

JOSHUA DAY BY DAY

JAMES TRAVIS

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DEDICATION

To the people of Saar Fellowship, for whom this book was originally written as a series of daily devotionals, and to our Lord and Saviour Jesus, to Him be the glory!

INTRODUCTION

Joshua was a person used mightily by God. His name means ‘Yahweh saves’ or ‘Yahweh is salvation’ and the book of **Joshua** certainly shows God saving His people.

Joshua is a history book and is the first book *after* the Pentateuch (**Genesis-Deuteronomy**). Some are turned off by the idea of history, aren’t they? The idea of ‘*why do we need to learn about all that stuff in the past? I’m a here-and-now kinda guy*’ is common. It is, though, important to know where you’ve come from in order to fully understand where you’re going and how you’re going to get there.

Opinion is split as to the authorship of **Joshua**¹ and there is also much disagreement as to the date of writing. But, scholarly arguments aside, what is **Joshua** all about and why does it matter to you and me today?

Back in **Genesis 12** and **13**, God made promises that His people would be a hugely blessed nation and live in their own land (**12.2-3, 13.15**, and **15.18-21**). The book of **Joshua**, then, gives us the official account of how those promises came to pass. Patriarchal promises are fulfilled and the people inhabit the land. But what about you and me? Why should we walk through **Joshua** day by day with the expectancy that it is relevant for our lives now?

¹ Donald K .Campbell - *Joshua*

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul taught that what happened *then* is a preview and a picture of what will happen *when* Jesus returns (**10.1-11**). As Joshua was a leader of people, as Joshua was the saviour of the people in this place and at this time, Jesus is the truer and better Joshua who has the power to save all people at all times. Jesus brings God's people into the promised land, Jesus empowers God's people for victory, and Jesus intercedes for sinners to bring them into God's appointed rest. Even the name of the main man, Joshua, when put into the language of the New Testament means 'Jesus saves'.

We should take the time to walk through **Joshua** day by day because, ultimately, it will point us to Jesus.

JOSHUA 1

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 1 picks up **after the death of Moses**. God's people have been wandering in the wilderness, experiencing His supernatural provision, and have reached the border of the land promised to them. We see that Joshua has been faithful in his service to God and to Moses (**v.1**) and that he was now being appointed as God's representative before the people (**vv.2-4**). The promise to inhabit real lands was genuine, and we see that as the leader Joshua was called upon to **be strong and courageous**. The reason for his confidence and courage was the promise of the presence of God in **vv.4-5**, and Joshua is told that his obedience would surely bring success for the people (**v.7**). His obedience, though, was to be total: mouth, mind, and might (**v.8**). Underscoring His prior promise, God tells Joshua that His presence is the power through which all this will be achieved (**v.9**).

The people are then told to wait and prepare (**vv.10-11**), old commitments are called upon (**vv.12-15, cf. 1 Corinthians 12.25-26**), and God's Word to Joshua is confirmed through others in the community (**vv.16-18**).

Joshua 1 sets us up so well for what is to come. I recently read this:

“Entrance into the land of Canaan was entrusted to a representative (v.3). Joshua was the trustee of the land for the people. In the same way, our representative Jesus goes before us and what we have in God we possess in Him”.²

As Joshua was appointed representative and leader of the people, as Joshua was given the task of taking God’s people into all that God had promised them, the same is true for Jesus. It is through Jesus that we pass over into all that God has promised for us. It is through His presence and power in our lives that our success is guaranteed. To step into all that God has for you, go first to His appointed representative, to the Lord Jesus.

² David Guzik - Enduring Word

JOSHUA 2

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 2 begins with Joshua preparing to enter the land promised to God's people (**v.1**). Spies are sent ahead **to view the land** and they find lodging at the home of **Rahab**. Many are shocked to learn that she was **a prostitute** but, as we'll see, she desperately wants to leave her old life behind and finds forgiveness and restoration in spectacular fashion. Trying to lay low and stay anonymous, word gets out that **men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land (v.2)**. Rahab goes above and beyond the cultural expectations of hospitality and covers for the spies: first metaphorically (**vv.4-5**) then more literally (**vv.6-7**).

Rahab wants to change and leave her old ways behind and gives a wonderful confession of faith in God in **vv.8-14**. Rahab is, simply, saved by faith alone (certainly not her actions and life) and her belief in God (**...we have heard...I know...the Lord your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth below...swear to me by the Lord...deliver our lives from death...**). The soldiers agree to preserve the lives of Rahab and her family on the condition she obeys their word (**vv.18-20**). As we will see in a few chapters time, her salvation from imminent death is secured and Rahab is assimilated into the family of God's people, so much so that she ends up being in the family line of Jesus Himself (**Matthew 1.5**).

The mission of viewing the land before them had no strategic benefit for God's people but it did stand to encourage the faith of the nation:

*"Surely the LORD is handing over all the land to us!
All who live in the land are cringing before us!"*
(**Joshua 2.24**, NET)

The people were beginning to see the truths of **1.5-7** in that the presence of God with them was enough to remove obstacles from their path.

For you and for me, something to dwell on today would be Rahab's salvation, her being saved from impending death. She heard about God, she knew of God, she knew that God was able to save her, and she believed. Despite living a life that many would condemn Rahab knew there was hope for her future to be found in the Lord. Her belief in this proved to be enough, and we see the words of **Joel 2.32** being lived out:

"It will so happen that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered".

