shihor Libnath. It then turned east toward Beth Dagon, touched Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtah El, and went north to Beth Emek and Neiel, passing Kabul on the left. It went to Abdon, Rehob, Hammon and Kanah, as far as Greater Sidon. The boundary then turned back toward Ramah and went to the fortified city of Tyre, turned toward Hosah and came out at the Mediterranean Sea in the region of Akzib, Ummah, Aphek and Rehob. There were twenty-two towns and their villages. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Asher, according to its clans.’ [Joshua 19:24-31](#)

The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher, [Joshua 19:24](#) / [Joshua 19:31](#) / [Genesis 49:20](#). There were twenty-two towns and villages, they are Helkath, which is also a Levitical town, [Joshua 21:31](#), Hali, Beten, Akshaph, Allammelek, Amad and Mishal. To the west, the boundary touched Carmel and Shihor Libnath, [Joshua 19:25-26](#). The boundary then turned east toward Beth Dagon, touched Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtah El, and went north to Beth Emek and Neiel, passing Kabul on the left, and it went to Abdon, Rehob, Hammon and Kanah, as far as Greater Sidon, [Joshua 19:27-28](#).

The boundary then turned back toward Ramah and went to the fortified city of Tyre, turned toward Hosah and came out at the Mediterranean Sea in the region of Akzib, Ummah, Aphek and Rehob, [Joshua 19:29-30](#).

ALLOTMENT FOR NAPHTALI

‘The sixth lot came out for Naphtali according to its clans: Their boundary went from Heleph and the large tree in Zaanannim, passing Adami Nekeb and Jabneel to Lakkum and ending at the Jordan. The boundary ran west through Aznoth Tabor and came out at Hukkok. It touched Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west and the Jordan on the east. The fortified towns were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth, Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath and Beth Shemesh. There were nineteen towns and their villages. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Naphtali, according to its clans.’ [Joshua 19:32-39](#)

The sixth lot came out for Naphtali, [Joshua 19:32](#) / [Joshua 19:29](#) / [Genesis 49:21](#). Their boundary went from Heleph and the large tree in Zaanannim, passing Adami Nekeb and Jabneel to Lakkum and ending at the Jordan, [Joshua 19:33](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning Zaanannim, [Joshua 19:33](#).

‘From [Judges 4:11](#), it appears that this oak or oak-forest was near Kedesh.’

The boundary ran west through Aznoth Tabor and came out at Hukkok, and it touched Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west and the Jordan on the east, [Joshua 19:34](#).

There were nineteen towns and villages, which were fortified, they are Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, which is also a Levitical city, [Joshua 21:32](#) / [1 Chronicles 6:76](#), Rakkath, Kinnereth, Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath and Beth Shemesh, [Joshua 19:35-38](#).

ALLOTMENT FOR DAN

‘The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan according to its clans. The territory of their inheritance included: Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, Elon, Timnah, Ekron, Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, Me Jarkon and Rakkon, with the area facing Joppa. (When the territory of the Danites was lost to them, they went up and attacked Leshem, took it, put it to the sword, and occupied it. They settled in Leshem and named it Dan after their ancestor.) These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Dan, according to its clans. [Joshua 19:40-48](#)

The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan, [Joshua 19:40](#) / [Joshua 19:48](#) / [Genesis 49:17-18](#). The territory included Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, Elon, Timnah, Ekron, Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, Me Jarkon and Rakkon, with the area facing Joppa, [Joshua 19:41-46](#).

We are told that when the territory of the Danites was lost to them, they went up and attacked Leshem, took it, put it to the sword, and occupied it, and they settled in Leshem and named it Dan after their ancestor, [Joshua 19:47](#) / [Numbers 26:5](#) / [Judges 1:34-35](#).

Davis and Whitcomb, in their commentary, say the following.

‘The Amorites, who settled portions of the Philistine plain, [Judges 1:34](#), drove the Danites out of the plains and into the hills. This led to a migration of part of the tribe of Dan northward to Leshem near the northern part of Naphtali, [Judges 17-18](#).’

ALLOTMENT FOR JOSHUA

‘When they had finished dividing the land into its allotted portions, the Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them, as the LORD had commanded. They gave him the town he asked for—Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim. And he built up the town and settled there.” [Joshua 19:49-50](#)

After everyone else received their inheritance, the Israelites gave Joshua an inheritance among them as God had commended, [Joshua 19:49-50](#) / [Joshua 1:3](#). They gave him the town he asked for, which was Timnath Serah, [Judges 2:9](#), in the hill country of Ephraim, and he built up the town and settled there, [Joshua 19:50](#).

Madvig, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Caleb and Joshua were the two faithful spies who believed God was able to give Israel the land, [Numbers 14:6-9](#) / [Numbers 14:30](#). The receiving of their inheritances frames the story of the dividing of the land among the nine and a half tribes, with Caleb’s at the beginning, [Joshua 14:6-15](#), and Joshua’s at the end. Caleb and Joshua are living examples of God’s faithfulness in fulfilling his promises made more than forty years earlier.’

“These are the territories that Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the tribal clans of Israel assigned by lot at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And so they finished dividing the land.’ [Joshua 19:51](#)

These are the territories that Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the tribal clans of Israel assigned by lot at Shiloh in the presence of God at the entrance to the tent of meeting, that is, the tabernacle, Joshua 19:51 / Joshua 18:1, and so the work was complete, Joshua 19:51.

Butler, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The gift of the land brought blessings not only to the nation as a whole and to the individual tribes. It also brought blessings to the faithful leader. God commanded Israel to reward the individual for his faithfulness. Thus, the Deuteronomic understanding of blessing and curse is expressed not only on the corporate, but also on the individual level. This, too, stands as a source of encouragement to Israel through the years as many of her people become dispersed from the main body of the people of God.’

CONCLUSION

It seems like God’s people always need to be stirred up; it took the encouragement from Caleb and Joshua to stir God’s people into action. We all need a bit of stirring up at times.

Paul did it to Timothy, 2 Timothy 1:16, Peter did it to his readers, 2 Peter 1:13 / 2 Peter 3:1, and Paul did it to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 8:10 / 2 Corinthians 8:11.

Encouraging other people is a gift from God, Romans 12:7-8, and as Christians, we too must be in the encouragement business. Whether at work, at home or in our congregations, we should try our best to encourage others, 1 Thessalonians 5:11 / 2 Peter 3:18. Encouraging one another may be simply listening to someone or comforting someone who is going through a difficult time, Romans 12:15.

In most congregations there is someone who is a great encourager, the question is who encourages the encourager? Why not go out of your way to encourage those who encourage others?

CHAPTER 20

INTROUCTION

‘Then the LORD said to Joshua: “Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood. When they flee to one of these cities, they are to stand in the entrance of the city gate and state their case before the elders of that city. Then the elders are to admit the fugitive into their city and provide a place to live among them. If the avenger of blood comes in pursuit, the elders must not surrender the fugitive, because the fugitive killed their neighbour unintentionally and without malice aforethought. They are to stay in that city until they have stood trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time. Then they may go back to their own home in the town from which they fled.” Joshua 20:1-6

CITIES OF REFUGE

God asks Joshua to tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as He instructed him through Moses, [Joshua 20:1](#). Cities of refuge were established in reference to the civil laws of the nation and six of the cities were given to the Levites to which a person who has killed someone accidentally may flee, [Joshua 20:2](#) / [Joshua 20:9](#) / [Numbers 35:6](#) / [Numbers 35:9-11](#) / [Deuteronomy 4:41-43](#) / [Deuteronomy 19:1-14](#).

