

Joshua

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Chapter 1

Part 1: Joshua 1:1-9

At times in our lives, we go through a transition. There are new things that we are called to experience, and new things that we are called to do, if we are going to be in God's will. This was true about Joshua. God had used Joshua as a servant to Moses, but, in this book, we see that things have changed. The Holy Spirit's leadership and provision in our lives is geared toward helping us fulfil the righteousness of the law (Romans 8:4). In a general sense, the call of God on our lives, is the fulfilling of the righteousness of the law (not in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of the Spirit). This can only be achieved through walking in the Spirit.

Verse 1: *"After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying:"*

The servant of the LORD: This is the title given to Moses. All of us should aspire to being servants (the word used here literally means 'slave') of the Lord. Our lives should reflect the fact that we acknowledge God and His Lordship in every area of our lives.

Moses' servant: This is the title that Joshua receives in this verse. The word used here for 'servant' is not the word for a slave. It is a word used for serving. Being a slave or serving another both allude to the same intention – both men recognised another's authority over their lives. Moses submitted to the Lord's authority, and Joshua, by submitting to Moses' authority, was indirectly also submitting to the Lord's authority.

Verse 2: *"Moses My slave is dead. Now therefore, arise, pass over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the sons of Israel."*

Now: In Hebrew, the word used here is a word that implies a sense of urgency. It is a word that implies something new or different. It implies that a transition is about to occur.

Arise: Scripturally the word used here is a word that is usually used to call someone into service. God is giving Joshua an assignment, a purpose and a mission. God has something that He wants Joshua to do for Him. Joshua had a choice as to whether he would submit to and obey this call of God in his life, or if he would reject the call of God.

Pass over this Jordan: When Moses began to lead the children of Israel, he took them through the sea of reeds. This was part of their transition from Egypt. God's call to Joshua, as he began leading the Israelites, was that he also needed to take them through a body of water – the river Jordan. This was their transition from the wilderness into the Promised Land. Moses had not completed the task of taking the people into the Promised land, so now this task was being passed on to Joshua. Going through the River Jordan was a step of faith, marking the conclusion of their 40 years in the wilderness. God was giving the people a new leader and a new beginning. The people were going into a new land.

Scripturally, this land (the Promised Land) parallels (is a paradigm of) the Kingdom of God. Like Joshua led the people into the Promised Land, Yeshua leads us into the Kingdom of God.

The land: Whenever God talks about the fulfilment of His covenant or will it is always connected to the Land (of Israel). God is still interested in what happens to the physical land of Israel. God is moving to bring His people back to the land of Israel in order that the prophetic purpose of God might be fulfilled. That prophetic purpose has to do with the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

I am giving: This verb has a present tense aspect to it – an unusual verb form in Hebrew - therefore a call to pay attention, as what is being said is highly significant. It is a verb form that causes it to stand out in a text. God is giving the sons (children) of Israel the land (of Israel) so that they can serve Him – service to the father and inheriting from the father are two important aspects of sonship.

Verse 3: *“Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.”*

Every place: There is a broadness, a great inclusiveness, to what God said to Joshua.

You: Written in the plural. Referring to the children of Israel.

As I said to Moses: It is God’s will that there is a passing on of His revelation to the next generation. The covenant promise went from Abraham, was passed on to Isaac and then to Jacob and so on.

Verse 4: *“From the wilderness and the lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.”*

The wilderness: There is a part of the land of Israel which is a desert – the Negev. This verse emphasises the wilderness. The wilderness alludes to our dependence on God. It is only when we approach God and are totally dependant on Him that we can truly worship Him.

The lebanon: When we speak about a country we do not say “the Israel” or “the England”, etc. There is a definite article in front of ‘lebanon’, which informs us that this cannot be referring to the country of Lebanon. In Hebrew the word translated ‘Lebanon’ here is a word that can also mean ‘white mountain’. Most scholars, from a Hebraic standpoint, see this as a reference to Jerusalem.

The Great Sea: Referring to the Mediterranean Sea.

The going down of the sun: The sun goes down in the west. God set Israel’s western border to be the Mediterranean Sea.

Your territory: God is telling Joshua what the boundaries of the land that He is giving to the children of Israel are.

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

Before: Could also be translated ‘against’. This does not mean that Joshua was not going to experience opposition.

Joshua was going to experience opposition, but, as long as he was committed to God's call, purposes and living within the boundaries that God had established, it was not going to be successful opposition. When we submit to the plans and purposes God has for our lives we do not need to worry about the enemy.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you: Scholars teach us that this is a redemptive phrase. God being 'with us' is an outcome of redemption. Once a sinful man has been redeemed, he can experience an intimate relationship with God. The purpose of redemption is intimacy with God.

Let go of: This is not the word for leaving – it is the word for letting go of. The context here is redemption. This implies that God will never let go of those whom He has redeemed (see John 10:27-29). In a practical sense today when we say "I am just going to let it go" it means that we are not going to defend it or protect it. We are going to lay it down and deliberately walk away from it. This is not what God will do to those whom He has redeemed. Once we have a relationship with God, He will not allow it to fall away.

Forsake: To intentionally and purposefully leave. God will never abandon those who are in a covenantal relationship with Him.

I will not let go of you nor forsake you: God is affirming His commitment to Joshua as it relates to His purpose.

Verse 6: *"Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."*

Strong: A word for strength and power.

Of good courage: Brave

You shall divide as an inheritance the land: This was Joshua's call.

I swore: God had made an oath - to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) specifically.

I swore ... to give them: When Israel walks in faithlessness they receive discipline from God – exile being one of the forms of discipline that they have received. However, this punishment does not last indefinitely but is for a limited period of time. The patriarchs were faithful to God's call and purposes. Likewise, God is faithful to do what He has promised to do, and a remnant of their offspring are going to be recipients of this. A remnant of the children of Jacob will take possession of the land as a requirement for the Kingdom to be established.

Verse 7: *"Only be strong and very courageous, that you may keep and do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may be skilled wherever you walk."*

Very: This is a word of strong emphasis. It means to do this in an exceedingly great manner - with all of your heart, soul and mind. To carry out the purpose of God in our lives, we need to be exceedingly courageous.

Do not turn... to the right hand or to the left: We need to approach the instruction/law of God in the proper way – accurately. We are not to have a one-sided and unbalanced view of the law.

Skilled: This is a word that has to do with understanding or common sense (according to God's perspective of common sense and not according to human common 'sense'). When we live according to the laws of God, we are given discernment, and we begin to see things clearly from His perspective.

As believers, saved by grace, we need to approach the law with respect. We need to understand that the law still has great relevance. None of us can keep the law today – there is no temple and so it is impossible to carry out the commandments perfectly and accurately. However, we know that Yeshua is our Passover Lamb. As believers, even if there were a temple today, we would not need to go to it at Passover to sacrifice for our sins. What we do need to understand, however, is the Biblical teaching/revelation of Passover. Understanding the relevance of Passover helps us to understand what the blood of Yeshua purchased for us. It helps us to understand why Paul would call Yeshua ‘our Passover’ (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Verse 8: *“Do not depart this Book of the Law from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, for the sake of that you will keep and do according to all that is written in it. For then you will be successful in your way, and then you will be wise.”*

Not depart ... from your mouth: We need to speak about the laws of God.

Meditate: Read and think about.

Day and night: We cannot keep the law in its entirety today, but we can, being led by the Spirit, understand it and apply the heart of it (its principles) in our lives today. We need to be constantly talking about and meditating on the Word. If we do not, we are in spiritual disobedience and are going to find the Spirit of God being quenched in our lives.

Wise: Those who are wise are those who have the right perspective – a Godly vantage point. When we see things in the way that God sees them, we are able to do the will of God. As we do His will we get more perspective, more knowledge, more understanding. We grow in understanding God's truth by taking what we are reading and applying the Word of God to our lives. The Word gives us discernment so that we can behave properly. As we behave properly, we are given a greater discernment/understanding.

Verse 9: *“Surely I have commanded you: be strong and courageous; do not fear, nor be confused, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you walk.”*

Surely: This is a word that implies that this is obvious.

Fear: Fearing something means that we give it priority. When we are not fearing God (giving Him priority) but are fearing other things (our enemy, tribulation, suffering, despair, etc), we take our eyes off God and move off the path that God would have us to be on. This leads to us becoming spiritually confused. When we are committed to God's purposes, and are walking in strength and courage, we are going to see things from God's perspective. It is only when we see things from His perspective that we can successfully do what He has called us to do. When we become fearful and give our enemy (the devil) priority, we are going to become spiritually confused – giving poor counsel or advice to others. We need to be those who lead others into God's will - with faith, strength and courage.

The LORD your God is with you: Knowing God is with us gives us peace.

Wherever you walk: There is an assumption that when we are fearing God we are walking in His will and are not turning to the right or to the left. When we are in His will, He has promised to be with us, so we don't need to give concern or priority to the enemy – therefore we will neither fear our enemy, nor will we become confused.

