

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA



This study guide is a wonderful example of how the body of Christ is designed to work. It came together because of the gifts, talents and abilities of many people. Its goal is to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ and to build up His Church as we seek to learn together from His Word. Special thanks go to Ann Penner, Jessica Dyck, Jean Veall, Joanne Irwin, Lois Shepherd, and Andrea Nicholls.

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INTO THE LAND OF REST: A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

The book of Joshua is full of action. God acts powerfully for His people, fulfilling all of His promises to them, defeating their enemies and leading them safely into the place He set apart for them – the Promised Land overflowing with every possible resource and blessing they could ever need. Joshua acts courageously, assuming command of God's people, diligently obeying God's commands and boldly administering all of God's plans for His people in the Promised Land. The people act in concert with God's commands and Joshua's instructions, pledging allegiance to Joshua as their leader and God as their King.

And yet, the book of Joshua is also full of rest. That sounds paradoxical, to be sure. How can a single book of the Bible be action-packed and full of rest all at the same time?

This study will uncover the answer to that question. It will focus on the purpose behind God's promise to the People of Israel as He took them out of the desert and into a land flowing with milk and honey. God's people, Israel, would find rest as they resolved to trust in His sovereignty, power, faithfulness, goodness and love. They would find rest as they feared His holiness and responded to His warnings about the dire consequences of sin. And they would find a measure of rest as they remained His faithful servants out of thankfulness and love for all He had done for them.

The book of Joshua equally applies to us today. It is a beautiful portrait of the rest we have (and will have) through the Lord Jesus Christ. By His grace, we have become part of God's covenant people as we believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus. God wants us to enter and live abundantly in the place of rest that He has given. The book of Joshua will spur us to action while teaching us to rest in the sufficiency of Christ upon this earth and to live with joy and anticipation of our eternal rest in heaven. This study will challenge us to walk by faith, trusting and obeying Jesus Christ in our daily lives and seeing how God fulfills His promises to those who fear Him.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Use This Study Guide	1
Suggested Memory Work	2
Week 1 – Introduction	5
Part I – Conquering the Land of Rest	
Week 2 – The Call of Joshua	15
Week 3 – Rahab and the Spies	21
Week 4 – Crossing the Jordan River	27
Week 5 – Building a Memorial	33
Week 6 – Obedience and Victory	41
Week 7 – Disobedience and Defeat	49
Week 8 – The Battles Continue	57
Part 2 – Inheriting the Land of Rest	
Week 9 – The Division of Territories	67
Week 10 – Caleb's Land	77
Week 11 – The Land Set Aside for Special Needs	85
Part 3 – Living in the Land of Rest	
Week 12 – The Eastern Tribes Return Home	93
Week 13 – Joshua's Farewell Address	99
Week 14 – Buried in the Promised Land	105
Week 15 - Conclusion	113
Bibliography	119
Additional Resources	120



HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

Think of this study guide as an appetizer to a wonderful meal; it is designed to whet your appetite for the weekly teaching and discussion sessions we will enjoy together. It is meant to prepare your hearts and minds to digest what you will hear and say. It will get you into the Bible so that you have a fuller understanding of what it meant to the People of Israel to conquer and inherit the land of rest and to live there in obedience to God. Their land of rest is a picture for us today of what it means to experience rest in and through the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth while we await our eternal Rest with Him in heaven.

Over the course of our study, you will be encouraged to read the entire book of Joshua, section by section in the ESV translation. As you read, pay particular attention to the presence of God and how He is the ultimate character at work. Note the other characters too, both in terms of who they are and what they do. Highlight key words and phrases that they use as they speak to one another. Record what is happening in their lives, in terms of the problems they have to deal with and how those problems are solved. This will help you to understand the narrative that is recorded in the book of Joshua. More importantly, as you work through it and listen to the teachers' lessons, consider how Joshua's narrative fits within God's overarching Narrative that fills the Bible from start to finish - His story of redemption, brought about through the birth, death and resurrection of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Week by week, this study guide features questions that will take you beyond the book of Joshua to other parts of scripture to provide valuable background information and to help you apply Joshua's story to your own walk of faith. These questions and applications are meant to complement the teaching and discussion sessions. In some cases, they will be similar to what you hear and discuss each week. In other cases, they will be quite different. This is all by design, as there is so much for us to learn in and through the book of Joshua.

Going back to our meal analogy, we hope that by the end of our study, you will leave the table full and satisfied. Put another way, we hope you will learn how God sincerely desires that you will live at rest, safe and secure in the knowledge that the God of Joshua is the same God today. In and through His Son, God offers you rest as you believe in the name of His Son and follow Him as the Lord of your life. He also offers the bright hope of eternal rest because of the saving grace of His Son.

SUGGESTED MEMORY WORK

"And [God] said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Exodus 33:14 (ESV)

"Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:7-9 (ESV)

"Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that He swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass."

Joshua 21:43-45 (ESV)

"Now therefore fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua 24:14-15 (ESV)

"Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)

The Promise of Rest

Joshua 1:13 (ESV) – "Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you saying 'The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest and will give you this land."

With all the preparations for the war to take possession of the land and the ensuing battles, it is easy to overlook the promise of rest, but rest is Israel's inheritance as much as the land. (Exodus 33:14; Deuteronomy 12:8-10; 25:19)

There are several words in the Old Testament Hebrew that can be translated into English as 'rest' and sometimes also the English translation can vary a little: for example, 'cease,' 'settle down,' 'repose.' Subtle nuances can be hidden. The word used in Joshua 1:13 is *nuach* (pronounced noo'akh): a word that carries with it the idea of settling down and remaining. It is linked linguistically to *menoah* 'resting place' and *nahalah* 'inheritance.' God took His people out of Egypt and gave them a land where they would be politically and economically free, a land with cities and houses filled with good things, wells, vineyards, and olive trees. (Deuteronomy 6:11)

Nuach for the People of Israel in the Promised Land includes both physical and spiritual rest. Rest from their enemies in a land where they are able to live according to God's ways and to serve him as their king. Israel was to be a light to the nations, showing them the blessedness of living in a covenantal relationship with God, drawing them to God. (Isaiah 2:1-5) In **Sabbath Rest**, Mark Scarlata puts it this way: "They are to provide an alternative vision to the world of how to live as a community in relationship to others and in relationship to God." (p. 66) Is this not what we are called to do today as Christians, as the Church?

In the New Testament, Hebrews 4 refers to this concept of rest by using the Greek word *katapausis*. It conveys a rest that is still being offered as a gift from God here on earth, as well as the final, eternal rest that awaits all of God's people in heaven. We enter into God's rest through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and choose to live in a covenantal relationship with Him, empowered by the Holy Spirit. And we look forward in hope to an eternal rest when the entire cosmos is redeemed and restored at the end of the age.



In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 1 - INTRODUCTION

The book of Joshua is a story of action, conquest, adventure and fulfilled promises. It is a record of real events that point us back to the People of Israel's history and forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. It reveals the possibility of victory and hope in the midst of conflict, failure, hardship and human weaknesses.

In that, the book of Joshua has very real and applicable lessons for us even today, reminding us of truths about who God is, His plan of redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ and how He blesses those who trust and obey His Word. Specifically, the book of Joshua shows us how we can rest in the all-sufficiency and sovereignty of God, even as we actively live in obedience to Him. It also points ahead to the eternal rest God offers to His chosen people through the blood of His beloved Son.

Before we begin our study of the book of Joshua, we need to understand its context, setting, plot and main characters. Such an understanding will prepare us to journey with Joshua and the People of Israel into the Promised Land.

The Context

1. The book of Joshua is the fulfillment of a promise God made to His people some 500 years before.

Has something ever been promised to you for which you had to wait? What was it? How did you feel during that time of waiting?

2. Read Genesis 12:7, Genesis 15:13-18 and Genesis 17:4-8.

What was the promise God made?

To whom did God make the promise?

What had to happen between the time when God made the promise and the time that the promise would be fulfilled?

The Setting

The sheer scope of the Promised Land was almost too big to imagine, spanning from the desert to Lebanon and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea. In today's world, this encompasses all of Lebanon, Israel and Jordan and some of Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt! The land was home to a number of tribes, all of whom the Bible describes as evil and idolatrous.

3. Fill in the blanks for the following verses.

Leviticus 20:24 (E	id to you [My people], 'You shall	
	their land, and I will o	give it to you to possess, a land flowing
with	and	
Deuteronomy 12:	10, 12 (ESV) "But when yo	ou go over the Jordan and live in the
land the Lord you	God is giving you to	, and when
He gives you	from	all your enemies around, so that you
live in	vou sh	all rejoice before the Lord your God."

What do these verses teach us about why and how God gave the land to His people and what the land would offer them?

Imagine how the People of Israel must have marveled at the scope of God's promise, dreaming what such a land would offer for them after enduring centuries of slavery and decades wandering the desert! Imagine how they must have marveled at the prospect of inheriting a land that would give them rest, peace and an abundance of everything they could ever need!

1 Peter 1:3-4 promises that because of God's great mercy and through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we as believers have an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. Hebrews 4:8-11 promises that we, too, can enter God's eternal rest.

Take a moment to reflect on the enormity of these promises. Ask God to help you more fully understand them over the course of this study.

The Characters

There are three main characters in the book of Joshua: God, His servant Joshua, and the People of Israel (taken as one). As we will see, these three characters are bound in a close and tangible relationship. Joshua and the people are called upon to trust in and obey all of God's commands. In return, God cares for them, sustains them, protects them, and provides all of the resources they need to act on His words and to enjoy the certainty of His promises as they come to rest in the Promised Land.

Let's take a few minutes to get acquainted with the namesake of our study: Joshua.

The Old Testament points to the Lord Jesus Christ in different ways, including typologies or "types." Types in the Bible can be people, ceremonies or events that point forward to fulfillment yet to come. Joshua is a type of Jesus as he was used by God to bring God's people into their place of rest. Joshua and Jesus share the same name which means "Jehovah saves" or "saviour." Joshua led the People of Israel into the Promised Land – a God-given inheritance and a blessed earthly destination. Joshua, therefore, points to the Lord Jesus Christ who offers the gift of salvation to all who believe in Him, gives them an inheritance that will never spoil or fade, and will take them into the ultimate Promised Land – a heavenly place of rest for all eternity. As we read through the book of Joshua, we can look to Joshua as a good and godly example for life. However, Joshua's life should continually point us to the one and only perfect man – our true saviour – the Lord Jesus Christ.