Nobody is beyond salvation if they turn to the Lord and call on His name. As David Guzik wrote,

"You may know some that seem "impossible" to save, but God's hand is not short to save people like Rahab, and He can work in amazing ways to bring salvation". ³

³ Ibid.

JOSHUA 3

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 3 begins with the people on the brink of entering the promised land. They camp **before they passed over** and the river before them must have looked like an insurmountable obstacle. Joshua knew that entering the land was, first and foremost, a spiritual problem and sends instructions through the camp that “**As soon as you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the Levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place and follow it**” (v.3). The ark goes way ahead (v.4) so the people can clearly see the way, and before the final command to go is given, Joshua is encouraged by the Lord (v.7).

The river that looked so much like an insurmountable obstacle becomes a wonderful opportunity for God to show Himself true to His Word (cf. **1.6, 9**). The priests are told, simply, to **stand still** as soon as their feet touch the water (v.8, **13, 15, 17**). The presence of God in the people’s midst would be enough to secure them safe passage over the river. There was no need for ingenious engineering, nor the risking of life and limb crossing a raging river (cf. **v.15b**). What must have been seen as an insurmountable obstacle was a wonderful opportunity for God to recreate, in part, the events of the Exodus wherein His people are delivered miraculously from old to new (**Exodus 14**).

The ark is taken, the people set off, the priests stand in the river, and the people pass over as **on dry ground (vv.14-17)**. Obstacle overcome, opportunity taken. Miracle worked, many delivered.

Whilst it's great to see God working in the past, what does this event mean for you and for me today?

The ark, the ultimate symbol of God's presence with His people (**Exodus 25.22**), was the means by which this miraculous deliverance occurred. God with His people allowed them to claim His promises, live the life He had prepared for them, and go wherever He called them. For you and for me, the same is available to us through Jesus. He is **Immanuel (which means, God with us) (Matthew 1.23)**. Jesus is the fulfilment now of everything the ark previewed here in **Joshua 3**. Our deliverance, our salvation, our entering into the promises of God, our journey from old to new, all of these things are possible only through Jesus.

JOSHUA 4

Read the full chapter [here](#).

In **Joshua 4** we see instructions (**vv.1-7**), actions (**vv.8-14**), more instructions (**vv.15-18**), and then a justification:

"The people went up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and camped in Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. Now Joshua set up in Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken from the Jordan. He told the Israelites,

*"When your children someday ask their fathers,
'What do these stones represent?'
explain to your children,*

'Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry ground.'

For the LORD your God dried up the water of the Jordan before you while you crossed over. It was just like when the LORD your God dried up the Red Sea before us while we crossed it. He has done this so all the nations of the earth might recognize the LORD's power and so you might always obey the LORD your God".

(Joshua 4.19-24, NET)

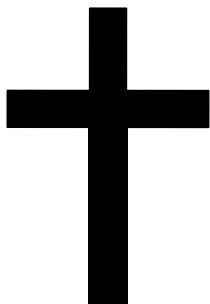
Why are the people stacking stones up now the river has been crossed? The stones are to stand as a **memorial forever (v.7)** to God's supernatural ability to save His people. The stones stand to remind God's people - and others who see them - that **the Lord your God** saved His people. The stones stand to remind all who see them that **He [did] this so all the nations of the earth might recognise the Lord's power and so [they] might always obey the Lord your God.**

The same is true for you. Times where God has shown Himself to be supernaturally strong stand like stones in our memories and minds and move us towards stronger obedience.

Think about a time when you had no idea how things would turn out, then God intervened so powerfully and evidently to resolve the situation in such a way as to glorify Himself and for your eternal good.

Think about all the occasions in the Bible where people were hopeless, no idea where to turn, no idea how the situation would ever come to a positive conclusion...and then the Lord steps in and brings something out of nothing.

The stones stood as a visual reminder of a time when God worked supernaturally to save His people. Do we have anything similar in our lives? Do we have a symbol of a time when God worked supernaturally to save His people? How about this:



As those stones stood to inspire future confidence in God's ability to guide and provide by reminding the people of time when this has been on show so powerfully and evidently, so the cross of Christ stands for us, now. Don't forget what God has done in your life, even

when things feel hopeless or as if they will never resolve positively.
Look back, look back to the cross and keep moving forward.

JOSHUA 5

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 5 is a chapter of preparation. In **vv.1-9** we see the nations in the paths of God's people preparing for battle (**v.1**) and we see Joshua circumcising **the sons of Israel a second time**. A terrible decision from a military-readiness perspective, but the people were to show faith and trust in God over their own ideas of how to prepare for battle.

As the preparation continues the people **kept the passover (v.10)**. As they are doing so, God's provision shifts from **manna** to the **produce of the land**. God will always provide for His people, but the method certainly changes from time to time.

Then, perhaps the most important piece of preparation. Joshua sees an armed man near camp (**v.13**). Taking his responsibility as leader seriously, Joshua approaches the man and asks whether he is, simply, friend or foe. The man replies with a confusing answer: **"No"**. He tells Joshua he is **the commander of the army of the Lord**. Joshua falls down to worship the man, and the man *doesn't* stop him from doing so.

Angels never receive worship (**Revelation 22.8-9**), and the man goes on to say that **the place where you are standing is holy**. This is almost word-for-word what we see in **Exodus 3.4-6** and this leads us to believe that the man is God Himself, God in the person of Jesus.