Chapter 1

Part 2: Joshua 1:10-18

The Book of the Law was foundational for Joshua's life and leadership. It instructed him on how to walk in obedience to the Lord and according to God's purpose for his life. In the second part of this chapter, we see a connection between the Word of God and taking possession of the things of God - being in the will of God. Foundational to all of this is the Promised Land. Biblically speaking there is a connection between the land of Israel and the will of God. Only in the land of Israel are the children of Israel able to carry out the things which are related to the will of God.

Verse 10: *"Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,"*

The officers: In modern Hebrew this is the word for a police officer -someone who oversees safety and security.

Verse 11: *"Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for **in three days** you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.'"*

Prepare: The people are told that they are going on a journey and that they need to prepare themselves for it.

Three days: When God wanted to reveal Himself to the people at Mount Sinai, they had three days to prepare themselves for Him (Exodus 19:10-11). The people failed at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:18-19). Now they were being given another opportunity to hear God's instructions, to obey, and to enter into His will for their lives. This is a foundational principle for our lives: God gives us instructions. As we obey Him and apply His instructions to our lives, we are enabled to carry out His will for our lives. It is only when we are walking in God's will that anything good, significant or praiseworthy is going to happen in our lives.

Possess: This word carries with it a degree of responsibility. The land belongs to them, but they had a responsibility to utilize it for the purpose for which God intended. With inheritance comes responsibility.

Verse 12: *"And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying,"*

The Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh: God, through Joshua, gave these two and a half tribes a specific command regarding their commitment to the rest of the tribes of Israel.

Verse 13: *"Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.'"*

Remember: Biblically there is a connection between the concept of remembering and a covenant.

When we live faithfully it means that we live out our lives in remembrance of the covenant that we have entered into (the promises that we have received encourage us to endure and persevere so that we can overcome the attacks and the obstacles of the enemy). We need to remember what God has told us, so that we can have the right focus, and know what our responsibilities are.

The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land: See Numbers 32

Rest: This is a Kingdom word and is related to what we experience in God's Kingdom – we experience rest, a ceasing from striving.

This land: The Reubenites, Gadites and half of the tribe of Manasseh had asked to inherit the land east of the Jordan River. They liked this land. It was good for their cattle, and they had no interest in leaving it. They, therefore, beseeched Moses to stay in that land and obtain it as part of their inheritance.

Note: This has a huge spiritual implication. God extended the boundaries of Israel to the east of the Jordan (as these tribes had requested) and not only to the west of the Jordan. This land east of the Jordan is important, as it shows a future fulfillment in regard to God expanding the borders of Israel.

Verse 14: *"Your wives, your children, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valour, and help them,"*

Moses gave you: Moses was under submission to God's authority. Indirectly this implies that God gave this land to these two and a half tribes.

But you shall pass before your brethren armed: Although these tribes had received their inheritance, and could already settle in it, they were reminded that they were still a part of the whole tribe of Israel, and they still had a responsibility to fight for the inheritance of their brothers who had not yet received their inheritances. Their inheritance was given to them with a condition attached to it (Numbers 32).

Armed: They needed to be ready for battle. When the people crossed over the Jordan, they had to be prepared to encounter an enemy. The enemy did not want the Jewish people in the land. This is still the case today.

Help them: These two and a half tribes did not have to live in the land of Canaan, but they were tasked to help them in their battles.

Verse 15: *"until the LORD gives rest to your brethren, as He has done for you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."*

Until the LORD gives rest to your brethren, as He has done for you: There is equality, and a common responsibility among the tribes – even though they are on different sides of the Jordan River. All of the tribes had to take possession of the land of Canaan – even if two and a half tribes would not be living in it.

Rest: They only received this rest once they had taken possession of the land and were dwelling in it.

Then you shall return: Only after the battle has been won and the enemy has been defeated were these 2.5 tribes allowed to go back to their own inheritance.

This side of the Jordan toward the sunrise: Referring to the land on the east side of the Jordan River (the sun rises in the east).

Note: The tribes of Israel were seen as an inseparable unit. So too was this land to the east and west of the Jordan River seen as an inseparable unit. There is unity in the purposes of God. God is going to bring about this unity again in the last days.

Verse 16: *“So they answered Joshua, saying, “All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go.”*

They: The Reubenites, Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh.

All ... we will do, and wherever you send us we will go: They are in total submission to Joshua. Responding to the will of God in total submission and surrender is the only ‘formula’ for success and victory.

Verse 17: *“Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses.”*

Heeded: Obeyed

We heeded Moses: Moses was given the instructions/commandments of God. These people, in obedience, responded to God’s commands (given through Moses).

Only: There’s only one thing that they want – for God to be with Joshua like He was with Moses.

God be with you: God is with us when we are doing His will. These tribes were willing to support Joshua as long as Joshua remained connected to the Presence of God.

Verse 18: *“Whoever rebels against your command and does not listen to your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage.”*

Rebels against your command: Joshua spoke according to the commands of the Lord. When we rebel against the instructions of the Lord, we are inviting death to come into our lives. Joshua 1:8 warns us to not let the Book of the Law depart from our mouths.

Whoever: This is inclusive – it includes everyone.

Whoever rebels...shall be put to death: Rebellion brings death. This does not mean that when we rebel against God we are necessarily instantly put to death (The consequence of Adam’s sin ultimately culminated in his own death – but it took a lifetime for that death to occur in his life). What it means is that we are going to see things dying in our lives – relationships (marriages, friendships, etc), businesses, etc. Obedience brings life. Obedience brings about the fulfillment of God’s will – His promises and His blessings.

Only be strong and of good courage: God had already given Joshua this command, a few times, in the verses preceding this one. These individuals (from Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh), by repeating this command to Joshua, are agreeing with God. They wanted Joshua to lead the people in the things of God. Leading people in the ways of God requires strength and courage.

Chapter 2

Part 1: Joshua 2:1-13

In this chapter we see how God moves in the lives of people to convey to them His revelation. Unfortunately, so frequently, many individuals reject the revelation of God. We need to be wise and humble so that we do not reject God's revelation, but obediently apply it to our lives so that we can inherit the things of God that He desires us to partake in.

Verse 1: *“Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from the Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So they went and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lay down there.”*

The Acacia Grove: Also called ‘Shittim’. This is a word that usually refers to a type of wood. The Ark of the Covenant was made out of this wood (Exodus 25:10). Exodus 25:22 reveals to us that the Presence of God was associated with the Ark of the Covenant. Some of the Rabbinical commentators do not see this event as happening by chance from this Grove. They see it as divinely orchestrated by God – alluding to the fact that God’s Presence and blessing was upon this mission. God wants to be actively involved in every aspect of our existence. Things we may gloss over and see as insignificant may in fact be hinting at His hand and design in our lives.

Two men ... to spy: Moses sent out twelve spies to spy out the Promised land. Only two of these spies (Joshua and Caleb) were faithful, ten of them were faithless. Joshua, not risking another ten faithless men, sent out only two spies.

Jericho: There is an emphasis upon the city of Jericho. Jericho is one of the oldest cities, and it was strongly fortified. Some commentators have pointed out that from a human perspective it made no sense to face a fortified city as the first enemy to conquer. Most armies would go for a weaker enemy, to subdue them and to ultimately increase their strength. God’s tactics are different to human tactics. God wanted them to conquer their strongest enemy first and then the rest of the land would have been open for them.

Harlot: The term used here means ‘prostitute’ or ‘harlot’. Some commentators have pointed out, however, that this term shares its roots with a word that speaks about nourishment. Perhaps the reason why these men went to her place was because she ran a boarding house, a place of provision and nourishment/sustenance.

Rahab: The name Rahab means ‘wide and broad’ (i.e a spacious place). Rahab was unique. She understood the revelation of God and she responded to it in a very different way to everyone else in Jericho (and those in the land of Canaan).

Lay down: The two spies rested in Rahab’s place. They intended to spend the night at her place.

Verse 2: *“And it was said to the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men have come here tonight from the sons of Israel to dig out the country.”*

Men have come...to dig out the country: Joshua had secretly sent out these two spies. Nevertheless, Jericho (not only a well fortified city) had very good intelligence. The intelligence community were well aware of what was going on around them and they took notice of even the slightest unusual activity. These spies were not professionals.

They assumed that by going to a prostitute's house others would think that their intention of being in Jericho was for fleshly reasons. The intelligence committee saw straight through their ruse.

To dig out: This is an idiom that means to investigate or to search.

Verse 3: *"So the king of Jericho sent (servants) to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to investigate all the land."*

Investigate all the land: The king knew that the children of Israel had a bigger objective than just conquering Jericho. The Israelites had their sights set on conquering the whole land of Canaan – and even beyond it. The king knew two men were in the city. He knew where they had come from, and he knew the purpose for why they were there.

Verse 4: *"Then the woman took the two men and hid him. And she said thus, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from."*

Two: In Scripture, the number 'two' most frequently alludes to a dichotomy – two opposing views. This was not the case with these men (as the singular pronoun bares out). These men were the exception to this 'rule'.

