

# Joshua 1:1-12:24

## The Conquest of Canaan

### Introduction to the Historical Books

The Historical books of the Bible are:

Joshua, Judges, Ruth

1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

From the *ESV Study Bible* - The “**Historical Books**” of the **OT**, which come **after** the **Pentateuch**, tell the story of (1) **Israel’s entry** into the **Promised Land of Canaan** under **Joshua**; (2) **Israel’s life** in the **land** under the **judges** and the **transition to kingship**; (3) the **division** of the **nation** into **two rival kingdoms (Israel and Judah)** and **life in both**; (4) the **downfall** and **exile** of **each kingdom**; (5) **life in the exile**; and (6) **Judah’s return** from **exile**. These **books span** close to **1,000 years** of **history**, so it is not surprising that their story includes many ups and downs, twists and turns. Yet, through it all, the **God who** is the **same yesterday, today, and forever** remains the **focal point** of all of these books.

Note that the **northern kingdom** of **Israel** lasted slightly more than **200 years** (931–722 B.C.), with 19 kings. **All of Israel’s kings** did **evil** in the **Lord’s eyes**, and there were **several assassinations** and changes of ruling family.

In contrast, the **southern kingdom** of **Judah** lasted almost **350 years** (931–586 B.C.), with the **same number** of **kings**. Thus, a **greater degree** of **political stability** existed in **Judah**—and, to some degree, **spiritual stability**, since **eight kings** in **Judah** did **right** in the **Lord’s eyes**. **All the kings** in this **lineage** were **descended** from **David**, to whom **God had promised** there would always be a descendant of his line on the throne (2 Sam. 7:12–16).

### Introduction to Joshua

After **Moses dies** at the end of **Deuteronomy**, **Joshua** is **appointed** as his **successor**. Under **Joshua’s leadership**, the **Lord leads Israel** into the **Promised Land** defeat the **Canaanites** and take possession of the land. The **mighty hand** of **Yahweh** is **evident** through the **Conquest** as He **miraculously intervenes** in many **battles**, supernaturally guiding Israel **step by step** through the Land of Promise. The **wickedness** and **sin** of the **Canaanites** has come to **fruition** and **Israel** is **God’s means** of cleansing the land, and causing **His people** to **settle there**. The **Conquest**

is largely a **success** as God's **Promise** to **Abraham** to bring his **descendants back** to the **land** to **possess** it has been fulfilled.

**Joshua 21:43-45** - 43 So the **Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it.** 44 And the Lord gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. **45 Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.**

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Thus, the **overarching theme** of **Joshua** is **God's faithfulness** manifested through His **Providence** in bringing **Israel** into the **land** He **promised** to them in the **Abrahamic Covenant**. Through the **biblical narrative** so far **God** has established Himself as the **Sovereign Creator** who shows **compassion** and **mercy** to His own **people**, **abounding** in **lovingkindness** and **truth**, **promising** and **fulfilling** His good **Word** to them. This He has done in **spite** of their **rebellion**, **sin** and **idolatry**. Yet He **forgives iniquity**, transgression and **sin**; but also He will by no means leave the **guilty unpunished**, but yet still He continues in **lovingkindness** to His people for the sake of His love and promises to the Patriarchs. The **Lord promised** Abraham and his descendants that they would **be blessed** and become a **blessing**, that they would **grow** to become a **great nation**, and that they would be given a **land of their own**. By the **end** of the **Torah**, **Israel** has been brought into the **blessing of covenant relationship** with the **Lord** and has become a **great nation**. But they remain **outside** the **Land of Promise**, on the plains of **Moab**. Now as the **Lord** goes **before** them in **mighty power**, **Joshua** will **lead** the **people** into the **land**, take it, and **divide it** among them as **their inheritance** from the **Lord**. This **astounding history** of **Israel** so far has now been **recorded** in the **Torah** (Pentateuch), and now the **Conquest** in **Joshua**, for His people to **consider** and **trust Him** as **their God**. Here they see in these **faith building words** the **awesome** and **faithful character** of their **God**. He is **worthy** to be **praised**, **worshipped**, and **trusted**.