They will be places of refuge from the avenger, [Joshua 19:3](#) / [Genesis 9:6](#), so that anyone accused of murder may not die before they stand trial before the assembly, [Joshua 20:4](#) / [Numbers 35:12](#) / [Joshua 20:4](#) / [Joshua 20:6](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘If he was found worthy of death, they delivered him to the avenger that he might be slain, [Deuteronomy 19:12](#), if not, they sent him back to the city of refuge, where he remained till the death of the high priest, [Numbers 35:25](#). Before the cities of refuge were appointed, the altar appears to have been a sanctuary for those who had killed a person unwittingly, [Exodus 21:13](#) / [Exodus 21:14](#).’

“So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. East of the Jordan (on the other side from Jericho), they designated Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau in the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead in the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan in the tribe of Manasseh. Any of the Israelites or any foreigner residing among them who killed someone accidentally could flee to these designated cities and not be killed by the avenger of blood prior to standing trial before the assembly.’ [Joshua 20:7-9](#)

These six towns will be their cities of refuge, [Joshua 20:7-8](#) / [Numbers 35:13](#). There were three cities of refuge on the west side of the Jordan and three were on the east side, [Numbers 35:14](#).

On the west side of the of Jordan, Kedesh, [Joshua 20:7](#), in Galilee was given from the tribe of Naphtali, [Joshua 21:32](#). Shechem, [Joshua 20:7](#), was given from the tribe of Ephraim, [Joshua 21:21](#). Kiriath-Arba, Hebron, [Joshua 20:7](#), was given from the tribe of Judah, [Joshua 20:7](#).

From the east side of the Jordan, Bezer, [Joshua 20:8](#), was given from the tribe of Reuben, [Joshua 21:36](#). Ramoth-Gilead, [Joshua 20:8](#), was given from the tribe of Gad, [Joshua 21:38](#). Golan in Bashan, [Joshua 20:8](#), was given from the tribe of Manasseh, [Joshua 21:27](#).

Back then, cities of refuge had meaning to their names. Shechem means shoulder or back or strength, Hebron means fellowship, Kedesh means holy, sanctuary, Golan means joy, exultation, Ramoth means high, exalted, and Bezer means fortification, stronghold.

These six cities will be a place of refuge for Israelites and for foreigners residing among them, so that anyone who has killed another accidentally can flee there, [Joshua 20:9](#) / [Numbers 35:15](#).

The cities are mentioned in [Joshua 20:7-8](#) / [Exodus 21](#) / [Numbers 35](#) / [Deuteronomy 19](#). Roads leading to these cities were kept in excellent condition, with signposts reading, ‘Refuge! Refuge!’ The cities were no more than half a day’s journey from any other city, [Joshua 20:7-8](#).

The cities were in central locations where they could easily be reached from any part of the country. The cities of refuge were open to all, and the doors into the cities were never locked. The cities were stocked with food, and there was no protection if a man did not flee to a city of refuge.

The principle behind these cities is based on the law of the avenger who could avenge the death of a relative who was killed. The next of kin had the right to avenge the death of a relative.

Unless the avenging relative acted out of the heat of the moment when a relative was accidentally killed, the attacker could escape to a city of refuge until a judgment could be made, [Genesis 9:6](#).

In these verses, we read about the classifications for those who had a right to flee to the cities of refuge. There was a difference between manslaughter, that is, someone who accidentally killed someone else, and an actual murderer. The difference between the two is based on intent.

If someone was killed by using a weapon, a weapon made of iron, Numbers 35:16, stone, Numbers 35:17, or wood, Numbers 35:18, then this would be classed as murder and was to be put to death, Numbers 25:16-18.

If a murder took place, the avenger could kill the murderer on the spot, Numbers 35:19. This same law applied to those who, out of hatred, killed another, Numbers 35:20-21.

The murderer was someone who intentionally killed someone else, whereas the manslaughterer was someone who had no such intent, but unintentionally killed someone. Anyone who killed someone accidentally was dealt with differently.

If, without enmity someone suddenly pushes another or throws something at them unintentionally or, without seeing them, drops on them a stone heavy enough to kill them, and they die.

Then since that other person was not an enemy and no harm was intended, the assembly must judge between the accused and the avenger of blood according to these regulations, Numbers 35:22-24.

Only those who accidentally killed someone were able to flee to the cities of refuge, Numbers 35:25. They could flee to the city of refuge in order to escape the vengeance of a near relative, Numbers 35:25.

However, if anyone exercised the privilege of escaping to a refuge city, they had to stay in the city until the high priest died, then they could return home, Joshua 20:5-6 / Numbers 35:25.

If that same person who killed someone accidentally decided to go outside of the city of refuge before the high priest died, then the near relative of the one who was killed could kill them without any guilt, Numbers 35:26-27.

If the high priest died, the one who accidentally killed someone could return to his property, and the near relative had no right to avenge the death of his relative, Numbers 35:28. This is to have the force of law for Israel throughout the generations to come, wherever they live, Numbers 35:29.

Notice that capital punishment could only be carried out when more than one witness could testify to the fact that murder was committed, Numbers 35:30 / Deuteronomy 17:6-7.

No amount of money could be paid to free the one who was guilty of murder, Numbers 35:31 / Exodus 21:30, and neither could any amount of money be paid in order that anyone who accidentally killed someone could leave a city of refuge before the death of the high priest, Numbers 35:32.

Israel must not pollute the land where they are because bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it, Numbers 35:33. Israel must not defile the land where they live because God's dwells there among them, Numbers 35:34.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘No wonder God is so particularly strict in his laws against murderers.

1. Because he is the author of life, and none has any right to dispose of it but himself.
2. Because life is the time to prepare for the eternal world, and on it the salvation of the soul accordingly depends, therefore it is of infinite consequence to the man that his life be lengthened out to the utmost limits assigned by Divine Providence.

As he who takes a man's life away before his time may be the murderer of his soul as well as of his body, the severest laws should be enacted against this, both to punish and prevent the crime.’

Clarke, in his commentary, continues and says the following.

‘The death penalty was given in order to keep society pure from the sickness of murderers. Once someone murders someone else, then the land is defiled by those who have no value for life. The death penalty, therefore, was God's way of keeping society clean from moral decay in reference to anyone who had no value for life, Genesis 9:6.’

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CITIES

The Bible Hub says the following.

1. Refuge and Safety.

Just as the Cities of Refuge provided a safe haven for the manslayer, Christ offers refuge to sinners seeking salvation. Hebrews 6:18 speaks of believers who ‘have fled to take hold of the hope set before us,’ drawing a parallel to the act of fleeing to a place of safety. In Christ, believers find protection from the ultimate avenger, the justice of God, which demands retribution for sin.

2. Accessibility.

The cities were strategically located and easily accessible, ensuring that anyone in need could reach them without undue delay. This reflects the availability of Christ to all who seek Him. Romans 10:13 declares, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ The open access to these cities symbolises the open invitation of the Gospel.