Him: In the Hebrew this word is written in the singular (even though it implies 'them'). This is not a grammatical error. God is communicating revelation to us. Referring to the two men with a singular pronoun shows that they were united – although they were two, they were one in thought and in purpose.

She said thus: Rahab spoke these words to the king's servants who had come looking for these men.

I did not know where they were from: This was a false statement. Rahab knew exactly where they had come from. She knew that they were part of the children of Israel. Rahab lied to protect the Jewish people who were under her roof (Many who harboured Jewish people throughout the Holocaust told this same kind of lie). This raises a moral and ethical dilemma for us. Is it ok to tell a lie, and when is it ok to do so? Is it permissible to lie so as not to participate with the enemy who desires information to cause harm to others? We are not called to participate in the evil plans of the enemy. Is our theology large enough to accept that it might be acceptable in the eyes of God for us to tell a lie in order to save the lives of others?

Verse 5: *"And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went, I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them."*

It was dark: People can't see in the dark. This was a plausible reason (lie) as to how the spies could have slipped out of the gates without being seen.

Where the men went, I do not know: This was also not a true statement. She had hidden the men in a safe place and knew exactly where they were.

Verse 6: *“(But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)”*

Flax: Flax is a plant with very thin branches. It was used to make linen. Flax is very porous and would have allowed them to breathe easily enough under it.

Verse 7: *“Then the men pursued them by the passageway to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.”*

The men: The servants of the king.

The passageway: The area around Jericho is a desert and doesn't get much rain. However, when it does rain, the water rushes off the surrounding mountains and sweeps away the soil, making a passageway down to the Jordan River. This is the natural kind of road that these men who have used to pursue the spies.

Verse 8: *“Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof,”*

Verse 9: *“and she said to the men: “I knew that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.”*

I knew: In the Hebrew this is written in the past tense. She had received revelation from God and had already arrived at a conclusion/made a decision. The revelation that she had received from God impacted her behaviour.

The LORD has given you the land: This is foundational for the Jewish people. The land of Israel is inherently related to the purposes of God (Yeshua is coming back to the literal Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, and He will rule and reign from the land of Israel for 1000 years). At times the people of Israel have been exiled from the land, but the Covenant keeping God has always brought a remnant back to the land.

You: Written in the plural and referring to their people – the children of Israel.

The terror of you has fallen on us: The people of Jericho, and perhaps even beyond that, had received revelation. They were aware that God was at work among the children of Israel (His covenant people). God's work intimidated them and caused them to fear. Rahab's response to this fear was different to the rest of her brethren.

All the inhabitants of the land: Not only those in Jericho.

Fainthearted: They have become weak and have no desire or resolve to fight the children of Israel.

Verse 10: *“For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Sea of Reeds before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.”*

We have heard: Faith comes by hearing. However, just because we hear does not mean that we are going to have faith. Hearing gives us the potential to exercise faith. All the people of Jericho (and all the people of the land), except for Rahab, heard what the Lord had done, but they didn't respond faithfully.

The Lord dried up the water: This was a miraculous sign. This miracle did not convince most of the people of God's greatness.

The Sea of Reeds: This is a body of water found at a specific location on the Red Sea.

Came out of Egypt: They had heard the message of Israel's redemption (the gospel message – the good news). When the people heard what God had done, they did not respond to His revelation in faith, but they responded out of fear. Fear paralyses people and positions them for defeat – not victory.

Sihon and Og: These were two very strong kings on the other side of the Jordan from Jericho.

Utterly destroyed: The words used here speak of complete destruction – not a thing of these kings was left, and none of their things were taken as plunder. Every trace of them was completely erased. Many times we see that God did not desire His people to financially (and in other ways) profit from their enemies (plundering the enemies would have added to Israel's profit). God used Israel as an example to the nations. He wanted the nations to see that Israel did not do things according to the ways of the world (being victorious and taking plunder) but that they functioned based upon the commandments of God. God wanted the nations to see that Israel behaved differently.

Verse 11: *“And as soon as we heard these things, our heart melted; neither did there remain any more spirit in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”*

Heart: Even though it is referring to the people in the land (plural) in the Hebrew this word is written in the singular. There was unity amongst all these people – as if they had one heart, one purpose.

Neither did there remain any more spirit: They had no courage or power to oppose the children of Israel.

God in heaven above and on earth beneath: God rules over the earth and the heavens. This was a great conclusion for Rahab to reach. Rahab allowed this truth to govern and change her life. Rahab hid the two spies and lied to the enemy on their behalf because she had a desire to participate in what God was doing.

Verse 12: *“Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the LORD, since I have acted graciously to you, that you also will show grace to my father's house, and give me a sign of truth,”*

Swear to me: This means to take an oath. Rahab had demonstrated her belief in, and commitment to, the Lord God of Israel. Now she was asking to be shown mercy and favour.

Show grace to my father's house: Rahab and her father's household were Gentiles. The covenant of grace does not take this fact into account. All those who respond by faith to God are able to enter into this covenant of grace – Jew or Gentile.

Grace...truth: Rahab, a Gentile woman, talks about grace and truth. She wants a gracious response from God, and she wants truth in her life.

Verse 13: *“make life for my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our souls from death.”*

Make life for: This is not the Hebrew word for ‘spare’. It is a word that speaks about sustaining or keeping alive. Grace and truth lead to life. As representatives of God (His ambassadors) Rahab is asking God’s people to act in the way that God would act toward her family. She believed in God’s grace and truth. Through the grace and truth of God she wanted to be made alive. Rahab had great faith that God could deliver her and her family (Hebrews 11:31).

Chapter 2

Part 2: Joshua 2:14-24

The Word of God should move in our lives to produce a change - a Kingdom type of change. This change begins with us receiving grace (Titus 2:11-14). The change that God's grace brings about causes us to be recipients of God's will (and, therefore, recipients of His rewards or recompense – His promises and blessings). Rahab believed the testimony of the children of Israel, and God’s revelation brought a radical change into her life, the life of a harlot. Rahab’s faith spurred her to action. Those who had also heard the testimony, but who had no faith, became paralysed by fear. Rahab (a Gentile woman whose name appears in the genealogy of Messiah – Matthew 1:5)) received the full measure of a member of God's covenant people. Even though she had been born a Gentile we see that there is a unity and an equality through faith. God is not a respecter of persons. This means that He doesn't have favorites. He accepts all people who believe in Him and who demonstrate a fear of Him (those who give Him priority in their lives).

Verse 14: *“So the men answered her, ‘Our souls in exchange for yours, if none of you declare this business of ours. And it shall be, that when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you.’”*

Our souls in exchange for yours: Rahab believed with all of her heart that God had given the land to the children of Israel. She believed that death was going to visit the people of Jericho, the Canaanites and all the surrounding nations because they did not want to acknowledge or participate in the will of God. These two spies promised her that if she died when the Israelites invaded the land then these men would also die. In other words, these men were promising to protect her and her family with their lives.

If none of you (plural) declare this business of ours: Their promise, however, had a condition attached to it. Rahab and her family had to remain silent (sworn to secrecy). If the family remained silent, they would not be put to death when the Israelites returned to conquer the land.

When the Lord has given us the land: The spies also had faith (they had no doubt) that the Lord was going to give them the land of Israel.

Kindly and truly: Literally ‘with grace and with truth’. God’s grace produces truth in our lives. When we have received God's grace, we will want to demonstrate His truth. God was going to keep His promise to the children of Israel (He was going to manifest His grace to them) and they were going to keep their promise to this woman and to her family.

Verse 15: *“Then she lowered them with a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwells on the wall.”*

Wall: In Hebrew there are two different words used for two different kinds of walls. The one word speaks of the walls found in a house. The walls in a house are thin. The word used here is a word for a much larger, stronger and thicker kind of wall. These walls fortified a city, and they were so thick that houses could fit inside of them. These houses would have tumbled down when the walls of Jericho fell. The section of the wall where Rahab’s house was situated remained supernaturally intact when the other parts of Jericho’s wall fell.

Dwells: This is written in the present tense. Whenever the participle (present tense) is used in Hebrew it emphasises a text. The reason it highlights a text is that it appears very infrequently in the Hebrew text and so when it does appear we need to pay particular attention to what is said.

She dwells on the wall: Song of Songs 8:9-10

Verse 16: *“And she said to them, ‘Go to the mountain, lest the ones who are pursuing you shall strike. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way.’”*

The mountain: The regions within the mountains. Some commentators say that the mountain, an elevated place, is a place of deliverance. Rahab had pointed the king’s servants in an easterly direction – they had left Jericho and gone toward the Jordan River. Jerusalem is a mountainous region to the west of Jericho. Some commentators have surmised that Rahab sent the spies in the direction of Jerusalem – toward the place of deliverance (Yeshua died in Jerusalem, a mountainous region, in order to give us life).
Strike: The word used here is a word for meeting up with, but meeting with the intention to harm. It is a word associated with attack.

Three days: Numbers are important in the Bible. The number ‘3’ is a number that speaks about something being revealed. After three days the pursuers were going to realise that they were chasing the wind, and they were going to return to Jericho.