### Today's Text - Outline

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### **Crossing into the Land 1:1-5:15**

The first **5 chapters** of **Joshua record** the account of the **people crossing** into the **land** from the **east side** of the **Jordan River**. Here God gives the blessing in fulfilment of His promise that every where they step, God has given them the land.

**Joshua 1:1-5** - Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, 2 "Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, **cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.** 3 "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. 4 "From the wilderness and this **Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun will be your territory.** 5 "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. NASU

Here God has **charged Joshua** with **leading the people, encouraging** him that God will **assure him victory** over every **enemy**. Here also is one very **familiar section** of Scripture that describes the **prosperous** and **successful life** of God's people who are **focused** on His **Word** and zealous to carry it out.

**Joshua 1:6-9** - 6 "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 "**Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.** 8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and

courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for **the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.**" NASU

The **focus on God's Word, meditation** on it and **great care in obedience** is the **path to prosperity** and success. **"7 be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go 8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."** See here also the **Lord's abiding presence** is the key to **strength, courage**, and the **success** in what He has **promised** (v-9). Here also the **Lord** has **promised to give them rest** as well as the **land**.

**Joshua 1:13** - 13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, **'The Lord your God gives you rest and will give you this land.'**" NASU

Here also **chapter 1** records the **people pledge of faithfulness** under **Joshua's leadership**. The very **serious nature** of the **warfare ahead** is emphasized.

**Joshua 1:16-18** - 16 They answered Joshua, saying, **"All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 "Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the Lord your God be with you as He was with Moses. 18 "Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death;** only be strong and courageous." NASU

### **Joshua, the spies, and Rahab (2:1–24)**

Joshua now **sends spies** into the **land** to look especially at **Jericho**. When they enter the **house of Rahab** the **harlot**, they have **been seen** and are **being pursued**. But **Rahab hides** the **spies** and **lies** about their **whereabouts**.

**Joshua 2:1-7** - 1 Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." **So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.** 2 It was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." 3 And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, **"Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land."** 4 **But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were**

from. 5 "It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." 6 But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof. 7 So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate.

Now Rahab does this out of the **fear of the Lord**, to **protect** the **spies**, and also the **lives of her family**. This is because in **faith Rahab** embraces the **invasion of God** and **His people** into the **land** and she **seeks a refuge** with **them**. The writer to the Hebrews acknowledges this **great act of faith** on her part.

**Hebrews 11:31 - 31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.**

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**Rahab** plays an **important role** in **God's Word**. She is remembered as one of the **ancestors of Christ** in **Matthew's genealogy**. She is actually the **mother of Boaz**, who marries the **gentile Ruth**, from whom **King David**, and ultimately **Jesus** come. This shows **God's impartiality** when it comes to **race, class, or depth of sin**. Yahweh's **forgiveness extends to all**, for anyone who was **repentant** and **turned to Yahweh for salvation**, even a **gentile prostitute!** The story here indicates that those **outside of Israel** could also be **included** in His **saving purposes**. She is also commended in **James 2:25** for her **great acts of faith**. **Rahab** makes a remarkable **confession of faith** concerning the **Lord** and **His invasion** into the **land** with the **Israelites**. She is **well aware** that **Israel's God** is **God over all**, and what **He did in Egypt**, and to the **Amorite kings** on the **east side of the Jordan**.

**Joshua 2:8-14 - 8** Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, **9** and said to the men, "**I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. 10** "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. **11** "When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. **12** "Now therefore, please swear to me by the Lord, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, **13** and

**spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death."** 14 So the men said to her, "Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and **it shall come about when the Lord gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you."** NASU

Here **Rahab** knowing the **terror** of the **Lord** has sought a **refuge from Him**, especially by **showing kindness** and **risking** her **own life** to **protect** the **spies**. She seeks a **promise** from the **spies** to **protect her** and **all her family**, knowing that the coming **siege** of **Jericho** is at **hand**. To her request **made by faith**, the spies affirm that they will **deal kindly** with her. The story continues as the **spies return safely** to the camp. The last verse of chapter 2 indicates one of the **key themes** of the **Conquest**; that **"24 all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us."**