Before the battle was undertaken, before plans were drawn up, before anything was done to step into the promises of God given to His people, Joshua and the people had to learn to submit and commit to God Himself: **“Take off your sandals...” ...And Joshua did so”**.

The same is true for you and for me. Before any challenges are overcome, before we plot a course through life with God at our side, before we step into the promises that God has given us, we must learn to commit to God Himself. We must take Him at His Word, trust that He will guide and provide, and, as Joshua did here, encounter God in the person of Jesus.

JOSHUA 6

Read the full chapter [here](#).

I once heard a sermon all about **Joshua 6**. Really, it was all about *me*. I learnt nothing of the text, I learnt nothing of God, nor the Saviour that Scripture testifies to. I learnt that I needed to have endurance, that I needed to keep going, and that if I did, God would give me a great victory.

I didn't see in that sermon that God had already given His people the victory (**v.2**). The people didn't need to win the battle, God had already done so. I didn't see that, really, it was God's power *in partnership with man's participation* that is powerful, not a man who believes he can do it all.

I heard all about the endurance and perseverance of the people and their efforts, not of the testing of their faith (**v.14**).

I heard nothing about the call to the people to avoid the idols and demonic deceptions of Jericho (**vv.17-19**).

The miraculous conquest was put down to the people, not the wondrous workings of God (**v.20**).

I heard nothing about how Rahab was saved by faith (**vv.22-23**) but that, despite hearing about God just like she had (**2.8-11**), nobody else responded in faith and were judged for that (**v.24**). Nothing substantiating an early writing of **Joshua** due to Rahab still being alive when it was penned (**v.25**), nor anything about the

prophecy of **v.26** being fulfilled in **1 Kings 16.34**. Overall, it wasn't a great sermon. It was ear-tickling and sought to build people up, but fell flat because the true power of **Joshua 6** is in the Word of God, isn't it?

Without the miraculous empowering of those fully submitted and committed to God, Joshua and the gang would have been people walking in circles outside a well fortified city. Without God's promise to give them the city, their shouts would not have brought down the walls. So, if we are looking for inspiration from **Joshua 6**, let us look to the promises of God that provide for the people of God, not ourselves.

JOSHUA 7

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 7 is a heavy read, isn't it? Right off the bat, in **v.1**, we see people disobeying God. These people in this place and at this time were in a covenant relationship with God that said, simply, that obedience brought blessing and disobedience brought a curse.

Joshua sends men ahead to scout what is before them (**v.2**) and the report comes that there is no great obstacle (**v.3**). The **three thousand men** sent forward enter into battle and make a quick retreat (**vv.4-5**).

Joshua's response is one of grief (**v.6**) and he questions God's plans to bring them so far yet have them defeated (**vv.7-9**). Then, in **vv.10-15**, the reason for their defeat becomes clear. The people **have transgressed [the] covenant** and **taken some of the devoted things, stolen, and lied**. This is in direct contravention of what we read in **6.18**, and God here is staying true to His Word in saying that this must be punished.

In **vv.16-21** the culprit is found and confession is made. We see the pattern of sin began with looking, then coveting, and finally taking. Punishment is swift and strong, and a warning as to the consequences of sin was witnessed by the people that day.

For you and for me, we are no longer in the same kind of covenantal relationship with God. Our position and our status before God comes only through the work of Jesus on our behalf. Our sin deserves the consequences we see here in **Joshua 7**, but because Jesus took those consequences Himself on the cross we need not. For a thought to take into today, I love what David Guzik wrote on this:

“Our position before God is secure in Jesus; but our fellowship with Him is hindered by our own sin (1 John 1:6).

This fellowship with God is our wellspring of power to live in the Spirit”.⁴

⁴ Ibid.

JOSHUA 8

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 8, in a way, seeks to right the wrongs of the previous chapter. The key to victory is laid out before them in **vv.1-2**, and this time Joshua commits to following God's plan with total obedience (**vv.3-9**). A plan is made and followed and, because the plan was of the Lord, works exactly as anticipated (**vv.10-23**).

Joshua and the people's total obedience this time around (cf. **7.1-9**) is epitomised in **v.26** wherein we read that **Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had devoted all the inhabitants of Ai to destruction**. Not until the battle was completely finished did Joshua relax his total obedience (**v.18**).

When the victory given to them by God was complete, we see the words of **Deuteronomy 27 and 28** fulfilled with the building of an altar **on Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 27.4)**. Sacrifices and offerings are made, and the 180° turn from the events of **Joshua 7** is complete when the people wholeheartedly seek to be a community focused on the Word (**vv.30-35**).

Is there something for us in this account that can read a little like a chapter from a military history book? We saw in **Joshua 7** that when disobedience is followed by sin then a curse follows whereas here in

Joshua 8, we see that total obedience to God's plan is the surest strategy for victory. For you and for me then, no matter what we are working through and no matter what is going on in our lives right now, the burden to achieve victory doesn't rest on us. God knows you, loves you, wants the best for you, and has already made a way for that to happen for you (**v.1**). We don't need to stray from the Word and promises of God to try and make things happen for ourselves, to try and advance our own situations (**7.21**). Rather, **"Do not fear and do not be dismayed...**because God has already provided for you everything you need to walk through whatever is going on in your life right now. There is a table set for you, there is victory ahead for you (**Psalm 23.5**), but that victory comes from your total obedience to the Lord and His Word.

