

Joshua

The goal of this Bible Class is to give the students a working knowledge of the whole book of Joshua. It is based on an expository approach to teaching the Bible, with an emphasis in preparing the students for the worship of our Savior. There are suggested Bible songs included in each lesson. The various lessons are to be viewed by the teacher as thematic suggestions to help with preparation. While the lessons are not intended to be read to the class word for word, the main ideas should be the substance of what is taught. The teacher, in preparation for the class, should consider reading through the whole curriculum before beginning the class, as well as the book of Joshua several times. This will provide the instructor with a broad and comprehensive understanding of Joshua as it is being taught. At the end of the twelve-week course, the class will be concluded with a Bible Knowledge Evaluation. The instructor should be sure to review the material sufficiently that the student is able to correctly answer the questions on the evaluation.

It is important that the instructor be not only knowledgeable about the material, but also able to teach it with enthusiasm and conviction. Students best learn from teachers that are themselves excited about the scriptures. The use of maps, diagrams, white boards etc. are extremely helpful. Some of these have been provided in the curriculum. It is suggested that the class be conducted in an interactive manner. This can be accomplished by having them read short portions of the scripture texts, asking them questions, and wholeheartedly encouraging them to ask questions. All students should be encouraged to bring a Bible to class.

The inclusion of the Westminster Shorter Catechism as part of the curriculum is designed to help the students acquire a broad understanding of Christian doctrine along with the specific Bible teaching. The Elders of the church will coordinate the specific questions and answers to be used in the class.

Bruce Wilkinson, the founder of *Walk Thru The Bible Ministries*, has been conducting seminars for decades, teaching Christians the basic content of all sixty-six books of the Bible through a unique system of memory techniques. He combines keywords with various physical movements to enable people to remember the various parts of the Bible. This system has proven so useful as a teaching device that we have determined to adopt our own "Walk Thru" keyword memory system for this Lord's Day Bible Class. This walk through can be taught in a couple of different ways. First, it could be explained completely at the beginning of the Joshua Bible class in one week with a brief overview about what

is going on, and then reviewed and explained throughout the class. This will require one whole Sunday class to accomplish, making this a thirteen week course. Second, the teacher may decide to add a new keyword and physical action with each new section of material, building (with review) week by week the whole system. It may be helpful to note that some of the physical actions are repeated, based on repeated keywords and ideas. On the following page is the list of keywords/phrases and physical actions used for the book of Joshua. This page can be copied and given to the students for them to study and memorize.

It will become evident to the teacher that this course curriculum, while not dealing with every verse and concept in the book of Joshua, is comprehensive and deeply theological. It is designed to help the students understand the book of Joshua in its wider biblical context, with emphasis on its place in the redemptive history of God's covenant people. The students will be confronted with and asked to understand and remember fairly difficult concepts. It should be remembered that children are able to comprehend much more than we often give them credit for. While this class will be a challenge for both the teacher and the students, the rewards for the efforts of those in the class will be surprising and exciting.

In preparation for these lessons, it would be helpful to consult the following:
Leithart, Peter, *A House For My Name: A Survey of the Old Testament*
Schaeffer, Francis, *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History*

May Yahweh bless you and the students as you seriously study His Word.

Joshua Walk Thru

- 1) **Joshua, strong and courageous in the word**
Say the word **Joshua**. Then, while holding up the right arm like showing muscle, say **strong**. Then, say the word **courageous** while taking the right fist to the heart. Then with both hands open together, say **in the word**.
- 2) **Rahab - Salvation**
With hands together from previous movement, bring them over the head and eyes as if to hide, and say, **Rahab**; then lift hands as if in praise to God and say, **Salvation**.
- 3) **Through Jordan**
Bring two hands down together from head to chest, then moving the away from body and apart, as if the water is parted, say, **Through Jordan** into Promised Land.
- 4) **Lord's Commander**
With right hand held up as if with a sword, say **Lord's Commander**.
- 5) **Jericho Destroyed**
While holding up seven fingers, with hands moving in a circle, say **Jericho Destroyed**.
- 6) **Achan and Ai**
Pretend to pickup something off of the ground and hide it by side, say **Achan**; then with right hand held up as if with a sword swinging down in conquest, say, **Ai**.
- 7) **Covenant Renewal at Mountains**
Place two hands together as if in handshake, say **Covenant Renewal at Mountains**. Raise the both hands with two fingers, and then with both hands form two little mountains (representing the two mountains).
- 8) **Covenant with Gibeon - Salvation**
Place two hands together as if in handshake, say **Covenant with Gibeon**; then lift hands as if in praise to God and say, **Salvation**.
- 9) **Conquest of South**
With right hand held up as if with a sword, bring the sword down to the south (down on a map), and say, **Conquest of South**.
- 10) **Conquest of North**
With right hand held down as if with a sword, bring the sword up to the north (up on a map), and say, **Conquest of North**.
- 11) **Division of Lands at Shiloh**
With right hand held out, shake as if with dice in hand, say **Division of Land** , and then with hands together by side of head as if sleeping, say, **at Shiloh** (Shiloh means "place of rest").
- 12) **Cities of Refuge and Levites**
Say, **Cities**; then hold up six fingers and say, **of Refuge**, and then hold hands together as if reading a Bible and say, **and Levites**.
- 13) **Eastern Tribes Return**
With right hand moving and pointing to the right (the east on the map), say, **Eastern Tribes Return**.
- 14) **Covenant Renewal at Shechem**
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Week One – Joshua – A New Moses

Joshua 1

❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

❖ Joshua Walk Thru

Explain the Joshua Walk Thru and how it will be taught in the class.

Why did God tell Moses that he would save the Hebrews from Egypt? Because of His covenant promises made to the fathers (Land, great nation, blessing to world). What is the three-part outline of Exodus (Deliverance, Covenant, and Worship)? After one year, where did the people go from Mt. Sinai and why? Kadesh to spy out the land. What happened? The people refused to go in on the advice of 10 of the spies, but Joshua and Caleb said they should take the land. What happened as a result of their disobedience? They wandered for forty years until that generation died (including Aaron and Moses). Why was Moses not allowed to enter the land? Because he disobeyed the Lord and spoke to the rock. Num. 27:18f says that, before the death of Moses, Joshua would be made ruler of the people.

Now we come to the book of Joshua, taking up the story as the people enter the land of Canaan. [Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last two pages of this lesson.]

I. Introduction

- A. “Joshua”** – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”
- B. Purpose of Joshua** – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

Joshua 21:43-45

So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

- C. **Outline** – There are two main sections of the book of Joshua:
- I. Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)
 - II. Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)

We will look at the book of Joshua in some real detail, but we would like for you to remember forever the above outline.

- D. Map of Mediterranean – Show the detail of Josh. 1:4

II. Joshua 1

A. The Call of Joshua to lead (1:1-9)

1. Promise of God to Joshua (vv. 1-5)

In Gen. 15:16 God promised Abraham to bring His people out of their 400 years of affliction, and into the Promised Land – defeating the people of the land because the Amorites were a terribly sinful people. The people of God were warned in Lev. 18:24-30 to not commit the sins of the people of the land. The people of God were to be holy – and were to avoid all of the terrible abominations of the Amorites, or they too would be vomited out of the land.

God promised to use Joshua to lead the people in the victory over their enemies, and that He would be with Joshua like He was with Moses.

⁵“No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

2. Command to be strong and courageous (vv. 6-9)

In Deut. 31:1-8; 14; 23, Moses, by the command of God, commissioned Joshua to be the new leader of Israel. In this passage we read:

⁶“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”

⁷Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. ⁸“And the LORD, He *is* the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”

Following God’s promise to Joshua was His strong command to Him. Three times God commands Joshua to “be strong and courageous” (vv. 6, 7, 9). This is important because back in Num. 13:31; 14:9 the people were feeling both weak and fearful, which made them refuse to go into the land 40 years before. In order for Israel to enter the land and conquer God’s enemies, they would have to trust

Him and be strong and courageous. The leader of the people, Joshua, would have to be strong and courageous. V. 9 says that Joshua can/should be strong and courageous because “the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.”

a. That he may know and obey the law

If Joshua was strong and courageous, the Lord will enable him to know/observe to do all the law, not turning to the right or left.

This is very important – In order to be strong in life, we need to obey the Lord. Know His word.

b. That he may prosper

God further said that if Joshua (and the people) were strong and courageous to do all the Lord commanded, He would bless them. As the people 40 years previously had refused to obey the Lord for weakness and fear and died in the wilderness, so now, the people would receive the covenant promises if they were strong and courageous, faithfully obeying the Lord.

B. The Promise of the people to follow Joshua (1:10-18)

1. Preparation to go into the land (vv.10-11)

In vv. 10-11 Joshua begins his leadership by commanding the people to get ready to enter and possess the land.

2. Special instructions to 2 ½ tribes (vv. 12-15)

In Numbers 32, 2 ½ tribes requested to have their portion of the land be on the east side of the Jordan. These were Gad, Reuben and ½ tribe of Manasseh. God (through Moses) approved this request, on the condition that the men of these tribes helped the other tribes to conquer the rest of the land. In this section Joshua reminded these 2 ½ tribes of their responsibility.

3. Promise to obey Joshua (vv. 16-18)

The 2 ½ tribes, and the rest of the people respond to Joshua’s leadership by promising to obey him, as they had learned to obey Moses. They even take an oath with their promise - ^{18c}“Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage.”

The people condemned themselves if they failed to obey the Lord by following the leadership of Joshua.

But they knew themselves too. They knew that they needed a leader that would be strong and courageous because there would be times that they may be weak and fearful. If their leader were strong and courageous, it would help them.

As God takes you through your life, you will be faced with things that will make you feel weak and fearful. You need to be strong and courageous. But if you study the scriptures, understanding God's promises and works throughout history, you will be strong and courageous enough to obey Him. And He will bless you in ways that are wonderful and surprising. He will use you to do mighty works for Him. Is that what you want? If so, be strong and courageous, and do not turn to the right or left, but do all that God has commanded in His Word – and He will bless you.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 2-4. Observe how the story is like the Exodus.

Week One – Joshua – A New Moses

Joshua 1

Introduction

“Joshua” – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

Purpose of Joshua – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

Key Verse to be memorized:

Joshua 21:43-45

So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

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Week Two –Entering the Promised Land Joshua 2-4

❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

❖ Joshua Walk Thru

❖ Quick Review

“Joshua” – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

Purpose of Joshua – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

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It is interesting to note that Joshua begins after the death of Aaron the High Priest and & Moses, and ends with the death of the leaders of the conquest (Joshua and Eleazar the High Priest). “Throughout the Old Testament, the death of a leader brings a crisis. Will the new leaders continue in the footsteps of those who have gone before [for good or bad]? This was a real problem for the Israelites. After the death of Joshua, Israel falls into idolatry, and throughout the books of Judges [as we shall see], the people fall into idolatry every time a judge dies. At the beginning of Joshua, the question is, ‘With Moses gone, will Israel be able to conquer the land? Is the Lord with Joshua?’”(Leithart, *A House for my Name*, p. 108f). (Remember Numbers and the death of previous generation, and then the change in Israel’s history with the death of Aaron and then Moses). The godliness of the leaders is very important to the holiness of the people. That is why we see so much attention given to this in Joshua 1.

Joshua is a new Moses – And prefigures the Greater Joshua/Adam Jesus.

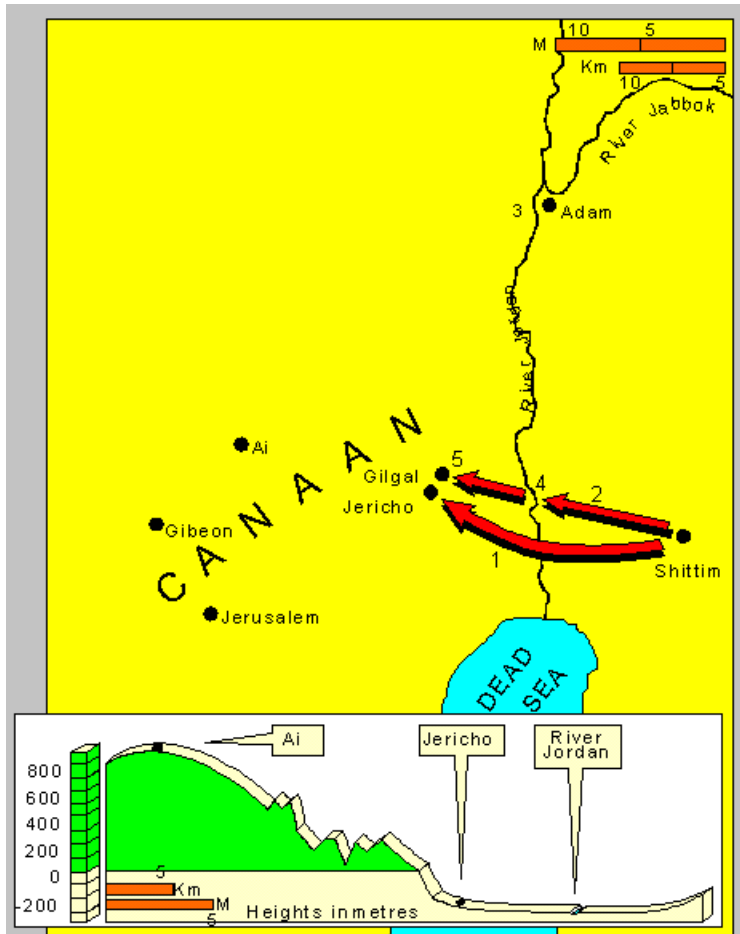
[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last page of this lesson.]

I. Spying Out the Land – The 2nd Time Joshua 2

As you remember from Numbers 13, the first generation of those who came out of Egypt refused to go into the land when spies were sent into the land. Although it was a good land, just as God had promised, the people were filled with fear. Instead of fearing the Lord and trusting Him to deliver the enemies of God into their hands, they trusted in their own strength.

Now, 40 years later, spies are sent into the land again. They represent the new Israel. The old Israel has died and passed away; behold a new Israel/people will enter into the promises of God. This time the people trust the Lord.

Let's look at it more closely. Turn to Joshua 2. In v. 1 it says that Joshua sent two men from Acacia Grove to spy the land (which is *Shittim* in the Hebrew), which is just across from Jericho on the other side of the Jordan River. They are still on the



The Israelites enter the Promised Land.

- 1 After Moses death, Joshua sends spies to explore Canaan—and especially Jericho. (About 10 miles)
- 2 The spies return. Next day Joshua moves the people to camp by the Jordan. It is springtime, the river is in flood. They wait 3 days.
- 3 At the city of Adam, 16 miles upstream, the Jordan was cut off for several hours.
- 4 As the people of Israel cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark stand in the middle of the dry river bed.
- 5 They camp at Gilgal 5 miles from the river. There all the male Israelites are circumcised, in keeping with the covenant.

