

# **A Faithful Man Who Can Find? Joshua a Faithful Man**

— A Study Guide on the Life of Joshua —

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## 1 Introduction

We live in age when men in positions of leadership fail as leaders and as moral examples on every side—in government, business, church, and family. Young men in the Church have few good role models that show them how to live God-honouring lives in the midst of a pagan culture. Joshua, an often over looked man of faith, is one leader who provides an outstanding counter-example to the decay around us.

A study of the life of Joshua will show us a great leader who was faithful to God to his last breath. As we follow his life from his patient service under Moses, through his career as a military leader, to his final work as a statesman mediating the covenant between God and Israel, we will see that the events of his life teach us many lessons about how to live out our lives in a pagan culture. Some of the key lessons are:

1. A future leader needs to learn patience. God's plans and preparations are not the way the world would prepare a man. God teaches him patience and awe. The world might teach him facts (e.g., facts about war or business management) or skills (e.g., how to sell). We are not to rush into putting people in positions of leadership (1 Tim 5.22). It takes a lot of preparation to make a real leader.
2. It is proper and good for us to 'spy' out a new territory and prepare before we embark on a new venture. We are to plan, think ahead, prepare, and organize. This is not contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit. There is never a contradiction between God's sovereign control of events and our need to act responsibly. It is God's instruction and is not un-spiritual. What is un-spiritual is to prepare plans without considering the revealed will of God, to trust our own plans, not to commit them to the Lord, and not to be open to his changing our plans. For example, when starting a new church work we are to understand the 'territory' and the needs. It is not more spiritual to rush into an activity without any planning.
3. The battle against sin will be fought and won on God's terms. This is important as too often we want to 'help out God'. This does not mean that we are not to go into the 'battle'. But it has to be fought according to God's terms and in his ways. For example, it is not right to break the law in order that good may come. God chooses to use men as his instruments. But he does not need us. None of us is indispensable.
4. It is important to make the Law of God visible in the civic arena by publicly posting it and by a regular reading of it. A significant factor in the weakness of the Church is the way it ignores the Law of God today.
5. God demands obedience and does not tolerate sin and his laws being ignored. There are many today who try to argue that it is wrong for us (the State) to punish with serious punishments (e.g., capital punishment) people who break the laws of God. But we will see that stealing from God is a capital offence punishable by death. God will punish sin in spite of men. We should not be weak-kneed because of our 'politically correct' culture.
6. God can take man's defeat and turn it into a victory for his glory. God may give men temporary victories in their sinful ways. But ultimately the war belongs to him.

7. After defeat or victory we need to turn to God. It is hard to do this after victories. It is easy to be caught up in our own powers and excitement. We want to take the credit. But we must quickly turn to God and thank him for the good things which come our way.
8. We are most vulnerable when we least expect it. Satan's strategy for causing us to sin is:
  - to catch us when we are feeling strong,
  - to use lies, and
  - to marshal evidence to make us comfortable with lies.
 We need to be on our guard at all times against Satan's methods that tempt to sin.
9. We can be led astray by making judgements with only a portion of the facts. We are not to let circumstances be our guide. Circumstances can look authentic, right, and honest. Joshua and Israel had the law and had reviewed it recently; however, they didn't use and apply the teachings of the Bible in their immediate situation. How often do we hear the word preached and understand it and then walk out without applying it in our lives? Many times the preached word has spoken directly to a situation which will come up during the immediately following days. We are to use our Urim and Thummim—the Bible—as our daily guide.
10. The conquest of Canaan shows the reality of God's punishment of sin. It is a sign of what is to come in the final judgement against all that is sinful. It provides an object lesson for us of what God will do on the Judgement day. There will be nowhere to hide. The caves and rocks will not be able to hide men from the wrath of God, if they continue in their rebellion against God.
11. God is keeping a record of his victories over Satan and sin (sinners), to be rehearsed at the last day when the books are opened and the dead are judged (Rev 20.11-15).
12. Canaan is a type of Heaven. Rewards for the Christian, now and eternally, are like the earthly types:
  - **Encouragement** (Rev 7.17; Rev 21.4)
  - **Cities** (Heb 12.28)
  - **Plunder** (Col 3.23, 24; Rev 22.12)
  - **Victory** (1 Cor 15.25, 54, 57; Heb 1.13)
  - **Land** (Mt 5.5; 1 Pt 1.3, 4)
  - **Peace** (Rev 21.1-2, 25-27)
13. The book of Joshua includes an administrative document, the *War Chronicle of the Great King*. The Bible is not an abstract philosophical treatise. The exact territorial definition given in the account shows that it is tied to history. Since the Bible speaks accurately and in detail in this account, we can trust it to be accurate in the other areas of detail (compare Lk 1.5; Lk 2.1-3) and can trust the accounts of the flood, miracles, virgin conception and birth of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. Just as God deals precisely, we need precision in our dealings with men. Contracts and legal documents help us ensure that we cooperate and work together. We must not be sloppy in our work and common dealings.
14. We are to take our responsibilities and covenants seriously, and to carry a job to its conclusion. If we do not, the results can come back to hinder us in the future. Victory in battle is only part of the way to total victory. Total victory does not come until the ravages of war are turned into a



peaceful realm and industry and routine are re-established. The Peace of Christ comes about once sin is defeated. The world's view is that peace can be had by talk and compromise. At times we cannot have peace without war and death. Christ had to go to the cross and face death in order to bring true peace.

15. We are placed under moral boundaries by God. What is good, commanded, and proper in one circumstance may not be in another. The Israelites were permitted, and required, to eliminate every person living in the entire land of Canaan and to take possession of the land. But this did not give them a right to pursue world domination. They were not to conquer the nations around Canaan. This shows that we are to make distinctions in the application of rights and privileges in other areas. For example, what is proper on six days of the week may not be right on the first day. What is proper in marriage may not be outside of it. What is right in a family context, may not be right in a worship service. The government has rights that families don't have, and families have rights that the government shouldn't take. This is not situational ethics, but it is contextual ethics (i.e., the context may make something wrong that is right elsewhere or under other conditions). God defines the context.

We will find three key themes running throughout the study of the life of Joshua. They are:

- **Faithfulness** (Joshua 24.15) – Joshua was faithful to the very end. For example, he did not give in to group pressure (Num 13.1-14.10). Not once did his faith waver—from the slavery in Egypt to exploring the land of Canaan; from serving for 40 years as Moses' aide to taking the people through the river; from the conquest to the covenant renewals. Joshua relied on God entirely. This should be our approach to life as we face God's enemies around us. Joshua was a great leader because he was a man with 'backbone'. He was 'faith full'—full of faith and one on whom others could rely.
- **Fidelity** (Joshua 23.15) – God is faithful to his promises. (Dt 7.7-9). He was faithful to his covenant with Abraham (Gen 17.8) in the allocation of the Land. This allocation also fulfilled the prophecies of Jacob (Gen 49.1-33) and Moses (Dt 33.1-29). This gives us hope: through the promise of Heaven and the fact that God is in control of all things.
- **Fairness** – The account of the conquest of Canaan is not one of a merely human conquest but of God's conquering sin and wickedness. The record of the book of Joshua reminds us that false gods are nothing, God punishes sin, and wicked men receive the punishment they deserve in a just and fair manner. But God gives the evangelical call to all mankind (e.g., to Rahab, and through reading of the law at Shechem). If those outside of God's covenant community repent they will be saved. If they do not repent, they will meet the consequences of judgement. The book of Joshua teaches people today that God is just; he reserves a Day of Judgement for all men who disobey him but will forgive and save all those who call upon him (1 Jn 1.9).

As we study the life of Joshua, we must continually remember that we are studying an historical account not a myth. Although the account of Joshua was written approximately 3,500 years ago, the details given about the geography and people accurately place the events in historical time and space. Joshua was a real man, who actually walked from Egypt to the shore of the Jordan river via the Sinai peninsula over a 40-year period, and who led an army of conquest into the land of Canaan. The reality of this man who had to overcome the tendency to sin that plagues us all, and who lived an exemplary life, allows us to say that it is not only

possible, but necessary, that everyone entrusted with the responsibilities of leadership is obligated to serve God faithfully (Rom 13.4) in every area of his life (private and public).

We must insist on the historical truthfulness of the Bible as it reports the life of Joshua. Otherwise we are left with nothing more than a mythical ideal and cannot put forward his life as a model that is both possible and necessary. We must reject all attempts to undermine the historical truthfulness of the account of Joshua's life, such as the following:

Unlike the Exodus, the story of Joshua and the conquest of Canaan can be tested against a rich archaeological record. The scientific consensus: bad news for the biblical account. According to the book of Joshua ... Archaeology tells a more complicated tale. Only after they had united in a sort of tribal league did they become the Israelites, and while they undoubtedly fought their neighbors for territory, it was only after they were firmly established in Canaan. An alternate theory: the Israelites were simply a breakaway group of Canaanites fed up with the existing society. ... Just because most scholars no longer accept Joshua's war of conquest, though, does not mean the question is settled by any means. 'To suggest that many things in the Bible are not historical is not too serious. But to lose biblical history altogether is to lose our tradition.'<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental flaw in this essay is that it subjects the Bible to 'archaeology', rather than judging archaeology by the Bible. The same thing is done by the teachers of the theory of evolution, astronomers who claim that the earth is billions of years old, and by proponents of a man-defined psychology and anthropology. Men want 'science' or experience to be the measure of all things.

We must **never** fall into this trap. We must remember that:

- Man's mind is polluted by sin (Rom 3.10-18). Why should we allow men who are in rebellion against God make any pronouncements about God, his word, or his truth? Sinful men have no place to stand when they make statements about the truthfulness of the Bible. They don't know or understand truth!
- Men suppress the truth they do have (Rom 1.18). Men will do anything to deny the truthfulness of the Bible, because they know that the moment they acknowledge it as true they will have to acknowledge its moral weight over their lives. As long as they can cling to the false hope that there are mistakes in the Bible, they can deceive themselves into believing that they do not have to be accountable to the Bible—and therefore to God.
- Men claim that physical experience is the only measure of reality. This is the way of men steeped in sin. They say only that which can be confirmed with the natural senses is reality. For example, if they found a piece of rock in Jericho which said: "Joshua was here in 1450 BC," then that would be believable. But if God says it in the Bible, it cannot be believed. This view of reality is false. Men don't conduct their daily lives this way—the same 'scientist' who claims that the history presented in the Bible isn't true unless he sees physical evidence is the one who will kiss his wife goodbye in the morning and say he loves her. He cannot show physical evidence for love. The same 'scientist' will use the laws of logic (e.g., the law of non-contradiction) to argue his case. But ask him to show physical evidence for logic, and he cannot. He will say: "But we don't need physical evidence for

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<sup>1</sup> "Are the Bible's Stories True?" Michael D. Lemonick, *Time*, Dec 18, 1995

laws of logic, but we do need it for revelation from God.” He is inconsistent and arbitrary. This is where sinful man always goes wrong—he is always inconsistent and arbitrary.

- Men won't believe the Bible unless the Holy Spirit changes their hearts. Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16.19-31) is the definitive statement on the claim to supremacy of experiential evidence (Lk 16.30, 31). “Even if someone from the dead goes to them they will not repent.” Men will twist all of the experiential evidence to fit their presuppositions.<sup>2</sup> To the unconverted man, archaeology will prove anything, including that the Bible is a myth.
- All men have a final standard. If it isn't the Bible, it is themselves. Asked why they trust archaeology, they will say: “Because many scientists believe it.” But why do they trust scientists? ... and so on. In the final analysis it really isn't archaeology that they are placing as the standard. It comes down to self *vs* God. There are only two possible final authorities: self or the true God; only two possible standards: self or God's word. This is what Adam discovered when he sinned in the Garden. If the Bible isn't true, there are no standards, no laws, no morality, no meaning.

It simply does not matter what archaeology says. It is nice when the Bible's accuracy is vindicated. But it is irrelevant. It doesn't matter if we never find an extra-Biblical reference to Joshua's conquest of Jericho, etc. The fact is, it is true because God has said it is true—in the Bible. And because it is a true account, we can study the life of Joshua with the hope that God can, and will, raise up faithful leaders who will lead us out of our compromise with degenerate materialism. Joshua is an ideal man to serve as an example for us as we try to live faithful lives in the modern ‘Egypt and Canaan’ of North America.

Joshua was not called to make his mark on history. He was called to be faithful and carry out the duties he was assigned. It is a great perversion in all areas of society when those in positions of leadership try to make a name for themselves or are interested in how they will be viewed by history, rather than focusing on doing the work to which they have been called by God. Joshua was a faithful man of God, whose focus in life was being faithful to the end.

The study of the life of Joshua gives practical guidance to those who run corporations, politicians, directors of non-profit organizations, church leaders, fathers in families, etc. We need leaders, like Joshua, who can:

- spur us on to do what is right,
- create visions and plans which are consistent with what is right,
- communicate the vision, and
- make sure that it is understood and followed.

At emergent times men often arise who can do this (e.g., Churchill), but we should be asking God to give us leaders like this all the time so that we don't bounce from extremes of chaos and focus.

As we consider the life of Joshua, let's keep in mind what Paul says about faithful men:

“So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove *faithful*.” (1 Cor 4.1-2)

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Chapter 6, “Anomaly and the Emergence of Scientific Discoveries,” in: Thomas S. Khun, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press: 1970.

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to *reliable* men who will also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Tim 2.2)

Let us pray that God will raise up faithful leaders like Joshua, and let us learn to be faithful like Joshua was.

Note: Please feel free to photocopy the question pages if you wish to use them as a hand-out for a Bible-study group.

## **2 Preparation for Leadership**

### **Objective**

- To consider the extent and manner in which Joshua was prepared for leadership, and show how leaders in the Church ought to be prepared.

### **Joshua's Birth and Early Life** (1 Chron 7.20-27; Exodus 5-14)

1. Who was Joshua, from what tribe was he, and what was his position of birth?
2. Where was Joshua born?
3. Of what recent history did he have firsthand knowledge?
4. What would the circumstances of his place and time of birth have taught him?

### **Battle with Amalek** (Ex 17.1-16)

1. Describe the situation leading up to the war with Amalek?
2. What single word could be used to describe the Israelites attitude at this time?
3. What was the stated reason for the attack by the Amalekites?
4. Why did God permit the Amalekites to attack Israel?
5. What do we find to be a surprise in this passage? (9)
6. What is the significance of this battle for Joshua?

7. What is the significance of this battle for Israel?
8. Who is credited with the win? Why? (13)
9. How did God show that ultimately it was his victory?
10. What did God tell Moses to do after the victory? Why?

Lessons:

- A. God is king over the nations and sovereign over the events of history.
- B. Reassurance that God is on the side of his people.
- C. A warning to believers who want to turn back to pagan ways - the pagan ways will be destroyed.

**Mountaintop Experience** (Ex 24.13-18)

1. What are we told about the relationship of Joshua to Moses?
2. Why did Moses take Joshua but not the other leaders/elders? (See *we* and *us* in verse 14.)
3. What happened to Moses?
4. What did Joshua do during this time?

**Joshua's Observation** (Ex 32.15-20)

1. What did Joshua think was going on in the camp? Why?
2. How did interpret the sounds?

### **Serving in the Tent** (Ex 33.7-11)

1. What did Moses do?
2. What additional information do we learn here about Joshua?
3. What did Joshua do while Moses met with God? Why?

**Lessons:**

- A. God's plans and preparations are not necessarily the way that man would prepare a leader.
- B. Small things of less apparent significance may be very significant in God's plans.

### **Joshua's Zeal** (Num 11.28)

1. What is the context for Joshua's comment?
2. Why did they want the food from Egypt?
3. What was the impact of the rabble's complaint on the rest of the people of Israel? (10)
4. What was God's response to their challenge of his gracious gift? (10)
5. What was Moses' response? (11-15)
6. He prayed to be relieved of his duties. (14)
7. What is God's response to Moses' prayer? (16-34)
8. What are examples today of people craving in the same way?
9. What happened that caused Joshua to speak out?
10. Why did Joshua want them stopped?

11. What do you think of this reaction, was it proper?
12. Can you think of ways in which this same kind of ‘concern’ expresses itself today? In the church?
13. What was Moses’ response?

**Lessons:**

- A. We must not be quick to question God’s gifts to people.
- B. We can look for special outpourings of his gifts at special times of judgement or blessing in history.
- C. Encourage those in the Church who can be involved in the teaching ministry.
- D. Leaders must not feel threatened by those who are able to teach, as if this undermines their ruling authority.

**Joshua the Spy** (Num 13.1-14.10)

1. What was the position of each of the men who was chosen? (3)
2. What were these men to do? Why?
3. What is the significance of the name change of Hoshea to Joshua?
4. What is the condition of the land they explored? (21-27)
5. What is the contrast between the message of Joshua and Calab (Num 13.30; Num 14.6-9, 38) and the other spies (Num 13.28, 29, 31-33)?



6. What is the response of the people? (Joshua 14.1-4)
7. What was Moses' reaction? (Joshua 14.5)
8. What was God's reaction? (Joshua 14.10ff)
9. Why did Joshua tear his clothes?
10. What was his word of exhortation and encouragement?

Lessons:

- A. It is proper and good for us to 'spy' out the territory before we embark on a new venture.
- B. Those with vision are often thwarted by those who are 'nay-sayers'.
- C. We must be confident that the Lord is on our side and that we can overcome even the apparently most formidable enemy.
- D. We have to learn patience. From God's perspective Joshua and Calab passed the test, but they would have to wait 40 years to see the results and gain the reward.

**Persevering to the End** (Num 26.65)

1. What is the significance of this statement?
2. How was Joshua faithful?

Lessons?

- A. We see the importance of obedience and perseverance.
- B. God rewards obedience.
- C. Following the Lord wholeheartedly is missing in the Church today.

**Appointment of Joshua as Leader of Israel** (Num 27.15-23)

1. What was Moses request at this time of rebuke?

2. What does Moses mean when he says that the LORD is the God of the spirits of all mankind?
3. What do we learn about Joshua's character from the prayer/request of Moses?
4. What is God's response to Moses' prayer?
5. What else do we learn about Joshua from this account?

**Lessons?**

- A. All earthly leaders are replaceable (even Moses).
- B. In our nations today we don't see this kinds of leadership. We should pray and vote for it.
- C. Leaders today are not to make their own laws but to use the Urim (the Bible) and obtain guidance from God for how to be shepherds over the people.

**Division of the Land** (Num 34.16, 17)

1. What is God telling Moses to do in this passage?
2. What is the significance of this passage in the context of Joshua's leadership?

**Lessons:**

- A. One man rule in Church or State is not the God-given ideal.
- B. It is important for us to seek scriptural guidance for all areas of our life.

**Encouragement for a New Leader** (Dt 1.38; Dt 3.21; Dt 31.3, 7, 14, 23; Dt 32.44)

1. What does God tell Moses to do as his death approaches?
2. What is the significance of the commission given by God?
3. How do God and Moses encourage Joshua?

Lessons:

- A. We all need encouragement for every task that we undertake.
- B. Leaders to encourage (as did Moses) those starting out.
- C. We are to be encouraged by Scripture and by what we have seen God doing in history.

### Summary Lessons for this Module

- A. God is on Israel's (the Church) side.
- B. It is important that we demonstrate faithfulness in all things, in the small things and the big, always.
- C. There is a balance between confidence in self and dependence on God.
- D. We are not to rush into putting people in positions of leadership.
- E. Attributes to seek in a leader:
  - Vision and wisdom
  - Dedication, patience, perseverance
  - Character (someone who can be followed and emulated).
- F. The best time to be useful for service in the future is now.

## Leader's Notes

### Joshua's Birth and Early Life (1 Chron 7.20-27; Exodus 5-14)

1. Who was Joshua, from what tribe was he, and what was his position of birth?
  - From the tribe of Ephraim (Num 13.8), therefore not the Messiah (Gen 49.10); firstborn.
  - A messiah, but not *the* Messiah; a saviour, but not *the* Saviour.
2. Where was Joshua born?  
Egypt.
3. Of what recent history did he have firsthand knowledge?  
Slavery and the plagues; had seen God's working through miracles.
4. What would the circumstances of his place and time of birth have taught him?
  - Patience and perseverance.
  - Knew and believed that the LORD God of Israel was the one true God.

### Battle with Amalek (Ex 17.1-16)

1. Describe the situation leading up to the war with Amalek?
  - People want to return to Egypt.
  - People challenge Moses' position.
2. What single word could be used to describe the Israelites attitude at this time?
  - Unbelief.
3. What was the stated reason for the attack by the Amalekites?
  - Israel was infringing on their territory.
4. Why did God permit the Amalekites to attack Israel?
  - Test the courage of Moses and the people,
  - Prove to the people that Moses is God's appointed leader,
  - Demonstrate that God is in control over the nations.
5. What do we find to be a surprise in this passage? (9)
  - There is no prior mention of Joshua in Bible. This is the first mention of him.
  - He is already the right-hand-man to Moses.
6. What is the significance of this battle for Joshua?
  - It is his first big test. Joshua was appointed as the military assistant to Moses (the general) to lead the counter attack.
7. What is the significance of this battle for Israel?
  - Their first test in battle (in war, but not first challenge to their faith).
8. Who is credited with the win? Why? (13)
  - Men are credited with God's actions. This is the means that God chose to use to further his purposes.

Men are his instruments.

9. How did God show that ultimately it was his victory?
  - While Moses' hands were held high the victory was Israel's. This showed that supernatural assistance led Israel to victory.
10. What did God tell Moses to do after the victory? Why?
  - To write down an account of it; to prepare a chronicle of the victory. Probably more than the account recorded in the Bible was written down. The names of all the people who fought and account of who killed how many would have been recorded.
  - So that Joshua would hear it. God was going to blot out Amalek. Joshua had to have a record of the account (especially how Moses held up his hands) to remind him when he became the future leader, and had to go into the promised land, that God was able to protect his people.
  - This account teaches that God uses men as his instruments to advance his cause and that it is proper to reflect on our successes as long as we realize that ultimately the victory is God's.
  - This account also teaches the usefulness of a diary keeping and reflecting on our history so that we don't lose perspective about the Providence of God.

Lessons:

- A. God is king over the nations and sovereign over the events of history.
- B. Reassurance that God is on the side of his people.
- C. A warning to believers who want to turn back to pagan ways - the pagan ways will be destroyed.

### Mountaintop Experience (Ex 24.13-18)

1. What are we told about the relationship of Joshua to Moses?
  - He was Moses' aid or assistant.
2. Why did Moses take Joshua but not the other leaders/elders? (See *we* and *us* in verse 14.)
  - It could be that Moses was preparing Joshua for eventually taking over as leader and he was preparing him to see the power/glory of God. He would not see this to the extent of Moses, but more than the other people. But this was probably **not** clear to either of them at this time. Joshua could not yet have handled what God was preparing him for, and Moses might have been overwhelmed by the prospect of not taking the people personally into the promised land. Moses may have taken Joshua for no other purpose than to have an aid along. But God had a greater purpose in mind.
3. What happened to Moses?
  - He went into the cloud for 40 days.
4. What did Joshua do during this time?
  - He waited. It appears that he did not go all the way with Moses.

### Joshua's Observation (Ex 32.15-20)

1. What did Joshua think was going on in the camp? Why?
  - Possibly he thought that the people were at war again with Amalek or a similar surrounding nation. Their leader, Moses, had been gone for quite awhile on the mountain and Joshua could have begun to think that they were defenceless.

2. How did interpret the sounds?
  - He said it was not the sound of victory or defeat (i.e., not related to war). What are their sounds of war? (singing or crying/lamenting). Moses heard it to be some **other** kind of singing. He seems to have recognized it as a sound of religious activities (compare Ex 32.7-8; Moses had prior knowledge from God). Joshua's context: war; Moses' context: religious revelry from pagan Egypt.

### Serving in the Tent (Ex 33.7-11)

1. What did Moses do?
  - Pitch a tent and meet with God.
2. What additional information do we learn here about Joshua?
  - He was young.
3. What did Joshua do while Moses met with God? Why?
  - Wait in the tent.
  - We are not told the reason, but could be to guard the tent against intruders.

#### Lessons:

- A. God's plans and preparations are not necessarily the way that man would prepare a leader.
  - God's way is to teach him patience and awe. Whereas the world might teach him facts (e.g., about war business management) and develop his personality traits (e.g., how to sell).
  - People today want to put themselves forward. But God exalts those who are content to faithfully serve (Mt 20.20-28).
- B. Small things of less apparent significance may be very significant in God's plans.

### Joshua's Zeal (Num 11.28)

1. What is the context for Joshua's comment?
  - See Numbers 11.4-7, 11, 14, 16-17, 25-28.
  - The people (the 'rabble' – non Jews) complain about the food from God, and want the food they used to eat in Egypt, which they said came at no cost.
  - A "welfare state"? Hardly a pleasant one!
  - Note that the *manna* from God was also provided at no cost.
2. Why did they want the food from Egypt?
  - They romanticised the past.
  - We should not say that the former things or days were better (Is 43.18; but contrast Is 46.9). Meat was probably not in their regular diet in Egypt.
  - They wanted variety (fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic).
  - Wanting variety is not in itself wrong, but challenging God is.
3. What was the impact of the rabble's complaint on the rest of the people of Israel? (10)
  - They joined in the complaining, with every family wailing.
  - The tendency of people is to join in mass complaining: mass hysteria, the phenomena of the crowd.
  - We'll see something similar in the life of Joshua when the spies return from their visit to the land of Canaan and they all (except for two) join together in fear.

- We see this same mass hysteria in stock buying fads; the popularity of current singing groups; riots.
4. What was God's response to their challenge of his gracious gift? (10)
    - He became exceedingly angry. See Exodus 16.4 where the manna is set out as a test of obedience to see if they would be satisfied with his provision and if they would keep the Sabbath.
  5. What was Moses' response? (11-15)
    - He prayed to be relieved of his duties. (14)
  6. What is God's response to Moses' prayer? (16-34)
    - It is **not** to remove Moses from office. Instead he gives him 70 assistants (v. 16) to share his work (v. 17).
    - This is an act of God's mercy in the midst of his curse on the people.
    - God performed a miracle and supplied the meat.
    - The people are given the very food they ask for, as a curse. They will eat beyond satiation to sickness (v. 20). This is the background for Joshua's zeal.
  7. What are examples today of people craving in the same way?
    - The rabble craves sex, and God gives them over to sexual appetites and they reap the consequences (Rom 1.26, 27).
    - The rabble craves excitement and they are struggling for an ever higher rush (e.g., bungee jumping; extreme sports, drugs).
  8. What happened that caused Joshua to speak out?
    - Two men uttered prophecies.
    - Probably they were based on visions and they may have been in some kind of a trance.
    - This was a special occasion and did not place these elders among the "school of the prophets." They did not have a specific office, but were given a temporary vision.
    - Similar examples of men being given visions like this are Saul the king (1 Sam 10.10, 11) and possibly Agabus (Acts 11.28; Acts 21.10)
  9. Why did Joshua want them stopped?
    - He was concerned that Moses' position might be challenged by these men.
    - If there were other people who were given gifts and insights from God, then maybe they would be seen as having special authority and the people would not heed Moses' special authority.
  10. What do you think of this reaction, was it proper?
    - Compare with Mark 9.38ff.
  11. Can you think of ways in which this same kind of 'concern' expresses itself today? In the church?
    - In the past the Roman Catholic Church tried to stop popular lay preaching movements such as that started by Francis of Assisi, the Waldensians, and the Lollards.
    - Pastors and elders must be very careful about how they treat those who have true teaching gifts from God.
    - A congregation must not view new men with teaching gifts as challenges to their favourite pastor/leader.
  12. What was Moses' response?
    - He did not feel threatened. Anyone who is confident in his position of leadership does not feel threatened when others take initiative. Moses also wished that more in the church would be able to prophesy.

- Compare with Phil 1.15-18; 1 Cor 14.1, 5, and Mark 9.39, 40 (but must be preaching the true gospel [Gal 1.9]).
- The desire of pastors and church leaders should be that there would be more, not less, who can teach and proclaim. But many seem to be threatened, or feel that their position of authority will be threatened if there are those in their congregations who can also teach. Moses did not respond with jealousy.

Lessons:

- A. We must not be quick to question God's gifts to people.
- B. We can look for special outpourings of his gifts at special times of judgement or blessing in history.
- C. Encourage those in the Church who can be involved in the teaching ministry.
- D. Leaders must not feel threatened by those who are able to teach, as if this undermines their ruling authority.

**Joshua the Spy (Num 13.1-14.10)**

1. What was the position of each of the men who was chosen? (3)
  - They were leaders in their tribes. Joshua was chosen as the person from the tribe of Ephraim.
  - Compare with the list of names in chapters 1, 2, 7. Why is there a difference in who the leader is?
2. What were these men to do? Why?
  - Explore the land of Canaan.
  - At the people's request (see Dt 1.22, 23); they wanted to see the route and what they would face (e.g. opposition). See verses 13.17-20. They were provided with comprehensive instructions of what was to be accomplished.
  - Moses agrees, to encourage the people to want to go to the promised land instead of back to Egypt.
  - To give them an opportunity to see what they would be blessed with, if they obeyed God. But ultimately God uses this as a test of their faith.
  - God knew what was coming when they went in to see the land and was seeing if they would trust him to bring them to the land.
  - Common practice in middle east (e.g., Judges 7.10, 11; 1 Sam 26.16; Joshua 2.1) and in all situations of war to send spies.
3. What is the significance of the name change of Hoshea to Joshua?
  - Hoshea (Salvation) Joshua (the Lord is salvation). A reminder that it is God who saves. 'Hoshea' could imply that the salvation came through the man. 'Joshua' reminds him that it is the Lord who will provide the salvation for Israel. This was to remind him that all that God would do in and through him was the work of God.
  - Prophetic name change. The first Jesus to save his people from the land of slavery and take them to the promised land. The second Jesus takes them from slavery to sin and brings them to the eternal promised land.
  - Embarking on new responsibilities and relationships (e.g., women who change their last names when married). Other name changes? Abram/Sarai, Jacob, Simon, Saul. A new name a new master (Rev 3.12), a new role, a new life. Names in OT times more significant. A future man of destiny!
4. What is the condition of the land they explored? (21-27)
  - Prosperous and fruitful.
5. What is the contrast between the message of Joshua and Calab (Num 13.30; Num 14.6-9, 38) and the other spies (Num 13.28, 29, 31-33)?
  - The other spies are frightened by the apparent strength of those in the land.



- Much as Christians are afraid when they look at the media, the scientific establishment, the government, the homosexual lobby. They seem so well funded and so well organized and established. It appears that there is no hope of a victory.
  - Joshua and Calab believe that they can take the land and can go in and gain the victory. One in a million! Literally since the population was about two million and they were the only two who believed this.
6. What is the response of the people? (Joshua 14.1-4)
    - They are afraid and want to return to their former ways.
    - What will it take to break them of this bad habit?
  7. What was Moses' reaction? (Joshua 14.5)
    - He fell facedown, probably in prayer.
  8. What was God's reaction? (Joshua 14.10ff)
    - He showed his glory and prepared to punish the people.
    - Their punishment was death in the desert that they so despised.
    - But notice that God didn't wipe them out quickly. He made their punishment long and slow to remind them of who he was. Every day that they wandered in the desert and were provided for by him, was another day that he showed them that he was the one who could take care of them, and who could have brought them to victory if they had had the faith to go into the land of Canaan.
  9. Why did Joshua tear his clothes?
    - He may have put on sackcloth
    - A sign of poverty and petition.
    - Clothes expensive. Expressive of remorse, mourning and frustration (Gen 37.29, 34).
  10. What was his word of exhortation and encouragement?
    - "The land is good, if Lord is pleased with us he will give it to us."
    - Notice that he makes his comment provisional on the Lord's will. He is not saying that it is absolute or that it is unconditional. Thus we should always say: "If it is the Lord's will."
    - "Do not be afraid and do not rebel."
    - Jesus constantly encouraged his disciples not to be afraid. Perfect love drives out fear. Faith and trusting drives out fear. God wants us to trust him. The opposite of love and faith is rebellion (hate and doubt).
    - Confidence in the Lord.

## Lessons:

- A. It is proper and good for us to 'spy' out the territory before we embark on a new venture.
  - Compare with Nehemiah's evaluation of the situation with the wall.
  - For example when starting a new church work – we need to really understand the territory and the needs.
  - It is not more spiritual to rush into the 'fray' without any planning.
  - Remember: it was clear that it was going to be God who would bring them to the land and who would conquer it. Yet this shows the importance of evaluation and assessment and preparation.
  - We shouldn't say "but this was a physical war, the work of the Church is spiritual." The same principle applies.
- B. Those with vision are often thwarted by those who are 'nay-sayers'.
  - There are always a thousand who will say: "it can't be done", or "we won't win".
  - Attitude is as important as skill.
  - This is not to discount God's working through people, or to deny that he is in control of all the

- events.
- We are dealing with the people's lack of commitment to the enterprise.
- C. We must be confident that the Lord is on our side and that we can overcome even the apparently most formidable enemy.
  - We are not to doubt and not to despair. Things look pretty bad for the Church in Western culture ... but don't doubt.
- D. We have to learn patience. From God's perspective Joshua and Calab passed the test, but they would have to wait 40 years to see the results and gain the reward.
  - We may not see immediate results from our actions of faith.

### **Persevering to the End (Num 26.65)**

1. What is the significance of this statement?
  - Everyone except Joshua and Caleb had died in the wilderness.
  - Not a single person, over the age of 20, who had come out of Egypt was left, except for those two.
  - Even Moses and Aaron had died in the way (refer to Num 20.22-24; Num 32.11-13).
2. How was Joshua faithful?
  - He followed the Lord whole-heartedly.

#### **Lessons:**

- A. We see the importance of obedience and perseverance.
  - We are to obey God at every step of our life through this wilderness.
  - The main thing in obedience is to have faith: to trust and believe.
- B. God rewards obedience.
  - With more challenges and responsibilities (Mt 25.21) in his kingdom and then with the eternal kingdom (Mt 25.34).
- C. Following the Lord wholeheartedly is missing in the Church today.
  - We are so quick to slip away from obedience.
  - God demands absolute obedience.
  - What ever is convenient is what we slip into.
  - Joshua resisted this and remained firm.

### **Appointment of Joshua as Leader of Israel (Num 27.15-23)**

- Moses was given a glimpse of the promised land and was told by God that he would not be going in because of his disobedience (lack of faith) Num 20.1-13.
  - Notice that God was gentle in his rebuke. He made provision for Zelophehad's daughters and also gave Moses a glimpse of what was to come for his people.
  - Notice also that this was not a total excommunication of Moses. Even though his sins had temporal consequences, we know that he was a true man of faith and saved from Hell, and that he is in Heaven today (the Transfiguration and Hebrews 11.23-29).
1. What was Moses request at this time of rebuke?
    - Not to ask to enter the land.
    - Not to try to excuse himself.
    - Not to blame others.
    - But rather to care for the people of God. It is interesting to see that as he is being forced to retire, he cares so much for the people of God.

- This shows what great character Moses had. He was a true saint!
  - His request is that God would give the nation a leader who would be able to lead them into the promised land.
  - Notice that this will be Joshua.
2. What does Moses mean when he says that the LORD is the God of the spirits of all mankind?
- God is the one who gives life (in him we live, and move, and have our being) and knows the entire life of every man.
  - He knows the heart as no one (not even a man himself) can know the heart.
3. What do we learn about Joshua's character from the prayer/request of Moses?
- Joshua was the answer to Moses' prayer, and must have, to a certain extent, met the qualifications defined by Moses.
  - Joshua was the one who would go out and come in before them. This means that Joshua's every-day conduct was exemplary and clearly speaks of a leader – one to be copied and followed. (1 Tim 3.2-7; Titus 1.6-9).
  - Joshua was one who would lead the people with vision, goals, and new directions. He would not just keep them existing and in a rut (in effect this is what they had been doing for 40 years). They were going into the promised land and they needed a leader who would help them conquer the enemies of God and set up a nation of god-fearing people based on the laws of God.
  - Joshua was the one who could unite the sheep and keep them from being scattered. Leaders (church and state) in the Bible are often referred to as shepherds, as is Jesus himself as the over-shepherd and the good shepherd. Vision and unity are sometimes at odds. Vision often divides. There are those who don't want change and who do not want to head in the new directions (witness those among the spies who did not want to the new land, and the reaction of the people). These people take offence with the leadership. Joshua had to be a person who could both lead toward new visions and yet keep the unity of the body. A very tough assignment! Notice that he would be the leader of the nation.
  - Joshua would keep them from being scattered. This could mean that he would keep them from going their own way (Is 53.6) when it come to laws (see 1 Kings 22.17; Ezk 34.5; Zech 10.2; Mt 9.36). The leader of a nation is to lead the people in the way of obedience.
4. What is God's response to Moses' prayer?
- It is to appoint Joshua.
  - This is a vote of confidence for Joshua. He is the one who is the answer to the prayer of Moses.
5. What else do we learn about Joshua from this account?
- He was endowed with the spirit. Could mean that he had wisdom and insight, but probably more likely that he was a man possessed by the Holy Spirit (thus the footnote in the NIV).
  - Moses' hand was laid on him. Notice 'hand' is in the singular (Num 27.23; Dt 34.9; Acts 6.6). May not be any great significance to this. But notice in verse 20 that he was to be given **some** (original: "from your authority") of the authority of Moses, but not all. A portion of Moses' dignity but not all. This may have been an act of consecration.
  - Joshua was not the one who would give laws to Israel (but was to obtain guidance through the Urim – Ex 28.30 and the high priest), nor would he be the one who would stand in the place of God before the people. Moses' place was unique (until Christ came). But the dignity and authority of Moses were transferred to Joshua to establish him as the suitable successor to Moses.
  - Joshua was to have command of the people (21). But because of having to seek advice from God, this was not an absolute leadership.

## Lessons:

- A. All earthly leaders are replaceable (even Moses).

- We are never to think that this is not the case.
  - A good leader will pray that God will supply a new leader to follow in his footsteps.
  - But a good leader will not necessarily take the task of appointing the leader into his own hands, but will let the Lord direct.
- B. In our nations today we don't see this kinds of leadership. We should pray and vote for it.
- We need to plead with God to give us this kind of leadership and also make sure that we vote for those with these attributes.
- C. Leaders today are not to make their own laws but to use the Urim (the Bible) and obtain guidance from God for how to be shepherds over the people.

### **Division of the Land (Num 34.16, 17)**

1. What is God telling Moses to do in this passage?
  - To appoint men to divide up the land.
2. What is the significance of this passage in the context of Joshua's leadership?
  - Notice that he has already been designated as the leader to follow Moses (Num 27.12-23).
  - Joshua was not going to be an 'absolute dictator' even though he was designated as the primary leader. This is something that many in the church and in the nations have to learn (history proves this). It is not possible for a single man to rule a body of people larger than a handful and do it in any way that approaches equity and fairness and with wisdom. God intends governments in church and state to be:
    - Representative of the people (e.g., Dt 1.9-16)
    - Made up of multiple individuals who will balance one another and bring wisdom to the situation.
    - Graded system of representation.
  - Presbyterianism is the ideal form of Government in the Church that meets this. How? Make comparisons.

#### **Lessons:**

- A. One man rule in Church or State is not the God-given ideal.
- Notice in Romans 13.1-7 the civil ruler is called a minister of God.
- B. It is important for us to seek scriptural guidance for all areas of our life.

### **Encouragement for a New Leader (Dt 1.38; Dt 3.21; Dt 31.3, 7, 14, 23; Dt 32.44)**

1. What does God tell Moses to do as his death approaches?
  - To bring Joshua for his commission (Dt 31.14) and to encourage him (Dt 1.38).
2. What is the significance of the commission given by God?
  - A direct commission. The hands of Moses have already been laid on the head of Joshua.
  - The calling of a leader has to be two-fold: from man and from God.
  - Representatives of the people must also be commissioned by God. Compare with the appointment of Matthias in Acts 1.12-26. Same with elders/pastors.
3. How do God and Moses encourage Joshua?
  - Bringing to his remembrance (Dt 3.21) all that God had done over the years from Egypt until the side of the river. In this case the defeat of Og and Sihon. Compare with Ex 17.8-16 and the written

account of the battle with Amalak and see Dt 31.19 “write down” and note Dt 31.30 and Dt 32.1-43. Replayed the song of the history (Dt 32.44).

- Reminding him that God can and will go ahead (Dt 3.21). He has done it, he will do it.
- Reminding him that God will be faithful to his promises. (Dt 31.23)

#### Lessons:

- A. We all need encouragement for every task that we undertake.
  - We are to encourage one another in the Church (1 Thess 4.18; 1 Thess 5.11; Titus 2.6; Heb 3.13; Heb 10.25)
- B. Leaders to encourage (as did Moses) those starting out.
  - 1 Thess 5.14; 2 Tim 4.2; Titus 2.15
- C. We are to be encouraged by Scripture and by what we have seen God doing in history.
  - His acts of providence are to encourage us.

#### Summary Lessons for this Module

- A. God is on Israel's (the Church) side.
  - Reassurance.
  - Example for us.
  - God is in control.
  - For us? Spiritual warfare. God is on our side.
  - What if we don't win the specific battle?
  - To what extent can we apply this to physical difficulties?
  - Have vision! Not be thwarted by 'nay-sayers'.
  - Attitude is as important as skill.
- B. It is important that we demonstrate faithfulness in all things, in the small things and the big, always.
  - Patience, perseverance and endurance.
  - Being trustworthy, faithful and faith-full.
  - The amount of time is not the key here, it is the fact of demonstrating faithfulness.
- C. There is a balance between confidence in self and dependence on God.
  - A balance between man taking action and God's work.
  - Credit to man and credit to God.
  - God uses men to work out his purposes. It is our talents and skills that God uses. But we must be sure that we know and realize that behind our successful work is God's power.
  - This is a divine mystery. (e.g., Scripture 100% man written, 100% God written.)
  - Example: It is proper and good for us to 'spy' out the territory before we embark on a new venture.
- D. We are not to rush into putting people in positions of leadership.
  - Compare with 1 Tim 5.22. It often takes a lot of honing to make a leader.
  - Caution is better.
  - There is a temptation toward pride when people are appointed to positions of leadership.
- E. Attributes to seek in a leader:
  - Vision and wisdom
  - Dedication, patience, perseverance
  - Character (someone who can be followed and emulated).
- F. The best time to be useful for service in the future is now.
  - We must be prepared to serve in every, and all, situations now to be useful for the challenges that God has in place for us then.
  - God rewards obedience with more challenges and responsibilities in his kingdom and then with the eternal kingdom.
  - The need of the hour to follow the Lord wholeheartedly with absolute obedience.



### 3 Preparation for Conquest

#### Objective

- To show us, through the example of Joshua, what is needed to prepare for new ventures in ministry.

#### Call to Courage (Joshua 1.1-7a)

1. What is Joshua called as this account opens?
2. Why is this?
3. Who do you think wrote this account?
4. What does this show about Joshua's character?
5. How does God prepare Joshua for the conquest of Canaan? (2-6)

#### Lessons:

- A. God knows that he is dealing with sin stained human nature.
- B. There is a need for preparation for new initiatives.
- C. It is always time to move forward.

#### Call to Obedience (Joshua 1.7b-9)

1. What five direct commands does God give to Joshua?
2. What is the book of the law? (8)
3. What is it for us?
4. What did God mean when he said that it was not to depart from the mouth of Joshua? (8)

5. What is the implication for Joshua?
6. What are some implications for us today?
7. What arguments might a person give for saying that the laws of God do not apply today? How would you respond?
8. What will be the result of keeping these five instructions from God? (7, 8)
9. What words are repeated before and after the commands? (6, 9) Why?
10. What is the promise for being faithful to God's commands, and laws?

**Lessons:**

- A. Success in life (all aspects) is ultimately conditioned on obedience to God.
- B. The importance of national obedience to God's laws is shown.

**Call to Conquer** (Joshua 1.10-18)

1. What are some observations you can make on verses 10 and 11?
2. What is Joshua's instruction to a portion of the Israelites? (12-15)
3. What can we in the Church learn from this instruction to the two-and-a-half tribes?
4. How do the people end Joshua's call to prepare for conquest?

**Lessons:**

- A. The ministry of the Church is to be supported by all the people, not by a few.
- B. Obedience results in blessings.
- C. We often need encouragement, and are to encourage one another.



### **Summary Lessons for this Module**

- A. God has commanded us in the Church to encourage one another.
- B. We are to be continually seeking new initiatives for the Church and preparing to move into them.
- C. Success in the ministry of the Church is ultimately conditioned on obedience to God.
- D. The ministry of the Church is to be supported by all the people, not by a few.
- E. The civil magistrate is to require national obedience to God's laws.