3. Impartiality.

The Cities of Refuge were available to all, regardless of social status or nationality, as stated in Numbers 35:15. ‘These six cities will serve as a refuge for the Israelites, as well as for the foreigner or temporary resident among them.’ This inclusivity prefigures the universal offer of salvation through Christ, who breaks down barriers and extends grace to all humanity, Galatians 3:28.

4. High Priest’s Death.

The manslayer was required to remain in the city until the death of the high priest, at which point they could return home without fear, Numbers 35:25-28. This aspect foreshadows the death of Christ, our High Priest, whose sacrificial death liberates believers from the penalty of sin. Hebrews 9:15 states, ‘For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.’

5. Judgment and Mercy.

The cities balanced justice and mercy, ensuring that the innocent were protected while the guilty were held accountable. This balance is perfectly embodied in Christ, who fulfils the law’s demands while offering mercy through His atoning sacrifice. John 1:17 affirms, ‘For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.’

CONCLUSION

The Cities of Refuge serve as a multifaceted type of Christ, illustrating His role as a sanctuary for sinners, His accessibility and impartiality, and the profound implications of His sacrificial death.

Through this typology, believers gain a deeper understanding of the comprehensive nature of Christ’s redemptive work and the assurance of safety found in Him. What do you need in your life by way of a place of refuge?

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION

‘Now the family heads of the Levites approached Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the heads of the other tribal families of Israel at Shiloh in Canaan and said to them, “The LORD commanded through Moses that you give us towns to live in, with pasturelands for our livestock.” So, as the LORD had commanded, the Israelites gave the Levites the following towns and pasturelands out of their own inheritance.’ Joshua 21:1-3

TOWNS FOR THE LEVITES

The family heads of the Levites approached Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the heads of the other tribal families of Israel at Shiloh, [Joshua 18:1](#). The Levites were given no inheritance of land because God was their inheritance, [Numbers 18:20](#).

However, on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, God speaks to Moses and asks him to command the Israelites to give the Levites towns to live in from the inheritance the Israelites will possess and give them pasture lands that surround the towns, [Joshua 21:2](#) / [Numbers 35:1-2](#).

The Levites will have towns to live in and pasturelands for the cattle they own and all their other animals, [Numbers 35:3](#). So, as God had commanded, the Israelites gave the Levites the following towns and pasturelands out of their own inheritance, [Joshua 21:3](#) / [1 Chronicles 6:54-81](#).

The pasturelands around the towns that are to be given to the Levites will extend a thousand cubits, which is around one thousand five-hundred feet from the town wall, [Numbers 35:4](#).

The outside of the town measures two thousand cubits, which is around two thousand feet on the east side, two thousand on the south side, two thousand on the west and two thousand on the north, with the town in the centre, [Numbers 35:5](#).

There were to be a total of forty-eight towns for the Levites, six cities of refuge, and forty-two additional cities. The towns the Levites are to be given are from the land the Israelites possess and are to be given in proportion to the inheritance of each tribe, [Numbers 35:8](#). Moses tells us that he was to take many towns from a tribe that has many, but few from one that has few, [Numbers 35:8](#).

Rea, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This distribution of the Levitical cities was a fulfilment of Jacob’s curse on Levi, [Genesis 49:5-7](#), but God overruled it, through Moses, because of this tribe’s having stood with Moses in a crucial hour, [Exodus 32:26](#).’

Levi, like Simeon, had sinned grossly, [Genesis 34:25-26](#), and their punishment was to be their dispersion throughout the people. However, twice the Levites showed themselves to be faithful to God.

They sided with Moses when the golden calf was built, and the people were ready to give themselves to idolatry, [Exodus 32:26](#). Phinehas, a Levite, vindicated God’s justice on the plains of Moab, [Numbers 25](#). Therefore, they received forty-eight cities and were provided for by the people of God. Repentance brings blessing, [Jeremiah 18:7-8](#) / [Ezekiel 18:30-32](#) / [Acts 2:38](#).

‘The first lot came out for the Kohathites, according to their clans. The Levites, who were descendants of Aaron the priest, were allotted thirteen towns from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. The rest of Kohath’s descendants were allotted ten towns from the clans of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and half of Manasseh. The descendants of Gershon were allotted thirteen towns from the clans of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. The descendants of Merari, according to their clans, received twelve towns from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun. So, the Israelites allotted to the Levites these towns and their pasturelands, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.” Joshua 21:4-8

The first lot came out for the Kohathites, and we are told that the Levites, who were descendants of Aaron the priest, were allotted thirteen towns from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, Joshua 21:4.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This number is said to be too great for the single family of Aaron. But it appears, 1 Chronicles 24:1-19, that the two surviving sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar, had together 24 sons, the heads of the priestly families. Since Aaron was 123 years old when he died, Numbers 33:39, his sons’ grandchildren and great-grandchildren were no doubt living in the elapsing years of Joshua’s course and had to be provided with dwellings.’

The rest of Kohath’s descendants were allotted ten towns from the clans of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and half of Manasseh, Joshua 21:5. The descendants of Gershon were allotted thirteen towns from the clans of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, Joshua 21:6.

The descendants of Merari, according to their clans, received twelve towns from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun, Joshua 21:7. And so the Israelites allotted to the Levites these towns and their pasturelands, as the LORD had commanded through Moses, Joshua 21:8 / Joshua 21:1-3 / Numbers 35:1-2.

‘From the tribes of Judah and Simeon, they allotted the following towns by name (these towns were assigned to the descendants of Aaron who were from the Kohathite clans of the Levites, because the first lot fell to them): They gave them Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), with its surrounding pastureland, in the hill country of Judah. (Arba was the forefather of Anak.) But the fields and villages around the city they had given to Caleb, son of Jephunneh, as his possession.’ Joshua 21:9-12

From the tribes of Judah and Simeon, they allotted the following towns by name, and we are told that these towns were assigned to the descendants of Aaron who were from the Kohathite clans of the Levites, because the first lot fell to them, Joshua 21:9-10.

They were given Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron, with its surrounding pastureland, in the hill country of Judah, and we are told that Arba was the forefather of Anak, Joshua 21:11. But the fields and villages around the city they had given to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his possession, Joshua 21:12.

‘So, to the descendants of Aaron the priest, they gave Hebron (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa, Holon, Debir, Ain, Juttah and Beth Shemesh, together with their pasturelands—nine towns from these two tribes. And from the tribe of Benjamin, they gave them Gibeon, Geba, Anathoth and Almon, together with their pasturelands—four towns. The total number of towns for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, came to thirteen, together with their pasturelands. The rest of the Kohathite clans of the Levites were allotted towns from the tribe of Ephraim: In the hill country of Ephraim, they were given Shechem (a city of refuge for one accused of murder) and Gezer, Kibzaim and Beth Horon, together with their pasturelands—four towns.’ Joshua 21:13-22

To the descendants of Aaron the priest, they gave Hebron, which we are told is a city of refuge for one accused of murder, Joshua 21:13 / Joshua 20:1-6 / Joshua 20:7. Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa, Holon, Debir, Ain, Juttah and Beth Shemesh, together with their pasturelands, nine towns from these two tribes, Joshua 21:13-16.

And from the tribe of Benjamin, they gave them Gibeon, Geba, Anathoth and Almon, together with their pasturelands, four towns, Joshua 21:17-18. We are told that the total number of towns for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, came to thirteen, together with their pasturelands, Joshua 21:19.