Inset: Cross section of the Israelite march from the Jordan to Jericho

east side of the river; that is they are to the east of the promised land/garden. Just as Adam and Eve, Cain, and the Shemites continued east as they moved away from the Lord, we now see the new people of God travel from the east into the garden like Promised Land.

The spies went to Jericho and stayed in the house of Rahab the harlot. [A harlot is a woman that takes money to sleep with men that are not her husband.] What is interesting in v.1 is that they came from Shittim (Acacia Grove) to a harlot's house. The Ark of the covenant is made of acacia wood. This is important because

the last time in the Bible that we read about Shittim is in Numbers 25:1-3 [turn there and read]. Some of the people of Israel committed harlotry with the women of Moab, and began to worship idols at Shittim, and the anger of the Lord burned against the people, and 24,000 were killed for not being faithful to the Lord. Remember that at Sinai the Lord made covenant with Israel; marrying Israel. But the bride of the Lord was not faithful to Him. The question that comes to mind as we think about this is: Will the people be faithful to the Lord as they go into the land, or will they commit harlotry and idolatry in the land? Will the sons of God remain holy and not mix with the people of the land? Will the people of God worship Yahweh alone, or will they worship the gods of the Canaanites? Will they fear the Lord, or will they fear the people with their false gods?

The spies did not go to her house to sleep with her, but to hide there since it would not be thought strange that men would go to her house by the people of the city. Somehow the king found out that the men were Israelites and was concerned that they were spies. But the woman took the men and hid them, and lied to the king of Jericho about the men. Can you think of any other women that lied to a king? The Hebrew midwives lied to Pharaoh to save the Hebrew babies in Egypt. The story in Joshua is an Exodus type story [i.e. out of Egypt to the Promised Land/out of the wilderness into the Promised Land.] The two stories are similar and let us know that God is saving His people from evil men and bringing them to the Promised Land through *women* of extraordinary faith. Is it right to lie? Heb. 11:3 and James 2:25 commend the lie of Rahab as an act of faith. How can that be? Vv. 8-14 shows us that she feared the Lord and put herself (and her family) in the hands of the Lord's men. She had faith in God, and saved the men of God. Instead of trying to seduce the men into being sinners and worship the false gods of the land, Rahab herself was saved by faith in the one true God and became an important mother (David and Jesus, see Matthew 1:5).

This is important because what we see here is that the promise that Abraham would be a blessing to the nations will be fulfilled. God not only intended to destroy the nations that occupied the land, but to convert/save all those who would put their faith in Him. Yahweh was sending Joshua ("Yahweh saves") into the land to put to death all those who rejected the Lord, and save all those who would submit to Him, worship Him and love Him. Death always comes before salvation. Jesus, the greater Joshua, was put to death so that we can live. Jesus said that in order to live, one must die. All men, sinners that they are, must die to themselves, and be raised to life again by God. So too, the people of the land are given the opportunity for life, if only they will live for the Him.

And so the spies, having been saved by Rahab the believer, return to the camp of Israel and told them all that had happened. V. 24 “Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.” Now, instead of the Israel being fearful and faint hearted, it is the people of the land that are terrified. All that the people of Israel must do is trust the Lord, be strong and courageous, as we saw last week.

II. Crossing Over The Jordan Joshua 3-4

A. Following the Lord Across Joshua 3

The next day God sent the people from Shittim across the Jordan. 3:15 tells us that the river was very full, and overflowed its banks during this time of the year. This means that they could not cross the river without the miraculous help of the Lord.

Just as Moses had been used of God to save the people by taking them through the Red Sea, so now, Joshua, the new leader/Moses will take the people in like manner into the land. As a result of this demonstration of God’s power through Joshua, the people were able to see that God was with Joshua like He was with Moses. This gave the people confidence and faith. Vv. 5, 10:

⁵And Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.” ⁶Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, “Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people.” So they took up the Ark of the Covenant and went before the people. Remember that word “sanctify” means to make yourself holy – to be set apart to do the work of the Lord.

¹⁰And Joshua said, “By this you shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* He will *without fail* drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: ¹¹“Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan.

What we see in this is that the people have the Lord, the King of the Earth, going before them. He will lead them, and will fight for them [we will see more of this next week]. As the people remain holy, and obey Him in faith, they have nothing to fear. Yahweh caused the waters to be blocked off and stood in a heap up stream (vv. 15- 16) when the soles of the feet of the priests who bore the ark touched the water. It didn’t happen before they took those steps. They had to take the steps of faith the Lord commanded. They couldn’t wait until they saw the waters dried up for them; they had to step out in faith. You will often have to do the same thing in your lives. You must learn to hear what God is commanding you in His Word, and then step out in faith. After you obey Him, without seeing how He will take care of you, He will do wonderful things in your lives. And so, in v. 17 we see that:

¹⁷Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

B. Memorial Stones Joshua 4

After the people had crossed, Yahweh commanded Joshua to have 12 leaders of the people (to represent the twelve tribes of Israel) take stones from the middle of the Jordan and carry them to the place where they would camp that night, which was Gilgal. The reason for this is explained in 4:6-7:

⁶“that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, ‘What do these stones *mean* to you?’ ⁷“Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.”

It is important to remember the works of the Lord in our lives. We study the scriptures in part to be mindful of the great things God has done throughout the history of His people. We take these stories and apply them to our own lives by trusting the Lord, and being encouraged by them are strengthened in our own hearts to obey Him. Although we cannot see these stones today, they continue to stand in the pages of scripture as a memorial to us forever.

But that is not all. V. 9 is a very strange verse.

⁹Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day.

Joshua took twelve stones (to represent the twelve tribes of Israel) and set up another memorial in the middle of the Jordan River. The text says that they are there to this day. Since the water then returned in the Jordan, who sees them? God! Yahweh also remembers His great works of salvation, and treats His people with mercy and grace.

The people crossed over the Jordan in safety to conquer the Promised Land. 4:12 tells us that the fighting men of 2 ½ tribes (Reuben, Gad & ½ tribe of Manasseh) crossed over, but left their families on the east side of the Jordan to inherit the land there according to the word of Moses in Numbers 32.

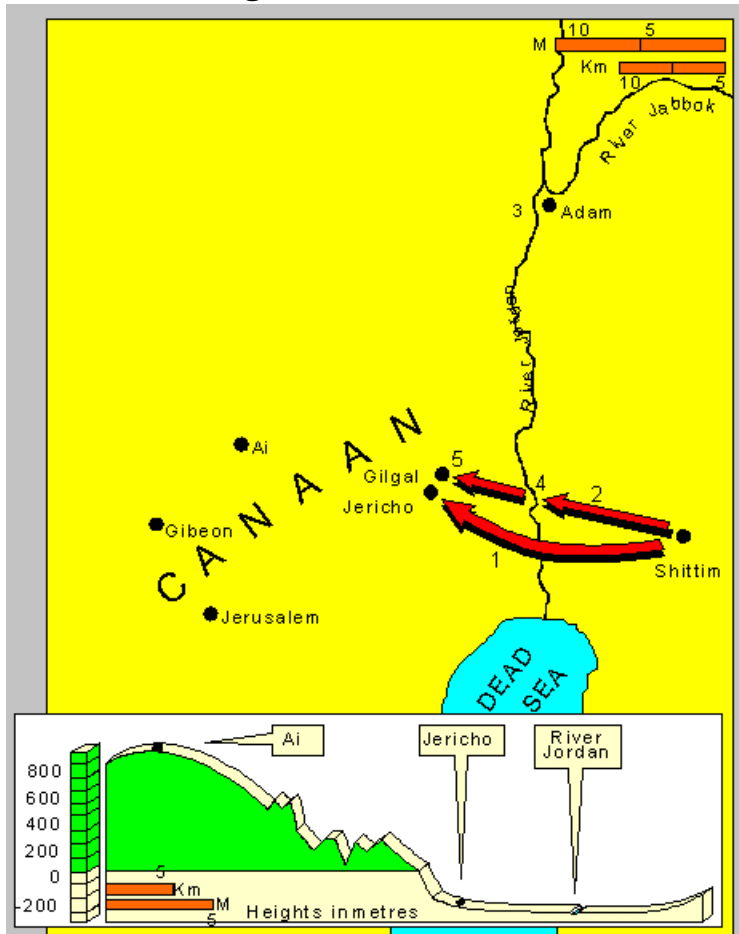
Homework assignment: Read Joshua 5-6. Notice the importance of worship. Why do you think the men of Israel were circumcised, and why they celebrated Passover before beginning to conquering the land. Did they worship around Jericho?

Week Two –Entering the Promised Land Joshua 2-4

I. Spying Out the Land – The 2nd Time Joshua 2

Map of Israelites Entering The Promised Land

II. Crossing Over The Jordan Joshua 3-4



The Israelites enter the Promised Land.

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Inset: Cross section of the Israelite march from the Jordan to Jericho

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Week Three –Worship and Conquest Joshua 5-6

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Joshua 21:43-45

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Outline – There are two main sections of the book of Joshua:

- I. **Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)**
- II. **Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)**

We have seen that with the death of Aaron and Moses, God raised up new men: Joshua and Eleazar the High Priest. The people of Israel, in faith, crossed over the Jordan, ready to conquer the land. They were confirmed in the knowledge that God was with them as they crossed the Jordan after the Ark of the Covenant. Ch. 3 spoke of the God who was with them as, “The Lord of all the earth.” He was not just the God of Israel, but also the ruler/King of the whole world. That is how Yahweh, the covenant Lord of Israel, can give her the land of Canaan. As King, Yahweh will go out before His people to defeat His enemies. While it is true that the fighting men of Israel did actually go into battle, it is the Lord, as we will see, that won the victory.

The first half of the book of Joshua is about warfare. But what we learn is that “Israel doesn’t win *because* her armies have great warriors. Instead, what is important is to trust the Lord, who is the Warrior of Israel [who commands the army of Yahweh]. The goal of the conquest is to set up God’s house in the land and to worship Him, and even the battles sometimes looks more like a service of

worship” (Leithart, p. 110f). Today we will see what doing warfare with the Lord looks like.

The same is true for us today. There are many good and bad, easy and difficult things that we are engaged in. We must trust the Lord Jesus to keep His covenant promises to us, and constantly realize that He will take us through the various parts of our lives with blessing.

I. Circumcision and Passover for the New Israel Joshua 5

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last page of this lesson.]

A. Circumcision of the New Israel 5:1-9

5:1 says that the people of the land had heard about the mighty works of Yahweh and were very fearful of the children of Israel. But this was not enough to conquer the land. God would only give Israel the land if they were faithful worshippers. Before God would bring them into the land, He determined to organize them as the worshipping community. He began with circumcision, the sign of the covenant.

Turn with back to Genesis 17. In Genesis 12 God made three great promises to Abram (i.e. the land, great nation (seed), and blessing to the nations). In Ch. 15 God made His covenant with Abram, and Abram believed God, and God declared him righteous by faith. Then in Genesis 17:1-14, God confirmed His covenant with Abram, and in 17:5-6 changed his name for Abram (“exalted father”) to Abraham (“father of a multitude”). God gave him the sign of the covenant: Circumcision. Circumcision is the cutting off of a portion of the skin of a man/boy’s private parts. By doing this, the person was identified as a member the covenant people of God. Refusing to be circumcised meant being cut off from the people. Circumcision was a way of saying that the person would trust the Lord, and live, as God wanted him to live.

The Bible tells us that baptism is like circumcision. By baptism we are made members of the worshipping community, members of the household of faith. Just like baptism, circumcision was not just a rite done with the body, it was a spiritual thing as well. The people were to have hearts that were circumcised (Deut. 10:16; 30:6). They were to be people of faith, whose hearts were given to the Lord, of which their circumcision was a symbol. It is not enough to be born as a descendant of Abraham. To be a part of the great nation that God promised to Abraham, you had to have the faith of Abraham. You needed to be a part of the covenant of Abraham. People that are Gentiles can be made children of Abraham by faith; and that faith is symbolized by circumcision (and baptism today). Those who would be members of the covenant must have the sign of circumcision placed on them (in the Old Covenant) or be baptized (in the New Covenant).

Now, turn to Joshua 5, where we learn that before the people, the worshipping/covenant people of God, can conquer the land, they must be marked with the sign of the covenant. The old Israel was circumcised before they came out of Egypt (Josh. 5:5; Ex. 12:43-49). Now that they were all dead, we learn that their children had not been circumcised. Now that the people are ready to be used by God to conquer the land, they must be marked with the sign of the covenant as well (5:2-9). V. 9 says:

Then the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.

The feeling and reality of being enslaved by the Egyptians was finally rolled away; taken away. Having come into the land, and being marked with the sign of the covenant, the people were now the New Israel, ready to be used by the Lord to conquer the enemies of God.

B. The Passover of the New Israel 5:10-12

One more thing the people did before they began to conquer the land: They ate the Passover meal before the Lord. You will remember that the Passover meal was the meal they ate the night before they left Egypt. The Lord promised to “pass-over” the houses of those who believed His promise. The death angel passed over the houses of those who sacrificed a lamb and put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of the house in faith. But those who did not do so, the firstborn were killed. By this means, the Lord saved His people, and brought them out of Egypt.

You see, the covenant community is always first a worshipping community. The salvation of the Lord begins with worship. And so Yahweh meets with His people in worship as they ate the Passover meal before Him. After they ate the Passover in Joshua 5 using the produce of the land, the Lord caused the manna to cease and from that day on the people ate what they got from the land. The covenant people, eating the covenant meal in worship, began to enjoy the blessing of occupying and living in the land.

C. The Commander of the Army of the Lord 5:13-15

Now, at the end of Joshua 5 we come to a strange and wonderful little story. Read vv. 13-15. Joshua was by Jericho (getting ready to defeat the great city), and the Commander of the army of the Lord appeared to him. The Lord appeared here to Joshua in the form of a man with a sword drawn. This text reminds us for Gen. 3:24 when the Lord cast Adam out of the Garden and set an angel with a flaming sword to guard the garden and the tree of life. Now, the new Adam, the covenant

people are brought again into a garden, a land flowing with milk and honey. Now the angel of the Lord uses the sword to bring them into the garden/land.