## Leader's Notes

### Call to Courage (Joshua 1.1-7a)

1. What is Joshua called as this account opens?  
Moses' aide.
2. Why is this?
  - To clearly identify him. Joshua was a common name, and his title was used to distinguish him just as he is called the son of Nun.
  - To inform us of his title. He was the one who had had a special position by virtue of his being the aide to Moses – the second in command.
  - To provide continuity with the preceding events.
  - To tell us that he was to complete the work that Moses had started but was not permitted to complete.
3. Who do you think wrote this account?  
Probably Joshua himself (or he had it written down by scribes).
4. What does this show about Joshua's character?
  - He was not a proud man. He was happy to be identified with Moses as an assistant (compare with politicians today).
5. How does God prepare Joshua for the conquest of Canaan? (2-6)
  - He makes it clear that the past is gone (Moses is dead). (2)  
The mourning period (30 days – Dt 34.8) was over and it was time to move forward. There is no looking back, no living in the past. This is important for organizations (e.g., Churches) starting out on a new phase. They can remember the past in a positive fashion. But they cannot keep looking back. They are to prepare to move forward.
  - He gives him a specific and personal charge. (2, 6)  
**You** and etc. get ready to cross. He is to take action. This is important for Joshua. Up until this point it had always been Moses who gave the commands. It had been forty years of Moses taking charge and showing the leadership. The Lord spoke directly to him. This was a confirmation that he had been commissioned to take over the work from Moses.
  - He tells him to prepare himself. (2)  
The crossing the Jordan would be in late winter (Dt 1.3) during the 11<sup>th</sup> month (Jan-Feb). So the rain and snow would have swollen the Jordan. They were to get their armaments ready. Everything was to be packed for a more rapid march. The tribes on the East side of the Jordan had to get their families and households in order as they were going to be leaving them behind. Joshua had to make plans for the conquest – sending the spies is an example. For any new venture it is important that preparation and plans be made. We are not to approach any activity with abandon and be ill-prepared. This is the work of the HS. It is his conquest. Yet he tells men to prepare (plan).
  - He gives him a set of specific promises of assurance:
    - He will give land to the Israelites (the promised land that they have been seeking since the time of Abraham (6)).
    - He will give them a large and well defined land (3, 4) (note how specific God is).
    - He will help him conquer his enemies.
    - He will be with him as he was with Moses. What could be more than this, to have God's accompaniment in the same way as Moses had it? God will never leave them – Emmanuel.
  - He encouraged him to be strong and courageous (5, 6) (see also 7, 9, 18).

- Joshua's fears are understandable. He has just been appointed to follow in the footsteps of the greatest human leader of all time. (Dt 34.10). This is overwhelming. He may have been feeling that he would never be able to measure up. What he had seen (miracles by Moses and rejection of Moses by the people) caused him to be frightened. The prospect of moving without Moses' guidance was also frightening. This is why God said these things to him. But they are both an encouragement and a challenge. After all these promises, he is basically saying "go forward without any doubts".

## Lessons:

- A. God knows that he is dealing with sin stained human nature.
  - We need to be encouraged and to see that we are not alone in our endeavour.
  - This is an important message as new pastors begin their work. They need to have encouragement and see clearly that they are not alone. We can be God's messengers in this endeavour. (1 Thess 5.11; Heb 3.13)
- B. There is a need for preparation for new initiatives.
  - Even though God was leading them, they were still to prepare.
  - There is never a contradiction between God's sovereign control of events and our need to act responsibly. We are to plan, think ahead, prepare, organize ... This is NOT contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is the very instruction of God! It is not in some way unspiritual. What is unspiritual is to prepare plans without considering the revealed will of God, to trust our own plans, to not commit them to the Lord and to not be open to his changing our plans.
- C. It is always time to move forward.
  - For congregations they are too go in and 'conquer' new territory.
  - There is to be no living in the past.

**Call to Obedience (Joshua 1.7b-9)**

1. What five direct commands does God give to Joshua?
  - Be careful to obey all the law given by Moses (not to turn to left or right).
    - In his personal life he needs to be exemplary before the people over whom he has been made a ruler.
    - Care is needed to obey. Obedience is not something that comes automatically, nor is success guaranteed. We have to work at obedience and be vigilant.
    - A civil leader has an extra-ordinary responsibility to be vigilant. There is a great tendency to drift into disobedience when there are pressure groups. Political expediency reigns supreme.
  - Not to turn to right or left.
    - What does this mean? One thing it could mean is they are not to add to or to subtract from (commission, omission).
    - This is the kind of thing that happens in our nations today: governments do away with laws (even ones in the 10 Commandments, without thinking of the case laws!) such as the laws against adultery, blasphemy, the Lord's day. And, they add laws that are clearly outside of their jurisdiction (e.g., one that we would all agree is wrong is the prohibition of signs in English, in Quebec).
  - Not to let Book of the Law depart from his mouth.
    - See below for more on this command.
  - Meditate on it day and night.
    - How many people do you know personally who do this? Read and pray over scripture both morning and evening. How many civil leaders do you know who do this? What about in the past? Do you? What a difference we would see in our nation if we had leaders who were acting in this way.

- Be careful to do according to all that is written in it.
    - We see again an emphasis on the need for care in keeping God's law. It is not easy.
2. What is the book of the law?
    - At least Deuteronomy, possibly the entire Pentateuch.
  3. What is it for us?
    - The entire Bible.
  4. What did God mean when he said that it was not to depart from the mouth of Joshua?
    - The Law was often to be read out loud since not everyone could read as most people can today (Dt 31.11; Neh 8.1-18; Acts 13.27).
  5. What is the implication for Joshua?
    - He was expected to recite the law before the people.
    - Recall, he is a civil magistrate (not a prophet or priest).
    - True religion and God's Law are to be both a private and a public matter.
    - Too many today say that a leader should keep his religion within his private life and not bring it into the public forum.
  6. What are some implications for us today?
    - Many people do not read anything of a serious nature, let alone read the Bible. Therefore in the Church it may make sense to be systematic in our Bible reading.
    - We need to find ways to get unbelievers to hear the Bible (the entire Bible). In the past this was done in schools. On Islamic TV the Koran is read every day. A TV station should do this with Bible.
    - Civil magistrates should distribute the 10 Commandments, permit Gideon to hand out Bible's in schools (note they sometimes give out NTs, need entire Bible).
    - As an aside, it is interesting that first portion of the Bible that is translated is usually the Gospel of John – this is grace without law. It would be against the grain to suggest that the first book to translate should be Deuteronomy. Maybe the Churches in the developing nations would grow up stronger if they had the Law first.
    - The Civil leader (Joshua is not a priest or a prophet) is called to obey the Law of Moses.
  7. What arguments might a person give for saying that the laws of God do not apply today? How would you respond?
    - Laws given to the nation of Israel, not to nations today, or nations around them. Is this true? Consider:
      - Lev 24.13-22
        - What was to be done with a blasphemer?
        - What was to be done with a murderer?
        - To whom did these laws and their punishments apply?
      - Nehemiah 13.15-22 (compare Is 56.6)
        - What did Nehemiah warn the Jewish nobles about?
        - What did Nehemiah tell the merchants to stop doing?
        - Where the merchants Jews?
        - What would he do if they continued selling on the Sabbath?
        - What was the current government of that day?
        - What right did Nehemiah have to tell the merchants not to sell their goods on the Sabbath, under this government?
      - Ps 2.1-7, 10-12; Ps 33.8; Jonah 3.1-10; Mt 14.3-5
        - Who was Herod? An Edomite not a Jew.
        - What was John's teaching against Herod?

- Why was this wrong for Herod?
- Mt 24.14 (compare with Mt 28.19-20)
  - What are the disciples to teach in all nations?
- Acts 17.29-31; Rom 13.1-5; Phil 2.9-11; 1 Peter 2.13-17
- If a law isn't repeated in the NT then it is not for us.
  - This becomes a hermeneutical principle for them. But they are unable to demonstrate where in the Bible this principle is given. In addition, they contradict this 'principle' when they use the OT to defend *any* law or behaviour (e.g., prohibitions against incest; singing hymns with musical accompaniment).
- The OT laws have now been replaced by NT laws. Is this true?
  - For example where does Jesus speak against kidnapping, incest and bestiality? He does not, in his spoken words while on earth. The law against kidnapping is found in Dt 24.7, the laws against incest are found in Lev 18.1-22 and Lev 20.10-21. The laws against bestiality are found in Lev 18.23 [the same chapter in which homosexuality is condemned]. These OT laws still apply.
- You can't expect a nation of non-Christians to adhere to Biblical law.
  - We may not expect it from the standpoint that they won't want to, but can expect it from the standpoint that they should! They are God's laws, not Jewish laws or Christian laws.

"The effects of virtue-free social policy have been devastating — but we don't seem quite ready to accept the alternative. Few politicians are comfortable about using words like "right" and "wrong," especially when the subject is sexual irresponsibility (which remains the surest predictor of criminality, ill health and welfare dependency among the poor). ... In fact, it isn't easy. It requires the fortitude to sometimes cast people into the outer darkness. ... It has become near impossible for a polity as rights-conscious, and tolerant, as ours to admit that some people who behave badly, if not quite criminally, aren't worthy of our support — to kick them off welfare, or out of schools and housing projects. But it is inescapable; the system can't work without sanctions — even if they require the sort of stiff, humourless, *un-American* propriety that gave morality such a bad name." Joe Klein in *Newsweek*, July 26, 1993.

8. What will be the result of keeping these five instructions from God? (7, 8)
  - Success and prosperity.
  - In contrast what do people believe will bring success and prosperity to a nation? Free trade, a low interest rate, full employment, many 'free' social services, a powerful army, ...
9. What words are repeated before and after the commands? (6, 9) Why?
  - Notice again what is the context in which these commands are given to Joshua. God knew that for a civil leader it would take great courage for him to enforce God's laws on the nation. There would be great pressure from the people to depart on the right or left.
10. What is the promise for being faithful to God's commands, and laws?
  - God will be with you and go with you.

#### Lessons:

- A. Success in life (all aspects) is ultimately conditioned on obedience to God.
  - He is to be obeyed unconditionally.
  - Success depends on law! What a surprise!
- B. The importance of national obedience to God's laws is shown.
  - Men and nations are to be subject to the Law of God.

- This message is not to be spiritualized, or to be applied to only the personal life of a believer, but to the nation.
- These commands, and God's laws in general, are to be applied by the civil magistrate to the nation over which he is a ruler.
- We may sound like broken record when we try to bring God's law to the attention of the Church and nation. The reality is that the Bible deals with the subject a lot more than most people realize, or want to know. The real problem is that Christians have not been willing to face the reality and have capitulated to the world and to pluralism.

### Call to Conquer (Joshua 1.10-18)

1. What are some observations you can make on verses 10 and 11?
  - Delegation of duties.
    - The officers/leaders who were sharing the leadership responsibilities with Joshua (Num 34.16, 17) were to carry out part of the duties of getting people prepared.
    - Jesus himself sent out the disciples in pairs, and delegated the responsibility to the disciples for the initial work of founding the Church throughout much of the Mediterranean world.
    - It is vital that we see that there is never to be a one-man ministry (in State or Church). A lot of people need to learn this, more so it seems, in the Church.
    - Someone said that a Church will plateau at the skill level of its leader if it is a one-man ministry. Think of Korean Churches with 1000+ elders, much more active in all-member ministry.
    - Three days from now ...
      - The time had finally come.
      - These words must have been the most amazing words they had heard in a long time. (Example: starter's gun, go-live of computer system.)
      - High anticipation, and then finally it was to come. 40 years!
      - The final analogue for us is the time of deaths approach. It should also be a time of great anticipation for the believer as he is being called home to his reward.
    - To take possession of the land ... for your own.
      - It was theirs by inheritance.
      - The nations there did not realize this or want it, but it was promised to Abraham.
      - The promise is finally being realized about 1406 BC. The Exodus was about 1446 (Pharaoh in Egypt at the time of the Exodus Amunhotep II son of Thutmose III—see also Judges 11.26 and 1 Kings 6.1) instead of 1290 BC (at time of Rameses II—see Ex 1.11) held by many influenced by liberal thinking.
    - For the Church today, although we are to seek to see God's laws applied in the nation and are to pray for a godly reign, we are not to set our hope in any way in this world. Our hope and expectation are to be in heaven. That is to be our promised land.
2. What is Joshua's instruction to a portion of the Israelites? (12-15)
  - The two-and-a-half tribes wanted to stay in the land on the East side of the Jordan (Num 32.1-27; esp. 5, 29).
  - They were to help their brother's take possession of the land.
  - The defeat of Og and Sihon (Num 21.21-35) had prepared Israel to go into the land.
  - Rest – what the tribes wanted after their wanderings. What all people want. But if we seek rest in this life it tends to indolence and laziness. But in heaven there will be true rest that will be blessed by challenge and stimulation (Heb 4.8, 9).

3. What can we in the Church learn from this instruction to the two-and-a-half tribes?
  - We are never to become complacent in the provisions that we have received.
  - It is not good for us to sit back and watch our brothers in the Lord suffer when we are in good stead.
  - We are to be prepared to move out from our comfortable situations and to help our fellows move forward into new territories. This means, for example, that we are to support them with missionaries and with funds for practical/physical and gospel work (e.g., Bible printing).
  - Paul indicated as much when he called on the churches in Asia and Greece to support the Christians who were suffering in Judea.
  - We have to be willing to work with other Christians when there is an opportunity.
  - But notice that it is the fighting men who are to go. This seems to imply that there are stages in life when the commitment to help is greater than at other stages (see Dt 24.5 for example).
  - Those who have other honest responsibilities are not expected to do everything. There is room for balance and no need for guilt if one is serving in an honest way and is unwilling/unable to take on more and become over extended and fail to be faithful in what they are already called.
  - There will be a curse on us if we fail to help in whatever way we can when we have the ability, the skills, the gifts and the time (18).
4. How do the people end Joshua's call to prepare for conquest?
  - With an encouragement to be strong and courageous.
  - This is the same exhortation that Moses (Dt 31.7) gave to him, and God gave to him (Dt 31.23; Joshua 1.6, 7, 9).

## Lessons:

- A. The ministry of the Church is to be supported by all the people, not by a few.
  - We are a team, not an isolated group of individualists.
  - Too much in our society is oriented around the role of the individual, not enough around the team and group:
    - Schools engender competition among individuals rather than group co-operation.
    - There is an emphasis on the 'nuclear family', rather than extended family.
    - The Church loves super-ministers who are one-man-shows.
- B. Obedience results in blessings.
  - The calls to obey (Joshua 1.7-9), and the promises for obedience in the promised land (6) are well defined.
  - God will help them conquer.
  - God is with us, we will ultimately win the war with Christ as our general.
- C. We often need encouragement, and are to encourage one another.
  - Four ways: God to men, Leaders to followers, followers to leaders, to one another.





## 4 Rahab and the Spies

### Objective

- To teach us how God deals with sinners through the Covenant of Grace.

### Moral Issues and General Considerations (Joshua 2.1-24)

1. Joshua sent spies out secretly. Under what circumstances is covert action correct?
2. Were the spies trespassing?
3. Did the woman lie to the messengers that the king sent to enquire about the whereabouts of the men?
4. Was this permissible?
5. Was it an untruth? Was it a lie?
6. What is truth telling? Must we tell the whole truth all the time?
7. Did Rahab perform a morally right action when she hid the spies?
8. Why did Joshua send only two spies?
9. What was going to be his first point of attack on the land they were entering? Why?
10. Where was Rahab's house?

**Faith of a Pagan** (Joshua 2.1-11)

1. Contrast these moral dilemmas with the woman's confession of faith. Where do we find this confession?
2. Upon what was her faith based?
3. For what is Rahab honoured in the NT? For her work of faith. (Confessional) faith leads to love and obedience.
4. What are some observations that we can make on verses 12-13?

**Lessons:**

- A. We have seen many more examples of God working in history (past and present) than Rahab had. These should teach us to have faith in God.
- B. Confessional faith must bear fruit as 'faith at work.'
- C. We are not to judge another Christian (or group) by his (their) light but by his (their) faithfulness to the light he has.
- D. The understanding Rahab gained from watching God work through Israel teaches us the importance of our example to the world.
- E. We should care for those who are going to perish in the coming judgement.

**A Covenant of Grace** (Joshua 2.12-21)

1. When you read this account what form of Biblical arrangement do you see being made here? What did the men do for the woman? (12-13, 14, 17)
2. What was the ground of the covenant? (i.e., Why did the parties agree to the arrangement?)
3. Where do we find vows in this covenant? How serious are the vows?
4. What was the sign of the covenant?
5. What were the conditions/obligations of the covenant? For both parties?

6. What was the result of this covenant?

### **Report of the Spies** (Joshua 2.22-24)

1. What was the report of the spies?
2. How does their report contrast with the report at the time Moses sent out spies? (Num 13.28, 29)

**Lessons:**

- A. We are sinners like Rahab who need to be under the Covenant of Grace.
- B. Take God at his word; believe in the seemingly impossible.
- C. We are not to go along with the world that will perish, as did Jericho.
- D. Be obedient to our covenant obligations as Rahab and the spies were to theirs.

### **Summary Lessons for this Module**

**Lessons:**

- A. God's acts in history teach men of his sovereign control and the pending judgement.
- B. We must believe God when he says that he will judge us.
- C. God saves sinners through grace not through works.
- D. God deals with men through covenants.
- E. Saved sinners will work out their salvation in good works.

## Leader's Notes

### Moral Issues and General Considerations (Joshua 2.1-24)

1. Joshua sent spies out secretly. Under what circumstances is covert action correct?
  - Compare Judges 7.10-15; 1 Sam 26.16.
  - When does covert action become a lie?
  
2. Were the spies trespassing?
  - Was the land private property or national property? They were not entering 'private' property.
  - Is there a law in the Bible against going onto the property of another nation or even going onto a person's private property?
    - Compare Lev 19.9, 10, and note the reference to aliens.
  - What principle, or law from the 10 Commandments did they break?
    - The concept of 'national' property may be foreign to the Bible and even common sense.
    - Too much is made of non-human entities 'owning' property.
    - Today crimes against the state are often punished more severely than punishment of sins against another person or God!
    - This consideration may say something about immigration laws. We may not like to address this, but should:
      - The Bible (and therefore God) is much more generous to the alien and the foreigner than we are often willing to be.
      - We should not like it when foreigners bring into this country their false religions. It should bother us that Moslems, Hindus, and Sikhs come to this country and demand rights for their false religions. We also feel very put out by 'economic' refugees who come to this country under false pretences.
      - Yet, at the same time, we have to admit that it is difficult to find anything in the Bible that gives nations the right to erect boundaries against those who wish to enter their land.
      - In fact in the Bible, one of the marks of Christian charity is the way in which we treat the foreigner and alien.
      - It is true that in OT times there were not complex immigration laws and nation-states *per se*. Yet, the Biblical principle of compassion for the alien must still have some bearing on our current national situation.
      - What is the proper balance? We must be Biblical.
  
3. Did the woman lie to the messengers that the king sent to enquire about the whereabouts of the men?
  - She said that she did not know from where they had come. (4 and 9)
  - She did not give correct information about where they were. (5)
  - She told them to go in the wrong direction. (5-7)
  - We can conclude that she lied.
  
4. Was this permissible?
  - Do not confuse the issue by raising the following:
    - The fact that there is no rebuke of her actions does not mean that her actions were correct. There are many actions reported in the Bible that are sinful and are not rebuked.
    - The fact of success does not justify the action. Compare Gen 27.18-24, the blessing notwithstanding, his actions were unworthy (also compare Gen 12.2 with Gen 16.1-2).
    - The commendation with respect to her faith and protecting of the spies (Heb 11.31; James

2.25; compare: Ex 1.17-21 “feared God”) does not mean that every aspect of what she did was right. She is not commended for leading the messengers astray. She is commended for her treatment of the spies.

- “It is strange theology that will insist that the approval of her faith and works in receiving the spies and helping them escape must embrace the approval of all the actions associated with her praiseworthy conduct.” (John Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, pg. 138).
- Excusing the action since it was a time of war.
  - We would need Biblical instruction that says this is a valid time to lie. Is the reference in 2 Kings 6.8-23 an example? Probably not.
- Assuming that she couldn’t have been done otherwise or the spies would have been killed.
  - It is presuming too much about what God could and could not do through providence to make his plans come to fruition.

5. Was it an untruth? Was it a lie?

- Rahab uttered an explicit falsehood. Therefore she lied. (Ex 23.1; Ex 23.7; Zech 8.16, 17; Rev 22.15)
- Truth: Ps 111.7, 8; Jn 17.17. Words cannot be un-factual and still be true.
- “As to the falsehood, we must admit that though it was done for a good purpose, it was not free from fault. For those who hold what is called a dutiful lie to be altogether excusable, do not sufficiently consider how precious truth is in the sight of God. Therefore, although our purpose be to assist our brethren, to consult for their safety and relieve them, it never can be lawful to lie, because that cannot be right which is contrary to the nature of God. And God is truth.” (Calvin: *Commentary on Joshua 2.4*)
- “Ordinarily, at least, the person who is to be branded as a liar is the person who affirms to be true what he knows or believes to be false or affirms to be false what he knows or believes to be true.” [Ordinarily, not because there are exceptions to the statement, but that even if we believe something to be true, and it isn’t, then we are liars when we report it. This is where much gossip comes from (Lev 19.16). We are to have the facts verified.]
- “When we speak, therefore, of the sanctity of truth, we must recognize that what underlies this concept is the sanctity of the being of God as the living and true God. He is the God of truth, and all truth derives its sanctity from him. This is why all untruth or falsehood is wrong; it is a contradiction of that which God is.”
- “As we are to be holy because God is holy, so we are to be truthful because God is truthful.” (John Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, pp. 133, 125, 127)

6. What is truth telling? Must we tell the whole truth all the time?

- We are not to lie (Eph 4.25).
- Compare with Elisha giving army the wrong direction (2 Kings 6.19).
  - Was this deception? Untruth? Lie?
  - Are any of the facts incorrect in Elisha’s statement? Does misunderstanding on the part of the hearer, constitute a lie on the part of the speaker? “were you at home when this happened?” “no” is very different from answering the question “do you know who did this?”, with “no”
- Compare 1 Sam 16.2, 3.
  - Evasion appears not to be a lie or even deception.
  - It appears to be proper under certain circumstances to conceal the whole truth. Concealment is not the same as affirming an untruth.
  - “The biblical ethic is built upon fine distinctions. At the point of divergence the difference between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, is not a chasm but a razor’s edge.” (John Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, pg. 141)

- Compare Joshua 8.3-29 where they feigned an action that was not their intent. It was not their problem that they were misunderstood.
  - Compare Dt 29.29. God does not reveal all things to man. He often hides the truth from unbelievers. But he is not a liar when they misinterpret the truth that he does reveal.
  - Compare Luke 24.28. Was Jesus deceiving? Lying?
  - Compare Proverbs 11.13.
7. Did Rahab perform a morally right action when she hid the spies?
- She hid the men, and provided for them. (6, 15, 16)
    - Think of the situation of hiding the Jews from German Gestapo.
  - She gave military intelligence: great fear (9, 11) which the spies report (24).
  - In effect she was a traitor to her nation. Was this proper?
    - Can't be a traitor to that which is false.
    - Similar to Luther who took a vow of celibacy and then married.
    - In RPCNA, vow of abstinence. If we agree to abstain, then later law is changed, we wouldn't be wrong to drink since the requirement was wrong.
  - She knew that the LORD had (not *will*) given the land to the Israelites (9). Inevitable. (14) It was rightfully their possession.
  - Even if she were a traitor, she is not commended for being a traitor, but for being faithful to God and kind to the spies.
  - Notice that she had hidden them before the king's messengers came, as if she knew that they would come. The king seems to have had a good spy network of his own, see how much he knew (2, 3).
8. Why did Joshua send only two spies?
- Compare with the action of Moses in Numbers 13.1-24.
  - Could Joshua's action be a reflection back on his own experience? 10 of the 12 were negative.
  - In this case there would be less opportunity for a negative report.
  - Notice also he did not send one man alone. Jesus sent out men by twos during the ministry period in Galilee. Principle? Teams, working together, build morale, encourage.
9. What was going to be his first point of attack on the land they were entering? Why?
- The invasion point was from Shittim on the plains of Moab a flat area where the Jordan was normally shallow and could be forded.
  - Across from Jericho one of the oldest inhabited cities in the ME. Jericho was located at an important crossing point. Even today it is a lush city. Its name meant "moon city."
  - God set their invasion point at a place that would be easy for an army to cross. But as we will see later, this was NOT an easy point after all.
  - God appointed the oldest pagan city in the region as the first to be defeated to show that he is the true God, and not the moon.
10. Where was Rahab's house?
- Her house was in the city wall, literally 'in' as the walls were very wide. Her house was built up against the wall and into the wall, with a window in the wall of the city.

### Faith of a Pagan (Joshua 2.1-11)

1. Contrast these moral dilemmas with the woman's confession of faith. Where do we find this confession?
  - In verse 11.
2. Upon what was her faith based?

- Knowledge based upon experience.
    - Knew that the LORD had (not *will*) given land to the Israelites (9). Her first words: “I know ...”
    - Heard what he did at Red Sea and with kings of nations around them. (10)
    - Fear of God and his people (9, 11)
    - Belief in the true God (11)
  - Her knowledge of God and of his dealings with his people was astounding.
  - She had more faith than the Israelites who had crossed the Red Sea and yet doubted God’s ability to care for them.
  - She lived more faithfully to the light she had than many (most) of the Israelites lived to the very much brighter light that they had. Compared to Israel her faith was greater.
3. For what is Rahab honoured in the NT? For her work of faith. (Confessional) faith leads to love and obedience.
- Her Faith (Heb 11.31).
  - Her kindness (good works) James 2.25.
  - Rahab was willing to risk her life for the spies.
  - More important than the military purpose of sending the spies is God’s overruling providence working through Rahab.
    - He brought a pagan into his household. God cares for individual sinners, and provides salvation.
    - This woman became an ancestor of Jesus (Mt 1.5).
  - We could summarize the life of Rahab this way:
    - her test of faith (1-7),
    - her statement of faith (8-11),
    - her work of faith (12-21),
    - her deliverance by faith (Joshua 2.22-24; Joshua 6.22-25)
4. What are some observations that we can make on verses 12-13?
- She saw hope among the Israelites, and expected that they would be fair and honest (exceptional in that barbaric age). She knew that she could turn to them for help.
  - She made an unselfish request for her family. She didn’t ask to flee with the spies. Rather, she thought about the well-being of her family with a self-denial that showed that God had already put his mark of grace upon her. She also was willing to wait. By not going she made it easier for the spies to escape.

## Lessons:

- A. We have seen many more examples of God working in history (past and present) than Rahab had. These should teach us to have faith in God.
- Our faith should be stronger than Rahab’s. Is it?
  - How many of us would be willing to risk our lives for God and his work? We are so weak in comparison to Rahab.
- B. Confessional faith must bear fruit as ‘faith at work.’
- Gal 5.22-23 – fruit of the Spirit.
- C. We are not to judge another Christian (or group) by his (their) light but by his (their) faithfulness to the light he has.
- We should bring them more light instead of accusations.
- D. The understanding Rahab gained from watching God work through Israel teaches us the importance of our example to the world.
- Israel was a good example by this time. God had removed the first generation that had left Egypt.
  - Are we as Christians living as the materialistic pagans around us?
  - Do we show that we are different? How?
- E. We should care for those who are going to perish in the coming judgement.

- Rahab shows more care than most believers show.
- Speaking to others as she did of the coming judgement (see Joshua 6.22-25). Care for those who are perishing.
- We are to draw in our family and those around us under the sign of the 'scarlet cord', the blood on the lintel, the blood of Christ for the judgement day is coming on us.
- We are saved from eternal judgement, yet we have so little concern for those around us.

### **A Covenant of Grace (Joshua 2.12-21)**

1. When you read this account what form of Biblical arrangement do you see being made here? What did the men do for the woman? (12-13, 14, 17)
  - They made a covenant with her to protect her.
  - Specifically, it is a covenant of grace. Why? Gracious to woman, a heathen, and to her family.
  - Attributes of a covenant (some)? 1) parties, 2) vow, 3) sign, 4) conditions, 5) results.
  - Initiated by the woman as a request. Can be initiated by either side. Her faith worked in her a strong belief to take God at his word.
2. What was the ground of the covenant? (i.e., Why did the parties agree to the arrangement?)
  - Trust: The ground of a covenant is always one of trust. The parties have to trust one another.
  - Another term is faith: The confession of faith on the part of the woman. She knew that God would do what he had said that he would do. She believed.
  - It was not based on her works. But her works are the outcome of her faith: She protected the spies because she believed in God. She did not believe in God because she had protected the spies.
  - So it is in the great covenant between God and man. We have to trust God (have faith). He supplies this faith to us to make us faithful to the covenant.
  - Notice that a common charge from God is that his people were unfaithful to their covenantal vows. That is why Jesus came. He kept the vows of the covenant perfectly on behalf of man.
3. Where do we find vows in this covenant? How serious are the vows?
  - 12 'swear', 17 'oath'
  - A binding vow, with the consequences of failure: the forfeiting of life to an avenger. (14, 19)
  - Compare with Gen 15.1-21; Gen 22.16; Ps 110.4; Heb 6.13, 14
4. What was the sign of the covenant?
  - The scarlet cord. (18, 21)
  - Note the rope that let them down was not the scarlet cord. Often commentaries and Bible studies state that the rope was scarlet, or children's story books show a picture with a scarlet rope. Different words are used in English and in Hebrew.
  - Notice that it had to be visible (18). Circumcision was public on 8th day, visible to covenant heads. Baptism is likewise to be public.
  - Cord viewed by Church Fathers as a sign similar to the blood on the lintel in Egypt. (Ex 12.22)
  - A symbol of Christ's atonement/covering or protection in red blood? If not, still a sign of the covenant with the men.
5. What were the conditions/obligations of the covenant? For both parties?
  - Obedience to the oath, not betraying the men, secrecy. (14, 20)
  - The sign is visible. (18)
  - Everyone under the shelter of the sign. (18, 19)
  - To spare Rahab and her family (13, 19)
  - In similar way there are obligations on both parties in the Covenant of Grace between God and men.



Which are? Jer 11.1-5.

6. What was the result of this covenant?
  - Compare with Heb 6.15 Abraham received the outcome of the covenant.
  - Rahab received:
    - Protection for her and her family from the destruction of the city (Joshua 6.22-25).
    - Eternal salvation and recognition as one in the gallery of the faithful. Heb 11.31; James 2.25.
    - Longer term result (anticipation) she became part of the family of God. Joshua 6.22, 23. She Married Salmon (Mt 1.5) and became the daughter-in-law of Nahshon a 'prince' (cf Num 2.3; Num 7.12).
    - Note she was not kept outside the camp. Something has been changed ... we will look at this again when we consider Joshua chapter 6.
  - A great blessing for all mankind because through her the Messiah came. Truly a Covenant of Grace!

### Report of the Spies (Joshua 2.22-24)

The spies hid in the hills (caves) NW of the Dead Sea (same place where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found). Rahab probably supplied them with food. The ones searching for them could not find them. After three days they forded the river and returned to Joshua.

1. What was the report of the spies?
  - Reported *everything* that had happened.
    - This is not to be overlooked. They would have told him about Rahab and her protection of them.
    - This would prove significant for Rahab's future. They were faithful to their vows to protect her.
  - They told Joshua that the LORD *had* given them the land and all the people are melting with fear.
    - Notice the use of the past tense. They hadn't even crossed the river yet, and they are already confident that God was with them.
    - The report of Rahab, that the people were melting with fear, became their report. (see v. 9)
2. How does their report contrast with the report at the time Moses sent out spies? (Num 13.28, 29)
  - Notice the mention of those who lived near the Jordan.
  - What was it that made the difference this time?
    - Not that the people of Canaan had grown smaller (see v. 29).
    - Not the size of Israelite population, about the same.
    - Not miracles, had most (all?) of the miracles already by the time of Num 13.1-33, and were now about 40 years removed from them.
    - Not that they had won a war against Amalek (Ex 17.8-16).
    - Not that they had a better leader now (Moses was the greatest).
  - What then made the difference?
    - It can only be attributed to one thing: Faith.
    - Faith of Rahab, which they had seen.
    - Personal faith of the spies.
    - Faith of the nation, to a degree they had learned their lesson.
    - They were willing to trust God now and not to challenge him.

Lessons:

- A. We are sinners like Rahab who need to be under the Covenant of Grace.

- She was no worse a sinner than any of us are by nature.
  - We need protection of our Joshua (Jesus).
  - Need to ask for protection. Rahab did!
- B. Take God at his word; believe in the seemingly impossible.
- C. We are not to go along with the world that will perish, as did Jericho.
- We need to walk contrary to the world's ways.
  - It was much harder for Rahab than for us. We have far more evidence of God's faithfulness. We have complete scriptures. She had not even access to the first books of Moses.
- D. Be obedient to our covenant obligations as Rahab and the spies were to theirs.
- Obey the Law of Christ.

## 5 Crossing the Jordan

### Objective

- To teach us that God is the Lord of all the earth and the sovereign judge of the nations of the earth.

### Final Preparations – The Consecration (Joshua 3.1-5)

1. Why did God send them early in morning and have them camp for three days at the fords on east side of river across from Jericho?
2. What were the orders the officers gave the people?
3. What is the significance of the ark going in front of them?
4. What do all these preparatory actions show about Joshua, in particular, and the people?

#### Lessons:

- A. Just as there was an order for the crossing, there is an order in the Church.
- B. We like to see how close we can get to God's holiness. He warns us to stay well back.
- C. It is appropriate to observe a time of consecration before a significant new venture in the work of the Church.

### The Morning of the Crossing – The Confirmation (Joshua 3.6-13)

1. What went out first from the camp? (6, 11)
2. Where were the priests to go? (8)
3. What did God tell Joshua that he was going to do? (7) Why?
4. What did Joshua do before the people actually set foot in the riverbed? (9)

5. How is Joshua's character displayed? (10)
6. What were the contrasts set up for the people by Joshua? (10)
7. How does Joshua strengthen the people? (11)
8. What were the people to do? (12)
9. How were the people to know that God was with them? (13)

Lessons:

- A. Leaders in Church and State are to act as servants, to direct glory to God, not to self.
- B. God called Joshua and the people to have a faith that could move mountains. We also are to have this kind of faith.
- C. We are to follow our 'ark' the Lord Jesus and his teaching in the Bible.
- D. God has shown the world, and recorded it in the Bible, that the false gods, the inventions of men, are nothing.
- E. God is sovereign over the nations. We are not to be shy or afraid to insist that men obey God's laws.

**The Crossing** (Joshua 3.14-17; Joshua 4.10-14)

1. Why did the ark of the covenant go before them? (14)
2. What is the significance of the priests standing in the middle of the river bed? (Joshua 3.17; Joshua 4.10)
3. Why is the action of holding back the water so significant? (15, 16)
4. Why did the water pile up in a heap (wall)? (16)
5. How did the people cross the riverbed? (Joshua 3.17; Joshua 4.10)

6. What was the order of the crossing? (Joshua 4.12-13)
7. How is Joshua's faithfulness shown, and what is the result? (Joshua 4.10, 14)

Lessons:

- A. We need to learn to take God at his word.
- B. God honours the obedient and faithful (e.g., Joshua).
- C. The crossing of the Jordan is a witness of God's judgement.
- D. God is the God of all the earth.

**Completion of the Crossing – The Completion** (Joshua 3.17; Joshua 4.15-19)

1. How long did it take to cross the river?
2. What happened the moment that the last foot of a priest left the river?
3. What is the significance to the statement “no sooner”? (18)
4. What was the day on which all of this occurred? (19)

Lessons:

- A. God does nothing by ‘chance,’ everything is worked out according to his plan.
- B. God continues to show mankind that he will judge the nations of the world.

**The Stones for a Memorial – The Cairn** (Josh 4.1-9, 20-24; Josh 5.1)

1. What did the Lord tell Joshua to do? (2) How does this relate to the action in Joshua 3.12?
2. What were these 12 men to do? (5)
3. What did Joshua do with the 12 stones? (9, 20)

4. What was the purpose of setting up the pile of stones? (6-7, 21-24)
5. Did the people heed the lessons of the pile of stones?

Lessons:

- A. We see the importance of having memorials to remind us of what God has accomplished in redemption.
- B. We see the importance of having memorials to remind us of what God has accomplished in his providence.

### Summary Lessons for this Module

Lessons:

- A. It is appropriate to observe a time of consecration before a significant new venture in the work of the Church.
- B. God called Joshua and the people to have a faith that could move mountains. We also are to have this kind of faith.
- C. We are to follow our 'ark' the Lord Jesus and his teaching in the Bible.
- D. God has shown the world, and recorded it in the Bible, that the false gods, the inventions of men, are nothing and he will judge men who rely on these false Gods.
- E. God is sovereign over the nations of the earth. We are not to be shy or afraid to insist that men obey God's laws.
- F. We see the importance of having memorials to remind us of what God has accomplished in redemption and providence.

## Leader's Notes

### Final Preparations – The Consecration (Joshua 3.1-5)

1. Why did God send them early in morning and have them camp for three days at the fords on east side of river across from Jericho?
  - Increase the fear of the people in Jericho (see, Josh 2.24; Josh 5.1).
  - Give time for the officers to throughout giving orders.
  - To make the final preparations for crossing (arms, personal consecration, worship).
  - Moses had directed (Joshua 4.10).
2. What were the orders the officers gave the people?
  - Their positions for crossing.
    - To remind them of the order they travelled in when going through the wilderness. (3)
    - See Joshua 4.12; Num 10.14-25.
    - Who was to go first? Judah (women/children) after the army.
  - To follow the ark on the priests shoulders (3).
    - Notice that here the ark was carried correctly as God had instructed Moses. (Ex 25.14)
    - Not as at time of David when they carried it on a cart and Uzzah was struck dead. (2 Sam 6.3, 6)
  - When the ark moved, they were to move to their positions and follow it (3, 4).
    - This would let them know which way to go.
    - Seems obvious: deep water (flowing at flood level and at about 15km per hour). They were to follow through fords, so as not hit deep areas and drown.
  - Stay back of the ark a good distance (4) .
    - Why? Holy. Only the Levites to carry it and they were not to touch it (Num 4.15).
    - Safest thing to do was to stay well back, then there was no temptation, no fear of falling.
    - Like at Sinai, the people were to stay well back from God's holiness.
  - Consecrate themselves (5).
    - A number of ritual aspects related to washings and abstinence.
3. What is the significance of the ark going in front of them?
  - What was in the ark? Covenant testimony – tables of stone (Ex 25.16, 21), manna (Ex 16.33, 34), Aaron's staff (Num 17.10). See also Heb 9.4.
  - What was the meaning of these symbols?
    - Possible: law (testimony), grace/love (manna), and authority over Church. Prophet, Priest and King (?).
    - Our ark? Christ first, bible second.
4. What do all these preparatory actions show about Joshua, in particular, and the people?
  - He had real faith, moving ahead by confident faith, "we will be crossing."
  - Refer back to Joshua 1.2. Think of what was facing them: river at flood stage, the armies of the Canaanites, unknowns.
  - How will they cross? They didn't know yet. The specific way was yet to be revealed but nevertheless they moved forward by faith.

#### Lessons:

- A. Just as there was an order for the crossing, there is an order in the Church.
  - Roles in Church (1 Cor 12.2ff; Eph 4.11, 12)

- B. We like to see how close we can get to God's holiness. He warns us to stay well back.
- Gen 3.4, 5
  - Not to challenge God with respect to his worship, work, will.
  - Stay well back, then there is no fear of falling off the path and into the waters and being drowned.
- C. It is appropriate to observe a time of consecration before a significant new venture in the work of the Church.
- Opening new church building, beginning a new ministry, sending someone out (Acts 13.2-3).

### **The Morning of the Crossing – The Confirmation (Joshua 3.6-13)**

- What went out first from the camp? (6, 11)
  - The priests with the ark.
  - Why?
  - The people were not to move without the guidance of the Lord.
  - This is a good principle for us.
  - How can we know if we are in will of God? Revealed will of God in Bible: how we are to live in faith and practice.
- Where were the priests to go? (8)
  - Into the River Jordan and to stand in the river (in the middle Joshua 3.17) and the people would walk by (Joshua 3.15).
  - What did God intend for the priests and then the people to do? Walk across the river at high flood.
  - Do we understand the enormity of this command to the priests? Probably not.
  - It was a real act of faith. Faith to move mountains, walk on water, heal the sick, etc.
  - God may not perform this kind of miracle today (revelation is complete), but he still expects this kind of faith.
  - What is comparable today? Mountain of sin? Bring down wickedness in state and society (abortion, Sunday commerce, gambling, homosexuality), convert sinners (e.g., abortionist). We can't have if not ask, don't ask because we don't believe. (See James 4.3)
- What did God tell Joshua that he was going to do? (7) Why?
  - Exalt Joshua before the people. Make them know/realize that God was with Joshua as he had been with Moses.
  - Before we answer the 'why' question consider this question: How long had it been since Moses had died? 30 days of mourning (Dt 34.8), at least 4 days for the spies (Joshua 2.1, 8, 22), at least 3 days camping at side of river (Joshua 3.1, 2). In total it was around 40 days, ending by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of first month (Joshua 4.19 compare with Ex 12.1-3). So why?
  - To substantiate Joshua's leadership since he had not been leader for very long.
    - The memory of Moses was still hot.
    - Do you see any significance to the way God proposes to substantiate the leadership of Joshua?
      - We see a pattern a-b-b-a. Moses → Passover, crossing (Red Sea), crossing (Jordan), Passover → Joshua.
      - The crossing of the Jordan and the commemoration of the Passover place Moses at the beginning of the wilderness trek and Joshua at the end.
      - This is to be taken as a strong sign that the leadership of Moses has been passed to Joshua.
- What did Joshua do before the people actually set foot in the riverbed? (9)
  - He called them forward to hear a message from God.
  - Not only is God going before them, he is giving them instruction.
  - This clearly is a pointer to the Bible, which is to be our ark and our instructor.



- We have the Law/covenant inside the ‘ark’. Follow it and learn from it. (Ps 119.9, 105)
5. How is Joshua’s character displayed? (10)
- He does not boast or say in any way that God is going to confirm his leadership. Instead he draws attention to the glory of God.
  - Insecure people often over-react to praise or confirmation. Joshua is not insecure. He knew that he was the leader and that he could move forward with real assurance.
  - [Know of leaders who have to constantly make their position prominent? Boast of how God is using them, of their successes, etc.]
  - As we have seen all along, Joshua is a role model for us.
  - We are not to draw attention to ourselves but rather focus attention on God and his Christ.
  - We are not to be misunderstood as being falsely humble by sitting back and being inactive. Joshua took action (spies, the preparations, the commands).
6. What were the contrasts set up for the people by Joshua? (10)
- The contrast between their nation and the other nations, the God of Israel and the gods of the nations, the living God and the *inanimate* gods of the other nations, the God that is able to act, and the gods which can do nothing more than be carried around, deceive, and sap their worshippers substance.
  - 1 Kings 18.24, 27-29, 36-38; Is 46.5-7.
  - The false gods of the nations are not *dead*. This word implies that they may have been at one time alive. Rather, they were never alive.
  - But God is alive, and active. He will show the people that he can control the events of nature.
  - Why did Joshua have to say this to them? Why didn’t he just perform the miracle and walk across the dry ground? Because people always have a tendency to forget God and his power. They could have attributed the events to magic, or to one of the false gods of the nations around them or to one of their own invention.
  - There is always this tendency in man. (Dt 5.7; Dt 6.14, 15; Dt 7.16). Like the atheist who is always looking for ways to deny the supernatural existence of God.
  - We need to be reminded that it is God who is in control of all things. Daily we forget, and daily we need to be reminded.
7. How does Joshua strengthen the people? (11)
- What does he say with respect to the nature of God in comparison with the gods of the nations?
  - He points out that God is the God of all the earth. He is not just a national god (Judges 10.6) or a god the hills (1 Kings 20.23) or sea or trees or a planet (which in the minds of the pagans were small). He is the Lord of all the earth.
  - Notice that Joshua uses the word *Adoni* (master, sovereign). This is illustrative. He doesn’t use the personal name of God, the name by which God makes himself known to Israel (see use in Joshua 2.9, 11). This is to reinforce his point that God is over all the earth.
  - What would this have meant to the Israelites with respect to the nations on the other side of the Jordan? He is God over them also.
  - What does it mean for us today? God is the Lord over the nations of the earth even today. He is Lord over the Hindus and the Muslims in India (etc.), and over those who are in this country.
  - Squeamish Christians today do not want to acknowledge this. They weakly/lamely say that we cannot impose the God of the Bible/Christianity (of all the earth) on the nations and that they have the ‘right’ to worship their own creations. If he is Lord of all the earth, they have no rights to false gods. Note this: **no** rights!
8. What were the people to do? (12)
- To choose a representative from each of the tribes.
  - Why? (Joshua 4.4-7) To pick up the stones to make the cairn.