The rest of the Kohathite clans of the Levites were allotted towns from the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua 21:20. In the hill country of Ephraim they were given Shechem, which we are told is a city of refuge for one accused of murder, Joshua 21:21 / Joshua 20:1-6 / Joshua 20:7. Gezer, Kibzaim and Beth Horon, 1 Chronicles 6:68, together with their pasturelands, four towns, Joshua 21:21-22.

‘Also from the tribe of Dan, they received Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Aijalon and Gath Rimmon, together with their pasturelands—four towns. From half the tribe of Manasseh, they received Taanach and Gath Rimmon, together with their pasturelands—two towns. All these ten towns and their pasturelands were given to the rest of the Kohathite

clans. The Levite clans of the Gershonites were given: from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan (a city of refuge for one accused of murder) and Be Eshterah, together with their pasturelands—two towns; from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion, Daberath, Jarmuth and En Gannim, together with their pasturelands—four towns; from the tribe of Asher, Mishal, Abdon, Helkath and Rehob, together with their pasturelands—four towns; from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Hammoth Dor and Kartan, together with their pasturelands—three towns. The total number of towns of the Gershonite clans came to thirteen, together with their pasturelands.’ Joshua 21:23-33

Also from the tribe of Dan, they received Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Aijalon and Gath Rimmon, [1 Chronicles 6:70](#) / [Joshua 17:11](#), together with their pasturelands, four towns, [Joshua 13:23-24](#).

From half the tribe of Manasseh, they received Taanach and Gath Rimmon, together with their pasturelands, two towns, [Joshua 13:25](#). We are told that all these ten towns and their pasturelands were given to the rest of the Kohathite clans, [Joshua 21:26](#).

The Levite clans of the Gershonites were given from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan, which we are told is a city of refuge for one accused of murder, [Joshua 21:27](#) / [Joshua 20:1-6](#) / [Joshua 20:8](#). Be Eshterah, together with their pasturelands, two towns, [Joshua 21:27-28](#).

From the tribe of Issachar, Kishion, Daberath, Jarmuth and En Gannim, together with their pasturelands, four towns, [Joshua 21:29](#). From the tribe of Asher, Mishal, Abdon, Helkath and Rehob, together with their pasturelands, four towns, [Joshua 21:30-31](#). From the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee, which we are told is a city of refuge for one accused of murder, [Joshua 21:32](#) / [Joshua 20:1-6](#) / [Joshua 20:7](#).

Hammoth Dor and Kartan, together with their pasturelands, three towns, [Joshua 21:32](#). The total number of towns of the Gershonite clans came to thirteen, together with their pasturelands, [Joshua 21:33](#).

Blair, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In all of these assignments, it should be remembered that the Levites were neither the sole possessors of those cities nor the rulers of them. The regulation meant that adequate room for the Levites was to be provided, and that they had the right to the pasture lands around their cities.’

‘The Merarite clans (the rest of the Levites) were given: from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam, Kartah, Dimnah and Nahalal, together with their pasturelands—four towns; from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer, Jahaz, Kedemoth and Mephaath, together with their pasturelands—four towns; from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Mahanaim, Heshbon and Jazer, together with their pasturelands—four towns in all. The total number of towns allotted to the Merarite clans, who were the rest of the Levites, came to twelve. The towns of the Levites in the territory held by the Israelites were forty-eight in all, together with their pasturelands. Each of these towns had pasturelands surrounding it; this was true for all these towns.’ Joshua 21:34-42

The Merarite clans, the rest of the Levites were given from the tribe of Zebulun, [Joshua 19:10-16](#), Jokneam, Kartah, Dimnah and Nahalal, together with their pasturelands, four towns, [Joshua 21:34-35](#). From the tribe of Reuben, Bezer, Jahaz, Kedemoth and Mephaath, together with their pasturelands, four towns, [Joshua 21:36-37](#).

From the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead, which we are told is a city of refuge for one accused of murder, [Joshua 21:38](#) / [Joshua 20:1-6](#) / [Joshua 20:8](#). Mahanaim, Heshbon and Jazer, together with their pasturelands, four towns in all, [Joshua 21:38-39](#). The total number of towns allotted to the Merarite clans, who were the rest of the Levites, came to twelve, [Joshua 21:40](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It is specifically pointed out that each of these four divisions of the cities of the Levites received either one or two of the cities of refuge: (1) The priests received Hebron; (2) the rest of the Kohathites received Shechem; (3) The Gershonites received Golan and Kedesh; (4) The Merarites received Bezer and Ramoth-Gilead.’

The towns of the Levites in the territory held by the Israelites were forty-eight in all, together with their pasturelands, [Joshua 21:41](#) / [Numbers 35:7](#). Each of these towns had pasturelands surrounding it, this was true for all these towns, [Joshua 21:42](#).

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘After this verse, [Joshua 21:42](#), the Septuagint introduces a passage (in part a repetition from [Joshua 19:49-50](#)), recording the grant of a special inheritance to Joshua, and also that he buried at Timnath-Serah the flint-knives with which he had circumcised, [Joshua 5:2](#), the people after the passage of Jordan. The latter statement, which has the authority of the Septuagint only, is a Jewish legend of early date.’

‘So, the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hands. Not one of all the LORD’s good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled’. Judges 21:43-45

Notice it says that God gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, [Deuteronomy 7:22](#), and they took possession of it and settled there, [Joshua 21:43](#).

God gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors and not one of their enemies withstood them because God gave all their enemies into their hands, [Joshua 21:44](#). And then we read one of the most important verses within the Bible, not one of God’s good promises to Israel failed, every one was fulfilled, [Joshua 21:45](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These verses enable us to see the big picture. God has indeed accomplished exactly what He intended; He has moved the newly-created nation of Israel into the room of the shameful Canaanites whose cup of wickedness was running over, and this nation, in the process of time, would deliver to mankind the Redeemer in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.’

CONCLUSION

God provides for all of our needs, and as long as we endeavour to do God’s will, He will bless us, [Matthew 6:33](#). One of the contentions of the premillennialists is that the land promise was never fulfilled.

They say that the Jews must still receive their land, and then Jesus will return to set up the kingdom He promised.

However, [Joshua 21:43-45](#), very clearly says that God gave them ALL THE LAND.

CHAPTER 22

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh and said to them, “You have done all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. For a long time now—to this very day—you have not deserted your fellow Israelites but have carried out the mission the LORD your God gave you. Now that the LORD your God has given them rest as he promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. But be very careful to keep

the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their homes. (To the half-tribe of Manasseh, Moses had given land in Bashan, and to the other half of the tribe, Joshua gave land on the west side of the Jordan along with their fellow Israelites.) When Joshua sent them home, he blessed them, saying, “Return to your homes with your great wealth—with large herds of livestock, with silver, gold, bronze and iron, and a great quantity of clothing—and divide the plunder from your enemies with your fellow Israelites.” So, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh left the Israelites at Shiloh in Canaan to return to Gilead, their own land, which they had acquired in accordance with the command of the LORD through Moses. Joshua 22:1-9

EASTERN TRIBES RETURN HOME

This chapter deals with false criticism. Joshua starts by commending the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh because they had obeyed Moses, [Joshua 22:1-2](#) / [Numbers 32:1-27](#).