Joshua asked Him a reasonable question: Who are you going to fight with? Our enemies or us? Yahweh then revealed to Joshua that it was the Lord who had come to him. Joshua did the right thing and fell on His face in worship, and listened in faith to what the Lord had to say to him. The Lord commanded Joshua to take off his shoes, because the place was holy. Does that remind you of another story we know about? Ex. 3:5 when God met with Moses at the burning bush. The Lord was in effect saying, just as I was with Moses to lead the people out of Egypt, so now I am with you to lead the people into the land I promised your fathers by covenant.

II. Worshiping around Jericho Joshua 6

Now we come to Joshua 6 and the destruction of Jericho. As you read this story, the most famous battle in the whole book, you see something very interesting. Instead of organizing the army to fight, what we see most of all is Joshua focussing on what the priests are to do. The priests carried the ark, the footstool of God, to proclaim that Yahweh is the new King of the land and that He is claiming Jericho for Himself. V. 1 says that the people of Jericho were “securely shut up” in the city, not willing to welcome the King of kings into the city.

Trumpets announced the coming of the new King. These ram’s horn trumpets are talked about in Lev. 25. Every 50 years there was a mighty celebration called *Jubilee* in which the slaves were to be set free, and lands were to be returned to the original owners. The horns were not just being used as a dreadful trumpet of war. The priests were commanded to sound the *trumpets of joy*; sounding forth the victory that would be theirs, the final giving of liberty to the people who had been slaves, and returning the land to it’s rightful owners, the people of Israel.

God’s plan to begin the defeat of the wicked inhabitants of the land was to cause the army to march around the city once a day for six days. The people were not to speak or shout or make any noise with their mouths (v. 10). They were merely to follow the priests with the trumpets and the ark around the city. On the seventh day, they did this seven times. V. 16-19 Joshua gave the people instructions,

¹⁶And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! ¹⁷“Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who *are* in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. ¹⁸“And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and

trouble it. ^{19c}“But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.”

The people were to shout on God’s command (not before).

- 1) The city was dedicated to God – it was to be utterly destroyed.
- 2) Because Jericho was to be a sort of offering to God, the people could not have anything of the city. It was to be destroyed as a sacrifice.
- 3) All of the valuable silver, gold, bronze and iron items were to be given to the Lord to be put and used in God’s house.

The people did as they were commanded. The city and everyone in it were destroyed. The only ones saved were Rahab and her family. She was saved by faith in the Lord. In v. 26, Joshua made a prophecy that anyone that rebuilt the city would be cursed, which came true in 1 Kings 16:34. God made Joshua great v.27.

In closing, it is good to notice that throughout this chapter, everything at the battle of Jericho is organized by sevens. Seven priests bearing seven trumpets; seven days, and on the seventh day they march around the city seven times. This reminds us of a week. How long is a week? Seven days. What happens on the seventh day? The Sabbath day. Remember what we said is the purpose of the book of Joshua:

Joshua 21:43-45

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Jericho was destroyed on a Sabbath day, the last day of the week of the siege. The battle of Jericho sends a clear message: When Israel worships God, He brings the walls down (Leithart, p. 111). The worshipping community of God is the means by which the Lord brings down those who oppose Him. Throughout the history of God’s people, when they worship Him, He acts on their behalf. After Jesus was resurrected from the dead, and ascended to sit on His throne in heaven, the church began to worship Him. As we will see later this year in the book of Acts, as they worshipped, the church grew. Now, 2000 years later, the church has continued to grow and the Lord is worshipped throughout the world. Whenever the church finds trouble, she should worship, and God will bless her.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 7-8. Notice that holiness and obedience are necessary for the blessing of God. What is covenant renewal.

Week Three –Worship and Conquest
Joshua 5-6

I. Circumcision and Passover for the New Israel Joshua 5

A. Circumcision of the New Israel 5:1-9

B. The Passover of the New Israel 5:10-12

C. The Commander of the Army of the Lord 5:13-15

II. Worshiping around Jericho Joshua 6

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 7-8. Notice that holiness and obedience are necessary for the blessing of God. What is covenant renewal.

Week Four –Holiness and Conquest Joshua 7-8

❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

❖ Joshua Walk Thru

❖ Quick Review

“Joshua” – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

Purpose of Joshua – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

Joshua 21:43-45

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Outline – There are two main sections of the book of Joshua:

- I. **Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)**
- II. **Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)**

Last week we learned that the victory that the Lord would give to His people would be realized as they faithfully worshipped Him. He is the King of the earth, and all those that would live with Him must serve and worship Him as He commands. The same is true for us today.

Worship must become central to the life of all true believers in the Lord Jesus. It is sometimes hard for us to understand why it is so important for us to worship. The truth is that it is a matter of faith for us. We take God at His word that worship is the single most important part of our lives as Christians. The Bible teaches us (through what we have already seen in our studies in Exodus, Numbers and Joshua and what we will learn in the other parts of the Bible) that when the covenant people worship the Lord in the manner that He has commanded, He gives them blessing and victory in the world. In worship, God not only meets with us, but also changes us, and prepares us to deal with the world He is giving over to us.

- When he calls us to worship and we obey, we learn to listen to His voice and obey.
- When we confess our sins and are assured that He has forgiven us, we are more concerned about our sins and the sin around us everyday of our lives.

- When we sing His praises, we are trained to praise and thank Him all the time.
- When we hear the Word preached, we are taught to think God's thoughts and are made ready to apply His Word in every area of our lives.
- When we give our tithes and offerings we are reminded that we are to give ourselves to God all the time, and to be willing to give what we have in service to God and those around us.
- When we pray in worship, we learn that we are to pray without ceasing.
- When we eat the Lord's Supper, we learn that fellowship with God is the most important thing we can hope for. We are encouraged evangelize the lost so that they too can fellowship with the Lord.
- When we are blessed in worship, we are reminded that all goodness and hope for our future comes from the Lord.

You see, worship trains us to live for the Lord everyday of our lives. If we think of worship in this way, it will help us to remember that it is not enough just to come to church. We must live for the Lord all of the time. Throughout the Bible we are taught that what God wants is not just worship, but obedience that results from worship. The person that loves the Lord and joyfully worships Him will also go out into the rest of their lives anxious to please the Lord through obedience.

What is important for us to learn from today's lesson is that God will only bless us with victory in life as we obey Him. **Holiness is necessary to conquest.**

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last page of this lesson.]

I. The Sin of Achan

Ch. 6 ends with the victory of God's people and the fame of Joshua spreading throughout the land. The story is going well. Ch. 7 begins with the word "but." God blessed the people with victory – **BUT** – The people sinned. Things changed from blessing to cursing. God gives victory as He is with His people – **BUT** – He causes them to be defeated when they act unfaithfully.

A. Dedicated Things – Cursed Things 7:1

As we have seen, the plan of God is to establish His Kingdom, with the house/worship of God being the central part of man's life. Men are related to God by covenant. All men are to be thought of as either covenant-keepers or covenant-breakers. Men are properly related to Him by covenant or they are not. God will use covenant-keeping men to build His kingdom – He will bless the works of their hands. God will destroy covenant-breakers and the works of their hands. The people of God are blessed by God and dedicated to Him and His purposes for them. Those who oppose the King of the earth are dedicated (set apart for destruction).

What we see in the book of Joshua is not only the bringing of the covenant people into the land (salvation), but also the destruction of those who are against the Lord. As we saw last week, the people of Jericho shut themselves up against the Lord. They refused to put their faith in Him (except Rahab). Thus in 6:17-19 we learn that the city is cursed, and that some of the things they owned were to be set apart as special; dedicated to the Lord's use in the house of God. What the unbelievers were using for wicked purposes would be given to God for holy purposes. The city, the people, the animals were all to be dedicated to God and were to be destroyed (6:21). The silver, gold and things of bronze and iron things were to be dedicated to God by saving them for the house of the Lord (6:19; see Deut. 7:16-24 & 25-26). Everything in God's world is to be dedicated to God for His purposes, which means that everything the world uses for wicked purposes need to be transferred to God to be used for His purposes. It is a question of what God wants to do with things. Now it is important to remember that after Jericho was conquered, the people would be allowed to keep the things they find among those they conquered (8:2, 27).

What we learn in 7:1 is that one man, Achan (meaning "troubler") kept some of the things that were to be dedicated to God for destruction and for the house of God. What is interesting is that v. 1 says that the "children of Israel" sinned. Over and over again in this passage it is the whole nation that is spoken of that sinned. You see, when we sin, it does affect more than just us. It has a way of polluting the whole community. God sees your sin and my sin not only personally, but also in the context of the whole community of God's people.

B. Defeat at Ai 7:2-9

Thus, when Joshua went on to obey the Lord by continuing to conquer the enemies of God in the land, the Israelites were defeated at the city of Ai ("heap of ruins"). They could not defeat the city because God was not with them. Why? Because He will only bless His people with victory as they obey Him. Holiness among the people is necessary to be blessed with conquest. Because the people thought the Lord was with them, they were surprised by the defeat, and became fearful.

In vv. 6-9 we see Joshua doing the right thing when he had trouble. He prayed! He fell to the earth on His face in worship (5:14) before the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle, along with the leaders of the people.

C. Judgement for sin 7:10-26

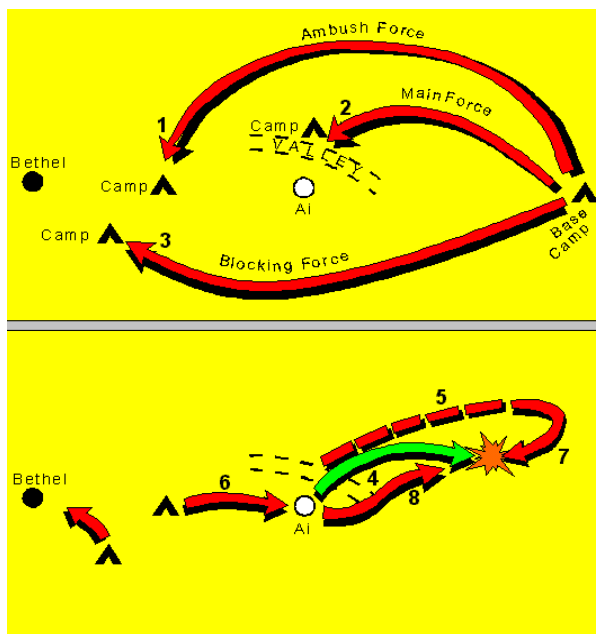
God answered Joshua's prayers by telling him that someone in the camp had sinned. He explained to Joshua what had happened in vv. 11-12. While Jericho had been dedicated to God for destruction, *now Israel had been dedicated for destruction*. When there is sin in the camp, God would not be with them. But, if they deal correctly with the sin, God would be with them again.

The same is true for us today. When sin is allowed to remain in the church, God will judge His people. But if the church deals with the sin in a biblical manner, God will bless His people.

God revealed to Joshua who the sinner was, tribe by tribe, family by family. The judgment of God on Achan was to burn him and all that he had with fire because he had "overstepped" the covenant and done a disgraceful thing among the people (v. 15, 24-26). Sin must be taken seriously, and must be dealt with biblically. If it is not, as we see here, it has a terrible effect on the whole covenant community.

II. The Defeat of Ai 8:1-29

Now that the sin of Israel had been dealt with properly, God would again be with the people (8:1). The city of Ai, which means a "heap of ruins" would be made like it's name. V. 2 tells us that this time, not like at Jericho, the people were allowed to take the booty, the valuable goods of the people there. The Lord had dedicated the city and the people for destruction, but had dedicated the booty to the people of Israel. Israel had to learn to follow the Lord to blessing, which is what they did (vv. 26-28).



- 1 Joshua sends out an ambush force at night to hide on the far side of Ai.
- 2 Next morning Joshua leads the main force to camp opposite the gate of Ai.
- 3 A third force is sent out to hide between Ai and Bethel, to block any intervention (Joshua 8:12).
- 4 The king of Ai leads his men out.
- 5 Joshua's main force pretends to retreat, the men of Ai pursue, as in the previous battle.
- 6 The ambush force enters unprotected Ai and sets it on fire.
- 7 Joshua's force turns to attack the men of Ai.
- 8 The ambush force joins the battle and overcomes the enemy.

They were being trained by God to conquer the land in this story. They did it by trickery (8:2c). God calls us to be wise and effective in conquering the world for Him.

III. Covenant Renewal 8:30-35

After the victory in Ai, Joshua renewed covenant with the Lord. What do you think it means to renew covenant? You will remember that when God brought the people out of Egypt He made a covenant with them at Sinai. Now that they are in the land, they took the covenant anew. It is a new covenant with a new people.

All of the people (i.e. elders, officers, Levites, women, children, strangers-non-Jews) were gathered together for this event. In Deut. 11:29f and 27:4ff, Moses commanded that when the people got into the land, they were to go to Shechem, which was near two mountains: Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal. These mountains were very close together, with a valley that stretched out between them. Something very strange about this place is that if someone is on one mountain and speaks loudly, it can be heard on the other and in the valley between them (you can go there and do this today). With the Ark of the Covenant in the valley, and the people on either side, the book of the law was read to the people. The curses of the law were read from Mt. Ebal, and the blessings of the Lord were read from Mt. Gerizim. There (Ebal) they made an altar (according to the law), and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and ate with the Lord in worship.

“God was giving the people a huge object lesson: What happened to them in the land was going to depend, as it were, on whether they were living on Mount Gerizim or Mount Ebal. The people were to hear from Mount Gerizim the blessing which would come to them if they kept God’s law and from Mount Ebal the curses which would fall upon them if they did not” (Francis A Schaeffer, *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History*, p. 109).

The people had already seen that obedience brought blessing at Jericho, and disobedience brought cursing at Ai. This was to be the time they made a promise to live for God. They clearly understood the importance of worship and holiness as they came into the land. Now they were prepared to live for the Lord.

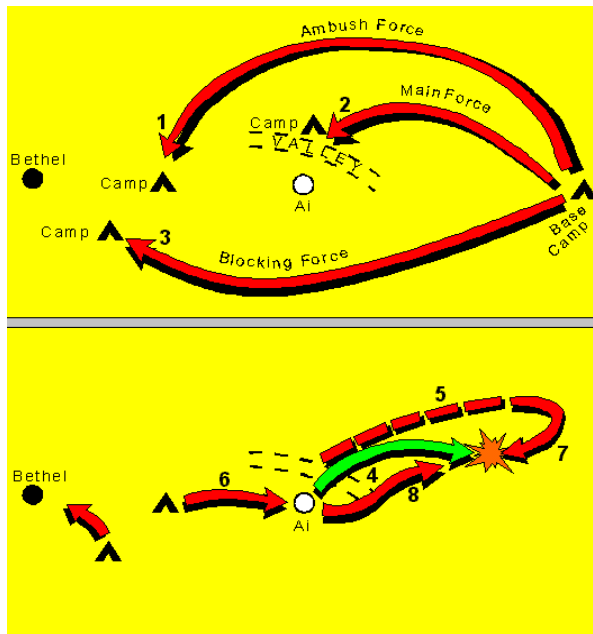
When we come to worship each Lord’s Day, we renew covenant with Him as well. The Lord Jesus was sacrificed on the cross for us, and made peace with God for us. We have communion/peace meal with God, remembering the blessings & curses in God’s word. We promise in worship to live holy lives everyday.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 9. Observe how God is merciful to unbelievers that trust in Him (compare this chapter to Rehab).