- What is the significance of this (i.e., the choosing)? Federal representation, act on their behalf. A sign of the covenant and protection of God, to be executed by representatives.
  - We will see the extension of the sign later at Gilgal (Chap 5), but here we see it in miniature through representatives.
  - The concept of representation is very important in scripture: Adam, Moses, David, Christ. If no representation, no salvation. (More in section on the Cairn below.)
9. How were the people to know that God was with them? (13)
- He would perform a miracle, by making the water pile up.
  - This is similar to Jesus' miracles. Purpose? Miracles were used primarily by Jesus as a sign to the Jews that he was the Messiah and only secondarily to provide assistance to those whom he helped. (Jn 10.25, 38; Jn 14.11).
  - Miracles themselves are not essential. Here the purpose was primarily to show who God was, and only secondarily to get the people across the Jordan. God could have easily arranged for them to come up the other side of Dead Sea or to have reached the Jordan at a low period.
  - He did not **need** to perform the miracle. He chose to do it to substantiate himself as the Lord of all the earth.

#### Lessons:

- A. Leaders in Church and State are to act as servants, to direct glory to God, not to self.
- This is probably one of the hardest lessons for men to learn.
  - It is very difficult not to seek our own ego gratification.
- B. God called Joshua and the people to have a faith that could move mountains. We also are to have this kind of faith.
- C. We are to follow our 'ark' the Lord Jesus and his teaching in the Bible.
- D. God has shown the world, and recorded it in the Bible, that the false gods, the inventions of men, are nothing.
- We are not to expect miracles today and especially this kind (i.e.. miracles over control of nature) today since the Messiah has already come and has shown himself to be the son of God (Mt 12.39).
  - An atheist in a debate with a Christian who says that he would believe in God if he saw a podium lifting in the air is to be directed to the Bible that shows God as sovereign over all creation.
- E. God is sovereign over the nations. We are not to be shy or afraid to insist that men obey God's laws.

#### The Crossing (Joshua 3.14-17; Joshua 4.10-14)

1. Why did the ark of the covenant go before them? (14)
- Note: to this point, God had gone before them in the pillar of cloud and fire.
  - God was making his presence known before them.
  - He was leading them. (Dt 31.3) He was entering the trial before them, as their substitute and surety.
  - God passed at head of his army and showed that he was their King (theocracy, no human king at this point).
  - He was on his way to fulfil the prophecy given in the cursing by Noah (Gen 9.25) and in the prophecy to Abraham (Gen 15.18-21) and Moses 40+ years before (Ex 3.8). He was going to give them their land!
2. What is the significance of the priests standing in the middle of the river bed? (Joshua 3.17; Joshua 4.10)
- God does not do anything without a purpose.
  - The priests holding the ark represented God in the midst of the river.
  - The entire army and nation, in effect, passed before God who was holding back a potential death: God their protector.

- God was taking on himself the trial by water/drowning. Judicial verdict: he was who he said he was. (See Num 5.16-28)
  - What gods had the Canaanites adopted instead of Jehovah? Baal and Ashtoreth.
    - This action was to contrast God with Baal the false god of the flood waters [Phoenicia (Greek)/Canaan from region of Tyre and Sidon by sea and also along Jordan (see Gen 10.15, 16; Gen 13.7)].
    - Myths describe Baal in conflict with death, infertility and flood waters and as the god of the storm and raging waters. In these myths Baal is shown to be a victorious 'king' of the gods.
    - God showed who really is God of floods!
3. Why is the action of holding back the water so significant? (15, 16)
- What if the water had not held back? What would the nation of Israel think about their God?
    - If he could help them, and unable to control nature, how could he overcome the nations around them.
    - To build real faith, based on the reliability of the Word. The faith will not be 'blind' faith. It will be *exercised* on evidences, but not come from evidences.
    - The miracle reinforce faith, do not produce faith! The evidence follows the faith! (Ex)
  - Why at flood time?
    - To dismiss the any claim to human possibility.
    - To dismiss the idea that it was a mere chance like a tree blocking the flow.
    - A mighty dam requires years to build with much labour and machinery today, and not during flood time.
    - God did it in seconds, and with nothing visible (no rocks).
    - To show his power to Israel and the Canaanite nations.
4. Why did the water pile up in a heap (wall)? (16)
- Because the priests set foot in the water with the ark. God would not let his presence in the ark be swamped with water – contrast this to the Egyptians who had been swallowed up in the water, God would not let this happen.
  - Because he had said that it would happen. God spoke, it was. God is faithful to his promises (Gen 15.13-16).
  - It was a spectacular way to make God's presence known to the Canaanite nations.
    - It may even have been more spectacular than the Red sea. More visible. Think of a sea (marshy), not flowing water, channel through, little overflowing of banks etc. (still an amazing miracle, but not as spectacular).
    - Up to Adam or at Adam. Any idea how far up the river? 35 +/- km. Massive impact on any of the city states and towns along the Jordan. Impossible to miss. No secret miracle. May have been the physical basin from the Jabbok down to the point of the crossing just kept filling up, or may be that it dried up, and water filled in the narrower valley heading up to the Sea of Galilee.
  - It was a visible witness that God is the Lord of all the earth. Evidence that he is the God of all nations.
    - Another sign, another chance to repent, before they met their doom. (Gen 15.16 not at time of Abraham, but now at time of Joshua)
    - God not a god of the hills, God of all the earth.
    - Notice that they (the nations) had heard that God had dried up the Red Sea (Joshua 2.10). Now they would see an equally amazing thing with their own eyes.
    - An object lesson – a visible sermon. Don't believe people when they say something like: "If God worked a miracle, such as ... I would believe in him." Did the people of Jericho believe? No! It is not miracles which bring people to faith, it is the HS (Lk 16.31). [Refer back to point above about miracles.]

5. How did the people cross the riverbed? (Joshua 3.17; Joshua 4.10)
  - They hurried over. Notice Joshua 4.3 “tonight” seems to indicate that they all crossed in a single day.
  - Not single file, but many abreast, a few hundred (or more) across. A line of 500 people every 15 seconds) would have taken 12.5 hours ( $1.5 \times 10^6 / 500 / 4 / 60$ ).
  - Imagine the consternation in Jericho: a wall of people for half a day. Wave upon wave! No repentance, just hatred of God, loathing of his people.
6. What was the order of the crossing? (Joshua 4.12-13)
  - Army of R/G & .5 tribe of M, then the other tribes and the armies with them.
  - “As Moses directed” Num 32.29, 30.
  - How many from Eastern tribes? 40,000. How explain with Num 26.2, 3, 7, 18, 34? Representative number, replacements would serve on intervals. Some left to defend homelands.
7. How is Joshua’s faithfulness shown, and what is the result? (Joshua 4.10, 14)
  - 4.10 Just as Moses had instructed Joshua.
  - 4.14 Joshua exalted in place of Moses.

Lessons:

- A. We need to learn to take God at his word.
  - The example of the crossing is a witness to us that what God says will happen.
  - There is a time coming when he will judge the world and sin.
- B. God honours the obedient and faithful (e.g., Joshua).
- C. The crossing of the Jordan is a witness of God’s judgement.
  - On nations which do not honour God.
  - Our own nation and all nations who refuse to honour him.
  - They have been weighed in the balance and have been found wanting.
- D. God is the God of all the earth.
  - He showed this by challenging the pagan god (Baal) and by going into the battle at the head of his people.
  - Jesus did this: he went ahead of his people to face death and defeat it. Death is defeated.

**Completion of the Crossing – The Completion** (Joshua 3.17; Joshua 4.15-19)

1. How long did it take to cross the river?
  - Notice Joshua 4.3 “tonight” seems to indicate that they all crossed in a single day.
  - Not single file, but many abreast, a few hundred (or more) across. A line of 500 people every 15 seconds) would have taken 12.5 hours ( $1.5 \times 10^6 / 500 / 4$ ).
  - The order: Priests with ark, R/G .5M, tribes, men with twelve stones, then the priests come out (Joshua 4.15-9).
  - The men carrying the ark were the last to come out, and the water went back to its place.
  - God went before them as their king and protected them until they were all across safely.
2. What happened the moment that the last foot of a priest left the river?
  - The waters returned to their place and ran at flood stage.
  - Reinforces our understanding that there was a lot of water!
3. What is the significance to the statement “no sooner”? (18)
  - It is clear that the blockage of the waters did not occur by chance (e.g., a chance blockage of the river upstream).
  - It is clear that God was holding back the waters. This was a miraculous work of God.

4. What was the day on which all of this occurred? (19)
  - Tenth day of the first month.
  - Do you recall what was special about this day?
  - It was the very day that they had begun the Passover (selection of lamb) in Egypt (Ex 12.2, 3).
  - God had brought the people full circle, began their journey and ended it on that day.
  - Certainly a day of deliverance! Compare with 5.10, second Passover since leaving Egypt.

## Lessons:

- A. God does nothing by ‘chance,’ everything is worked out according to his plan.
- B. God continues to show mankind that he will judge the nations of the world.

**The Stones for a Memorial – The Cairn (Josh 4.1-9, 20-24; Josh 5.1)**

1. What did the Lord tell Joshua to do? (2) How does this relate to the action in Joshua 3.12?
  - Choose 12 men.
  - Where have we seen this instruction in the context of the crossing? (Joshua 3.12)
  - What is the connection between these two verses?
  - If Joshua 3.12 is not an anticipation of Joshua 4.2, then there does not seem to be too much direct use for the selection of the 12 men in Joshua 3.12.
  - Joshua seems to have anticipated what God would ask him to do, and asked the people to do it in advance – see Joshua 4.4 “that he had appointed.”
  - This does not mean that he guessed. God could have laid out the plan for him and told it to him. He seemed to have a pretty clear idea of what God was going to be doing with respect to the crossing.
  - This is the *public* command for what Joshua had already done.
2. What were these 12 men to do? (5)
  - To pick up stones from the very centre of the river (where the priests had stood and where the ark had been stationed) and carry them on their shoulders to the shore.
3. What did Joshua do with the 12 stones? (9, 20)
  - He set them up.
  - Where? (19) At Gilgal (“circle of stones” or “roll back” 5.9)
  - Gilgal: Dt 11.30 context of Gerizim and Ebal; First Passover new land 5.10; base of operation for the conquest; Judges 2.1 angel goes up; 1 Sam 15.12ff Saul and Samuel; David welcomed back 2 Sam 19.15, 40; others ... place of false worship Amos 4.4; Hos 4.15; Hos 9.15; Hos 12.11.
  - Up as what? A pile, a cairn (or possibly ring, with one reading of ‘gilgal’).
  - Notice the reading in the NIV footnote and the reading in the NKJV. It is possible that Joshua set up a *second* pile in the midst of the river at the very spot where the priests had stood. If so, this pile would have had the same purpose.
4. What was the purpose of setting up the pile of stones? (6-7, 21-24)
  - 12 parts in one unit, and not made with hands (Acts 17.25; 2 Cor 5.1)
    - Sign (6) of what God had done. Like sealing an envelope with wax. This is the work of God. His seal on the miracle and on the work that he had performed for his people. A legal statement. (See Gen 28.18)
    - Calvin: “The stones were placed according to the number of the tribes, that each might be incited to gratitude by its own symbol.”
  - Memorial (7) to the people of Israel forever.
    - Memorial of what? To his victory. Kings in Middle East would raise a stele or column

commemorating their victories. God is displaying the same thing, his victory of Baal the false God of the Canaanites.

- Sign and memorial of what? In the greater Biblical context: the covenant of grace and its conditions and obligations of obedience. God will be faithful to his side of the covenant, sealed in stone! You be faithful to your side and obey his laws. [See Gen 31.44-48 sign of a covenant; also Jesus as chief corner stone Ps 118.22; 1 Pt 2.4-8 stone of stumbling and the Church as living stones 1 Pt 2.5.]
- Object lesson (21-23) A means of reminding the people of what God had done. A visible reminder. Reminder not to go after the false gods of the Canaanites. Reminder of God's great power. Like the ships at the bottom of the ocean in Pearl Harbour, or the re-built portions of concentration camps are a reminder of the evils of war? (See Ex 12.26)
- Witness to the nations around them (24). Again the emphasis on God being the Lord of all the earth (Joshua 3.11, 13) so that they will fear the Lord. This was the reason that he performed the miracle – to show his power over the false gods, and to bring people to repentance.
- Boundary stone? See also Gen 31.51, 52
- The pile(s) was (were) still visible to the day the book was written. (9) One in water sticking out of the water when it flowed at normal levels, and one at Gilgal.
- We have national monuments even today. National cairns? Vietnam War memorial stone. Berlin wall, portion? What else? What do they represent? War, famous men, key events.

5. Did the people heed the lessons of the pile of stones?

- What were the results?
- Josh 5.1; The people feared, but they did not repent, they hardened their hearts.
- Judges 2.8-15 Notice where the angel started from 2.1; The nation of Israel forgot God and yet were so close in time and distance to Gilgal!
- This is the situation in society and the Church today:
  - Society hardens heart against God and throws off every 'oppressive' element of Biblical religion.
  - The Church forgets what God has done and what he is capable of doing.
  - The drift, and now rush, of society is always away from the ways of God's Law, until there is revival and reformation.

Lessons:

A. We see the importance of having memorials to remind us of what God has accomplished in redemption.

- Which memorials do we have in Church?
  - Lord's supper, baptism, signs of the covenant.
  - Sabbath (creation, resurrection).
- Others? Reformation wall. Some sites in Scotland from the times of the Covenanters. Closer to home. Is it wrong to have memorials? Right? In our congregation?

B. We see the importance of having memorials to remind us of what God has accomplished in his providence.

- What spiritual memorial stones do you have?
  - Milestones, key events, decisions: conversion, Baptism.
  - Points of temptation overcome. Note how and place a memorial there. Great victory over forces of evil.

## 6 Circumcision at Gilgal (Joshua 5.1-12)

### Objective

- To teach us the importance of the covenant signs we have in the New Testament economy.
1. Why did Joshua have to perform this circumcision?
  2. What is the significance of this Covenant for Joshua and the people at this time at Gilgal.
  3. How long was this covenant to be in force? (verses 9, 12 13)
  4. Who were circumcised according to the text?
  5. What is the significance of the statements in 5-7 with respect to the Passover?
  6. What did they do after they had been circumcised?
  7. How were they blessed? (verses 11-12; compare 6)

#### Lessons

- A. The importance of baptism should not be understated. God intends us to remember our baptism and to be faithful to it.
- B. The Lord's Supper is our Passover; it is to be celebrated as the memorial of our deliverance from the wilderness wanderings in sin.
- C. God will supply all the provisions we need until the day that he gives us a place at the feast of the Lamb in heaven.

## Leader's Notes

1. Why did Joshua have to perform this circumcision?
  - There was a new generation that had not been circumcised. (4, 5) Since leaving Egypt had not been done during the journey in desert. Why? Not clear. How reconcile with Lev 12.1-3; Gen 17.12. Command is given to circumcise every male on 8th day. Possible: to let the old generation die away and make a sharp distinction with the new. (6) Or another indication of the degree of their rebellion.
  - To prepare them for the Passover. (5-7) Why? (Ex 12.43-45) No one was allowed to eat of the Passover who had not been circumcised. This was one of the key distinguishing characteristics between the Israelites and the other nations. Foreigners were allowed, and expected, to make the sacrifices and to participate in many other elements of worship. The laws of Moses applied to foreigners, except certain very limited ceremonial aspects including the Passover.
  - To increase their faith in the face of the enemy (note 5.1, 8). The pain of the circumcision would have made them unable to fight and yet here they were preparing to face their greatest challenge and they disable their entire army. Stupid? God will protect them.
  - To roll away the reproach of Egypt (9) What reproach?
    - Enslavement and scoffing of Egyptians. (Ex 32.12)
    - Remnants of the wanderings (they wanted to go back, wanted gods of Egypt).
  - To consecrate people to God. (9) All the men of the original generation had died. God had purged out the evil. Circumcision was viewed as a cleansing. Cutting away of sin. (Jeremiah 4.4) They were starting on a new life; a 'new birth.' This is the sign of the new birth. Just as baptism is for us.
  - But why circumcision at all? To renew sign of covenant.
    - Which covenant? The one with Abraham. (Gen 17.1-14)
    - Sign of Covenant between whom? (v. 2) God and Abram
    - Promise of covenant? (verses 4-8) Promise of seed, land and blessing.
    - What is to be the sign? (v. 11) Circumcision
    - Sign applied to whom? (verses 12-13; Gen 21.4) All male seed, household members and infants.
2. What is the significance of this Covenant for Joshua and the people at this time at Gilgal.
  - Israelites were now going to possess the promised land (Gen 17.8). They had to be circumcised to go into the land. The sign of the covenant to possess the promise of the covenant.
3. How long was this covenant to be in force? (verses 9, 12 13)
  - Everlasting.
  - How can this be, is not circumcision done away? Baptism the replacement for and the covenant is the same. [now more universal] Promise of Abraham still in force (Gal 3.29) since there is an eternal seed, an eternal land, and an eternal blessing. Two parts to the fulfilment.
4. Who were circumcised according to the text?
  - "All Israel." That is all males – representation.
  - Adults and infants – covenantal form, again representation. Implies baptism of infants.
  - A sign of belief and repentance. [Gen 15.6 "Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness."]
5. What is the significance of the statements in 5-7 with respect to the Passover?
  - When was first Passover? (Ex 12.1-3)
  - When does it appear that they next celebrated the Passover? One year later. (Num 9.1, 2)
  - What happened not too long after the second observance of the Passover? (Num 13.31-33 and Num



14.1-12) The people heard the report of the spies and rebelled. There is no reference to them holding a Passover from this point until the observance at Gilgal (38 years later). This means that they must not have celebrated the Passover in their desert wanderings until they entered the land of the Canaanites.

- As a result of the rebellion, God is pointing out that they had lost the benefits of the Passover during the desert wanderings. The people had not only been rejected, and had no prospect of entering the promised land, they were not allowed to partake of the Passover. They were in effect excommunicated. Their unbelief and actions of rebellion had given them over to the situation of the pagans who are expected to obey the laws of God, but do not have the fellowship with God.
6. What did they do after they had been circumcised?
- Ate the Passover.
  - Compare with Ex 12.2, 10th day first month, (Ex 12.3) pick lamb (Ex 12.6) take care of lamb (Ex 12.6) sacrifice the lamb. Parallel here in Joshua 5.10. Passover week began on the 10th day and continued through the 14th.
  - Notice that the Israelites crossed the Jordan on the first day of the Passover week (Joshua 4.19) and celebrate the Passover as their first event of conquest.
  - Compare with Jesus
    - Jesus made the triumphal entry Sunday afternoon. (Mt 21.1-11)
    - When did he arrive at the temple? (Joshua 21.12) Possibly Sunday evening, note Joshua 21.17 “went out to spend the night.”
    - So he arrived at the temple on what day of the Jewish calendar? 10th day of Nisan (first month).
    - So the Lamb of God arrived at the temple at the very time the sacrificial animals for the Passover were being selected. (Sunday evening 10<sup>th</sup>, Monday evening 11<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday evening 12<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday evening 13<sup>th</sup>, Thursday evening 14<sup>th</sup> Passover lamb slain and eaten. Friday 14<sup>th</sup> continues and Jesus died before the end of the 14th Nisan (3:00 in afternoon) before evening came and 15<sup>th</sup> started. The Passover lamb was slain on Passover day.
7. How were they blessed? (verses 11-12; compare 6)
- They eat of the promised land and partake of the fine bounty of the land.
  - The food that had sustained them, the manna, stopped just as they are provided with food of the land.
  - When they went across the river was in the springtime. So they must have had access to some of the storage facilities of the Canaanites.
  - It appears that at this time the land was so fertile and productive that it was almost without effort that people could supply themselves with food.
  - Notice that they have unleavened bread and roasted grain (like nuts).

#### Lessons:

- A. The importance of baptism should not be understated. God intends us to remember our baptism and to be faithful to it.
- Each time we see an infant Baptized, it should remind us of the vows we took or that were taken on our behalf, and should cause us to be faithful so that we do not lose the blessings of the Lord’s Supper as the Jews lost the blessing of the Passover.
  - We should be reminded of circumcision of the heart (Rom 2.28, 29 with Jer 4.4) and the rolling away the reproach of our sin.
  - Our baptism should remind us of what Jesus did for us, and that we have been cleansed as his people.
  - Our baptism should remind us that we are in a covenant relationship with God.
- B. The Lord’s Supper is our Passover; it is to be celebrated as the memorial of our deliverance from the wilderness wanderings in sin.
- C. God will supply all the provisions we need until the day that he gives us a place at the feast of the Lamb in heaven.

- God's provision of manna continued up to the day they it was replaced by the supplies of the promised land, a type for heaven.

## 7 The Fall of Jericho (Joshua 5.13-6.27)

### Objective

- To teach us that God will punish those who rebel against him by hiding behind the walls of this world.

1. What was Joshua doing near Jericho? (Joshua 5.13)

Lessons:

- A. He did not waste time hoping. He went about the commission that he had been assigned.
- B. Leaders should go ahead and seek new opportunities for the people.
- C. It is important for us to spy out and understand the enemies strengths and weaknesses.

2. What did Joshua find as he neared the walls of Jericho? (Joshua 5.13)

3. Who was this man?

4. What did Joshua ask the angel and how did the angel respond? What did the angel mean by his answer?

Lesson:

- A. We are not to go into life assuming that God is on our side, even if we are Christians. Rather we are to be on God's side.

5. What parallels can be found in the Bible to the statement in verse 5.15?

6. What is the significance of the instructions in verses 6.2-5?

7. How do you think that the people would have responded? How would you have responded?

8. What does God tell them to do?

Lessons:

- A. The battle will be fought and won on God's terms.
- B. God can win without us. He doesn't need us to fight his battles, but he chooses to use us for his kingdom purposes.
- C. God often has to teach us patience and to have faith.

9. What were some of the features of their march around the city? (Joshua 6.3-15)

Lessons:

- A. Obedience to God is required, even when his purposes are not clear to us.
- B. God will take the glory in the destruction of his enemies.
- C. God has a missionary motive, and gives us time to repent.

10. What happened when the people shouted and the trumpet sounded? (20)

Lessons:

- A. The power of God is not in the power of men, or the instruments of men.
- B. God chooses to use men as his instruments even though he does not need them.

11. What were the soldiers to do with everything in the city? (Joshua 6.17-19, 21, 24)

Lessons:

- A. God alone the owner of life. He sets the bounds for men in terms of place and time.
- B. What God has declared holy or sacred, let no man claim otherwise.

12. Why was Jericho destroyed?

Lessons:

- A. There is judgement pending for evil systems that hide behind their walls of clay.
- B. There is judgement pending for evil nations that choose to ignore God and his justice.

13. What great act of mercy was shown in the midst of these events? (Joshua 6.17, 22-23, 25)
14. Who were saved from destruction? (22)
15. Where were Rahab and her family placed? (23) Why?

Lessons:

- A. It is important that we keep the promises we make.
- B. God shows that he is faithful to his promise to Abraham regarding the blessing to the nations.

16. What is the curse that Joshua pronounced?

Lesson:

- A. God does not overlook the wickedness of men.

17. How does this chapter end? What does it tell us about Joshua?

## Leader's Notes

1. What was Joshua doing near Jericho? (Joshua 5.13)
  - Likely he had gone out to spy out the stronghold himself.
  - Verse 1 tells us that the city was shut tight.
  - He was determining how he was going to break through the 'impregnable' walls. He did not yet know what God was going to do for the people.

### Lessons:

- A. He did not waste time hoping. He went about the commission that he had been assigned.
    - There is never anything inconsistent with praying and doing, with trusting in the Lord and acting.
  - B. Leaders should go ahead and seek new opportunities for the people.
    - As the leader, went ahead and scouted the territory.
  - C. It is important for us to spy out and understand the enemy's strengths and weaknesses.
    - Even though it is the Lord's battle, he expects us to be prepared.
    - Apply to cultural awareness: evolution, scientism, mysticism, atheism.
2. What did Joshua find as he neared the walls of Jericho? (Joshua 5.13)
    - A man standing with a drawn sword.
    - Compare with Genesis 3.24.
  3. Who was this man?
    - The LORD (a theophany), Christ (a Christophany), an angel?
    - Compare:
      - Gen 18.1-3 (1 LORD, 3 Lord)
      - Judges 6.11-16 (v. 14 LORD, 15 Lord)
      - Judges 13.1-22 (v. 22 God) with Joshua 5.14
      - Dan 10.13 (esp. vv. 13, 21); Dan 12.1 (Joshua 8.16; Joshua 9.21)
    - The fact that he accepted worship indicates that he was not a created angel.
      - Luke 1.11, 19, 26. Note: 2.13-14 and compare with Rev 19.10.
      - The angel of the LORD is often the second person of the Trinity. This is probably who Joshua confronted.
  4. What did Joshua ask the angel and how did the angel respond? What did the angel mean by his answer?
    - He *wasn't* on the side of Israel, rather Israel was to be on God's side.
      - God doesn't choose sides. We choose sides: either to be on God's side or against him. "Choose this day whom you will serve."
      - In fact he had already said he was with them (Ex 23.20-23).
    - Note: God at times used the (wicked) nations around Israel to punish them. So at times he could appear to take the side of the enemies.
    - The angel wasn't there to fight at this point.
      - This does not mean that God was ambivalent to the evils of the Canaanites.
      - It seems that he came not to fight but to give a blessing and a commission. (Joshua 5.15).
      - Joshua was to take orders from him. (Joshua 6.2-5).
      - The angel was the commander, Joshua was the lieutenant.

### Lesson:

- A. We are not to go into life assuming that God is on our side, even if we are Christians. Rather we are to be on God's side.

- We are to be on God's side by obeying and honouring him.
5. What parallels can be found in the Bible to the statement in verse 5.15?
    - Moses at the burning bush.
      - Moses is a clear parallel. This gives us an indication that Joshua was commissioned at the start of this major chapter in Israel's history in a similar manner to the commissioning of Moses.
    - Jesus at his Baptism
      - In Jesus' case the situation is different (e.g., not a statement regarding holy ground) but the significance is the same: a Spiritual battle as much as a physical one.
  6. What is the significance of the instructions in verses 6.2-5?
    - To show that the battle was the Lord's.
  7. How do you think that the people would have responded? How would you have responded?
    - I believe that the many of the people were eager to go to war.
    - They had been priming for this for many years. Here at last was their opportunity to get into action.
  8. What does God tell them to do?
    - March around a city blowing trumpets!
    - I am sure that more than one person said: "What is the use? How stupid!"

## Lessons:

- A. The battle will be fought and won on God's terms.
    - This is important, as too often human nature wants to 'help out God'.
    - Note that this does not mean that we are not to go into the battle. We are. But it has to be done according to God's terms and in his ways.
  - B. God can win without us. He doesn't need us to fight his battles, but he chooses to use us for his kingdom purposes.
    - Think of key individuals who seem to be so effective in the battle who are struck down in the prime of their life. It does not seem to make sense.
    - God is reminding us that his purposes do not to rely on individuals.
    - His purposes are to bring the ultimate glory to his greatness. The victory is his.
  - C. God often has to teach us patience and to have faith.
    - It may be that he holds us back from something that we think that we are prepared to do, and wish to be doing.
    - This passage teaches us to have faith. (Heb 11.30)
    - There are great evils in the 'walled cities' out there. It can seem to us that the walls around evolution, abortion, or homosexuality are strong. Those inside the walls can think that they are strong. But they are no more secure than were the people inside the walls of Jericho.
9. What were some of the features of their march around the city? (Joshua 6.3-15)
    - Different than a human siege. No battering rams or earth mounds. Religious procession.
    - Ark and priests to go first. (6)
      - Note that the priests may not have worn sandals. (Ex 3.5) On holy ground.
      - They represented the people.
      - The city was holy (dedicated, not without sin), given over to the Lord, to be completely destroyed (17, 18)
    - The trumpets blowing through the whole march. (9)
      - Signal trumpets, not musical instruments. (Ex 19.13)
      - To announce the presence of the LORD. (2 Sam 6.15; Zech 9.14; 2 Chron 29.27, 28)

- Silence during the procession. (10)
  - Total attention, silence, listen, not question.
  - Compare:
    - Lev 10.3, attention of courtesy before the august majesty.
    - Rev 8.1, all before the judgement.
    - Rom 3.19; Ps 107.42. On that day, no one will question God. He will ask: “Why did you not honour my holiness?”
- Seven days, seven trips on seventh day.
  - Jericho mound is about 200m by 400m (4 football fields wide by 4 long, about 16 football fields).
  - Significance of the 7s (holy, entire, devoted, sacred work).
  - A Sabbath in here somewhere. Possibly the very day of the destruction.
  - This is the work of God, a work of worship.
  - 7 days mirror on creation. A new order in a new land.
- The final shout. (16, 20)
  - A shout of judgement.
  - Jesus will return with the shout of the archangel and a trumpet (1 Thess 4.16).

#### Lessons:

- A. Obedience to God is required, even when his purposes are not clear to us.
    - He tells them to walk, and he will use this for his purposes.
    - Like water into wine: “Fill jars with water ...”
  - B. God will take the glory in the destruction of his enemies.
  - C. God has a missionary motive, and gives us time to repent.
    - 1 Kings 8.41-43
10. What happened when the people shouted and the trumpet sounded? (20)
- The walls came down.
  - Earthquakes happen in many places, was this an earthquake?
    - Not an earthquake or the Israelites would have also been affected.
  - No, this was a great act by a mighty God.
    - Great walls: 2m wall space of 5m, 4m wall, with a roof between the two walls.
    - Liberal ‘scholars’ date this violent destruction around 1250 BC, but they claim that this destruction was done by the Egyptians. They say that later walls made of mud bricks that came down on this day around a small village was the ‘city’ Joshua destroyed.
    - But we believe that it was about 1406 BC. The Exodus was about 1446 (Pharaoh in Egypt at the time of the Exodus Amunhotep II son of Thutmose III—see also Judges 11.26 and 1 Kings 6.1) instead of 1290 BC (at time of Rameses II—see Ex 1.11).

#### Lessons:

- A. The power of God is not in the power of men, or the instruments of men.
    - Gen 1.3, 6, etc. Zech 4.6.
  - B. God chooses to use men as his instruments even though he does not need them.
    - We must always remember this. None of us are indispensable.
11. What were the soldiers to do with everything in the city? (Joshua 6.17-19, 21, 24)
- Everything was devoted to the LORD. Lev 27.28, 29; Dt 20.16-18 They were to:
    - Destroy (burn, 24) the city, not to keep it for habitation. It was not a fit place to live since it was associated with idolatry. Num 31.21-24
    - Destroy all people (every one including women and children), not just the soldiers.
      - The ‘innocent’ suffered with the men of war.



- Consequences of sin, everyone visited by the wrath of God.
- Destroy all animals.
- Take all gold, silver and bronze into the treasury of the LORD.
- They were to keep away from the devoted things (18) else they would bring destruction on the people.

## Lessons:

- A. God alone the owner of life. He sets the bounds for men in terms of place and time.
- B. What God has declared holy or sacred, let no man claim otherwise.
- What in our modern context? Bible, marriage, life (e.g., euthanasia and abortion).

## 12. Why was Jericho destroyed?

- It was the closest city to their crossing.
- It was one of the oldest cities in the world.
  - Probably a city which many thought was essentially indestructible.
  - God was showing that there could be nothing that could stand in the way of his judgement.
- Jericho was probably the centre of worship of the moon.
  - This was not just the destruction of a pagan city but of the centre of idol worship.
- Their refusal to repent of their pagan practices and idolatry. Num 33.51-52; Dt 9.3-4
  - Recall that Rahab had said that they had heard about the works of God in Egypt. They had known of them for 40 years.
  - Then they had seen his work in destroying the Amorites and his work at the crossing of the Jordan.
  - Then they had a chance to repent during the seven days of siege.
  - Jericho was a tightly shut city with frightened people. But not frightened enough to repent. Only Rahab did.
- They thought that they could hide from God behind their walls of brick.
  - This was no more effective than the 'wall' of water.
  - They chose to ignore God. People choose their damnation. God gives warnings.
- Was God being Cruel?
  - Not so! Men will be punished with eternal damnation if they don't repent.
  - This was a warning of what will come in the final judgement.
  - People who say that this is a different God than God of NT forget what Jesus says (Mt 25.41).
- How do people hide behind walls to avoid God? Wall of money, fame, power, love, pleasure?

## Lessons:

- A. There is judgement pending for evil systems that hide behind their walls of clay.
- B. There is judgement pending for evil nations that choose to ignore God and his justice.
- 2 Peter 3.4-10

## 13. What great act of mercy was shown in the midst of these events? (Joshua 6.17, 22-23, 25)

- They spared Rahab in fulfilment of their oath. Remember the oath was an oath to the death (see 4 the notes for question 3 (v. Joshua 2.14) in Chapter 4, Rahab and the Spies, A Covenant of Grace (Joshua 2.12-21).

## 14. Who were saved from destruction? (22)

- Everyone in Rahab's household. 2.12, 18, 19

## 15. Where were Rahab and her family placed? (23) Why?

- Outside the camp.
- They were ceremonially unclean. Num 12.14-15; Num 31.19

- However, this placement was not permanent. See v. 25 (lives among ...)
  - Non-Jews part of the multitude travelling with Israel.
  - She married Salmon Mt 1.5 (became daughter-in-law of Nahshon a 'prince' cf Num 2.3; Num 7.12).
  - She became a great blessing for herself and all mankind in the line of Jesus.

#### Lessons:

- A. It is important that we keep the promises we make.
- We are too glib about saying we will do something and then not following through.
- B. God shows that he is faithful to his promise to Abraham regarding the blessing to the nations.
- Genesis 17.4.
  - Isaiah 56.1-8 (especially 6-8).
  - He continues to be faithful to this promise.
  - We have an assurance that the message of the Gospel will get through to unbelievers and bring them into the Kingdom.
16. What is the curse that Joshua pronounced?
- A curse on any one who rebuilt the city.
  - This was fulfilled just as Joshua prophesied. 1 Kings 16.34
  - This curse does not mean that the city was uninhabited during all this time (2 Sam 10.5), only that it was not a walled city.

#### Lesson:

- A. God does not overlook the wickedness of men.
- Application: e.g. false worship in the Church, disrespect for the Sabbath. God will deal with it.
  - God, in his time, WILL cleanse evil from his Church.
17. How does this chapter end? What does it tell us about Joshua?
- He is shown as being acknowledged as a faithful man of God.
  - It is a fitting note with which to end this module: Joshua the man of God (27). The faithful man is blessed. "Like a tree planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in season ..."
  - He was faithful:
    - When all others (except Caleb) rebelled
    - As an understudy to Moses
    - Preparing the people for the crossing
    - At the crossing of the Jordan
    - In the conquest of Jericho.
  - "Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?" Prov 20.6
  - That we can learn the lessons of patience and faithfulness of this man of God, should be our earnest prayer.

## 8 Achan's Sin

### Objective

- To teach us that God will punish those in the Church who bring shame on his work.

### Achan's Disobedience (Joshua 7.1, 11, 21)

1. Who sinned in this account?
2. Why then does the writer say "The Israelites acted unfaithfully?" (Joshua 7.1, see also Joshua 7.11)
3. Who was Achan?
4. Can we learn anything from Achan's ignominy arising out of his obscurity?

#### Lessons:

- A. Anyone of us can be of great harm to others in a corporate body.
- B. The actions of the individual are important in the corporate context.
- C. We need to work hard to be of use, but notice how little effort it takes to be a destructive force.

5. What exactly was it that Achan did/took?
6. Why was it a sin to take these things?

#### Lessons:

- A. Illustrates how serious sin and punishment can come as a result of coveting.
- B. God is not selfish, but he does demand obedience.
- C. We need to wait for God's time to receive blessings that he will give us.

7. Contrast Achan with Rahab.
8. Do people today (esp. in the Church) commit the same kind of sin?

9. How do people in 'Israel' (the Church) today commit the same sin, in principle, that Achan committed?
10. Why is it that we don't see the immediate consequences of our sins, as Achan didn't?
11. How can we avoid the sin of Achan?

Lessons:

- A. God does not tolerate sin and being ignored.
- B. To go against the revealed instructions of God is a serious offence against his nature (holiness) honour (worthy of obedience) and grace (he gives us much).
- C. We are to take seriously all of God's law.

**Israel's Defeat** (Joshua 7.2-5)

1. What did Joshua, as a good leader do, after the fall of Jericho? (2)
2. What was the report of the spies? (3)
3. What do you think that this tells us about the mental state of the people, and esp. the spies?
4. What other indications do we have that this may have been the state of their hearts?
5. There is something going on here that is more than just the sin of Achan. What do you think it is?
6. Contrast the three instances of spies being sent out in the life of Joshua.
7. What are the two extremes to which we can go in dealing with challenges and trials, especially in the Christian life?

8. What was the outcome of their pride and self-confidence?

Lessons:

- A. We must not become proud or arrogant. It is very easy to crash, and the crash will be very hard.
- B. It shows how quickly we forget the lessons God has taught us.
- C. Is it easier for us to forget? Or harder?
- D. We are most vulnerable after we have completed something 'great' (accomplishment or victory) at what ever scale.
- E. We need defeats to teach us who is really in control of the events of history, and who is building his Church.

**Joshua's Dismay** (Joshua 7.6-9)

1. What steps does Joshua take to show his dismay? And what does each action show or signify?

Lesson:

- A. When confronted by the chastisements of God, we must not rebel or become hardened but rather we must come humbly before God, in true humiliation and repentance.

2. Who accompanied Joshua in the actions that he took?

3. What is the substance of Joshua's prayer?

4. What are the key points? What do they tell us?

Lessons:

- A. We should pray often for our nation, as did Joshua's.
- B. We can ask God for explanations and clarification and we can challenge him to show his glory.
- C. We should be silent before God: wait and see

**God's Dealings** (Joshua 7.10-13)

1. Why do you think that God challenged Joshua in this way? Was it wrong for Joshua to be in a position of confession and penitence? Why then did God tell him to stand up? (Compare vv. 10 and 6.)
2. Who sinned in this account? Why then does the writer say in Joshua 7.11 "Israel has sinned?"
3. What is the sin that Israel is charged with?
4. In v. 12 God says in effect, "so now you know the reason for the defeat at Ai". What does he say that presents an irony in respect to the devoted things that were taken?
5. Did the Israelites know what they were supposed to do?
6. What did God tell the people to do? (13)

**Achan's Discovery** (Joshua 7.14-19)

1. How do you think that God "took the tribe, clan, family?" (14, 16-18)
2. Why did God go through this elaborate ritual to have Achan exposed?
3. Are we to use this kind of instrument to discern God's will?
4. What was the reason Achan was to be punished?
5. What was to be the action that Joshua was to take when the guilty party was found? (15)
6. In what way was he to be punished? How was the capital punishment to be executed? Why?

Lessons:

- A. The seriousness of sin.
- B. We need seriously to consider how visible sin is to be punished by the state.
- C. God knows our actions and we are 'found out.'

7. How does Joshua direct his words to Achan? (19)
8. What does Joshua mean by "give glory to the LORD"?

**Achan's Disclosure** (Joshua 7.20)

1. How is the sin exposed? (20)

**Achan's Destruction** (Joshua 7.22-26)

1. Why did Joshua send messengers to get the material from Achan's tent? (22)
2. What was done with the evidence after Achan's confession? (22-23) Why?
3. What was the punishment?
4. Why did God punished Achan in this way?
5. What was the significance of the pile of stones?

Lessons:

- A. God is patient, but we must realize that he demands total obedience from us.
- B. God is not ignoring sins. He is giving men time to repent.
- C. Anyone of us can be of great harm to others in a corporate body.
- D. We need to work hard to be of use. But it takes little effort to be a destructive force.
- E. God sees all, there will be no escaping the final judgement of the fire of cleansing, if there is no true repentance.

## Leader's Notes

### Achan's Disobedience (Joshua 7.1, 11, 21)

1. Who sinned in this account?
  - Achan.
2. Why then does the writer say "The Israelites acted unfaithfully?" (Joshua 7.1, see also Joshua 7.11)
  - God deals, in general, with man in a corporate covenant capacity. Nations are judged for the sin of individuals. Continuing today, God deals with an entire nation when the leaders or individuals in the nation are sinners.
  - Examples?
    - Adam represented mankind in Garden, in original sin. (Rom 5.14-17)
    - David when he counted the people (2 Sam 24.1, 9-13)
    - Christ represents all those who believe in him. Vicarious atonement. Representative obedience.
  - What is a balancing aspect in Scripture to this?
    - The "soul who sins will die" for his own sins. Ezk 18.4, 20.
    - The Bible is clear that as individuals we will not be punished (eternally) for the sins of other individuals.
  - In a corporate capacity we all will be blessed or punished to the extent that the general tendency of our nation and our leaders is toward godliness or evil. But ultimately we stand or fall at the judgement seat of God based on our own works (NOT salvation by works).
  - This principle is the same in the church context: organic whole (1 Cor 12.12-26; esp. 26)
3. Who was Achan?
  - The only other references to him in the rest of the Bible are Joshua 22.20; 1 Chron 2.7. All that we know about him is told us in this account.
  - His name means? Try to guess from the NIV footnote to v. 26. Apparently it means: Trouble. How appropriate God's providence is. If he was named this at birth, he lived up to his name. If he gained this name along the way, then he was true to his character.
4. Can we learn anything from Achan's ignominy arising out of his obscurity?

#### Lessons:

- A. Anyone of us can be of great harm to others in a corporate body.
- B. The actions of the individual are important in the corporate context.
  - Too many today act as individuals and think little of the corporate consequences of their actions (e.g., family, church, nation context).
- C. We need to work hard to be of use, but notice how little effort it takes to be a destructive force.
  - We don't have to be a 'somebody' to be destructive.
5. What exactly was it that Achan did/took?
  - Robe from Babylon (Heb: Shinar): imported, decorated, valuable. Clothes much more valuable than today (e.g., Judges 14.13; 2 Tim 4.13; 2 Kings 5.5 contrast amount of gold and silver in v. 5 with Joshua 7.21)
  - 2.3 kg silver and .6 kg gold
6. Why was it a sin to take these things?



- Specific command related to Jericho (Joshua 6.18, 19).
- The general principle of 'the ban' Dt 7.22, 25, 26.
- It is possible that the robe was a detestable thing and may have had pagan religious significance. (cf 2 Kings 10.22), gold may have been associated with idolatry.
- Breach of the general principle given in the Ten Commandments Ex 20.15, 17 (possibly 20.4). Compare with 7.21 "I coveted."
- He also stole and lied (11).
- Principle of the Portion. A portion of everything that God gives to us belongs to God and is to be returned to him to show his sovereignty. Time, money, life ..., and here, the first portion of the spoils of conquest.
- Only Jericho was under the ban (Joshua 8.2, 27), but the rest of the cities and the plunder belonged to Israel. Achan just needed to be patient and God would let him have his desires (in the proper context).
- In essence it was a religious sin, a breach of first 4 commandments of 10 commandments. But he also broke a number of the second six commandments.

## Lessons:

- Illustrates how serious sin and punishment can come as a result of coveting.
  - God is not selfish, but he does demand obedience.
  - We need to wait for God's time to receive blessings that he will give us.
- What are some ways that people in the Church want to rush to take the blessings in their own way/time?
- New-Christians rush into teaching.
  - Wishing to take on an 'important' job but unwilling to take on the simple duties of obedience.
  - World's methods in outreach.

## 7. Contrast Achan with Rahab:

Rahab	Achan
1. Canaanite	1. Israelite
2. Gave up the things of Canaan (gods and material possessions)	2. Lusted after and stole the things of Canaan
3. Saved from destruction	3. Given over to destruction (as was meted out on the Canaanites)
4. Married into tribe of Judah	4. Removed from the tribe of Judah
5. Given a spiritual Canaan	5. Kept from the spiritual Canaan

- Do people today (esp. in the Church) commit the same kind of sin?
  - The answer is obvious.
- How do people in 'Israel' (the Church) today commit the same sin, in principle, that Achan committed?
 

Stealing from God:

  - Sabbath not kept.
  - Tithe not given over.

Same sin that Adam committed in the Garden. Could have all the fruit of all the trees except for one. Yet he wanted that one as well.