**Joshua 2:24** - 24 They said to Joshua, "Surely the Lord has given all the land into our hands; moreover, **all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before us."** NASU

God had **previously promised** them through **Moses** that He would send **"the hornet against them."**

**Deuteronomy 7:20-24** - 20 Moreover, **the Lord your God will send the hornet against them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you perish.** 21 You shall not dread them, for the Lord your God is in your midst, **a great and awesome God.** 22 **"The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you** little by little; you will not be able to put an end to them quickly, for the wild beasts would grow too numerous for you. 23 **"But the Lord your God will deliver them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed.** 24 "He will deliver their kings into your hand so that you will make their name perish from under heaven; no man will be able to stand before you until you have destroyed them. NASU

As the **people** begin in **battle** against their **enemies**, this **great fear grips** them and sends them into **confusion** and they **perish** before Israel.

### **Crossing the Jordan (3:1–4:24)**

Joshua now commands the people to **pack up camp** and get ready to **move out**. Now the **Jordan River** in the **spring** is a **great flowing river** and not easy to cross. Yet **God** will do **wonders** before the people as He brings them **across** the **Jordan** and into the **land**. He commands the **priests** who carry the **Ark of the Covenant** to **walk down** into the **water** and there **God causes** the river to **stand up** in a **heap** so they **walk across** on **dry land**. Apart from the **divine** and **awesome miracle**, the

significance is, God uses this as a **sign** to **encourage** the **faith** of the **people** that by **His power** and **presence** they will be **victorious** over their **enemies** where they are **crossing over** to take the **land**.

**Joshua 3:7-13 - 7 Now the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.** 8 "You shall, moreover, command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'" 9 Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God." 10 Joshua said, **"By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Gergashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite. 11 "Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan.** 12 "Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe. 13 "It shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, **the waters of the Jordan will be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above will stand in one heap."**

Now the Lord has them **gather twelve stones** up from the **Jordan** and set them up as a **memorial** at the **camp** at **Gilgal**. The text explains that there future **generations** will **remember** the **mighty deeds** of the Lord in bringing the people into the land.

**Joshua 4:4-7 - 4** So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe; 5 and Joshua said to them, "Cross again to the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel. 6 "Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, **'What do these stones mean to you?'** 7 then you shall say to them, **'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.'** So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever." NASU

Specifically, the people of future generations will need a **memorial** to remember that **"24 the hand of the Lord is mighty, so that you may fear the Lord your God forever."**

**Joshua 4:18-24** - 18 It came about when the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord had come up from the middle of the Jordan, and **the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up to the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and went over all its banks as before.** 19 Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth of the first month and camped at Gilgal on the eastern edge of Jericho. 20 Those twelve stones which they had taken from the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. 21 He said to the sons of Israel, "**When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?'** 22 **then you shall inform your children, saying, 'Israel crossed this Jordan on dry ground.'** 23 **"For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the Lord your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed;** 24 **that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, so that you may fear the Lord your God forever."** NASU

#### **Ritual renewal and divine encounter (5:1–15)**

Now that they have **crossed over** the **Jordan** into the **land**, the matters of first importance must be attended to. These would be the matters of the **reinstitution** of the **covenant sign** of **circumcision** (vv. 2–9) and the **celebration** of **Passover** (vv. 10–12) remind God's people of their **privileged covenant relationship** with Him (signified by circumcision) and of their **redemption** out of bondage by Him (signified by the Passover). These are really at the **heart** of their **worship of God**, much like **baptism** and the **Lord's Supper** function for us in the **New Testament Church** (Col. 2:11–12, 1 Cor 5:7). This **second generation** of **Israelites** had not observed the **rite** of **circumcision**, so the Lord has them **recommit** to the **covenant** by this **sign** of the **covenant**. There they wait to be **healed** as they reflect on what the Lord has done to bring them **into the land**.