Week Four –Holiness and Conquest Joshua 7-8

I. The Sin of Achan

II. The Defeat of Ai 8:1-29



- 1 Joshua sends out an ambush force at night to hide on the far side of Ai.
- 2 Next morning Joshua leads the main force to camp opposite the gate of Ai.
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III. Covenant Renewal 8:30-35

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 9. Observe how God is merciful to unbelievers that trust in Him (compare this chapter to Rehab).

Week Five –Faith & Covenant With Gibeon Joshua 9

❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

❖ Joshua Walk Thru

❖ Quick Review

“Joshua” – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

Purpose of Joshua – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

Joshua 21:43-45

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Outline – There are two main sections of the book of Joshua:

- I. **Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)**
- II. **Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)**

Can anyone remember what we were discussing last week? The sin of Achan (troubler), the way to deal with such sin, the victory at Ai, and the covenant renewal at Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. What we have seen over and over again in our studies is that the Lord will be with His people as they are faithful, but will not be with them when they do not follow or obey Him. To put it in another way, He will draw near to them with blessing when the people are living for Him; and He will come to them with cursing and judgment when they are disobedient and unfaithful. Being a holy people, a people in covenant with God means that you have special obligations to Him, and you had to be especially careful with God so near to you.

What are some of the godly character traits that we have learned about in our studies of the book of Joshua? Josh.1 – Strength and courage; Ch. 2 – The faith of Rahab; Ch. 3 – Willingness to follow the Lord, faith; Ch. 4 – Remembering the Lord; Ch. 5 – Covenant faithfulness – circumcision; Ch. 6- Faithful worship/conquest faith; Ch. 7 – Selfishness v. holiness; Ch. 8 – Patience; Covenant faithfulness.

What about deceit/lying? Is this a good thing or a bad thing? We have seen at least two occasions where lying was a good thing (Hebrew midwives and Rahab), and there are others that we could look at. Why would lying in these cases be a good thing? Because they guarded God's people from harm, and Rahab put her faith in God. It is only in very extreme circumstances that lying is good and proper, yet in some cases it would be a grand act of faith and righteousness to do so. Today we will look at a story where a whole group of people was saved by their lie to the children of Israel. Turn to Joshua 9.

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last page of this lesson.]

I. Kings of the land gather against Israel 9:1-2

Joshua 9:1-2

And it came to pass when all the kings who *were* on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard *about it*, that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord.

When God gave the law, He gave Moses specific commands about warfare.

Deut. 20:1, 10-18

“When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God *is* with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.

The first is to go into battle remembering and knowing that Yahweh would be with them, and would fight for them. Knowing that the Lord is with you helps to drive out fear.

10 “When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it.

As a general rule, the goal of God's Kingdom is peace. That is what we are to strive and work for. It is the thing that should be on our hearts: that the enemies of God and His people would be willing to be at peace with us and not resist the Lord.

11 “And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people *who are* found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you.

The city that does want to make peace will have to be servants of God's people. Peace is only possible on God's terms. The people of God cannot forsake the Lord in order to make peace. Unbelievers must forsake their way of life and way of thinking in order to live at peace with God's people. We can only have peace in God's terms.

12 “Now if *the city* will not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it. 13 “And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, you shall

strike every male in it with the edge of the sword.¹⁴ “But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies’ plunder which the LORD your God gives you.

The people that do not want to make peace on God’s terms will not want to submit to God and His word, and will want to fight against the people of God. In that case, the people of God were to fight and destroy those who refused God’s peace.

15 “Thus you shall do to **all the cities which are very far from you**, which *are* not of the cities of **these nations**.

Now all of these things (offerings of peace, tribute, defeat of rejecters of peace) were to be done for those that were very far away from the land that God was giving to His people, the Promised Land.

16 “But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive,¹⁷ “but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you,¹⁸ “lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

The nations that inhabited the land were to be destroyed; with no peace offered to them. Why? Because of their sin (Gen. 15:13-16). The people of the Promised Land were to all be destroyed, why (beside their sin)? V. 18, the reason is that the sinful people of the land may cause the holy people of Israel to turn to their sins. This is very important to remember as a principle. The people around you will influence you, for with good or bad. Those who are going to tempt you, or entice you to do that which is not right must be resisted. Do not make peace with those that could/would turn you away from the Lord. Resist them. Flee from them if they are doing you harm. Trust the Lord who is with you. But do not give into the sinfulness of those around you.

II. The Gibeonite Covenant through faith and deceit 9:3-27

Now there was a group of people that lived not far from where the Israelites were camped. They knew that the nations were gathering against the Israelites (like Rahab knew), **BUT** (v. 3) the people of Gibeon did not want to join with them. Instead, they wanted to be saved. Somehow they knew that if they were to go and try to make peace it would be rejected and they would be defeated. So they tried a different way to be at peace. They tricked the Israelites (vv. 4-6). They told Joshua that they were from a far away country, which as we learned in Deut. 20 that Israel was to make peace with. The truth is that they were from not too far away, and were Hivites, doomed by God for destruction. But with their deception

they convinced Joshua and the rulers of the people that they lived far away, and made a covenant with them. They made a covenant of peace with those whom God had commanded them not to. They made a covenant not to destroy them, and to protect them if they were attacked. They were to be under Israel, which meant that the Gibeonites were to be ruled and guarded by Israel. The covenant was made with these promises.

V. 14 is interesting. The men of Israel looked at the evidence that the Gibeonite presented and made a decision to make covenant. But they did not ask counsel of the Lord. They didn't pray about it. They didn't seek the Lord's will apart from what they knew from the law of God and the testimony they received from the Gibeonites. There are times that something *seems* right to us, but really isn't. It is important to remember to be prayerful at all times, and to ask the Lord to help you make wise and godly decisions.

Three days after the covenant was made, the deception was discovered. The people of Israel were very unhappy with their leaders for making covenant with the Hivites. Israel did not attack the Gibeonites because the rulers of Israel had sworn an oath. Children, it is important to always keep your promises, just like the Israelites did (Ps. 15:4). God takes our promises/oaths seriously even if we do not, and He will judge those who break their oath (v. 20). But because God had commanded that the Hivites should be destroyed, and because Israel swore an oath, the rulers made them the servants of the people, carrying water and cutting wood for the house of God. They were cursed (v. 23) by making them slaves. But their slavery was to God. They were made servants of the Lord's house.

Joshua ("Yahweh saves") delivered the Gibeonites. Vv. 24-25 shows that the Gibeonites entrusted themselves to God and the people of Israel (vv. 9-10). Their faith had saved them. They used deceptive means to do it, but God saved them. The lesson here is not to go around lying to get salvation. Rather, those who know that they are doomed to be judged by God must submit themselves to God in faith, and trust that He will save them. They valued life with God more than their freedom and life apart from God. They were not like the other nations (vv. 1-2) that were willing to go up and fight against God and His people. The lies to the people of God placed them in submission to God. Although cursed with slavery, they were slaves to God.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 10. Notice the way God unifies His people to fight against His enemies. The sinful actions of the five kings are used by God to conquer part of the land for His people.

Week Five –Faith & Covenant With Gibeon
Joshua 9

I. Kings of the land gather against Israel 9:1-2

Deut. 20:1, 10-18

II. The Gibeonite Covenant through faith and deceit 9:3-27

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 10. Notice the way God unifies His people to fight against His enemies. The sinful actions of the five kings are used by God to conquer part of the land for His people.

Week Six –Covenant Unity Against Unbelieving Enemies
Joshua 10:1-27

❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism

❖ Joshua Walk Thru

❖ Quick Review

“Joshua” – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

Purpose of Joshua – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

Joshua 21:43-45

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Outline – There are two main sections of the book of Joshua:

- I. Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)**
- II. Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)**

Last week we talked about the covenant of peace that Israel made with the Gibeonites. You will remember that the Gibeonites tricked Israel into making an oath to not destroy them, so that by faith, they became servants of God and the people of Israel. They were linked to Israel and Israel’s God by covenant. This is the only way to have relationship with God and His people.

Back in Genesis learn that Abram took his family from the far north down to the land of Canaan. In Ch. 12 God made promises to Abram 1) Great nation, 2) The land, 3) A blessing to the nations of the world (Gen. 10 – 70 nations). His nephew Lot was with him (covenantally associated with Abram), and decided to split up because they were all too numerous to live together (Gen. 13); Lot took the well watered land to the south, and Abram was given by God the land of Canaan. In Gen. 14 Lot was taken captive by four invading kings. Abram rescued Lot from them in a surprise attack, and defeated them. As he returned, Melchizedek (“King of Righteousness”), the king of Salem (“peace”), which was later known as the city of Jerusalem (“foundation/teaching of peace”), met Abram on the way. Gen. 14:18 says that Melchizedek was the priest of God Most High, and that he brought bread

and wine to Abram (a communion meal). At this time God was honored and worshipped in Salem, and the king ruled for God. More than 400 years later, as we shall see, the kings of the land no longer ruled in righteousness (Gen. 15:6).

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last two pages of this lesson.]

I. Unbelieving Nations fight against the Covenant People 10:1-5

Turn in your Bibles to Joshua 10. It begins with the king of Jerusalem (“teaching/foundation of peace”), whose name is Adoni-Zedek (“lord of righteousness”). He had heard what Joshua had done in Ai and Jericho, and that he made a covenant with peace with the Gibeonites. The king of Jerusalem and the people were greatly afraid because if Israel and the Gibeonites were to be united and fight together, it would surely mean their destruction. And so, Adoni-Zedek got four other Amorite kings together to fight against Gibeon.

	Melchizedek Gen. 14	Adoni-Zedek Josh. 10
Name	king of righteousness	lord of righteousness
City	Salem – Peace	Jerusalem - Teaching/ Foundation of Peace
Character	Priest of Most High God	Rebel against God
Salvation/Protection	Abram rescues Lot	Israel rescues Gibeonites
Military Strategy	Surprise Attack	Surprise Attack
Actions of the kings	Brought communion after victory against 4 kings	Convinced 4 kings to fight against Gibeon
Historical End of the Kings	Remembered as priest of God – A type of Jesus	Neck crushed, killed, hanged and left in cave.

Unlike Melchizedek, the “king of righteousness” and priest of God Most High, Adoni-Zedek, the “lord of righteousness” did not act in righteousness. Whereas Melchizedek went out to meet Abram with bread and wine in celebration of Abram’s victory over the four kings and rescue of Lot; Adoni-Zedek rebelled against God with four other kings and attacked the Gibeonites who were in covenant with Israel. There had obviously been a change in Salem/Jerusalem. It was no longer following after God Most High; and was no longer the place of peace. Indeed the sin of the Amorites was full (Gen. 15:16), and was ready to be judged by the Most High God.

II. The Covenant God fights for the Covenant people 10:6-15

In vv. 6-15 we have one of the most amazing stories of the Bible. It begins with the Gibeonites coming to Joshua at his headquarters in Gilgal to ask for help (v. 6). Remember that when Israel defeated Jericho and Ai they took control of the middle of the land, and that Ai was on a mountain. Now the other kings in the mountains became worried because they knew that they were next. Joshua went up to the

mountains to fight the Amorites with his army of the people, and all the mighty men of valor (Special Forces). Vv. 8-10 says:

And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.” Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the LORD routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

They made a surprise attack, having marched all night (like Abram in Gen. 14:15).

Notice that when the Lord is with Israel in battle, the “King of all the earth” fights for them. In fact, v. 10 says that the Lord “routed them...killed them with a great slaughter...chased them.” It was the men of Israel that did this, but the text says that God did it. If that were not enough, v. 11 says that God cast down large hailstones from heaven upon the enemies so that more died from the hail than those who died by the swords of the children of Israel. What a wonderful and amazing story! Wouldn't it have been something to be the Israelites and to see the Lord fighting for you? But that's not even the most amazing part!

V. 12ff says that Joshua prayed to the Lord with the people of Israel hearing him. He said:

“Sun, stand still over Gibeon;
And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.”
So the sun stood still,
And the moon stopped,
Till the people had revenge upon their enemies.”

Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

God heard the prayer of Joshua, and the sun did not go down for a whole day, and the moon did not rise (although both could be seen). We do not know how this happened. But we know it did because the Bible tells us that it did. This was a miracle of great significance. The meaning of it is that God intended for the Israelites and the whole world to recognize that Joshua was God's chosen ruler/leader of His people. Turn back with me to Gen. 1:16-18:

16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to **rule** the day, and the lesser light to **rule** the night. *He made* the stars also. 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to **rule** over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was good*.

Throughout the Bible the sun and moon represent rulers/kings of men/nations, just like they rule over the day and night. The stopping of the movement of the sun and moon was a symbol that the King of the earth, and His appointed ruler, Joshua, were defeating the wicked kings of the Amorites. Just as the sun and moon divide

the night and day, so too the righteous and wicked were divided by the godly leadership of Joshua.

III. Covenant Judgment against enemies of the Covenant people vv. 16-27

The five kings of the Amorites did not even see all that had gone on. They hid in a cave, in the darkness, away from the new leader of the land, a new sun that had risen by God's hand to rule the land. Joshua commanded that a stone be rolled over the mouth of the cave so that the kings could not escape while Israel finished the job of defeating the Amorites. After this, v. 21 says that the people of the land no more "sharpened his tongue" or criticized the children of Israel (see Ex. 11:7 for similar word usage and meaning). It was clear that God was with the children of Israel, and there was nothing for the people of the land to say about it.

Joshua commanded that the five kings of the Amorites be brought out of the cave for judgment. He told the captains of the army to put their feet on the necks of the kings. These kings were rebellious against the Lord – they were stiff-necked men. Their defeat was symbolized by having their stiff-necks broken. The five kings were killed and hanged on five trees. In the Bible, to be hanged on a tree is a curse, and a sign of judgment (Deut. 21:22-23). As the sun went down, the bodies of the five kings were brought down and cast into the cave they hid in, and large stones placed against the mouth.