Following the defeat of the Midianite kings, the two and a half tribes requested that the land east of Jordan be given to them as their possession, [Numbers 32:5](#). Moses at first was suspicious of the idea because he felt it would prevent the rest of the people from crossing over, [Numbers 32:6](#).

The men of the two and a half tribes assured Moses that they would fight with their brothers until the land was subdued west of Jordan, [Numbers 22:18-19](#). Moses then made an agreement with them that if they would help take the land of Canaan, then they could have the land east of Jordan, [Numbers 32:20-22](#).

Moses then gave the word to Joshua and to Eleazar the priest that the two and a half tribes were to receive the land east of Jordan that had belonged to Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, [Numbers 32:28-33](#).

In short, they had obeyed Joshua, they had fought alongside their brothers, they had obeyed God, and therefore, they could go and possess the land east of Jordan, [Joshua 22:3-4](#) / [Joshua 1:12-18](#).

Joshua then goes on and commands the two and a half tribes to love God, walk in all His ways, keep His commandments, hold fast to Him, and serve Him with all their heart and soul, [Joshua 22:5](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Here we have six one-syllable words, dramatic imperatives that can lead the soul into a state of being well pleasing to God. The message here is founded upon the ‘first and great commandment’, [Mark 12:29-30](#). Throughout the Scriptures, the ‘love of God’ is equated with keeping God’s Word and doing His will, [John 14:15](#) / [John 14:23](#).’

Joshua then proceeds to compensate the two and a half tribes and so he blessed them, and they went to their homes, [Joshua 22:6](#). We are told to the half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given land in Bashan, and to the other half of the tribe Joshua gave land on the west side of the Jordan along with their fellow Israelites, [Joshua 22:7](#) / [Joshua 13:8](#) / [Joshua 14:3](#) / [Joshua 18:7](#).

Joshua sent them home and blessed them again and gave them a portion of the spoil, [Joshua 22:8](#). So the two and a half tribes left the Israelites at Shiloh, [Joshua 18:1](#), to return to Gilead, their own land, which they had acquired in accordance with the command of the LORD through Moses, [Joshua 22:9](#) / [Numbers 32:1-5](#).

‘When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. And when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them. So, the Israelites sent Phinehas, son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. With him, they sent ten of the chief men, one from each of the tribes of Israel, each the head of a family division among the Israelite clans. When they went to Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—they said to them: “The whole assembly of the LORD says: ‘How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the LORD and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day, we have not cleansed ourselves from

that sin, even though a plague fell on the community of the LORD! And are you now turning away from the LORD? “If you rebel against the LORD today, tomorrow he will be angry with the whole community of Israel. If the land you possess is defiled, come over to the LORD’s land, where the LORD’s tabernacle stands, and share the land with us. But do not rebel against the LORD or against us by building an altar for yourselves, other than the altar of the LORD our God. When Achan, son of Zerah, was unfaithful in regard to the devoted things, did not wrath come on the whole community of Israel? He was not the only one who died for his sin.’ Joshua 22:10-20

The two and a half tribes returned to the land that had been given them to possess, and now, across the Jordan, they are separated from their fellow Israelites.

There may have been a feeling of isolation, and so the two and a half tribes, therefore, decided to build an imposing altar, [Joshua 22:10](#). The altars were important because it was upon the altar that sacrifices and burnt offerings were made. This one must have been large enough to be seen at a great distance.

Woudstra, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These tribes evidently intended the altar they built to be a replica of the brazen altar in the tabernacle courtyard at Shiloh, [Joshua 22:28](#). If they did, it is easy to understand why the other tribes reacted to its construction so violently. God had prohibited the building of altars in the land apart from the ones He ordained, [Deuteronomy 12:1-14](#).’ Word got to the rest of Israel that the altar had been built, [Joshua 22:11](#); somehow, misunderstanding always travels fast. It’s like a wind, there’s no way of stopping it, and so the ‘whole congregation of Israel’, [Joshua 22:12](#), was ready to go up against their brothers in war, [Deuteronomy 13:12-18](#).

The whole group of people did not cross the Jordan, but they sent Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest and ten chiefs from the tribes, [Joshua 22:13-14](#). Maybe, out of love, they didn’t attack immediately. Isn’t that how we are to act? [Galatians 6:1](#).

Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest and ten chiefs, went to Gilead and met with the two and a half tribe, and told them the whole assembly of God asks, how could they break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could they turn away from God and build themselves an altar in rebellion against Him now? [Joshua 22:15-16](#).

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘The punishment for such a sin as making another altar, as well as the designation of that offence as sinful, is found in [Leviticus 17:4](#) / [Leviticus 17:8-9](#) / [Deuteronomy 12:4-14](#) / [Deuteronomy 13:12-16](#).’

They ask, was not the sin of Peor enough for us? [Joshua 22:17](#). Peor, [Joshua 22:17](#), is where the people worshipped idols, [Numbers 25:1-9](#), and where twenty-four thousand people died as a result of a plague from God, [Joshua 22:17](#). Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Phinehas, who had borne a conspicuous part in vindicating the cause of God against those who fell away to Baal-Peor, means that, terrible as the punishment had been, there were still those among them who hankered after Baal worship, and even practised it in secret, [Joshua 24:14-23](#).’

They ask them if they are now turning away from the LORD? [Joshua 22:18](#). They remind them if they rebel against God today, then tomorrow God will be angry with all of Israel, not just them, [Joshua 22:18](#).

They offer them land west of the Jordan if the land they possess is defiled, [Joshua 22:19](#). Notice they say, come over to God’s land, where His tabernacle stands, and share the land with them [Joshua 22:19](#).

They offer all of this simply to discourage them from rebelling against God or rebelling against the rest of Israel by building an altar for themselves, other than the altar of God, [Joshua 22:19](#). They mention Achan, the sin he committed and the consequences of his sin, [Joshua 22:20](#) / [Joshua 7:1-26](#).

‘Then Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh replied to the heads of the clans of Israel: “The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows! And let Israel know! If this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the LORD, do not spare us this day. If we have built our own altar to turn away from the LORD and to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, or to sacrifice fellowship offerings on it, may the LORD himself call us to

account. “No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, ‘What do you have to do with the LORD, the God of Israel? The LORD has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you—you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the LORD.’ So, your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the LORD. “That is why we said, ‘Let us get ready and build an altar—but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.’ On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the LORD at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, ‘You have no share in the LORD.’ “And we said, ‘If they ever say this to us, or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the LORD’s altar, which our ancestors built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.’ “Far be it from us to rebel against the LORD and turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of the LORD our God that stands before his tabernacle.’ Joshua 22:21-29

Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh were willing to discuss the issue, which is great news. The name of God was invoked, and notice that the three names of God are repeated: the Mighty One, God, and the LORD, Joshua 22:21-22 / Psalms 50:1.

Three different names, but each one has a meaning. The Mighty One, El, represents the earliest Hebrew idea of God, meaning strength. God, Elohim, suggests the manifold ways in which El the Mighty One displayed His greatness, as the source of all power, mental, moral, and physical, in heaven and earth.

The LORD, Jehovah, the name by which God revealed Himself to Moses, Exodus 3:14, meaning the Self-Existent One, the author of all being, He whose supreme prerogative it was to have existed from all eternity, and from whose will all things were derived.

Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary, say the following.