God had been at work in Joshua's life well before we meet him in Joshua 1. Indeed, the Bible gives us seven glimpses into Joshua's life, all of which demonstrate just how much God had been at work, preparing and equipping Joshua to succeed Moses as leader of Israel.

4. Look up one, some, or all of the following passages. As you do, consider how God prepared Joshua for the monumental role he would assume after Moses died.

Exodus 17:8-16

Exodus 24:13

Exodus 32:1-35 (especially verses 15-18)

Numbers 13-14

Numbers 27:12-21

5. Psalm 139:16 (ESV) says, "in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." How is the truth of this verse demonstrated in these examples from Joshua's life?

6. Reflect on your own life, and especially your journey of faith. How has God used different people, places and events to equip you for the plans He has for you?

Notes



PART I

Conquering the Land of Rest

Conquer: to gain or acquire by force of arms; to overcome by force of arms; to gain mastery over or win by overcoming obstacles or opposition; to overcome by mental or moral power

Synonyms: vanquish, defeat, subdue, reduce, overcome, overthrow

Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus

- 11

Archaeology and the Book of Joshua

Many people consider the Bible just a book of stories, fairy tales even. They do not believe that the Bible is truly an accurate book of historical record. Nor do they believe that it is possible to date Biblical events on the basis of facts and evidence.

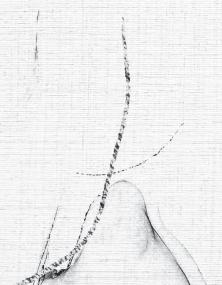
The book of Joshua is no exception. The period of time that best fits the archaeological records and the events recorded in Joshua lies between the 15th and 13th centuries BC. This is a historical period that extends from the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BC) and into the Iron Age (1200-600 BC). This was a time in history when many different groups of people, including the Israelites, were on the move. One just has to read the book of Joshua to encounter many of them, from the Canaanites to the Hittites, the Hivites to the Perizzites, the Girgashites, the Amorites and the Jebusites. (Joshua 3:10)

The People of Israel were chosen to be a group unified under the One True God. They were unified by their language, culture and religious practices. They were united under their God-given law. In contrast, the peoples that lived in Canaan were diverse, both ethnically and religiously. They were gravely afraid of the manner in which the People of Israel were united under their God.

Archaeological evidence supports the Biblical account of Joshua. David M. Howard, for example, describes a stele (standing stone) of the Egyptian pharaoh MernePtah that dates to 1207 BC. (The New American Commentary: Joshua Vol. 5) The stele mentions Israel as a people whom he had encountered and subdued in a battle near Canaan. From this, we can be certain that the People of Israel were well-known and well-established in the region at this time in history. Likewise, other archaeological discoveries also support the Bible's accuracy and even support Israel's claims to the land today.

Some have argued that the Biblical account of Joshua cannot be established because they cannot find evidence of Israel's gods. What they forget, however, is that Israel was distinct from other peoples in that it worshipped a God who had expressly forbidden them from creating idols or images of any kind. (Exodus 20:4) Unlike other peoples in the region at the time, the People of Israel did not worship man-made idols in shrines or temples. As such, some archaeologists have challenged the historical accuracy of Joshua by looking for an absence of evidence of Israel's God. No evidence is the evidence they have sought and this has emboldened them to dispute the accuracy of the Bible's account.

While we know that archaeology cannot "prove" the Bible in that we must come to accept the Bible by faith, we can be assured that events of the Bible are historically accurate on the basis of the work of many other scholars. As quoted in Josh McDowell's A Ready Defense, Millar Burrows of Yale University has written that, "archaeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the scriptural record ... such evidence as archaeology ... strengthens our confidence in the accuracy with which the [Biblical] text has been transmitted through the centuries." (p. 93)





In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 2 - THE CALL OF JOSHUA

Read Joshua 1:1-18

As we learned last week, the book of Joshua involves three main characters: Cod Joshua and the Boonla of Israel Their relationship is clearly demonstrated

	the dialogue recorded in Joshua 1.
7.	According to Joshua 1:2-6, what did God promise Joshua?
8.	In your own words, summarize God's instructions to Joshua in Joshua 1:2-9.
9.	According to Joshua 1:10, do you think Joshua hesitated at all when responding to God's instructions? Why or why not?

10. How did the people respond to Joshua in Joshua 1:16-18?

Joshua 1 underscores that the People of Israel were not going to inherit the Promised Land according to human terms but, rather, according to God's. It is also very clear that the outcome was certain. God had given the land to His people! They would make it their home if they claimed His promise and acted in obedience to Him.

Likewise, the Bible teaches that we can be forgiven of our sins, not because of anything that we can do, but because of what God did for us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. All we need to do is to claim that truth and "believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." (Acts 16:31 ESV)

11. Read Ephesians 2:1-7. Write, in your own words, what God did for you through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Note when and why God did this and what is your part in that relationship?

That said, while God told Joshua and the people that the land would be theirs, they were not to be mere bystanders. God intended them to take the initiative, acting on His promise, even before they put their boots on the ground.

They were commanded to obey not just some of God's laws, but all of them. Joshua, for example, was told to meditate on God's law "day and night," to implement it, and to declare it to the people.

As part of the forgiven people of God, we too have been commanded to live according to God's Word and share it with those around us. This takes resolve, strength and courage as we have to actively choose to live according to the Bible each and every day, trusting God's promises and obeying His commands.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus defines "resolve" as "to reach a firm decision about ..." It lists decisiveness, firmness, purposefulness, resoluteness, and stick-to-itiveness as its synonyms.

12. When you consider an average week in your life, do these words describe your walk with the Lord? Why or why not?

- 13. God repeatedly told Joshua not to be afraid. How could fear have distracted Joshua when leading the people into the land of rest that God had in store for them?
- 14. Are there areas of your own life in which fear has robbed you from living at rest in God's promises? List them here.
- 15. Look back at God's assurances to Joshua in Joshua 1:7-9 (ESV). Read them slowly and out loud. Highlight any words that are particularly striking to you.

"Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Becoming strong and courageous doesn't just happen. It comes from spending time in God's Word, meditating and reflecting on its truths. Psalm 1:2 calls the one who meditates on scripture "blessed." Proverbs 3:1-6 says that reflecting on, and remembering, scripture gives wisdom, prosperity, health and peace. Isaiah 26:3 promises that God will keep the one whose mind is stayed on Him "in perfect peace."

16. Notice that God told Joshua to meditate on His laws "day and night." (Joshua 1:7) That makes it clear that meditating is to be a continuous activity as we apply the truths of scripture to everyday events in our busy lives.

Consider how much meaningful time you are devoting to reading and meditating on God's Word? Is it enough? What are some practical steps you can take to spend more time in His Word each day?

"Probably there is no greater offense in all of Christendom than speed-reading the Bible. The Bible must be read slowly and meditatively, allowing the Spirit of God to open up our understanding."

A.J. Tozer, "The Crucified Life", p. 22

17. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus promises rest for our souls. That rest is (and will be) an eternal one for all who seek forgiveness of their sins and freedom from the crushing guilt of trying to earn salvation by good works alone. Have you ever felt trapped by that burden? Have you tried to be "good" to earn your way to heaven? How can meditating on His Word give you rest (or refreshment) from that load? Spend some time right now bringing your burden to Him.

"Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)

Notes:



"With God, it isn't who you were that matters; it's who you are becoming ... If God can turn Rahab, a harlot, into a holy vessel, entrusting her with the very genes that would one day produce the King of kings, surely those of us with a past can leave our shame in the rubble and walk away, fixing our eyes on the One who washes us white as snow."

Liz Curtis Higgs, Bad Girls of the Bible, pp. 165, 167

In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 3 - RAHAB AND THE SPIES

Read Joshua 2:1-24

Joshua 2 tells how Joshua acted on the Lord's instructions to conquer the Promised Land. His first step was to send two spies on a reconnaissance mission, reminiscent of what he and 11 others had done for Moses some 40 years before. (Numbers 13-14)

1. Compare the report that Joshua's spies gave him in Joshua 2:24 with the report that Moses' spies brought back to him in Numbers 13:26-31. What are the similarities and differences?

Joshua 2 introduces us to a remarkable woman named Rahab. Scripture tells us that Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute whose house was likely built into the walls surrounding the city of Jericho.

- 2. Read Joshua 2:7, 15-20. What words come to mind when you think about what she did? For example, were her actions bold, risky or foolish?
- 3. According to Joshua 2:14, 17-20, what conditional promise did the spies make to Rahab in return for her actions?

4.	Fill in the blanks of the following verses	i.	
	Joshua 2:9 (ESV) "I	_ that the Lord has given y	ou this land"
	Joshua 2:10 (ESV) "For we have	how	the Lord dried
	up the water of the Red Sea before you	ı came out of Egypt and v	what you did
	to the two kings of the Amorites"		
	Joshua 2:11 (ESV) "And as soon as we _		it, our hearts
	melted, and there was no spirit left in a	ny man because of you	. for the Lord
	your God, He is God in the heavens ab	ove and on the earth ber	neath."
	According to Rahab's own words, why	did she help the spies?	
5.	Do you find Rahab's words and deeds s	surprising? Why?	
6.	How do Rahab's words and actions cor faith: "Now faith is the assurance of thir not seen" (Hebrews 11:1 ESV)?	•	
sh "riç	hab's faith earned her a great reward – s e was welcomed into the People of Israe ghteous" even though she was a prostitu ble's "Hall of Faith" for what she did for th	el. More than that, Rahab vite (James 2:25), and liste	was deemed

Her great reward even extends to us. Matthew 1:5 lists her as one of only five women in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ! In that, her story in the book of Joshua points us directly to the safety, security and rest we can enjoy in the Lord today and forevermore.

7. What does Rahab's great reward demonstrate about the character of God, especially in the context of these other references to her throughout scripture?

Even though Rahab received a great reward on the basis of her faith, her "colourful" past remained part of who she was. Perhaps some Israelites looked down on her as she made her home among them. Perhaps some judged her, warning their children to avoid her lest they become tainted by her past life of sin.

8. Are you ever tempted to judge someone unfairly because of his or her past? How might the following verses help you to see them in a proper light within the body of Christ (the church)?