JOSHUA 9

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 9 begins with news of the great victory in Ai reaching those in the area, and we see local leaders coming together to **fight against Joshua and Israel (vv.1-2)**. Some, however, take a different approach. **The inhabitants of Gibeon** hear the same reports of Joshua and the Lord his God and come to him pretending to be **from a distant country**. They lie and deceive Joshua and the other leaders of God's people into a peace agreement, something forbidden in **Exodus 23.23-24**. The biggest mistake, however, we see in **v.14**:

*"The men examined some of their provisions, **but they failed to ask the LORD's advice**".
(NET, emphasis added)*

Not seeking God's will led Joshua and the leaders to enter into an agreement that they never should have. The people evidently don't like what has happened (**v.18**), but to their credit the leaders stick to their oath even though they know it was a poorly sworn one (**vv. 19-22**).

Joshua seeks to get to the bottom of this deception and finds out the truth: the Gibeonites are not from a far away land, but sought peace due to hearing **of the name of the LORD your God...and all he**

did...we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing (vv.9-10, 24). As a consequence, **Joshua made them that day cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD (v.27).**

Like Rahab, the Gibeonites came to be part of God's people through the sin in their lives. Like Rahab, they would go on to play an important role in the future of God's people (**1 Chronicles 112.4, 6.39-40, 1 Kings 3.4, Nehemiah 3.7, Jeremiah 28.1**). Like Rahab, the Gibeonites are a great example of sinners who come to God in humility (**v.25**) knowing that He is their only hope of life and a future.

For you and for me the principle is the same. It doesn't matter who we were (**Joshua 2.1b**), it doesn't matter who we think we are (**Joshua 10.2b**), all that matters is who God says we are. God had a plan for Rahab, God had a plan for the Gibeonites, and God has a plan for you. In humility come to Him and trust Him with your future and, as we see with Rahab and the Gibeonites, it will exceed anything you can possibly imagine.

JOSHUA 10.1-15

Read the full passage [here](#).

Joshua 10 begins with news of the wondrous works of God spreading through the city-states around them (**vv.1-5**). An alliance is made and plans are formed because those around **feared greatly** the military ability of Israel and the supernatural empowering they possessed. **Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem** sends out letters to four other kings, the like of which can be seen in the collection known as the Armana Letters ⁵.

The target of the alliance, the Gibeonites, reach out to Joshua for help and he responds by sending his best (**v.7**). As with previous victories, the surety comes from the promise of God that He had **given them into your hands**. So often in Scripture we see a command of God (**Do not fear them**) followed by a promise of God (**for I have given them into your hand**) and then an opportunity to participate in the work of God (**Joshua...marched up all night from Gilgal**).

We see that Joshua and his **mighty men of valour** do that they can do (**v.10b**) and God does what only He can (**v.11, 13**). Perhaps the most interesting point in this passage is found in **vv.12-14**:

⁵ British Museum

*“The day the LORD delivered the Amorites over to the Israelites,
Joshua prayed to the LORD before Israel:*

*“O sun, stand still over Gibeon;
O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon!”*

The sun stood still and the moon stood motionless while the nation took vengeance on its enemies. The event is recorded in the Scroll of the Upright One. The sun stood motionless in the middle of the sky and did not set for about a full day. There has not been a day like it before or since. The LORD listened to a human being, for the LORD fought for Israel!”

(NET)

The sun stood still? The moon stood motionless? There are many, many explanations for this. Here a few:

- A comet passed so close to earth as to kill the enemies of Israel but also knock earth off its axis, therefore giving the impression that the day was longer and the sun stood still.
- Earth's rotation was slowed for the day.
- Light was reflected off something, given the impression of a longer day.

However this is explained the source is the same. However people choose to interpret this text and however people choose to explain this miraculous account (which is buttressed by ancient texts claiming an extraordinary long *night* during the same time period) the source is the same. However this happened, it allowed God's people to complete their victory and thereby glorify God and prove His Word true (**v.8**). God intervened, supernaturally and miraculously,

into the regular rhythms and routines of His creation to protect His people and to prove Himself true and trustworthy.

Another instance of this comes to mind, and would be a great thing to dwell on today.

Another time that God intervened so powerfully and miraculously into the natural world to save His people (cf. **Luke 23.44-45, Matthew 27.51-52, 28.2**).

JOSHUA 10.16-28

Read the full passage [here](#).

The alliance of kings formed in **10.5** are now on the run and end up hiding in a cave (**v.16**). They're found and, simply, held there until the victory is complete (**vv.18-21**). When it was so, unlike Saul in **1 Samuel 15**, Joshua finishes completely the task the Lord has given him.

The kings are brought out of the cave (**v.22**) and used as an example of what happens to those that disobey, oppose, and ignore God (**v.26a**). In the midst of all of this, we see a *fascinating* picture of the antichrist in **the king of Jerusalem**. David Guzik writes:

"The Bible tells us of a coming false messiah (Revelation 13:3), who will rule over Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), who will lead a confederation of kings (Revelation 17:12-13), fighting against Yeshua (Revelation 17:14), resisting His occupation of the land (Revelation 19:19), and hiding in caves (Revelation 6:15-17). All in all, Adoni-Zedek is a fascinating picture of the coming Antichrist".

We again see the truth that Joshua's victories – and our own – come when God's power is at work with our participation (**v.25b**, cf. **Nehemiah 4.9**). The vanquished are then displayed (as was the brutal custom of the day) as both an example and a deterrent to others of what happens to defeated enemies.

Again in a passage that reads like a military history (and a passage that follows the pattern of other ancient historical accounts from this time period) there is a message for you and for me. We see that, as we read above, the total victory of Jesus over His enemies is foretold through Joshua.