Adoni-Zedek, who should have been a lord of righteousness, was in reality a picture of Satan, coming against the people of God. God used Joshua to judge/curse him and the other four kings, and place them in the ground forever. Jesus (Yahweh saves) took upon Himself the judgment for our sins, was hanged on a tree for our curse, and was placed in a tomb/cave with a stone rolled over it. But Jesus came out of the cave in victory. He removed the curse from us. Not only so, He is like Melchizedek (Heb. 7), the King of Righteousness, and gives us, the children of Abraham, bread and wine. And as Rom. 16:20 says, He (the God of peace – like the name Jerusalem) will crush Satan under our feet. God will indeed cause us, His people, to conquer the earth for the glory of God. He will go before us, and cause all of our enemies to be defeated before us. Do you believe it? These stories were written to help us believe and trust the Lord. Let's go out of here excited that the God who gave Israel the victory in the land will use us to build His Kingdom on the earth.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 10-11. Observe how the story of conquering the northern cities is like the conquest of the southern cities.

Week Six –Covenant Unity Against Unbelieving Enemies

Joshua 10:1-27

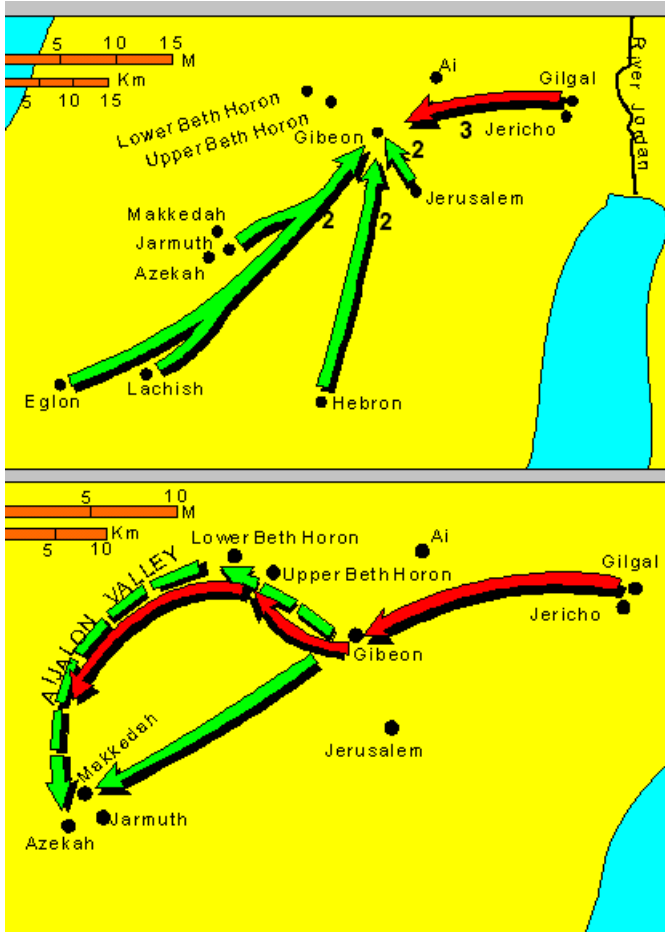
I. Unbelieving Nations fight against the Covenant People 10:1-5

	Melchizedek Gen. 14	Adoni-Zedek Josh. 10
Name	king of righteousness	lord of righteousness
City	Salem – Peace	Jerusalem - Teaching/ Foundation of Peace
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Historical End of the Kings	Remembered as priest of God – A type of Jesus	Neck crushed, killed, hanged and left in cave.

II. The Covenant God fights for the Covenant people 10:6-15

III. Covenant Judgment against enemies of the Covenant people vv. 16-27

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 10-11. Observe how the story of conquering the northern cities is like the conquest of the southern cities.



- 1 The people of Gibeon, frightened by what had happened at Jericho and Ai, trick Joshua into making a treaty with them (Ch. 9).
- 2 Five local kings (Amorites) hear about this. They besiege Gibeon. The town calls for help from Joshua.
- 3 Joshua's troops march 15 miles by night, using the wooded country for cover.
- 4 The Amorite armies are completely surprised by Joshua's sudden attack. They panic and run down the mountain pass of Beth Horon.
- 5 The five kings escape secretly but are found hiding in a cave at Makkedah.
- 6 Joshua's objective is not just to rescue Gibeon, but to break the power of the local kings. He seizes the opportunity and pursues the fleeing Amorite forces.
- 7 Joshua's soldiers and a killer-hailstorm finish off the Amorites.

Week Seven – Faith and History and the Conquest of the Land **Joshua 10:28-11:23**

- ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism
- ❖ Joshua Walk Thru
- ❖ Quick Review

“Joshua” – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

Purpose of Joshua – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

Joshua 21:43-45

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Outline – There are two main sections of the book of Joshua:

- I. Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)**
- II. Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)**

Last week we talked about how God was miraculously with His people in defeating the five Amorite kings by casting deadly hail upon the enemies and stopping the sun and moon for a day. Adoni-Zedek, whose name means lord of righteousness, was king of what city? Jerusalem (“teaching/foundation of peace”). He has not like his forefather, Melchizedek who really was a king of righteousness.

Why were the children of Israel brought into the land? [Several answers would be right. Fulfillment of the covenant to Abraham; removal of the sinful /idolatrous inhabitants of the land; the establishment of the house of God in the center of the world.]

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last two pages of this lesson.]

I. Faith, Worship and History

As we have seen, faithful worship is important to the life and success of the people of God. The people that have faith trusting in God alone for salvation will worship Him and be blessed by Him. Today we will be looking at many places in our Bibles so that we can better understand what is happening when we read that: “Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war” (Josh. 11:23).

Turn to Hebrews 11 (towards the end of the NT part of your Bibles). This has been called the “Hall of Faith.” Like a museum with pictures and relics from ancient times, it gives us an understanding of our history. But this is a museum of those who had faith, trusting God and His promises.

8 By faith *Abraham* obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with *Isaac* and *Jacob*, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all given the promises of the covenant, but none of them really saw the promises fulfilled in their lifetimes. But they believed the promises of God, even to the day they died. This was written in the Hall of Faith to remind all of us to continue in faith, even when we cannot see how God will keep His promises.

The blessings of the children of Israel as they conquered the land are in part a result of the faith of the fathers of the covenant. Joshua conquered the land through faithful worship, and his conquest was based on Abraham’s worship.

Long before Joshua, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob moved through the land, setting up altars in various places. Turn with me to Gen. 12, where we learn that Abram was called by God and given the promises. In v. 6 we learn that he went to **Shechem**, which is near the place where Mt Ebal and Mt Gerizim are and where the people retook the covenant. There the Lord appeared to Abram and he built an altar of worship (v. 7). Then he moved to **Ai**, which is near **Bethel** and built another altar (v. 8). Bethel means “House of God,” and there Abram “called on the name of the Lord” in worship. We have seen the wonderful work of God in taking that city under Joshua. In Gen. 12 we learn that Abram went to Egypt because of a great famine in the land of Canaan. When he came out of Egypt (an exodus story) he went back to Bethel (13:1-4). Later God gave him the whole land (Gen. 13:14-18). But as we saw in Hebrews 11, he did not really own the land, but just moved around in it. He then moved to Hebron and built another altar (Gen. 13:18). Time moved on and God made covenant with Abraham. Later, in Gen. 22 God tested Abraham’s faith by commanding him to sacrifice his son Isaac on an altar on Mt. Moriah (Gen. 22:2-9), which later in history became the place where God would build the temple. Abraham believed God, and God counted that faith as righteousness.

Later, God met with Isaac at Beersheba and renewed the covenant made with Abraham, and there he made an altar (Gen. 26:23-25). Jacob also made altars of worship. God met with Jacob and renewed the covenant made with Abraham at Bethel and there he raised a pillar like an altar (Gen. 28:18-22). God blessed him, giving him a new name, Israel, which means “Prince of God.” Jacob went into the Promised Land, and built an altar at Shechem, like Abraham had done (33:18-20) and called it “God, the God of Israel.” Jacob returned to Bethel and built another altar (35:1-7) and called the place, “God, the House of God.” Then God blessed Israel and again made the same promises of Abraham and Isaac, and there he set up a pillar (memorial) there and renamed the place that God appeared to him Bethel, “House of God.”

You see, hundreds of years before, God blessed His covenant people with His covenant promises, and they believed God. They faithfully worshipped throughout the land knowing that God would give it to them in time. **They did not enjoy the blessings of the land as had been promised to them, but they knew that their descendents would. By going through the land worshipping as they had, they claimed the land and the promises of God as if they were the ones to receive it. And in time they did receive it through their children. Abraham and Jacob’s worship was a *pre-conquest* of the land.** Once the land is consecrated to the Lord by worship, eventually the land will be conquered. It took centuries, but the Lord will establish His house in the Land. [Note: The idea for much of the above material came from *A House for my Name*, Leithart, p. 111]

II. The Conquest of the Land in History Joshua 10:28-11:15

A. Conquest of the Southern part of the land (10:28-43)

Turn now to Joshua 10:28ff. After Joshua had defeated and killed the five rebellious kings led by Adoni-Zedek, he proceeded to conquer the rest of the land in the south. If you will look on your map you will see that they took the whole southern area, which are the same places the covenant fathers had set up altars of worship.

40 So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded.⁴¹ And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon.⁴² All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

[Map on the handout can illustrate the extent of the conquest.]

B. Conquest of the Northern part of the land (11:1-15)

Now look at 11:1. The king of Hazor in the far north heard about what Joshua had done in the south, he assembled a very large army with very many horses and

chariots. This is very much like what Adoni-Zedek had done in the south. But the Lord said the same thing to Joshua in v. 6:

6 But the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.”

And so, Joshua in a quick attack defeated all these rebellious kings. He hamstrung the horses, making them useless, and burned the chariots, demonstrating that if God is for you, no one can defeat you. The children of Israel utterly destroyed all of the people and burned the cities, just as God had commanded. V. 15 says: As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

III. A Summary of Joshua’s conquests (11:16-23)

Joshua 11:16-20

16 Thus Joshua took all this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands,¹⁷ from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, and struck them down and killed them.¹⁸ Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19 **There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All *the others* they took in battle.²⁰ For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

God had determined that the people of the land would be destroyed. Only the people of Gibeon made peace with God through faith. All of the others were destroyed.

Interestingly, it took 7 years for all of this to happen. When it was all over, God gave them rest/Sabbath. V. 23 says:

23 So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.

The inheritance promised to the fathers was actually given to Joshua & the people. We too must have faith and faithfully worship the Lord. He has promised that the whole world will be conquered for Him. We do not see it now, but we must believe and worship faithfully, walking according to His Word.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 12. Notice how both Moses and Joshua are described as leading the people in victory against the wicked leaders of the land.

Week Seven – Faith and History and the Conquest of the Land
Joshua 10:28-11:23

I. Faith, Worship and History

II. The Conquest of the Land in History Joshua 10:28-11:15

A. Conquest of the Southern part of the land (10:28-43)

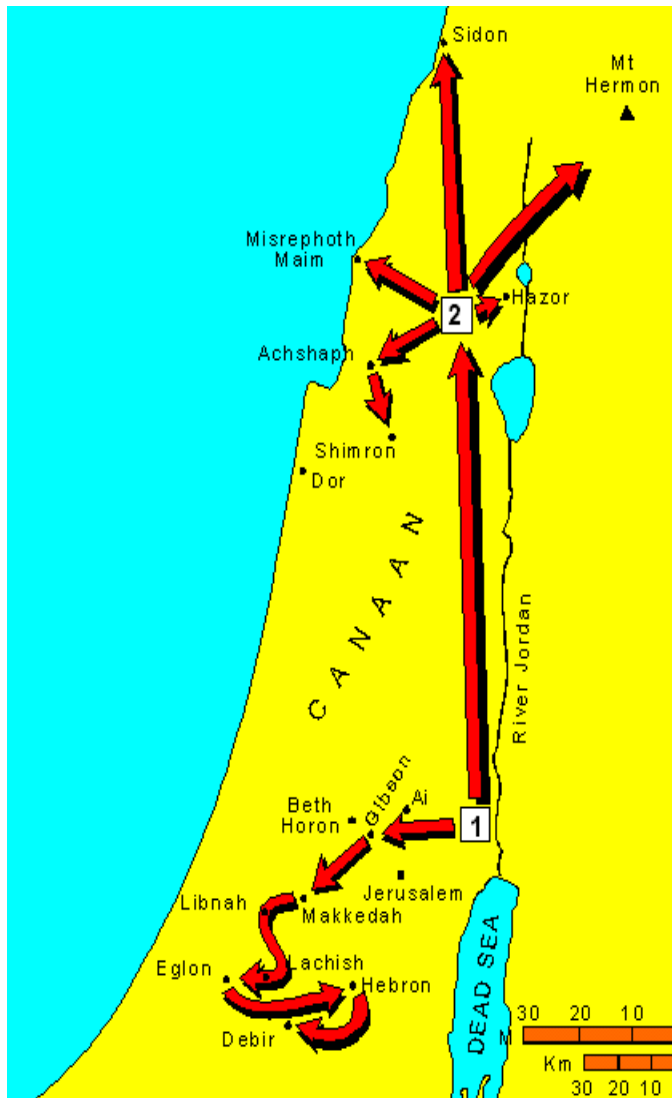
B. Conquest of the Northern part of the land (11:1-15)

III. A Summary of Joshua's conquests (11:16-23)

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 12. Notice how both Moses and Joshua are described as leading the people in victory against the wicked leaders of the land.

Conquest of the Land

Joshua 10:28-11:23



Joshua's Campaigns

- 1 In the south** (Joshua 10). Joshua's southern campaign was triggered by the treaty he made with the city of Gibeon. Five local kings went to war against Gibeon for its defection to the Israelites. Joshua conquered all their cities using speedy marches and surprise attacks.
- 2 In the north** (Joshua 11). The collapse of the south spurred the powerful King Jabin of Hazor to assemble a large army for war. Again Joshua's shock tactics demolished the enemy. But these quick victories had to be followed up by a slower guerilla war, rooting out pockets of resistance (Joshua 11:18).

These two campaigns were only the beginning of the conquest and settlement of Canaan. Many cities and territories were still outside Israelite control (Judges 1). But Joshua's campaigns were the foundation for building the nation in Canaan.