Isaiah 9:17b (ESV) "For everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly."

Romans 3:22-24 (ESV) "The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ [is] for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

- 9. Perhaps you struggle with forgiving yourself for something you did in your past. Or maybe you find that moving beyond your own past is hard. Do you continue to label yourself on the basis of who you once were? Read the following verses. How can they encourage you and remind you what God offers when you come to Him by faith?
 - Psalm 103:8-14
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- 10. Spend some time thanking God for the ways in which He can, and wants to, transform your life just as He did for Rahab on the basis of her faith.

Notes:



The Ark of the Covenant symbolized the throne of the Lord God, the King of Israel, who chose to dwell among His people. As the Ark was to go ahead of the people as they crossed the Jordan River, God was sending a very clear message to His people. He was going with them - personally leading them into the land He had promised as their inheritance and place of rest.

Picture source: https://keltonburgpreacher.wordpress.com

In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 4 - CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

Read Joshua 3:1-17

When the People of Israel arrived at the banks of the Jordan River, it would have been approximately 1.5 km wide and some 3-4 metres deep. Its current would have been strong and its banks would have been packed with tangled brush and jungle growth. It was, therefore, no small or gentle stream. Instead, it was a raging and violent river in flood. Let's take a look at how each and every one of the people made it safely across.

- 1. According to Joshua 3:2, for how long were Joshua and the people camped beside the Jordan River? How might they have felt during that time? Put yourself in their shoes, and imagine how you might have reacted, hearing that you were going to cross the river without boats or bridges to help you on your way children, animals and belongings in tow.
- 2. Joshua told the people and the priests how they were to cross the river. Let's break Joshua's instructions down into three parts by noting what the people and priests were to do and why they were to do it.

Verse(s)	What were the people/ priests to do?	Why were they to do it?
Joshua 3:3-4		
Joshua 3:5		
Joshua 3:6, 8		

3.	Read Joshua 3:13. What did Joshua assure the people would happen if they followed his instructions?
4.	What was the very personal assurance that God gave to Joshua in Joshua 3:7? How does it complement the assurances God gave Joshua back in Joshua 1:3, 8, 9?
5.	How did the people and priests respond to Joshua's instructions based on Joshua 3:14-17?
6.	Reflect back on the differences between what the people might have felt camping on the banks of the Jordan River in Joshua 3:1 and what they witnessed in Joshua 3:14-17. What would your reaction have been?
7.	Have you ever stepped out in faith and obedience to God even though you were afraid? Did God respond in a way that made you certain He was with you? What were the circumstances?

8. The crossing of the Jordan River is similar to that of the crossing of the Red Sea. Look at the following verses from Exodus and highlight how the events in both crossings were, in many respects, the same.

Exodus 14:13-14 "And Moses said to the People, 'Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you today ... The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent'."

Exodus 14:21 "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the [Red] sea, and the Lord drove the sea back ... and the waters were divided."

Exodus 14:29 "But the People of Israel walked on dry ground ..."

Exodus 14:31 "Israel saw the great power of the Lord ... and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses."

Exodus 15:8 "At the blast of your nostrils, the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap ..."

9. There is one critical difference between the crossing of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan River. In the verses below, circle what is different about the direction in which the people were headed.

Exodus 14:11b (ESV) "What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?"

Joshua 1:2b (ESV) "Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the people of Israel."

Deuteronomy 6:23 (ESV) "And [God] brought us out from there [Egypt], that He might bring us in and give us the land that He swore to give to our fathers."

10. There are real parallels between the Christian life and the crossings of the Red Sea and the Jordan River. The crossing of the Red Sea is a picture of how the believer has been delivered out of the old life of sin. The crossing of the Jordan River depicts how the believer has been taken into a new life of rest, inheritance and blessing in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Quite literally, a believer's walk of faith can best be summed by the phrase "out with the old and in with the new"!

If you are a Christian, how has the Holy Spirit been at work in your life most recently, helping you to move out of the old and into the new?

If you are still exploring Christianity, don't be afraid to reach out to a friend, your table leader or a teacher to talk about the new life you can have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Throughout our walk of faith, we will encounter situations in which God calls us to do things that seem as risky, or even as "crazy," as crossing the Jordan River at flood level. And yet, just as He did with Joshua and the People of Israel, God promises us that He will be with us in everything we face. Always! Nevertheless, as He did with them, God still expects us to do our part. He desires that we step out boldly by faith and stand firm in the challenges of life.

- 11. Is there an area in your life in which you sense God calling you to step out boldly by faith for Him? Or a situation in which you need to stand firm on His promises?
- 12. Let's conclude with the words of Psalm 121:1-8 (ESV). They are beautiful reminders of the help that is ours when we look to God by faith.

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore."

Meditate on these words this week. Ask God to help you to rest in Him as you step out boldly in faith for Him. Be secure in the truth that He remains the same God as the One who lead the People of Israel safely across the Jordan River.

Notes:



Absolutely Secure

The People of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. The wilderness was a hostile environment with wild animals and human enemies ready to attack. Their children, livestock and belongings stretched out in a long defenceless line as they wandered round and round and round. Put short, the people were ill-prepared to defend themselves in any way. On their own, they were vulnerable to attack and wanting in every possible way.

While we can only imagine just how vulnerable the People of Israel must have looked and felt, we know that God took care of their security all the more. His presence protected them on every side. He provided for their every need — food and water, shelter from the sun, and light by which to travel at night. He was their fortress. His power kept them safe from their enemies as word of His mighty acts spread far and wide.

The inhabitants of Canaan, on the other hand, appeared to be relatively secure. First, they had the natural barrier of the Jordan River to hold back enemy invaders. Second, they had fortified their cities – and these were large cities – with walls and gates. The Canaanites felt so protected behind their defences that they neither fled nor asked for mercy even though they were afraid of the God of Israel. The Bible tells us that they were melting with fear.

Any security expert will tell you that there is no such thing as absolute security. They will also tell you that any security you get will come with a cost. Not so for the People of Israel. God's security system had no gaps that could be exploited by hostile forces. It had none of the inconveniences of setting up barriers or ensuring an armed guard. Instead, God continued to charge His people to be courageous. They could trust Him and He would keep them safe.

It is a difficult thing to bring the reality of security and the feeling of security together. We may know our homes, for example, are secure but still feel afraid in the middle of the night. Under Moses, the People of Israel doubted that God would take them safely into the Promised Land solely because they did not feel secure. (Numbers 13-14) Under Joshua, however, the people trusted that God would keep them absolutely secure. They rested in God's assurance as the reality of security and feeling of security finally went hand-in-hand.

In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 5 - BUILDING A MEMORIAL

Read Joshua 4:1-5:1

Implicit in this week's passage is God's call to remember how He is very present and at work in the lives of His people. In that wonderful assurance, however, there is also a warning! One of the greatest threats to our faith is forgetfulness; Satan does not want us to remember what God has done, is doing, or will do in our walk of faith with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "assurance" as: 1(a) being certain in the mind; (b) confidence of mind or manner: easy freedom from self-doubt or uncertainty; (c) security; 2 something that inspires or tends to inspire confidence.

- 1. According to Joshua 4:1-3, what did God tell Joshua to do after the People of Israel had safely crossed the Jordan River?
- 2. Why did God instruct the people to do this, according to Joshua 4:6-7?

Throughout the Bible, God has instructed His people to speak of His laws, celebrate feasts, and observe ceremonies to remember who He is and all that He has done (and will continue to do). In the Old Testament, for example, the People of Israel were commanded to partake in the Passover to remember how God had delivered them from a life of slavery in Egypt. Likewise, in the New Testament, Christians are called to celebrate the ordinance of Communion as an on-going memorial of the Lord Jesus Christ's death until He comes again.

3. Highlight the similarities between God's instructions in Joshua 4:6-7 and those in the following verses.

Psalm 78:4-7 (ESV) "I will open my mouth [with] things we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders that He has done ... [so] that the next generation might know them ... [and] so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God but keep His commandments."

What do these verses teach about our responsibility to the next generation(s), both as individuals and members of the church?

- 4. Brainstorm some practical ways that you can fulfill this responsibility, even if you don't have children in your own home.
- 5. Look carefully at the sequence of events in Joshua 4:18. Write them out in your own words.

6. According to the poetic description in Psalm 114:5-7, how did that sequence of events take place? Was the sequence of events a coincidence?

Psalm 114:5-7 "What ails you, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back ... Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob ..."

7. Sometimes, the Bible records very small details in the middle of a much larger narrative. These small details are extremely important and we need to pay attention to them. Joshua 4:19 is no exception. On what day of what month did the People of Israel cross the Jordan River and camp at Gilgal?

The date recorded in Joshua 4:19 is significant in that it marked an anniversary in the life of God's people. On the very same day, 40 years before, God instructed His people to prepare to go out of a life of slavery in Egypt with the Passover. According to Dale Ralph Davis, "this day had marked the beginning of redemption; now it marked its completion. What [God] began He brought to completion." (*No Falling Words*, p. 41)

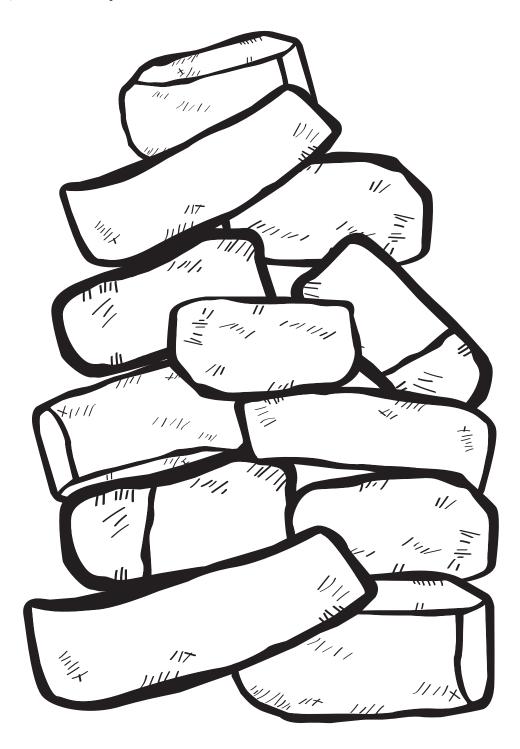
The Apostle Paul assured the Philippians that God was doing a similar thing in their own lives of faith when he wrote, "And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6, ESV)

8. Use the image on the next page to build a "Memorial of 12 Stones" to depict what God has done, and continues to do, in your own walk of faith. You may want to use Psalm 103 and Ephesians 1:1-14 to help get you started. Prayerfully use your "Memorial" as a reminder of His faithfulness, especially when times get tough. Use it to share God's goodness with those He has brought into your life. You may even want to cut it out of the study guide and place it where you can see it on a daily basis.