As we move through our lives, day by day, we are presented with an untold number of choices that line us up either with the ways of Jesus and of God's people, or with the ways of the world and of those who disobey, oppose, and ignore God. As things played out here for Joshua and Adoni-Zedek, so things will ultimately play out between the Lord Jesus and those that stand against Him.

For you and for me, we've been given such a wonderful resource in the Word of God to guide us through these decisions that line us up with one side or another. Use it today, and every day, to line yourself up with the Lord.

JOSHUA 10.29-43

Read the full passage [here](#).

The end of **Joshua 10** is very formulaic. We see, six times, the recording of victories for Joshua and the people over their enemies. They fight and triumph over **Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir**. We see time and again that battles were won because **the Lord gave** them the victory, and at the end of the passage we read this:

*“Joshua captured in one campaign all these kings and their lands,
for the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel”.*
(**10.42**, NET, emphasis added)

We see the truth right there: this pretty epic military campaign of total success was only possible for Joshua and the people because **the Lord God...fought** for them. Their victory was only possible because God empowered it. Could Joshua have won without the Lord fighting for Him? Possibly, but nobody wins them all, do they? But, as we just read, **Joshua captured in one campaign all these kings and their lands**.

For you and for me, we can move through life in our own power and in our own strength trying to fight all our own battles. We might even win some. But, if we really want to experience life as God

intended, if we really want to experience victory over the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil (**Ephesians 2.1-3**) then we need to submit and commit to the fact that the battle belongs to the Lord, and that He has already won it:

“He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”
(**Colossians 2.14-15**, NET)

Through His death on the cross, Jesus has already triumphed over **what was against us**. It has been **taken away** for those that believe in who He is and what He has done. Your victory is right here, won on the cross by a Saviour who loves you. You can keep going trying to fight your own battles, or, you can claim the victory over **what was against** you in the name of Jesus.

JOSHUA 11

Read the full passage [here](#).

Joshua 11 begins in familiar fashion: an alliance of kings and armies is formed to **fight against Israel (vv.1-5)**. The reassurance is also familiar (**v.6**), as is the truthfulness of God's Word (**v.8**). The victory for Joshua and God's people was total, their obedience total, and the judgement of God against those who had been given over to their sin was also total (**vv.10-20**, cf. **Romans 1.24-28**).

The final hurdle is perhaps the highest (metaphorically and literally). Back in **Numbers 13** the spies' report of people **of great height**, compared to which they looked **like grasshoppers** had made the people too afraid to enter the land promised to them. Here in **Joshua 11** we see that trusting in God, totally, led them to victory over **the Anakim from the hill country** and **there was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel**. One rather famous descendent of those left **in Gaza** appears later in **1 Samuel 17** but for now, they're out of the way. With this, **the land had rest from war**.

For you and for me, at the risk of being repetitive, again we see that total obedience to, and trust in, God is the only way that the people are victorious (**v.6, 8, 15, 20c**). Without being overly obvious, the same is true for you and for me. When we try and make a way in our power and strength we invariably come up short, even when we

are on the precipice of something wonderful (**Numbers 14.1-4**).

Rather, as a shepherd leads sheep that are willing, we need to follow first and forge ahead second. Today then, focus on just that: following first, forging ahead second.

JOSHUA 12

Read the full chapter [here](#).

At first glance **Joshua 12** doesn't seem to contain much for us, does it? In **vv.1-6** we see a list of kings and peoples conquered on the east side of the Joran river, and in **vv.7-24** a corresponding list for the west. It's so easy to skim read this kind of chapter in the Bible and move on to something with more action in, isn't it?

But, before you do, pause and think about how God's people in this place and at this time would have read records like this. What we read as **Joshua 12** is a list of victories, a compendium of the conquered. It's a written record of how God has miraculously moved to provide for His people. It's something they could point to and say "See, God loves us and has moved so evidently and powerfully to save us from danger and death".

For you and for me, no, these names might not mean much, because now we would look to the accounts of the cross and the resurrection and say "See, God loves us and has moved so evidently and powerfully to save us from danger and death". We would look to the cross and the empty tomb and see victory, enemies conquered, and God's will unfolding. In our being able to look back to both, **Joshua 12** and the cross of Christ, we are in the privileged position of being able to see one foreshadowing the other and God's master plan of redemption, of provision, and of protection for His people

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playing out. Don't dismiss passages like **Joshua 12** then, see them as a preview the ultimate victory of Jesus.

JOSHUA 13

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 13 begins with the truth that despite Joshua being **old and advanced in years...there remains yet very much land to possess**. There is always more to do. For Joshua here there was more land to possess that the Lord had promised him. For you and for me, more promises of God to possess.

After reading that the **Geshurites** and the **Maacathites** were not driven out from the land fully (**v.13**, cf. **2 Samuel 3.3**) the rest of the chapter is about land given as inheritance to different tribes. We see the inheritance of Reuben (**vv.15-23**), Gad (**vv.24-28**), and Manasseh (**vv.29-31**). Interestingly, the tribe of Levi is not given land as an inheritance, but **the offerings by fire to the LORD God of Israel are their inheritance**, simply, **the LORD God...is their inheritance**.

Again with chapters from the history books in the Bible, the temptation is that we skim-read them and count them as not applicable to our lives today. No, we are not promised possession of this parcel of land or that pocket of territory. Rather, we share in the inheritance of **the tribe of Levi**. God has called believers in our day and age a **holy priesthood (1 Peter 2.5)** and said that we share in **the saints' inheritance (Colossians 1.12)**.