You may go your way: After three days it would be safe for the spies to return to the Israelite camp.

Verse 17: *“Then the men said to her, ‘We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear,’”*

We will be blameless of this oath...(unless): The spies would not be obligated to keep their oath to Rahab if she didn’t meet a certain condition that they set forth for her...

Verse 18: *“Behold we are coming into the land. Tie this scarlet cord of hope in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father’s household to your own home.”*

We are coming into the land: The implication is that God’s will is going to be fulfilled and they will come into the land to take possession of it.

Tie this scarlet (cord of hope): Rahab had to give the children of Israel a sign that she was to be saved in order to be a part of them.

Scarlet: Crimson. The spies specifically requested the cord to be this colour – the colour of blood. They wanted to see the sign of blood upon the house (Exodus 12:7, 13). The word ‘scarlet’ is related to redemption.

Cord: The word translated ‘cord’ here is the Hebrew word for ‘hope’...a cord of hope.

Bring...to your own home: Her family would only be saved if they went into her home (Noah’s family would only be saved if they went into the ark). Salvation is conditional. We are only saved when we are IN Messiah. Rahab’s family were to remain in this house until they were delivered. This has a connection to Passover (Exodus 12:22).

Verse 19: *“So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him.”*

Note: The spies told Rahab that they could not vouch for the safety of anyone found outside her house. If the people in Rahab’s family obeyed the command to stay in the house, the power of God would preserve them. If they disobeyed the command, then their blood was on their own heads.

Verse 20: *“And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear.”*

Verse 21: *“Then she said, “According to your words, so be it.” And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet hope in the window.”*

According to your words, so be it: She agreed to their terms and conditions.

Sent them away...And..bound the scarlet hope (expectancy) in the window: She put her faith into action. When our faith is put into action we have hope of redemption, of deliverance/salvation (James 2:26).

Verse 22: *“And they went, and came (unto) the mountain, and they dwelt there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way but found them not.”*

Unto: This preposition is not written in the Hebrew. This is a literary strategy. This grammatical construction emphasizes the mountain.

The pursuers sought them ... but found them not: Satan is called the ‘father of lies’ (John 8:44). The enemy believed a lie. They could not tell the difference between truth and lies. The strong working of delusion is going to be one of the signs that characterises the last days (2 Thessalonians 2:11). People are deceived because they do not believe the truth. Truth is always related to the will of God. Those who are not committed to the will or the revelation of God are going to be deceived by falsehood.

Verse 23: *“So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and recounted all that had happened to them.”*

The mountain: This is the third time in this chapter that the mountain has been emphasised.

Verse 24: *“And they said to Joshua, “Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us.”*

Truly the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands: Like the previous two spies sent into the Promised Land (Joshua and Caleb), these two spies came back talking about the faithfulness and provision of God. They came back from their mission, after seeing the hand of God, filled with faith and not with fear. These two spies were in submission to Joshua and had been in submission to Rahab. Therefore, they were alive to tell about the faithfulness of God in their lives.

Has delivered: They saw it as fait accompli – as if God had already given over the land to them. In their minds this was a done deal.

The inhabitants of the country are fainthearted: The people in the land of Canaan had heard the testimony of God’s work. They knew it was true, but they chose to reject it. They did not respond to God’s revelation.

Fainthearted: A word of weakness.

Chapter 3

Psalms 84:7 speaks about a people whose strength is in the Lord and who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. A pilgrim people experience periods of transition throughout their lives. As we (a pilgrim people who are passing through this world - 1 Chronicles 29:15, James 4:14) submit to the instructions of God, we move closer and closer to where God would have us be – we go from strength to strength – so that we can do the things that He would have us to do.

Crossing the Jordan River, to enter into the Promised Land, was a critical experience for the children of Israel to go through. Moses, although he was a great servant of God, was not perfect. Not being the one to lead the people into the Promised Land was a punishment that Moses received for failing to sanctify the name of God before the people (Numbers 20:7-12). Moses took matters into his own hands, and so God allowed Joshua the privilege of leading the Israelites into the Land.

Verse 1: *“Then Joshua got up early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they lodged there before they crossed over.”*

Joshua: The name ‘Joshua’ comes from the same root that the name ‘Yeshua’ comes from. Most of the time when Joshua (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) is named, there is a slight variation in the spelling of his name from the spelling of Yeshua’s name (יֵשׁוּעַ). However, in Nehemiah 8:17 his name is spelt in exactly the same way as Yeshua’s name is spelt. Like Joshua, the son of Nun, brought the children into the Promised Land, Yeshua, the son of God, leads His children into a Kingdom experience.

Morning: ‘Morning’ (the time when the light arrives) represents revelation - a declaring or a revealing of something. ‘Morning’ is also related to worship, to dedication (Psalm 5:3, Psalm 63:1).

Joshua got up early in the morning: Scripturally there is an emphasis on dedicating the beginning of the morning to the Lord. The children of Israel, under Joshua's leadership, were pursuing God. They desired to worship God.

He and all the sons of Israel set out: Joshua's leadership impacted the actions of all the children of Israel.

Shittim: The Acacia Grove (see Joshua 2:1). Before the Ark of the Covenant was covered in gold, it was made from acacia wood. The Ark of the Covenant reminds us of the Presence of God.

Jordan: In Hebrew this word means 'to go down'. Scholars tell us that it is a name that has a connection to humility.

They lodged there: The modern Hebrew word for 'hotel' comes from this word.

Verse 2: *"So it was, at the end of three days, that the officers went through the camp;"*

Three: 'Morning' speaks of revealing something, and the number 'three' (Scripturally) is a number that emphasises revelation – revealing something, testing or proving something (see Joshua 2:16). 'Three days' always has to do with something of significance. When we read of 'three days' in the Scripture, it should cause us to be expectant, watching out for something significant to take place – Exodus 19:11, Matthew 12:39-40, Matthew 17:22-23.

Officers: Similar to police officers. These were the ones who maintained or established order.

Verse 3: *"and they commanded the people, saying, "When you see the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall travel from your place and walk after it."*

Priests: Only men from the tribe of Levi were allowed to be priests.

The Ark of the Covenant: In this chapter the Ark of the Covenant is emphasised. The Ark is a picture of the dwelling Presence of God (Numbers 7:89). The Ark is also related to the commandments of God and the mercy of God (Exodus 25:10-22). There is an inherent relationship between the presence of God and the commandments of God. When we submit to the instructions of God we are brought into His Merciful Presence.

Note: A paradigm is revealed here - the crossing of the Jordan River and entering into the land of Israel is a picture of our departure from the things of this world and entering into the Kingdom of God. The Scripture gives us insight, showing us what we need to do in order to be pursuing a Kingdom experience.

Verse 4: *"Yet there shall be a distance between you and it, about two thousand cubits in measurement. Do not go near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before."*

Note: The instruction given here revealed to the people how they were to show respect for the Ark of the Covenant.

It: Referring to the Ark of the Covenant.

That you may know the way by which you must go: As pilgrims passing through, we have a journey to make through this dark world.

It is only when we follow respectfully (in an honouring way) after the Presence of God (the Ark), reliant on His mercy and submitted to His commands, that we will be able to walk in the right paths.

You have not passed this way before: This is a new way for them (for us). If we are going to walk in a God pleasing and God honouring way we need to keep our eyes on Him.

Verse 5: *“And Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders in your midst.”*

Sanctify yourselves: How do we sanctify (set apart) ourselves? Just praying does not produce sanctification in our lives. The word for sanctification comes from the root word for holiness. Sanctification, therefore, is related to holiness. Holiness is related to the purposes of God. When Joshua told the people to sanctify themselves, he was instructing them to ready themselves to do the purposes of God. God was not taking the children of Israel into the land to fulfil their purposes. He had redeemed them, protected them in the wilderness and was taking them into the Promised land so that His purposes could be realised and revealed through their lives. God desired that the people would enter into the land to do righteousness, and to be an example and a blessing to all the families in the earth (Genesis 12:3)

Note: In these verses we see a progression. The Israelites were going to leave the wilderness and were going to go into the land that the Lord had chosen for them. To get there, the people had to choose to humble themselves (crossing the Jordan River is a picture of this – they were not able to rely on their own understanding, but they had to place their trust in the Lord). Trusting God, and submitting to His instructions, brought the people into His Presence. When we are committed to God (desiring righteousness and fulfilling His purposes) He begins to work wonders in our lives.

Verse 6: *“Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, ‘Lift up the ark of the covenant and pass before the people’. So, they lifted up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.”*

Note: When God gives us an instruction, we are supposed to carry it out. The priests are giving us an example of this. They were told what to do, and so they did it. Obedience to God invites His Presence into our lives.

Pass before the people: God desires to dwell amongst His people (Revelation 21:3). Here, God is placing His Presence in the midst of His people in a way in which it can be seen. He is teaching them about His Presence and His purpose in their lives.

Verse 7: *“And the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.”*

Exalt: To magnify or make great

That they may know...: God had a purpose for exalting Joshua – and it had nothing to do with Joshua

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you: God’s purpose was not so that the people would see Joshua, but that they would see Him. Joshua being made great would result in God being glorified.