Notes:



Memorial of 12 Stones



Joshua's Battle Horns

Trumpets are often used throughout the Bible to signal something for God's People. The Battle of Jericho is no exception.

In Joshua 6, God commanded seven priests, blowing seven trumpets, to march in front of the Ark of the Covenant and Joshua's warriors during the seven-day battle of Jericho. For the first six days, all were to march silently around the city once. On the seventh day, all were to march around the city seven times. After the seventh round, the priests were to blow the trumpets to signal Joshua's warriors to shout. The Lord would then give them the city!

The trumpets in Joshua 6 were neither musical instruments nor made of metal. They were made of animal horns, and were more noisemakers than anything else. In fact, there were three different types of horns used during the battle of Jericho: the *geren*, *sopar* and a *yobel*.

Joshua 6:5 is the only time the geren is referenced in the Old Testament as a signal. The *sopar* was commonly used throughout the Old Testament to signal warriors during a battle. It was also used to remind God's People that He is their Holy King, and to call them to offer sacrifices to atone for sin. The *yobel* was used to signal the Israelites that they were to approach Mount Sinai when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments in Exodus 19:13.

David A. Howard Jr., The New American Commentary: Joshua Vol. 5, p. 169

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In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 6 - OBEDIENCE AND VICTORY

Read Joshua 5:2-6:27

This passage includes one of the most well-known stories in the Bible. To borrow the words of the familiar kids' song, it tells of when "Joshua won the battle of Jericho and the walls came tumbling down!"

What is important to recognize in this story, however, is not just the fact that the walls did, truly, "come tumbling down." We also need to appreciate the degree to which Joshua and the people put their full trust in God and obeyed His commands as they prepared for battle. Their obedience to God resulted in a victory from God.

On February 22, 1990, the NY Times announced that archeologists had "impressive" evidence to support Joshua's account of the Battle of Jericho. Studies involving ceramic remnants, royal scarabs, carbon-14 dating, seismic activity in the region and ruins of tumbled-down walls led many archeologists to accept that the ancient city of Jericho was indeed destroyed in a 7-day siege around 1400 BC, just as the Bible says.

John Noble Wilford, "Believers Score in Battle over the Battle of Jericho," NY Times, February 22, 1990

1. Think of an important event in your own life (e.g., a wedding, birthday, anniversary, vacation, graduation, etc.). How much time did you spend preparing for the event in comparison to the duration of the event itself? Did your preparations influence the success of the event? Why or why not?

Joshua and the people obeyed God's commands by preparing for the battle in five ways. Let's look at them in turn.

Preparation #1 - Joshua 5:2-9

- 2. According to Joshua 5:2, what was the first way that God prepared His people once they had made it across the Jordan River? Do you find this surprising, given that the men were just about to go into battle?
- 3. Why did God prepare His people for battle in this way (Joshua 5:4-7)?

"Why didn't God give the order [to circumcise] a month or two back, on the east side of the Jordan when the Israelites were not in such an exposed condition and before the fear and hatred of the Canaanites were aroused? If this was only about obedience, that would have been a more logical moment to issue the command. Yet God waited until this moment, when the stakes were precariously high. Why? Because the whole enterprise was about trust ... circumcision is about trust ... He watches over. You can rest."

Mark Buchanan, The Rest of God, pp. 98-99

Preparation #2 - Joshua 5:10-12

4. According to Joshua 5:10, what was the second way God prepared His people for battle?

o. Look at oonida on iz: What happoned inimediately after the took place	5.	Look at Joshua 5:11-12.	What happened immedi	iately after this to	ook place?
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Preparation #3 – Joshua 5:13-15

6. God prepared Joshua even above and beyond what the People of Israel had to do. On the basis of Joshua 5:13-15, how did Joshua react to what (or who) he saw? How might this encounter have prepared him for battle?

Preparation #4 – Joshua 6:2-6

God prepared Joshua by giving him instructions to pass on to his army as they set out to conquer the first part of the Promised Land.

- 7. What did God promise Joshua in Joshua 6:2?
- 8. According to Joshua 6:3-11, what were Joshua and the people to do in the battle, and who/what was to go with them?

Preparation #5 – Joshua 6:15-19

Joshua gave final instructions to prepare the people for what would happen once the battle was over, even before it had begun.

- 9. What were the people to do with everyone and everything in Jericho? Were there any exceptions and, if so, what and why?
- 10. According to Joshua 6:20-25, how did the people ultimately respond to God's commands?

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days."

Hebrews 11:30 (ESV)

This story demonstrates a principle that is repeated over and over throughout the Bible: victory comes when we trust God and prepare for the "battles" in our own lives by heeding His Word, submitting to His will, obeying His commands, and living a life of faith. Even more, God's people experience victories when we (the church) corporately claim God's promises by faith and fight battles that rage against us in our world today.

11. Consider the following verses. How do they demonstrate the principle that victory and obedience go hand-in-hand for us as individuals and for the church as a whole?

Deuteronomy 12:28 (ESV) "Be careful to obey all these words that I [Moses] command you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God."

Psalm 1:1-3 (ESV) "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

1 John 5:3-4 (ESV) "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith."

Prayerfully work through the old hymn *Trust and Obey* (as written out below). Ask God to show you how it might help to prepare for the battles you face in your daily life by faith.

Trust and Obey

"When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way;
While we do His good will, He abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of His love, until all on the altar we lay; For the favour He shows, and the joy He bestows, are for them who will trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet, we will sit at His feet, or we'll walk by His side in the way;
Where He sends we will go, what He says we will do, never fear, only trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

Words by John Sammis, 1887

Notes:



Achan's Sin

Households today are relatively small and may even consist of a single person. The individualism of our day appears to place the interests of the one ahead of those of the family, community and country. This was not the case in Joshua's day. In ancient Israel family dwellings were clustered together into compounds. In this setting an extended family lived together governed by the eldest male.

Mark Scarlata writes: "In ancient Israel the idea of communal participation and shared life was very different from how we understand it today. There was no concept of a personal, private life that did not have an effect on the wider community. Israel was called to holiness, and that required everyone's obedience so that God's holiness would inhabit the whole community. Sin, however, was thought to be like a contamination or a contagious disease that could quickly spread." (Sabbath Rest, p. 99)

This is the same idea as leaven (yeast) permeating through a whole batch of dough and affecting the whole. The sins of individuals - like bad leaven - have the potential to taint the entire community, but balanced against this is the idea that holiness can also spread to others, filtering through the whole community - like good leaven.

Achan's specific sin was that he coveted, and then stole, some of the things in Jericho that had been designated by God as "devoted things." Such items were to be given over to the Lord, often by totally destroying them. They were considered holy, set apart to God. (Joshua 6:19) Theft of such "devoted things" sounds bad enough, but Achan, and through him the People of Israel, were more seriously accused of "breaking faith" with God. (Joshua 7:1)

Achan's sin was a betrayal of trust that kindled God's righteous anger. As such, his actions were punished swiftly and decisively. Achan, his entire family, and all of his possessions were destroyed; in effect they were given back to the Lord. A pile of stones marked this event so that it would not be forgotten.

Achan put his greed ahead of his commitment to obey God. His disobedience broke the covenantal relationship between God and Israel. That's why we see the covenant being renewed in the next chapter of the book of Joshua. (Joshua 8:30-35)

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In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 7 - DISOBEDIENCE AND DEFEAT

Read Joshua 7:1-26

Last week, we learned that obedience to God leads to victory from God. This week, we are going to see the same principle at work but in a much different way. While victory and obedience go hand-in-hand, disobedience and defeat go together, too. In that, there is a sobering wake-up call for all of us. Sins, even those we hope would stay secret or hidden, have very serious and far reaching consequences, not just for our own lives but for those around us as well.

The narrative in Chapter 7 unfolds in a way that gives us, the readers, more understanding of what is going on than the characters in the story themselves. We have the answer to the central questions of this chapter before the characters even ask them. We know the cause of events before they have ever taken place. And we know why the chapter comes to such a sobering end before it begins. Let's go through these one-by-one.

The Answer

- 1. What is the answer (or the reason) for what will take place in Joshua 7, according to Joshua 7:1?
- 2. To what does the phrase "devoted things" in Joshua 7:1 refer? Look back at Joshua 6:17-19 for more context.

The Questions

3.	The questions that flow from "the answer" in Joshua 7:1 happen in the wake of the battle for the city of Ai. What happened at Ai according to Joshua 7:4-5?
4.	How did the People of Israel respond? Contrast their response in Joshua 7:5 to Rahab's words to the spies in Joshua 2:9-11. Do you find the seeming reversal of roles surprising?
5.	What questions did Joshua pose to God in Joshua 7:7-9? Which question is

The Sobering End

most striking to you and why?

God immediately answered Joshua's questions with very stern words. God's words emphasize what we, the readers, already knew. Israel sinned by stealing things that had been devoted to God, lying about the theft and hiding the evidence. (Joshua 7:10-11)

6. Look at Joshua 7:12-15. What did God require Joshua to do, and how was God's command tied to Israel's quest to conquer the Promised Land?

- 7. According to Joshua 7:16, approximately how much time elapsed between the time when God gave His instructions to Joshua and the time when Joshua began to bring the People of Israel before Him?
- 8. As readers of the narrative, we already know the identity of the guilty party. (Joshua 7:1) Imagine how Achan must have felt as the People of Israel, including his friends and family, were brought before God tribe-by-tribe. Put yourself in his shoes. How would you have felt? Would you have hoped your sin would remain a "secret," hidden from the view of others? What might you have done in his place?
- 9. Achan's "secret" sin is ultimately disclosed before God, Joshua, and all the people in Joshua 7:20-21. To what did Achan confess, and why did he act as he did?

"You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence."