  - Service given grudgingly for service of Kingdom (e.g., CPC and other volunteer efforts) but if it came to making \$ or hobby or watching a sport ...
  - Adding to worship, own inventions (a form of stealing, since taking the honour from God).
- Why is it that we don't see the immediate consequences of our sins, as Achan didn't?
 

Why are people today not punished immediately as was Achan?

- In order to answer these questions we need to ask first:
- Does the fact that God does not punish immediately mean that God does not consider the sin as serious today as he did in Joshua's day?
- Do people who break the first four of the Ten Commandments today deserve to be punished by God?
  - Gen 4.4-7; Lev 10.1, 2; 1 Sam 6.6, 7; Acts 5.1-11.
  - God re-establishes his sovereignty and position at each significant juncture in redemptive history.
  - The example of Achan is a sufficient warning and example for us. 1 Cor 10.1-7 (esp. 6-7).
  - It is sufficient that God will hold us accountable in the Judgement.
  - It is not that God is ignoring man's sins in 'holy things.' He is giving men time to repent of their actions, and allowing those who don't repent to heap up the coals of the fire of judgement on their own heads. He will punish in his time.

11. How can we avoid the sin of Achan?

- Phil 4.12 Learn contentment in the situation God has placed you. (Mt 6.31-34; 1 Tim 6.6; Heb 13.5)
- Learn to love the law of God.

Lessons:

- A. God does not tolerate sin and being ignored.
- There are many today who try to argue that it is wrong for us (the state) to punish people who break the laws of God with serious punishments (e.g., capital punishment). But we see here that stealing from God is a capital offence punishable by death. God will effect his punishment in spite of men. We should not be weak-kneed because of our PC ('politically correct') culture. Of course, we are not to be cruel either.
- B. To go against the revealed instructions of God is a serious offence against his nature (holiness) honour (worthy of obedience) and grace (he gives us much).
- C. We are to take seriously all of God's law.
- All of the Ten Commandments case applications (Rom 3.23).

**Israel's Defeat (Joshua 7.2-5)**

1. What did Joshua, as a good leader do, after the fall of Jericho? (2)
- He sent spies to obtain military intelligence. We looked at the moral issue of spies and the strategic aspect of them when we considered the sending of the two spies into Jericho. We also made reference at that time to the fact that Joshua was following the example of Moses when he sent the spies to spy out the land. (Num 13.1-33)
  - He wanted to capitalize on the successes at Jericho, Joshua moved quickly against the next city.
    - Ai was strategic because of its placement at the top end of a ravine. From here Joshua would control a significant foothold on the West side of the Jordan and would be able to move out his army for the conquest of the rest of Palestine.
    - He wanted to take out Ai, a major religious centre and give the people of this region a crippling blow. Their gods and their religion would fall and they would tremble. Just as we saw the crossing of the River Jordan was a direct prophetic object lesson against Baal of the waters, so destruction of the gods of Ai (tree groves, and hills) would accomplish the same thing. [Sennacherib threatened Hezekiah and Jerusalem Is 36.18-20]
    - Ai "the ruin" in Hebrew (always written with the definite article). Built on a previous ruin? May have been a city previously destroyed by the Amorites. Then re-built. Very

- difficult to identify the exact location. Number of 'tels' in this area.
  - Beth Aven (house of vanity/wickedness) vs Beth el.
  - He was obedient to the instruction of the Lord, and continued on the conquest. Dt 7.1-6 He did not sit on his victory but moved on.
  - Object **lesson**: the Christian life is moving on in victory, not sitting in repose in victory. Victory can only be enjoyed in comfort and rest once the entire promised land is obtained. What for us? For us this is glory in heaven.
- 2. What was the report of the spies? (3)
  - Do you notice anything about this report that is peculiar? What if you compare it with 8.25?
    - If the population of Ai was evenly split, then there were the same number of men and woman, and 6,000 men.
    - How many soldiers did the spies say to send? 2-3,000, about half the potential number of soldiers in Ai.
- 3. What do you think that this tells us about the mental state of the people, and esp. the spies?
  - May be an element of rashness.
  - May be an element of forgetfulness. Forgotten that God had given them the victory at Jericho.
  - Been depending on their own strength and wits.
  - Self assurance.
  - Self confidence.
- 4. What other indications do we have that this may have been the state of their hearts?
  - The spies don't seem to have done their work very well. They didn't get all the facts. They had the wrong number of men in the city. Self-confidence/assurance can lead to a casualness and lack of preparedness. (sports team).
  - Their hearts melted and turned to water. (5) So that means that there was in their hearts something which made them strong (confidence).
- 5. There is something going on here that is more than just the sin of Achan. What do you think it is?
  - Look back at vv. 1 and 11.
  - The problem is more than just the action of stealing the material items. The problem is greater, it is a problem of the heart. They were stealing the glory from God. It was (in their opinion) their own actions which had given them the victory, and would carry them forward on their next conquest.
  - Though Achan is primarily at fault others seemed to be on a 'high.'
  - They failed to remember that it was God who had given them the victories at Jericho and instead thought that it was their strategies.
  - God is using the sin of Achan as a means of teaching Israel a lesson about spiritual pride.
- 6. Contrast the three instances of spies being sent out in the life of Joshua.
  - Numbers 13.26-33 (28, 31, 32) How did the spies represent the situation? Represented the Canaanites as overwhelming. How were the people in Canaan different 40 years later? Probably not much. What then was the difference at the time of Jericho? People were depending on the LORD. In Numbers they were depending on self.
  - Joshua 2.10, 11, 24 How did the spies represent the situation? Represented the victory as being possible, because the LORD was with the people and would surely give the land into their hands.
  - Joshua 7.3 How did the spies represent the situation? As being nothing, of inconsequence.
- 7. What are the two extremes to which we can go in dealing with challenges and trials, especially in the Christian life?

- Lacking confidence in the LORD, not believing that he is able to overcome his enemies working through us.
  - Being over confident in the arm of flesh and the ability of man.
  - Practical examples?
    - Fear of homosexual movement, abortion industry, media ... Wring hands in despair.
    - Count on programs (e.g., evangelism), money in congregation (yet be spiritually ineffective), confession, theology ... and not be on our guard for pride and self-confidence in the heart.
    - Balance: Ps 18.28-36
8. What was the outcome of their pride and self-confidence?
- Consequence of sinning against God? (5) 36 people lost their lives because of the selfishness/covetousness of Achan and the false self-confidence of the people. Many affected. Notice remembrance of this event (Joshua 22.20).

#### Lessons:

- A. We must not become proud or arrogant. It is very easy to crash, and the crash will be very hard
- Must always give God the glory.
  - Our own congregation could experience this as we grow and are blessed if we have a false self-confidence. ...
- B. It shows how quickly we forget the lessons God has taught us.
- How could they forget the lessons from the Jordan and Jericho?
  - They had seen the 'impossible' performed before their very eyes.
  - How could they be so haughty?
- C. Is it easier for us to forget? Or harder?
- We don't have the immediate evidences like they had, but we do have all of revealed scripture.
- D. We are most vulnerable after we have completed something 'great' (accomplishment or victory) at what ever scale.
- Misjudge
  - Become arrogant, self-assured
  - Overrate self
  - How quickly we can fall (Paul 1 Cor 10.12)
- E. We need defeats to teach us who is really in control of the events of history, and who is building his Church.
- Think of examples? e.g. Peter's denial.

#### Joshua's Dismay (Joshua 7.6-9)

1. What steps does Joshua take to show his dismay? And what does each action show or signify?
- Tore his clothes.
    - What does this practice sybolize? Gen 37.29, 34; Gen 44.13; Num 14.6; Judges 11.35; Acts 14.14 Extreme grief. Note Lev 10.6 (also Mk 14.63)
    - Why do you think that it means this?
      - We already noted that clothes were valuable at this time. So there is an element here of giving over of something that is valuable to destruction (like the burnt offering or the ban on the plunder given over to complete destruction).
      - A dramatic action to correspond to the level of their inner emotion (e.g., like kicking a can when angry). In general the Hebrews (Jews) and Middle Eastern cultures are more expressive of their emotions than are the Western cultures.
  - Fell facedown on the ground (remained till evening)

- What is the significance of this? Gen 17.3, 17; Num 14.5; Num 16.4, 22, 45; Joshua 5.14
- A sign of submission before a sovereign. Prostrate.
- People still do this to a certain extent before monarchs to show their submission. And in some cultures bowing is still a sign of respect and the degree of the bow a sign of greater respect.
- Who was Joshua bowing before?
  - God. He knew that God was his sovereign.
  - Why do people today not bow before the LORD?
  - Our views of respect have changed considerably. Among men we generally (in NA) do not show respect to those who are 'superiors.' We use the sign of respect of an equal (e.g., a hand shake). How far we should go in bowing to men is worthy of discussion. But because we no longer bow to men, we also want to treat God as an equal instead of as our LORD.
- Sprinkled dust on his head (implied)
  - A sign of sorrow, typified by ashes.
  - What is the significance of this?
    - A sign of humiliation: Is 61.3.
    - A symbol of our own earthly nature: Gen 3.19; Gen 18.27.
    - A symbol of our status: 1 Sam 2.8; Ps 89.39.
- Prayed: "he said" (v. 7)
  - Why?
    - He realized that this problem (the death of 36 men) was a judgement from the LORD.
    - He knew that he had to take his concerns to the LORD. There was no one else to help. The arm of flesh, the spirit of self confidence had just failed them. And the god's of the Canaanites were nothing (demonstrated at the Jordan and at Jericho). We will look at the substance of his prayer later.
- What do all these actions tell us about Joshua? Or, what word can you use to describe his response to the actions of God?
  - He was humbled before God.
  - Compare with Job 2.7-13 and 3.1

## Lesson:

- A. When confronted by the chastisements of God, we must not rebel or become hardened but rather we must come humbly before God, in true humiliation and repentance.
  - In what ways does the Church need to come before God today, as Joshua did in his day?
    - *Directory of Public Worship* "... it is lawful and necessary, upon special emergent occasions, to separate a day or days for public fasting or thanksgiving, as the several eminent and extra-ordinary dispensations of God's providence shall administer cause and opportunity to his people."
  - How can we come humbly today? Are we expected to tear our clothes and pour ashes on our heads? What is the equivalent today for us? Fasting? Putting aside frivolity? No TV!?
  - Notice that Joshua takes the lead in brining the nation to repentance.
    - He was of course, the leader of the nation. But there have been many times in history when the leaders have failed to exercise their duties in the manner that he did.
    - Our nation's leaders and the leaders in the Church need to take the lead in bringing us before God in repentance and confession.
2. Who accompanied Joshua in the actions that he took?
  - The elders of Israel (v. 6) All the leaders of the nation/church worked in concert to bring the issues before God.

- The whole Church is affected and hurt by the sinful action of one individual. The whole Church, represented by its elders, leading the whole body, are to come humbly before God. Compare Acts 5.11 “the whole church.”
  - It seems that this is an aspect of Church life that is missing in our generation.
    - There is very little corporate concern, confession, and contrition.
    - It largely goes to the problem of discipline.
    - There is a great need for a proper perspective on church discipline.
    - This is largely what we are dealing with in this chapter: the sin of an individual affecting the entire body, and the entire body dealing with the sin as a body. 1 Cor 5.13
  - As examples, contrast RCs that have considered ex-communication for members involved with the abortion industry or supporting it; with the Southern Baptists’ apparent unwillingness to deal with a professed member of their organization because he was the President of the US.
3. What is the substance of Joshua’s prayer?
- Humble appeal to God, asking for an explanation of what has just happened. Acceptance, but wanting to know why.
4. What are the key points? What do they tell us?
- A Solemn Salutation (7)
    - To whom is his prayer addressed?
      - Addressed to Sovereign Lord — *adoni yahwah* “Lord LORD” or “Lord Jehovah.”
      - Similar to “Lord Jesus” Title and personal name (Ex 3.15).
      - Master of all the universe, the one who created all things and now sustains and governs his creation.
      - “Prayer is offering our desires to God ...” (SC Q97)
    - This is where we must begin when we want to understand what God is doing in our lives and in the life of our church or nation. We must begin with God and his reign and not with anything else. Is 29.16; Is 45.9; Rom 9.20.
  - A Search for a Solution (7)
    - A question regarding the purposes of God.
      - Is it wrong to raise this kind of question?
      - Joshua had already acknowledged God’s sovereignty.
      - Compare Hab 1.2-3; Jer 12.1; Job 21.7, 13; Rev 6.10.
      - He is not questioning God’s purposes or plans but rather looking for an explanation. A desire and an attempt to understand what God was doing.
    - What was the specific question that Joshua wanted answered?
      - Why did you bring us across to destroy us? Why, if you want to give this land into the hands of the Israelites are you allowing this to happen. Why are you working things out this way?
    - Isn’t it often the case that we think that we know better how God should work out things in history.
      - “If I were God ...” Song in Tom Sawyer movie he sings as he is running away from another scolding from his aunt when they think he is dead.
      - Men think that they know how to run things better than God. But they don’t know all the facts.
    - Joshua is not questioning God’s ways and knowledge or claiming that he knows better than God, but he is looking for an explanation.
    - What is the implication of this question?
      - If God is not for us who will be? If God is not working for Israel, there is no hope. The venture should be called off. “Lord are you there?”

- Joshua realized that the victory was dependent on the presence of the commander of the LORD's army (Joshua 5.13-15), and if he was not present then there was no hope.
- He knew where his hope and strength were. Rom 8.31; Ps 121.2.
- A Suggested Strategy (7)
  - Suggestion that an alternate course of action might have been better. (v. 7)
  - What did Joshua suggest as an alternative strategy for the course of action they had taken.
    - That it would have been better to stay on the other side of the Jordan.
    - This is not to be taken as a challenge of God's wisdom, rather it is to be taken in the context of the previous statement.
    - If God is not working with us and, if we are not working with God, then it is far, far better to stay put and to not take action.
    - BUT ... we are not to stay put, we are to take action ...
    - Therefore we must be in the will of God and we must know his presence.
- A Statement of Silence (8)
  - What is Joshua doing here?
    - He is acknowledging that the we are to remain in silence before God's course of action and his wisdom.
    - Wicked and Christians in silence before God. (Lev 10.3b; Job 2.13; Ps 107.42; Rom 3.19; Rev 8.1) [recall potter and clay]
- A Summation of Suspense (9)
  - How does Joshua challenge God.
  - He presents a challenge to God's glory. cf Ex 32.11, 12 (esp 12) Luke 11.2 "your kingdom come"

#### Lessons:

- A. We should pray often for our nation, as did Joshua's.
  - But more particularly they should be for the leaders in the Church and State.
  - Our prayers should be filled with requests that our leaders would take the lead and lead us humbly before God and in God's ways — that our leaders would be like Joshua.
- B. We can ask God for explanations and clarification and we can challenge him to show his glory.
- C. We should be silent before God; wait and see.
  - Hab 2.1; Ecc 5.2

#### God's Dealings (Joshua 7.10-13)

1. Why do you think that God challenged Joshua in this way? Was it wrong for Joshua to be in a position of confession and penitence? Why then did God tell him to stand up? (Compare vv. 10 and 6.)
  - Because as the civil/religious leader he was called upon to exercise discipline on those who had sinned. Dt 17.2-6; Rom 13.3, 4; Gal 5.10
  - A church or civil ruler/leader is not to sit around decrying the evil that has occurred. Rather he is to take action against those who have done wrong.
  - Can you think of examples today where God is saying to the leaders of the Church or our nation: "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?"
    - Leaders often ignore wickedness, except when they are in some way personally affected. They are afraid to point out sin, or can't be bothered. Not PC, won't be re-elected.
    - Courts are slow to exercise justice.
  - When the leaders are on their faces, they can't be watching what is going on around them! There is a proper time for them to be on their faces before God. But then to rise from confession and deal with the sin.

2. Who sinned in this account? Why then does the writer say in Joshua 7.11 "Israel has sinned?"
  - Achan.
  - Notice to this point Achan has not been discovered. He is mentioned in v. 1 (recounting the story after it has happened), and later (v. 18) he is discovered. But at this point Joshua does not know who has sinned or how many have sinned. So God is telling Joshua that there is a problem in Israel.
  - God deals with man in general in the corporate capacity covenant capacity. Nations are judged for the sin of individuals. Continuing today God deals with an entire nation when the leaders or individuals in the nation are sinners (Adam, David). Counter example: Christ.
  - Achan was the one who acted out what was in the hearts of the people. All (many, most) Israel coveted the plunder of Jericho.
  - What is a balancing aspect in Scripture to this?
    - The "soul who sins will die" for his own sins. Ezk 18.4, 20.
    - The Bible is clear that as individuals we will not be punished (eternally) for the sins of other individuals.
3. What is the sin that Israel is charged with?
  - Violating the covenant of God. What was the covenant which they broke? The covenant treaty of Deuteronomy (Dt 4.1ff note Dt 5.6; Dt 7.1ff [esp/ Dt 7.25, 26]) into which they were circumcised at Gilgal (Joshua 5.2-9).
  - Stealing How did they steal? They (he) took what rightfully belonged to the Lord (e.g., Adam and Eve; Mal 3.9, 10).
  - Lying. How? Pretending to be upright before God, like Ananias and Saphira. But lying to/before the HS
  - Coveted (21) Lusting after the things of the world. Not content to wait to receive them.
  - How do people in the Church commit these same sins today?
    - Holding back the tithes, spending time which is to be devoted to the Lord, on their own pleasures, parading their false righteousness before men.
    - The accumulation of things and money is still a problem among those in the Church.
4. In v. 12 God says in effect, "so now you know the reason for the defeat at Ai". What does he say that presents an irony in respect to the devoted things that were taken?
  - Notice the use of the word "destruction" (NIV) "accursed" (second instance in NKJV). (Joshua 6.18)
  - In the Hebrew the word "destruction" (*kharem*) is used twice.
  - The nation of Israel runs because they are primed for *destruction* because they have not destroyed the things devoted to *destruction*. God uses a play on words.
  - The people will suffer the very destruction (holiness giving over, total consumption, irrevocable giving over) which God has told them to exercise on his enemies if they do not destroy the things devoted to destruction.
  - So Joshua is going to have to find out what the thing is that is to be destroyed.
5. Did the Israelites know what they were supposed to do?
  - They knew what was right, but they chose to act in a manner contrary to what they knew (Rom 7.7-24).
  - What is the answer to the problem of the sin? (v. 12b) Stop doing what is wrong, and do what is right. Gen 4.5-7 (esp. 7); Eph 4.25-29.
  - It is easy to say, but hard to do.
  - In over 95% of the cases where we fail it is not that we don't know what is the right course of action, it is that we don't choose to follow what we know is the right action.



6. What did God tell the people to do? (13)
  - To consecrate themselves. (cf 3.5) Ex 19.10, 14-15 washing and abstinence. Why?
    - To meet with God. Only that which is holy can come into his presence.
    - To get ready for judgement. You'd better be holy if you are going to meet the judge of all the earth.
    - Get ready for "surgery" (the cutting off of that which is offending). The need for cleansing and purification (as per circumcision at Gilgal).
  - Why did God not deal with the sin immediately that night?
    - It is possible that God was giving Achan time to think about his sin, and either to come forward in repentance or to increase his guilt by hardening his heart.
  - It is interesting how we all seem to think that God does not see our sins and when he doesn't deal with them immediately, we assume that he must have overlooked them.

### Achan's Discovery (Joshua 7.14-19)

1. How do you think that God "took the tribe, clan, family?" (14, 16-18)
  - A form of casting lots. But how specifically?
  - Urim and Thummim "curses" or some "lights" and "perfections" from the ephod. (Ex 28.30) Like alpha and omega, in Hebrew the Urim begins with the Aleph and Thummim begins with the last letter Tau. Introduced here with no explanation of how they worked, or in what circumstances they were to be used.
  - Note Joshua was to use the U&T for decision making (Num 27.18-21). Joshua was familiar with their use and had authority to ask the priests to use them for guidance.
  - Other examples of use: 1 Sam 23.6, 9; Ezra 2.62, 63
  - We are not told how they read the U&T, but it may have been:
    - Some have suggested it was two flat stones with different engravings or colours on each side that were dumped out of a pouch on the ephod/breast-piece. Both 'yes' or both 'no' or one of each meaning 'no answer.' (See Rev 2.17)
    - Or possibly nothing more than the word of the priest who spoke under the direct guidance of the HS when acting in the capacity of priest (cf Zachariah Lk 1.22).
  - Can you think of other examples where the lots or similar means of 'chance' were used for the determination of God's will, and sanctioned, by God. 1 Sam 14.41; Acts 1.24-26; Jonah.
2. Why did God go through this elaborate ritual to have Achan exposed?
  - Is it possible that he was still giving Achan a chance to repent. At each step, Achan would see the hand of God in the selection and see the hand of judgement approaching closer. What was he thinking? "Next one will be a mistake, will miss me ..." or thinking "oh no I'm doomed."
  - To show his control over all events of history.
    - There are no chance events, God controls all events.
    - Among the nations that they were to conquer there was a belief that events of future and hidden circumstances could be found by divination.
    - It is no different today: use of the "psychic" who was supposed to have helped the police find the grave of the girl who had been murdered in Vancouver.
    - Men may have superstitious beliefs in the mystical ways of getting advice and direction (ouija board, tea leaves ...). But God shows who is really in control of the events of the universe. Prov 16.33.
    - Jesus did the same with his miracles over nature. A sign that he was God, and the Messiah.
  - God is, in effect, throwing out a challenge the pagan Gods.

- Just as he threw out a challenge to Baal, the god of the waters, by holding back the waters at flood stage so that the Israelites could cross the Jordan.
  - So he was going to show the Israelites and the nations of Canaan that he was also a God of the plains and trees (and not Asherah) in the destruction of Ai.
  - At this point he was going to show that the robe and idolatrous materials hidden in Achan's tent were no match for his all-knowing eye.
  - Jesus did the same with his showing that he knew all things — John 1.47-51.
3. Are we to use this kind of instrument to discern God's will?
- During the Middle Ages these means were used sometimes to determine guilt.
    - Are we to use instruments of "chance" to determine God's will today?
    - Why? Why not?
  - Is God still in charge of all events?
    - Is there such a thing as chance?
    - Does he still control the toss of the die?
  - Of what relevance is it that the Scriptures are complete and we have a full account of what God requires of us?
    - Would a complete canon of Scripture have made any difference in the determination of action in the case of Achan? In the other passages we noted?
    - Does God continue to communicate through direct revelation today?
    - Are the U&T and similar devices a form of direct revelation?
    - Are the U&T and similar devices an example of what the writer refers to in Heb 1.1, 2 as "various ways?"
    - Has God discontinued the use of these various ways since these are the last days and his revelation has come through his Son?
  - Is the casting of a die, tossing of a coin, etc. (e.g., to choose a starting kicker in football) a wrong way to make decisions?
    - What about choosing between two candidates for the office of elder?
    - Is there a difference? Why?
4. What was the reason Achan was to be punished?
- Violated the covenant.
    - What covenant? Covenant made with Moses specifically (Deuteronomy is the treaty document).
    - Notice chapter Dt 4.1ff (note also Dt 5.6; Dt 7.1ff) into which they were circumcised at Gilgal (Joshua 5.2-9).
  - Did a disgraceful thing — very bad (Dt 22.21; Judges 19.23-24; Judges 20.6, 10; 2 Sam 13.12).
5. What was to be the action that Joshua was to take when the guilty party was found? (15)
- To punish the guilty party with capital punishment.
    - Notice that capital punishment was the requirement of God.
    - Was this cruel and inhumane?
    - 'Theocide' vs homicide. Idolatry is a form of 'theocide.'
  - Does the state today have the right or responsibility to carry out civil punishments for idolatry?
    - Many in the Church today would argue that the state doesn't even have the right to carry out capital punishment for homicide, so certainly they wouldn't agree with capital punishment for idolatry.
  - What are capital crimes?
  - Other than murder what are the capital crimes in the Old Testament economy?
    - Adultery (Lev 20.10; Dt 22.21-24)
    - Sodomy and bestiality (Lev 18.23; Lev 20.15, 16; Ex 22.19)

- Homosexuality (Lev 18.22; Lev 20.13)
  - Rape (Dt 22.25)
  - Incest (Lev 20.11, 12, 14)
  - Incorrigibility in children (Ex 21.15, 17; Dt 21.20ff)
  - Sabbath breaking (Ex 31.14; Ex 35.2; Num 15.32ff)
  - Kidnapping (Ex 21.16; Dt 24.7)
  - Apostasy, idolatry (Lev 20.2; Dt 13.6-17)
  - Witchcraft, sorcery, and false prophecy (Ex 22.18; Lev 20.27; Dt 13.5; Dt 18.20)
  - Blasphemy (Lev 24.10-16).
  - Which ones continue to be punishable by death today?
    - Or for which ones has the death penalty been abrogated? Why?
    - Not because God views the sin any less severely.
    - We need to watch out for ethical arbitrariness.
    - We also must be careful not to be inconsistent with a ‘two-sided’ argument—e.g., we say baptism of infants continues as a sign of the covenant unless the provision for children is *revoked* ... but then we can’t say that capital punishment no longer applies unless it is specifically *re-stated* as a requirement ... there are a number of sins listed in the OT that are NOT specifically re-stated in the NT, because they are not restated does that mean that they are no longer sins?
    - Does Hebrews 2.2 have any bearing? Why were the punishments just then, but not today?
    - Why is murder in a unique category?
    - What principles can we apply to determine which sins are to be punished as capital crimes?
    - The entire debate is somewhat academic today because the State, in many places, does not apply capital punishment for any crime, and we currently have little power to change this.
  - These are not easy questions to answer, and we don’t claim to have the final answer to them. But to dismiss the whole topic of capital punishment for crimes other than murder as raving lunacy or inappropriate for our day, is to condemn the very God who commanded Joshua to put to death a fellow human being for stealing a piece of cloth and a few pieces of metal!
6. In what way was he to be punished? How was the capital punishment to be executed? Why?
- Destroyed by fire, cleansing.
    - Note the use of this: Lev 2.16; Lev 3.5 (offering); Lev 13.55-57; Lev 21.9; Num 31.23 (purging of evil).
  - Two means of cleansing: water and fire
    - Note the destruction/cleansing of the old world was accomplished with water (flood), the final cleansing will be with fire: 2 Peter 3.7, 10.
  - All that he owned; total giving over. Like the offering for sin which was to be consumed in its entirety.

## Lessons:

- A. The seriousness of sin.
- We so often lose sight of this, because:
    - Culture makes light of sin. Not a real word in its vocabulary. Or sin is viewed as something akin to indulging in a luxury.
    - Laws and punishment make light of sin (US 1M prisoners because not carrying out God’s punishment against crime). Claim: environment the cause, and rehabilitation the solution, rather than sinful nature the cause and retribution/restitution the solution.
    - Church makes light of sin, excusing and condoning (e.g., among leaders).
    - Satan is rejoicing at the evacuation of sin consciousness from world. The less men know

about and believe in the reality of sin, the less likely they are to repent and come to salvation. Declare sin!

- B. We need seriously to consider how visible sin is to be punished by the state.
- Rom 13.4.
  - The irony is that sins of heart are the ones the state tries to control and punish (selfishness, hatred, bigotry), and they seem to let the visible ones go. There is a big to-do about 'hate crimes.'
  - The very nature of 10 commandments is that all but (one or two) can be visibly demonstrated.
  - Note also that almost all are in negative form: 'not'.
  - Compare also nature of first sin, a 'not', and an outward action. Of course sin of heart here, but God punishes the outward sin.
- C. God knows our actions and we are 'found out.'
- Nothing can be kept secret from God: Ps 69.5; Dan 2.22; Luke 8.17
7. How does Joshua direct his words to Achan? (19)
- "My son" Why? A fatherly attitude/approach — a combination of firmness mixed with love; discipline with gentleness. The leader of a nation viewed as a father: "father of his country" "fathers of a city" "city fathers"
  - Where are the leaders called fathers in Bible? Indirectly in Dt 5.16.
    - SC Q64 "What does the fifth commandment require? The fifth commandment requires us to respect and treat others, whether above, below, or equal to us, as their position or our relationship to them demands." Notice the words "above, below". We are to respect those in authority over us as fathers, and those 'beneath' us as sons.
    - LC Q124 "Who are meant by *father* and *mother* in the fifth commandment? By *father* and *mother*, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age, and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth."
  - Lesson for parents, elders, bosses, and civil leaders? See Gal 5.23; 1 Tim 3.3, 4; Titus 1.7 for attributes of godliness.
  - Verses 19 and 20 present a courtroom scene with Achan as the guilty party, Joshua as the Lawyer, God as the Judge.
8. What does Joshua mean by "give glory to the LORD"?
- Compare John 9.24; Rev 11.13 NIV footnote: "a solemn charge to tell the truth."
  - Like putting hand on Bible: "I swear to tell the truth, whole truth, nothing but truth ... so help me God."
  - What is the significance of this statement?
    - God is the witness to all actions and statements.
    - God is the judge of all actions and statements.
    - Even if you hide it God still knows.
  - Joshua as the minister of God is to be told what Achan has done.

### Achan's Disclosure (Joshua 7.20)

1. How is the sin exposed? (20)
- By direct confession from the mouth of the guilty party. "I have sinned."
  - Is confession of sin a sufficient remedy to atone for sin? Did the fact that he confessed at this point mean that he was absolved or that he shouldn't be punished?
    - Compare with Judas: Mt 27.4.
    - What is the missing ingredient in Achan's and Judas' confession of sin? True repentance.
    - He (Achan) confessed that he had committed the action but there is no indication that he

- really repented. Nevertheless, his sin had to be punished.
- This points out clearly to us that sin must be punished. Compare with necessity of Christ's death. It was not sufficient that men would admit that they had sinned or even that they would be truly repentant and ask for forgiveness. The debt for sin had to be paid.
- This fact is often/usually missed by our modern legislators and the proponents of our current justice system. They hold that 'punishment' is intended to reform or to change behaviour. They miss the fact that punishment is an objective judicial requirement, not a subjective reformatory action.

### Achan's Destruction (Joshua 7.22-26)

1. Why did Joshua send messengers to get the material from Achan's tent? (22)
  - Compare Dt 17.6.
  - No one saw Achan take the material, but at least two found the material in Achan's possession.
  - Circumstantial evidence is valid in trial, but even so, it must be from multiple witnesses.
  - There was, in addition, his own confession. This appears to be sufficient (2 Sam 1.10-16), but possibly David should have sought other witnesses since there was only one witness.
2. What was done with the evidence after Achan's confession? (22-23) Why?
  - It was taken from Achan's tent and spread out before the LORD.
  - The LORD was the judge.
  - Evidence is usually brought forward and presented to the Judge.
3. What was the punishment?
  - Compare v. 15 with v. 25.
  - It was a combination of stoning first and then of burning. Why both?
    - Stoning: The hands of witnesses were to carry out the punishment (Dt 17.7) and the whole community could carry out the punishment. Achan's sin brought death to 36. Achan's punishment was corporately administered. Active participation in the punishment makes less likely for false accusations and also makes the punishment real and makes less likely that others will sin in the same overt way.
    - God cleansed the sin from Israel with fire. All the things were destroyed, as they should have been.
4. Why did God punish Achan in this way?
  - Why did he pick out this particular sin and punish it so severely?
  - Why does he not punish all the other people who steal from him and ignore his covenantal requirements?
  - It was the start of a new era; compare with Ananias and Sapphira and Nadab and Abihu. God establishes his sovereignty and position at each significant juncture in redemptive history.
  - To provide an example, only one is needed. This is a sufficient warning and example for us. 1 Cor 10.1-7 (esp. 6-7). This example is sufficient for God will hold us accountable in the Judgement.
  - To preserve purity in Israel.
5. What was the significance of the pile of stones?
  - A tomb.
  - A memorial (see Joshua 4.9, 21-24) to remind the people of the importance of total obedience to

- God.
- The valley was called Achor (trouble) after Achan. His name apparently means trouble. How appropriate God's providence is. If the child was named this at birth, he lived up to his name. If he gained this name along the way, then he was true to his character. The Only other references to him in the rest of the Bible are in Joshua 22.20; 1 Chron 2.7. All that we know about him is told us in this account.

#### Lessons:

Can we learn anything from this person's ignominy arising out of his obscurity?

- A. God is patient, but we must realize that he demands total obedience from us.
- B. God is not ignoring sins. He is giving men time to repent.
  - Those who don't repent are heaping coals of the fire of judgement on their own heads. He will punish in his time.
- C. Anyone of us can be of great harm to others in a corporate body.
  - Importance of the individual in the context of the corporate.
  - Too many today act as individuals and think little of the corporate (e.g., family, church, nation context).
- D. We need to work hard to be of use. But it takes little effort to be a destructive force.
  - We don't have to be a 'somebody' to be destructive.
- E. God sees all, there will be no escaping the final judgement of the fire of cleansing, if there is no true repentance.

## 9 The Destruction of Ai

### Objective

- To remind us that God will gain the victory in spite of man's sin.

### Assurance at Ai (Joshua 8.1, 2)

1. How does God start the conversation with Joshua?
2. Where else do we see similar words in Scripture?
3. Why does God start the conversation with Joshua in this manner? Why now, at this time?

Lessons:

- A. We all need encouragement for every task that we undertake.
- B. Leaders are to encourage (as did Moses) those starting out.
- C. We are to encourage one another in the Church (1 Thess 4.18; 1 Thess 5.11; Heb 3.13; Heb 10.25)

4. What is the means that God uses to provide the encouragement for Joshua?

Lessons:

- A. Shows that God is faithful to his promises.
- B. We see examples of how we are to encourage one another, from the examples of God's encouraging Joshua.

### Ambush at Ai (Joshua 8.3-13)

1. What contrasts do you see between verses Joshua 8.1; Joshua 8.3; with Joshua 7.3.
2. Why does God send Joshua with the "whole army?"

3. What strategy of war does God give to Joshua.
4. What are the particulars of the ambush?

**Lessons:**

- A. Success (usefulness) will come only if we are obedient.
- B. Success does not come from the arm of flesh, but in accordance with God's direction.

**Assault of Ai** (Joshua 8.14-23)

1. What are the mistakes which the King of Ai made?
2. Was what Israel did, by letting themselves be driven back (15) and by luring them from the city (16) right or wrong (not militarily, but morally)?
3. What was the purpose of God's instructing Joshua to hold out his javelin?
4. Why did they spare the king of Ai? (23) Was this right?

**Lessons:**

- A. Shows how God can take man's defeat and turn it into a victory for his glory.
- B. Shows how the sinful self confidence of men in rebellion against God will come down on their own heads.
- C. God may give men temporary victories in their sinful ways. But ultimately the war belongs to him.

**Anathema at Ai** (Joshua 8.24-29)

1. What is the end of Ai?
2. What did they do with the plunder?
3. What do you notice when you compare 7.25 with 8.28 and 7.26 with 8.28, 29c?



4. What is the meaning of the death of the king of Ai?

### **Summary Lessons for this Module**

- A. God will not forsake his people, even if they fall into sin. He is faithful (Dt 31.6, 8; Heb 13.5; Mt 18.20; Rom 8.31, 35-37).
- B. Provides an example of the great problem of: in Achan's fall, as in Adam's, is man's defeat and curse. But God turns this into a victory, through Joshua (Jesus) for his glory (Rom 8.28).
- C. Warning of what is to come in the final judgment.

## Leader's Notes

### Assurance at Ai (Joshua 8.1, 2)

1. How does God start the conversation with Joshua?
  - With words of encouragement. "Don't be afraid," "fear not."
2. Where else do we see similar words in Scripture?
  - Gen 15.1; to Abram. Shield and great reward
  - Gen 21.17; to Hagar. God has heard the boy crying
  - Gen 50.19, 21; to brothers. Joseph standing in place of Christ, reassures his brothers
  - Ex 20.20; to Israel. Moses receiving the 10 Commandments
  - Dt 1.21; to spies. Moses commissioning
  - Dt 31.8; to Joshua. Moses commissioning
  - Judges, Samuel, Kings, Elijah, David, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekial, Dan, Joel, Zechariah, Jairus, to John (Rev 1.7; Rev 2.10)
  - John 6.20; John 14.27; Jesus to his disciples
3. Why does God start the conversation with Joshua in this manner? Why now, at this time?
  - Not that he was a weak leader or weak individual.
  - We all need encouragement.
  - He needed it especially at this point because of the recent defeat.
  - Note a few [not only] of the other places that God encouraged Joshua.
    - Dt 1.38; Dt 3.21; Dt 31.7, 23 Encouragement for a New Leader.
      - How do God and Moses encourage Joshua?
      - Bringing to his remembrance (Dt 3.21) all that God had done over the years from Egypt until the side of the river. In this case Og and Sihon. [Ex 17.8-16 written account of the battle with Amalak, and see Dt 31.19 "write down", replayed the song of the history (Dt 32.44).]
      - Reminding him that God can and will go ahead (Dt 3.21). He has done it, he will do it.
      - Reminding him that God will be faithful to his promises. (Dt 31.23)
    - He encouraged him to be strong and courageous. Joshua's fears understandable. Appointed to follow in footsteps of the greatest human leader of all time. (Dt 34.10) Overwhelming:
      - Feeling that he will never be able to measure up.
      - What he had seen (miracles by Moses and rejection of Moses by the people) caused him to be frightened.
      - Prospect of moving without Moses' guidance was also frightening.
      - This is why God said these things to him. But they are both an encouragement and a challenge. After all these promises, he is basically saying "go forward without any doubts".
    - Joshua 10.8 at the conquest of Gilgal, Joshua 11.6 Northern Kings.

### Lessons:

- A. We all need encouragement for every task that we undertake.
  - God knows that he is dealing with sin stained human nature.
  - We need to be encouraged and to see that we are not alone in our endeavour.

- It is not sin to need or give encouragement.
- B. Leaders are to encourage (as did Moses) those starting out.
  - 1 Thess 5.14; 2 Tim 4.2; Titus 2.15
  - To be encouraged by Scripture and by what we have seen God doing in history. His acts of providence are to encourage us.
- C. We are to encourage one another in the Church (1 Thess 4.18; 1 Thess 5.11; Heb 3.13; Heb 10.25)
- 4. What is the means that God uses to provide the encouragement for Joshua?
  - Take whole army (before a few on advice of men 7.3)
  - Prophecy of assurance:
    - I have delivered ...
    - You shall do ...
  - A promise of success: “You may carry off the plunder”
    - Irony, for Achan, he could have had it all! Sell soul for world ... vs ... sell world for soul Mt 16.26.
  - A strategy for success: the ambush  
We are not told how much information God gave Joshua about how to execute the ambush, but it is likely that he gave more information than is recorded here. Joshua would have needed the reassurance of a precise plan. At Jericho there was a lot of detail about how to carry out the plan, so there probably was in this instance as well.

## Lessons:

- A. Shows that God is faithful to his promises.
  - Specifically to the promise he had made with Joshua that he would care for him and guide him (Dt 31.23).
- B. We see examples of how we are to encourage one another, from the examples of God’s encouraging Joshua.
  - Recalling the works of God in history.
  - God is faithful, his word secure.
  - God will gain the ultimate victory.
  - Direct challenge to move forward in the confidence of God.

**Ambush at Ai (Joshua 8.3-13)**

1. What contrasts do you see between verses 8.1/8.3 and 7.3.
  - A few thousand vs the whole army.
  - Man’s opinion and self-confidence vs God’s strategy.
2. Why does God send Joshua with the “whole army?”
  - To make it clear that God directs the affairs of history. He will work events in his way: sometimes with a large army, sometimes with a small one. We are not to assume that there is only one way for God to work. Not to put God in a box.
  - To show that all Israel (even the 2.5 tribes from other side of the Jordan Num 32.20-22; Joshua 4.12) has a place in the conquest of Canaan, the work of the entire body. So that a few can’t go in and take the city and then claim that they did all the work and take the plunder for themselves. cf 1 Sam 30.21-25.
  - To give Joshua and Israel a clear message. The conquest is possible, and not that difficult if they follow the way that God has established.
  - Does this mean that God wants us only to go on the offensive when we have vast armies of Christians who can attack the forces of evil (e.g., abortion, false government, false psychology (e.g., self-actualization), or false science (e.g., evolution).

- Obviously not compare Gideon's case Judges 7.7; Zech 4.6-10.
  - Do you think that, even in human terms, so many soldiers were needed? No. Compare vv. 1, 3 with v. 25.
3. What strategy of war does God give to Joshua.
- The setting of an ambush.
4. What are the particulars of the ambush?
- At night 30,000 are sent out (between Ai and Bethel) behind the city. (Joshua 8.9) Compare with Joshua 7.3 (2-3,000); this is more than in the whole city.
  - 30,000 to fight this battle. Only a portion of the total army, available. Men served for a time (e.g., month or two and went home). How many in the whole army? 120,000-600,000? Some contend that there are copying and interpretation errors in the numbers here and in the book of Numbers and the counts are high by an order of magnitude. So they contend that the army was only about 60,000 max, and the number in ambush, 3,000.
  - Thus, how are we to interpret 8.12? 5,000 in Ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city.
    - It is possible that he had two forces of ambush. One near and one a rear guard.
    - Another suggestion is that the entire army (e.g., a force of 30,000) is to be understood metaphorically as being involved in the ambush with 5,000 in one place and 25,000 in another.
    - Some have suggested that there is a manuscript difficulty here (i.e., in verse 12). Possible (but must be very careful!). The LXX does not mention the 5,000 ("And the ambush was on the west side of the city.") and does not have v. 13 at all.
    - It is possible that of the 30,000, 5,000 in particular were the ones he actually left in ambush. The rest returned to Joshua once the ambush was set (see Joshua 8.4).
  - The rest marched up early the next morning, in day light. Set up camp to north, manoeuvring his troops, pitching their tents, making a major show. And waited for the king of Ai to send out his troops to attack (which appears to be on the following day (v. 14).

#### Lessons:

- A. Success (usefulness) will come only if we are obedient.
- B. Success does not come from the arm of flesh, but in accordance with God's direction.

#### Assault of Ai (Joshua 8.14-23)

1. What are the mistakes which the King of Ai made?
- Over confidence of the troops of Ai. Assumed that they will go out and defeat Israel as they had previously. A key word: "hurried." (14)
  - Not doing his homework, in terms of determining the situation of the war. (14)
  - Leaving the city unprotected. (16, 17) Notice that the city of Bethel joins the attack.
2. Was what Israel did, by letting themselves be driven back (15) and by luring them from the city (16) right or wrong (not militarily, but morally)?
- God told them to do it, but God is truth and the author of truth. God cannot lie or tell a person to lie, or do wrong or tell a person to do wrong.
  - 1 Sam 16.2, 3. Proper under certain circumstances to conceal the truth. Evasion, not a lie or even deception.
  - Luke 24.28. Was Jesus deceiving? Lying? Pretending action is obviously not wrong.
  - Joshua's troops feigned an action which was not their intent; it was not their problem that they were

- misunderstood.
  - “The biblical ethic is built upon fine distinctions. At the point of divergence the difference between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, is not a chasm but a razor’s edge.” (Murray)
- 3. What was the purpose of God’s instructing Joshua to hold out his javelin?
  - Compare Ex 17.9-13. Notice that it is the staff of God (9).
  - A signal (Ps 35.3) But could have used a trumpet.
  - A sign of God’s control of the battle (compare v. 26).
  - A reminder that God would give the victory and not man’s arm.
- 4. Why did they spare the king of Ai? (23) Was this right?
  - Not in God’s plan. (Joshua 8.2)
  - Not in Joshua’s plan. (Joshua 8.29)
  - Compare 1 Sam 15.9, 18, 20, 22-23, 32-33. Shows the same kind of behaviour.
  - What is the problem? Disobedience, and a false sense of humanitarianism. Much like the idea today that you can’t execute a murderer or rapist because somehow this is ‘inhuman’.

## Lessons:

- A. Shows how God can take man’s defeat and turn it into a victory for his glory.
- B. Shows how the sinful self confidence of men in rebellion against God will come down on their own heads.
  - Homosexual ‘victories’ in the schools, or pro-abortionists winning a court decision.
- C. God may give men temporary victories in their sinful ways. But ultimately the war belongs to him.

**Anathema at Ai (Joshua 8.24-29)**

- 1. What is the end of Ai?
  - Burned, given over to the LORD. The banned city is made a sacrifice of cursing; anathema.
- 2. What did they do with the plunder?
  - They carried it off. There is reward in obedience.
- 3. What do you notice when you compare 7.25 with 8.28 and 7.26 with 8.28, 29c?
  - Burned the city and it a pile of stones. What is the meaning?
  - Total cleansing.
  - A memorial (to this day)
  - Achan got what the city was to get because he did not carry out what he was supposed to.
- 4. What is the meaning of the death of the king of Ai?
  - Israelites did not carry out executions with hangings, but with stonings (Dt 21.21-23).
  - Yet was probably stoned and then impaled (or possibly hung) and put on display.
  - It indicates that he was cursed.
  - The body was not to be left impaled on the tree past evening: respect for the body and so the land was not cursed.
  - Should remind us of the humiliation that came upon Jesus when he bore the guilt of our sin. Jesus was taken down before sunset, God saw to it.