Note: Many average people are given some great things to do, and God will lift these people up. However, they are not lifted up for their own purposes but for the purposes that belong to God. As God lifts them up, He is the only One who should receive the glory - not them.

Verse 8: *"You shall command the priests who carry the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.'"*

The edge of the water: The banks

Verse 9: *"So Joshua said to the children of Israel, 'Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God.'"*

Come...and hear: God wanted to give them revelation. Through Joshua, they were going to hear the Word of the Lord, their God.

Note: When we move into the will of God, we move into the promises and blessings of God. God does not benefit when we are in His will (He is perfect and does not need our help to become any more perfect), but we greatly benefit when we are in His will. God can accomplish everything on His own, but He chooses to partner with us and use us so that His work can be a blessing for us too. God does not need us. We, however, totally and completely need Him.

Verse 10: *"And Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that the living God is in your midst, that He will utterly take possession from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:'"*

He will utterly take possession from before you...: God demonstrates to the people that He is with them by showing them His victory over their enemies. God is the One who took possession of the land for the children of Israel.

From before you: In your presence.

Note: Seven nations are mentioned here. Biblically, seven is a number that relates to purpose. God is moving to fulfill His purpose. When the purposes of God are fulfilled, the people of God are blessed. If we want the blessing of God to be present in our lives, then we need to submit ourselves to the purposes of God. When we are humble God will work His work in and through us.

Verse 11: *"Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passes before you into the Jordan."*

The ark of the covenant: Repetition shows emphasis. The Presence of God is being highlighted in this passage of Scripture.

The ark ... passes before you into the Jordan: The Jordan reminds us of humility (a going/flowing down). God moves in our presence when we are humble before Him. God hates pride. It is only when we are humble that we can be drawn into His Presence and used by Him. Those who desire to exalt themselves will not be used by God.

Verse 12: *“Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe.”*

Twelve: This (together with its multiples – 144, etc) is a Kingdom number. It is a number associated with the new Jerusalem – the Kingdom in its final/eternal state (Revelation 21:9-21).

Twelve men from the tribes: God has a Kingdom purpose for the twelve tribes (the twelve disciples, etc).

Verse 13: *“And it came about, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord over all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off; the waters that come down from upstream stood as one heap.”*

LORD: The first name of God used here is the sacred, transcendent name of God (YHWH).

Lord: The second name used for God is the name ‘Adonai’ – our Master.

Rest: This word has the same root as the word for the name ‘Noah’.

Cut off: The word used here is a word that speaks of separation. It is a covenant word – in Hebrew it is incorrect to say, ‘we made a covenant’. The correct words are ‘we cut a covenant’.

Waters: The word for water in Hebrew is always plural.

Waters...stood as one heap: God did this supernaturally. This was the ‘wonder’ (miraculous and mighty act of God) spoken about in Joshua 3:5.

Verse 14: *“And it came about, when the people travelled from their tents to pass over the Jordan, with the priests carrying the ark of the covenant before the people,”*

Verse 15: *“and as those who carried the ark entered into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who carried the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest),”*

The Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest: This was the reputation that the humble Jordan River had during harvest time. This also reveals to us that 3500 years ago the Jordan was a lot larger and more powerful than it is now.

Verse 16: *“the waters which came down from upstream stood in one heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed through before Jericho.”*

One: This word for ‘one’ is related to God (the Lord is One). This was a heap that belonged to God. He was the One who brought this about.

Adam: This was the name of a city, close to another place called ‘Zaretan’. These cities are named to inform us of the precise location of where this miracle actually took place.

Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea: The Dead Sea.

Verse 17: *“Then the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel passed through on dry ground, until the whole nation had crossed completely over the Jordan.”*

Stood firm: They were established or made firm because they were in submission to the instructions of God.

Nation: This is usually a word associated with the Gentiles. However, prophetically, when God is pleased with Israel, He calls them by this name. When God cut covenant with Abraham, He promised to make Israel into a great nation (Genesis 12:2). By calling them a ‘nation’ here God is alluding to His pleasure in them. They are submitted to Him; they are walking in His will. This pleases Him.

Chapter 4

Part 1: Joshua 4:1-14

The word ‘remember’ in Hebrew is a very significant word. It is a word which is usually used within the context of a covenant. When God ‘remembers’ His covenant with His people He usually moves in a restorative way to bring about a good change for His people (Genesis 8:1). We, too, need to pause, often, in order to remember the faithfulness of God. We need to remember, so that we can share it with others – especially the next generation.

Verse 1: *“And it came about, when all the nation had completely passed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying:”*

All the nation had completely passed over the Jordan: The whole nation of Israel was now standing in the Promised Land.

Verse 2: *“Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe,”*

Note: See Joshua 3:12

Verse 3: *“and command them, saying, ‘Take for yourselves, from the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood firm, and establish twelve stones. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.’”*

From the place where the priests’ feet stood firm: The Lord wanted the stones to be taken from the place where the priests had stood firm as they held the ark of the covenant.

Establish: Set up. The Lord wanted these twelve stones to be a memorial, a marker of remembrance, at the location where the people crossed the Jordan river. The purpose of this memorial was to remind the people of the faithfulness of God.

Lodging place: In modern Hebrew the word used here is the word for a hotel.

Verse 4: *“Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe;”*

Twelve men... one man from every tribe: This is repetitive. The point of this repetition is to emphasize the faithfulness of Joshua who did exactly what God told him to do.

Verse 5: *“and Joshua said to them: “Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and lift up for yourselves, every man, a stone, and place it upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel,”*

Pass over before the ark of the LORD: At this point all the children of Israel had crossed over to the other side of the Jordan. However, the priests were still standing, on dry ground, in the middle of what had been the River Jordan. Before the priests moved, Joshua instructed these twelve men to go back to where the priests were standing, and each man was to pick up a stone onto his shoulder (twelve stones in total) and they were to carry these stones to the place where they would be spending the night.

Verse 6: *“that this may be a sign in your midst, for your sons they shall ask tomorrow saying, ‘What are these stones for you?’”*

A sign: The word used here is a word of purpose. God had a purpose in telling Joshua to make this memorial/testimony.

Sons: The next generation. Scripturally, very frequently, a verse that alludes to the ‘next generation’ (by mentioning ‘sons’, etc) places a verse within a Kingdom context. We need to remind the next generation (our children and grandchildren) about the faithfulness of God. God keeps His promises, and He moves in the lives of those who are submitted to Him to bring them into His will.

Tomorrow: In the future.

What are these stones for you?: What is the purpose of these stones?

Verse 7: *“Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.”*

Forever: This is a word which has Kingdom relevance – eternal implications. The people needed to remember this act of God. They needed a reminder that God moved miraculously to fulfil His promise and to bring them into the land that He had promised them. God saved the children of Israel so that they could carry out His purposes. He has saved us for the same reason – to carry out His purposes while we are alive in this world today. God’s commandments (which teach us what righteous or unrighteous behaviour are) reveal His character and purposes to us. When we are IN Messiah, we are called a ‘new creation’. As a new creation, we have the potential to submit in the correct way to the instructions of God – in a way that reveals the spirit/heart behind the law (in a way that fulfils the righteousness of the law). As believers we are not under the law. This means that we are not under its judgment, and we cannot be condemned by it. But, as believers, with the Holy Spirit living in us, we can utilise the law of God to demonstrate righteousness. The purpose of the law is not to save us, but the law reveals to us our need for salvation.

The law also reveals the foundational principle for being saved - and that is faith. Abraham believed (he had faith) and the outcome was that it was credited to him as righteousness. Having been redeemed by the blood of the perfect Lamb of God, we are positioned to walk in righteousness and behave righteously – to bear testimony and to fulfil the will of God.

Verse 8: *“And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the LORD had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there.”*

The place where they lodged: We are going to see that this lodging place was a place of faithfulness. It is a place of great significance. We are going to discover that it is a place that testifies to the faithfulness of God. The people were going to respond to the faithfulness of God in this place.

There: This word is emphatic. The twelve memorial stones were set up in this location where the faithfulness of God was going to be revealed to the children of Israel.

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

Note: Joshua placed twelve stones in the place where the feet of the priests had stood, in the middle of the Jordan river.

They are there to this day: Any time these stones are seen they testify about God’s faithfulness. God’s faithfulness is a very important part of the transition experience – from the wilderness (synonymous with the world), into the Promised land (synonymous with the Kingdom of God). God never leaves us and nor does He ever fail us. In the midst of this world transitioning (coming to an end), we need to hold onto the faithfulness of God. He is faithful to supply our needs, and He is able to move miraculously in order to bring us into the fullness of that Kingdom experience.

Verse 10: *“So the priests who carried the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua; and the people hurried and passed over.”*

The priests ...stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished: This has been repeated over and over again. The priests did not move from their position in the middle of the dried-up Jordan River. Neither did they set down the ark, but they continuously held it up.

All that Moses had commanded Joshua: When Moses realized he wasn't going to be the one to lead the people into the land, he gave Joshua some commandments of what needed to be done to lead them in.