Psalm 90:8 (ESV)

The end of Joshua 7 is tragic, to say the least. It's hard for us to even conceive of the reason for and scope of God's punishment for one man's sins. Achan and his family, along with all of their belongings, were destroyed once his "secret" sin was revealed. (Joshua 7:22-26)

- 10. How can one person's secret sin(s) destroy the lives of those around him/her? Have you witnessed that before in a family or the church?
- 11. Is it possible to find rest while harbouring a secret sin? Why or why not?

A "heap of stones" was placed over the graves of Achan and his family to remind the people of his sin and the punishment it deserved. More importantly, the heap of stones became a lasting testament to God's holiness and the judgement He must render in the wake of sin.

The place where Achan and his family perished was named "the Valley of Achor" as it means "trouble." Throughout Israel's history, God used this place to demonstrate that, just as He is a God of judgement and wrath, so is He a God full of goodness, mercy and love. Read what the prophet Hosea wrote about the Valley of Achor hundreds of years after Achan's death.

Hosea 2:14-20 (ESV) "Behold, I [God] will allure [my People of Israel] ... and speak tenderly to [them] ... I will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope ... I will make [my People] lie down in safety. And I will betroth [them] to me forever ... in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy ... in faithfulness. And [they] will know the Lord."

- 12. How can Hosea's words give you hope in the wake of Joshua 7's sobering end?
- 13. Achan is an extreme example of how sin can destroy an individual, a family, and even an entire group of people. His story is, therefore, a clear warning. Like Achan, we can also fall prey to the terrible consequences of sin when we only focus on our own desires: on what might make us "happy" instead of what God would have us desire or do. Reflect on the following quote from C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*.

"What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could "be like gods"—could set up on their own as if they had created themselves—be their own masters—invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history—money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery—the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing."

Can you see yourself in it? How?

As sinners we, like Achan, deserve death. Yet, the Bible is very clear that God does not want to leave us stuck in our sin. Instead, He warns us to repent and gives us time to do so, just as He did with the People of Israel back in Joshua 7. He longs that we would claim the forgiveness He graciously gives through His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

14. Joshua 7:1 began with the word "but." Prayerfully meditate on these other "but" verses. Are there any "secret" sins in your life that you need to confess?

Romans 5:18-21 (ESV) "Therefore, as one trespass [by Adam] led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's [Jesus'] obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

1 John 1:6-9 (ESV) "If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin ... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Don't wait! Confess your sins to God even now! Also, consider whether you need to confess your sins to someone else you trust as a means of keeping yourself accountable and/or seeking help if you are trapped in an addictive pattern of sinful behaviour. Don't stay in the darkness, hiding your sins. Claim the rest, peace, healing and forgiveness God so graciously and lovingly offers through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notes:



The Kings of Canaan

Joshua 12 lists a large group of kings that the People of Israel defeated as they journeyed towards and eventually conquered the Promised Land.

These kings did not rule over large empires. Instead, they ruled over cities and their surrounding lands. They were independent of one another and yet frequently joined forces to fight a common enemy.

At times, these kings paid taxes to an overlord (or superpower) such as Egypt. Take, for example, a series of letters found in Egypt at Tell el-Amarna. Dating back to the mid-14th century, these letters were sent from kings in Canaan to their Egyptian overlords and appealed for assistance. (David M. Howard Jr. *The New American Commentary: Joshua* Vol. 5, p. 48)

Interestingly, while the book of Joshua tells us that the kings of Canaan joined together to fight against the People of Israel (Joshua 9:1-2), it offers neither a hint of an appeal to a superpower nor suggestion that any superpower came to the aid of the Canaanite kings when the Israelites conquered the land.

The kings of Canaan and their people were deathly afraid of Israel's God. They had heard of God's mighty acts in Egypt and how He demonstrated the powerlessness and the falseness of Egypt's gods. They knew their first line of defence, the Jordan River, had failed them completely. Even so, they did not flee Israel nor ask for mercy. They remained defiant even in their fear.

Meanwhile, God gave Joshua and the People of Israel victory after victory as they took possession of the Promised Land. This should come as no surprise given that the name Israel means "God prevails" or "God contends." God prevailed over the kings of Canaan to give His people the land He had promised to their forefathers hundreds of years before.

Through His words and deeds, God declared that He was the only one true God and King. He made it clear that the land was to be cleansed of all of Canaan's false gods. Just as He was holy, His people had to be holy. They could not live at rest in a land that was defiled by false gods and/or pagan kings. He commanded His people to ensure that the kings of Canaan would "not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices that they have done for their gods" because that would lead them to sin against the Lord their God. (Deuteronomy 20:18)

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In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 8 - THE BATTLES CONTINUE

Joshua 8:1-12:24

Our reading this week is one of the two longest segments in our study, as it includes five chapters from the book of Joshua. Please persevere through them! They are vitally important because they tell us how God empowered Joshua and the People of Israel to conquer all of the Promised Land.

Joshua 8:1-35 – Victory at Ai and the Renewal of the Covenant

- 1. How does Joshua 8:1 signal that the sin of Achan was behind Joshua and the People of Israel and that they were back on track to the conquer the Promised Land?
- 2. What is the key difference between what the People of Israel were allowed to take following the battle of Ai versus the battle of Jericho, according to Joshua 6:18-19 and Joshua 8:2?
- 3. Read Joshua 8:13-35. After he was victorious in battle and had conquered Ai, what did Joshua do with, and for, the People of Israel? Thinking back to our lesson last week about Achan's sin, why was this so important?

Joshua 9:1-27 – The Gibeonite Deception

- 4. Not long after Joshua conquered Ai, other kings in Canaan gathered together to fight against Israel. Some, however, from the Hivite city of Gibeon decided to fight not with military force, but with cunning and deception instead. What did they propose to Joshua, according to Joshua 9:3-13?
- 5. Read Joshua 9:14-15. What did Joshua and the People of Israel do in response to the proposal? More importantly, what did they not do? Why do you think they neglected this?
- 6. Have you ever neglected to pray when in a situation like Joshua? What were the circumstances and what was the outcome?
- 7. Joshua eventually confronted the Gibeonites and asked about the reason behind their deception. He also made them servants of Israel: cutters of wood and drawers of water for sacrifices to God. According to Joshua 9:24, why did the Gibeonites act as they did?

Joshua 10:1-43 – The Sun Stands Still and the Conquests of Southern Canaan

8. Joshua 10:8-9 tell us that Joshua came upon his enemies after receiving another assurance from God that victory was sure. Joshua 10 ends by telling us that Joshua and the People of Israel conquered all of southern Canaan. Some might, then, conclude that it was Joshua who conquered the land and secured victory for Israel. Fill in the blanks for the following verses.

Joshua 10:10 (ESV) "And the	threw them into a panic
before Israel, who struck the	em with a great blow"
Joshua 10:11 (ESV) " and the	e threw down large stones
from	on them and they died. There were more who
died because of the	than the
killed with the sword."	
'sun, stand still at Gibeon,'	at time, Joshua spoke to the Lord and said . and the sun stood still until the [People of heir enemies There has been no day like it
when the	_ heeded the voice of a man, for the
fought	t for Israel."
Joshua 10:42 (ESV) "And	captured all these kings and
their land at one time, beca	use fought for Israel."

To whom should we rightly attribute the victory?

Joshua 11:1-23 – Conquests in Northern Canaan

9. What did God say to and do for Joshua and the people according to Joshua 11:6-9?

10. Joshua was one of the thousands of slaves who were delivered out of Egypt and then chased by Pharaoh into the Red Sea. Read the selected parts of the song that Moses and the people sang that day.

Exodus 15:1-18 (ESV) "I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song ... my salvation ... The Lord is a man of war ... Pharaoh's chariots ... He cast into the sea ... Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power ... shatters the enemy. In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries ... Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode ... You will bring them in and plant them ... in the place ... which you have made ... The Lord will reign forever and ever."

How might the events recorded in Joshua 11:6-9 have reminded Joshua of what he sang with Moses after crossing the Red Sea? Do you imagine Joshua found some irony there?

11. Joshua 11 concludes with Joshua and the People of Israel conquering the entire Promised Land. Read Joshua 11:23 slowly. As what did the people receive the Promised Land, and what was the result, both for them and the land itself?

Joshua 12:1-24 – Kings Defeated by Moses and Joshua

12.	Joshua 12:1-24 lists	the kings that we	re defeated b	oy Moses	and Joshua.	How
	many kings in total	were defeated?				

13. Why do you think all of these kings are specifically listed in this chapter?

Summary

14. Let's put all of this long section from the book of Joshua together. Joshua and the People of Israel lived through a series of physical battles as they conquered the Promised Land. We may not personally live in the midst of physical battles as Joshua did. Nevertheless, as Christians we certainly do live in the midst of spiritual battles, and these battles will rage until the Lord Jesus Christ returns. As we fight in these battles, we need to keep our eyes, hearts and minds fixed solely on Him.

Read what Paul wrote about living in the midst of spiritual battles.

Ephesians 6:10-18 (ESV) "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil ... Take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day ... Stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as shoes for your feet ... the readiness of the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints."

61

How do Paul's words parallel what Joshua and the people did as they fought physical battles to conquer Canaan, or in one key instance, forgot to do? Is there one thing in Paul's list that you do well in the spiritual battles you encounter? Based on where you are today, which area do you most need to focus on as you fight spiritual battles?



Notes:

"What Jesus gathered into His life from His prayers we can never know, but this we do know, that a prayerless life is a powerless life. A prayerless life may be a noisy life and fuss around a great deal but it is far removed from Him who, by day and night, prayed to God."

Mrs. Lettie Burd Cowman, Streams in the Desert, p. 182

PART 2 Inheriting the Land of Rest

Inherit: to come into possession of or receive especially as a right or divine portion

Synonyms to inheritance: a bequest, birthright, heritage, legacy

Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus

The first few words of Joshua 13 signal that we are entering into a new section in the history of Israel. After seven long years of battle, Joshua and the People of Israel could finally move beyond their physical battles and settle into their inheritance! As we will see, Joshua faithfully obeyed God as he divided the land between the 12 tribes of Israel – each tribe named after the 12 sons of the people's patriarch Jacob. As he divided the land, Joshua made it clear that each tribe would bear the responsibility of clearing its portion of land of any remaining enemies. At the same time, Joshua disbanded his army and sent some tribes to their lands on the eastern side of the Jordan River.