## Lessons:

- A. God will not forsake his people, even if they fall into sin. He is faithful (Dt 31.6, 8; Heb 13.5; Mt 18.20; Rom 8.31, 35-37).
- B. Provides an example of the great problem of: in Achan’s fall, as in Adam’s, is man’s defeat and curse. But God turns this into a victory, through Joshua (Jesus) for his glory (Rom 8.28).

- C. Warning of what is to come in the final judgment.

## 10 The Covenant Renewal at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim

### Objective

- To remind us that God's law applies to all men, and that we must take time to read it regularly.

### The Altar and a Time of Thanksgiving (Joshua 8.30-31)

1. What did Joshua do at this point?
2. Why did he build an altar at this time? What is its significance?
3. Why on Mount Ebal?
4. How did he make the altar?
5. What other monuments have been built to this time associated with the conquest?

#### Lessons:

- A. Whether in defeat or victory, we need to turn to God.
- B. Shows the importance of pure worship, exactly as God has said, not adding or subtracting.

### Copying and Reading the Law (Joshua 8.32-35)

1. After the sacrifices of praise, what did the people do
2. Who attended the copying and reading of the Law?
3. What followed the copying of the law? Why? Compare Deuteronomy 11.29-32.

5. Why are both the content of the message and its format important?

Lessons:

- A. We see the importance of making the Law of God visible in the public arena through the regular reading of it.
- C. Back to the Bible! If this was true for Joshua with only 5 books, how much more important is it for us with 66!

### Summary Lessons for this Module

- A. It is important that we take a time-out to nurture a relationship with God.
- B. The structure of this worship is important: To God, from God.
- C. We should never be so busy doing God's work that we don't take time to hear God speak.



## Leader's Notes

### The Altar and a Time of Thanksgiving (Joshua 8.30-31)

1. What did Joshua do at this point?
  - Although were not told this, he moved the people a fair distance (about 30km) into the centre of Canaanite territory to Mt. Ebal near Shechem.
  - Some 'scholars' argue that this account cannot be in the correct historical position in the book — too many enemies around them, and a city (Shechem) in the vicinity of these events. But ...
    - Timing is relevant in the context of these events. (See below)
    - They were being obedient to the commands of Moses and the LORD.
    - Straight march (almost directly north) from Ai/Bethel to Shechem (only Shiloh, to east, on way. No cities blocking progression.
    - Just as they crossed the river and camped outside Jericho and marched around it for 7 days, there is no reason to assume that they could not have camped near another Canaanite city. The people in Shechem would have closed their gates and would have been sitting in fear of Israel.
  - Second, he built an altar to the LORD.
2. Why did he build an altar at this time? What is its significance?
  - Then ... Sets up a spiritual contrast. A heap of stones (Joshua 8.29) for the burial of King of Ai and a memorial, contrasted with the heap/pile of stones for the altar.
  - The events (of the journey) that transpired between the erection of the two piles of stones is not important for the account and the lesson that the Holy Spirit and Joshua want communicated. The contrast is important:
    - A pagan religion defeated, the true religion being practiced.
    - A pagan king lying under the rocks, the true King being worshiped.
  - To remind the people of the importance of serving God. The defeat at Ai (Achan) was the direct result of not keeping the Covenant. Will follow the sacrifice of thanks with the reading of the Law to reinforce the importance of serving God continually.
  - They had to battle to this point, a key point in their conquest (see below). Now a moment of reflection. Probably a Sabbath.
  - They offered sacrifices of thanksgiving. Notice not sin offerings.
    - Offered to the LORD burnt offerings. (Lev 1.1-17).
    - Sacrificed fellowship offerings. (Lev 3.1-17; Lev 7.11-18).
  - In obedience to the commands of Moses and God. (See Dt 11.26-32 [Then 12-26 are chapters giving law, return to Ebal and Gerizim in 27.] Dt 27.4, 5; Joshua 1.7-8). They were returning to first principles. This conquest was not of man's making. It was specifically God's doing.
  - Notice, not for, but *to*. Not make a big deal out of this, but there is a subtlety in the wording. Worship isn't **for** God, it is for man, but it is to God.
3. Why on Mount Ebal?
  - Abraham had built here after God had promised him the land in a covenantal arrangement. (Gen 12.6-7) It is interesting that here also is where Jacob buried the strange gods (Gen 35.1-4) and raised an altar to God, the God of Israel (Gen 33.20). Later Joshua would call the elders back to give them their final charge (Joshua 24.1), and here they would bury the bones of Joseph (Joshua 24.32).
  - Very heart of Canaanite territory, the land of inheritance.
    - Militarily important point for branching out to continue conquest. Rehoboam made this the

- first capital after the N kingdom separated. (1 Ki 12.25).
    - Religious importance. Place of worship among the Canaanites. Baal Berith (Lord of the Covenant), may have been a perversion of the covenant with Abraham.
    - Visible reminder in the heart of the land the memorial to the conquest accomplished through God, and the reminder of his law (the plaster coated stones (more below)).
  - To the north of Shechem. It may be that the altar was related to the fact that the curses would be recited from this point. It may be that the altar of peace and thanksgiving was a reminder to them that they could have either curses, or blessings through appealing to God.
  - Side notes re Gerizim: John 4.5-6 (plot of land where Joseph was buried), 4.19, 20 “this mountain” Gerizim. The Samaritans had a temple on this mountain which was destroyed by the Jews between the time of Ezra and the time of Christ. Cause of great animosity. Samaritan pentetuch switches Ebal and Gerizim. See also Dt 12.5.
4. How did he make the altar?
- Following the command of Moses. (Dt 27.5-7)
  - According to the instructions written in the Book of the Law. (Ex 20.24-25)
  - Made of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. (Ex 20.24-25) Compare with temple (1 Kings 6.7) A pile of stones, not cut with tools. To emphasize God’s creative work and not man’s. Religion/worship is to come from God’s hand, not to be invented by man.
  - Application, church living stones, all different.
5. What other monuments have been built to this time associated with the conquest?
- Joshua 4.20 The pile of rocks at Gilgal as sign (Joshua 4.6), legal statement. And a memorial (Joshua 4.7) to the people of Israel forever. Memorial of what? To his victory. Kings in Middle east would raise stella or columns commemorating their victories. God is displaying the same thing, his victory of Baal the false God of the Canaanites.
  - Joshua 7.26 The pile of rocks over Achan to remind people of the consequences of sin (judgement) and the necessity of obedience, (memorial).
  - Joshua 8.29 The pile of rocks over body of king of Ai at the city gates. To remind people that the nation was holy to the LORD.
  - People still have monuments today: Washington, Vietnam, Cenotaph.
  - We will look at another monument — the stones coated with plaster on which the law was written.

#### Lessons:

- A. Whether in defeat or victory, we need to turn to God.
- Hard to do after victories, easy to be caught up in our own powers and excitement. We want to take the credit. But we must quickly turn to God and thank him for the good things which come our way.
- B. Shows the importance of pure worship, exactly as God has said, not adding or subtracting.

#### Copying and Reading the Law (Joshua 8.32-35)

1. After the sacrifices of praise, what did the people do
- Moses had ordered the people to plaster stones and to write a copy of the law. Dt 27.1-4, 8.
  - Large stones. Why?
    - Large letters, or all the law, or possibly the entire book of Deuteronomy (Dt 27.3), certainly the sections with the blessings and curses.
    - Large flat stones up to 7 feet long have been found in this area. Coated with plaster they would have been very smooth.
    - Similar stone found at Behistun Iran with information about three times length of

## Deuteronomy.

- Copied the law in the presence of all the people. Why? No excuses, public witness, public covenant.
  - Set up on Ebal. Why? Posted in a public place as a memorial, in heart of Israel.
  - Law on the mountain of cursing. These curses will happen to you if you disobey (Dt 11.29).
  - Significance for us: Men don't want the Ten Commandments visible on public buildings. They say it offends other religions. But in reality it is that they don't want to face their obligations to God.
2. Who attended the copying and reading of the Law?
- Camped at the bases of the two hills. Half at base of Ebal to North and half at base of Gerizim to south. Priests in the floor below with Ark of Covenant.
  - Notice who was standing, all Israel. (33)
  - Also women and children and aliens. (35)
  - Ex 12.38; many others went up with them.
  - Whole assembly including the women and children. Including the aliens Why are they specifically mentioned? To show the keeping of the law of Moses applies to all men (see Dt 31.12 for inclusion of aliens and children and women). Also, possibly a lesson to us: children to be in the worship service.
3. What followed the copying of the law? Why? Compare Deuteronomy 11.29-32.
- The reading of the law (34-35) that was written on the stones.
  - Requirement to read the law. (Dt 31.9-13)
  - Public reading of the law to the entire nation.
  - In the natural amphitheatre: the space between Ebal and its neighbour Gerizim provides a natural amphitheatre with good acoustics. Jotham's pulpit (Judges 9.7).
  - It may have been that Joshua read and the priests repeated the words as a human amplification system. The voices would have filled the valley (much like old fashioned singing when people couldn't read). Antiphonal (cf Ps 136.1-26).
  - Dt 11.29-32 Moses instructions to the people to pronounce the cursings and blessings on Ebal and Gerizim. As part of the reading, or following the reading, the pronouncement of the blessings and curses see Dt 27.9-28.68.
  - After each phrase was read, the people would shout "amen" (participatory worship!)
  - The impact of this would have been overwhelming on the nations around them. The people in Shechem would have heard the voices like thunder (Rev 6.1) and would been petrified. The account would have swept through all the nations (see the fear that comes on Gibeonites and they come to make a treaty).
  - Reminds us of the state of moral deterioration to which men go. Our age is nothing unique. God will judge our nation as he did the Canaanites. The curses would be heard then, they will be heard again!
4. Why are both the content of the message and its format important?
- Twelve statements in Dt 27.15-26. Representative. Blessings and curses Dt 28.1-68.
  - Precision in the construction of the altar and setting up the stones.
  - Worship in Spirit and Truth. Interesting that these words were spoken by Jesus to the woman at Mt. Gerizim.

## Lessons:

We see the importance of making the Law of God visible in the public arena through the regular reading of it. Back to the Bible! If this was true for Joshua with only 5 books, how much more important is it for us with 66!

**Summary Lessons for this Module**

- A. It is important that we take a time-out to nurture a relationship with God.
  - Regain perspective, consistently and constantly review God's Word for his will.
- B. The structure of this worship is important: To God, from God.
  - To God: the sacrifices (prayer, singing and tithes and offerings).
  - From God: Reading of the law (Bible reading and preaching).
- C. We should never be so busy doing God's work that we don't take time to hear God speak.

## 11 The Gibeonite Deception

### Objective

- To remind us that we must always be on our guard against Satan and sin.

### Preamble (Joshua 9.1-2)

1. What do we learn from verses 1 and 2 about the land that Joshua and Israel are about to possess? What do we learn about the conquest itself?
2. What explicit instructions are given to Joshua and the people with respect to the nations in Canaan?

### The Ploy (Joshua 9.3-13)

1. Where was Gibeon?
2. What did the Gibeonites do? (3, 4)
3. What was the essence of their ruse? What was it that they did to deceive/trick Joshua and Israel?
4. Why was this deception successful?
5. What do their request “make a treaty with us” (6, 11) and the words “your servants” (8, 11) tell us about the Gibeonites?
6. Was there saving faith and belief on the part of the Gibeonites?
7. How could they have avoided destruction?

#### Lessons:

- A. We are most vulnerable when least expect it.
- B. Satan’s strategy for causing us to sin: 1) Use lies; 2) Marshal evidence to make comfortable with the lie.
- C. We need to be on our guard at all times against temptation and sin. (1 Cor 10.12)

**The Problem(s)** (Joshua 9.14-15)

1. What did Joshua and the leaders do that were wrong?
2. Could Joshua have avoided the situation? How?
3. Do you know of any other instance where Joshua makes a mistake like this?

**Lessons:**

- A. Need for vigilance. Even great leaders can fall.
- B. We can be lead astray by making judgements with only a portion of the facts.
- C. We are not to let circumstances be our guidance.
- D. We are to use our Urim and Thummim, the Bible for guidance
- E. There is wisdom in waiting and enquiring.

**The Product** (Joshua 9.16-20)

1. How long did it take to discover their mistake? Three days.
2. Why did they not attack the cities/towns of the Gibeonites?
3. Why did the people grumble? (18)

**The Punishment** (Joshua 9.21-27)

1. He could not wipe them out. But he could do the next closest thing. What did he do?
2. What was the curse and punishment for? (22)
3. Was this punishment a surprise to the Gibeonites? (9, 11, 24)

4. What special aspect of the curse has a bearing on the history of Israel? (23)
5. What happened to Israel as a result of their actions?
6. What happened to the Gibeonites in the end? Only two other references beyond Joshua:

Lesson:

- A. The Gibeonites went to Joshua in deceit to protect their own lives, but apparently they were not ready to become part of Israel and part of God's people. We should come to our Joshua (Jesus) as his servants, not in deceit, but rather willingly; confessing his lordship over our lives and wanting to align with his people.
- B. We should be willing to be servants of God (Ps 84.10; Rev 7.15), rather than retain our own autonomy.

## Leader's Notes

### Preamble (Joshua 9.1-2)

1. What do we learn from verses 1 and 2 about the land that Joshua and Israel are about to possess? What do we learn about the conquest itself?
  - Politically divided into small kingdoms. Probably not what we think of as kingdoms, more like tribes with a village chief (called city kingdoms). Not a united empire like Babylon before or Assyria Neo-Babylon after.
  - Tells us of the three major divisions of the land with respect to the conquest:
    - Hill country (central 9-10.28 and southern campaigns 10.29-43).
    - Western foothills (northern kings, compare 11.2 headed by Hazor, chapter 11).
    - [Summary in 12, of land taken to that point.]
    - Along the coast of the Mediterranean (Joshua 13.1-7). Land to be taken later after the death of Joshua (Philistines harass during the time of the Judges to time of David). Note: Ex 23.27-31 (esp. 29); Judges 3.1-5 (compare with Judges 1.27-36).
  - See the promise to Abram in Gen 15.13-20 (16).
    - The sin of the Amorites to reach full measure.
    - Amorites dominant in Palestine from about 2100-1800 BC.
    - Sihon (Num 21.21; Joshua 12.2) and Og Amorites (Joshua 12.4; Dt 3.11; Ai (Joshua 7.7).
    - Used as a general term for the inhabitants of Canaan (Gen 48.22; Joshua 24.15).
    - Canaanite religious practices: polytheistic, child sacrifice, idolatry, religious prostitution, divination.
    - God was patient with them, and gave them an opportunity to repent. They saw their judgement coming. Rahab one of the few to see the consequences. The Gibeonites another.
  - Preamble to what is to come in the rest of the book. The opening section of the conquest is complete. The covenant has been renewed. But now it is down to the hard work of systematically driving out the wicked nations. They cannot sit back now, there is work to be done.
  - Joshua's work in the conquest similar to our battle against sin, the Christian life.
    - In the initial conversion there is a purging out of sin and truth establishes a foothold. But then it becomes a life-long pursuit of driving out the remaining evil.
    - Nations come together to make war against Joshua and Israel. Forces of evil come together to make war against the Christ/Jesus (Joshua), the Church and against Christians. Ps 2.2
2. What explicit instructions are given to Joshua and the people with respect to the nations in Canaan?
  - Dt 7.1-6; Ex 23.31-33. Not to make a covenant with them or to let them live in the land. Not to intermarry with them. To destroy them completely.
  - What reasons are given?
    - They will cause you to sin.
    - Their false worship will be a snare.
    - God will destroy you if you fall away.
    - You are a special people chosen by God.
  - What is the significance of their driving out the nations, etc.
    - Symbol of driving out sin.
    - Symbol of the purity that is supposed to typify the Christian.
  - Recall reasons: They were idolaters, pagans, heathen sinners, unrepentant, (450 years wickedness of Amorites full). God was using an arm of flesh to destroy them. When people have difficulty with God's actions through Joshua, they forget that there is a final judgement to come.



**The Ploy (Joshua 9.3-13)**

1. Where was Gibeon?
  - South of Ai (10km), east of Jericho (~25kms), Just north of Jerusalem.
  - Close, nearby, to the armies of Israel.
  - The very next (or among, e.g. Jerusalem [Joshua 12.10]) city which would have been attacked after the Sabbath at Ebal/Gerizim.
  
2. What did the Gibeonites do? (3, 4)
  - Resorted to a ruse, a ploy. Why?
  - It may be that the plans of Joshua for the conquest were obvious. He had come into the heart of the territory, coming up a valley from the Jordan river plain. He was on the plateau. The cities to the north were quite a distance. The cities to the immediate south-east were obvious targets.
  - The people had heard of Moses' instructions: no survivors to be taken! (See Joshua 9.24) And they had seen the way Joshua had worked thus far, in the two cities. No one was left alive. They knew that they were to be destroyed if they were considered part of the Canaanite tribes.
  - They had the historical examples on the east of the Jordan (9, 10) and were afraid.
  
3. What was the essence of their ruse? What was it that they did to deceive/trick Joshua and Israel?
  - Dressed up in old clothes, took along old food.
  - Stated that they had come from a distant country (6) by telling a lie.
  - Joshua had some doubts and he knew that they were not to make a treaty with the Canaanites. So he questioned them further (7, 8)
  - They lied a second time (9) about where they were from and about their supplies and equipment (12, 13).
  
4. Why was this deception successful?
  - Israel may have felt invincible after the 'high' of the covenant worship the day before.
  - They had just reviewed the law and figured that they were really in the 'know'. They were caught off guard.
  - The nations around them had just formed an alliance against them (2), so they did not expect their enemies to be coming for terms of peace. (Notice v. 2 and 7 Hivites, some must have stayed out of the alliance.) Notice 10.2 Gibeon an important city in the Canaanite region, with good fighters, so the Israelites would not have expected it to be cowering before Israel.
  - They used the knowledge they had (Ex 23.31-33; Dt 20.10-15 (note 16)) to place themselves outside of the boundaries of destruction. Thus they made it possible for Joshua to let down his guard.
  - They gave so much 'evidence' that Joshua acting impartially was inclined to believe it. ["tell lie often enough and people will believe it."]
  
5. What do their request "make a treaty with us" (6, 11) and the words "your servants" (8, 11) tells us about the Gibeonites?
  - They knew that they would never be able to win in a war. God was too strong. This does not mean that they were ready to accept the true God. They just wanted to avoid the unpleasantness of being destroyed.
  - They were not ready to go into insane battle. Notice that in vs 11 there is mention of elders. Contrast this with vs 2 and 10.3. What do you notice that is different? 'Republic' ruled by elders instead of by a king. A degree of sense in a body politic. We see that this is how a church is to be run, not by a dictator who can drive people into a conflict they couldn't win because his ego has to be maintained, but by a wise group of elders who can lead them to make decisions based on input from many people.
  - They knew that to live they would have to be servants (Dt 20.10-15). This does show that the Law of

Moses, including Deuteronomy was already known outside of Israel. Obviously Canaanites were listening when the law was read on Mt. Ebal. Israel was not working in a vacuum. Men are not excused for not coming to God. They know what God requires. They choose to ignore it.

- Displaying their understanding of this type of arrangement International diplomacy suzerain/vassal. The book of Deuteronomy models this type of treaty.
6. Was there saving faith and belief on the part of the Gibeonites?
    - Their strategy and their understanding were both shrewd. But they were not willing to accept the LORD. Instead they wanted to cling to their own idols, thus the ploy of deception.
  7. How could they have avoided destruction?
    - If they had come to Joshua and had said humbly that they were afraid, and they knew that the LORD was the true God, then they would likely have been accepted into Israel as was Rahab.

Lessons:

- A. We are most vulnerable when least expect it.
- B. Satan's strategy for causing us to sin: 1) Use lies; 2) Marshal evidence to make comfortable with the lie.
- C. We need to be on our guard at all times against temptation and sin. (1 Cor 10.12)

### The Problem(s) (Joshua 9.14-15)

1. What did Joshua and the leaders do that were wrong?
  - Didn't do what was necessary to find out all the facts.
  - Sampled their provisions. Not necessary to do this. They could see the mouldy bread. This was a means of sucking them further into the trickery of the false setting. Sure enough, old bread, the story must be true. Overcame their scepticism (Joshua 9.7) Deepen their sense perceptions. This is how Satan tempts. Gen 3.6.
  - Didn't enquire of the LORD.
    - How should they have done this? Num 27.18-21.
    - Saw example Joshua 7.14. Note: Joshua was to use the U&T for decision making (Num 27.18-21). Joshua was familiar with their use and had authority to ask the priests to use them for guidance.
    - A form of casting lots — Ex 28.30 Urim and Thummim "curses" or some "light" and "perfections" from the ephod. Like alpha and omega, in Hebrew Urim begins with Aleph and Thummim begins with the last letter Tau.
    - Not told how they read the U&T, but it may have been two flat stones with different engravings or colours on each side that were dumped out of a pouch on the ephod/breast-piece. Both 'yes' or both 'no' or one of each meaning 'no answer'. (See Rev 2.17)
  - Made a treaty of peace with. Specifically forbidden to do this. Dt 7.2.
  - Let them live. Not to do this either. Dt 7.2. Ps 106.34, 35 Notice the consequences.
  - Ratified by an oath. Misused the name of God (Ex 20.7) by making the vow. Binding on them Lev 19.12 so not to misuse it by breaking it, see for example Joshua 9.19, 20.
2. Could Joshua have avoided the situation? How?
  - Asked more questions?
  - Asked the LORD in prayer.
  - Waited for a period of time.
3. Do you know of any other instance where Joshua makes a mistake like this?
  - Where is a sin specifically recorded about him? None.

- Joshua 24.15; Heb 11.30. Presented to us as a man of faith.
- But he is clearly a human instrument and vessel.

## Lessons:

- A. Need for vigilance. Even great leaders can fall.
  - We must all be careful that we not become overconfident or self-assured.
- B. We can be led astray by making judgements with only a portion of the facts.
  - They had the law and they knew it. They had reviewed it in the past few days. However they didn't use/apply the teachings of the Bible in this immediate situation. How often do we hear the word preached and understand it and then walk out without applying it in our lives? Many times the preached word has spoken directly to a situation which will come up during the immediately following days.
- C. We are not to let circumstances be our guidance.
  - Circumstances can look authentic, right, and honest. Culture, own psychology can influence. Almost too trusting.
- D. We are to use our Urim and Thummim, the Bible for guidance
- E. There is wisdom in waiting and enquiring.
  - We are often too rash. Need for prayer.

**The Product (Joshua 9.16-20)**

1. How long did it take to discover their mistake? Three days.
  - How was it discovered? Spies as they prepared for attack, or does v. 17 tell us how?
  - Set out on the next phase of their conquest, and then they discovered the situation.
  - It could be that they travelled to these cities to make sure that what they heard wasn't a rumour. But the question still remains: who told them?
  - NIV *so*, NJKV *then*, but Heb. *and*. Note that it is on the third day after they set out (17). But it would not have taken three days to travel this distance if they had been heading directly there. So it is more likely that they were moving their armies against the next cities and made an unprecedented discovery.
  - The author gives us a preamble in v. 16 to follow immediately after the account of the problem. It is as if he says: "They didn't inquire of the LORD, and three days later they found out they had made a serious mistake. And when they arrived there on the third day ..."
  - Notice that there are a few cities/towns mentioned. Some very small, satellites of Gibeon. All in the general vicinity of where Jerusalem is today.
2. Why did they not attack the cities/towns of the Gibeonites?
  - They had made a vow. The importance of making and keeping vows: Ex 20.7; Lev 19.12
  - But wasn't the vow invalid because it was a wrong vow?
  - They weren't to make vows with these people, as we have seen.
  - Need to make a distinction between making a valid vow — a vow within the power of the one making the vow, and in general a moral rightness — and making an invalid vow — one that was not within the power of the person or was in and of itself unlawful. For example, this treaty if it had been made with tribe on the other side of River or North (i.e., in Syria) it would probably not have been invalid. So the treaty itself was not wrong.
  - Some vows are not within the authority of the person making them, or are immoral. See Num 30.7
  - Vow of the man in Judges 11.31, 34-40 and vow of the men in Saul's army 1 Sam 14.24. Stupid, but not immoral. Some vows are immoral: Acts 23.12.
  - They had sinned in making the treaty, but they did not commit a second sin to 'undo' the first. "Two wrongs don't make a right." (vv. 19, 20)

3. Why did the people grumble? (18)
  - It is possible that they were upset at their leaders for having made a rash vow, and now they could not carry out the mandate that was given to them.
  - But it is more likely that they were upset because they could not possess their land.
  - This is often how people behave. You will see them suddenly very concerned for having others obey the law when their (the others') disobedience infringes on their supposed rights. For example situation in N Alberta with tax exemptions for living in N climate. When they weren't allowed, they wanted government to take away the benefit from others who had gotten it. Apply the law fairly! They were not really concerned for justice, concerned that they are missing out on something.
  - The Israelites were known for their grumbling! (e.g. Ex 15.24; Ex 16.2, 7-9, 12; Num 14.2, 27, 29; Num 16.41; Num 17.5, 10)
  - Being satisfied with our lot in life is a very important aspect of living a holy life (1 Peter 4.9; Phil 2.14).

### The Punishment (Joshua 9.21-27)

1. He could not wipe them out. But he could do the next closest thing. What did he do?
  - He made them into slaves (Joshua 9.21) with a type of work related to the household (bringing in water and wood for the cooking stoves): Household servants.
  - There is irony since the Israelites had been slaves in Egypt. Slavery? Num 31.9, 15-18; Dt 20.10-15 (note 16); Lev 25.44-46. 1) capture, 2) purchase, 3) birth, 4) restitution, 5) debt default, 6) self-sale (poverty). But abduction wrong: Ex 21.16; Dt 24.7.
  - Put them under a curse (23). Gen 9.20-27 (esp. 25-27).
    - Fulfilment of (at least part) the curse. Sons of Canaan serve sons of Shem.
    - It is clear that God the author of events of history. Who else could have worked out the details so that this prophecy would come true? Otherwise the Canaanites would all have been wiped out and there would have been none left to fulfil this prophecy.
    - It is clear that God is the author of the Bible. If there were multiple authors (without superintendence of God) how could they have been so careful to make sure that this little item wasn't overlooked, or that it was fulfilled in this way, without (!) any direct reference.
  - God honoured the treaty and vow (as we will see in the next chapter). God and the Israelites protected the Gibeonites. Compare 10.3, 4, 7, 8.
2. What was the curse and punishment for? (22)
  - Lying, deception. They lied a number of times, as we saw previously. Not an arbitrary action by Joshua. Rather the action of a lord over a vassal. A just action, on the part of civil magistrate, for their breaking one of God's laws.
3. Was this punishment a surprise to the Gibeonites? (9, 11, 24)
  - The Gibeonites had hoped that this would be the outcome, rather than their destruction.
4. What special aspect of the curse has a bearing on the history of Israel? (23)
  - Made hewers and drawers as household slaves (26), but specifically for assembly and in the tabernacle and then the temple.
  - Notice that the tabernacle was first at Shiloh (Joshua 18.1) about 20 kms NE of Gibeon, then at Nob (1 Sam 21.1) near Jerusalem, then moved to *Gibeon* (1 Chron 16.39; 2 Chron 1.3-5) until the time of Solomon when he took the items into the temple in Jerusalem near *Gibeon*.
5. What happened to Israel as a result of their actions?

- Drawn into war. 10.1-8
  - Notice Judges 19-21 (Judges 19.16, 22) Gibeah about 8 km from Gibeon. It is possible that the Benjamites who settled in the territory of the Gibeonites learned the practices of the Canaanites through their neighbours. The deterioration in Israel after the death of Joshua which we see throughout the book of Judges seems to reach its wicked climax in the events recorded here. It could be that this was the consequence/punishment of the treaty they had made.
  - We should not make alliances with the world.
6. What happened to the Gibeonites in the end? Only two other references beyond Joshua:
- David provided restitution for breach of treaty by Saul (2 Sam 21.1-14)
  - Men from Gibeon helped re-build the wall of Jerusalem (Neh 3.7). If these were men descended from the original Gibeonites, then they still considered themselves under the authority of Israel, over 1000 years later, and after the captivity. If men today would honour treaties in a similar way!
  - Then they disappear from history.

## Lesson:

- A. The Gibeonites went to Joshua in deceit to protect their own lives, but apparently they were not ready to become part of Israel and part of God's people. We should come to our Joshua (Jesus) as his servants, not in deceit, but rather willingly; confessing his lordship over our lives and wanting to align with his people.
- B. We should be willing to be servants of God (Ps 84.10; Rev 7.15), rather than retain our own autonomy.
- We should rather be servants of God than be dead. This will result in a blessing, NOT a curse, for us.



## 12 The Sun Stands Still

### Objective

- To teach us how serious sin is and to remind us of the reality of God's punishment of sin

### Alarm of Adoni-Zedek (Joshua 10.1-4)

1. What did the King of Jerusalem hear that caused him alarm?
2. What was his response to these events and to what he heard?
3. What is it in general that can bring fear to a sinner? To a non-Christian?
4. What will be a non-Christian response to these fears?
5. Compare the name 'Jerusalem' and the name of its king.

### Amorite Attack (Joshua 10.5)

1. What happened after Adoni-Zadek called together the alliance.

### Agreement Appeal (Joshua 10.6-9)

1. Just a few days after making the treaty with the Gibeonites what happened?
2. Why did Israel have to come to the rescue of the Gibeonites? Didn't the treaty of peace include just the provision that Israel would not destroy the Gibeonites? (Joshua 9.15)
3. How did Joshua react to the entreaty from Gibeon?

**Lessons:**

- A. We are to take our responsibilities and covenants seriously.
- B. We are not to be slow or slack about our work.
- C. The work of 'ministry' belongs to all the saints, not a select few, or the best.

- 4. Before Joshua began the war against the Canaanites what did he do?
- 5. What was the message?

**Lessons:**

- A. We all need (constant) encouragement for every task that we undertake.
- B. Leaders to encourage those starting out and continuing (1 Thess 5.14; 2 Tim 4.2; Titus 2.15).
- C. We are to encourage one another in the Church (1 Thess 4.18; 1 Thess 5.11; Heb 3.13; Heb 10.25).

**Awesome Adoni** (Joshua 10.9-15)

- 1. In what different ways does God demonstrate that he is awesome as he helped Israel defeat its enemies?
- 2. What do you think the significance was of these actions on the part of God?
- 3. When you consider the conquests of Jericho and Ai and compare it with this conquest what do you notice that is similar or different? (Joshua 6.20-21; Joshua 8.3-8; Joshua 10.11-13)  
How was the battle fought in each case?
- 4. What do you think happened that day in the Valley of Aijalon?

**Amorite Award** (Joshua 10.16-28)

- 1. What did the five kings do when they saw that the battle was going against them? Why?
- 2. Why did Joshua have the rocks rolled over the mouth of the cave and why did he post a guard?
- 3. What was Joshua's instruction to the army? (19) Why?
- 4. What city is mentioned in 28? Where is it mentioned in the alliance in vs 3? What does this tell us?



5. Who didn't speak a word against Israel? (21) Why?
6. What was the Amorite Award? What was the final punishment for the kings of the Amorites?
7. What were the ways Joshua punished these kings?

Lesson:

- A. We are reminded of the reality of God's punishment of sin.

## Leader's Notes

### Alarm of Adoni-Zedek (Joshua 10.1-4)

1. What did the King of Jerusalem hear that caused him alarm?
  - Destruction of Ai and Jericho. Holy destruction, giving over to the Lord. Fulfilment of the command Dt 20.16-18. No one left alive.
  - Gibeonites had made a treaty (1) with the Israelites. Alignment. Gibeonites living near (2) Israel (this means physically and in service and subjection). Traitors. Deserters.
  - They were especially concerned because of the fact that Gibeon was a larger town of size and more powerful than a royal city, and its men were good fighters. (2) This means that they were feeling that they could not fight Israel and be successful.
  - Israelites now possessed the central plain and had split in half the territory of Canaan. Living near them. (2) Why was he alarmed? Knew strategically he was cut off from the N part of Canaan and was militarily weakened.
2. What was his response to these events and to what he heard?
  - Assembled an alliance five kings in the southern hills. (4)
  - Attacked his own people. (4)
    - For what reason? Because they had made an alliance.
    - Doesn't this seem to be rather silly? Why attack own people? What motivates? Envy? Fear? Irrational response. Compare the account of Sothones in Acts 18.14-17.
3. What is it in general that can bring fear to a sinner? To a non-Christian?
  - Prospect of destruction of physical life and possessions. Nothing else to hope for. This life is everything to them, so they have to cling and defend.
  - Potential of others in his 'camp' defecting to the Christian position and being against them (knowing the hollowness of their position). See hatred of Jews against Paul when he converted (Acts 9.22, 23).
4. What will be a non-Christian response to these fears?
  - Insane jealousy, and hatred.
  - Name calling and mud-slinging.
  - Violence.
  - Some areas where right now you see this kind of reaction: homosexuals (attacking church, Focus on the Family), pro-abortionists, false religions (e.g., JW's, Moslems act as if person didn't exist if they convert to Christianity or become violent [recent example in Pakistan]), evolutionists.
  - We are blessed right now with relative peace and not a lot of antagonism, but this could be temporary. It may be because we aren't really challenging the culture.
5. Compare the name 'Jerusalem' and the name of its king.
  - When was the city named this? Very old city. Name appears in Ebla tablets (2500 BC) and Egyptian and Assyrian texts (19th-18th cent. BC). Initially may have been: 'foundation of Shalem' after Canaanite god, but seems to have become 'foundation of peace' Hebrew word Peace. (See Gen 14.18).
  - Notice the name of the king whom Abram went to see who was a priest Gen 14.18-20 compare with Heb 7.1-2.
  - Compare with the name of the king of Jerusalem at the time of Joshua. Do you see any similarities? Zedek part means righteousness. What does the first part mean? Lord. "Lord of Righteousness" A

second king of Jerusalem who is the king or lord of righteousness.

- But what a contrast! One was priest of God Most High and presumably a true believer. The second a wicked man resisting God and his people. 400+ years and total degradation. (Gen 15.12-16)
- Compare Jer 23.5-8 (6); Jer 33.14-18. Jerusalem in Jer 33.16. One King who in Jerusalem by this name was “priest of God most High”, another came along and took the name falsely. The true Lord of Righteousness came to re-possess Jerusalem and establish eternal righteousness. This is a model for how God has worked in salvation - three steps:
  - Man = Adam was set up as a king (dominion over creation) truly a king of righteousness.
  - Man = Adam (under Satan’s influence) tries to set himself up as king under his own banner, but still wants to be called ‘man’ and yet wants to be a god. Wants to call himself a king of righteousness, but his righteousness is hollow.
  - Man = Christ comes to re-establish what was lost when man falsely set himself up as king. The true King of Righteousness.

### Amorite Attack (Joshua 10.5)

1. What happened after Adoni-Zadek called together the alliance.
  - It went on the attack. Compare with 9.1, 2
  - Sin cannot tolerate good or real righteousness. It goes on the offensive. Notice that evil does not tolerate co-existence. It must have (try to get) the upper hand.
  - Two lessons:
    - Pluralism can never work. Contrary to what many Christians (and most ‘liberals’) think, you cannot have X’ity co-existing with false religions and moral systems. If X’ity true, it alone is true.
    - Evil attacks whenever it feels threatened.
  - Psalm 2.1-12 illustrates the spiritual truth underlying this. The kings of the earth make alliances against God, his people, and those under covenant protection.

### Agreement Appeal (Joshua 10.6-9)

1. Just a few days after making the treaty with the Gibeonites what happened?
  - Israel is called upon to honour the treaty by coming to the aid of the Gibeonites.
2. Why did Israel have to come to the rescue of the Gibeonites? Didn’t the treaty of peace include just the provision that Israel would not destroy the Gibeonites? (Joshua 9.15)
  - The appeal not to abandon them (6) tells us that there was more to the treaty than just a treaty of peace. If there hadn’t been then how could the Gibeonites have appealed to Israel in this vein?
  - Suzerain/vassal treaties need to be considered. Under this arrangement the great king was like a father to the vassal. Great king expected to protect his vassals.
  - There could have been an attitude of some (remember their grumbling (Joshua 9.18)) that this was a convenient way to get out of the problem.
    - After all the Gibeonites had deceived and lied to Israel. Why should they protect this conniving bunch off wicked sinners. Wasn’t this God’s justice being poured out on them. Why bother to protect them.
    - If this attitude was present with any of the Israelites, it would not have been a surprise, it is part of sinful human nature.
    - It is necessary for us to see that this kind of attitude points out another reason why Israel *should* have gone to the aid of the Gibeonites: What is sin? Acts of commission and omission. What does “you shall not murder” mean (WCF negative and positive, e.g., 104,

105, 108, 109, 112, 113, 116, 119, 135, 136, etc.). To do everything we can to protect or neighbour from harm. Gibeonites were no longer enemies and more than neighbours, so Israel had an obligation to protect them

- This appeal gives us an indication of the reason why the Israelites weren't supposed to make a treaty with the Gibeonites in the first place. The treaty brought them into a close relationship much like a father/son relationship and placed upon Israel obligations which they should not have had if they were carrying out their duties as 'ministers of God's vengeance' (see Rom 12.19 and Rom 13.1-7) against the full wickedness of the Amorites.

3. How did Joshua react to the entreaty from Gibeon?

- He moved quickly (7, 9). He didn't waste any time going to their aid. Israel took their responsibility seriously. The work was important.
- They went out with the entire army.
  - This wasn't going to be a fiasco like Ai where they thought that they could defeat the city with a few men: took the enemy seriously.
  - They involved the whole congregation in the work of conquest. It was not for a select few (note the fact that the best fighting men are distinguished but they are included).
  - To show that all Israel (even the 2.5 tribes from other side of the Jordan Num 32.20-22; Joshua 4.12) has a place in the conquest of Canaan, it is the work of the entire body. So that a few can't go in and take the city and then claim that they did all the work and take the plunder for themselves. cf 1 Sam 30.21-25.
- The best men were included. This could be a routine task or a skirmish but the best men went with the entire army.

Lessons:

- A. We are to take our responsibilities and covenants seriously.
    - Many times I have heard Christians say that they would do things and found out that they have forgotten. This is not following the instruction of God nor a good example. (Prov 20.6)
  - B. We are not to be slow or slack about our work.
    - Col 3.22-24 [specifically to slaves, but does not exclude any of us].
    - Industry: Prov 20.13 (love not sleep), Prov 22.29 (diligent stand before kings), Rom 12.11 (zeal and fervour).
  - C. The work of 'ministry' belongs to all the saints, not a select few, or the best.
    - A principle that is often hard for leadership to remember: Eph 4.11-12.
4. Before Joshua began the war against the Canaanites what did he do?
- It appears that He inquired of the LORD, because we see that the LORD gave him a message. Contrast with 9.14.
5. What was the message?
- One of comfort and encouragement.
  - We have seen before how often God gives this message before Joshua or another sets out on a major mission for the LORD. (See, Josh 8.1)
  - Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Elijah, David, Psalms, Isa, Jer, Ezek, Dan, Joel, Zachariah, Jairus, Jesus to his disciples, to John.
  - Why does God give encouragement at this time?
    - Not a weak leader.
    - We all need encouragement.
    - He needed it especially at this point because of massed armies, not a single city, and possibly because he was feeling the weight of having made a treaty when he should not have.
    - Many other places God encouraged Joshua.

- How did God encourage Joshua at this time?
- By referring to the future in the past tense: reminding him that he (God) can and will bring the nations to defeat.

## Lessons:

- A. We all need (constant) encouragement for every task that we undertake.
  - God knows that he is dealing with sin stained human nature. We need to be encouraged and to see that we are not alone in our endeavour. Not sin to need or give.
- B. Leaders to encourage those starting out and continuing (1 Thess 5.14; 2 Tim 4.2; Titus 2.15).
- C. We are to encourage one another in the Church (1 Thess 4.18; 1 Thess 5.11; Heb 3.13; Heb 10.25).

**Awesome Adoni (Joshua 10.9-15)**

- In what different ways does God demonstrate that he is awesome as he helped Israel defeat its enemies?
  - Lord threw Canaanites into confusion (Heb: terror) (10)
  - Hailstones (11)
  - Long day (12)
- What do you think the significance was of these actions on the part of God?
  - In the Canaanite pantheon there were many God's. We already noted that the crossing of the river Jordan and the holding back of the waters was a statement against Baal Hadad (specific sub-name of Baal) the god of the floods and the primary god of their religion.
    - Baal Hadad god of the storm is again challenged by the true God who send down hailstones.
    - God shows his control over the day to confound the god of the sun.
    - A direct challenge like he gives in Is 44.6-23
  - A challenge to Adoni-Zedek who would try to challenge God like Pharaoh did. The hail and control of the daylight is a reminder of the way God dealt with the Egyptians.
  - Warning for us. Mt 24.29; Rev 6.12-17; Rev 16.21.
- When you consider the conquests of Jericho and Ai and compare it with this conquest what do you notice that is similar or different? (Joshua 6.20-21; Joshua 8.3-8; Joshua 10.11-13) How was the battle fought in each case?
  - Jericho, the defeat of the walls entirely God's work. People go in and 'mop-up.' Could say that God fought the battle.
  - Ai, God did not intervene directly. The battle was fought with human ingenuity. [Of course, God was behind the scenes cf 8.1). Could say that men fought the battle.
  - Aijalon. Human instruments supported by direct intervention of God. Could say that God and men fought together.

Why do you suppose that there are these differences?

- To remind men that the battle is God's and that he is behind the victory; even when he does not take direct part. Show heathen that God is in control as per 13.1.
- He didn't want them to forget this after Ai. They might have thought that they could win at any battle after the strategy worked at Ai.
- To remind us that we cannot put God in a box. He deals differently in each battle, as we have seen:
  - In miracles (e.g., not every blind man healed)
  - In salvation, process, way.
  - In punishments (Num 16.30)

There are many who seem to think that God will only work in one way. For example: one form of evangelism, or one way of conversion, or only one way of conducting worship, or one way to hold communion, or one way to pray, etc. They would try to model every congregation the same and would try to enforce standards and sameness where this is not required. God could have had them march

around the walls of each city. God does not work the same way twice. The different ways God works clearly shows that he is a God of diversity within unity. He did not create a utilitarian universe of grey with oatmeal at every meal. God is creative: variety of flowers. We creatures, in his image, need variety and should encourage it, and delight in it. We should not try to force every person to behave exactly as we do. We should not require uniformity across congregations or mission work. God is going to use many means to achieve his ends depending on the circumstances and personnel. BUT, don't carry this to the other extreme. God is not a God of disorder, and he puts boundaries around our lives, worship, etc. Example, juggling or brain-surgery are NOT worship, though they can be performed in worshipful manner, or by a person whose life is lived for God. Within bounds (e.g., moral, natural) we can, and should, have variety.

4. What do you think happened that day in the Valley of Aijalon?
  - Quotation from the book of Jasher and then statement "the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day."
  - Jasher: Compare 2 Sam 1.18; Num 21.14 non-canonical account of wars. A journal or chronicle. Scripture writer selected from this for inclusion in the Bible.
  - Interpretations:
    - Figurative, poetic, religious intuition, not literal.
    - Astrological, referring to war in stars, myth found in Enuma Elish and Assyrian astrology.
    - Night/darkness prolonged by eclipse (sun didn't rise) e.g. vs 9
    - Mist and rainstorm prolonged darkness: "... as Thothmes III exploited a summer morning mist in his advance on Megiddo in 1479 BC the hail in verse 11 suggests a dark cloudy winter morning. Thus, the oldest source, the fragment of the Book of Jasher, implies no miracle. This is only introduced in the prose interpretation of the pre-Deuteronomic compiler. The events recorded are an object of faith in the cult-legend of Gilgal."
    - Prolongation of light by comet, refraction, or stopping the earth's rotation.
  - Key seems to be stood still and stopped. It is difficult to see how they can mean something like 'eclipsed' or 'covered' or 'stopping the heat'
  - Similar passage in 2 Kings 20.9-11; Notice 2 Chron 32.31.
  - In midst of a very historical account. Fact that Jasher it is quoted in a very historical context would imply that the quotation is also to be understood as history.
  - Likely God actually stopped the rotation of the earth for (12) hours. Not acceptable to argue that world would fall apart from inertial force. God who created universe in 6 days from nothing can certainly make circumstances support a stopped earth. But regardless of how done, a miracle.