Week Eight –Kings Conquered By the Great King’s Men **Joshua 12**

- ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism
- ❖ Joshua Walk Thru
- ❖ Quick Review

“Joshua” – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

Purpose of Joshua – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

Joshua 21:43-45

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Outline – There are two main sections of the book of Joshua:

- I. Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)**
- II. Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)**

Last week we talked about the conquest of the land of Canaan. The land promised to the patriarchs [do you remember what that word means? To be “ruled by fathers.”], the covenant fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was given to them several hundred years before the time of Joshua. They lived in the land, and set up places of worship throughout the land. As they worshipped all through the land, it was a way of claiming ownership for their descendents. Now as Joshua led them into and through the land in conquest, they were beginning to reap the benefits of the faith of those covenant fathers. As we saw last week, after Joshua had taken the middle section of the land, he overcame the five wicked kings led by Adoni-Zedek in the south. Then, in the north, he defeated the five kings with their great armies.

All of this He did in complete obedience to God, who is the “Lord/King of all the earth” (Josh. 3:11, 13). As the leader of the people, Joshua represented God to the people – he was like God in that he led the people as if God were leading the people. That is why it was so important in the beginning of the book of Joshua for God to command him to be strong and courageous to do all that God had commanded in the book of the law. To lead the people of God means that you are to stand in the place of God before the people. 11:23 says: So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.

I. Covenant Headship

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last page of this lesson.]

As we have seen, the relationship of God to His people is based on the covenant. In fact, God deals with all men in terms of His covenant. There was only one person and her family and one group of people that were saved in the land of Canaan when Joshua came into the land (Rahab and the Gibeonites). They sought, by faith, to be united to God and His people and were made part of the covenant. Men are either members of the covenant as covenant-keepers, or they are outside of the covenant as covenant-breakers. Sometimes this way of looking at God’s dealing with man is called *covenant* theology. [Theology is a word that means the “study of God.”] [This is also called *Federal* theology – meaning “representative” theology.] Throughout the Bible we see that men and nations are thought of in terms of the covenant. Not only so, all relationships are covenantal (God and man, man and man).

Covenant Theology	Covenant Keepers	Covenant Breakers
Who is God?	Yahweh – Covenant God Faithful worship	False Gods Idolatry
Who is the leader(s) for God?	Moses & Joshua – Jesus Adam, Patriarchs, Priests	Wicked kings
What is the law? How do God’s people live?	Word of God	Wicked laws of kings
What happens in life? Blessing or Cursing?	Blessings-Land-Kingdom Curse-Judgment	Land taken Given to people of God
How is the covenant to continue in history?	Inheritance Children in the covenant	Disinherited – Judged Destroyed

[Teacher: Refer to this chart on the handout to help the students understand.]

When God makes covenant with men, He establishes Himself as the supreme authority over them. He communicates with men that are the leaders of the people. These are covenant heads – leaders. They are the ones that represent the whole people. When the covenant head speaks or acts for the people, it is as if the whole people have spoken or acted.

- Adam was the head of the whole human family. When he ate the forbidden fruit, the whole of mankind (not yet born) was *represented* in his decision. We were there in the garden (symbolically) *in* Adam. With Adam’s sin, we all sinned and became sinners. The Bible says in 1 Cor. 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” Jesus is spoken of in the Bible as a second or greater Adam. By His righteous life and His death on the cross, we are made alive. These covenant heads acted on behalf of us, one as a leader to death and the other to life.
- Abraham was another covenant head. God made covenant with him. He is spoken of in the Bible as the father of all those who believe. He represents the

people of God. If we are children of faith, we are members of the Abrahamic covenant by faith.

- Moses was another covenant head. When he went up on Mt. Sinai, he was more than just a man that went up on a mountain. He was the leader of God's people. When he came down from the mountain, Moses spoke to the people as God's representative. He gave them the law of God. He had led them out of Egypt and then through the wilderness for God. He made judgments according to the Law for God. He prayed for the people to God. As the covenant head/leader, Moses represented both God and the people.

Now in each of these cases, they were individual men. But they represented God to the people, and the people to God. As individual men, as separate men in the covenant, God judged them for their individual sin (Moses striking the rock resulted in Moses not going into the land). But when they sinned as a representative of the people they were covenant leaders of, they and the people were judged (Achan was judged along with his family because he represented his family in the battle). The same is true about the rewards for faith. Rahab believed in God, and God blessed not only her but also her family. She was representing her family when she hid the spies and secured the promise from them.

As the covenant head of my family, when I vote on Election Day, I represent my family and vote for the Hayes family. When I go to a church meeting, I represent the Hayes family. When I am at home with my family, I lead my family for God. I do so either righteously or sinfully. What I do in my covenant household is either a blessing or a curse to my family based on the Word of God. If I sin, it will have an impact on my family; and if I obey God it will bless my family.

You see, the covenant theology of the Bible teaches us about life. It structures the way we understand the world in which we live. God is the Lord of the earth, and His rule and authority is over every man, woman and child.

He is King over all the nations, whether the kings of the nations know it or not, and whether the kings of the nations choose to submit themselves to Him or not. The only way to be blessed by Him is to believe His Word and submit to Him. Those covenant heads/leaders that do not submit to God will be judged by Him, along with their people. And those covenant heads/leaders that do submit to God will be blessed along with their people. This is why kings are so important.

II. The Covenant Judgment of the Wicked Kings of Canaan Ch. 12

Turn with me now to Joshua 12. There have been two main leaders of the covenant people that we have so far studied: Moses and Joshua. These men faithfully led the people of God. The result was that God blessed the people through them.

- God used Moses to lead the people out of Egypt, gave them the law at Mt. Sinai and made covenant with them, and led them through the wilderness. Before his death, Moses led them in the conquest of the land to the east of the Jordan River, and gave that land to the 2 ½ tribes as their inheritance (12:1-6).
- God used Joshua to conquer the main cities of the rest of the land (12:7-24).

Joshua 12 is a list of the kings that Moses and Joshua defeated. Certainly it was the people of the land that were being defeated, but what is interesting about Joshua 12 is that it is the kings that are listed. The kings are listed because they represent the people of the land covenantally. The great King of kings used His covenant leaders (Moses and Joshua) to lead the covenant people to defeat and destroy the covenant-breaking kings of the land. By defeating the kings of the land, God was, in effect, defeating the false gods of the land, and destroyed the way of living that these covenant-breakers had established there. These 31 kings represented the wickedness of the land that was so ready to be judged by God. They ruled over the main cities of the land. As we will see next week, there was much land and many people yet to be conquered, but what we learn here is that the wicked covenant headship has been destroyed. They have, in effect, placed their feet on the necks of the people of the land by conquering the great kings of the land.

Jesus, the greater Moses and Joshua now sits as our covenant head at the right hand of the Father in heaven, and as the Great King He rules the whole world. He has sent us into the entire world to conquer it for Him. The Bible says that all His enemies are being destroyed, and the kings of this world will be either saved through Him, or destroyed. Jesus will save His people, and destroy their enemies. By the end of history, before He returns, Jesus will, as our covenant head, rule the world and give us possession of our inheritance, the world. Do you believe it?

Thus, we come to the end of the first section of the book of Joshua: The entry into the land, and the conquest of the land (1-12). Next week we will begin to look at the second section of the book: The dividing of the land, and instructions for living in the land (13-24).

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 13-19. Observe how much detail is given to us about the division of the land. Where does this division take place? What does Yahweh do for Joshua and Caleb, and why?

Week Eight –Kings Counquered By the Great King’s Men
Joshua 12

I. Covenant Headship

Covenant Theology	Covenant Keepers	Covenant Breakers
Who is God?	Yahweh – Covenant God Faithful worship	False Gods Idolatry
Who is the leader(s) for God?	Moses & Joshua – Jesus Adam, Patriarchs, Priests	Wicked kings
What is the law? How do God’s people live?	Word of God	Wicked laws of kings
What happens in life? Blessing or Cursing?	Blessings-Land-Kingdom Curse-Judgment	Land taken Given to people of God
How is the covenant to continue in history?	Inheritance Children in the covenant	Disinherited – Judged Destroyed

II. The Covenant Judgment of the Wicked Kings of Canaan Ch. 12

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 13-19. Observe how much detail is given to us about the division of the land. Where does this division take place? What does Yahweh do for Joshua and Caleb, and why?

Week Nine –Division of the Land & Tabernacle In Shiloh

Joshua 13-19

- ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism
- ❖ Joshua Walk Thru
- ❖ Quick Review

“Joshua” – The name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

Purpose of Joshua – The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.

Joshua 21:43-45

⁴³So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. ⁴⁴The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. ⁴⁵Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Outline – There are two main sections of the book of Joshua:

- I. Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)
- II. Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)

Last week we concluded the first section of the book of Joshua (1-12), which shows how God brought the covenant people into the land and conquered the kings of the main cities of the land. God used His covenant leaders of Israel to crush the heads of the people of the land by killing the kings of the major cities. This whole process took about seven years. As we have seen, in 11:23, after this seven years of war and conquering the major cities of Canaan, “The land rested from war.”

I. The Inheritance Divided by God through Joshua Joshua 14:1-7

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last two pages of this lesson.]

But this was only the beginning! They were given the land, but they had not yet really taken possession of it all. Israel, the army of God, took the main cities, the large fortified cities of power and influence. Now it was time to go throughout the land and take possession of the inheritance that God had given to His covenant people. Read Joshua 13:1, 2a

Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: “You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. “This is the land that yet remains...

Yahweh had given Joshua much victory in his lifetime; and God would continue to strengthen him to complete the work that needed to be done: Divide the land. Yet, Joshua would not live long enough to lead the people to the final possession of the land (we do not know how old Joshua was in 13:1; but we do know that he was

110 when he died, see 24:29). He would need to prepare the people for this great work of possession.

After listing the land that needed to be possessed, in v. 6 God promised: "...them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you." The land was to be divided by "lot" (Num. 26:54-56). What do you think it means to divide the land by "lot?" We do not know exactly how it was done. It was something like throwing dice or drawing straws or putting names in a hat. By dividing the land in this way, there was no way that the people could claim that the division was unfair (Prov. 18:18). Yahweh, who controls all the casting of lots (Prov. 16:33) would be the one to divide the land. The choice was Yahweh's. The tribes had to trust the Lord for their inheritance.

The land was divided into twelve parts. The way this worked was interesting. How many sons did Jacob have? Twelve. Two of his sons did not receive a portion of the land. Which two? Levi and Joseph. Levi was chosen as the priestly nation, and was not given a portion of the land. Next week we will learn about the cities they were given and why. Joseph had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Thus, the two missing tribes (Levi and Joseph) were replaced with the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh to make a total of 12 divisions by 12 tribes in the land. [Look briefly at the chart with the students.]

The division of the land in Joshua 13-19 is divided into two parts. 13:7, 8:

"Now therefore, divide **this land** as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."

With the other half tribe the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses had given them, **beyond the Jordan eastward**, as Moses the servant of the LORD had given them:

A. 2½ Tribes on the east of the Jordan Joshua 13:8-23

In Num. 32, the 2½ tribes of Reuben, Gad (1/2) Manasseh asked Moses to give them the land to the east of the Jordan. Moses gave them the land, but made them promise to go to war with the other 9½ to help them conquer the land on the west side of the Jordan River. Now in Joshua 13, the tribes of Reuben, Gad (1/2) Manasseh were given their inheritance. Having done their duty, they were free now to go and taken possession of their inheritance.

As noted earlier, the Levites did not receive a portion of the land. Joshua 13:33 tells us why:

But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.

Num. 18:20-21 says:

Then the LORD said to Aaron: “You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I *am* your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel. “Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.

The tribe of Levi was scattered throughout the land (as we will see next week) to serve Yahweh and the children of Israel. They would be supported financially by the tithes of all the people. But most importantly, Yahweh was their inheritance. They had a most favored status or position in Israel.

B. 9 ½ Tribes on the west of the Jordan Joshua 14-19

Throughout the rest of this section of the book of Joshua (14-19), we learn about the division of the land to the other 9½ tribes. Some of the tribes were larger than others, and received larger portions of the land. For example, Judah’s portion was so large, the tribe of Simeon was given their inheritance inside of the inheritance of Judah (19:1, 9). Other tribes were smaller and received smaller portions of the land.

In the part of the division of the land for the 9½ tribes we learn that the three largest tribes are given their inheritance first: Judah in the south, Ephraim and the ½ tribe of Manasseh in the north. By settling the five strongest tribes first, Joshua made it easy for Israel to defend itself against those nations that may want to attack her. Finally, the other seven tribes received their inheritance as well.

II. The Tabernacle in Shiloh Joshua 18:1

Before the other seven tribes received their inheritance, Israel set up the tabernacle at Shiloh (which is north of Bethel, the “House of God”). 18:1 says,

Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them.

This is the central and most significant part of the division of the land. As we have seen throughout our studies, being in covenant with God means that He dwells in the midst of His people. When the people worship Yahweh and obey His word, they are blessed with His presence, victory and the land. Central to Israel is the worship of the Lord; and in the center of the land, God sets up His house. This makes the land a holy land; a land that contains Yahweh’s house. The King of all the earth rules from His throne (the Ark of the Covenant) in the tabernacle in Shiloh.

Once the tabernacle was established in Shiloh, the rest of the land was divided for the remaining 7 tribes.

III. Heroes of Faith and Conquest: Caleb and Joshua (14:6-15; 19:40-50)

As we finish this section of Joshua dealing with the division of the land, we want to take a few minutes to notice that God made special provision for two of His men: Caleb and Joshua. Remember back in Num. 13 & 14 that it was Joshua and Caleb, the two believing spies, which encouraged the people to trust and obey God and go in and take the land. Now, many years later, God honored them with special inheritances.

A. Caleb Joshua 14:6-15 & 15:13-19

God promised Caleb, through Moses, that he would receive a special inheritance because he followed the Lord with his whole heart (Num. 14:24; Deut. 1:36, see also **Joshua 15:13-19** and Judges 1:12—20). What is interesting about Caleb is that he is not a descendant of Abraham. He was a Kenizzite (a tribe in Canaan in Abraham's time – Gen. 15:19), who had apparently become a member of the covenant community of Israel, having joined the tribe of Judah sometime before the Exodus. By faith, this non-Israelite, had led the covenant community by encouraging the people to go in and take the land of Canaan, the land of his forefathers. He placed faith and covenant before his heritage. Indeed, the promises of God to Abraham were being fulfilled: He had become a great nation, entered the land, and had become a blessing to the nations (Rahab, Gibeon, and now Caleb).

B. Joshua Joshua 19:40-50

Read Josh. 19:40-50. God did not forget His faithful servant in the end of the division of the land. God gave Joshua the city of his choice. God always rewards faith and obedience. May God give us all strength and courage as we obey His word, and cause all His promises to be fulfilled in and through us.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 20-21. Yahweh sets aside special cities in these chapters. What are these two kinds of cities?