Verse 11: *“Then it came about, when all the people had completely passed over, that the ark of the LORD and the priests passed over in the presence of the people.”*

Completely passed over: When all the children of Israel were safely on the other side of the Jordan River.

The ark ... passed over in the presence of the people: A strong emphasis has been placed on the ark of the covenant. The ark should remind us of the Presence and mercy of God, as well as the commandments of God. We experience the Presence of God when we are following the instructions of God.

Verse 12: *“And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them.”*

Armed: These men were ready for battle. Their inheritance was on the other side of the Jordan (the east side) but the condition attached to that inheritance was that they needed to help their brothers fight their enemies in the land of Canaan (Numbers 32).

Armed... as Moses had spoken to them: They were obedient and faithfully did what Moses had commanded them to do.

Verse 13: *“About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho.”*

Verse 14: *“In that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the eyes of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.”*

In that day: In prophecy, this expression is frequently used (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא). When that expression appears, it is an expression of judgment. When the children of Israel took possession of Jericho and the other cities, they did so by war. In the last days there is going to be a physical and spiritual battle for the land of Israel in order for the Kingdom to come. The Kingdom of God cannot be established without the outpouring of God's judgment. This final battle will be between the children of Esau (Edom) and the children of Jacob (the Jewish people). All the nations of the world are going to side with Edom (Zechariah 12:3, Obadiah).

The LORD exalted Joshua: Joshua recognised and submitted to Godly authority.

They feared him: They gave him priority.

They feared him, as they had feared Moses: There is a consistency. Joshua, realising that Moses was under God's authority, submitted to Moses. The people saw that Joshua was submitted to God's authority and so they submitted to him. If we want to be people who are pleasing to God, we need to be people who are submitted to His authority and to the authorities He has placed over us.

Chapter 4

Part 2: Joshua 4:15-24

When the Israelites walked into the Promised Land it was not automatically theirs. They took it through war. God wanted to reveal to His people His supernatural power. This was true in their past, is true in their present, and is going to be true in their future.

Verse 15: *“Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying,”*

Verse 16: *“Command the priests who carry the ark of the Testimony to come up from the Jordan.”*

The ark of the Testimony: Up to this point, the ark has been called ‘the ark’, ‘the ark of the covenant’, or ‘the ark of the Lord’. This is the first time that it is being called by this name. The tablets that God wrote the ten commandments on were placed in the ark. These commandments set out God’s expectations for His people. When we apply these commandments to our lives (faith produces obedience), we can expect that there would be a testimony of response from God – God will respond in our situations.

Note: Biblical grace moves us to obedience (obedience to the commandments/instructions of God). Heretical grace will move us into sin.

Come up from the Jordan: The priests had been standing in the riverbed for the entire passing of the nation of Israel to the other side of the Jordan. They had remained standing there while each of the twelve men collected their stone. Now the Lord was commanding the priests to also make their exit from the river.

Verse 17: *“Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, “Come up from the Jordan.”*

Joshua therefore commanded: God commanded Joshua; Joshua commanded the priests.

Come up: Scripturally, direction is important. Going ‘up’ is related to a call. Paul, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, talks in Philippians 3:14 of the ‘upward call’ of God in Messiah Yeshua. Our ‘upward call’ always agrees with the instruction, will and purposes of God. Moving ‘up’ gives us a different perspective and puts us into a different condition (that of submission). We can only obey God when we have been redeemed. We can only obey God when we have received the indwelling Spirit of God in our lives. Believers are the only ones who can truly obey the Word of God.

Verse 18: *“And it came to pass, when the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet disconnected (from where they were in the Jordan) and came to the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.”*

Disconnected: The word translated ‘touched’ here is incorrect. In fact, it speaks of exactly the opposite – it speaks of a disconnection, a lifting up from, a letting go of. It is the same word that is used today when someone disconnects a telephone call. When God moves to remove us from worldly culture (in order that we can be a ‘new creation’) He supernaturally disconnects our connection to the worldly mindsets and way of behaving.

It is only through the supernatural power of God that we can break free from the world and from the way the world thinks.

The waters of the Jordan returned to their place: God had temporarily and supernaturally interrupted the natural order of things. God commanded. The people moved to obey. Their obedience led to the supernatural working of God in their lives. Once God's commands were fulfilled, things went back into their natural order – but the lives of those who had been obedient found their lives radically changed (new perspectives, new location, etc).

Verse 19: *“Now the people went up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.”*

The tenth day of the first month: This is a very important date in the Scripture. It was a few days before Passover, and it marked the day when the children of Israel (while they were still in Egypt) had been commanded to bring the Passover lambs into their homes (Exodus 12:1-6). This date marked the formal beginning of God's work of redemption. In Egypt, the first aspect of redemption was put into place – the payment for redemption, ie the blood of the lamb. Now we are going to see the second aspect of redemption – the outcome, the fulfilment, the outworking of their redemption.

First month: called Aviv or Nisan.

They camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho: They are going to Jericho for battle. The Lord is fulfilling His promise to them, and they are going to take possession of the land of Israel.

Verse 20: *“And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal.”*

Gilgal: In Joshua 4:8 we were told these stones of memorial (a memorial to the faithfulness of God) were to be set up at their place of lodging. In this verse we learn the name of that lodging place. ‘Gilgal’ comes from a Hebrew word that's related to rolling – a rolling away of or a removal. When something is rolled, it usually means that it is too heavy for us physically and so cannot be picked up.

Verse 21: *“Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: “When your sons should ask their fathers tomorrow, saying, ‘What are these stones?’”*

Tomorrow: A word that speaks about the future. Joshua was preparing them for the future. Do we know how to answer the next generation when they ask us about the supernatural and miraculous activities of God? Can we testify to the next generation about the faithfulness of God in our lives?

Verse 22: *“then you shall make your sons know, saying, ‘On dry land Israel crossed over this Jordan’;”*

Note: This is the response that God wanted the fathers to give their sons when they asked the question: ‘What are these stones?’

On dry land Israel passed over this Jordan: A flooding river could have only been crossed through the miraculous power of God.

What has been emphasized throughout this passage is this miraculous crossing as well as the ark of the covenant. God's Presence is only in our midst when we are walking in obedience to Him. When His Presence is in our lives, we can expect the supernatural. We can expect His miraculous power to position us for victory over our enemies.

Israel: Over and over again the people have been called 'the children of Israel'. There is a change here – they are simply called 'Israel'. The name 'Israel' is a Kingdom word. It is a word that speaks about a Kingdom people – Jew and Gentile. It is Kingdom people who experience the miraculous presence, power and purposes of God being realised in their lives.

Verse 23: *"for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Reed Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over,"*

The Reed Sea: The Sea of Reeds refers to a location based in the Red Sea. There are great similarities between the crossing of the Red Sea and the crossing of the Jordan. In both instances God's miraculous power held the waters at bay so that the children of Israel could cross from one place to another on dry ground. God begun this good work when He took them out of Egypt. Crossing the Jordan would have reminded the people that God was continuing that good work in their lives. The children left Egypt in a miraculous way, and they were now entering the land of Israel in a miraculous way.

As the LORD your God did to the Reed Sea: God is consistent. His supernatural power takes people out of bondage, and that same miraculous power leads people into His promises.

Verse 24: *"that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, for it is strong, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."*

All the peoples of the earth may know: The emphasis here is not the people of God. The emphasis is on the people that God is inviting to know Him. It is not in the nature of God to simply destroy people (God would have welcomed any Caananites who, like Rahab, submitted to His purposes). God gives people an opportunity to repent. He gives all people an opportunity to submit to Him and obey Him. Most people rebel and do not take this opportunity which is offered to them (Matthew 7:13-14).

That all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD: What is emphasised here is the testimony of God. Joshua 4:16 alluded to His testimony. God works in our lives to give us a testimony. This testimony (that God has worked in our lives) helps others to understand God and His workings. When people see the work of God in our lives, it helps them to respond properly to Him.

The hand of the LORD: This is an idiom. The hand of the Lord is speaking of the power of the Lord. The implication is that when we truly know the power of God, we are going to submit to Him.

It is strong: God's hand is strong. Those who are wise will submit to Him.

Fear the LORD: Fearing the Lord is not about being afraid of Him. People who are afraid do not demonstrate faith or submission. Fear paralyses people and causes them to not carry out the Word and will of God. In contrast, fearing the Lord means to give Him priority. The fear of the Lord produces obedience and submission in our lives to the things of God (taking His instructions and applying them to our lives).

Note: In this passage God is setting things in order for the people to serve Him and inherit what He wants them to have. Having faith (giving God priority) positions us where we can be heirs of the will of God. It is only when we are in His will that we will know joy, happiness and contentment. We will not experience the Presence of God until we submit to Him. Submission leads to obedience and obedience brings Gods provision and power into our lives. When His Presence is in our lives, He gives us His perspective so that we can be participants in His will being done.