#### **Amorite Award (Joshua 10.16-28)**

1. What did the five kings do when they saw that the battle was going against them?
  - Fled and hid in cave.
  - Why? To flee from the wrath of God. Not the sword of men, but the anger of God. Rev 6.12-17 (kings hiding in caves, notice also the effects in the sky which are similar to what happened that day over Aijalon).
  - God's judgement poured out on the massed armies of the Canaanites is a lesson to us of what is coming on the great day of God's victory over sin and sinners.
2. Why did Joshua have the rocks rolled over the mouth of the cave and why did he post a guard?
  - To hold them for later (see v. 22) for public justice to be executed against the leaders.
  - So that they could go on with the defeat of the rest of the army.

Notice the weakness of the kings. Supposed to be leaders and they hide at the first sign of trouble.

3. What was Joshua's instruction to the army? (19) To press on in the battle and stop the enemy before they can get back inside their cities. Why?
  - Dt 20.16 Don't leave anyone alive.
  - According to 20, they were successful.
4. What city is mentioned in 28? Where is it mentioned in the alliance in vs 3? Not mentioned. What does this tell us?
  - Joshua was going to make the most of the day. He wasn't content to let a nearby city dig in and strengthen its defences.
  - What does this tell us about the army? Obedient to the command of God. It took Jericho (Achan), Ai, and Gibeonites to teach them to obey with regard to the complete destruction of the Canaanites.
  - To remind them that the battle is not over when the head is defeated. It is not over until every last enemy is defeated. Thus with sin. We cannot rest when we have conquered the 'big' sins in our life. We have to press on until we have purged sin from every nook and cranny.
5. Who didn't speak a word against Israel? (21)
  - The nations around the Israelites.
  - Why? Silenced by the power of God and before God. (Lev 10.3b; Job 2.13; Ps 107.42; Is 52.15; Rom 3.19; Rev 8.1) [recall potter and clay] Wicked in silence before God.
6. What was the Amorite Award? What was the final punishment for the kings of the Amorites?
  - The death penalty for all. Every Canaanite soldier was pursued and killed, and then the kings were put to death.
  - Why was this proper? Dt 7.2, carried out war, murders (cf war crime trials today).
7. What were the ways Joshua punished these kings?
  - By leaving them locked up in cave until he had completed the conquest.
  - By having the army commanders place their feet on the necks of the kings. (24) What is the significance of this action? A form of public humiliation, sign that the war is over. Gen 3.15; 1 King 5.3; Ps 8.6; Ps 47.3; Ps 110.1; Mal 4.3; Rom 16.20; 1 Cor 15.25.
  - By striking the five kings. (26) Why by sword and not stoning? (Dt 21.21-23) Capital crime, but in the context of war, whereas the other a means of all Israel participating in the punishment of a capital offence. The instrument for capital punishment later (Paul's day) seems to have become the sword. (Rom 13.4)
  - Hung on tree. (26) Israelites did not carry out executions with hangings, but with stoning. Probably impaled and put on display. Cursed. Sign of what is the humiliation that comes from bearing the guilt of sin. Contrast Christ (Gal 3.13).
  - Body not to be left impaled on the tree past evening.
    - Respect for the body.
    - Prolonged exposure gives undue recognition to the crime and the criminal.
    - So land not cursed.
    - Jesus taken down, God saw to it (Dt 21.23).

## Lesson:

- A. We are reminded of the reality of God's punishment of sin.
  - One over-riding lesson. The reality of God's punishment of sin.
  - An object lesson for us of what God will do in the Judgement day.
  - There will be nowhere to hide. Caves and rocks will not be able to hide us from the wrath of God if men continue in their rebellion against God.





## 13 The Conquest of Canaan (Joshua 9.1, 2; Joshua 10.28-12.24)

### Objective

- To show that the conquest of Canaan is a type for the coming Judgment Day, and Christians will inherit Heaven as the Israelites inherited Canaan.

### Invasion Recapitulated

1. Provide an outline structure of the account.
2. Can you think of other Biblical examples of war chronicles?

Lesson:

- A. God is keeping a record of his victories over Satan and sin (sinners), to be rehearsed at the last day when the books are opened and the dead are judged (Rev 20.11-15).

### Items of Repetition

1. What are some themes that you notice being repeated as you read Joshua 10.28-11.23?
2. What happens in the North (Joshua 11.1-5) that is similar to what we saw in the South (Joshua 9.1, 2; Joshua 10.1-4)?

### Issues and Riddles

1. How can we justify the destructive action of the Israelites?

Lesson:

- A. The destruction of the Canaanites is a sign of what will come in the final Judgement against all that is sinful.

2. What is the significance of the statement: “the LORD hardened their hearts?” (Joshua 11.20)

3. How long did the conquest take?

### **Israel's Rewards**

1. In chapter 11 what are Israel's Rewards? What does Israel gain from the conquest or in the context of the conquest?
2. In what ways is Canaan a type for Heaven?

## Leader's Notes

### Invasion Recapitulated

These sections provide a summary of the primary conquest under Joshua. It covers the entire military sequence of the Southern, Central, and Northern campaigns. It is a war chronicle. Ancient kings and generals kept these logs and published them on pillars and walls.

1. Provide an outline structure of the account.
  - This account divides the land into three areas of the conquest:
    - Hill country, central (Joshua 9.1-10.28);
    - Southern (Joshua 10.29-43);
    - Northern kingdoms headed by Hazor (11), also called the Western foothills (Joshua 11.2, 16-17).
  - The first two areas were covered in one campaign (Joshua 10.42).
  - A complete list of land taken to this point is provided in 12.
  - This account does not consider the land to the NW, along the coast of the Mediterranean (Joshua 13.1-7).
    - This land would be taken later after the death of Joshua;
    - The Philistines harass during the time of the Judges to time of David. Note: Ex 23.27-31 (esp. 29); Judges 3.1-5 (compare with Judges 1.27-36).
2. Can you think of other Biblical examples of war chronicles?
  - War poems and chronicles: Ex 15.1-27; Judges 5.1-31; Ps 136.1-26; Heb 11.1-40 (victory over sin); Rev 12.10-12; Rev 19.1-10.

Lesson:

- A. God is keeping a record of his victories over Satan and sin (sinners), to be rehearsed at the last day when the books are opened and the dead are judged (Rev 20.11-15).

### Items of Repetition

1. What are some themes that you notice being repeated as you read Joshua 10.28-11.23?
  - Joshua and all Israel (Joshua 10.29, 31, 34, 36, 38; Joshua 11.7)
    - Importance of involving the whole community in work.
      - Not just the leaders or mighty men, but all have a work to do.
      - Leaders need to work to involve. (Eph 4.11)
  - God gave them into their hands (Joshua 10.30, 32, 42; Joshua 11.8)
    - God shows his sovereignty.
    - Fulfilling promise made to Abraham.
    - We need to know and believe.
  - As the LORD God had commanded (Joshua 10.40; Joshua 11.12, 15, 20, 23) As Moses servant of the LORD had commanded him.
    - Obedience in work.
    - We should be obedient even in the small things.
  - They put all the people of the city to the sword (Joshua 10.28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 39, 40; Joshua 11.8, 11, 12, 14, 17, 20, 21). Irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. The cities are a sacrifice offering to God.

2. What happens in the North (Joshua 11.1-5) that is similar to what we saw in the South (Joshua 9.1, 2; Joshua 10.1-4)?
  - Wicked men try over and over again to defeat the Lord and his people.
  - Satan tries same. He occasionally gets small victories, but he cannot be victorious in the end.

### Issues and Riddles

1. How can we justify the destructive action of the Israelites?
  - God commanded it. (Dt 20.16-17) Who are we to question?
  - They came out against Israel (Joshua 11.4).
  - The sin of the Ammorites was full (Gen 15.16). They were not neutral.
  - God cleansed the land of its sin (Dt 7.1-6).
  - Their hearts were hardened against God (Joshua 11.20). Notice the reason: so that he could exterminate them without mercy. Sinners deserve what they get by way of punishment.
  - Their refusal to repent of their pagan practices and idolatry (Num 33.51-52).
  - Sin is to be judged. (Ezk 18.1-32).
  - Mercy was provided but ignored: Miracles, example of Rahab at Jericho (missionary motive of 7 days), public reading of law at Schechem.
  - To keep the Israelites from going into sin (Dt 20.18).
  - Man is the instrument of Judgement (Dt 9.4, 5).
  - God alone is the owner of life, and decides when and how of death (Acts 17.28).
  - God does not overlook the wickedness of men (Ps 94.10).
  - Speaks to God's requirement for capital punishment. Many people think of using jail for reform rather than thinking of punishment as judicial action for justice.

### Lesson:

- A. The destruction of the Canaanites is a sign of what will come in the final Judgement against all that is sinful.
2. What is the significance of the statement: "the LORD hardened their hearts?" (Joshua 11.20)
  - Compare with Ex 8.32 with 9.12 Pharaoh hardened his heart and the Lord hardened it. 2 Sam 24.1 with 1 Chron 21.1. See also Rom 9.17, 18.
  - It is clear that man's actions (and Satan's) are under God's sovereign control.
  - This shows the sovereign and determinative will of God. "God not only foreordains the end of salvation [or not] for the elect [damned], he also foreordained the means to that end." (Sproul)
  - "Active hardening would involve God's direct intervention within the inner chambers of Pharaoh's heart. God would intrude within the inner chambers of Pharaoh's heart and create fresh evil in it. This would certainly insure that Pharaoh would bring forth the result that God was looking for. It would also insure that God is the author of sin." (Sproul)
  - "Passive hardening is a totally different story. Passive hardening involves a divine judgement upon sin that is already present. All that God needs to do to harden the heart of a person whose heart is already desperately wicked is to "give him over to his sin." (Sproul)
  - What is this hardening? "God allowed Pharaoh to harden his own heart but the action of hardening was Pharaoh's. ... There can be no question but Pharaoh hardened his own heart." (Murray)
  - "From these and similar passages, it is evident that it is a familiar scriptural usage, to ascribe to God effects which he allows in his wisdom to come to pass." (Hodge)
3. How long did the conquest take?
  - Moved quickly from city to city (e.g., Joshua 10.29, 31 etc.); contrast with Joshua 11.18: Waged war for a long time.
  - Use Caleb as an indication. 14.7 40 + 38 (Dt 2.14) = 78 and 40 + 45 (Joshua 14.10). Thus 45-38 = 7

years. From Sihon/Og to Hebron.

- Balance between continual movement and steady pace.
- We need to consider how war was fought: seasons and feeding families etc.

## Israel's Rewards

1. In chapter 11 what are Israel's Rewards? What does Israel gain from the conquest or in the context of the conquest?
  - **Encouragement** — Joshua 11.6 (compare, Josh 8.1; Josh 10.8, 25).
    - Examples of encouragement from God, to: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Judges, Samuel, David, Kings, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, Zachariah; Jesus to disciples.
    - Why does God give encouragement at this time?
      - New campaign (northern), venture.
      - We all need encouragement.
    - How did God encourage Joshua at this time? The future is given in the in the past tense.
    - Reflect back on what we have already studied about encouragement in this book.
  - **Cities** — Joshua 11.13, did not burn the cities on the mounds. Except Hazor, Why? See Joshua 11.10. The main city is punished. Leader an object lesson.
    - Protected, fortified.
    - Places to inhabit.
  - **Plunder** — Joshua 11.14. took all the spoil, plunder (Dt 20.14).
  - **Victory** — Joshua 11.19. Every city except the Hivites in Gibeon (note the special reference because of the treaty). No other city made a treaty of peace. Complete victory.
  - **Land** — Joshua 11.23. Given as inheritance for tribal divisions. We will consider this starting in chapter 13.
  - **Peace** — Joshua 11.23. Then the land had rest from war (Dt 12.10). Peace of Christ once sin is defeated. At times cannot have peace without war and death. Christ had to go to the cross and face death in order to bring peace. World's view is that peace can be had by talk and compromise.
2. In what ways is Canaan a type for Heaven?
  - The rewards for the Christian, now and eternally are these:
    - **Encouragement** (Rev 7.17; Rev 21.4).
    - **Cities** (Heb 12.28).
    - **Plunder** (Col 3.23, 24; Rev 22.12).
    - **Victory** (1 Cor 15.25, 54, 57; Heb 1.13).
    - **Land** (Mt 5.5; 1 Pt 1.3, 4).
    - **Peace** (Rev 21.1-2, 25-27).



## 14 Division of the Land

### Objective

- To teach us that God keeps detailed accounts; humble faithfulness to God will be rewarded, whether in this life or in eternity.

### Legal Terms (Joshua 13.1-19.51)

1. Why is the administrative document recorded here?
2. Why does the account give an exact territorial definition? [Joshua 13.15-23; Joshua 15.1-4, 20-32]

#### Lessons:

- A. God keeps a complete administrative record of all of human history.
- B. Exactness in historical accounts teaches us to trust the veracity of God and the truth of Bible.
- C. This reminds us not to be sloppy in our dealings with our neighbours. We need to be precise and careful in our dealings of men.

### Land to be Taken (Joshua 13.1-7)

1. How does God begin the account?
2. What was the land yet to be taken? What territory is described?
3. Why did God leave some land untaken? Was this any failure on the part of Joshua?
4. Why did God apportion the land still be taken at this time and not wait until they had conquered all the territory? (6, 7)

#### Lesson:

- A. We see the importance of carrying a job to its conclusion.
- B. God presents test of our faith and obedience: perseverance.
- C. We have some blessings now but the rest are future: "the already and the not yet."

### Land Transaction — Recollection (Joshua 13.8-33)

1. What do we find recounted in Joshua 13.8-33?
2. What is the significance of the “what Moses had given them?” (Joshua 13.15, 24, 29, 32)

**Lessons:**

- A. Like Joshua we are not called to make his mark on history. We are called to be faithful and carry out the duties we are assigned.
- B. If all our leaders and if all of us, would emulate Joshua the Church would be a powerful force for good on earth.

3. A reference is made in Joshua 13.22 to Balaam. What are we told here about him that we don't learn in Numbers chapters 22-24?
4. What was the end of Balaam?

**Lessons:**

- A. Many cults have these elements in them:
  - Claimed messages from God through some form of divination (special glasses, dreams, voices),
  - Elements of the sensual and sexual perversion (e.g., polygamy), and
  - The acquisition of wealth for the leaders.
- B. We see that God uses angels of darkness to do his work, but under his control.
- C. Like Balaam all those who love the luxuries of this life will get their reward.
- D. Satan, who is the father of lies, falsehood, and sorcery, will ultimately be crushed under the feet of Christ.

5. What exceptions are mentioned in this passage?

**Lesson:**

- A. We are placed under moral boundaries by God that define certain behaviour as right in some contexts and wrong in other contexts.

6. Why didn't the Levites get an inheritance? (Joshua 14.3, 4; Joshua 18.7) Dt 18.1-5. What was their inheritance?



**Lesson:**

- A. We are not to place our hope in the things of this world, any more than Levites were to place hope in temporal world. We are to look beyond, to the eternal inheritance. (Mt 6.19-21).

**Land Transaction — Reward** (Joshua 14.1-19.51)

1. What land is to be their inheritance? (Joshua 14.1)
2. Compare 14.2 with Num 34.13. What means did they use to divide the land by lot?
3. Caleb's Reminder: What was the promise that God/Moses had made to Caleb (Joshua 14.6) that Caleb brings to the attention of Joshua? (Num 14.38; Dt 1.34-36)
4. Caleb's Request: Caleb asked for something, what was it? (12)
5. Caleb's Reward: Was Caleb's conviction in God's faithfulness to his promises justified? (10)
6. We have seen that Caleb was a faithful man (8, 9). What else do we learn about him? (Judges 1.12-20)

**Lessons:**

- A. Like Caleb, we should not give in to group pressure.
- B. Caleb relied on God for his life and victory, this should be our life's attitude as we face God's enemies around us.
- C. Heaven is the promised land for us.
- D. Some saints will be like Caleb and see Heaven brought in while they are still alive (1 Thess 4.15-18).

7. Why does Chapter 14 end with the words. "and the land had rest from war" (note also 11.23; and Dt 12.10)? Was the war ended?

## Lessons:

- A. In the Christian life there are always going to be more battles to fight and win.
- B. The final victory for us individually is when we are taken to glory, and for the Church, when Christ returns (2 Tim 4.7-8).

8. What tribe did the allocation begin with on the Western side of the Jordan? (Joshua 15.1) Why?
9. Who was awarded the land first in Judah?
10. What area is being described in verses 48-60?
11. A passing reference is made to “City of Salt and En Gedi” (62). Where were these cities located?
12. What important city was not yet conquered? (63)
13. What does the reference “to this day” (Joshua 15.63) tell us?
14. What is the importance of the account in verses 17.3-6?
15. What town of historical significance was given to Ephraim? (Joshua 17.7; Joshua 20.7; Joshua 21.21)
16. What was the problem? (Joshua 15.63; Joshua 16.10; Joshua 17.12, 13; Joshua 19.47) How did Joshua deal with it? (Joshua 17.14-18; Joshua 18.3-4)
17. How did Joshua spur the people on to complete the allocation of the land? (Joshua 18.1-10)

## Lessons:

- A. We need leaders who can:
  - Spur us on to do what is right,
  - Create visions and plans which are consistent with what is right,
  - Communicate the vision, and
  - make sure that it is understood and followed.
- B. If we see no blessing in the Church, it may be because we do not have leaders who are applying the Biblical requirement for them to lead.

18. What was the last act in the allocation of the land? (Joshua 19.49-50)

Lessons:

- A. God will reward his faithful servants; there is a reward for faithfulness.
- B. Servants of the LORD are to be humble and faithful just like Joshua.

## Leader's Notes

### Legal Terms (Joshua 13.1-19.51)

1. Why is the administrative document recorded here?
  - As, Joshua 10.28-12.24 is a war chronicle for the Great King, so Joshua 13-19 is the administrative document of this king. Consider of the *Doomsday Book* of William the Conqueror as a similar example.
  - The record was used for kingly administration — Kings after victory gave out spoils and land to their faithful followers. Here God does the same for his generals, nobles, and champions.
  - It serves as a promise of the heavenly Canaan to come (Mt 5.5; Jn 14.2, 3 “dwelling places”; Rom 4.13; 1 Pt 1.3, 4 inheritance). Just as God allocated the inheritance to Israel, God will allocate a reward to all those who are his people. (2 Tim 4.7-8)
2. Why does the account give an exact territorial definition? [Joshua 13.15-23; Joshua 15.1-4, 20-32]
  - It reminds us that the account is positioned in real history. The Bible is not an abstract philosophical treatise. Since it speaks accurately and in detail here, we can trust it to be accurate in the other areas of detail (cf Lk 1.5; Lk 2.1-3): specifically, the historicity of Gen 1.1ff (Creation and the Flood), miracles such as the sun standing still (Joshua 10.12-14), the virgin conception and birth of Christ, the resurrection of Christ ...
  - It demonstrates the fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham (Gen 13.14-17; Gen 15.18-21; Gen 17.7-8).

#### Lessons:

- A. God keeps a complete administrative record of all of human history.
  - The precision of this account reminds us that nothing is over-looked by God. Rev 20.12-15
- B. Exactness in historical accounts teaches us to trust the veracity of God and the truth of Bible.
- C. This reminds us not to be sloppy in our dealings with our neighbours. We need to be precise and careful in our dealings of men.
  - Contracts and legal documents should be carefully worked out to ensure that we cooperate and work together. When we make promises we are to fulfil them exactly as we said we would.

### Land to be Taken (Joshua 13.1-7)

1. How does God begin the account?
  - By referring to the age of Joshua.
  - How old was he? Between 90 and 100, Caleb 85. See Joshua 14.10
  - Why does he make reference to the age of Joshua?
    - To indicate that a new regime was about to be instituted and to indicate why he (God) had to administer the land while he (Joshua) was still alive.
    - To show his mercy and faithfulness in keeping Joshua alive (with Caleb see 14.6ff) while all the other Israelites died in the wilderness. (Num 14.28-30; Num 26.63-65)
  - What is God's plan? To administer the land while Joshua the revered, respected leader is still alive (Joshua 4.14).
2. What was the land yet to be taken? What territory is described?
  - Note: ‘rulers’ (Hebrew *seren* 21 times translated as “rulers” in NIV) used only in context with Philistines. Not “king” or “lord”. It is suggested that this is a loan word from early Greek [Linear B c.

- 1450 B.C., may show contact with early Greek culture].
  - The people: Phoenicians were from the area along coast (around Tyre, south west to Egypt (Ex 13.17; Ex 23.31) and north (north west of Sea of Galille) to the northern part of Lebanon. Canaanite and Philistines were probably from *Casluhim* (Gen 10.13, 14); from the islands (Jer 47.4; Amos 9.7); which is likely a reference to Crete. Therefore they may have been Minoans. The Minoans had undertaken a major expansion 1900-1700 B.C. They controlled much of the eastern Aegean and Mediterranean in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C.
  - The Philistines were left to chastise the people (Judges 3.2-3). They pushed inland. There was social contact during the time of Samson. The Israelites adopted their gods (Judges 10.6-7).
  - We need to look ahead to time of David. The Philistines controlled the distribution of iron (1 Sam 13.19-22); David killed Goliath; the people sought protection (1 Sam 27.1-12); they were finally subdued (2 Sam 5.25). Some resurgence during the divided kingdom and during the exile. But they slip into total obscurity after the return from exile.
3. Why did God leave some land untaken? Was this any failure on the part of Joshua?
    - Notice 11.15 etc. Joshua left nothing undone. It wasn't a question of failure on his part that there was still land to be taken. His was a progressive campaign.
    - To protect the lands from wild animals (Dt 7.22)
    - As a test (Judges 2.20-23; Judges 3.1-4) to see if they will they would carry out God's mandate after Joshua. Instead they intermarried (mingled with the world) and adopted the ways of the pagans (idolatry). It is a test to see if they will obey the Great King, and keep the conditions of the treaty that they have taken at Gilgal (Joshua 5.1-12) and Ebal/Gerizim (Joshua 8.30-35).
    - It teaches us of the spiritual battle against sin. God tests our personal commitment to him.
  4. Why did God apportion the land still be taken at this time and not wait until they had conquered all the territory? (6, 7)
    - The land to be taken was theirs. It was been given to them, therefore it was to be allotted.
    - If they have trouble getting it, it will be a reminder of their unfaithfulness and lack of obedience.
    - So that it can be done under Joshua.

## Lesson:

- A. We see the importance of carrying a job to its conclusion.
  - If not, the results can come back to hinder us in the future.
- B. God presents test of our faith and obedience: perseverance.
- C. We have some blessings now but the rest are future: "the already and the not yet."
  - Do we really believe this?

**Land Transaction — Recollection (Joshua 13.8-33)**

1. What do we find recounted in Joshua 13.8-33?
  - An exact breakdown of the land on East of Jordan.
  - Why now? Hadn't the trans-Jordan tribes already been given their land? Compare with Num 32.33.
  - The land hadn't yet been specifically allocated. Only the general territory had been assigned, but not specifically allocated. At this point the work of the 2.5 tribes is complete and their inheritance can be given to the tribes and families.
2. What is the significance of the "what Moses had given them?" (Joshua 13.15, 24, 29, 32)
  - This land was already theirs.
  - It was not Joshua who gave it to them. But he was the administrator. It reminds us that Joshua was completing the work that had been assigned to Moses. Moses had been prevented from entering the

land and completing this work. Joshua was acting on behalf of Moses, and thus, on behalf of the LORD.

- Compare Moses' leadership over 40 years with Joshua's ~7-10 years. Joshua was completing the work of Moses. There was no leader in the wings to take over. This is not a dynasty, it is a special time of leadership.
- Even at the end of his life and work, even when highly respected by the people (Joshua 4.14), Joshua was overshadowed by Moses.

#### Lessons:

- A. Like Joshua we are not called to make his mark on history. We are called to be faithful and carry out the duties we are assigned.
  - It is a great perversion of the work of the Church when leaders in the Church are more interested in how they will be viewed in history than focusing on doing the work to which they have been called. It is a travesty when they try to become 'known,' or get a 'name' rather than working faithfully as servants (Jn 13.1-17).
  - If all our leaders and if all of us, would emulate Joshua the Church would be a powerful force for good on earth.
  - Joshua was a faithful man of God, whose focus in life was being faithful to the end (we will see this again in Joshua's farewell message (Joshua 23.14-15; Joshua 24.14-15).
3. A reference is made in Joshua 13.22 to Balaam. What are we told here about him that we don't learn in Num 22-24?
  - About his use of divination and about how he died.
  - Notice Num 24.25. It appears that Balaam after giving the various prophecies went home and had nothing more to do with the Jews. In fact, if we only had Num 22-24 we could think that there had been an element of godliness in Balaam (e.g., Num 22.9-13, 18, 34; Num 23.11-12, 25-26).
  - Are there any (other) indications in the Bible that he was not a righteous man?
  - Sorcery (Num 24.1) and divination (Joshua 13.22) which are anti-God (Lev 19.26; Dt 18.10).
  - Consuming greed (Jude 11; 2 Peter 2.15-16).
  - Taught sexual perversion in the name of religion (Rev 2.14; compare Num 25.1-2; Num 31.16).
  - Notice how this event from the dawn of Israel's national history is brought forward in these last days (Peter, Jude, Revelation) as a warning for us. Why?
  - Balaam is a prototype of a corrupt teacher who deceives his followers and leads them into destruction for his own personal gain.
4. What was the end of Balaam?
  - He died by the sword. Balaam's end is mentioned only in passing here, but it is highly instructive. We don't need a lot of words to teach a lesson.

#### Lessons:

- A. Many cults have these elements in them:
  - Claimed messages from God through some form of divination (special glasses, dreams, voices),
  - Elements of the sensual and sexual perversion (e.g., polygamy), and
  - The acquisition of wealth for the leaders.
- B. We see that God uses angels of darkness to do his work, but under his control.
  - Satan with Job is an example, but Satan is, ultimately, always doing God's will. Balaam a false prophet was constrained to prophesy only the truth in his seven oracles.
- C. Like Balaam all those who love the luxuries of this life will get their reward.
- D. Satan, who is the father of lies, falsehood, and sorcery, will ultimately be crushed under the feet of Christ.
  - Balaam's life and death is a warning and a promise.

5. What exceptions are mentioned in this passage?
- Had not driven out the people of Geshur (13).
  - The Levites weren't given an inheritance (14, 33). We will consider this below.
  - Why had they not driven out the people of Geshur?
    - Notice Joshua 13.2; in the land remaining, different group than in Joshua 13.13, along route to Egypt, see also 1 Sam 27.8
    - Physical geography — they had gone north along the east side of the Jordan but did not cross the Yarmuk river below the Sea of Galilee. (Joshua 12.5) Dt 20.10-15, as these territories were outside the boundaries of destruction.
    - These people were not enemies as were the Canaanites. They had not resisted Israel in wilderness, and were not in the promised land. See 2 Sam 3.3. David married a princess from Geshur. His son Absalom was from this union. Later Absalom fled to his grandparents land (2 Sam 13.37-38; 2 Sam 14.23, 32; 2 Sam 15.7, 8).

## Lesson:

- A. We are placed under moral boundaries by God that define certain behaviour as right in some contexts and wrong in other contexts.
- What is good, commanded and proper in one circumstance may not be in another.
  - They were permitted to eliminate every person living in the entire land of Canaan and to take possession of the land. But this did not give them rights to world domination.
  - This restriction shows that we are to make distinctions in application rights and privileges. For example:
    - What is proper on one of six days of week may not be on first.
    - What is proper in marriage may not be outside of it.
    - What is right in family context, may not be right for worship service.
    - Government has rights that families don't have, families have rights that government shouldn't take.
    - Many pacifists are against capital punishment because they say killing is wrong. Murder is wrong, but killing in specific instances is not.
  - This not situational ethics, but it is contextual ethics (i.e., the context may make something wrong that is right elsewhere or under other conditions). God defines the context. In situational ethics, we attempt to define both the contexts and the obligations within the contexts.
6. Why didn't the Levites get an inheritance? (Joshua 14.3, 4; Joshua 18.7) Dt 18.1-5. What was their inheritance?
- Offerings are their inheritance (14).
  - LORD God himself their inheritance (33) as a promise from God.
  - What is the significance of this?
    - Symbol of how Christians should live lives pleasing to God. We should not look for an 'inheritance in this world' our inheritance is in Heaven. To set our hope in heaven. Not on earthly things.
    - The work of ministry in the Church is to be supported by the Church.
    - 2 Chron 31.4: the priests, Levites devoted to the Law; for the work of the Kingdom. The point is not that they were to practice law, but teach it. Support those who preach gospel is similar (1 Cor 9.14; Phil 4.15, 18).
  - Did the Levites, trust in God and take him as their inheritance?
    - Able to own houses in the towns.
    - Time of Eli, cheating the people.
    - They became materialistic, just like the rest of the people.

Lesson:

- A. We are not to place our hope in the things of this world, any more than Levites were to place hope in temporal world. We are to look beyond, to the eternal inheritance. (Mt 6.19-21).

### Land Transaction — Reward (Joshua 14.1-19.51)

1. What land is to be their inheritance? (Joshua 14.1)
  - Note Num 34.1-12.
  - Refer to the fulfilment of promise given to Abraham (Gen 13.14-17; Gen 15.18-21; Gen 17.7-8).
  - The Israelites divided just as the LORD had commanded Moses, completing the work of Moses (Joshua 14.5).
2. Compare Joshua 14.2 with Num 34.13. What means did they use to divide the land by lot<sup>3</sup>.
3. **Caleb's Reminder:** What was the promise that God/Moses had made to Caleb (Joshua 14.6) that Caleb brings to the attention of Joshua? (Num 14.38; Dt 1.34-36)
  - Why had this promise been given to him? (7)
  - Because he had had confidence in his God, and in his ability to give the Israelites the land that he had promised to Israel (Dt 1.8) and Abraham.
4. **Caleb's Request:** Caleb asked for something, what was it? (12)
  - That the land be given to him that was promised to him.
  - On what grounds did he appeal? The grounds of God's promise.
5. **Caleb's Reward:** Was Caleb's conviction in God's faithfulness to his promises justified? (10)
  - He brought him to the land.
  - In what ways did he bless Caleb for his conviction and faith?
    - Kept him alive longer than average (85, cf Ps 90.10 Psalm of Moses).
    - Kept his strength, of man of 40 (vs 11).
    - Allowed him to see the fulfilment of the promise. Abraham and Moses had to accept it entirely on faith, he got to see the realization.
    - Gave him land (Joshua 15.13).
6. We have seen that Caleb was a faithful man (8, 9). What else do we learn about him? (Judges 1.12-20)
  - He was victory oriented (Judges 1.14 and Joshua 14.12; Joshua 15.16). Bride-price not money, but his daughter. To him the great reward was seeing the victory of God over his enemies. Notice that Othniel, who was the husband of Caleb's daughter became the first judge (Judges 3.7ff).
  - His boast (Joshua 14.12) was not an idle boast (Judges 1.20; Joshua 15.14). Based on the promise of the Lord. (1 Sam 17.32-37, 45-47).
  - He was generous (Judges 1.14, 15; Joshua 15.18-19). He gave his daughter land and wells. (cf Job 42.15; Num 27.1-11). It was not a common thing to give an inheritance to daughters. This gift may have been a wedding gift. Whatever the case, it shows us that he was generous.

Lessons:

- A. Like Caleb, we should not give in to group pressure.
- He was able to withstand group rebellion (in Numbers).
  - As a leader he was a man with 'backbone'.

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<sup>3</sup> See the answer to question 1 in *Achan's Discovery*, Chapter 8 Achan's Sin.



- This is what the Church, government, society, families, needs today.
  - B. Caleb relied on God for his life and victory, this should be our life's attitude as we face God's enemies around us.
    - God, can and will, win against them as he did over the pagans in Canaan.
    - The homosexuals, abortionists, Sabbath-breakers, pornographers, idolaters ... will not prevail over the Great King. Confidence of Caleb.
  - C. Heaven is the promised land for us.
    - We are never to become discouraged by what happens in this life. The 'here and now' is not the final reckoning.
    - We may have to die before the final age is ushered in. In effect we have to accept the fulfilment of the promise on faith.
  - D. Some saints will be like Caleb and see Heaven brought in while they are still alive (1 Thess 4.15-18).
    - Notice 1 Thess 4.18; encourage each other. The example of Caleb is given to a) show us that God is totally faithful to his promises, and b) to encourage us that the promises will come to reality.
7. Why does Chapter 14 end with the words. "and the land had rest from war?" (note also 11.23; and Dt 12.10) Was the war ended?
- From one perspective, no:
    - Land still to be taken by war (Joshua 13.2ff).
    - Battles still to be fought (Judges 1.1).
  - From another perspective, yes.
    - Joshua's (Moses') work was now complete. The people have been brought to their inheritance and have been given the land. All that was left was the legal work of allocating it.
    - The specific land of Judah was now in the hands of Calab, implying the 'end,' or the beginning of the end.

## Lessons:

- A. In the Christian life there are always going to be more battles to fight and win.
- There will be stages of our life where we can say that we have rest from war.
  - But there will always be an ongoing battle with sin.
  - See: Israel's Rewards, The Conquest of Canaan (Joshua 9.1, 2; Joshua 10.28-12.24), for a discussion on peace.
- B. The final victory for us individually is when we are taken to glory, and for the Church, when Christ returns (2 Tim 4.7-8).
8. What tribe did the allocation begin with on the Western side of the Jordan? (Joshua 15.1) Why?
- Because Judah is the leader of the nation of Israel. Numbers 2.3; Gen 49.3-10 (brother's sons will bow to you, sceptre not depart); seen as the Royal line: 2 Kings 17.18; Ruth 4.18-21; Mt 1.1-16).
9. Who was awarded the land first in Judah?
- Caleb and Othniel are mentioned in Joshua 15.13-19. Why? Was Caleb the leader?
  - Caleb not the leader of the clan, but he was blessed in a special way.
  - Othniel did become a leader and a Judge (Judges 3.7-11). But his clan was not to be the clan of leadership.
  - Who was the leader? Num 2.3; Num 7.12 Nahshon; Ruth 4.20 Salmon; Mt 1.5.
  - Who was Nahshon's daughter in law (Rahab).
  - Who was Nahshon's grandson? Boaz.
  - Who were the great kings who came from Nahson's line? David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Christ.
10. What area is being described in verses 48-60?
- Where is the "hill country of Judah" (Lk 1.39, 65). Note (Lk 1.36) "your relative," then note Lk 2.4, 5

- both were from the “hill country of Judea.”
- To where did Naomi and Ruth go when they came back from Moab? Ruth 1.22.
  - What town is missing from the list in vv. 49-60? Bethlehem.
  - Between verses 59 and 60 another group of towns is listed in the Greek OT (Septuagint, LXX), a northerly group reaching to Jerusalem: “Tekoa (2 Sam 14.2; Amos 1.1), Ephratha which is Bethlehem ...”
  - Why it is not mentioned in the Hebrew Masoretic text is not clear. It may be that these towns were captured later (i.e., after the first version of the book of Joshua was written - see below) and a gloss was added and thus it appeared in specific Hebrew manuscripts (for example one from which the LXX was translated) and not in others. Certainly, by the time of Boaz (just a few years later), Bethlehem was in the hands of Judah.
11. A passing reference is made to “City of Salt and En Gedi” (62). Where were these cities located?
- Qumran, the hills beside the Dead Sea (Salt Sea) SE of Jerusalem. The area in which the Dead Sea scrolls were found.
12. What important city was not yet conquered? (63)
- Jerusalem (note that their king was defeated 12.10).
  - Notice the context (Joshua 11.1-5) where the kings assemble with their armies including Jebusites (3).
  - Notice also that after a battle the survivors would flee to their cities (Joshua 10.19).
  - So Jerusalem was tightly secured against the forces of Israel. It was a walled city, with steep canyons protecting it. It had an underground water source.
  - When was the city taken? (Judges 1.8 and 21)
    - It seems that the city was defeated, but not occupied by Judah (Joshua 18.28) it was given to Benjamin. It was again occupied by the Jebusites.
    - If was not fully under the control of Israel until the time of David about 1000 BC (2 Sam 5.6-10).
13. What does the reference “to this day” (Joshua 15.63) tell us?
- It gives us a hint as to when the book of Joshua was written (before 1000 BC). Because it was in the possession of the Jebusites. This statement would not have applied at the time of David.
  - It is likely that major portions of the book were written originally at the command of Joshua (Joshua 18.8; Joshua 24.25, 26). He may have written parts himself (Joshua 5.1, 6).
  - The final version was probably assembled by a prophet after death of Joshua.
  - There are twelve occurrences of phrase “to this day” (e.g., Joshua 7.26; Joshua 8.28, 29; Joshua 9.27; Joshua 10.27).
  - Part of the book (e.g., Joshua 24.26) obviously was written by Joshua himself.
  - It is possible that Samuel put together the final version that we have now (Shiloh 18.1 etc. 8 times, important to writer, important to Samuel).
14. What is the importance of the account in verses Joshua 17.3-6?
- It is the fulfilment of the promise made by Moses to the daughters (and descendants) of Zelophehad (Num 26.33; Num 27.1-11).
  - As a result of their request a law was made by Moses (Num 27.8-11) to deal with the situation.
  - Here they are receiving their inheritance in accordance with the promise and the law. (Joshua 17.4).
15. What town of historical significance was given to Ephraim? (Joshua 17.7; Joshua 20.7; Joshua 21.21)
- Note the historical significance of Shechem: Gen 48.3, 4, 22 (NKJV portion, NIV ridge of land, see footnote, Hebrew, shoulder, mountain ridge). Gen 34.25-29 (see also Gen 34.2; Gen 38.18, 19); raised altar Gen 33.20; buried strange gods Gen 35.1-4; covenant renewal Joshua 8.30ff; covenant renewal Joshua 24.1-13; Joseph’s bones Joshua 24.32; Jotham prophesied Judges 9.7-21; Shechem/Sychar Jn

4.41-42 first fruits.

16. What was the problem? (Joshua 15.63; Joshua 16.10; Joshua 17.12, 13; Joshua 19.47) How did Joshua deal with it? (Joshua 17.14-18; Joshua 18.3-4)
- They had been given a command to drive out the nations (Dt 20.16-17).
  - They weren't being faithful to the command of the LORD.
  - They were failing the test (Judges 2.20-23; Judges 3.1-4).
  - They were not taking the initiative (Joshua 17.14-18). Ephraim and Manasseh are given here as examples of the general attitude of the rest of the people.
  - What are some specific ways that they made excuses:
    - The problem isn't ours, it is the problem of our environment. (14) If we had more land we'd be okay. Give us more ... an element of envy here as well.
    - We are oppressed, we can't go down there, after all the ones down there have iron chariots, more ... union power, political strength, more votes, more money ... (16)
  - What was Joshua's reaction?
    - If you are so numerous, go do ... (15) Telling them that they need to take responsibility for their own well being. You have been given cleared and cultivated land, but a little extra work won't hurt you.
    - Stop making excuses, you have the ability and capability, go use it. (17-18) Get on with your job and stop complaining.
    - He rebuked them (Joshua 18.3)
    - He took action (Joshua 18.4) See below.
  - This is example of the emphasis on 'rights' that plagues our own society (and every society!).
    - We hear every 'oppressed' minority group screaming for more resources, and claiming that they are oppressed.
    - Our politicians reward them and in the process create disincentives at the cost of those who are willing to work hard. Our politicians should state it plainly and simply: "stop complaining and go do some work."
    - The emphasis in Scripture is on ensuring that everyone is treated equally by the law, that all laws are neutral and do not respect factors such as wealth, or poverty, or ethnic background (native or foreigner). But the emphasis in law in our culture is to force every one to be equal. In other words, it is exactly these later factors that the law considers, such as pay equity, minority quotas, income redistribution (a euphemism for stealing!).
    - Joshua reminded them of their responsibilities.
    - We need leaders today who will do this, just like Joshua.
17. How did Joshua spur the people on to complete the allocation of the land? (Joshua 18.1-10)
- He rebuked them, and in the process reminded them of what God had done for them. (Joshua 18.3)
  - He devised a plan of action. (Joshua 18.4) A good sign of a leader is that he can develop clear action plans for those within his domain of responsibility, and can then allocate responsibility to carry out the actions.
  - He also communicated the plan of action (Joshua 18.4-6). It is not enough to have a plan, it is necessary to make clear to everyone what the plan is and how it is to be carried out.
  - He ensured that those carrying out the plan of action clearly understood what they were to do. (Joshua 18.8) It is important to not only communicate a plan but also to make sure that it is understood by all those who will be responsible for making it happen.

Lessons:

- A. We need leaders who can:
- Spur us on to do what is right.
  - Create visions and plans which are consistent with what is right.

- Communicate the vision, and
  - make sure that it is understood and followed.
    - Joshua's example gives practical guidance for those who run corporations, politicians, leaders of non-profit organizations, church leaders.
    - At emergent times men often arise who can do this (e.g., Churchill), but we should be asking God to give us leaders like this all the time so that we don't have to have extremes of chaos and focus.
  - B. If we see no blessing in the Church, it may be because we do not have leaders who are applying the Biblical requirement for them to lead.
18. What was the last act in the allocation of the land? (Joshua 19.49-50)
- What do you notice by looking at 14.6-15 and comparing those verses with 19.49-50.
    - Consider them in the context of the land allocation on the eastern side of the Jordan.
    - Caleb was given his allocation first (before any of the others) and Joshua last.
    - These two men are like bookends holding up the allocation.
    - All Israel was given its inheritance because of the faithfulness of the two who came back with the positive report and who believed that God could do what he promised.
  - Notice that the Israelites gave Joshua the land as the LORD had commanded. It doesn't seem that this was a great display of generosity on their part. They would have all wanted more land just like the sons of Joseph. But God was ensuring that the two champions of the faith, and dedicated servants, were given their reward.
  - Is there any significance to the fact that Joshua receives his inheritance last? It may indicate that he was a humble servant who was serving God faithfully. He wasn't a warlord, or conquering hero. He was nothing more than a servant that the LORD turned to and said: "well done."
  - What did Joshua do with his inheritance? (end 50)
    - He built it up.
    - He was probably close to 90, but like Caleb (Joshua 14.10-11; compare Dt 34.7) he was probably as strong and vigorous as he had been at 40. God kept him young so that he had an extra measure of blessing.
    - He settled there. He had rest! A foretaste of Heaven.
    - This seems to indicate that Joshua was given additional years to enjoy the fruit of his labour. If he was 90, he was given an additional 20 years to enjoy his inheritance (Joshua 24.29).
    - Where was Joshua buried? (Joshua 24.30) As a final honour he was laid to rest in the land of his inheritance. Contrast with Jesus who was laid to rest in a borrowed tomb.

#### Lessons:

- A. God will reward his faithful servants; there is a reward for faithfulness.
  - We may not see it in this life, and we may not always see how it is done, even when there is a reward in this life. (2 Tim 4.7-8)
- B. Servants of the LORD are to be humble and faithful just like Joshua.
  - We have seen many times that Joshua was completing Moses' work. He did not consider himself to be someone special. He was not out for his own glory or fame.
  - He was walked humbly before his God. He was an Enoch, Moses, David, Mordecai, Nehemiah, Paul ... Christ (Phil 2.1-11).
  - The example of Joshua's humility speaks clearly to leaders in Church (and State or business!). They are to be humble servants of God.

## **15 Cities of Refuge** (Joshua 20.1-9)

### **Objective**

- To teach us how serious murder is, how it is defined by God, and how it is to be dealt with.
1. What was Joshua told to do? (2)
  2. How many cities were they to set aside? Why? [Num 35.6-15]
  3. What were to be the cities of refuge?
  4. What was to be the purpose of a city of Refuge? (3, 9)
  5. How were men to determine if a killing was murder? (Num 35.16-30)
  6. What do we call accidental killing today?
  7. What were the people in the City of Refuge to do with the person who fled there?
  8. Under whose jurisdiction were the cities of refuge? (Num 35.6) Why? (Dt 33.8, 10)
  9. If it was murder, according to Num 35.30-31, what was to happen to the murderer?
  10. If the killing was not murder then what could happen? (Num 35.22-28)
  11. What would be your opinion if someone today were to argue that they could kill a person who had killed a relative of theirs unintentionally?

**Lessons:**

The cities of refuge as places of sanctuary teach us:

- A. We have a right to a fair and impartial trial before peers.
- B. The distinction between murder and manslaughter.
- C. That God required capital punishment for murder.
- D. Revenge is to be managed and belongs in the hands of the civil magistrate.