Week Nine –Division of the Land & Tabernacle In Shiloh
Joshua 13-19

I. The Inheritance Divided by God through Joshua Joshua 14:1-7

A. 2½ Tribes on the east of the Jordan Joshua 13:8-23

B. 9 ½ Tribes on the west of the Jordan Joshua 14-19

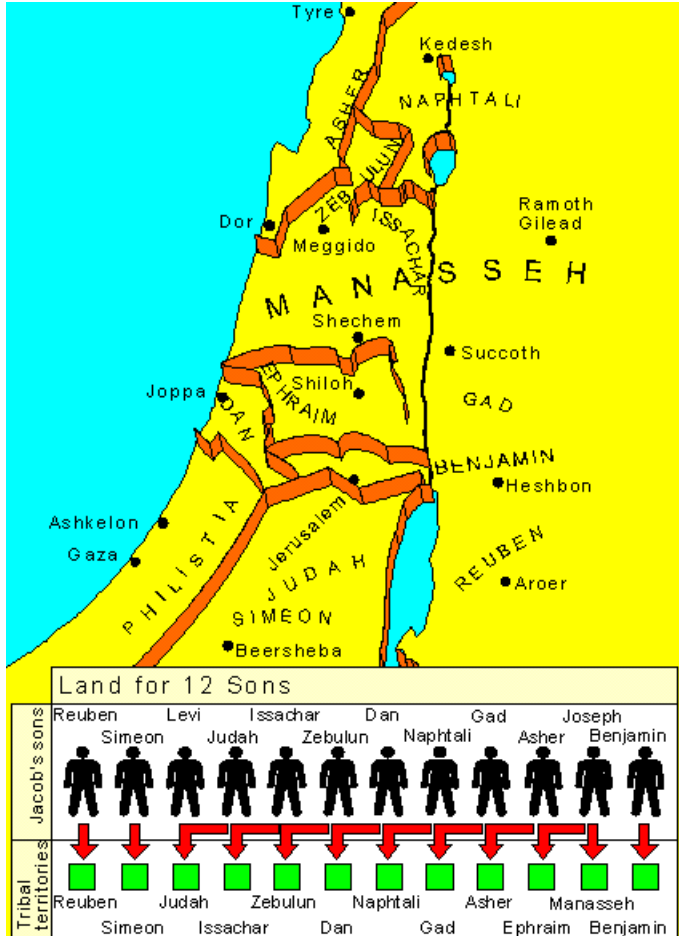
II. The Tabernacle in Shiloh Joshua 18:1

III. Heroes of Faith and Conquest: Caleb and Joshua (14:6-15; 19:40-50)

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 20-21. Yahweh sets aside in these chapters special cities. What are these two kinds of cities?

The Division of the Land

Joshua 13-19



The children of Israel were divided into 12 tribes. The people of each tribe were descendants of one of Jacob's 12 sons. All the sons had been at their father's deathbed when he prophesied their future (Genesis 49). However, the names of Jacob's 12 sons differ in 2 ways from the names of Israel's 12 tribal territories.

- Levi does not appear on the map. Soon after the exodus the Levites became a tribe of priests. They were not given a part of the land, but instead received 48 cities with land around them.
- Joseph is also missing from the map. The descendants of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, formed two tribes, each inheriting territory in the Promised Land.

Because the conquest of Joshua was incomplete, many of the tribes faced problems in settling into their new territories.

Week Ten –Cities of Refuge & Levites
Joshua 20-21

- ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism
- ❖ Joshua Walk Thru
- ❖ Quick Review

As we have said throughout our studies of Joshua, there are two main parts to the outline of the book:

- I. Entrance into, and conquering the land (1-12)**
- II. Dividing the land, and instructions (13-24)**

We have seen that God powerfully used Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land. The covenant people of God were brought through the Jordan River from the east, into the New Garden, well suited and prepared as a blessing to the new people of God. They had been trained in the wilderness to follow Yahweh, worshipping and obeying Him according to the word given to them at Mt. Sinai. The Lord not only judged, tested and trained the people in the wilderness, but also cared for them as well. Once they came into the land and ate the first Passover in the land, Yahweh stopped the manna, and they began to eat of the produce of the land. After they conquered Jericho and Ai, God renewed the covenant with the people. Then, after making covenant with the Gibeonites, Israel went through the land conquering the kings of the south and north. Finally, as we saw last week, Joshua divided the land according to all the commandments of Moses.

At the center of Israel was the city of Shiloh, where they set up the tabernacle of meeting. The people of Israel were first and most importantly worshippers of Yahweh. Everything they had received came from the goodness and blessings of the Lord. Every part of the life of the covenant people was to be governed by the Word of the Lord. The King of all the earth had made Himself known, and ruled the world from His throne above the Ark of the Covenant in Shiloh. The only way to receive mercy and grace from God was to come in submission and obedience to the Lord, according to His word. Justice was established in the land through God's word. The tabernacle of God, the palace of Yahweh, being set up in Shiloh, made the land the Holy Land; and God in the midst of the people made Israel a Holy People.

I. The Cities of Refuge Joshua 20

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last two pages of this lesson. Prepare by reading: Ex. 21:12-13; Num. 35; Deut. 4:41-43; 19:1-13.]

Joshua 20 is the establishment of the six cities of refuge in the land. What does it mean to take refuge? To hide from danger. Does anyone know what these cities were for? Let's look back in our Bibles to understand what Joshua was doing here.

In Gen. 4:8-12 we learn that when Cain killed his brother, Abel's blood cried out to God from the ground. The blood of one murdered cries out to God for revenge from the ground. After the flood, God gave man permission to eat animals, but not the blood of animals, because the life of a creature is in the blood. But any animal or man that kills a man will be held accountable (Gen. 9:3-5). Revenge is God's idea for dealing with killing a person. "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man."

Man was created in the image of God. Because of this, killing a man, shedding a man's blood is like trying to strike against God Himself. Even the ground knows this and cries out to God for revenge.

When God gave the law to Moses, this principle is set forth in the law. We all know the 6th commandment. Ex. 21:12-13 says:

"He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered *him* into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee." Vengeance is required for murder. In the Bible, the family of someone that is murdered appoints someone to take revenge for the murder. This person was called the "avenger of blood." Num. 35:19 says,

'The avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death.'

The avenger of blood could not do his duty until there was a trial to decide that the murderer had indeed been identified (Joshua 20:3; Deut. 19:12). But when someone was convicted of the crime of murder, he was to be put to death (no ransom could be paid). This was important because, as Num. 35:33-34 says:

So you shall not pollute the land where you *are*; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 'Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.' "

The murder had to be put to death because the blood of the victim cried out to God for vengeance. Failure to do so would defile the land in which God lived with His people. But if a man is killed accidentally, God shows mercy by allowing the killer to flee to a "city of refuge." In the law, God instructed the people to set up six cities of refuge in the land (Deut. 4:41-43; 19:1-13; Num. 35). These cities were to be easy to get to (Deut. 19:3, 6), so that the manslayer (accidental killer) could get there before the avenger of blood could overtake him and kill him. The manslayer would present his case to the elders of the congregation (Num. 35:24; Josh. 20:4), and if they are convinced of killing the person accidentally, he is free

to live in the city of refuge, safe from the avenger of blood. The manslayer must stay in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest (Num. 35:28), at which time he is free to go back to his home (Josh. 20:4). The death of the High Priest cleansed the land. This law was for the stranger (non-Israelite) as well as for the covenant people.

Joshua 20 tells us that God appointed special cities for accidental killers. This teaches us that God is the great avenger against sin, especially sins against His image in man. But he will show mercy to those who accidentally kill a person. God wanted to impress upon Israel and the world with the value of life. To take another person's life, even if accidentally, is a very serious thing. By the establishment of these cities, God, in effect, reminded the people that if they did not keep His law, they would be cast out of the land He had given to them.

II. The Cities of the Levites Joshua 21:1-42

As noted earlier, the Levites did not receive a portion of the land. Joshua 13:33 tells us why:

But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.

Num. 18:20-21 says:

Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I *am* your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel. "Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.

The tribe of Levi was scattered throughout the land to serve Yahweh and the children of Israel. They would be supported financially by the tithes of all the people. But most importantly, Yahweh was their inheritance. They had a most favored status or position in Israel.

Now turn to Joshua 21. [Read vv. 1-3] The Levites were not given their own tribal division of land. The reason for this is that God had set apart the tribe of Levi as a special tribe, a tribe to serve Him and be a blessing to all Israel. He did this because the Levites stood with Moses against the people at the golden calf incident (Ex. 32), and because Phinehas, a Levite, stood for holiness when the people committed harlotry and idolatry in Moab (Num. 25). Because of these great works of faithfulness and obedience, God gave to the tribe of Levi a covenant of peace;

...and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel. (Num. 25:13).

God made the Levites the tribe that served in the tabernacle and as the priests of God. At the end of his life, as he blessed the children of Israel, Moses said of the tribe of Levi in Deut. 33:10:

They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, And Israel Your law. They shall put incense before you, And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar.

It was the great duty and privilege of the Levites to teach the law of Yahweh to the people of Israel, and to offer sacrifices for them. They were special representatives of God to the people.

In Joshua 21 we learn that 48 cities, spread throughout the land, were given to the Levites for them to live in and do their work for the Lord. These were places where the word of God was studied and taught. The continued faithfulness of the Levites throughout the land would mean blessing for the people of Israel. In large measure, “Israel’s future depends on her faithfulness to the Lord’s word, and this depends a great deal on the faithfulness of her priests and Levites. But it will be the priests and Levites who fail most miserably” (Leithart, *A House for My Name*, p. 112).

III. A Summary of God’s Faithfulness Joshua 21:43-45

Joshua 21:43-45 is the summary of the whole book of Joshua.

So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

All of the land had been conquered, divided and the possession of the lands had begun. God had kept His promise to give Israel the land, rest on every side, and victory over their enemies. Yahweh had kept all His promises to Israel. Yet, as Deut. 7:22-23 says,

“And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become *too* numerous for you. “But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed.

The final possession of the land will take time. He would drive out the unbelieving inhabitants of the land as the people of Israel grew and became strong, and acted faithfully to the Lord.

God will fulfill all His promises to us, and will put all of the enemies of Christ under our feet as we obey and faithfully live for Him.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 22. What can we learn from the story of the return of the 2 ½ tribes for how to deal with sin and problems with people?

Week Ten –Cities of Refuge & Levites
Joshua 20-21

I. The Cities of Refuge Joshua 20

Ex. 21:12-13

Num. 35

Deut. 4:41-43; 19:1-13

II. The Cities of the Levites Joshua 21:1-42

Ex. 32

Num. 25

Deut. 33:10

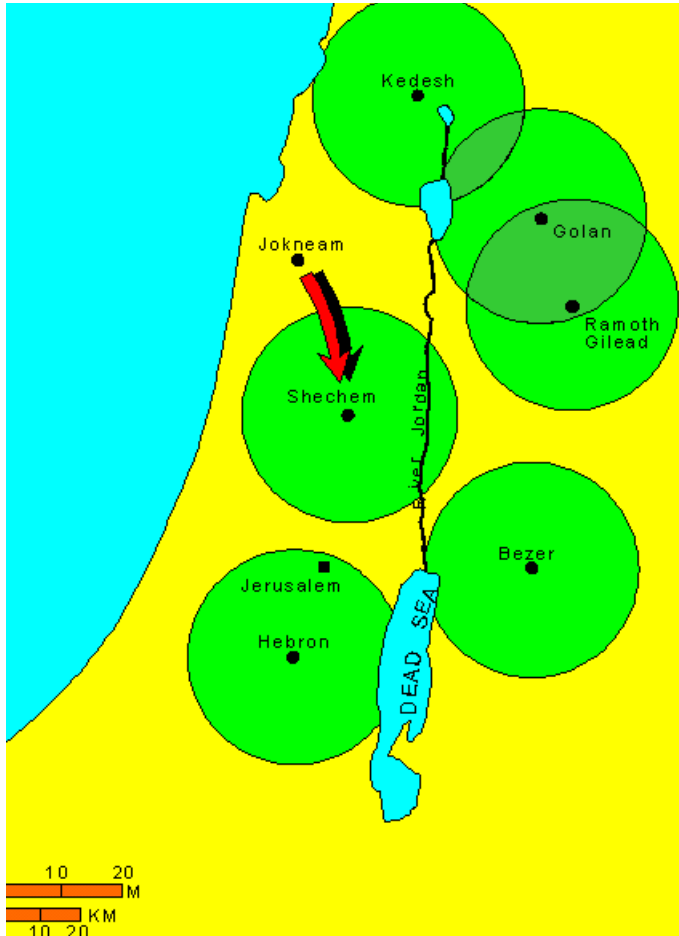
III. A Summary of God’s Faithfulness Joshua 21:43-45

Deut. 7:22-23

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 22. What can we learn from the story of the return of the 2 ½ tribes for how to deal with sin and problems with people?

The Cities of Refuge

Joshua 20



Cities of Refuge

After the initial conquest, the Israelites named 6 cities as special 'cities of refuge.' A person who accidentally killed another was told to run to the nearest city of refuge. He or she would there be given shelter from avenging relatives until a fair trial could be arranged.

Week Eleven –Return of the 2 ½ Tribes Joshua 22

- ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism
- ❖ Joshua Walk Thru
- ❖ Quick Review

Last week we saw that God had fulfilled all His promises to His people. Joshua 21:43-45 is the summary of the whole book of Joshua.

So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

We also saw that God designated six special cities as Cities of Refuge. What were these for? [They were cities that an accidental killer could flee to for protection from the avenger of blood.] There were also forty-eight special cities given throughout the land. Who were these given to, and why? [The Levites were given the Levitical cities because they were not given a division of the land like the other tribes. It was the responsibility of the Levites and priests to lead in worship teach the people the word of Yahweh. Being spread throughout the land, they were able to do this more effectively.]

Now, finally, after all of the various tribes have been given their portion of the land to possess, we learn in Ch. 22 that the 2 ½ tribes of Reuben, Gad and the ½ tribe of Manasseh return to their inheritance on the other side of the Jordan [Which? East]

[Teacher: Give the students the handout on the last page of this lesson.]

I. The Homecoming of the 2 ½ Tribes to the East Joshua 22:1-9

Read Joshua 22:1-3. What had Moses commanded the 2 ½ tribes to do? Moses had given the 2 ½ tribes their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan, but commanded them to go with their brothers over to the west side of the land and help them conquer the land. After they helped their covenant brothers gain their inheritance, they were free to return to their own lands to possess them (Num. 32:20-22; Deut. 3:18; Josh. 1:12-18). In Joshua 1, the men of the 2 ½ tribes promised to do all that God commanded them through Moses, and to obey Joshua in all things, just as they had done with Moses.