You might think that things are going fairly well in your faith-life: you're further along the discipleship path now than when you began,
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you've left behind struggles and sins that plagued your former self, but, as the Lord told Joshua, **there remains very much...to possess.** Being a **holy priesthood** means we have a level and intimacy of access to God that the average person didn't have in the time of Joshua. As for the tribe of Levi, the same is true for you and for me: **the LORD God...is [our] inheritance.** Use it, claim it, and possess it!

JOSHUA 14

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 14 begins in similar fashion to **Joshua 13**: land is being allotted as inheritance. We see that Eleazar the priest and Joshua... and the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes come together to oversee the casting of lots for inheritance (**v.2**). We see that everyone is taken care of in some way, shape, or form in **vv.2-4**, and the people did as the Lord commanded.

Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite then comes to Joshua to claim what was promised to him many years ago:

"That day Moses made this solemn promise: 'Surely the land on which you walked will belong to you and your descendants permanently, for you remained loyal to the Lord your God.' So now, look, the Lord has preserved my life, just as he promised, these past forty-five years since the Lord spoke these words to Moses, while Israel traveled through the wilderness. See here, I am today eighty-five years old! Today I am still as strong as when Moses sent me out. I can fight and go about my daily activities with the same energy I had then. Now, assign me this hill country that the Lord promised me at that time! No doubt you heard then that the Anakites live there in large, fortified cities. But assuming the Lord is with me, I will conquer them, as the Lord promised."

(Joshua 14.9-12, NET)

Caleb was one of two spies who returned with a positive report of the land ahead of the people in **Numbers 13.1-25**, the other being Joshua himself. Everyone else was destined to die in the wilderness

because of their lack of faith, trust, and obedience to God *except* Caleb and Joshua (**Numbers 14.30**). Here, now, Caleb is claiming what was promised to him (**Joshua 14.9**).

Often in our own faith life, we are reticent to claim what has been promised to us, aren't we? We know that God has said this and that and made these promises and those promises, but we are seldom stand up to claim them. Yes, there are promises made to specific people at specific times which we cannot claim, such as Jeremiah 29.11, but there are also big, bold, and broad promises that apply to anyone and everyone (**Isaiah 40.30-31**, *for example*).

Today then, rather than seeing the struggles ahead as the spies did, choose to focus on the promises God has made about you and about your situation. See how your life changes when you stand on the Word and the promises of God and when you claim what has been promised to you.

JOSHUA 15, 16, 17

Read the full chapters [here](#).

Chapters 15-17 are all very similar. Land is being allotted to the people and we read in great detail of places and borders. Again, whilst this might seem tedious to us, it certainly wouldn't have been to the people *finally* receiving the land they were promised!

In **15.1-2** we see **the people of Judah** and their allotment, **vv. 13-19** is about Caleb and his family, and **vv.20-62** is more on Judah and the places they captured. We read that, for now, Jerusalem could not be conquered (**15.63**). An easy city to defend yet, as David Guzik wrote,

*"...no matter how hard the struggle, with God's promise, and God's help, we can triumph – there is really no good excuse for why this city must stay in Canaanite hands until the time of David
(2 Samuel 5:6-10)". 6*

Into **16.1-4** we see the allotment for **the people of Joseph**, and in **vv.5-10** we read of **the people of Ephraim**. Sadly the people do not drive out those lingering in the land (**v.10**). The convenience of having people to work for you is not equal to the obedience they should have shown: convenience ≠ obedience.

17.1-2 shows us the allotment for **the people of Manasseh** and **vv. 3-6** for the daughters of Zelophedad. The promise given to them in **Numbers 27.1-11** is claimed here and the daughters left with their inheritance. The remaining allotments for **the territory of Manasseh** are detailed in **vv.7-13**, and then we see a stark contrast in attitude:

“The descendants of Joseph said to Joshua, “Why have you assigned us only one tribal allotment? After all, we have many people, for until now the LORD has enabled us to increase in number.” Joshua replied to them, “Since you have so many people, go up into the forest and clear out a place to live in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites, if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you.” The descendants of Joseph said, “The whole hill country is inadequate for us, and the Canaanites living down in the valley in Beth Shean and its surrounding towns and in the Valley of Jezreel have chariots with iron-rimmed wheels.” Joshua said to the family of Joseph—to both Ephraim and Manasseh: “You have many people and great military strength. You will not have just one tribal allotment. The whole hill country will be yours; though it is a forest, you can clear it, and it will be entirely yours. You can conquer the Canaanites, though they have chariots with iron-rimmed wheels and are strong.”
(Joshua 17.14-18, NET)

Back in **14.11-12** Caleb was willing to step out in faith and take on a battle he knew the Lord could aid him with. Here, however, **the people of Joseph** wanted more land simply given to them. Joshua replies very shrewdly and says, simply, *well, if you are indeed big and strong, go take some more from the hill country...clear some trees and go for it*. So much had been given to the people and already they wanted more, but without the associated hard work.

In a chapter full of detail and description that many of us are detached from, perhaps this is the biggest takeaway for us: yes, God provides all we need, but that doesn't diminish our own need to get

up and get it. The land was there for **the people of Joseph**, they simply needed to realise fully what they had been given and get to work on it.

JOSHUA 18,19

Read the full chapters [here](#).