Chapter 5

Verse 1: *“So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.”*

The kings of the Amorites...the kings of the Canaanites: The children of Israel had already destroyed two of the great Amorite kings – Sihon and Og (Numbers 21:21-35). Under the leadership of their kings, it is presumed that the Amorites joined forces with the Canaanites who were on the western side of the Jordan. According to some of the sages, the Amorites went across the Jordan River before the children of Israel and united with those in Jericho and some other tribes in the land of Canaan (the Canaanites etc) with the hopes that their vast numbers would discourage Israel from crossing over the Jordan River.

The sea: The Mediterranean Sea.

Heard: They heard a testimony of what God had done for His people.

Their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them: In their hearts these people knew that they were defeated already. They had no strength left to oppose what God was doing. However, this did not mean that the children of Israel would be automatically successful in conquering the land. God had to teach them that they would not receive His promises if they were operating in the flesh. This is a very important principle: we cannot operate in the flesh (fleshly thoughts or actions) and receive from God.

Verse 2: *“At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make swords of flint stone for yourself, and again circumcise the sons of Israel the second time.”*

Swords of flint stone: This stone was made very sharp.

Again circumcise ... the second time: Someone cannot be circumcised twice. It is going to be undeniably revealed to us that God is talking about a different group of people – i.e. the next generation. When the next generation is emphasized in the Scripture, we need to remember that it sets the passage within a Kingdom context. Many things in this passage relate to the Kingdom and we are given many Kingdom principles that we're called to live by today.

Verse 3: *“So Joshua made for himself swords of flintstone, and he circumcised the sons of Israel at the Hill of the Uncircumcision.”*

Uncircumcision: This speaks about the spiritual condition of those who had crossed over the Jordan River. They were still operating in the flesh and so were not yet ready to do what God had called them to do. Circumcision brings about the death of the flesh. When flesh is removed from the body it dies. Foreskins, once they have been removed, have to be buried according to Jewish law. Burial is also related to death. The Lord was teaching the people that they were still in the flesh. We cannot inherit the things of God in the flesh (Jeremiah 4:4, Ezekial 36:26-27).

Verse 4: *“And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt.”*

This is the reason: This is speaking about the main/primary reason why these men had to undergo circumcision.

Died in the wilderness: Those who had been circumcised had died in the wilderness.

Verse 5: *“For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised.”*

All the people born in the wilderness: The sons (the next generation) who had been born in the wilderness had not been circumcised. The group of people to be circumcised at this “Hill of Uncircumcision” were all part of this next generation.

Verse 6: *“For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people who were men of war, who came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD—to whom the LORD swore that He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, “a land flowing with milk and honey.”*

Forty: Numbers are important in the Bible. The number 40 relates to change or transition. That is what God is doing - He's bringing a change upon the people; they're going through a transition.

He would not show them the land: God did not show them the Promised Land because of their faithlessness. Although this group had been circumcised, they were faithless. They died in the wilderness. Now a new group, their sons, have grown up and they have learned to trust in and depend on God. They had seen God's miraculous activity as He brought them across on dry land through the Jordan River. Now it was necessary for them to go through a circumcision of their flesh (and symbolically, their hearts). Unlike babies, these men could choose to accept or reject the command to be circumcised.

Verse 7: *“Then Joshua circumcised their sons whom He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.”*

Note: The timing of this circumcision is so important. Joshua 4:19 tells us that the people crossed over the Jordan River on the 10th day of the first month (Nisan). This was a very important date, as it marked the beginning of the preparation for Passover (Passover begins on the evening of the 14th day of Nisan). On this day a lamb was brought into the house and readied for sacrifice. However, 40 years later, this day is now being used for another kind of preparation. Only circumcised males were allowed to participate in Passover (Exodus 12:48)

Verse 8: *“So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were revived.”*

They were revived: Until life returned to them (i.e. until they were healed).

Verse 9: *“Then the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from upon you.” Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.”*

This day: Either referring to the 10th day of Nisan, or to the day when the task had been completed.

Egypt: Egypt is related to the world. As believers, we are not to think as the world thinks. We need to think in accordance with the revelation of God. It is only when we think according to the revelation of God that we are going to grow and mature, and God can position us where He will use us so that we can be instruments that bring glory and honour to Him.

Gilgal: Gilgal comes from the same root as the word used for rolling (something) away.

Verse 10: *“Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.”*

Kept the Passover: Only those who were circumcised could celebrate the Passover (Exodus 12:48). Uncircumcision (living in the flesh) is in conflict with redemption (living in the Spirit). Circumcision brings about the death of the flesh so that we might live in the Spirit - this is the outcome of redemption.

Fourteenth day of the month: They had crossed over the Jordan on the 10th of the month, were then circumcised and now are celebrating Passover – all within the space of three days.

At twilight: In the evening.

Verse 11: *“And they ate the grain of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and toasted grain, on the very same day.”*

Unleavened bread: Matzah.

Verse 12: *“Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the grain of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate from the produce of the land of Canaan that year.”*

The manna ceased: They no longer ate that supernatural food – manna. Although they had eaten supernatural food in the wilderness, it had not caused them to live supernaturally. God had miraculously provided for them, but the majority did not, by faith, receive His provision and they had died in the wilderness. This next generation, the Kingdom generation, no longer received the supernatural food (they ate natural food) but they were called to do supernatural things.

Note: Although we live natural/physical lives in this world we are called to live supernaturally. This means that we need to be able to discern the supernatural while we are in this body and while we are living in this world (we live in the natural but do the supernatural).

Verse 13: *“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood 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?”*

Joshua was by Jericho: Jericho would have been a dangerous place for the Israelite people – especially if they were alone, like Joshua appears to be.

He lifted his eyes: This is a Hebrew idiom for prayer.

Looked, and behold: He is receiving revelation

Opposite: In Hebrew this word can either be referring to the fact that a man was standing before Joshua, or it can mean that a man was standing in opposition to Joshua.

His sword drawn in His hand: This man was ready for battle.

Joshua went to Him: When we live in the flesh, our behaviour is going to display fear – giving priority to the wrong things in our lives. Joshua did not act in fear. He lived by faith and his behaviour reflected this.

Are You for us or for our adversaries: Even though this man was battle ready and appeared to be standing in opposition to Joshua, Joshua made no assumptions about his intentions. Joshua wanted discernment. He wanted to know this man’s identity.

Verse 14: *“So He said, “No, for I am the Captain of the army of the LORD. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, “What, my Lord, are you speaking to Your servant?”*

He said: Referring to the man who had his sword drawn.

No: This man was neither for nor against the Israelites. He is also neither for nor against their enemies. Joshua’s question was not the right question. This man was for and with God.

Captain: An important leader.

Now: This word displays a sense of urgency. It was with a sense of urgency that this Captain of the Lord’s army had come to Joshua.

Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped: Some commentators have suggested that this man that Joshua was speaking to was Yeshua in a pre-incarnation appearance. In other places in the Bible when men fell down in front of angels, they were told not to worship them as they were fellow servants (Revelation 22:8-9).

This man does not discourage Joshua from worshipping. Others have suggested that because the text does not say 'worshipped Him' it is talking about Joshua worshipping God in a general sense and not referring to Joshua worshipping this Captain of the Lord's army. *My Lord...your servant*: Joshua sees this One as his Master. Joshua identifies himself as this One's servant. The use of these words lend traction to the theory that this One was the pre-incarnate Yeshua.

Verse 15: *"Then the Captain of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing upon is holy." And Joshua did so."*

Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing upon is holy: Moses was given this same command in Exodus 3:5. This could be teaching us that Joshua is walking in the same heritage and humility as Moses did. It shows us that there was a unity between these two men – both were humble servants of the Lord. Their humility manifested itself in submission. Those who have a submissive spirit are people who are obedient. Those who are obedient live victorious lives – they experience victory over their fleshly, carnal nature and they inherit the promises of the Lord. Disobedience, on the other hand, leads to defeat.

Joshua did so: Joshua responded appropriately.

Chapter 6

Part 1: Joshua 6:1-14

God wants His people to experience victory. However, it is only when we submit to His instructions that He grants us victory. If we are going to walk in victory, we have to demonstrate the truth of God in our lives.

Verse 1: *"Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in."*

Jericho: The city of Jericho is one of the oldest cities in the world. In the days of Joshua, it was one of the most strongly fortified cities in the world.

Shut up because of the children of Israel: They knew that the children of Israel wanted to conquer the city of Jericho, as well as all the other places in the land of Canaan. They knew what God had done in the past and they were paralyzed by fear.

None went out, and none came in: The city was totally shut down - paralyzed by fear. God created the children of Israel to be used to bless the nations of the world (Genesis 12:3). However, to experience that blessing, the nations had to agree and submit to the purposes of God. The people in Jericho did not want to participate in the purposes of God. When we say 'no' to the purposes of God we are rejecting the victory of God.

Verse 2: *“And the LORD said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, her king, and the mighty men of valour.”*

The LORD said ...See: The Lord wanted Joshua to look at and to perceive something based upon His Word (what God says) - not necessarily referring to what Joshua could see with his eyes from a human perspective.