## Leader's Notes

1. What was Joshua told to do? (2)
  - Designate cities of refuge as instructed through Moses.
  - Where do we find these instructions? (Num 35.9ff).
  - Notice, again, that Joshua is completing the work that Moses assigned. [This is what modern legislators are to do. They are to carry on the work of Moses. The laws that they make are to be consistent with the Law given through Moses.]
2. How many cities were they to set aside? Why? [Num 35.6-15]
  - Six.
  - To cover the entire territory. So as no city was too distant from any other town or part of Israel. So a person could get to a city within a day (or two) of hard travel. No part of the territory of Israel was more than 80kms from a city of refuge. Under the worst scenario, walking 5km/hour, a person could reach a city of refuge in 16 hours.
3. What were to be the cities of refuge?
  - Shechem (Central) — long history: Abram first camped there, built altar (Gen 12.6); Jacob and events around Dinah (Gen 33-34); Jacob buried strange gods and raised altar (Gen 35.1-4); Covenant renewed, law read set on stones, Ebal to North and Gerizim to south (Joshua 8.30-35) and again (Joshua 24.1, 14, 24, 25); a headquarters for conquest for Joshua; Jotham and Abimelech; Jeroboam's capital; Sychar woman at the well and lesson about true worship.
  - Ramoth (Central)
  - Kiriath Arba/Hebron (South)
  - Bezer (South)
  - Kadesh (North)
  - Golan (North ).
4. What was to be the purpose of a city of Refuge? (3, 9)
  - A place where a person who killed someone unintentionally/accidentally could flee.
  - Compare Numbers 35.6 with Num 35.11 and Joshua 20.3. What difference do you notice between these statements?
    - Verse 6 says that anyone who killed another person could flee to the city.
    - What might this be telling us? It could be that any persons who killed someone could flee to a city of refuge. He could stay there until his trial to determine if it was murder or not (Joshua 20.4, 6; Num 35.12).
5. How were men to determine if a killing was murder? (Num 35.16-30)
  - Striking someone with something that could kill him. (Num 35.16-18)
  - Throwing an object at a person, shoving him (Num 35.20)
  - Hit with fist. (Num 35.21)
  - Why does the account mention these three things?
    - The list is not exhaustive, but provides set of examples. What about poison, tripping with wire, sword, arrow ...)
    - It is intended to show the kinds of actions that are considered murder.
  - What was to be the condition? with malice aforethought (20) intentionally (20), hostility (21), intention to harm (23).
  - What other condition had to be in place to establish the killing as murder? (Num 35.30).
    - There had to be at least two witnesses.

- Why? To avoid the possibility of an innocent person being put to death.
  - Do the witnesses have to be eye-witnesses? In other words is circumstantial evidence possible? Hebrew word for witness is *ehd*. This can also be things: e.g., Gen 31.44, 52; Ex 22.13; Dt 31.19, 26, 28; Joshua 24.27.
6. What do we call accidental killing today?
- Manslaughter.
  - Can you give some examples?
  - What are examples which are not manslaughter but at the same time are not intentional, wilful, murder. Drunken driver killing a person. Child falling into a swimming pool around which there is no fence.
  - What do we call these? Negligence. Person held accountable. Ex 21.28-32.
  - Four classes of killing:
    - Intentional murder, 1st, 2nd
    - Murder through negligence
    - Manslaughter (accidental)
    - Self-defense.
7. What were the people in the City of Refuge to do with the person who fled there?
- (4) Admit him. Sanctuary must be provided. In middle ages church building held similar capacity (Thomas Beckett/Henry II).
  - (4) Give him a place to live and a job to work at. Form of house arrest till case settled.
  - (4) Hear the case .
  - (6) Possibly conduct a trial. But note Numbers 35.25.
  - Where was the trial held? (4) City Gates.
  - Who attended the trial? (4, 6) Elders and assembly.
  - What does this tell us about how the trial was to be conducted?
    - The murder trial was to be public.
    - Maintain a balance between spectacle and secrecy; either extreme is wrong.
8. Under whose jurisdiction were the cities of refuge? (Num 35.6) Why? (Dt 33.8, 10)
- These cities belonged to the Levites. They had special responsibility for the maintenance of the law of God (e.g., regular reading and teaching of it) and had access to God for decisions.
  - God is saying that a proper attitude to life and death matters can be skewed if people fall away from the Law of God. This is exactly what has happened in NA. As our culture has fallen away from a proper understanding of God's law it has changed the laws of God about murder and capital punishment.
9. If it was murder, according to Num 35.30-31, what was to happen to the murderer?
- He is to be put to death.
  - Is this a Jewish law that only applied in the nation of Israel? (Gen 9.5-6)
  - Why was the man to be put to death?
    - Life-blood belongs to God, his portion, not man's prerogative to take it (Gen 9.4, 5).
    - Murder pollutes the land, and the land cannot be cleansed unless the debt is paid by the murderer with his own life (Num 35.33).
  - How was the murderer to be put to death?
    - Stoning: Lev 20.2; (sacrifice son), Lev 20.27 (spirit medium); Lev 24.16 (blasphemy); Dt 21.21 (rebel son); Num 15.36 (Sabbath breaking); Joshua 7.15 (stealing from LORD); Dt 13.10; Dt 17.5 (idolatry); Dt 22.22-24 (adultery).
  - Who was to put the murderer to death?
    - Avenger of blood, justice (Joshua 20.3, 5; Num 35.19, 21).



- Hands of witnesses to carry out the punishment (Dt 17.7).
  - The whole community/assembly could carry out the punishment.
  - Is there injustice here? Is this cruel and inhumane?
    - Our culture would say so. It would argue that the God of the OT is mean and vicious. How can we respond?
    - Why is it considered cruel to execute a murder today, but not cruel then? What has changed? Not God. Not evil in society. How are we influenced by culture?
    - Christ was sentenced to death. God did not consider it improper to send Jesus to cross to die as punishment for sins. Why should we consider it wrong to punish a murderer for his sins?
    - What is the use of the sword if not to punish capitally (Romans 13.1-7)?
    - Crime deserves punishment. It is unjust not to punish a true murderer with capital punishment.
    - Ultimately God will punish with death.
10. If the killing was not murder then what could happen? (Num 35.22-28)
- Stay in the city of refuge as a form of exile.
    - For how long? (Num 35.25)
    - Until the high priest died.
  - What could happen if he was found outside the city before the death of high priest? (Num 35.26, 27)
  - Once the high priest had died what could the accused do? (Num 35.28)
    - He could return to his own property and obviously the Avenger of Blood could not get him, or be, himself, guilty of murder.
  - What is the significance of waiting until the death of the High Priest?
    - Some argue that the priest was acting as a type for Christ and that the death of the High Priest paid the debt of the sin.
    - The problem with this view is that the individual hasn't sinned (note Ex 21.13 "God lets it happen").
    - Is it rather simply a statute of limitation? It gave a cooling off period to control blood feuds.
11. What would be your opinion if someone today were to argue that they could kill a person who had killed a relative of theirs unintentionally?
- No cities of refuge.
  - No high priests.
  - Let the courts decide and put it to rest.
  - Vengeance belongs in hand of civil magistrate and not personal matter (Rom 12.7-19; Rom 13.3, 4).

#### Lessons:

Do we have to find a type of Christ in the cities, a 'spiritual' application?

The cities of refuge as places of sanctuary teach us:

- A. We have the right to a fair and impartial trial before peers.
- B. The distinction between murder and manslaughter.
- C. That God required capital punishment for murder.
- D. Revenge is to be managed and belongs in the hands of the civil magistrate.



## 16 Towns for the Levites

### Objective

- To remind us that we cannot find true rest (satisfaction) with an allotment of this world's property or possessions. Our rest is ultimately found in Heaven.

### The Approach (Joshua 21.1, 2)

1. What did the family heads of the Levites do? Why?
2. Where did they come forward?

#### Lessons:

- A. The commands of Moses are binding and to be followed.
- B. The work of God has to be completed in detail to be considered in obedience.
- C. The promises of God will be fulfilled.

### The Allotment (Joshua 21.3-42)

1. What were the Levites given? Not given? Why?
2. What is the structure of verses 4-7?
3. What do you notice in these verses (4-7) about the allocation of the towns of the Levites?
4. To whom did the first lot fall? (4)
5. Where were the Kohathites to live? (4) Why?
6. What is covered in verses 8-42? Why is it recorded here?

7. Did the Levites 'own' these towns?

Lessons:

- A. Our attitude to this world as Christians is to be modelled by the provisions given to the Levites.
- B. Our God is a God of detail. His plan covers every detail, and he governs to that level.

**The Award** (Joshua 21.43-45)

1. What did God give the Israelites?
2. Why did God give the land of Canaan to the Israelites?
3. What does the passage mean when it says that they had rest?
4. What else did they obtain? (44b) What does this mean?
5. What does this passage tell us about the promises of God? (45)

Lessons:

- A. Many people in this world are seeking a rest in this life but not finding it in the right place.
- B. The Israelites only found a temporary rest. God left challenges for them to see if they would remain faithful.
- C. Land (heaven), rest, and victory (peace) are only to be found in serving God obediently to the end ... the very end.

## Leader's Notes

### The Approach (Joshua 21.1, 2)

1. What did the family heads of the Levites do? Why?
  - Family heads approached Eleazar and Joshua (and other tribal leaders) and asked for the land they were to receive according to the promise of Moses.
  - Why did they have to come forward?
  - Was it because Joshua forgot to give them their land?
  - No, it was because the rest of the land was allocated and it was their turn.
  - Where do we find the command given through Moses?
  - Num 35.1-5.
  - Note: again (at least 30 times) this is work of Moses, not the work of Joshua.
2. Where did they come forward?
  - Shiloh:
    - Place of judgement.
    - Off the main road from Bethel to Shechem (Judges 21.19). Excavated in 1926-32 by Danish.
    - Place where Joshua began the distribution of the land (Joshua 18.1).
    - Tabernacle there, and the presence of God. Tent of meeting (Joshua 18.1; Judges 18.31; 1 Sam 4.3), moved to Nob (1 Sam 21.1), Gibeon (1 Chron 16.39), Temple (1 Kings 8.4). Priests at Nob vs Shiloh (1 Sam 22.11; 1 Sam 14.3). Ark at Gilgal (Joshua 4.19); moved to Ebal (Joshua 8.3), Bethel (Judges 20.27), Shiloh (1 Sam 1.3 with 3.3); captured (1 Sam 4.1-11); moved to Beth Aven (1 Sam 14.18), Jerusalem (2 Sam 6.2) Temple (1 Kings 8.1ff).
    - Site of pilgrimage (1 Sam 1.3) and festival (Judges 21.19).
    - Sign of Judgement (Ps 78.60, 61; Jer 7.12, 14; Jer 26.6, 9).
  - It is possible that Samuel put the final version of Joshua together (Shiloh 18.1 etc. 8 times, important to writer). Note reference 'until this day' (Joshua 15.63).

#### Lessons:

- A. The commands of Moses are binding and to be followed.
  - We better have a good reason for not following the commands of Moses.
- B. The work of God has to be completed in detail to be considered in obedience.
  - The Law of God has to be obeyed in scrupulous detail (Mt 23.23). Today many say that 'love' is all that is important. But how do we show love for God and our fellow man if we don't obey God. We are not to neglect the requirements of God but to do them with a devotion to please him.
- C. The promises of God will be fulfilled.

### The Allotment (Joshua 21.3-42)

1. What were the Levites given? Not given? Why?
  - Towns but no territory.
  - Why didn't the Levites get an inheritance? (Joshua 13.14, 33; Joshua 14.3, 4 [priesthood]; Joah 18.7) Dt 18.1-5.
  - What was their inheritance?
    - Offerings are their inheritance (Joshua 13.14).
    - LORD God himself inheritance (Joshua 13.33) promise of God.
  - What is the significance of this?

- Token (portion of the people) of how Christians should live their lives to please God. We should not look for an 'inheritance in this world' our inheritance is in Heaven. To set our hope in heaven. Not on earthly things.
  - The ministry to be supported by the Church. The priests/Levites were devoted to the Law (2 Chron 31.4); i.e., for work of the kingdom. This is not practicing law, but teaching it. We are to support those who preach gospel (1 Cor 9.14; Phil 4.15, 18).
  - Do you think that all Levites, trusted in God and had him as their inheritance?
    - Able to own houses in the towns.
    - By the time of time of Eli they were cheating the people (1 Sam 2.12-17).
    - Materialistic, just like the rest of the people (Micah's idols Judges 17.7ff).
2. What is the structure of verses 4-7?
- Summary of the number of towns by three groups.
  - Why three groups? Three sons of Levi (e.g., 1 Chron 6.1)
3. What do you notice in these verses (4-7) about the allocation of the towns of the Levites?
- Spread throughout the nation.
  - Why were Levites spread throughout the rest of Israel?
  - The Levites were keepers of the Law, preserving, transcribing, interpreting. (Dt 17.9-12; Dt 27.14; Dt 31.25, 26; Neh 8.7-9). They had special responsibility for maintenance of the law of God.
  - It seems that God is telling us that a proper attitude to life and death issues can be skewed if people fall away from the Law of God. This is exactly what has happened in NA. As our culture has fallen away from a proper understanding of God's law it has changed the laws of God about murder and capital punishment.
4. To whom did the first lot fall? (4)
- Descendants of Aaron. Why? Priestly line.
5. Where were the Kohathites to live? (4) Why?
- In Judah, Simeon, Benjamin. Joshua 15.1-12 (esp. 8). Within the boundaries of Judah, near Jerusalem.
  - Why?
    - The Temple was to be there later.
    - In wilderness they carried the Tabernacle articles (Num 3.27-32; Num 4.34-36).
    - Later they became gate keepers, singers, and workers in the Temple (1 Chron 6.31-38; 1 Chron 9.17-21, 31-32; 2 Chron 20.19; 2 Chron 34.9-13 [12]).
6. What is covered in verses 8-42? Why is it recorded here?
- Detailed allocation of the cities to the Levites.
  - Shows God's detailed concern for all aspects of the work of his kingdom. God is ruling and governing his creation in infinite detail. There is nothing out of his control.
  - Acts as a legal document for nation (land title).
  - Reminder to us that God keeps a complete administrative record of all of human history. The precision of this account reminds us that nothing is over-looked by God (Rev 20.12-15).
  - Notice verses 13, 21, 27, 32, 38. How many? Which city is missing? (Joshua 20.7, 8) Bezer (Joshua 21.36) is not mentioned as City of Refuge in chapter 21.
7. Did the Levites 'own' these towns?
- What city is mentioned in v. 11? Hebron
  - Compare with Joshua 14.13-15, what city is given to Caleb? Hebron. What are we told about the giving of Hebron to Caleb? (Joshua 14.14) It belonged to Caleb permanently. Joshua 21.12 gives a further explanation. See also Dt 12.12.

- What does this tell us about the way the Levites were given a place to live? They were primarily urban dwellers. They were called to be scribes, scholars, students of the Word/Law.

## Lessons:

- A. Our attitude to this world as Christians is to be modelled by the provisions given to the Levites.
  - We are not to place our hope in the things of this world, any more than Levites were to place hope in temporal world. To look beyond to the eternal inheritance (Mt 6.19-21).
  - We should not be seeking a great inheritance in this life but should rather be looking for our inheritance in eternity.
- B. Our God is a God of detail. His plan covers every detail, and he governs to that level.
  - His sovereignty is not just over the 'big' events of life. Everything is controlled by him. We are to accept his providences and trust his government.

**The Award (Joshua 21.43-45)**

1. What did God give the Israelites?
  - Land (43)
  - Rest (44a)
  - Victory/Peace (44b)
2. Why did God give the land of Canaan to the Israelites?
  - As indicated in v. 43, because he had sworn to do so to their forefathers (Gen 13.14-17; Gen 15.18-21).
  - Behind this, is his grace, he was being gracious to them.
3. What does the passage mean when it says that they had rest?
  - They no longer had to fight continually, but could go about domestic duties of raising livestock, crops, and families.
  - What is the meaning of this word 'rest'?
    - 'Rest' is often translated from the Hebrew *sabat* (from which we get Sabbath).
    - But in this case it is a different word. The Hebrew word used here (translated *rest*) is not *rest* in the sense of retiring from work and spiritual contemplation, but rather it is *nuahl* which is 'being settled' (e.g., Gen 8.4 ark on Mt Ararat.; Ex 33.14 to Moses; Dt 3.20 to eastern tribes; 1 Chron 22.18 to David; 2 Kings 2.15 spirit of Elijah on Elisha). It has the sense of *peace*, and can be translated 'leave', 'put', 'place', 'lower down onto something', 'safety', etc. It can mean *resting from work*, but in this sense it is the physical resting (settling onto a bed or couch, rather than the idea of stopping work). For example a traveller may sit on a bench to rest (i.e., lower himself and take a pause from his journey, whereas a traveller may sit on a bench to rest (i.e., cease from his travelling and spend time in contemplation). The reason for this distinction is that we have to be careful how far we attempt to apply the word *rest* (e.g., Gen 2.2, 3) in Joshua 21.44. We must be careful not to apply, without warrant, a 'sabbath' meaning to the word, when the word the writer uses is not based on the word *sabat*.
    - Compare Heb 3.7-11. What did the generation that died in the wilderness seek? What did the second generation get (Ps 95.11 Heb: Manoah [resting place, peace of rest, quite]).
    - Compare Heb 4.8. What is wrong with the rest spoken of in Joshua 21.44? It is only temporal and physical rest. It is not eternal and spiritual rest. It cannot be ultimately what we are to seek.
    - Paul (or the writer of Hebrews) seems to be saying that what the people were given (rest: settlement) was not the real rest (sabbath) that they needed. He gives us a warrant for expanding on the meaning of *rest* in Joshua, and brining it into the context of the sabbath

rest.

4. What else did they obtain? (44b) What does this mean?
  - 'LORD handed all their enemies over to them.'
  - Does it mean that they had defeated every last one of them? See Joshua 23.4-5; Judges 1.1ff.
  - They now possessed the land, but their enemies would not be able to displace them. They had dominance and control, but not total possession. God left their enemies in the land:
    - Because of wild animals (Ex 23.27-30; Dt 7.22).
    - As a test (Judges 2.20-23; Judges 3.1-4) to see if they would carry out God's mandate after Joshua or instead intermarry (mingle with the world) and adopt the ways (idolatry) of the pagans. It is a test to see if they will obey the Great King, and keep the conditions of the treaty that they have taken at Gilgal (Joshua 5.1-12) and Ebal/Gerizim (Joshua 8.30-35).
5. What does this passage tell us about the promises of God? (45)
  - Not one of the promises of God can fail.
  - He is faithful to his promises. (Ps 145.13)

#### Lessons:

- A. Many people in this world are seeking a rest in this life but not finding it in the right place.
  - They think that if only they could get out of debt, and get a nice cottage, etc. then they will have rest.
  - They think that if they can save enough for a fine retirement, then they will have rest.
  - But in this life there can never be true rest, especially for those who make material things the measure of meaning.
- B. The Israelites only found a temporary rest. God left challenges for them to see if they would remain faithful.
  - Victory is not to be found in this life, but in eternity (1 Cor 15.53-57).
- C. Land (heaven), rest, and victory (peace) are only to be found in serving God obediently to the end ... the very end.
  - We are to finish the work God has given us, Just as Joshua finished in every detail the work he was given through Moses.



## 17 The Eastern Tribes Return Home

### Objective

- To apply the historical examples to the regulation of discipline and worship in the Church.

### The Accomplishment (Joshua 22.1-4)

1. What did Joshua do with the 2.5 tribes? (1-2)
2. What had the 2.5 tribes done in obedience? (2-3)
3. What could they do once they had completed the duty that they had sworn to fulfil? (4)

#### Lessons:

- A. We see the importance of keeping vows and following through on our promises.
- B. We see the importance of persevering in the work of the Lord. Rest is not obtained until the work is complete.

### The Advice (Joshua 22.5-8)

1. What two things did Joshua do for the Eastern tribes before they headed home?
2. What was the first charge Joshua gave the 2.5 tribes? (5)
3. What was the second charge? (8)
4. In addition to the charges, what did Joshua do for the 2.5 tribes as he sent them home? (6, 7) How?

**The Altar** (Joshua 22.9-10)

1. What did the returning tribes do? (10-11)
2. What specifically would have made this construction significant, distinct, or obvious. How was it know to be an altar?
3. What are we told about this altar? (11)

**The Accusation** (Joshua 22.11-20)

1. What did the rest of Israel do? (12) Why?
2. Did the Israelites jump to a conclusion?
3. Before they went to war what did they do? (13-14)
4. What did the Israelites accuse the Eastern tribes of doing? (15-20)
5. What did the tribes of Israel fear would be the consequences of this rebellion?
6. What did the ten tribes assume? (19)

**Lessons:**

- A. Consider carefully if there are perversions of worship in the Church today.
- B. Encourage the civil magistrate to stop pagan idolatry in our society.
- C. Look for peaceful means of dealing with sins before jumping to drastic action. Explore the cause of the problem and understand it.
- D. Leaders in one part of the Church are to take the responsibility for the purity of the rest of the Church.

**The Answer** (Joshua 22.21-29)

1. What was the claim of the Eastern tribes? (22-23) Was it true?

2. Did the 2.5 tribes do wrong in building an altar?

Lessons:

- A. There is always a danger in taking unilateral action within a corporate body; such as a Church.

- B. The Regulative Principle of Worship is exhibited in the actions and comments of Israel

3. What is the form of the Eastern tribes reply?
4. Is this of an example of misusing the name of God?
5. What were the reasons the Eastern tribes gave for building the altar?
6. How did they conclude their answer? (29)

Lessons:

- A. Oaths and vows, when used properly, are serious and are to be taken seriously.
- B. We should look for alternate ways to accomplish goals and choose ones that do not cause offence.
- C. We see the seriousness of jumping to conclusions or taking things at face value when there is a need to understand the motives.

### **The Acceptance** (Joshua 22.30-34)

1. What were the reactions of the leaders of the 10 tribes?
2. What did they call the altar?

Lesson:

- A. Memorials are important to remind us of God and his work. BUT, we must be careful not to create our own without God's authorization.

3. How does this entire episode give us a model for dealing with Church discipline?

## Leader's Notes

### The Accomplishment (Joshua 22.1-4)

1. What did Joshua do with the 2.5 tribes? (1-2)
  - Summoned and commended them for obeying Moses and himself.
  - Why were they summoned? The work was completed and now it was time to return home.
  - What was the work that they had done, and the command that they had kept? Num 32.16-27; Dt 3.18
2. What had the 2.5 tribes done in obedience? (2-3)
  - Obeyed everything
  - Kept at it for a long time
  - Not deserted their brothers
  - Carried on the mission of the LORD.
3. What could they do once they had completed the duty that they had sworn to fulfil? (4)
  - Return home.

#### Lessons:

- A. We see the importance of keeping vows and following through on our promises.
- B. We see the importance of persevering in the work of the Lord. Rest is not obtained until the work is complete.
  - 2 Tim 4.6-8.

### The Advice (Joshua 22.5-8)

1. What two things did Joshua do for the Eastern tribes before they headed home?
  - He gave them charges. (vv. 5, 8)
  - He blessed them. (vv. 6, 7)
2. What was the first charge Joshua gave the 2.5 tribes? (5)
  - Obey the commands of God.
  - How do we show love for God?
    - By keeping his commandments. Dt 6.5, 6 (notice the use of Dt 6.5 in Joshua 22.5); Mt 22.37; 1 Jn 4.19-21; Jn 14.15.
  - How does this contrast with the view of many in the church?
    - Their view is that somehow you can love God without obeying.
    - How do you show love? By saying words, singing simple choruses (a church will have a praise service but ignore the explicit command of God to keep his Sabbath holy)?
    - How can we show love for God today?
  - What are the commands we are to keep?
    - Ten Commandments (all Ten!).
    - Are those the only commands that we are to keep? Commands given by Jesus (e.g., Mt 5.21-48).
    - Is that all? What about the commands in the OT (e.g., Gen 9.4-7)?
    - What about the civil laws in the Mosaic Law?

- How many of you believe that it is wrong for a person to kidnap another person?
- How many of you believe that it is wrong for a brother to have sex with his sister?
- How many of you believe that it is wrong for a person to have sex with an animal?
- How many of you believe it is wrong for a merchant to use an inaccurate scale to charge you for a meat purchase?

Where does Jesus speak against kidnapping, incest and bestiality, false weights and measures, etc?

He does not, in his spoken words while on earth. The law against kidnapping is found in Dt 24.7, the laws against incest are found in Lev 18.1-22 and Lev 20.10-21. The laws against bestiality are found in Lev 18.23 [same chapter in which homosexuality is condemned]. Laws regarding weights and measures in Lev 19.35-36. Many in the Church today would dismiss Deuteronomy and Leviticus as Mosaic Law and say that the laws in them were given to the OT Jews and have no relevance today. Yet, as we have demonstrated, at least *some* of the laws in the Mosaic Law still have relevance today.

- The modern Church has been too quick to dismiss the OT laws and has not grappled with developing principles for determining which laws and under what conditions these laws are to be applied under the NT economy.
  - We have to accept as a basic principle the view that the OT laws still apply to us (unless specifically done away with by Christ). Mt 5.17-19
  - If we do not accept the Bible's application of the Ten Commandments as given through the civil case laws, then what will be our standard? Either God or man? Theonomy or autonomy? There are only two choices.
  - As a practical consideration, many of the laws for running a society in a God honouring way are found only in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. We are left with a difficult and uncertain situation if we reject the OT as normative for Christians today; we are left with arbitrariness.

### 3. What was the second charge? (8)

- Divide the plunder with the rest of their brothers.
- What plunder? (Joshua 8.27 contrast with Joshua 6.18; Joshua 7.11)
  - The plunder of all the cities except Jericho was theirs for the taking.
- Who were the ones that they were to share the plunder with?
  - Those who had remained behind.
  - Who were these? Weren't all the men of the 2.5 tribes to cross over and fight? Dt 3.18
  - It may be that the soldiers went across for the initial conquest of Jericho, but then most returned to the other side to their homelands.
    - The conquest would have taken a long time (Joshua 11.18). How long?
    - Joshua 14.7  $40 + 38$  (Dt 2.14) = 78 and  $40 + 45$  (Joshua 14.10). Thus  $45 - 38 = 7$  years.
    - From Sihon/Og to Hebron. Acts 13.19, 20 [= 450] years (Gen 15.13  $400 + 40 + 10$ ); i.e., 7-10 years.
  - Another way to think of this is to consider the size of Israel's army, and to think what it would have been like to keep them all in battle formation for 7 years. see Num 26.2, 51.
  - We need to consider how war was fought: seasons (1 Chron 20.1) and the necessity of feeding their families etc.
  - The whole army probably did not stay across the river. A portion every month or every few months would go on duty; the rest were on leave to farm and care for their families.
- Why did Joshua give them this instruction about sharing the plunder with the rest of the people? Num 31.25-27; example of David (1 Sam 30.21-22).

- What can we learn from this example of the plunder?
  - There are different roles for everyone in the Church, and no one is to think that one person's role is more or less important than another's. 1 Cor 12.12-31
- 4. In addition to the charges, what did Joshua do for the 2.5 tribes as he sent them home? (vv. 6, 7) How?
  - He blessed them.
  - How did he bless them? We are not told, but he may have followed examples of earlier patriarchs:
    - Num 6.24-27
    - Gen 48.19-22; Gen 49.3-4 (see Judges 5.15-16)
    - Dt 33.6, 13-17, 20-21
  - What was their blessing? Plunder and Land (which was among the best).
  - How significant is the blessing to them? Gen 27.37; Gen 48.19; blessings considered to be assured.
  - What do we notice about the position of the blessing relative to the work to be performed. Blessing comes from obedience; follows upon the obedience. Compare Joshua 14.13.
  - Blessing comes at the end of life for those left to carry on the work. Ps 24.3-5; Ps 67.1, 5-7; Ps 115.11-13; Ps 133.1-3.

### **The Altar (Joshua 22.9-10)**

1. What did the returning tribes do? (10-11)
  - Built an altar at Geliloth in Canaan. Either Gilgal (LXX) or a site east of Shiloh along the Jordan [compare, Joshua 18.17; Joshua 13.2] - on the West side of the Jordan in Canaan.
2. What specifically would have made this construction significant, distinct, or obvious. How was it know to be an altar?
  - Note v. 28, replica.
  - Generally to be made of earth or uncut stones (Ex 20.24, 25).
  - Large (see Ex 20.26) because:
    - Large portions of animals such as oxen had to fit on an altar, and because steps could (in theory) be built up to it.
    - The dimensions of the altar for the tabernacle (which was of bronze and was to be carried, are given in Ex 27.1 as 1.3m high x 2.3m long and wide). This box would have been set on a base of field stone and dirt.
    - It was not just a pile of stones, but a layered construction with a ramp.
    - There may have been other aspects such as horns. It is possible that the 2.5 tribes included the bronze portion in their construction.
3. What are we told about this altar? (11)
  - It was imposing and impressive.
  - Why are we told this?
  - Easier to understand why Israel would consider it to be a rival to the one in Shiloh.

### **The Accusation (Joshua 22.11-20)**

1. What did the rest of Israel do? (12) Why?
  - They gathered for war.
  - Why did they get ready for war? They suspected that the Eastern tribes were setting up a rival worship to that at Shiloh.

- But why was taking up the sword the way of dealing with the problem? Dt 13.12-18. Judges 20.1-48 gives another of example of Israel purging evil from their midst with war.
  - Why didn't they just write off the 2.5 tribes on the Eastern side of the Jordan and say: "well, they are off-base, let's make sure we stay pure?" They had a broad concern for the people of God.
2. Did the Israelites jump to a conclusion?
- Apparently.
  - What hint do we have that this is the case. Notice v. 11 tells us that the altar was on the Israelite's side of the river. This seems to indicate that it was truly a memorial, and not for worship.
  - It was possibly wrong for them to have built the altar without the instruction of God. But their motives appear to be right (we will see more later when they are confronted by the leaders of Israel.)
3. Before they went to war what did they do? (13-14)
- They sent leaders to the other side of the Jordan to:
    - find out what was really going on,
    - determine the real motive, and
    - convince them that their attempts at setting up a false form of worship were wrong.
4. What did the Israelites accuse the Eastern tribes of doing? (15-20)
- Accused the Eastern tribes of idolatry.
  - What were the specific charges? Why did they consider it idolatry?
    - They considered the Eastern tribes to be breaking faith (16). In what way? Establishing their own worship, without God's authorization. (Dt 4.2, 3 [note Peor]; Dt 12.30-32).
    - They felt the Eastern tribes were turning away from God (16, 18). How? By disobedience. Possibly by setting up an alternate God. If they were not worshipping in God's way, they were worshipping in their own way. This is as much idolatry as worshipping a stone.
    - They believed the Eastern tribes were committing the sin of rebellion (17, 18, 19); same as the sin of Peor (Num 25.1-5, Moabite worship of Baal at Peor).
    - They accused them of committing the sin of Achan (20) who stole glory, rights, and property from God.
    - Notice the use of Peor and Achan. For a time they were aware of recent history. But they soon forgot it. History is important for us. We don't learn the lessons of history, and if we do, we soon forget them.
5. What did the tribes of Israel fear would be the consequences of this rebellion?
- Bringing a plague (17) and discipline/wrath of God (20) on the rest of Israel.
  - The sins of individuals in the Church affect the whole body. We saw this with Achan's sin and the effect it had when they tried to attack Ai. Achan rebelled, but he was not the only one who suffered.
  - Notice that they said that they still had not been cleansed from the sin of Peor? (17) What is meant by this?
    - Wasn't the plague, which killed 24,000 people, the punishment? Once the punishment is meted out isn't the sin paid for?
    - It is possible that the situation refers to Num 25.16 (Dt 2.9, 14, 16; Dt 23.3-8). The Moabites were considered as enemies, and had not yet been punished (2 Sam 8.2, 12; 1 Chron 18.2, 11). They were supposed to have been put to the sword by Israel (Eastern 2.5 tribes!) but had not been, and in fact were never (compare: Jer 48.16; Ezk 25.8-11). Joshephus indicates Moab was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (582 BC).

6. What did the ten tribes assume? (19)
- They assumed that the Eastern tribes were trying to solve a problem. The inference or assumption is that they put up an altar on western side to avoid the pagan defilement on the eastern side since they had not yet inquired about the reason and may have been jumping to a conclusion.
  - What did they mean by telling the Eastern tribes that if the land east of the Jordan was defiled they should go across to western side.
    - Not to worship, but to live.
    - Why would they say this? They were trying to keep the tribes together.
    - There may have been a jealousy over the 2.5 tribes having their own territory.
  - Was the land on the east side really **more** defiled?
    - Bashan and Ammorites; and Ammon, Moab, Edom lived on this side.
    - The first two were defeated by Israel (Num 21.21ff) and the other three were half brothers of the Israelites.
    - There was not really much difference from the rest of the Canaanites whose worship was polytheistic, wicked in sexual terms, included child sacrifice, etc.
    - The nations had been purged and idols sites had been cleansed.

#### Lessons:

- A. Consider carefully if there are perversions of worship in the Church today.
- Actions we clearly can take:
    - Make sure we stay away from false forms of worship.
    - Excommunicate (expel) those who bring false worship into a congregation and refuse to repent.
    - Find ways to call the Church to account for false worship. We have a responsibility to our brothers in the Church and should work for their repentance as did the tribes on the West side of the Jordan.
- B. Encourage the civil magistrate to stop pagan idolatry in our society.
- An idolater (e.g., Moslem, Hindu, Mormon) would not likely be in our assemblies. Is the state to punish them.
  - Why doesn't the Church today demand that the civil magistrate stop pagan idolatry? Why does the Church today think that it knows better than God what it should be demanding from the state? Is God any less offended?
  - What if the pagan ritual involved killing a child (e.g., Lev 20.2)? What if it involved a spirit medium (Lev 20.27); blasphemy (Lev 24.16); Sabbath breaking (Num 15.26); idolatry (Dt 13.10; Dt 17.5). Why would we stop killing a child but make a distinction for the other things that God hates?
  - We don't take idolatry seriously because we really don't believe what God says in Ex 20.3-11. "... will not hold anyone guiltless ..." To break any of these commands was a capital crime.
  - Is the civil magistrate to "take up the sword" against those who worship falsely? This is a difficult question; but the answer is not as obvious as most people today would assume. Idolatry is still an abomination before God.
  - WCF 23. "God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world hath ordained civil magistrates ... armed them with the power of the sword ... for the punishment of evildoers (Rom 13.1-4; 1 Pt 2.13, 14). ... that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed." (Is 49.23; Ps 122.9; Ezra 7.23-28; Lev 24.16; Dt 13.5, 6, 12; 2 Kings 18.4; [1 Chron 13.1-9; 2 Kings 23.1-26]; 2 Chron 34.33; 2 Chron 15.12, 13)
  - Consider the relevance of Psalm 2.12 with respect to this question. Who are kings of the earth to obey? Whose laws are they to enforce? What will happen to them if they don't?
- C. Look for peaceful means of dealing with sins before jumping to drastic action. Explore the cause of the



- problem and understand it.
- D. Leaders in one part of the Church are to take the responsibility for the purity of the rest of the Church.
- The leadership of the Reformed Church today should be making a serious attempt to call the rest of the Church to repentance. The attitude of many in the Reformed context is to write-off the rest of the Church.
  - Note that the Israelites were willing to go to war (and if necessary lose lives) for the cause. Most of us certainly don't have this kind of concern for the Church of Christ.
  - What other things should we be doing?

### The Answer (Joshua 22.21-29)

1. What was the claim of the Eastern tribes? (22-23) Was it true?
  - Their claim was that their actions in no way constituted rebellion, nor was it for any form of offering or sacrifice.
  - Without looking ahead, what in v. 22 gives you an indication of their truthfulness?
    - Their emphasis before God that they had not rebelled.
    - Also, there is a hint in v. 11; Since the altar was on the Israelite's side of the Jordan, this seems to indicate that it was truly a memorial, and not to be used for worship.
2. Did the 2.5 tribes do wrong in building an altar?
  - Where are there instructions about only one altar? It is not clear that there is. Not Ex 20.22-26.
  - It was assumed (Joshua 22.19, 29) that with the altar in the Tabernacle being in place, other altars were not to be built.
  - It might have been a wiser strategy for the Eastern tribes to have sought guidance from the Urim and Thummim and counsel of the priests and leaders of Israel, before they built the altar. This may have eliminated the questions and uncertainty and given them clear direction.

### Lessons:

- A. There is always a danger in taking unilateral action within a corporate body such as a Church.
  - The action can be misunderstood and the action could be done in error.
  - The wise course is to seek the counsel of the Church leaders and the guidance of a group of elders.
- B. The Regulative Principle of Worship is exhibited in the actions and comments of Israel.
  - They knew that to add anything to, or subtract anything from, worship of God is wrong. (Dt 4.2; Dt 12.30-32)
  - They took the view that unless God has specifically instituted something in worship then they were not to do it.
  - Note that the 2.5 tribes claimed (and they are to be believed in this) that the purpose of the altar was not for worship.
  - This is the same claim made by others: e.g., with the use of pictures of Jesus (ignoring the question of whether or not it is right to have pictures of Jesus) which at first may be nothing more than visual aids for Children, then aids in worship, and then objects of worship.
  - Man's tendency is to drift in the direction of disobedience in worship.
  - The attitude of the 10 tribes might be a wise one to take. We must be extra careful to preserve the worship of God and not expand the boundaries.
3. What is the form of the Eastern tribes reply?
  - A oath: swearing before God, in God's name.
  - What kind of oath? A self-maledictory oath (end v. 22, end of v. 23).
4. Is this of an example of misusing the name of God?

- They did not take the name of God in vain. What they said was a deadly serious oath.
  - Is it okay for us to take an oath today (e.g., swearing allegiance, promising to tell the truth in court)?
  - How do we explain this in light of Jesus instruction in the Sermon on the Mount? (Mt 5.33-37)
    - The context shows us that Jesus is speaking in an absolute and hyperbolic form (e.g., plucking out eye, cutting off arm [5.29-30]).
    - People had (have) trivialized oath taking, and so Jesus was pointing out the need for it to be done only in a serious context. When we trivialize oath, we take the name of God in vain.
    - The ones Jesus criticised were also committing perjury by rationalizing their oaths—by drawing a distinction between types of oaths they were taking God's name in vain.
    - Consider Biblical examples: God to Abraham (Gen 24.7); Abraham sending Eliazer (Gen 24.2-4); Jesus did not denounce using God's name in a serious oath (Mt 26.63-4), only when God's name was invoked did he answer; Paul (Rom 9.1; 2 Cor 1.23); God himself took an oath in his name (Heb 6.16, 17) and the writer justifies oath taking.
    - Clearly Jesus is teaching:
      - To use the name(s) of God in casual language and swearing is anathema to God.
      - To use God's creation as a substitute, as a form of swearing an oath, is wrong.
      - To use oaths in casual conversation is not to be done. Oaths are a serious matter for a serious time.
      - Vows are to be taken seriously (e.g., business contracts, courts of law, vows of office, etc.).
    - WCF 22: “A lawful oath is part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth ... The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence: therefore to swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred (Mt 5.34, 37). ... [i]t is a sin to refuse an oath touching any thing that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority.”
5. What were the reasons the Eastern tribes gave for building the altar?
- (24-25) Out of fear that they might be cut off from God and the rest of Israel by the other tribes.
    - This was not an unfounded concern; it was based on an understanding of human nature.
    - Distance and a lack of communication can cause differences.
    - The Jordan was a psychological boundary more than a physical one.
    - Examples of modern equivalent: language differences in Canada; colour of person's skin.
  - (26-27) As a witness between the two sides.
    - Notice that it was on the Western side of the Jordan.
    - If they had wanted to have an altar so that could offer sacrifices on the east side of the Jordan, they would have built the altar on the east side. It was of little use to them on the west.
    - By the time they had crossed the river to offer sacrifices they may as well have gone on to Shiloh (later to Jerusalem).
    - It was a declaration of their right to be part of the ceremonial system of the rest of Israel.
  - (27-28) A memorial visible to generations to come.
    - A memorial is for coming generations. War memorials and Memorial/Remembrance Day remind us of the horrors of war; a war which we did not fight.
    - The use of memorials was something they were familiar with. Joshua had built memorials previously, Joshua 4.20; Joshua 7.26; Joshua 8.29; Joshua 8.32; Joshua 10.27; with one still to come (Joshua 24.26) for a complete number (7) of memorials.

6. How did they conclude their answer? (29)
- They re-emphasized their commitment to God and to the proper observance of his worship.

Lessons:

- A. Oaths and vows, when used properly, are serious and are to be taken seriously.
- B. We should look for alternate ways to accomplish goals and choose ones that do not cause offence.
- For example it probably would have been wiser to set up a pile of stones as a cairn, taking a lesson from Joshua, and not as an altar.
- C. We see the seriousness of jumping to conclusions or taking things at face value when there is a need to understand the motives.
- With the Gibeonites Israel sinned by not looking into the matter in more detail.
  - Here again they jumped to conclusions. But this time they did examine the situation.
  - A lot of problems in the Church are caused by people taking things at face value and not understanding the motives behind the actions. Can you think of examples?

**The Acceptance (Joshua 22.30-34)**

1. What were the reactions of the leaders of the 10 tribes?
- They accepted the explanation of the 2.5 tribes.
  - They called off the holy-war.
  - They rejoiced that the 2.5 tribes were trying to be faithful to the will of God.
  - They were glad that there was no sin in Israel.
  - They reported their findings to the people.
2. What did they call the altar?
- “A Witness Between Us that the LORD is God.”
  - What can we learn from this?
    - The memorial was left in place. This is an implicit acceptance that their motives were proper, even if their actions were of questionable nature.

Lesson:

- A. Memorials are important to remind us of God and his work. BUT, we must be careful not to create our own without God's authorization.
- The actions of tribes on the western side of the Jordan emphasize this concern.
  - What named memorials has God given us?
    - The Lord's Supper and the Sabbath.
3. How does this entire episode give us a model for dealing with Church discipline?
- Compare with Mt 18.15-17.
  - We see the importance of confronting an individual as quickly as possible with an (apparent) sin.
  - We are to deal through the leaders of the Church as required.
  - We are to listen to the explanations from all parties.
  - If the brother who has sinned repents, or is cleared of sin, then he is to be restored to fellowship with rejoicing.
  - If he refuses to hear, then we are to be prepared for ‘war’. In our context this means being prepared to defend God’s cause and expelling the person who refuses to repent.



## 18 Joshua's Farewell to the Leaders

### Objective

- To teach us that we should reflect back on our recent life-history to see God working out his promises in our lives and to encourage us to live lives that will please him.

### Recollections/History (Joshua 23.1-5)

1. After a long time (v. 1) ... How long was it?
2. What are we told that the people were given? (1)
3. Who did he summon? (2)
4. What are the key messages that he wants them to remember? (3-5)
5. Who does he say did the conquering? (3, 4)

#### Lessons:

- A. Learn the lessons of history. Much of the Bible is presented to us as history.
- B. The importance of having God as our personal God; God of our family, congregation, and nation (the three institutions that God established).
- C. God is a promise keeping God (in terms of both negative and positive promises).

### Rules/Charges (Joshua 23.6-11)

1. What are the charges that he gives the leaders of the people?

**Lessons:**

- A. We learn of the importance of separation from the world in key areas of our lives.
- B. God is the only true God. We are not to accept or go after any substitute.
- C. Again we see the importance of obeying God in order to show him our love. Jesus says: "If you love me, you will keep my commands." (Jn 14.15)

**Reminders/Warnings** (Joshua 23.9-13)

1. In addition to giving charges (9-11) Joshua is doing something else, what is it?
2. What are the other consequences of disobedience that he warns about? (12-13)
3. Overall, what do these warnings tell us about the Nation of Israel staying in the promised land?

**Recapitulation/Summary** (Joshua 23.14-16)

1. What does he mean by the expression 'way of all the earth?' (14)
2. What is the structure that we find in his conclusion?
3. What does he emphasize in summing up?
4. What do we learn about Joshua from this account?