‘The combination of the three names of God-El, the strong one; Elohim, the Supreme Being to be feared; and Jehovah, the truly existing One, the covenant God, Joshua 22:22, serves to strengthen the invocation of God, as in Psalms 1:1, and this is strengthened still further by the repetition of these three names.’

God’s judgment is asked if any wrong was intended and will be used ONLY if God requires it, Joshua 22:23. And what was it? It was a fear that future generations would question the two and a half tribe’s part with God’s people, Joshua 22:24. The Jordan would be looked upon as a border forbidding them from having a portion with God’s people, Joshua 22:25.

They wanted to build an altar, but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices, Joshua 22:27. They wanted the altar to be a witness between them and Israel and the generations that follow, that they worship God at His sanctuary with their burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings, Joshua 22:27.

By doing this, in the future, Israel’s descendants will not be able to say to them, they have no share in God, Joshua 22:27. If Israel’s descendants ever say this to them, or to their descendants, they can answer by saying, ‘look at the replica of God’s altar, which our ancestors built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and the rest of Israel,’ Joshua 22:28.

Cook, in his commentary, says the following.

‘They erected this altar to keep alive their claim of having the same interest as the other tribes in the sanctuary of God, located at that time, in Shiloh.’

They never intended to rebel against God or turn away from Him by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of God that stands before His tabernacle, Joshua 22:29. The altar would serve as a witness to the fact that the people were one with each other and God.

‘When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the community—the heads of the clans of the Israelites—heard what Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. And Phinehas, son of Eleazar, the priest, said to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, “Today we know that the LORD is with us, because you have not been unfaithful to the LORD in this matter. Now you have rescued the Israelites from the LORD’s hand.” Then Phinehas, son of Eleazar, the priest,

and the leaders returned to Canaan from their meeting with the Reubenites and Gadites in Gilead and reported to the Israelites. They were glad to hear the report and praised God. And they talked no more about going to war against them to devastate the country where the Reubenites and the Gadites lived. And the Reubenites and the Gadites gave the altar this name: A Witness Between Us—that the LORD is God.’ Joshua 22:30-34

Notice that Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest and ten chiefs heard the explanation and they were pleased, [Joshua 22:30](#). Phinehas spoke up and said that the Lord was in their midst because they haven’t been unfaithful to God in this matter and now they have rescued the Israelites from God’s hand, [Joshua 22:31](#).

They went back to spread the word that they had jumped to a false conclusion, [Joshua 22:32](#). They were glad to hear the report and praised God, and they talked no more about going to war against them to devastate the country where the Reubenites and the Gadites lived, [Joshua 22:33](#).

Notice that it was the Reubenites and the Gadites who named the altar, A Witness Between Us, that the LORD is God, [Joshua 22:34](#) / [Matthew 7:15-20](#). The absence of the mention of the half-tribe of Manasseh suggests it was the Reubenites and the Gadites who erected the altar in the first place.

CONCLUSION

When word got to the rest of Israel that the altar had been built, [Joshua 22:11](#), somehow, misunderstanding always travels fast. It’s like a wind, there’s no way of stopping it, and so the ‘whole congregation of Israel’, [Joshua 22:12](#), was ready to go up against their brothers in war.

This reminds me of some brethren who hear something, and before they get all the facts in the case, they are ready to go to war, [Proverbs 15:1](#). How many congregations have been split down the middle because all the facts weren’t gathered in the case? Somehow, we forget all about [Ephesians 4:3](#) and [Colossians 3:14](#).

We can learn from this: don’t tell anything bad about anyone, check it out with the person you’ve been told about, and if it’s true, try to help them, but if it’s not true, straighten out the person who talked to you.

No, we sit back in our smugness and say, ‘nope, not gonna be anybody ruling the roost here but me. If things don’t go to suit me, then things just won’t go,’ or ‘even if all I heard wasn’t true, most of it probably was anyway. So, we’ve just nipped it in the bud now.’

How often do our brethren listen to what someone has to say? We close our minds and let words pass by, and sometimes we do not even sit down and discuss.

We must beware of being so prejudiced that we will not accept the truth from the person we have called into question. Love demands that we do. If you’ve told something about someone else that wasn’t true, did you go back to correct it when you found out the truth?

CHAPTER 23

INTRODUCTION

‘After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then a very old man, summoned all Israel—their elders, leaders, judges, and officials—and said to them: “I am very

old. You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the LORD your God who fought for you. Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain—the nations I conquered—between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. The LORD your God himself will push them out for your sake. He will drive them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you. “Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must not serve them or bow down to them. But you are to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have until now. “The LORD has driven out before you great and powerful nations; to this day no one has been able to withstand you. One of you routs a thousand, because the LORD your God fights for you, just as he promised. So be very careful to love the LORD your God.” Joshua 23:1-11

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL TO THE LEADERS

Joshua had one last great message for his people. The people were at rest, [Joshua 23:1](#), but Joshua was getting old, but despite his age, [Joshua 23:1-2](#), and so he gathered all Israel, their elders, leaders, judges and officials because he was old, [Joshua 23:2](#). He had something else he had to say, choose!

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Whether this assembly was held at Timnath-Serah, where Joshua lived, or at Shiloh, where the ark was, or at Shechem, as in [Joshua 24:1](#), we cannot tell. Some think that the meaning here, and that mentioned in [Joshua 24:1](#), were the same, and if so, Shechem was the place of assembling, but it is more likely that the two chapters treat of two distinct assemblies, whether held at the same place or not.’

Constable, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Unlike other narrative texts, this one has no specific setting in time or space. It simply connects to [Joshua 13:1](#), when Joshua was old, and [Joshua 21:44](#), when God had given rest. The setting thus marks Israel at the moment she had dreamed of from the Exodus onward, [Exodus 33:14](#). But it also marks the crisis of leadership transition. The message which follows is at the same time one for prosperity, and also for crisis.’

Joshua begins by explaining what God has done, He has fought against the nations, [Joshua 23:3](#). I guess it would be easy for them to sit back and boast about the battles ‘they won’.

There was only one problem with that: they hadn’t done it. Israel needed to remember who had been out there fighting for them, [Joshua 23:3](#) / [1 Corinthians 10:12](#) / [Proverbs 16:18](#).

God had promised His people a land, and now they had it, and basically, God divided it out, [Joshua 23:4](#). But not only that, but God dispossessed the nations around; He pushed them out, and they would no longer possess the land, but Israel would, [Joshua 24:5](#).

Joshua then goes on and tells them some things to do, tells them two things to do: be very strong, keep all that is written in the law, [Joshua 23:5](#), which is a clear reference to the Pentateuch, the Five Books of Moses. Cling to the Lord, [Joshua 23:8](#), and love the Lord, [Joshua 23:11](#).

And so, Joshua then goes ahead and tells them some things they are not to do: don’t turn from God’s law to the right or to the left, [Joshua 23:5](#); don’t associate with the nations among them and don’t have any use for their gods, [Joshua 23:6-7](#).

They must hold fast to God, as they have until now, [Joshua 23:8](#). It was God who drove out before them great and powerful nations, and to this day no one has been able to withstand them, [Joshua 23:9](#).

Notice that Israelite routed a thousand, because God fights for them, Joshua 23:10. This implies that Israel has nothing to fear in the future, God would continue to fight for them. And so, Joshua reminds them to be very careful to love God, Joshua 23:11.