In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 9 - THE DIVISION OF TERRITORIES

Read Joshua 13:1-19:51

This is the second of two very long and detailed passages from the book of Joshua. We have seven chapters to cover and we'll do that by dividing them into three parts. As you read them, try to stay awake (insert smiley face here)! It is not easy reading to be sure, and you'll be tempted to ask yourself, "Do I really need to read or know this?" In a word, the answer is yes!

According to David G. Firth, "we need to read these chapters (though we don't need to enjoy them in the same way that we might enjoy some other parts of Joshua). The book of Joshua is not complete without them as they provide the evidence that Yahweh [God] is indeed fulfilling his promises to Israel. Joshua's subsequent claims about Yahweh's faithfulness to his promises (Joshua 21:45; 23:14) depend upon what is said here, though that much of the land remains to be claimed also provides the foundation for Joshua's final messages to the people (Joshua 23-24). So we need to read these chapters; and that need comes from their function. They are the key evidence that Yahweh has indeed given the land, and, more than that, that every clan could understand that the land where they lived was theirs."

The Message of Joshua: The Bible Speaks Today, p. 142

Joshua 13:1-14:5 - Land Still to Be Conquered and the Inheritance East and West of the Jordan

1. Read Joshua 13:1-7. Summarize these verses in just one sentence, even if it's long.

2.	Go back over Joshua 13:1-7 one more time. Count how many times the word "all" appears.
3.	What does the fact that the word "all" was used so many times say to you about the amount of work that Joshua and the People of Israel still had to do? If you had been among them, would you have been intimidated by that amount of work? Why or why not?
4.	According to Joshua 14:1-5, Joshua, Eleazar the priest, and the heads of the tribes distributed the land west of the Jordan River by lots. Do you find this surprising? Why or why not?
Jo	shua 15:1-17:19 — The Allotment for the Tribes of Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh
5.	As you will see, this part of Joshua records an incredible amount of detail about the actual boundaries of each tribe's land. In our modern world, this degree of detail is similar to the property surveys that accompany the purchase of a new home. Why do you think the book of Joshua includes this degree of detail and accuracy?
Ju an	e Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ was a descendent of the tribe of dah. (Matthew 1:1-6, Luke 3:31-34) As such, commentators have noted that, "as omen to Judah's future greatness and leadership, its allotment west of the rdan is mentioned first" in the book of Joshua. (New Bible Commentary, p. 253)

- 6. Chapter 15 gives a lengthy description of Judah's portion in the southern part of the Promised Land. What are some of the geographical features of this part of the land?
- 7. How do Judah's geographical features fulfill the words of Moses in the verses below?

Deuteronomy 6:10-11 (ESV) "And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant..."

8. Years before they conquered the Promised Land, God told the People of Israel what they were to do (and not to do) with its inhabitants (the Canaanites). Underline God's instructions in the verses below.

Numbers 33:50-53 (ESV) "And the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, when you pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you and destroy all their figured stones and destroy all their metal images and demolish all their high places. And you shall take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it.

Deuteronomy 7:1-4 (ESV) "When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their

sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods."

Why do you think that God commanded His people to take such actions upon conquering the Promised Land?

9. How well did the People of Israel obey God's commands (in the previous verses)? Put another way, how successful were the following groups of people in driving out the inhabitants of their part of the Promised Land?

Verses	Groups of People	Degree of Success
The tribes east of the Jordan (Joshua 13:13)		
Caleb at Hebron (Joshua 15:13-17)		
Tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:63)		
Tribe of Ephraim (Joshua 16:10)		
Tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 17:12-13)		

Joshua 18:1-19:51 – The Allotment of the Remaining Land and the Allotments for the Tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Naphtali, Dan and Joshua Himself

Joshua 18:1 tells us that all of the People of Israel gathered together at Shiloh and erected the tent of meeting. Most commentators agree that the tent of meeting refers to the tabernacle, the movable structure that represented the Lord's presence among them. From this point on, Shiloh would eventually become the center for worship for the People of Israel until King David moved it to Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 6)

10. Surprisingly, some of the People of Israel were not as keen to claim their inheritance as others. Read the following three translations of Joshua 18:3.

Joshua 18:3 (KJV) "And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?"

Joshua 18:3 (ESV) "So Joshua said to the people of Israel, "How long will you put off going in to take possession of the land, which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you?"

Joshua 18:3 (NIV) "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?

Put into your own words why some of the people did not claim what God had given them as readily as others did?

11. Have you ever fallen prey to the same tendencies as some of the People of Israel did in Joshua 18:3 (as recorded above)? Have these same tendencies kept you from experiencing all the good that God desires for you as His child?

According to Joshua 18:1-10, Joshua sent out surveyors from each tribe to describe the remaining land. Upon receiving the descriptions, he assigned the land to the remaining seven tribes by lot. As he went through this process, he repeated (three times) that it was being done "before the Lord." (Joshua 18:6, 8, 10)

12. How does Joshua's repeated use of the phrase "before the Lord" demonstrate that the land was being divided by both wise human leadership and divine direction?

According to Joshua 19:49-50, who was assigned the last portion of land, and what did he do with it?

The two faithful spies from Numbers 13-14 bookend the division of land: Caleb received the first portion of land west of the Jordan, and Joshua the last. Ironically, God's specific promise of land for Caleb is recorded several places in scripture, while Joshua's land is only mentioned once. According to Joshua 19:49-50, Joshua's land was given to him not only as a gift from God, but from the People of Israel as well.

Summary

13. Joshua 13:1 tells us that Joshua started to divide the land among the People of Israel when he was "old and advanced in years." What do Joshua's actions throughout this long passage tell you about his character and his faith? What can you learn from his example and how could you apply this in your own life?

14. How does Joshua's example point towards our ultimate example in life, the Lord Jesus Christ?



Notes:







In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 10 - CALEB'S LAND

Read Joshua 14:6-15

Last week, we read how Joshua divided the Promised Land into territories for each of Israel's 12 tribes. Tucked into that part of the book of Joshua, we find the wonderful story of Caleb, a man who truly lived his life trusting and obeying God. Caleb's story is a reminder that while God has plans and purposes for the nations, He also cares intimately for His people as individuals.

To fully understand Caleb's story, we need to go back some 45 years and revisit the story of when Moses sent him to spy on the Promised Land along with Joshua and 10 other men. We had a brief look at this story in Week 3, but will go through it in more detail now. You may want to spend a few minutes reading through Numbers 13-14 before you begin the following questions.

- 1. According to Numbers 13:17-20, what task did Moses give Joshua, Caleb and the 10 other spies? Specifically, what information did Moses ask them to obtain?
- 2. Upon their return, Joshua and Caleb gave a very different report to Moses than did the other 10 spies. Let's compare those two reports by noting the main points of each.

Joshua and Caleb's Report Numbers 13:30, 14:6-9	The Other 10 Spies' Report Numbers 13:27-29, 32-33

3. From these reports, what did Joshua and Caleb encourage the People of Israel to do, and why?
4. According to Numbers 14:1-4 and 10, how did the People of Israel respond to the reports of Caleb and Joshua in comparison to the other 10 spies?
In Numbers 13:30 and Numbers 14:7-9, we read that Caleb spoke boldly to Moses

5. God honoured Caleb and Joshua for acting according to their convictions. In contrast, He punished the other 10 spies and the People of Israel for not believing their report. According to Numbers 14:26-35, how did He do this?

and the People of Israel. In doing that, he (and Joshua) followed his convictions even though the rest of the spies, and indeed all of the People of Israel, took another view. Numbers 14:10 tells us that in speaking boldly, Caleb (and Joshua) put themselves in serious danger as the people were ready to stone them out of

6. The other 10 spies and the People of Israel were punished because they did not believe God when He promised that the land would be theirs, challenges notwithstanding. What group of people might you have been part of – those who believed God's promises (Caleb or Joshua) or those who did not (the other 10 spies and the people)?

fear.

7.	What lessons can the church today draw from the manner in which the People of Israel responded to Caleb and Joshua, especially given that they knew that God had promised them the land?
8.	Read the verses below.
	Numbers 14:24 (ESV) "But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land"
	Deuteronomy 1:35-36 (ESV) "Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He shall see it, and to him and to his children I will give the land on which he has trodden because he has wholly followed the Lord!"
	In your own words, summarize the type of man Caleb was when Moses sent him to spy on the Promised Land with Joshua.
9.	Let's return to our passage in Joshua 14 and read about the kind of man Caleb became many years later. Compare Joshua's description of Caleb in Joshua 14:9 to the verses you just read in Numbers 14:24 and Deuteronomy 1:35-36 (above). Did Caleb change? Why or why not?
10.	According to Joshua 14:10, how long did Caleb have to wait to receive the reward that God had promised him?

- 11. Do you think that it was hard for Caleb to wait? Would it have been hard for you?
- 12. Upon receiving his reward, Caleb responded to Joshua in a remarkable way. Read through Caleb's words as recorded in Joshua 14:10-12. As you do, underline the words "the Lord" each time they appear.

Joshua 14:10-12 (ESV) "And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, just as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am this day eight-five years old. I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming. So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the Lord said."

What do Caleb's use of the words "the Lord" say about his faith in God, and specifically what he believed about God's role in his past, present and future?

The King James Version of the Bible translates Caleb's words in Joshua 14:12 as "now give me this mountain." Hebron, the land which God had promised to Caleb as his inheritance, consisted of rugged terrain with powerful cities, known to be inhabited by giants. Yet Caleb did not back down from a challenge, even though he was an old man. He didn't ask Joshua to give him some "nicer" land that would have made his life easier or more comfortable. Instead, Joshua 15:13-17 tells us that Caleb drove out the giants and settled his land. What strength. What courage. What faith in the goodness and faithfulness of His God!

13.	3. Have you ever met someone who has lived a long and faithful life like Caleberg If you have, list the top three things you have learned from them. If you have what can you learn from Caleb's life?			

Notes:



"... the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy! Sing to God, sing praises to His name ... Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in His holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home; He leads out the prisoners to prosperity ... Your flock found a dwelling in [your inheritance]; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy ... He is the one who gives power and strength to His people. Blessed by God!"

Psalm 68:3-10, 35 (ESV)



In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 11 - THE LAND SET ASIDE FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Read Joshua 17:3-6, 20:1-9, 21:1-45

For the past two weeks, we've been studying how Joshua divided the Promised Land between the 12 tribes of Israel. This week, we're going to see how and why certain portions of the land were set apart for three particular groups of people. We'll look at their specific problems and the beautiful ways that God provided for their special needs.