## Leader's Notes

### Recollections/History (Joshua 23.1-5)

1. After a long time (v. 1) ... How long was it?
  - See Joshua 24.29. Joshua was 110 when he died.
  - If he was about eighty when they came into the promised land then this is thirty years later.
  - We saw that the conquest took 7-10 years.<sup>4</sup>
  - Joshua got to live in the land for about 20 years before he was called from this world to his eternal Canaan.
  - Contrast this with Moses who did not get to live in the promised land (Dt 32.48-52; Dt 34.1-6).
2. What are we told that the people were given? (1)
  - Rest.
  - What does the passage mean when it says that they had rest?
    - We saw previously that it means no longer having to fight continually.<sup>5</sup> They could go about the domestic duties of raising livestock, crops, and families.
    - The Hebrew *sabat* (from which we get Sabbath) is not used here. The Hebrew word (*nuahl*) used here (translated *rest*) does not mean rest in the sense of retiring from work and spiritual contemplation, but rather it means 'being settled' (e.g., Gen 8.4 ark on Mt Ararat.; Ex 33.14 to Moses; Dt 3.20 to eastern tribes; 1 Chron 22.18 to David, sense of peace; 2 Kings 2.15 [spirit of Elijah on Elisha]; leave, put, place, lower down onto something, safety, etc.). It can mean resting from work, but in this sense it is the physical resting (settling onto a bed or couch, rather than the idea of stopping work).
  - Compare Heb 4.8. What is wrong with the rest spoken of in Joshua 21.44?
    - It is only temporal and physical rest.
    - It is not eternal and spiritual rest.
    - It cannot be ultimately what we are to seek.
    - Paul (or the writer of Hebrews) seems to be saying that what the people were given (rest: settlement) was not the real rest (sabbath) that they needed.
3. Who did he summon? (2)
  - The elders, leaders, judges and officials.
  - This list tells us that he brought leaders of both church and state together to obtain the blessing and the charges. Today both groups are to work together under God. Too many today feel that it is not the government's responsibility to enforce God's laws. Whose laws should be enforced if not God's? (Compare Romans 13.1-7)
  - A key consideration, is that government has to make laws. By its very nature it makes and enforces a position of morality.
  - The fundamental question is: whose morality, man's or God's?
  - The Civil magistrate is to enforce God's Law.
4. What are the key messages that he wants them to remember? (3-5)
  - You have seen ... what God has done, who fought for you ... own eyes.
    - He is not dealing with remote history. We have two sources of witness to God's works, what are they?

<sup>4</sup> See the answer to question 3 in *Issues and Riddles*, Chapter 13 The Conquest of Canaan.

<sup>5</sup> See the answer to question 7 in *Land Transaction — Reward*, Chapter 14 Division of the Land.

- General revelation in Providence — history and personal circumstances. We also have seen.(see Dt 30.2).
  - Special revelation in Scripture.
  - What is the historical perspective of this exhortation? Compare with 24.2 ff.
    - Perspective of the short term history since coming into the land.
    - There is no excuse for them if they drift away. They have the evidence immediately and the witness, and it will stand against them.
  - LORD your God ...
    - Personal God, on their side.
    - Note that in one sense a non-believer can call God his God. In what sense can he? As a creature of God: Acts 17.24-28; Phil 2.10, 11.
    - In what sense can he not call God his God? In a personal relationship: Jn 20.28.
    - How is 'your God' used in this instance? God who chose Israel in the covenant. Ex 6.6-8; Gen 17.7; Ex 34.9. Not necessarily a saving relationship.
  - The allotment ...
    - What was the allotment?
    - Why is it significant that Joshua specifies the allotment?
    - He refers back to Gen 15.18-19.
    - He is pointing out that God is faithful to his promises.
  - God will drive out ...
    - What will he do? He will drive out the remainder of the enemies.
    - What is the significance of this? They are called to trust based on the examples of the past ... believe, because of what he has done.
5. Who does he say did the conquering? (3, 4)
- Lord drove out
  - I conquered
  - What is the significance of this?
    - God and man as co-workers.
    - God does not need man to accomplish his purposes, but he chooses to work through man.
    - It reinforces the balance between man's responsibility and God's sovereignty.

#### Lessons:

- A. Learn the lessons of history. Much of the Bible is presented to us as history.
- God could have written a systematic theology text book to communicate doctrine.
  - But he has determined that the primary way he would communicate to us is through inscripturated history (lessons of life).
  - The key lessons of history are:
    - God is acting providentially.
    - We are in a covenantal relationship with God.
    - We are to be covenant keepers or we will suffer the consequences.
- B. The importance of having God as our personal God; God of our family, congregation, and nation (the three institutions that God established).
- C. God is a promise keeping God (in terms of both negative and positive promises).
- He has demonstrated this from the beginning when he promised Adam and Eve that they would die if they ate the fruit and later that he would send the Messiah.
  - We have to believe in some key promises yet to be fulfilled:
    - Christ will return.
    - There is a Judgement to come.
    - There will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust.
    - There will be Heaven for those who have believed that God is a promise-keeping God.



**Rules/Charges** (Joshua 23.6-11)

1. What are the charges that he gives the leaders of the people?
  - Be strong (6). How?
    - Obey, etc., as follows in v. 6.
    - Our strength is in the Lord. (Ps 18.29; jump over wall, defeat enemy.)
    - Armour in Eph 6.11-17.
    - Notice that he is applying the words ‘be strong’ that were given to him. (Dt 31.7, 23; Joshua 1.7-8)
      - Is he in a position to place this kind of injunction on the people?
      - Was he an example of strength?
  - Obey all the words written in Book of Law. (6)
    - What is the Book of the Law? Deuteronomy or Pentateuch
    - For us it is the Bible OT (2 Tim 3.16) & NT. Note Mt 5.17-20; Mt 7.21, 23, Jesus a second Joshua.
    - What does “turn to right or left” mean? Add or subtract. (Joshua 1.7-8; Joshua 22.5; Dt 6.6-7)
  - Not associate with nations that remain. (7, 12)
    - What does he mean by associate with them?
      - Not form confederacies (12) or intermarry (12); be separate, not unequally yoked. (2 Cor 6.14)
      - How should we apply this in our context? (1 Cor 5.9-11).
    - Not invoke names of their Gods or serve them.
      - What did this mean in their day?
      - What does it mean in our day?
      - What would be the consequences? (2 Ki 17.7-8ff)
      - How should we apply this in our cultural context?
  - What were they to do instead (8)? Hold fast to (your) God.
    - How? As above.
  - What is his concluding charge?
    - Be careful to love the LORD your God?
    - How do we show love for God? “If you love me you will obey what I command.” (Jn 14.15)

## Lessons:

- A. We learn of the importance of separation from the world in key areas of our lives.
  - It is very easy for us to drift into sin when we associate with sin.
  - There is a tendency among us to see how close we can walk to the line, flirting with sin. We need to steer well clear of sin to ensure that we avoid it.
- B. God is the only true God. We are not to accept or go after any substitute.
  - Remind yourself of this every day.
- C. Again we see the importance of obeying God in order to show him our love. Jesus says: “If you love me, you will keep my commands.” (Jn 14.15)

**Reminders/Warnings** (Joshua 23.9-13)

1. In addition to giving charges (9-11) Joshua is doing something else, what is it?
  - Giving them a warning.

- What is the purpose of the warning?
  - To show them that if the nations can't resist God, then the Jews won't be able to either.
2. What are the other consequences of disobedience that he warns about? (12-13)
- If you turn away and associate with the nations, which told not to do, God will no longer drive out before you the nations.
  - Nations are snares and traps. How? Ex 23.33; Ex 34.12; Dt 7.16
  - Nations whips, thorns. How? Punishment
  - Perish from the land
3. Overall, what do these warnings tell us about the Nation of Israel staying in the promised land?
- It was conditional on obedience.
  - What is the analogy for the Christian life?
  - Can we lose our salvation if we stray from obedience?
    - If not, what then are the consequences?
    - Not ultimate, but temporal punishment.
  - What else might a drifting from obedience show?
    - That we are not/were never were part of the household of faith.
    - Faith is exhibited by our works. (Mt 7.15-23; Jn 14.15; James 2.17.)

### Recapitulation/Summary (Joshua 23.14-16)

1. What does he mean by the expression 'way of all the earth?' (14)
- To dust he shall return. (Gen 3.19; Job 7.21; Job 10.9; Job 34.15; Ps 22.15; Ps 90.3) He is predicting that it is time for him to die.
  - What are some of the expressions that people use today for dying? 'passed away' ...
  - Compare Joshua's expression with 'rested with his fathers' (1 Kings 11.43) and Jesus'/Paul's expression (Jn 11.11; 1 Thess 4.13).
  - What is significant about Joshua expression?
    - Gives an indication that he understood why men die—because of sin (an allusion to the fall and the curse).
    - Shows that he understood that death affected all mankind; no one escapes.
    - He tells us that men do not have an answer to the problem of death.
    - It is found in the context of the rest of the verse that deals with the Lord's promises.
      - This shows us that he believed there to be more than just dust.
      - How did he know? (See Job 19.25-27)
2. What is the structure that we find in his conclusion?
- Structure:
    - Recollections/History (14)
    - Reminders/Warnings (15, 16)
    - Rules/Charges (16)
    - The same sections as we see in the chapter as a whole; although the order is different.
  - We see the structure of a covenant document.
  - It is important for us to have repetition because of our tendency to drift away from God.
    - We need reminders.
    - A good teacher provides summaries in forms which reinforce the key ideas without restating them in identical form.
3. What does he emphasize in summing up?
- You personally know (14)

- Promises (14)
  - Curses (15) are as sure as the blessings if you violate the covenant: the blessings and curses of Gerizim and Ebal
  - What is the condition? (16)
    - Keep/violate the covenant.
    - What covenant? Covenant of Life.
  - What is the key to obedience?
    - Serve God and him only.
    - This is a key failure throughout history and in our culture.
  - These are his key message. He has yet to assemble the people and bless them one last time in a great act of covenant renewal. But before he does, he charges the leaders on their own. He knows that the commitment of the leadership is important as he goes into the meeting with the people.
4. What do we learn about Joshua from this account?
- He did not lose his focus.
  - To the end he was concerned about obeying God and fulfilling the obligations of the Covenant.
  - He was a faithful man, fully committed to obedience; persevering to the end.
  - He finished the work of Moses, which Moses failed to complete because of his sin.
  - He believed God to be God; a God of blessings and curses who keeps his promises.
    - This is the sum of Gospel: Believe and act in accordance with that belief.

## 19 The Covenant Renewed at Shechem

### Objective

To encourage us reflect on our lives and see that we must live a life that is consistent with our confession of faith.

### Preamble (Calling the People) (Joshua 24.1-2a)

1. Who did Joshua assemble at Shechem?
2. How does this differ from the assembly we saw in chapter 23?
3. Why at Shechem? What did we discover about this place in chapter 8?

### Prologue (Recitation of History) (Joshua 24.2b-13)

1. How did Joshua introduce his charges to the people (2-13)?
2. How far back did he take this history?
3. What are the key events that he selects for his summary?
4. What is a common theme that runs through these seven events mentioned by Joshua? Why?
5. What are the seven contrasts Joshua sets up?

#### Lessons:

- A. We should periodically reflect on God's work in history and understand the Providence of God at work.
- B. We should see that God will not be mocked by the ways of pagans. (Is 44.6-11)
- C. We should reflect on the fact that God is the only true God.

**Provisions (Covenant Stipulations)** (Joshua 24.14-15)

1. What are the charges that Joshua gives to the people?
2. What choice does Joshua set before the people?
3. What is the note of irony in the choice of gods he presents before the people?
4. What is Joshua's conclusion about himself and his family?

**Profession (Creedal Statement)** (Joshua 24.16-18)

1. How do the people respond?

Lesson:

A. It is important that we 'walk the talk'.

**Product (Blessings and Curses)** (Joshua 24.19-20)

1. How does Joshua show the people that they are to take seriously their profession?

Lesson:

A. This warning from Joshua teaches us the importance of living a life consistent with our confession of faith.

**Promise (Ratification Before Witnesses)** (Joshua 24.21-27)

1. In this section what is the overall tone of the people's response?
2. What did Joshua do in response? (22)
3. What specific instructions did Joshua give, and actions did he take to ratify the

Covenant?

**Passings (Three Burials)** (Joshua 24.28-33)

1. What was Joshua's final act?
2. How old was Joshua when he died? What is the significance?
3. What are the three burials which are mentioned in this passage?
4. Why are these three burials mentioned?
5. What are we told in each case about the burials?
6. What is the significance of the burial of Joseph's bones?

**Lessons:**

- A. That this earth and habitat is not our home and final place of resting (whether in peace and prosperity in this life or in death).
- B. We are to look forward to our inheritance which is in the New Heavens and Earth and will be the eternal home of our resurrected persons.

**Postscript (Lessons in Faithfulness)**

1. We come to the end of Joshua's life and the Book of Joshua. But there is one verse in the last section of the book that we skipped until now. Which one?
2. What does this verse do in the Biblical narrative? Compare 24.28, 29, 31 with Judges 2:6-8.
3. What did the Israelites do after the death of Joshua? (Judges 1.1)

4. What word was spoken by Joshua? (1 Ki 16:34) What does this comparison tell us?
5. What is the meaning of Nehemiah 8:17?
6. What was important from the life of Joshua from the perspective of Stephen? What was not? (Acts 7:45)
7. What is the lesson from the life of Joshua in Hebrews 4:8?
8. What is mentioned, and what is not, in Hebrews 11.30-31? Why?
9. What three lessons do we learn from a study of Joshua, a faithful man?

## Leader's Notes

### Preamble (Calling the People) (Joshua 24.1-2a)

1. Who did Joshua assemble at Shechem?
  - All the tribes and all the people, including the leaders.
2. How does this differ from the assembly we saw in chapter 23?
  - In chapter 23 he gave the charge only to the leaders, here he includes all the people.
3. Why at Shechem? What did we discover about this place in chapter 8?
  - Shechem (Hebrew, shoulder, mountain ridge).
  - Raised altar Gen 33.20; Gen 34.25-29; buried strange gods Gen 35.1-4; Gen 48.3, 4, 22; Jotham prophesied (Judges 9.7-21).
  - Shechem/Sychar John 4.41-42 first fruits.
  - Covenant renewal. (Joshua 8.30ff)
    - The place of cursing and blessing in the context of the Covenant.
    - Joshua is taking them back to the place that they had made their Covenant vows some 20-30 years previous.
  - Most important, it is here that God promised Abraham that he would give the land to his descendants. (Gen 12.6, 7)
    - When Joshua recites the history of Israel (starting in vs 2b) he is taking the people back to the very place where God met with Abraham and promised them the land.
    - Here they stood and not one of the LORD's good promises had failed (Joshua 24.23).

### Prologue (Recitation of History) (Joshua 24.2b-13)

1. How did Joshua introduce his charges to the people (2-13)?
  - "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says." He started by claiming to be an authoritative spokesman for God. Only one who was called and appointed by God could dare to take this position.
  - He reflected on the history of their nation.
    - Why did Joshua reflect on this history? What is the structure of this section of Joshua?
    - He used a Covenant-treaty form; compare with Deuteronomy:
      - Introduction (Dt 1.1-5)
      - Preamble (Dt 1.6-4.43)
      - Historical Prologue (Dt 4.44-26.19)
      - Stipulations (Dt 27-30)
      - Ratification (Dt 31-33)
      - Leadership Succession (Dt 34.9)
2. How far back did he take this history?
  - To the time of Abraham.
  - At what specific point in Abraham's history did he begin his review?
    - The call out of Ur.
  - Why did he go to this point in history? Why not to Adam or Noah?
    - This is the point at which God began to call out of all mankind a special people; the sign of his elect nation.
    - Notice the use of the word "began" for Isaac alone is the son of promise, not Ishmael.



3. What are the key events that he selects for his summary?
  - The outline of history that Joshua gives:
    - The call of Abraham
    - The sons of Abraham/Isaac (Jacob and Esau) and their different directions, lands
    - Moses and Aaron sent to afflict the Egyptians and rescue Israel
    - The desert wanderings
    - Possession of the lands east of the Jordan with the demise of Balaam, and Balak
    - Crossing the Jordan and the defeat of Jericho
    - Defeat of the nations in Canaan
4. What is a common theme that runs through these seven events mentioned by Joshua? Why?
  - Why does he choose to rehearse these particular events?
  - What is he teaching the people?
  - In each case he sets up a contrast between the false gods of the nations through-out the ‘civilized’ world of that day and the true God.
  - Let’s consider each contrast and understand its relevance:
5. What are the seven contrasts Joshua sets up?
  - First contrast: between the gods worshipped on the other side of the river. (2, 14)
    - Which river? The Euphrates.
    - This is the first instance after Noah where we see God making a distinction between the true God and false gods. Refer to Gen 6.5.
    - Chaldeans were astrologers; their religion was primarily concerned with this world; it had a fluid concept of gods and placating the gods; it was akin to modern materialistic superstition.
    - Abraham was called to leave the gods and way of life.
    - This is the first explicit instance of the call from (out of) sin, idolatry, materialistic hedonism. [Noah’s call to build an ark was an implicit call out of sin.]
  - Second contrast: between the directions of the two sons of Isaac: Jacob and Esau. (4)
    - The first was a Covenant Keeper the latter a Covenant breaker.
    - Esau was the first to break away from the explicit statement of the Covenant of Grace. (Heb 12.16; Rom 9.13)
    - Esau went back to the gods of this world and had the pleasant land for a season. Whereas Jacob had to endure the trials and testing of Egypt.
    - Those who are in the Covenant are always being tested to see if they will stay true to the Covenant obligations or follow the way of the world Rom 1.18-23, 28 (*exchanged*, not thinking the covenant worthwhile).
  - Third contrast: the conflict between the gods of Egypt and the true God. (5-7)
    - They had a mixture of local deities with gods of nature and cosmic gods:
      - Sun (Re) the source of life, river (vegetation) god, rebirth Osiris.
      - In their religion there is an imitation of true religion and a concept of afterlife. But God showed the Egyptians and the ‘civilized’ world that he is in control. It was a form of syncretism through the introduction of falsehood, much like Islam.
    - The contrast here is between false organized religion with the only true religion.
    - The requirement is to withdraw from all false religions and to be separate. So much of modern Christianity does not take this principle to heart.
  - Fourth contrast: a passing mention of the desert wandering. (7)
    - Why is the mention of this period so brief?
    - It was very significant in their recent history, and a reminder of their sin at Peor.

- So why is there so little mention of these events? It is not required to show the contrast between the true God and the gods of the world.
- It is mentioned because it further establishes the contrast. What is the contrast that is implicit in this item of history?
  - The Golden Calf (possibly modeled on the Egyptian sacred bull Apis).
  - What is the issue here? Why is this showing a contrast between true religion and false?
  - It showing that from the true religion we are not to introduce man made elements and innovations into worship: e.g., hymns or drama.
- Fifth contrast: the conflict between the false god's and their prophets which claim to control events: blessings and curses. (8-10)
  - Balaam attempted to curse Israel. No matter how hard he tried, only words of blessing came from his mouth.
  - God is showing here that he is the one who alone can give blessings and curses.
  - His Covenant and its stipulations are real. All the other imitations are false.
  - Blessings come from God alone: Lev 25.18-21; Dt 11.26, 27; Rom 1.21 (men don't give thanks to God, so are under a curse).
  - The result of righteousness is the blessing of the Covenant. (Mal 4.5, 6 vs Mt 5.3-10)
- Sixth contrast: Baal with the true God. (11)
  - Baal was the god of the Phoenicians (Crete) in Canaan; the region of Tyre and Sidon by the sea.
  - Baal was also worshiped along the Jordan. (See Gen 10.15, 16; Gen 13.7)
  - Baal was the god of the storm and raging waters. Myths describe him in conflict with death, infertility and flood waters, emerging victorious as 'king' of the gods.
  - God showed who really is God of the floods! The god Baal of the spring floods is challenged by The God who created the waters (Gen 1.10; Ps 69.34) and can hold them back (Ps 77.13-20).
  - God gave a challenge to the false god of the Canaanites.
- Seventh contrast: Ashtoreth with the true God. (12-13)
  - Another god of Canaan was the Ashtoreth, the god of fertility and fields and fruitfulness.
  - This god could not stop the 'hornet' (panic caused by fear – 2.11, 5.1, 9.24) of the real God. (13)
  - Notice the perception of the world. (1 Kings 20.23)

#### Lessons:

- A. We should periodically reflect on God's work in history and understand the Providence of God at work.
- This requires that we:
    - understand history. Knowing the history of the world and the Church gives us a long term perspective on how God works.
    - see his working in current events.
  - This perspective will help us avoid error, not making the same mistakes that were made in the past, and will help us to maintain an optimism knowing that things are not out of control and God is working all things for his own glory.
- B. We should see that God will not be mocked by the ways of pagans. (Is 44.6-11)
- There is no God beside the true God. He has demonstrated this time and again in history.
  - The point of the historical review by Joshua was to demonstrate this unequivocally to the people. But he did not call down another miracle from Heaven to make his point. Instead he pointed them to history.
  - What is needed in our generation is not more wonders from God to prove that he is the only God. Wonders themselves will not convince Lk 16.30-31. We need to reflect on God's revelation about

- his work challenging the false gods of this world.
- C. We should reflect on the fact that God is the only true God.
- All false gods are nothing more than dreams and figments of the imagination. They are nothing more than man wanting to take the place of God.

### Provisions (Covenant Stipulations) (Joshua 24.14-15)

1. What are the charges that Joshua gives to the people?
  - Fear the LORD.
    - What does it mean to fear the LORD?
    - It means to reverence him and hold him in respect and awe.
    - It also means that we are literally to be afraid of him. (Heb 12.29)
    - The single biggest problem in our society and culture is that there is no fear of God among men. (Prov 1.22-29 [esp. vs. 29])
  - Serve him with all faithfulness.
    - How can we fear him with faithfulness?
    - Obedience to his revealed will in the scriptures.
  - Throw away the false gods.
    - Which of the 10 Commandments is applicable in this instance? 1<sup>st</sup>: “You shall have no other gods *before* (face-to-face, in presence of, instead of) me.”
2. What choice does Joshua set before the people?
  - The choice of serving the LORD or false gods.
  - How many choices are presented here? Two.
  - How many choices are there before men today? Two. ONLY two!
  - God does not place before us multiple paths. It is not a difficult decision. There are only two ways.
  - What are other examples are given in Scripture where we see the same two choices placed before man? Gen 3.1-5; 1 Kings 18.21; etc.
  - It is hard at times for us to remember this. We somehow think that we can live as the world six days of the week (sports, friends, life-style, etc.) and be one-day-a-week Christians. We need to demarcate our lives more clearly. If God is God, then we should serve him with all of our power. If he is not God, then everything is irrelevant and we may as well live as pagans.
3. What is the note of irony in the choice of gods he presents before the people?
  - Which pagan ways does he give them as an alternative to God? What is the irony?
  - What he is doing is saying which of two evils will you choose? Either way is damned. It would be as if I were to present to you today two choices: serve God, but if not decide whether you will trust in evolution or communism.
  - Why did he present them with these two alternatives to the true God? To show them that the alternatives are absurd: Where are the gods east of the River? What are the gods east of the River? What has become of the gods of the Amorites?
  - He subtly shows them that these gods are nothing. How? By saying you now live in the land of the Amorites. If the gods of the Amorites had been something, then they would have defeated you, but they are nothing, and the true God has wiped them from the face of the earth.
  - We need to find ways to confront our neighbours in this manner. They don't realize that the latest fad to replace God will fail just like the last one. They don't see the irony of their choices. They cling to their evolutionary theory, their philosophy of self-actualization, their models of reforming human behaviour through education, or their belief in the innate goodness of man ...
4. What is Joshua's conclusion about himself and his family?
  - He declares that he will stand firm for God.

- What are some observations we can make about this statement?
  - What kind of statement is it? A confession of faith, a vow of obedience before God.
  - In what forum did he make this statement? Publicly, before the assembled witnesses of the church and state.
  - In what capacity did Joshua make this statement? Whom did he represent? He made it as the head of a family and he made it on behalf of the other members of his family. What do we call this kind of confession of faith? Federal representation.
  - What is an example of this kind of confession of faith in a public setting, where the head of the household represents the members of his family? Baptism of an infant.

### Profession (Creedal Statement) (Joshua 24.16-18)

1. How do the people respond? They respond with three classes of statements:
  - **Denouncement** (16) – They say they will not forsake God to serve false gods.
    - What are they denying by this?
      - They are denying that they will forget the LORD or go after other gods. This is a serious matter.
      - They are in a legal setting where the Covenant is being renewed. God, angels, men, leaders and people are all present as witnesses.
    - Politicians, leaders, make all kinds of vows and promises.
      - What is their record?
      - It is imperative that leaders of the Church be models of consistency in this area.
    - It is as important for us to be very careful and serious when we vow not to do something as it is to vow to do something.
    - How often do we say we won't do something, or will do something, and never think of the consequences?
    - When we denounce something, we had better be faithful.
  - **Demonstration** (17-18a) – Their second statement is a demonstration that they understood and acknowledged that God had done four things for them.
    - What four things had he done for them?
      - He had brought them out of Egypt. There was no hope of their escape otherwise. Their situation was hopeless, but God had rescued them through the hand of Moses.
      - He had performed miracles on their behalf in the form of the plagues, creating manna, bringing them through two bodies of water, etc.
      - He had protected them on their journey. They had food to eat and water to drink, their clothes did not wear out, they were not harassed by enemies, etc.
      - He drove out the nations before them so that they could take possession of the promised land.
    - What do you notice about all four of these things?
      - Each is miraculous, and could not have happened without the power of God. Each is a declaration of complete/total dependence on God, and they would be dead if not for God's work. Each is a display of love for his Covenant people.
    - Compare vv. 2b-13 with 17-18 and what do you notice?
      - The people are essentially reciting back what they have heard Joshua telling them.
      - What part of the account do they focus on? The part that is relevant to their own experience. God's dealings with them were real; not distant in time or space. (See 23.3)

- **Declaration (18b)** – Then they concluded by saying that they will serve the LORD.
  - What irony do you find when you compare vs 14 with their statement.
    - Since Joshua had to tell them to get rid of their false gods it seems ironic that they now claim that it was far from them to forsake the LORD and that they will serve only the true God.
  - How is this similar to how many in the Church today, even Christians, act/speak?
    - They say: “I love Jesus and want to serve God.” then they go out immediately and follow the gods of this age.
    - It is ironic how quickly we forget what we hear in the sermon and go out and live like we belonged to the race of pagans.
  - What do you think is the reason that they speak one way and act another?
    - Sin. But what specifically is the problem? Why do men think that they are good? Why do men think that they aren’t very serious sinners? Self deception. Rom 1.18 ‘suppress’ and Rom 1.21 ‘foolish hearts were darkened’.
  - What did they mean when they said that God was their God? What were they claiming?
    - 1) creator, 2) covenant, 3) personal.
    - Did they mean what they said? It is hard to know how sincere they were. Joshua 24.31 and Judges 2.6-11 tell us that the generation alive at the time of this covenant renewal remained faithful for awhile.

Lesson:

A. It is important that we ‘walk the talk’.

- Too many people who claim to be Christians bring disrepute to the cause of Christ by a blatant show of inconsistency between what they say and how they act.
- Can you think of some examples of how we might be inconsistent?
  - Saying that we trust God, then worrying about financial matters. There is a distinct difference between being diligent in business and planning for the future (e.g., saving and investing), and being obsessed with income statements and the size of our bank account or portfolio. The line between right and wrong is often very hard to discern in many areas. We have to walk well back of the line.
  - Saying that God is our God, and not being thankful for what he has given to us. (Rom 1.21) It is surprising and appalling how many people, who claim that they are Christians, complain about the most mundane things. Complaining is showing a lack of thankfulness.
  - Saying that we will serve God, and then ignoring his commands. How many people in the Church find doing their own business or entertainment on the Sabbath to be more important than worshipping God?

### Product (Blessings and Curses) (Joshua 24.19-20)

1. How does Joshua show the people that they are to take seriously their profession?
  - He tells them two things. What are they?
  - “You are not able to serve the LORD.”
    - Why is it that they cannot serve the LORD? He goes on to say the they cannot serve God because he is a holy and Jealous God and will not forgive rebellion and sin. What does he mean by this? Lets consider this from a number of perspectives.
    - Does he mean this in an absolute sense, or in a relative sense? Is Joshua saying that God will never forgive sins? (Num 14.18; Neh 9.17) No, therefore he is not speaking in an absolute sense. Notice verse 20 gives us an indication that this is a relative sense by the use of ‘if’. The concept of conditional forsaking would not have any meaning if God did not forgive at all.

- What then is the relative sense? It is difficult for man to come to repentance, and serve God, when he is overconfident in his position before God. (Mt 19.24)
- What makes the Israelites overconfident in this instance? Their enemies are subjected and the land is their possession. How can we become overconfident in a similar way?
- What will make it difficult for us to come to the LORD in repentance? Dependence on wealth, status, standing in the church, friends and family, love of sin ...
- What aspects of God's character does Joshua list which have a bearing on the way in which we are to approach God and God's willingness to forgive sins? Holiness, jealousy.
- What specifically do these two things tell us? God will not tolerate sin in his presence and he will not tolerate our making our gods equal with him. He is the infinite creator, and the absolutely holy one (Rev 4.8). He will not stand for competition. Do NOT think that this is selfish in anyway. We are not comparing gods here. God is unique and alone in his holiness and standing. If we claim that we are to seek that which is good and honour it, and since there is nothing better than God, then we are to seek to honour God alone.
- "God will bring disaster on you."
  - What are the conditions of this curse? Alternatively what are the conditions of retaining the blessing? If they (we) go after other gods. So we must worship, love, and obey the one God only.
  - What will he do if they (we) do not do these things? He will bring disaster and make an end. From Israel's perspective this meant immediately being removed/cut off from the promised land. But it also had a spiritual meaning – the loss of an eternal inheritance. So also for us. If we forsake the Covenant of God, we will be cut off eternally. Jesus will say to us "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mt 25.41)

Lesson:

- A. This warning from Joshua teaches us the importance of living a life consistent with our confession of faith.
- To claim Jesus as our Lord is a serious matter and we must live it out seriously.

### **Promise (Ratification Before Witnesses) (Joshua 24.21-27)**

1. In this section what is the overall tone of the people's response?
  - It seems that there is quite a degree of self confidence (21, 24) being displayed.
  - What leads to this conclusion?
    - In v. 19 Joshua warned the people that they were not able to serve the LORD.
    - Which, as we have seen, means that it is a difficult matter and cannot be done in man's strength.
2. What did Joshua do in response? (22)
  - He took their statement at face value and confronted them with it. He said in effect: "this is what you say, so prove it?" If they were sincere, then they would; otherwise he was doing what we call today "calling their bluff."
  - Were the people sincere in their statement?
    - Although they were over confident, it appears that they really believed that they wanted to serve the LORD.
    - What evidence, in this chapter, seems to support this conclusion? v. 31 seems to support it by indicating that all those who had been at the Covenant renewal as Shechem were faithful.
3. What specific instructions did Joshua give, and actions did he take to ratify the Covenant?

- He told them to dispose of the foreign gods.
  - Notice the response of the people is specific in v. 24.
  - What do they say they will do to with this request? “We will serve the LORD our God and obey him.”
  - What are they saying in this response? They will worship only the true God.
  - How successful was Israel in keeping itself free from the foreign Gods? Not very ... (Gen 35.2; Judges 10.16; 1 Sam 7.3; 2 Chron 33.15).
  - What does this teach us about how we are to deal with the next generation which follows us?
    - It shows us how easy it is for the next generation to drift away, even when the current generation is faithful to God. Consider how many congregations and denominations have been founded on Biblical principles and within two generations of the founders, have drifted from the truth, and have introduced foreign gods.
    - We have to be very careful to make the next generation see what God has done (for us, and in history) and the importance of standing firm for God.
- He made (cut) a covenant for the people.
  - What do you notice about the wording of this statement? ‘for’ indicates that it was done on their behalf.
    - In what capacity was Joshua acting? As the covenant mediator. He was acting on their behalf and representing them in a federal capacity before God.
    - What is another, very important, instance in scripture where a mediator made a covenant on our behalf with God? Moses made a covenant on behalf of the people (Ex 24.8). But there is a more important mediator (Heb 9.15). Jesus is the second Moses and second Joshua, he is the one who saves his people from Egypt (slavery to sin) and brings them through the Jordan (river of death) and brings them into the promised land (Heaven). He made the covenant with God on our behalf.
- He drew up decrees and laws (25).
  - What decrees and laws did Joshua present to the people. The laws of Moses (Joshua 1.7; Joshua 8.32; Joshua 22.5; Joshua 23.6).
  - There is no indication that he invented anything new in the process. He applied the Law of Moses to the people.
  - When did our Covenant mediator (while on earth) do the same thing? When he preached the *Sermon on the Mount*.
  - What laws did he give the people? No new command. (Mt 22.36, 38; Mk 12.31; Jn 13.34) He gave the proper interpretation of the Laws of Moses - therefore he gave the Laws of Moses.
- He recorded the decrees and laws (26).
  - Moses did the same thing (Ex 34.27).
  - How did our Covenant mediator do the same thing? (Jn 21.24; Lk 1.1-4; Heb 1.1) We have the will of God written down in the scriptures. “What does the Bible primarily teach? The Bible primarily teaches what man must believe about God, and what God requires of man.”<sup>6</sup>
- He set up a large stone as a witness (26, 27).
  - How many stones or piles of stones have we seen in the book of Joshua? Seven in total (Joshua 4.20; Joshua 7.26; Joshua 8.29; Joshua 8.32; Joshua 10.27; Joshua 22.26, 27. The promised land had seven memorials to God’s victories, judgement, and worship dotted throughout it to show that it was complete and holy to the LORD.

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<sup>6</sup> Westminster *Shorter Catechism* Q3.

- Why a stone? Permanent memorial. Visible to generations to come (Joshua 4.21-23; Joshua 7.26; Joshua 22.27-28)
- What does Joshua mean when he says that the stone has been a witness and has heard the words? He is saying that it is a sign of the covenant as the rainbow (Gen 9.13-16), or circumcision, or baptism, or a wedding ring. None of these have ears, but they remind us (and God) of our covenant vows and are visible reminders that we are to keep our vows.
- We in the Church today have two memorials to, and signs of, the Covenant: Baptism and the Lord's supper.

### Passings (Three Burials) (Joshua 24.28-33)

1. What was Joshua's final act?
  - He sent the people to their inheritance.
  - What can we learn from this?
    - It was an inheritance. They hadn't earned it, nor did they deserve it. It was a gift of God. This is an analog for salvation.
  - When Jesus left the earth what did he do as his last act? Lk 24.50, 51
    - He blessed the disciples.
    - What does this blessing do? It confers an inheritance on the people.
    - This action is similar to Jacob's blessing his sons before he died, or Moses blessing the tribes before he died. .
2. How old was Joshua when he died? What is the significance?
  - 110 years old. What significance is there in this age?
  - Why are we told what his age at death was?
    - Gen 50.26 Ancient Egyptian records considered 110 years to be the ideal life span. This would have signified that there was divine blessing on Joseph. The Israelites of Joshua's day would likely have remembered this custom and have inferred that God had blessed Joshua.
    - Ps 90.10. A blessing beyond the typical age (remember that Moses wrote this Psalm (Ps 90.1), so ages were already reduced by this time from the patriarchal period.
    - It shows that Joshua was given time to enjoy his inheritance (probably 20-30 years of peace on the land).
    - Dt 34.7 In comparison to Moses, Joshua wasn't as great. He was the aide of Moses who was commissioned with carrying out the work of Moses. The death of Joshua at a younger age than Moses helps remind Israel that Moses held a special place in God's plan. (Dt 34.10-12) Moses had to be listened to as the special Law-giver from God. He was the greatest until the greatest of all, Jesus, came along.
3. What are the three burials which are mentioned in this passage?
  - Joshua (29),
  - Joseph (32),
  - Eleazar (33).
4. Why are these three burials mentioned?
  - One aspect is that we find mention of a Prophet, Priest, and 'King'. The three key offices in the OT economy and in the work of Christ. All three of these offices are typical of Jesus.
  - Another aspect is that we see the era of Moses and the Egyptian captivity drawn to a conclusion.
    - Joshua his aide, who has finished the work of conquering the land; Aaron's son, the one who carried out the work of the Priesthood on behalf of Moses' brother; and the closure of the Egyptian slavery with the burial of the bones of Joseph.



- This is the final act of the escape from captivity and the conquest of the promised land.
  - We are reminded that the promised land is a temporal, and temporary, blessing. Death reminds us that Canaan is not the final reward. The final reward is the spiritual Canaan. (Rev 21.4)
  - As a practical application, it reminds us:
    - That we are to treat dead bodies with respect.
    - Burial is the preferred means of dealing with the bodies of the dead, since this symbolizes sleeping and thus that there will be a day to come when the bodies will be raised from the grave.
5. What are we told in each case about the burials?
- We are told the location or territory in which the burial takes place.
    - Joshua was buried in his land of inheritance. 19.50 Notice by men in known place. Moses by God, unknown place. What is the significance?
    - Joseph was buried in his land of inheritance. Gen 33.19; In the territory of Manasseh his eldest son. Joshua 17.7.
    - Eleazar was buried in his land of inheritance. Joshua 21.4, 5, 20 (compare 5 with 24.33)
  - Why? They came to 'rest' (1 Kings 2.10) in their inheritance. But this was not the rest (Heb 4.8) that they were to be seeking (Mt 25.34).
6. What is the significance of the burial of Joseph's bones?
- It fulfills a vow which was made about 500 years before (Gen 50.25).
  - It shows the importance of keeping our vows.
  - It shows that God does, and we are to, keep a long-term perspective.
  - It closes the era of the slavery in Egypt.
  - It shows the faithfulness of God to his promises (Gen 50.25).

#### Lessons:

- A. That this earth and habitat is not our home and final place of resting (whether in peace and prosperity in this life or in death).
- B. We are to look forward to our inheritance which is in the New Heavens and Earth and will be the eternal home of our resurrected persons.
- This book may appear to end on a down note (death and burial). But for the Christian it is the ray of hope before the world turns evil and ugly (in Judges).
  - The burials in the inheritance (the promised land) reminded every devote Jew living over the next 400 years that a golden age was coming.
  - This would not be the age of the earthly kings (e.g., David and Solomon) but the age of the Messiah.
  - Burial is a waiting period for the Christian. So, we wait for the eternal golden age of the Messiah (1 Thess 4.13-18). Encourage one another with these words!

#### Postscript (Lessons in Faithfulness)

1. We come to the end of Joshua's life and the Book of Joshua. But there is one verse in the last section of the book that we skipped until now. Which one? 31.
2. What does this verse do in the Biblical narrative? Compare 24.28, 29, 31 with Judges 2:6-8.
- This verse acts as a bridge between one era and the next because it points into the next era/book. This serves to:
    - Show the continuity of scripture. No piece stands in isolation from the rest. God supervised (acted as the superintendent of) the inscripturation process.
    - There was an editor of the material written by Joshua who probably also edited Judges

- and put them into their final form. Probably Samuel.
  - It reminds us that no man stands alone. All men are part of the ongoing interwoven process of history.
  - Thus we should look briefly at significant references to Joshua, in the Bible, after this point.
- 3. What did the Israelites do after the death of Joshua? (Judges 1.1)
  - They asked the LORD for guidance in its continuing conquest of Canaan.
    - They continued to follow the practice of the Moses and Joshua, in asking for guidance from the LORD.
    - They followed the example of Joshua; seeking guidance from the LORD.
    - Joshua was to use the Urim and Thummim for decision making (Num 27.18-21)<sup>7</sup>.
  - However, what is different between Joshua and the Judges from the situation between Moses and Joshua? (compare Dt 31.3, 7, 14, 23; Dt 34.9)
    - No specific leader is designated to follow Joshua. Why is this?
    - They were supposed to be a holy kingdom of priests (Ex 19.6) with God as their king. If they were truly faithful to the commands of God, they shouldn't need a specific (single) earthly leader.
    - The elders should have been sufficient:
      - There were elders before Moses. (Ex 3.16)
      - Moses worked through them. (Ex 12.21; Ex 24.1/Num 11.16, 24, 25)
      - The Sanhedrin was set up; judgement was in the hands of the elders. (Dt 19.12; Dt 21.2, 3, 6, 19/Joshua 20.4)
      - Joshua handed over the 'rule' to the elders. (Joshua 23.2; Joshua 24.1, 31)
      - The monarchy deteriorated and the Jews returned to a rule by elders.
      - This is an indication of how the Church should function. No 'monarch' in the Church, but rather a plurality of elders with the oversight and rule. It may also serve as an example for the State today.
    - Why did God not appoint a leader to replace Joshua?
      - To test the obedience of people who have sworn that they would be faithful to him.
      - To show the people that they really can't follow God's will without his continually watching over them. (Joshua 24.19)
  - They continued the conquest of the land as Joshua had instructed them. God had left some of the land for them to conquer after the time of Joshua:
    - Wild animals (Dt 7.22)
    - Test (Judges 2.20-23; Judges 3.1-4) to see if they will they carry out God's mandate after Joshua, and to see if instead they will intermarry (mingle with the world) and adopt the ways (idolatry) of the pagans. It is a test to see if they will obey the Great King, and keep the conditions of the treaty that they have taken at Gilgal (Joshua 5.1-12) and Ebal/Gerizim (Joshua 8.30-35).
    - Spiritual battle against sin, test of personal commitment.
- 4. What word was spoken by Joshua? (1 Ki 16:34) What does this comparison tell us?
  - Joshua 6.26 [550 years later]. It tells us that:
    - Joshua was a prophet.
    - God does not overlook unfaithfulness.
    - God keeps his promises over the centuries.
    - Notice that if Hiel even thought about the prophesy he probably thought it was a mere

<sup>7</sup> See the answer to question 1 in *Achan's Discovery*, Chapter 8 Achan's Sin.

superstition. In the same way, men today think that God isn't going to come in final judgement. (2 Pt 3.4)

5. What is the meaning of Nehemiah 8:17?
  - It does not mean that the feast was not kept. (Ezra 3.4; 2 Chron 7.8-10)
  - The celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles at the time of Joshua is a reference point (benchmark) for subsequent celebrations.
  - Standard for joy (2 Chron 30.26; 2 Chron 35.18).
  - Entry into the promised land was a high point in the celebration of Tabernacle/Temple. (Rev 19.9)
6. What was important from the life of Joshua from the perspective of Stephen? What was not? (Acts 7:45)
  - Crossing the Jordan and the conquest of Jericho and the rest of the land are not mentioned.
  - It is the bringing of the Tabernacle into the promised land which is important to Stephen.
  - Why was this important?
    - It is where God made his presence known.
    - The events of the history of Joshua were similar to those of the history of Moses (e.g., crossing the Red Sea).
    - It is the fact that God brings his 'abode' or presence into Canaan that Stephen wants to focus our attention on. (Acts 7.48-50).
    - The people rebelled against the presence of God in their land.
    - This reminds us that we should not rebel against the God of the Covenant who dwells among us.
7. What is the lesson from the life of Joshua in Hebrews 4:8?
  - Nothing of this life and world is able to give us the rest that ultimately we need. Only in Christ and in the eternal Canaan will we find eternal rest.
  - This is a reminder that we are to set our hope and affections in Heaven.
8. What is mentioned, and what is not, in Hebrews 11.30-31? Why?
  - The destruction of Jericho and the faith of Rahab are mentioned. But Joshua is not mentioned.
  - Why? What is important is the lesson of destruction of sin and escape from sin through faith.
  - The man, Joshua, is not critical. It is the work of God that is important. Joshua is an instrument of God who is working out his great redemptive plan.
9. What three lessons do we learn from a study of Joshua, a faithful man?
  - **Faithfulness** (Joshua 24.15) – He was faithful to the very end. We saw his faithfulness from the slavery in Egypt to exploring the land of Canaan; from serving for 40 years as Moses' aide, to taking the people through the river; from the conquest to the covenant renewals. Not once did Joshua's faith waver.
    - How do we show our faithfulness to God?
      - By getting rid of the foreign Gods.
      - By obeying the true God. (Joshua 22.5) The "Lord commanded" appears ~10 times; "Moses commanded" appears ~ 10 times; "serve LORD" appears ~5 times.
  - **Fidelity** (Joshua 23.15) – God is faithful to his promises. (Dt 7.7-9). He was faithful to his covenant with Abraham (Gen 17.8) in the allocation of the Land. This allocation also fulfilled the prophecies of Jacob (Gen 49.1-33) and Moses (Dt 33.1-29). This gives us hope: through the promise of Heaven and the fact that God is in control of all things.
  - **Fairness** – The book of Joshua includes a war chronicle and legal documents related to land transactions. It is a covenant treaty of a Great King with a subject people. The account of the

conquest is not one of a merely human conquest but of God's conquering sin and wickedness. The record of Joshua teaches us that false gods are nothing, God punishes sin, and wicked men receive the punishment they deserve in a just and fair manner. But ... God gives the evangelical call (Rahab, reading the law at Shechem). If men repent, they will be saved. If they do not repent, they will meet the consequences of judgement. Joshua teaches men today that God is just; he reserves a Day of Judgement for all men who disobey him; but will forgive and save all those who call upon him (1 Jn 1.9).

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