Chapters 18-19 are very similar to the three preceding them, and detail land allotments for the remaining tribes. The people gather at **the tent of meeting** and we read that there were **seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been appointed (v.2)**. Why, we're not sure. Perhaps they had been so used to the bedouin lifestyle they were reticent to settle, perhaps they were apprehensive about putting down roots. Either way, Joshua exercises some great leadership and encourages them to take what was promised (**v.3**) and puts a plan into action whereby they would learn about the land then have it allotted (**vv.4-10**).

The rest of **chapters 18-19** are very formulaic. We read of land allotted to **the people of Benjamin (vv.11-28)**, **Simeon (19.1-9)**, **Zebulun (vv.10-16)**, **Issachar (vv.17-23)**, **Asher (vv.24-31)**, **Naphtali (vv.32-39)**, and **Dan (vv.40-48)**. There is also special mention for the inheritance given to Joshua in **vv.49-51**.

Again we're left reading what is, essentially, a town survey: who lives where. We've talked before about the promises of God being claimed and lived in by His people (**ch.14**). We've talked before about our inheritance not being land, but life (**ch.9, 13**) but here in **19.49** we see a point for us to ponder today:

***“When they finished dividing the land into its regions,
the Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun some land.”
(NET, emphasis added)***

Joshua, as God’ appointed leader of the people (**11-9**) took his portion last. Joshua was so concerned with others (**18.2-10**) that he took his own portion last. Herein we see another picture and preview of Jesus,

*“...who though he existed in the form of God
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,
but emptied himself
by taking on the form of a slave,
by looking like other men,
and by sharing in human nature.
He humbled himself,
by becoming obedient to the point of death
—even death on a cross!
As a result God highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow
—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—
and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord
to the glory of God the Father”.*
(Philippians 2.6-11, NET)

Both Joshua and Jesus were so concerned with others that the put themselves last. Joshua did it here with land, and Jesus did it for your life.

JOSHUA 20

Read the full chapter [here](#).

In **Joshua 20** we see six cities being set apart as **the cities of refuge**. Simply, if one person killed another without premeditation or intent, they could flee to one of these strategically located, designated safe cities for protection from the **avenger of blood** (the family member of the deceased vociferously chasing justice). Protection was guaranteed for the innocent until the **high priest at that time** died, at which time the manslayer could **return to his own town and to his own home, to the town from which he fled**. This protection for the innocent was guaranteed for both citizens and guest workers (**v.9**). Simply, God's justice and mercy applied to all.

Where do we see this principle play out in our own lives? Perhaps it is in the special relationship shared with a spouse: someone who will always take your side in a conflict and provide, metaphorically if not physically, the refuge needed when accusations come. Perhaps it is in the confines of a community: a group of people to whom we run for protection and acceptance, understanding and support. Whilst they are wonderful refuges to have to hand, no doubt, there is more available.

Scripture tells us that Jesus is our refuge and strength, a person to whom we run for refuge (**Psalms 46.1, Hebrews 6.18**).

Just as those six cities of refuge were strategically located so that everybody was within easy reach of one, Jesus is just as easily within reach for you (**Psalm 139.7**).

Just as the cities were open to all who needed their protection, Jesus is able to save all who come to Him (**Joel 2.32**).

Just as protection was guaranteed as long as the seeker stayed within the city (**vv.5-6**), Jesus guarantees the same for you (**John 6.39, 15.4**).

There is much similarity between the cities of refuge and Jesus. There is, however, one point on which they differ, and it's the point that means that everyone, you and I included, can and should run to Him for refuge today. The cities of refuge only helped the innocent (**v.3**) whereas Jesus, fulfilling and surpassing what we see here in **Joshua 20**, welcomes the innocent *and* the guilty. Jesus provides refuge, forgiveness, acceptance, protection from death, and life to those that know they are guilty, that know they need help, and those that run to Him for refuge.

JOSHUA 21

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 21, at first, looks very similar to chapters we've already read. It's the turn of the **Levites** to learn where they will live, and we know from previous chapters that they aren't going to receive a large province of land as an inheritance (**13.14, 33**). They will receive, by lot, places to live that are in and amongst the rest of the nation (**v.4**, *for example*). The chapter then details which Levites will live where (**vv.4-42**) and then ends with *another* statement of how the Lord did all He had promised to do (**vv.43-45**).

Rather than have a priestly province somewhere, detached from the rest of the nation, God's plan was that the priests would be everywhere. Rather than have one particular place filled with ministers, the Lord's plan was that everybody, everywhere, would have access to the priestly tribe of Levi. This, in principle, is still very true for believers now.

Rather than have one huge, mega Christian nation somewhere, detached from the rest of the world, God wants believers to be involved in all levels of society, in all nations, on all continents. The opportunities for ministry, serving others in the name and style of Jesus, are far more abundant when believers are everywhere as opposed to just somewhere. The country you live in, the job you have, the people you interact with, none of this is by accident.

Instead of living in a closed-off commune somewhere, Christians are to commune with those around them to demonstrate a life lived for the Lord.

Today then, consider where you are living and why. If you feel that you'd be better off somewhere else surrounded by more people 'like you', stop and pray and ask God why He has you where He has you now.

JOSHUA 22

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 22 begins with the **Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh** being dismissed from their military service, so to speak, and charged with keeping the Words and will and ways of God in their new homes (**vv.1-6**). The remaining half of the tribe of Manasseh are similarly dismissed and blessed and all seems well (**vv. 7-9**).