‘But if you turn away and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you may be sure that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the LORD your God has given you. “Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed. But just as all the good things the LORD your God has promised you have come to you, so he will bring on you all the evil things he has threatened, until the LORD your God has destroyed you from this good land he has given you. If you violate the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, the LORD’s anger will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land he has given you.’ Joshua 23:12-16

Joshua now gives Israel a warning: if they turn away and ally themselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among them and if they intermarry with them and associate with them, then they may be sure that God will no longer drive out these nations before them, Joshua 23:12-13.

Instead, they will become snares and traps for them, whips on their backs and thorns in their eyes, until they perish from this good land, which God has given them, Joshua 23:13.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘These terrible words are an exact blueprint of what really happened to Israel. They intermarried with the pagan populations they left remaining in the land. Next, they accepted the worship of those pagan gods; even a king named his son after Baal, 1 Chronicles 8:33 / 1 Chronicles 9:39. In time, the true worship of God was abandoned altogether, and Israel degenerated into a condition exactly like that of the Canaanites they had displaced. In fact, Hosea, Hosea 12:7, denominates Israel as ‘a Canaanite.’

Joshua knows he is about to die, and he reminds them that even though all God’s promises have been kept to this point, Joshua 23:14 / Joshua 21:43-45, they will be destroyed from the land and they will perish quickly, Joshua 23:15-16 / Leviticus 26:14-33 / Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In all this exhortation, we see how closely Joshua copies the example of his great master Moses, Leviticus 26:7-8 / Leviticus 26:14 / Deuteronomy 28:7 / Deuteronomy 32:30.’

CONCLUSION

Life is full of choices. What career will I take? What kind of person should I marry? Where should I live? Etc. God has challenged men to choose as well, Deuteronomy 30:19 / Joshua 24:15 / 1 Kings 18:21 / Philippians 3:2-14. Mary was commended by the Lord because she had ‘chosen the good part’, Luke 10:42.

If you could leave just one message behind, what would it be? Would it tell of your accomplishments? Would it tell how to spend the money you would leave behind? Would it tell which people to get revenge on for the way they had treated you? Or would it tell of the need to be sure to choose to serve God?

Unfortunately, too many people today are not taught that they must face the consequences of their behaviour, whether they steal, or if they are unfaithful or even if parents don’t discipline their children, there can be consequences.

If there is one thing that is taught in the Bible, it is that men must face the consequences for their sins, Romans 2:5-9 / Romans 14:10-12 / 1 Corinthians 4:5 / 2 Corinthians 5:10.

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION

‘Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges, and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshipped other gods. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac, and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, but Jacob and his family went down to Egypt. “Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out. When I brought your people out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen as far as the Red Sea. But they cried to the LORD for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the wilderness for a long time.’”

Joshua 24:1-7

Joshua now gathers together all the tribes of Israel at Shechem and summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God, **Joshua 24:1**.

He reminds them of what God said long ago to their ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods, **Joshua 24:2**. Notice that Abraham is also included in idol worshipping, **Joshua 24:2**.

JEWISH TRADITION

Whilst in Ur, Jewish tradition says that Abraham’s father, Terah, was an idol-maker. Once he had to travel, so he left Abraham to manage the shop. People would come in and ask to buy idols.

Abraham would say, ‘How old are you?’ The person would say, ‘Fifty,’ or ‘Sixty.’ Abraham would say, ‘Isn’t it pathetic that a man of sixty wants to bow down to a one-day-old idol?’ The man would feel ashamed and leave.

One time, a woman came with a basket of bread. She said to Abraham, ‘Take this and offer it to the gods.’ Abraham got up, took a hammer in his hand, broke all the idols to pieces, and then put the hammer in the hand of the biggest idol among them.

When his father came back and saw the broken idols, he was appalled. ‘Who did this?’ he cried. ‘How can I hide anything from you?’ replied Abraham calmly. ‘A woman came with a basket of bread and told me to offer it to them. I brought it in front of them, and each one said, ‘I’m going to eat first.’

Then the biggest one got up, took the hammer, and broke all the others to pieces.’ ‘What are you trying to pull on me?’ asked Terah, ‘Do they have minds?’ Abraham replied to his father, ‘Listen to what your own mouth is saying? They have no power at all! Why worship idols?’

There must have been something in Abraham that God saw as unique for Him to call him, **Genesis 15:7**. God asked him to leave his home and extended family in order to go to a country that God would show him, **Genesis 11:31 / Acts 7:3 / Hebrews 11:8**.

Imagine someone asking you to leave your home but you don't know where you're going? That's faith, **Hebrews 11:6**. The text says, 'The LORD had said', **Genesis 12:1**; this is past tense.

Although we don't know exactly how long-ago God spoke to Abraham, we do know that He did speak with him whilst he was in his homeland, **Joshua 24:3 / Genesis 12:1 / Genesis 15:7 / Acts 7:2**.

We also know from the previous chapter that Abraham is the father of the Israelites, Nahor and Haran were his brothers, and his father was called Terah, **Genesis 11:27-31**.

God is different from idols, men created and worshipped images they could see. Sometimes in animal form, sometimes in human form and sometimes in a combination of both forms, yet these so-called gods were not gods at all.

God cannot be seen; however, He created the universe, He gave His law, and He rules in the affairs of men. God is better than idols. God blessed Abraham and took him from idolatry. He gave him a land, multiplied his descendants, and provided a lineage.

It was God who gave him many descendants, **Joshua 24:3**. He also gave him Isaac, **Genesis 17:15-17**, and to Isaac, He gave Jacob and Esau, **Genesis 25:19-26 / Joshua 24:3-4**.

It was God who assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, **Genesis 36:8-9 / Deuteronomy 2:5**, but Jacob and his family went down to Egypt, **Joshua 24:4 / Genesis 46:1-4**.

There are seven promises given to Abram.

1. A People, **Genesis 12:2**.
2. A Name, **Genesis 12:2 / Genesis 15:5**.
3. Protection, **Genesis 12:3**.
4. Prosperity, **Genesis 12:2**.
5. A Universal blessing, **Genesis 12:3**.
6. A Homeland, **Genesis 12:7 / Genesis 15:18-21**.
7. A Son, **Genesis 12:3 / Genesis 3:15 / Genesis 17:16**.

It was God who sent Moses and Aaron, **Psalm 105:26**, and afflicted the Egyptians by what He did there, **Exodus 7-12**, and then brought them out, **Joshua 24:5 / Exodus 6:6 / 1 Samuel 10:18**.

When God brought them out of Egypt, they came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen as far as the Red Sea, **Joshua 24:6**. Israel cried to God for help, and He put darkness between them and the Egyptians and brought the sea over them and covered them, **Joshua 24:7 / Exodus 14:28**.

In other words God also blessed the Israelites by providing leaders, He provided passage, and He provided protection from the Egyptians. The Israelites who were living at that time saw with their own eyes what God did to the Egyptians and then they lived in the wilderness for a long time, **Joshua 24:7 / Joshua 5:6**.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'Notice that there is a PRESUMPTION on the part of Joshua here that his audience were in possession of accurate and trustworthy records of all that he mentioned, 'rendering it unnecessary to enter into detail.'

"I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you, and you took possession of their land. When Balak, son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Balaam, son of Beor to put a curse on you. But I would not listen to Balaam, so he blessed you again and again, and I delivered you out of his hand. "Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites,

Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands. I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow.