Now in Joshua 22, Joshua praised these men for their faithful obedience and their help to their covenant brothers. God had given rest to all of the tribes. God had used the faithful obedience of the Reuben, Gad and the ½ tribe of Manasseh to conquer the land. These three tribes, by their obedience, had not only served God, but also their brothers in the Lord. The two greatest commandments are to love the Lord our God (which is demonstrated through obedience), and to love our neighbors as ourselves. As we have said before, it took seven years to conquer the major cities of the land. For seven years the 2½ tribes faithfully served their brothers by fight alongside of them. For seven years these men stayed away from their own families and lands to serve their brothers. When you spend so much time with people, in such difficult circumstances as they had, you gain a great deal of respect and love for one another. My guess is that while they were anxious to get home to their families and inheritances, it was an emotional departure from the men of the other 9½ tribes that they had served so faithfully. When Joshua reminded the eastern tribes to remain faithful to Yahweh and keep His law-word, we read:

V. 6 “So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.”

V. 7b-8 “And indeed, when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them, and spoke to them, saying, “Return with much riches to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.”

Joshua blessed them for their faithful service to God and their brothers. Clearly, the relationship between the tribes was good and a blessing to all. God had blessed them. As the 2½ tribes returned with all of the spoils of war, they were commanded/reminded to divide it between all of the families that remained on the east side of the Jordan.

And so, they returned to their lands.

II. Holiness and Brotherly Love Joshua 22:10-34

Now turn to V. 10, where this happy story takes a bit of a turn.

And when they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh **built an altar** there by the Jordan—**a great, impressive altar**.

This verse does not tell us **WHY** they built this great and impressive altar. It just says that when the 2½ tribes got to the Jordan river on their way over to their own

inheritance, they built it. We will learn later in the chapter why they did this. But at this point in the story, it doesn't at all look like a good thing!

Let's look at the next two verses, vv. 11-12:

11 Now the children of Israel heard someone say, "Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel's side."¹² And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them

Clearly, the 9½ tribes, when they heard about this great and impressive altar were alarmed, angered and were prepared to take action against the 2½ tribes. Why do you think this was? What is the purpose of an altar? [To offer sacrifices.] Where were the people supposed to offer sacrifices? [At the tabernacle in Shiloh.] The 9½ tribes assumed that the 2½ tribes were going to offer sacrifices on this great an impressive altar, as opposed to going up to Shiloh, as the Lord had commanded. The 9½ tribes thought that Reuben, Gad and ½ of Manasseh were rebelling against the Lord, and setting up unbiblical worship. They thought that the holiness of God was being violated. And as they had seen repeatedly through their history after the Exodus, God judged the whole nation for such sins (vv. 16-20).

What was the response of the 9½ tribes to the great and impressive altar? They were prepared to go to war against their brothers, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the ½ tribe of Manasseh. They loved the Yahweh their God more than even their family and part of their nation. They did not want anything to do with unholy, unbiblical worship. They did not want to cooperate with sin, or allow such unholiness to pollute the land they had fought so long and hard for.

"The holiness of God demands no compromise" (Francis Schaeffer, *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History*, p. 156.)

This is the attitude of heart and mind that we should have as well. We should passionately strive for holiness in ourselves and in those around us. We must never cooperate with, or put up with sin around us if we have the ability to deal with it in a godly and biblical manner. The scriptures teach, here and elsewhere, that often we must strive against sin and wickedness in order to be holy. As we do so, we are to do fight against the sinfulness of others according to the word of the Lord.

What is interesting is that the 9½ tribes didn't just attack the 2½ of the east. Rather, because they loved them as those who had just been blessed by Joshua, they sent leaders to talk to them about it (including Phinehas the high priest and 10 rulers of each of the other tribes, vv. 13-15). V. 16 says:

"Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD: 'What treachery *is* this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in

that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the LORD?

They went on to remind the tribes of the east of the judgments of God against Israel in the past: How Israel had committed unholy acts with the women of Acacia Grove/Shittim and were enticed to commit idolatry with Baal (Num. 25); and the sin of that “Troubler” Achan that caused judgment to come upon all Israel. These unfaithful acts were used as reminders to the eastern tribes. Why have you acted unfaithfully to Yahweh??? The western tribes didn’t just attack; they tried to work it out with the eastern tribes, so that the whole nation would remain faithful to God.

The tribes of the east answered with faith and holy love for their brothers. They began by calling upon God to curse them if they truly sinned in this matter, and then explained why they built that great and impressive altar. They explained that they did not intend to offer false/unbiblical offerings. [Read vv. 24-28, which is their explanation.] The 2½ were concerned that in the future, because of the distance between them, the 9½ would cut them off from worshipping the Lord. They built the altar to remind the tribes of the west that they were part of the covenant people of God, and should always be welcomed to the worship of Yahweh. The altar was a grand reminder, a witness, to the west that the tribes of the east are brothers together with them in the covenant of God.

After the tribes of the east explained their desire to remain faithful to the Lord, the whole congregation of the Lord was pleased and “blessed the Lord” (vv. 30-33) and spoke no more of going to war. The 2½ tribes called the great altar they built “Witness,” V. 34 says, “For *it is* a witness between us that the LORD *is* God.”

We have much to learn about how we should act from this story. We should desire holiness so much that we must strive against sin and wickedness, even in those whom we love and respect. Yet, we need to be careful not to jump to conclusions and make a mistake. We need to go directly to people with our concerns and talk with them to get the facts. And if we are wrongly accused, we should not be angry and fight back. Rather, we should lovingly tell the truth, and pursue peace with our brothers in the Lord. We should long for both holiness and peace in our relationships with people. The result will be that God will bless us, and we with us.

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 23-24. Notice the sermon of Joshua, and how he causes them to renew covenant with Yahweh.

Week Eleven –Return of the 2 ½ Tribes
Joshua 22

I. The Homecoming of the 2 ½ Tribes to the East Joshua 22:1-9

II. Holiness and Brotherly Love Joshua 22:10-34

Homework assignment: Read Joshua 23-24. Notice the sermon of Joshua, and how he causes them to renew covenant with Yahweh.

Week Twelve –Farewell Address & Covenant Renewal **Joshua 23-24**

- ❖ Westminster Shorter Catechism
- ❖ Joshua Walk Thru

I. Introduction: Last words Joshua 23

Throughout history, the last words of men are some of the most important words they will speak. Before his death, Jacob called his sons together and he spoke to each one (Gen. 48-49). Before his death, Moses spoke one last time to the children of Israel in a song (Deut. 31-32). King David's last words are recorded in 2 Sam. 23 and 1 Kings 2:1-9.

So now, in Joshua 23:1-2 we read:

Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: "I am old, advanced in age.

Joshua 24:29 says that Joshua was 110 years old. He had indeed served Yahweh faithfully a long time. As he prepared to die, he wanted his many years of service to the Lord to have a lasting impact on the history of Israel. He wanted his life to count for the Lord. How about you? Do you want to be used by God?

Back in 13:1-2 we see the old age of Joshua mentioned before he divided the land.

Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. ²"This is the land that yet remains:

What was important to him was not just the victories already won; but also the continuing necessity to possess the land. The people were given victory over the main cities of the land, but they still had the responsibility to drive out the unbelievers of the land, and fully take possession of their inheritance. If they failed to take the land fully, they would forever have great difficulty living in the land.

Joshua called together the leaders of the people and made an important speech to them. He does two main things in this speech. First, he reminded them of what Yahweh had done for them. Second, He warned them to be faithful to the Lord.

Vv. 3, 4-5, 9-10 says:

“You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the LORD your God *is* He who has fought for you. ⁴“See, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. ⁵“And the LORD your God will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

⁹“For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but *as for* you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. ¹⁰“One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God *is* He who fights for you, as He promised you.

Joshua was careful to show them that God had already done great things for Israel, and that He promised to do more still. The blessings God’s people enjoy always come from God’s hand. All that they have had been given to them by Him. They were given the blessings of the land for no other reason than God is merciful and loving to His people, and because of His faithfulness to His promises. He is forever good to His children as they walk in obedience to Him (Deut. 8).

What is very important in this speech is Joshua’s warnings to the people. Read vv. 6-8, 11-13:

⁶“Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, ⁷“*and* lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, ⁸“but you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day.

¹¹“Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you **love the LORD your God.** ¹²“Or else, **if** indeed you do **go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations**—these that remain among you—and **make marriages** with them, and **go in to them and they to you,** ¹³“know for certain that the **LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations** from before you. But **they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.**

The most important thing the children of Israel must do is loving the Lord their God! How do they love God? By staying faithful to Him. They must not have anything to do with the gods of the nations. They must not have any peace with the nations. They must not marry the people of the land, lest they be turned from the Lord their God. If Israel turns from the Lord to serve other gods, Yahweh will turn from blessing to cursing in His relationship with Israel. Instead of being blessed in the land, they will be cursed and removed from the land. The nations, which they are to continue to destroy, will become a curse to Israel. This is very important to keep in mind as you read the rest of your Bible. God was destroying

the nations for their sin. If Israel became like the nations, Yahweh will bring His covenant curses against His own people. Read vv. 14-16.

¹⁴“Behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. ¹⁵“Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. ¹⁶“When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you.”

These last words of Ch. 23 read almost like a prophecy – a prediction of the future. This is a very powerful warning, one that begins with the loving kindness of the Lord, and ends with His most terrible wrath. It is important to see that Joshua’s warnings center around worship. If the people follow after other gods by worshipping them instead of Yahweh, they will obey those gods and do all of the horrible sins that the nations had done. God is a jealous God. He loves His bride. He wants her to love Him, and remain faithful to Him only.

We, like the children of Israel, must remain faithful to our Lord Jesus. We must love Him and keep His commandments, turning from those things all around us that would take us from the Lord Christ.

II. Covenant Renewal at Shechem Joshua 24

Remember the covenant renewal service at Mt. Ebal (cursing) and Mt. Gerizim (blessing) in Ch. 8? [Review if necessary.] Covenant Renewal is something that we see over and over again in scripture. It is a time when the people of God look back to the Covenant God made with His people, how He has faithfully performed all His promises, and what obligations they have to Him. They promise to worship Him and Him alone. They promise to obey Him and His appointed leaders. They renew covenant.

Joshua called the people together in Ch. 24, and speaks to the leaders of the people, who were responsible to communicate with the people and lead them in the ways of God. He reminded them of the blessings they had experienced from God, all the way from Abraham to that time. He reminded them that in their history, the covenant people had served three different sets of gods related to three different waters: 1) On the other side of the Euphrates River in the north, Babylon, the gods of Abram’s family (Vv. 2-3);

2) On the other side of the Red Sea, the gods of the Egyptians (v. 14);

3) On the other side of the Jordan, the gods of the Amorites (v. 15).

In all of these cases, Yahweh had brought them away from the gods of other land, into the Promised Land.

Then in v. 14 Joshua said:

“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. **Serve the LORD!**”

Serve The Lord! Serve The Lord! You have a choice before you today, O Israel. Who are you going to serve this day? Yahweh or the worthless gods that unbelievers serve? Now, Joshua called upon Israel to choose which God they will serve. Israel had a long history of following after other gods. Which God will you serve. Choose this day! The only choice for God’s people is Yahweh or the worthless gods of the world.

Joshua boldly answered his own question in v. 15:

But **as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**

In Hebrew, the sense is, “I have chosen, and I will choose.”

The people boldly answered back, and said in v. 16-18:

So the people answered and said: “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; “for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. “And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. **We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God.**”

Joshua began to argue with the people in order to make them really sure that they were willing to serve the Lord. V. 19f:

The people argued back to Joshua, V. 21:

And so, Joshua warned them one last time, vv. 22-23,

And the people responded in v. 24,

And the people said to Joshua, “The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!”

Then Joshua made covenant with them. He wrote down the words of the covenant on a large stone as a witness to them and Yahweh that they would be faithful to Him. And Israel was indeed faithful and worshipped Yahweh during the lifetimes of Joshua and the leaders of the people at that time. The story ends well. At the deaths of Joshua, the elders of the people and Eleazar the High Priest the people were serving the Lord. We need to remember that the death of the leaders, especially the High Priest is a time a crisis and concern. Will the new leaders

follow Yahweh and lead the people in righteousness? The book of Joshua ends leaving us wondering what will happen next in Israel? We shall see in the book of Judges.

You have choices to make in your life too about the Lord. Will you faithfully love and worship Christ, or will you become like the people around you? Will you serve God, and do His will, even when it is hard? Will you choose Christ, or the other pretend gods of our day? Choose the Lord Jesus today, and live everyday for Him. He will make His blessings known to you in ways you could not possibly imagine. He is a good and gracious God. He is faithful to His covenant. He will be faithful to bless you as you obey and serve Him; and He will be faithful to curse you if you disobey Him and choose not to serve Him. What will it be for you?

Homework assignment: Do the Joshua Student Evaluation and return it next week.

Joshua: Student Evaluation

Name _____ Date _____

- 1) What does the name “Joshua” mean in the Old Testament Hebrew language?
And what is the same name in the New Testament?
- 2) What is the two-part outline of the book of Joshua?
I.)
II.)
- 3) What is the purpose of the book of Joshua? _____

- 4) What is the lesson of Achan at Ai? _____

- 5) What city was the tabernacle setup at?
 - a. Shechem
 - b. Shiloh
 - c. Gilgal
- 6) How many times did Israel renew covenant with Yahweh in Joshua? _____
- 7) The Levites were given 48 levitical cities instead of an inheritance because:
 - a. The Levites were to lead the people in worship
 - b. Yahweh was their inheritance
 - c. The Levites were responsible to teach throughout Israel the Word of God.
 - d. All of the above.
- 8) The 2 ½ tribes on the eastside of the Jordan river sinful set up an impressive altar for false worship. True or False
- 9) What important lessons have you learned from Joshua? _____



Joshua: Student Evaluation Answer Key

- 1) Joshua means: “Yahweh Saves;” Jesus is the New Testament name for Joshua.
- 2) I.) Entry into the land, and the conquest Ch. 1-12
II.) Division of the land and instructions for living in the land Ch. 13-24
- 3) The book of Joshua represents the historical conclusion to the covenant made at Mt. Sinai. The covenant promises are fulfilled to the people of God by bringing them into the land, and defeating their enemies.
- 4) The Lord will be with us in blessing if we obey Him; but if we disobey His word we not only bring the just judgments of God down upon ourselves, but those in covenant with us may suffer His curses.
- 5) b. Shiloh
- 6) The people renewed Covenant two times in the book of Joshua.
- 7) d. All of the above.
- 8) False
- 9) What have you learn in the book of Joshua? Answers based on each person’s observations.