Then, however, word reaches Joshua and the people that those now east of the river had built an **altar of imposing size**. The automatic reaction is one of consternation and preparation for war against their own brothers (**vv.10-12**). Whilst this would not have been a battle the people *wanted* to fight, sometimes healthy bodies need to purge themselves of poison (**1 Corinthians 5.5**, *for example*) and the threat of perceived paganism within the people was too serious to ignore.

To their credit, a party of representatives is sent over to investigate before military might is deployed and implores the people east of the river to explain, citing previous examples of the principle that ‘your sin affects us all’ (**vv.13-20**, *cf. Leviticus 17.8-9*).

The people east of the river explain and actually agree with the concern being raised (**vv.21-30**) and say, simply, that this **altar of imposing size** was not built as a rival centre for worship, more of a

memorial, **a witness between** those east and those west of the river that they are all one people. The altar was built as a replica, and worship of God can still happen in the prescribed way not simply how the people wanted (cf. **John 4.24**). This explanation is accepted by the party sent from west of the river (**vv.30-34**) and they in turn report back to the people.

There is much to admire in **Joshua 22**, there are multiple points to ponder today:

- Those west of the river were concerned, primarily, with God's Word and will and ways being violated. Are we?
- Those west of the river were prepared to sacrifice to make sure their brothers and sisters were not living in sin. Are we?
- Both sides sought to see the issue from the perspective of the other. Do we?
- In the end, God is glorified because His people have come together in unity to listen, to understand, and to put Him first in their own ways.

JOSHUA 23

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 23 begins **a long time** after **Joshua 22**, and we read that the land had been **given rest**. Joshua was now **old and advanced in years**, and he tells the leaders of the people (through whom his message would reach **all Israel**) that he is about to go **the way of all the earth (v.14)**. The people are reminded, again, that is has been the Lord who has established them in their land and has driven out their enemies (**v.3, 5, 10**) and that not one thing that the Lord promised has not come to pass (**v.14**).

Joshua reiterates that there should be no mixing with those people that are driven out before them, simply, because there shouldn't be any cultural assimilation (**vv.7-8**), and then the covenant of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience is re-stated (**vv.14-16, cf. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28**).

Sometimes with chapters like this, we can find it hard to pull out a principle for ourselves or see how they are relevant to our lives today. We confidently assert that we are not living under this covenant anymore, don't we, but do we know why?

Do we know why are we not subject to the 'obedience = blessings, disobedience = curses' way of interacting with God anymore?

The covenant agreement, the way we interact with God, is now, simply, better. **Hebrews 8.6-7** tells us that

"...now Jesus has obtained a superior ministry, since the covenant that he mediates is also better and is enacted on better promises".
(NET)

Jesus is better than all the priests that went before Him and the agreement, covenant, that He mediates between God and man is better. You and I have the opportunity to interact with God in better ways than the people we are reading about in Joshua because we have been redeemed by the curse of the law, as Paul writes **(Galatians 3.10-14)**.

By seeing how things were, by seeing the perilous line between blessings and curses that people walked we can appreciate the steady surety of a walk with Jesus, knowing that by faith we are heading towards the ultimate blessing, eternal life.

JOSHUA 24

Read the full chapter [here](#).

Joshua 24 is the end of the book, and the end of the story for Joshua. The Biblical narrative continues seamlessly over the page (**Judges 1.1**), but today is the last time we will hear from Joshua himself.

Perhaps at the same meeting as **23.2**, Joshua speaks prophetically (**v.2**) and delivers a comprehensive overview and reminder of the fact that, actually, it has been God and not man that has brought you from humble beginnings to where you all are today (**vv.2-13**). Upon remembering the covenant, Joshua challenges the people to recommit to it:

“Now obey the LORD and worship him with integrity and loyalty. Put aside the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt, and worship the LORD. If you have no desire to worship the LORD, then choose today whom you will worship, whether it be the gods whom your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But I and my family will worship the LORD.”
(**24.14-15**, NET)

Joshua wants the people to have more than a surface-level, light and easy commitment (**v.19**, cf. **Luke 14.25-33**) and they duly reply three times with the fervour that Joshua was looking for:

*“No! We really will worship the LORD...
We are witnesses!...
We will worship the LORD our God and obey him”.
(v.21, 22, 24, NET)*

We then read that at the age of one hundred and ten Joshua died (**v.29**) and that he was buried **in his own inheritance at Timnath-serah**. As if to underscore the fact that the links with the wilderness generation are coming to an end, we read that whilst those who knew Joshua were alive Israel served God (**v.31**), that **the bones of Joseph** were buried where promised (**v.32**), and that **Eleazar the Son of Aaron** also died (**v.33**).

The end of the book reads very much like a time of change. The people had now possessed their land as promised, and the leaders that had guided them here on behalf of the Lord had now died. The covenant had been renewed here in **Joshua 24**, meaning that Joshua had set up the people to focus on their true source of guidance and provision. We get the feeling that a new chapter was beginning in the story of God's people, which we can read about in the book of **Judges**.

For a point to ponder for you and for me, I love what David Guzik wrote on the end of the book of **Joshua**:

“As the generations pass, they are each challenged to conquer the land of blessing and promise that God has for them – and we will do it, as we pay close heed to our Joshua, to Jesus Christ”.⁷

⁷ - Enduring Word

Notes

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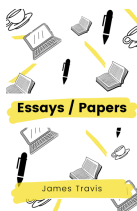


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