So, I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.’ Joshua 24:8-13

It was God who brought them to the land of the Amorites, who lived east of the Jordan, and they fought against them, but God gave them into their hands, Joshua 24:8 / Exodus 3:17 / Deuteronomy 20:17-18. It was God who destroyed them, and Israel took possession of their land, Joshua 24:8 / Numbers 21:21-30.

When Balak, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Balaam to put a curse on Israel, but God wouldn’t listen to Balaam, so he blessed Israel again and again, Numbers 23:1-4 / Numbers 14:29-30, and God delivered them out of his hand, Joshua 24:9-10 / Joshua 13:22.

When Israel crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho, the citizens of Jericho fought against them, Joshua 6:1-27, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, Acts 13:19, but God gave them into their hands, Joshua 24:11.

It was God who sent the hornet ahead of Israel, which drove them out and the two Amorite kings, Joshua 24:12 / Exodus 23:28-33. Israel didn’t do it with their own sword and bow; God did it, Joshua 24:12 / Joshua 1-12. Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the hornet, Joshua 24:12.

‘The word is used figuratively for a cause of terror and discouragement. Bees are spoken of in the like sense, Deuteronomy 1:44 / Psalms 118:12.’

Trapp, in his commentary, says the following concerning the hornet, Joshua 24:12.

‘Understand it either literally, as in Joshua 24:12, or figuratively, of the stinging terrors of their self-condemning consciences.’

It was God who gave them a land on which they didn’t toil and cities they didn’t build and Israel live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that they didn’t plant, Joshua 24:13 / Isaiah 37:30 / Jeremiah 29:5 / Jeremiah 29:28 / Ezekiel 28:26 / Zephaniah 1:13.

In other words, God blessed the Israelites by provided protection from the Egyptians, the Amorites, Balak, and the Canaanites and He provided a possession.

‘Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshipped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.’ Joshua 24:14-15

The Israelites are told to fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth, Joshua 24:14. Joshua tells them to put away false gods their ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve God, Joshua 24:25 / Joshua 24:2.

Joshua asks them to choose between their ancestors idol gods or the God of Israel whom Joshua serves, Joshua 24:15. Joshua has already made his mind up and speaks on behalf of his and says, as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD, Joshua 24:15.

Plummer, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Joshua invites the people, as Elijah did on an even more memorable occasion, to make their choice between the false worship and the true, between the present and the future, between the indulgence of their lusts and the approval of their conscience. No desire to stand well in the eyes of Israel, no temptation of this lower world to pervert his sense of truth deters him. The experience of a life of service to Jehovah has convinced him that Jehovah is the true and only God, and from that conviction, the venerable warrior does not intend to swerve.’

‘Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we travelled. And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God.” Joshua 24:16-18

And the people respond by saying, they won’t forsake God by serving other gods, Joshua 24:16. They agree that God delivered Israel from Egypt, He preserved them during their travel, Joshua 24:17, and He drove out the enemy from before them, Joshua 24:18. In short, they agreed to serve God and God alone.

‘Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you.” But the people said to Joshua, “No! We will serve the LORD.” Then Joshua said, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD.” “Yes, we are witnesses,” they replied. “Now then,” said Joshua, “throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.” And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God and obey him.” Joshua 24:19-24

So, they all agree, but there is a severe warning for the Israelites. Joshua tells them they shouldn’t take their commitment too lightly because they won’t be able to serve God because He is a holy God, He is a jealous God, Joshua 24:19.

If they forsake God, then God will not forgive their sins, and He will harm and consume them. It would be under the new covenant that their sins and our sins would be forgiven, Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Despite the warning, the people make the commitment and say, they will serve God, Joshua 24:21, and so they are witnesses against themselves, Joshua 24:22, and therefore they must put away the foreign gods, Joshua 24:23. They say, they will serve God, and they will obey Him, Joshua 24:24.

THE COVENANT RENEWED AT SHECHEM

‘On that day, Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws. And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD. “See!” he said to all the people. “This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God.” Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance. Joshua 24:25-28

And so, a covenant is made by Joshua for the people and at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws, Joshua 24:25. Joshua records the words in the book of the law of God and a memorial stone was set up, Joshua 24:26, which would serve as a reminder to the people, Joshua 24:27. It will be a witness against Israel if they are untrue to their God, Joshua 24:27.

Once again, we see memorials being erected. There was one at Gilgal where they crossed the Jordan, Joshua 4:20, and another at Mount Ebal, where the law was readout, Joshua 8:30-10:43. Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance, Joshua 24:28.

BURIED IN THE PROMISED LAND

‘After these things, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel. And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants. And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.' Joshua 24:29-

33

If Joshua died, then who wrote this last part?

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following.

'The last six verses in this chapter were, doubtless, not written by Joshua; for no man can give an account of his own death and burial. Eleazar, Phinehas, or Samuel might have added them to bring down the narration so as to connect it with their own times and thus preserve the thread of the history unbroken. '

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning the words, 'servant of the LORD, Joshua 24:29.

'The title, 'Servant of Jehovah' is used of Moses frequently in the Book of Joshua, as in Joshua 1:1-2 / Joshua 1:13 / Joshua 8:31 / Joshua 8:33 / Joshua 9:24 / Joshua 11:12 / Joshua 11:15 / Joshua 12:6 / Joshua 13:8 / Joshua 14:7 / Joshua 18:7 / Joshua 22:2 / Joshua 22:4-5. But this is the very first time the title is given to Joshua.'

At the age of one-hundred and ten, Joshua died and was buried, Joshua 24:29-30. He had lived a full life, and he had lived a faithful life. He has such an influence on the people that they served the Lord all the days he lived and for the lifetime of the elders who survived him, Joshua 24:31 / Judges 2:6-10.

Joseph's bones had been carried by the Israelites from the time of their Egyptian bondage, Exodus 13:19, and they buried them in Shechem in the land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, Joshua 24:32 / Genesis 33:19.

We are told this became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants, Joshua 24:32 / Joshua 16:4. Eleazar, son of Aaron, died, Numbers 3:32, and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim, Joshua 24:33 / Numbers 25:11-13. Joshua, Joseph, and Eleazar came out of a land of bondage and are buried in a land of rest.

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

'The death and burial of Eleazar saw the transfer of the High Priesthood to his son Phinehas. Thus, just as the death of Aaron and Moses closed Deuteronomy, so the death of Eleazar and Joshua closed this book.'

Plummer, in his commentary, says the following.

'The additions to this chapter that are found in the Septuagint (LXX) should be rejected. Their mention of Astarte and Ashteroth as separate deities is alone enough to discredit it.'

CONCLUSION

The Book of Joshua is essentially a book of choices. Joshua himself, in the beginning, had to make a choice; the people chose to enter the land. Rahab and the Gibeonites made a choice, Achan chose badly, Caleb, the two and a half tribes and the cities of refuge, and we too must choose.

And here are our choices, whose benefit am I seeking? Who will be affected by it? How will they be affected? Does God's Word forbid it? Will it help the cause of Christ?

Will it benefit me spiritually? Have I sought wise counsel? Have I prayed about it? Am I willing to follow the right way? I pray you choose wisely and choose what Joshua chose, ‘as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD,’ Joshua 24:15.