**Joshua 5:8-9** - 8 Now when **they had finished circumcising all the nation, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed.** 9 **Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you."** So the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day. NASU

Thus, the site of **Gilgal** is known as the **place** where **God faithfully** fulfilled the **promise** to bring them **into the land**, and the people have **recommitted** to the **covenant** with **God**. The **standing stones** are there to **remind them**. This of course is also **reaffirmed** by the **celebration** of the **Passover**, that **annual memorial feast**



that the **Lord established** for them to **remember** that **God delivered** them out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt.

**Joshua 5:10** - 10 While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal **they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho.**

Now they have **committed themselves** again to the **worship of God**, and to basing their life in the land on their **identity as God's people**. Another important event is that now they have **crossed over** and into the **land**, the **mana** has **ceased**, and according to **God's promise** they will **live off** the **abundant fruit** of the **land flowing** with **milk** and **honey**.

**Joshua 5:11-12** - 11 On the day after the Passover, **on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain.** **12 The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.** NASU

Having now **refocused** on the **Lord** and His **covenant** with them, God now **reassures Joshua** that in the **epic conquest** ahead for them, **He** will be **with them** and **go before** them.

**Joshua 5:13-15** - 13 Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" 14 He said, **"No; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord."** **And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, "What has my lord to say to his servant?"** 15 The captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, **"Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy."** **And Joshua did so.** NASU

There is some **controversy** as to whether or not this is a **Christophany** or **Theophany** or **not**, but obviously **God assures** them of **His presence**, and in a very **military way**. It is the **"14 captain of the host of the Lord."** God will be **with them** in the coming **military campaign**.

### **Taking the Land (6:1–12:24)**

Chapters 6-12 of Joshua records the military aspect of taking the land of the Canaanites. They are continually reminded that they are here because the Lord brought them here, and He has promised to bring them in and give them the victory over their enemies by His mighty Hand.

**Joshua 6:1-2** - 6 Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in. 2 The Lord said to Joshua, **"See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors.**

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Here they will learn the **great faith lessons** of continual **dependence** upon the **Lord** and His **guidance** through **life**. They must **act** on His **commands** and **seek** His **direction** all along the way. When they do so **God will fight** for them and give them **victory** over **great armies** and **impossible circumstances**. When they **fail** to **seek** and **obey** the **Lord**, even the **smallest enemies** overcome them. Let us all learn the **lessons of Faith 101** here in the **Conquest** narrative.

### **Jericho's fall: firstfruits of war (6:1-27)**

As **Israel** begins to **conquer** their **enemies** and the **land**, the encounter at **Jericho** highlights the **great dependence** on **God** and His **guidance**. The remarkable **battle plan** of **God**, its **supernatural** elements, and its **strange divinely ordered instructions** highlight the fact that **God** will **go before** them and **give them** the **land** as His **gracious gift**. Even a **great city** like **Jericho** will **fall** before their very eyes. Moreover, they will **learn here** what it means to **devote** their **enemies** and their **belongings** to **destruction**, and take **no plunder** and **leave no survivors**.

**Joshua 6:3-5** - 3 **"You shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days. 4 "Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 "It shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead."** NASU

Joshua leads the people in **obedience** to **God's command**, the **Ark of the Covenant** of the **Lord** going **before them** for **seven days** marching around the city. Joshua reminds the people that they have **promised Rahab** and her **family** that they will **live**, but everything and everyone else will be **under the ban**.

**Joshua 6:16-18** - 16 At the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord has given you the city. 17 **"The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the Lord; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 "But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not**

**covet them and take some of the things under the ban**, and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it.

The **plan** goes off with **great success**.

**Joshua 6:20-21** - 20 So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout and **the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city. 21 They utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword**. NASB

The **promise** to **Rahab** is **fulfilled**, the **city** is **devoted** to **destruction** and burned with fire, and Rahab is welcomed permanently into the community.

**Joshua 6:22-25** - 22 Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the harlot's house and bring the woman and all she has out of there, as you have sworn to her." 23 So the young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all she had; they also brought out all her relatives and placed them outside the camp of Israel. **24 They burned the city with fire, and all that was in it**. Only the silver and gold, and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. **25 However, Rahab the harlot and her father's household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day**, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. NASU

The **oath** of **Joshua** **highlights** the **significance** of **God's judgment** upon **Canaan**, and **warns** any and all that **rebuilding** what **God** has **destroyed** would bring a **curse** upon them. The **curse** here is ironically fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34 when the rebuilder of the city does so at the cost of His firstborn and his youngest son.