God's provisions for them underscore His wonderful character. He knew then just what they would need to rest in the Promised Land. Praise God, the same holds true today! He knows and cares for the specific and special needs of all of His children. Coming to Him with our needs will allow us to find rest and hope in the midst of our struggles.

The Daughters of Zelophehad

Before we look at the story of the five daughters of Zelophehad in Joshua 17:3-6, we need to go back to a story when they were still young women and wandering in the desert with Moses. (Numbers 27:1-11, 36:1-13)

1. In Numbers 27:1-5, these young women came before Moses, the priest, and the leaders of the people with a very special request. What was it and how did Moses respond?

God instructed Moses to put into place provisions that would help future generations of women when they found themselves in similar situations as the daughters of Zelophehad. (Numbers 27:6-11, Numbers 36:1-12) These provisions became front and centre in Joshua 17:3-6 some forty-five years later.

- 2. In Joshua 17:3, what problem faced the now-grown daughters of Zelophehad as Joshua allotted land to their tribe?
- 3. According to Joshua 17:4-6, what did they do to address the problem and what solution did Joshua offer? How does Joshua's solution point directly back to God's provisions for them in Numbers 27 and 36?
- 4. What do God's provisions for these women say about God's character, especially given that this was a culture in which title and ownership of land was typically given only to men?

The Cities of Refuge

God's law made it clear that those who shed another's blood would pay for their crime with their own blood. Families were expected to avenge the murders of their members. Nevertheless, God's law also provided for exceptions to be made if the murder was accidental or unintentional. (Exodus 21:13, Numbers 25:9-34, Deuteronomy 9:1-13) According to Dale Ralph Davis, "God's laws and rules take note of the motives and intents of such cases" as our society does when a person is tried for either manslaughter or murder. (Joshua: No Falling Words, p. 153)

5. What was the problem that the cities of refuge were to address, according to Joshua 20:1-6?

6. In *Discovering Joshua*, Charles Price notes that, "the roads leading to the cities of refuge were always kept in good repair. All obstructions that might slow a man down were removed. Every river was bridged and at every turning in the road there were signposts bearing the word 'Refuge." (p. 155)

What does this fact tell you about the heart of God, especially in the context of judgement and punishment?

The Cities and Pasturelands of the Levites

- 7. The Levites were told that they would not receive their own specific territory in the Promised Land as their inheritance. According to Joshua 13:14 and Joshua 13:33 why not? More specifically, who or what was to be their inheritance instead?
- 8. Even though they were not given land of their own, God did not leave the Levites without the resources they needed to live. Read the following verses below and underline how God provided for their special needs.

Deuteronomy 18:1-8 (ESV) "The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the Lord's food offering as their inheritance ... And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. The first fruits of your grain, of your wine and of your oil, and the first fleece of your sheep, you shall give him ... And if a Levite comes from any of your towns out of all Israel ... and ministers in the name of the Lord his God ... then he may have equal portions to eat, besides what he receives from the sale of his patrimony."

Numbers 35:2-8 (ESV) "Command to the People of Israel to give to the Levites some of the inheritance of their possession as cities for them to dwell in. And you shall give to the Levites pasturelands around the cities ... for their cattle and for their livestock and for all their beasts ... And as for the cities that you shall give from the possession of the People of Israel, from the larger tribes you shall take many, and from the smaller tribes you shall take few; each, in proportion to the inheritance that [each tribe] inherits, shall give of its cities to the Levites."

9. Joshua 21:3-40 tells us that 48 cities (and surrounding pasturelands) were given to the Levites in all. This is the exact number that God set aside for them in Numbers 35:6. These cities were scattered throughout the Promised Land.

Read the verse below.

2 Chronicles 17:9 (ESV) "And they [the Levites] taught ... having the book of the Law with them. They went about through all the cities ... and taught among the people."

Why do you think the Levites' cities and pasturelands were to be scattered throughout the Promised Land?

10. As Christians, we are scattered throughout our communities, interacting with different people in our homes and places of recreation and work. How can we follow the example of the Levites in this reality?

Summary

11. Joshua 21 ends with a wonderful summary of how the land was divided among the People of Israel. Read Joshua 21:43-45 slowly and out loud, and then highlight the words that jump out at you most.

Joshua 21:43-45 (ESV) "Thus the Lord gave to Israel all the land that He swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the Lord gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the Lord had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass."

What do these verses teach you about the character of God?

12. Hebrews 13:8 (ESV) declares that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

How can this truth encourage you in the context of God's provisions for the daughters of Zelophehad, those who escaped to the Cities of Refuge, and the Levites?

Notes:



PART 3

Living in the Land of Rest

To live: to maintain oneself; to occupy a home; to attain eternal life; to conduct or pass one's life; to have a life rich in experience

Synonyms: active, alive, going, operating, working

Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus

Rest in God Alone

King David was a man of war. For most of his adult life he had no rest from his enemies - and there were many, including at one point even his own beloved son Absalom. Throughout his rule, David continued to take possession of more of the territory of the Promised Land. God gave him success in his battles but seldom rest from battle.

In all and through all the circumstances of his life, David turned to the Lord and poured out his heart. Time after time in the Psalms, David began with a recounting of his troubles and then ended with words of praise. Nevertheless, there was no rest to be found in the circumstances of David's life. Instead, David found rest in God alone.

The Psalms of David assure us that he trusted in the Lord: in His faithfulness, His goodness, His righteousness, His justice and His absolute sovereignty. God was his rock. Throughout his life, David proclaimed the mighty acts of the Lord and he looked forward with confidence to a time of eternal rest when he would dwell with the Lord forever.

Psalm 62 also speaks of the depth of David's trust in God in his day-to-day struggles. When reading Psalm 62:1, the NIV translation says, "Truly my soul finds rest in God, my salvation comes from him." The ESV, a more literal translation, provides a clue as to what that kind of rest looks like, "For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation."

The original Hebrew word used in Psalm 62:1 speaks of a still waiting, a waiting in silence, in quiet trust, and thus a 'repose.' This is the kind of rest that is available to us today through the Lord Christ Jesus: the One who saves us from sin and sent His Spirit to live within us. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus invites us to "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is in Him alone that we find rest in this life and will enjoy eternal rest in the life to come.

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In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 12 - THE EASTERN TRIBES RETURN HOME

Read Joshua 22:1-34

Joshua and the People of Israel have now reached the point where they can live a life of rest in the Promised Land. The battles are over! The conquest has been won! The land has been divided! And their "new" life can finally begin!

- 1. Think of a time that, after an event ended, you heaved a sigh of relief knowing that your life could now "begin" anew. How did you feel?
- 2. There is a backstory that we need to establish to fully appreciate today's passage. Moses had promised the Eastern tribes (Ephraim, Gad and Manasseh) that they could settle on the east side of the Jordan (i.e., across the river from the Promised Land). Moses, however, asked them for something in return. According to the following verses, what was it?

Numbers 32:20-22 (ESV) "So Moses said to them, 'If you will do this, if you will take up arms to go before the Lord for the war, and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before the Lord, until He has driven out His enemies from before Him and the land is subdued before the Lord; then after that you shall return and be free of this obligation to the Lord and to Israel, and this land shall be your possession before the Lord."

3. Look at Joshua 22:2-3. Did the Eastern tribes fulfill their part of the bargain? How?

"Imagine what it would have been like for these soldiers to return home after being away for so many years! Think of the love they would experience, the joys they would find, the treasures they would share! That's just a small picture of what happens when the children of God enter into the rest God gives to those who yield their all to Him and trust His Word."

Warren Wiersbe, Be Strong, p. 163

4. Joshua exhorted the eastern tribes to do five things as he discharged them from service and sent them back to their homes. Fill in the blanks to underscore what Joshua encouraged them to do.

Joshua 22:5 (ESV) "Only be v	very careful to	
the commandment and the la	w that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded	
you, to	the Lord your God, and to	
	in all His ways and to keep His commandments	
and to	to Him and to	
Him with all your heart and w	rith all your soul."	

5. In those words, Joshua reminded them, and indeed all of the People of Israel, that they had to pursue faithful living each day. Even though they had conquered the Promised Land and received their inheritance, they still had much to do in their walk with God.

The same is true for us! Underline the key words in the following verses that correspond to Joshua's exhortation to the eastern tribes.

Matthew 22:37 (ESV) "And [Jesus] said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment'."

Proverbs 3:6 (ESV) "In all your ways acknowledge [the Lord], and He will make straight your paths."

John 15:14 (ESV) "You are my friends if you do what I command you."

2 Timothy 3:14 (ESV) "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned it."

Psalm 100:1 (ESV) "Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!"

Does one of these verses particularly challenge you in your daily walk with the Lord Jesus Christ? Put a star beside it.

- 6. Look back at Jesus' words in Matthew 22:37 (as quoted above). Why do you think loving the Lord is the "great and first commandment"? How does loving God impact one's ability to obey, serve, and rest in Him?
- 7. Joshua 22:10-14 tells us that the eastern tribes built an altar upon crossing back into their own land. How did the People of Israel react to the altar?
- 8. What explanation did the eastern tribes provide for their altar in Joshua 22:22-29?

9. According to Joshua 22:30-34, how did the priest and People of Israel respond once they heard the Eastern tribes' explanation?

Charles Price writes, "To make assumptions about people's actions or motives without listening to their own explanation first can be dangerous and lead to misunderstandings with serious consequences." (*Discovering Joshua*, p. 163)

10. Have you or someone you know ever been hurt by a wrongful assumption? How did you feel?

11. What can the story of the eastern tribes teach you about interacting with others fairly, truthfully and wisely?

Notes:

Be Still My Soul (In You I Rest)

The state of the state of

Be still, my soul, The Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently, the cross of grief or pain
Leave to thy God, to order and provide
In every change, He faithful will remain
Be still, my soul, thy best thy heavenly friend
Through thorny ways, leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake
All now mysterious shall be bright at last
Be still, my soul, the waves and wind still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

In You I rest, in You I have my hope In You I trust, You never let me go I place my life within Your hands alone Be still, my soul.