**Joshua 6:26-27** - 26 Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "**Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his firstborn he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates**." 27 So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land. NASU

See here in Joshua 6, the people have learned a great lesson of faith.

**Hebrews 11:30-31** - 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. **31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace**. NASU

### **Israel's failure: Achan's sin; corporate guilt (7:1–26)**

Chapter 7 records Joshua's attack of the **city of Ai** without a **divine command** to **do so** or of any **inquiry** to the **Lord** as to how Israel should proceed. This brings **judgment** upon **Israel**, and **36 men** lose their lives in the **battle**. This happens because the **nation bore guilt** in regard to things **under the ban** because the one man **Achan**, coveted and **kept back** some things in his tent which were **devoted to destruction**. The whole account opens with these words...

**Joshua 7:1 - 7** But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, **took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel.** NASU

After the **account** of the **battle** and the **losses there**, God **reveals** to **Joshua** what **Achin** has done, **7:11**, and commands **Joshua** to bring the people out and **cast lots to identify** who among them **has sinned** and brought **guilt** upon the whole **nation**. This of course resulted in the loss of **36** of their men.

**Joshua 7:14-21 - 14** 'In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that **the tribe which the Lord takes by lot shall come near by families, and the family which the Lord takes shall come near by households, and the household which the Lord takes shall come near man by man.** **15** 'It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he **has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.'** **16** So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. **17** He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken. **18** He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken. **19** Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." **20** So Achan answered Joshua and said, **"Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: 21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."** NASU

Here see the **tragic affect** that the **sin** of **one** brings upon the **many**. Also, let us **fear the Lord** as He means **serious business** in **calling** His **people** to **follow** and **obey** Him. The had required **careful obedience** of them **all**, and here is seen an important reason why.

**Joshua 7:22-26** - 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it. 23 They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the Lord. **24 Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. 25 Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. 26 They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger.** Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day. NASU

The **ESV Study Bible** comments, "*Josh. 7:24–26 Having brought trouble on Israel by his covetous act, Achan is put to death and he and all that he had are covered under a great heap of stones in the Valley of Achor (meaning "trouble").... Seven heaps or piles of stones figure in the Joshua account (see note on 4:20). The first was set up by Joshua in 4:20 as a memorial to the Lord's faithfulness in bringing Israel safely across the Jordan River. This heap of stones over Achan is a reminder of Israel's potential for unfaithfulness and of the dire consequences that result.... all Israel stoned him with stones. This method of execution appropriately involved the entire community, as the entire community had been defiled and needed to be purified. It also freed any single individual from bearing the weight of acting as sole executioner.*" **End quote.** As Israel **moves forward** in the **Conquest**, they have **learned** a **valuable faith lesson** about **careful obedience** to the **Lord**.

### **Israel's renewal: Ai's defeat (8:1–35)**

**Chapter 8** records the successful **battle** and **fall** of the **city of Ai** after **careful obedience** to the **Lord's instructions** are **followed**. This is a **reassurance** to Israel that the **Lord** is with **them**, but they must be **zealously focused** upon His **Word**, and inquire of Him.

**Joshua 8:1-2** - 8 Now the Lord said to Joshua, **"Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given**

**into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.** 2 "You shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; **you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves.** Set an ambush for the city behind it." NASU

There is a **long** and **detailed narrative** of the **battle plan** and **fulfilment**. In the end the emphasis is upon following the **careful instructions** of the **Lord**.

**Joshua 8:7-8** - 7 "And you shall rise from your ambush and take possession of the city, for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand. 8 "Then it will be when you have seized the city, that you shall set the city on fire. **You shall do it according to the word of the Lord. See, I have commanded you.**" NASU

Israel is **successful** and **conquer** the **city of Ai** and its **people**. Another **emphasis** is placed upon **carefully listening** to the **word** of the **Lord, 8:27**, and here the Lord has **changed** the **conditions** of things **under the ban**.