Be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on When we shall be forever with the Lord When disappointment, grief and fear are gone Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored Be still, my soul, when change and tears are past All safe and blessed, we shall meet at last.

In You I rest, in You I have my hope In You I trust, You never let me go I place my life within Your hands alone Be still, my soul.

In you I rest, in You I found my hope In You I trust, You never let me go I place my life within Your hands alone Be still, my soul

Songwriters: Jason Ingram/Kari Jobe/Traditional

In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 13 - JOSHUA'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

Read Joshua 23:1-16

Our passage records Joshua's "farewell address" to the leaders of the People of Israel: the elders, officials and tribal chiefs. He was 110 years old when he gave this address.

1. Read Joshua's entire address. What jumps out at you most? Why?

- 2. To whom does Joshua repeatedly attribute Israel's success? Look specifically at Joshua 23:3-5, 9-10.
- 3. Why do you think Joshua so deliberately reminded the leaders of Israel about the reason behind their successful conquests, the source of their inheritance, and the provider of their life of rest?
- 4. How do Joshua's words correspond to Paul's words to the Thessalonians?

Thessalonians 5:24 (ESV) "He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it."

- 5. Have you ever met a person who, like Joshua, gives God the glory for all of his/her successes? How has that person impacted your own walk of faith?
- 6. Joshua reminded the leaders of Israel that while God fought for His people and secured the victories in their conquest, the People of Israel had a role to play, too. How does Joshua's address highlight that fact, according to Joshua 23:4, 9-10?
- 7. The New Testament underscores our responsibility to work to advance God's plans and purposes. Can you think of a few examples? The following verses might help get you started.
 - Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV) "And Jesus said to them, 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
 - 2 Corinthians 5:20, 6:1 (ESV) "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God ... Working together with Him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain."

- 8. Having reminded the leaders of Israel of all the good things God did for them, Joshua urged them to fulfill their obligation to God. According to Joshua 23:6-8. how were the leaders of Israel to live and act towards God?
- 9. Look at Joshua 23:6 carefully. On what were the People of Israel to base their lives and actions? Is there any "wiggle room" in this verse? Why or why not?
- 10. Joshua calls them to act in obedience to God. At the same time, however, he was crystal clear about the consequences that would flow from falling into a life of disobedience. What does he warn are the consequences of disobeying God in Joshua 23:11-16?
- 11. Have you ever been warned about the consequences of disobedience in a way that was similar to Joshua's warning to the leaders of Israel? What impact did it have on you?

In Knowing God, J.I. Packer writes that God is at once good and severe: "Behind every display of divine goodness stands a threat of severity in judgement if that goodness is scorned." Packer also underscores that God is not impatient in his severity. Instead, God is slow to anger and abounding in love! He extends His grace to all and gives us many opportunities to repent of our sin. This is one of the true marvels of God's grace, demonstrated on the cross by the Lord Jesus Christ.

12. Joshua's farewell address offers a full portrait of God and gives us a glimpse of the bigger narrative of redemption that is at play throughout the entire Bible in that it highlights God's faithfulness, mercy, love and kindness to His people. Joshua's words showcase God's goodness. But they also warn that God is holy and cannot tolerate sin; He will discipline and judge His people when they disobey.

Pray through David's words in Psalm 119:65-68, 71. Thank Him for His goodness. Appreciate His patience. Be reverently mindful of His holiness and judgement. And consider how He disciplines you as His beloved child.

Psalm 119:65-68, 71 (ESV) "You have dealt with your servant, O Lord, according to your word. Teach me good judgement and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now, I keep your word. You are good and do good; teach me your statutes ... It is good for me that I was afflicted that I might learn your statutes."

Notes:



"This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV)

In the Word and In My Life

WFFK 14 - RURIFD IN THE PROMISED LAND

Read Joshua 24:1-33

Last week, we read Joshua's address to the leaders of the People of Israel in which he reminded them of the fulfillment of God's good promises, warned them of the dangers of disobedience, and concluded by telling them that he was "about to go the way of the earth." (Joshua 23:14)

This week, we are going to read another address Joshua delivered at Shechem just before he died. His audience was much wider this time, and he spoke to all of the People of Israel: the tribes, the elders, the heads, the judges and the officers of Israel.

1. When studying narratives in the Bible, it is important to notice small details, such as geographic locations, as these details will deepen our understanding of what we read. Shechem, the place where Joshua delivered his final address to the people, is one such spot. It was not "just" a random spot in Israel's history, but one whose significance spanned back hundreds of years to Abram (who was later given the name Abraham by God).

Read Genesis 12:5-7 (ESV) below.

"So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him."

What promise did God made to Abram at Shechem, and what was Abram's response?

2. On the basis of Joshua 24:2-3, why do you think Joshua gathered all of the People of Israel at Shechem?

Scholars believe that the ancient city of Shechem got its name from the Hebrew word for "back" or "shoulder" because of its location in the narrow valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Shechem's ruins were discovered by archaeologists between 1913 and 1962, near what we know as the modern-day city of Nablus. Today, we would place Shechem approximately 65 km north of Jerusalem.

3. In addition to its historical significance, Shechem was known for its location at the most important crossroads in the middle of the Promised Land. All of the major thoroughfares would pass through this central place.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word "crossroad" is defined as: (1) a road that crosses a main road or runs cross-country between main roads; (2) usually crossroads: (a) the place of intersection of two or more roads; (b) (i) a small community located at such a crossroads; (ii) a central meeting place; (c) a crucial point especially where a decision must be made."

Summarize in one sentence the meaning of a "crossroads" especially in the context of Joshua's address to the people.

4. In Joshua 24, the People of Israel were, literally and figuratively, at a "crossroads." Joshua, their leader, was about to pass away, and the people would now have to live in the Promised Land without his leadership and godly example.

To equip the people for their future, Joshua reminded them of all that God had done on their behalf throughout their history with a series of "I" phrases - "I" referring to God. Record those "I" phrases in the following table.

Verse(s)	"I" Phrase(s)
Joshua 24:3	I took your father Abraham, I gave him Issac
Joshua 24:4	
Joshua 24:5	
Joshua 24:6	
Joshua 24:7	
Joshua 24:8	
Joshua 24:9-10	
Joshua 24:11	
Joshua 24:12	
Joshua 24:13	

5. Moving on from that incredible recounting of God's provision and care for His people, Joshua challenged the people with a "therefore" statement in Joshua 24:14-15. In the context of these verses, the word "therefore" can be translated as "consequently," or "as a result of," or "for that reason."

Underline the "therefore" statement in the verses below.

Joshua 24:14-15 (ESV) "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

6.	Read Joshua 24:16-23. In combination with his "therefore" statement in verses 14-15, what seems to be Joshua's biggest concern for the people in terms of their commitment to God?
7.	Joshua put before the people a very clear choice about the deity they would serve. Laying out various "candidates," he was clear that they cannot serve both - they had to choose between the one true God or false foreign gods. Thinking of our present-day culture, what sorts of gods might we be tempted to serve? How do they compete with serving the one true God with sincerity and faithfulness?
8.	Joshua's challenge to "choose this day whom you will serve" is just as applicable to Christians today as it was to the People of Israel when they gathered in Shechem. Why must all believers make this choice daily?
9.	Prayerfully consider Joshua's challenge in terms of the ways that you choose to spend your time, talents, resources and energies.
10.	In Joshua 24:24, we read that the people made a clear choice to serve the Lord. According to Joshua 24:25-27, what concrete steps did Joshua take to hold the people accountable for their choice? Why do you think these steps were important?

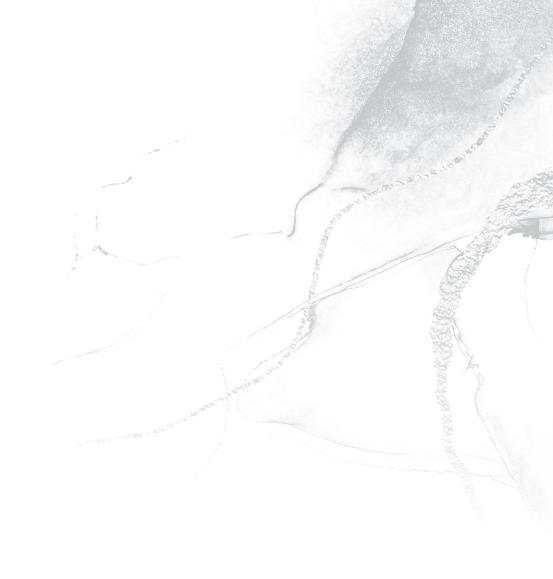
- 11. Joshua died at the age of 110. On the basis of Joshua 24:29-31, summarize the legacy that Joshua left the People of Israel.
- 12. We started this week's lesson by learning that Joshua spoke to the People of Israel at a literal and figurative crossroads. In that, we are reminded that we should see each day as a "crossroads" in our own lives a point of decision as to whom we will serve and which path we will pursue in our daily lives.

Read Jeremiah 6:16 below.

Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV) "This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.'"

In what specific ways can Jeremiah's words help you to see each day as a crossroads and to make the right decision about whom you will serve? What will be the outcome of living in this way?

Notes:



There is a Place of Quiet Rest

There is a place of quiet rest, near to the heart of God, a place where sin cannot molest, near to the heart of God.

O Jesus, blest Redeemer, sent from the heart of God, hold us, who wait before thee, near to the heart of God.

There is a place of comfort sweet, near to the heart of God, a place where we our Saviour meet, near to the heart of God.

There is a place of full release, near to the heart of God, a place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God.

hymn written by Cleland Boyd McAfee (1930)



In the Word and In My Life

WEEK 15 - CONCLUSION

	Take a few minutes to flip through the study guide and reflect on what you have read, heard and written.
	Is there anything that particularly impacted you?
	Is there an area in which the study has challenged you in your walk of faith?
	Have you sensed God at work in your heart? How?
2.	If you had to sum up the book of Joshua in your own words, what would you say is its core message?
3.	Why is this truth so essential for Christians to know and understand, even though we live thousands of years after Joshua did?

4. Have	you experienced	l rest in and	through the	Lord Jesus	Christ? How?
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5. Do you find hope in the truth that the measure of rest we enjoy in the Lord Jesus Christ today pales in comparison to the measure of rest we will enjoy with Him in heaven forever? How can you share this with others who have yet to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour?

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Notes:





Prayer Requests:



Prayer Requests:



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