**Joshua 8:27-28** - 27 Israel took only the cattle and the spoil of that city as plunder for themselves, **according to the word of the Lord which He had commanded Joshua.** 28 So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation until this day. NASU

Now to **highlight** the **whole point** of paying **careful attention** to the **Word** of the **Lord**, Joshua **builds** and **altar** holds a **ceremony** to read the **entire Law** to the **people** now that they are **in the land**. It is in a sense a covenant renewal ceremony.

**Joshua 8:34-35** - 34 Then afterward he **read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law.** 35 **There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel** with the women and the little ones and the strangers who were living among them. NASU

Here the **Lord** has **emphasized** that **success only** comes with **careful obedience** to the **Word** of the **Lord**.

### **Israel's Canaanite covenant: the Gibeonite ruse (9:1-27)**

Chapter 9 records a **failure** on **Israel's part** to **inquire** of the **Lord**, and thus they are **deceived** by the **Gibeonites**. Most of the other **Canaanite nations** are gathering together and ready to go to **war** with **Israel**, but the Gibeonites are much **more shrewd** than them. They **devise** a **plan** to **deceive Israel**, and plead for an **oath** of safety, which **Joshua grants**, and thereby **disobeying God's command** to **annihilate** the **Canaanites** from the land, (Deut7:2). The **Gibeonites lie** and tell

a **deceiving story** about coming from a **far away** place and speaking words of **respect** and **fear** of the **Lord** and His people.

**Joshua 9:8-15** – 8 Then Joshua said to them, "Who are you and where do you come from?" **9 They said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the Lord your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt, 10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroath. 11 "So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; now then, make a covenant with us."'** 12 "This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled. 13 "These wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey." 14 So the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the Lord. **15 Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them.** NASU

This puts **Israel** in a **difficult situation**, so they are **forced** to let them live since they have **taken an oath** in the **Name** of the **Lord**.

**Joshua 9:16-21** - 16 It came about at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land. 17 Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. **18 The sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders. 19 But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, "We have sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. 20 "This we will do to them, even let them live, so that wrath will not be upon us for the oath which we swore to them."** 21 The leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whole congregation, just as the leaders had spoken to them. NASU

**Moses** had **clearly warned** them **not** to make a **covenant** with the **inhabitants** of the **land** (Ex 34:12, Deut 7:2). But in their haste Joshua and the Jewish leaders

**broke God's Law** and made a **covenant** with the **enemy**. Since their **oath** was **sworn** in the **name** of the **Lord** (Josh 9:18), it could not be broken. Joshua therefore lets them live, but makes them servants.

**Joshua 9:22-27** - 22 Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are living within our land? **23 "Now therefore, you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."** 24 So they answered Joshua and said, "Because it was certainly told your servants that the Lord your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. 25 "Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us." 26 Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them. 27 But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, to this day, in the place which He would choose. NASU

What do we **make** of this **whole episode**? **Barnes** comments, *"It was the carelessness of the Israelites themselves which betrayed them into this league. It was therefore their duty when they found themselves entrapped into this unlawful covenant, to devise means by which they might respect both their own oath and God's purposes as intimated in His injunctions (Deut 7:2) against sparing the Canaanites. This was accomplished by granting their lives to the Gibeonites, but reducing them to a servile condition, which might be expected to disable them from influencing the Israelites to do wrong. It may be added, that had the Israelites broken their oath, taken solemnly in the Name of the Lord, they would have brought that Name into contempt among the pagan; and, while punishing perjury in others, would have themselves, the Lord's people, incurred the reproach of perjury. The result showed that Joshua and the princes judged rightly in this matter."* **End quote.**

### **Defense of Gibeon, conquest of the south (10:1–43)**

After **Israel enters a covenant** with the **Gibeonites**, Gibeon suddenly finds itself in **danger** to a group of **five Canaanite kings** who have **gathered together** and laid **siege** to **Gibeon**. The Gibeonites send to **Joshua** and request his help in the **battle** to which Joshua, **with God's approval**, arrives at Gibeon to fight against the Canaanite kings.



**Joshua 10:8-11** - 8 The Lord said to Joshua, **"Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you."** 9 So Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal. 10 **And the Lord confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon**, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11 As they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, **the Lord threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.** 12 Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon." **13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies.** Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. 14 There was no day like that before it or after it, when the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel. 15 Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp to Gilgal. NASU

The **astonishing overthrow** of these **kings** is a **marvel** indeed. Consider the mighty **hand** of the **Lord** on full display here... **"11 the Lord threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword."** Awesome indeed! Even more, **"13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies."** See here the Lord performed a miracle of cosmic proportions, in which the earth ceased rotating for a time! Only one response is appropriate!

**Psalm 33:8** – 8 Let **all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.** NASB

The following **verses 16-27 record** Israel pursuing the **armies** of those **kings** and **destroying** all of them. The **five kings** were hiding in a **cave** and **Joshua** had them **brought out** and **humiliated** before the Israel. The **Lord encourages** Israel here.

**Joshua 10:24-25** - 24 When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, **"Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings."** **So they came near and put their feet on their necks. 25 Joshua then said to them, "Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and**

**courageous, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies with whom you fight."** NASU

Then after putting them to **death**, and **piling a heap** of **stones** upon the entrance of the **cave** into which they were **thrown**, **Joshua guides** the army **toward** much of the entire **southern region** of Judea for **conquest**. Verses **28-43** record the **southern campaign** in which the **key southern cities** are defeated of **Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir**. Chapter 10 ends with a summary description giving glory to God for the victory.

**Joshua 10:40-43** - 40 Thus **Joshua struck all the land, the hill country and the Negev and the lowland and the slopes and all their kings. He left no survivor, but he utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the Lord, the God of Israel, had commanded.** 41 Joshua struck them from Kadesh-barnea even as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen even as far as Gibeon. 42 **Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the Lord, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.** 43 So Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp at Gilgal. NASU

### **Conquest of the north and a list of defeated kings (11:1–12:24)**

**Chapter 11** records the **conquest** of northern Canaan. In this case, the **kings** of the **north gathered together** and came to **fight against Israel**.

**Joshua 11:4-8** - 4 They came out, they and **all their armies** with them, as many people **as the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots.** 5 **So all of these kings having agreed to meet**, came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. 6 Then the Lord said to Joshua, **"Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow at this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel;** you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." 7 So Joshua and all the people of war with him came upon them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and attacked them. **8 The Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, so that they defeated them, and pursued them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim and the valley of Mizpeh to the east; and they struck them until no survivor was left to them.** NASU

Verses **10-15** record the subsequent **capture** of **all the cities** of the **kings** who came out **against them**, including **Hazor**, the **only city** they **burned with fire**. All of this **Joshua did according to the Word of the Lord**. In almost every case the people were allowed to **keep** the **spoils of war**. The only **cities** that were **burned with fire** were **Jericho, Ai, and Hazor** in all of the land.

**Joshua 11:14-15** - 14 All the spoil of these cities and the cattle, the sons of Israel took as their plunder; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them. They left no one who breathed. 15 **Just 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.** NASU

All of this was **from the Lord**, who had **decreed a complete end** for all of these wicked Canaanites who **committed abominations** in the sight of the Lord for **centuries**. Now the **sin of the Canaanite** was **ripe for judgment**, and **Israel** was His means.

**Joshua 11:19-20** - 19 There was **not a city which made peace** with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle. 20 **For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them,** just as the Lord had commanded Moses. NASU

And so the **Conquest** was **complete**. The **Lord gave them** into the hands of Joshua and Israel according to the **promises** He had made with the **Patriarchs**, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**Joshua 11:23** - 23 So Joshua **took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses,** and **Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.** NASU

**Chapter 12** records the **kings defeated** under the leadership of **Moses** (12:1–6) and **Joshua** (12:7–24), bringing the basic **conquest narrative** to a close.

**Joshua 12:1** - 1 Now **these are the kings of the land whom the sons of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise, from the valley of the Arnon as far as Mount Hermon, and all the Arabah to the east** NASU