I have given: Written in the past tense. From God’s perspective this victory was already complete.

King: Jericho’s leader. He led the people to agree with him in not participating in the things of God (they, passively, just closed up the city and waited to see what would happen).

The mighty men of valour: The soldiers and warriors. The warriors of Jericho had a significant history and reputation. They were used to being victorious in battle against whomever came against them. According to historians, the people of Jericho would simply close up their city (which was surrounded by walls). Jericho had springs of water and could also store a large supply of food. As a result, they were prepared for a siege and could simply outlast their enemies. When their enemies, outside their walls, became weak and frustrated, the soldiers of Jericho would go out and fight them in their weakened condition and therefore bring about a victory for Jericho.

Verse 3: *“You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days.”*

Note: Although God had assured Joshua that Israel was going to be victorious, Israel still had to be obedient to the commands that God gave them in order to secure their victory. Faith (believing what God has said) leads to obedience. The reward for faith is victory.

You men of war: These men were fighting a battle, but it was not a conventional one. God fights differently to men. He instructed these men of war to wage warfare not in the flesh (not in the natural) but in the supernatural.

Go all around the city once. This you shall do six days: Once a day, for six days, these men were to walk around the entire city of Jericho.

Verse 4: *“And seven priests shall bear seven shofars of rams’ horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.”*

Shofars: These shofars (ram’s horns), traditionally, represent the provision of God. When Isaac was taken by his father Abraham to Mount Moriah (according to tradition, the temple mount), Abraham was told to bind his son and offer him up, on wood, as a burnt offering. As Abraham was about to slay his son, an angel called to him and showed him a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham was told to substitute this ram in his son’s place (Genesis 22). These shofars are different to the silver trumpets spoken about in Numbers 10:1-10. The sounding of the ram’s horn (shofar) should remind us of Whom (ie Yeshua) God has provided for life, so that His promise will not be done away with (Isaac, the promised son, was not done away with), but that His promises will come about.

The ark: The ark reminds us of the Presence of God, the mercy of God and the commandments of God. In this passage there is an emphasis on demonstrating submission/obedience to God’ instructions/commands.

The seventh day you shall march around the city seven times: For six days they were to go around the city once a day. On the seventh day there was a change – they had to walk around the city seven times on the seventh day. All in all, in the space of seven days they would march around the city 13 times (6+7=13). Biblically, 13 is a number that reminds us of the unity between God (1) and the 12 tribes of Israel (1+12=13). When there is unity between God and His people things happen – the enemy is defeated!

Verse 5: *“It shall come about, when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up (and defeat) every man straight before him.”*

A long blast: This is a word that speaks of a continuation, a long drawing out or a stretching. The shofar had to be blown in an ongoing or continuous manner.

A great shout: A large noise.

Fall: Crumble. The people of Jericho’s hope were in their walls. This hope was misplaced.

The people shall go up: This is referring to the children of Israel.

Go up (and defeat) every man straight before him: The men were instructed to put to death any of their enemies that they encountered before them as soon as the walls of Jericho crumbled. There were not going to be many survivors from the people of Jericho.

Verse 6: *“Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Lift up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven shofars of rams’ horns before the ark of the LORD.”*

The ark ... rams’ horns: The ark reminds us of God’s Presence. The ram’s horn reminds us of His provision. The message here is this: God is going to provide everything that we need in order to carry out His purposes – to see His will being fulfilled.

The ark of the LORD: In this verse it is not the ark of the Testimony or the Covenant that is being emphasised, but the ark of the Lord. This name brings God into the equation. God is brought into this conflict as the Lord or Master. It is only when God is in the conflict with us that we are going to be victorious.

Verse 7: *“And he said to the people, “Pass over, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD.”*

Note: There are two groups of people alluded to in this verse – those who marched in front of the ark, and those who marched behind it (front and rear guard).

Verse 8: *“So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven shofars of rams’ horns before the LORD passed over and blew the shofars, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.”*

Note: There is a change of emphasis. The priests who were blowing the shofars were now walking in front of the ark of the covenant of the Lord. If we are going to be obedient to God, we need to rely on what (WHOM) He has provided for us.

The ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them: In this instance the ark is not leading but it is following. This teaches us a principle on how to bring the Presence and Power of God into our circumstances. If we are not willing to walk by faith, according to the instructions of God, if we are not willing to position ourselves where God wants us to be, then God is not going to come along with us. He will not be a part of what we are doing.

Verse 9: *"The armed men went before the priests who blew the shofars, and the rear guard came after the ark, while the priests continued blowing the trumpets."*

The armed men went before: These made up the front guard.

The shofars: These remind us that God is going to provide a victory for His people.

The rear guard: Literally: Those who gathered up.

Note: All of these people wanted to accomplish the purpose and will of God. God does not help us to accomplish our own wills and desires. God changes us so that our wills bend to His will, and He will help us to accomplish HIS will.

Verse 10: *"Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, 'You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout.'"*

Until the day: There is a right timing in which to do things. God's timing. We need to prayerfully seek God to find His timing for the things in our lives. In the same way that His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways so to, in the same way, is His timing not our timing. When we submit to the instructions of God we are placed into His schedule/timetable. When we do not submit to His instructions, we are not going to be timely in the things of God. It is only when we are adhering to God's timetable that we will receive His blessing and provision, for victory, in a timeous manner.

Verse 11: *"So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around it once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp."*

They came into the camp: They returned to the camp after each time they had circled the city (for those first six days).

Lodged: They slept in the camp.

Verse 12: *"And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests carried the ark of the LORD."*

Morning: This is a word that has to do with light, revelation, illumination.

Verse 13: *"Then seven priests bearing seven shofars of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the shofars. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while the priests continued blowing the shofars."*

The armed men: These men walked in front of the ark.

Verse 14: *“And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. And thus they did for six days.”*

Note: For those six days, in the natural, nothing changed. But God was at work. The people were submitting to His instructions and things were being supernaturally positioned for a change. In our lives we may not see immediate changes in our lives or in our environments. This should not lead to disillusionment. If we are carefully following the instructions of the Lord, He will bring about a victory for us in His time.

Six: Biblically this is a number associated with grace. God’s grace prepares us for the purposes of God (number 7, Biblically, is the number associated with the purposes of God).

Chapter 6

Part 2: Joshua 6:15-27

We need to be people who live according to God’s schedule and timing of things. We not only want to be people who do **what** He wants done, but we do the things He wants done **when** He wants them done.

Verse 15: *“But it came about on the seventh day that they rose early, with the rising of dawn, and marched around the city seven times according to the judgment. On that day only they marched around the city seven times.”*

The seventh day: Most scholars believe that the seventh day is referring to the Sabbath Day. When we apply the truth of the Sabbath Day to our lives, we experience the goodness of God in our lives – the bringing down of the strongholds of the enemy.

The judgment: The word used here is a word used to refer to the judgment of God. The Sabbath Day is a day of restoration - a day of putting things into order. God's judgment does exactly that!

On that day: These words also refer to God’s judgment. God’s judgment brings about His purposes. For a believer God's judgment is a good thing. It brings about the change that God wants in our lives.

Note: In this verse the number 7 is repeated, therefore emphasised. Seven is related to holiness and holiness is related to the purposes of God. On this day the children of Israel were going to fulfill the purposes of God. When we fulfill the purposes of God we are going to experience the promises of God.

Verse 16: *“And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the shofars, that Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the LORD has given you the city!”*

Note: Joshua was a military leader. However, it was not a requirement for the military to conquer the city of Jericho. Jericho was not conquered through weapons of warfare (like we would expect) but through the provision of God (the shofars allude to and remind us of this provision).

Shout: When the people shouted, they acknowledged and stated, in a public way, their agreement with God (their Provider).

Verse 17: *“Now the city shall be devoted to the LORD, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.”*

Devoted: In modern Hebrew the word used here is the word for ‘boycott’. When a company is boycotted, it means that all ties are cut off from that company – people will not shop there and nor will they buy the products supplied there. People want nothing to do with the company they are boycotting. In the same way the children of Israel were to have nothing to do with Jericho and her people (except for Rahab and her family). The Israelites were not to take any of the spoils of war from Jericho. All the people in the city would die by the sword and all the possessions in Jericho had to be utterly destroyed – offered up or dedicated solely to God (usually consumed or burned with fire).

She hid the messengers: Both Christian and Jewish scholars agree that this ‘hiding’ also involved giving false information to the messengers of the king (it involved everything she did in order to keep the spies alive). Like the other people in Jericho, Rahab knew that God was at work. Unlike the other people in Jericho, she put her faith in Him, as she had a desire to participate in what God was doing.

Verse 18: *“And only this, by all means keep (away) from the devoted things, lest you be destroyed when you take of the devoted things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.”*

Only this: The only thing acceptable to God and pleasing to Him is obedience to His will/fulfilling His purposes.

Make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it: If the children of Israel did not obey God’s instructions in regard to the things which were to be devoted solely to Him then they would bring trouble on their fellow brothers and sisters (fellow Israelites). The things that happened to the people in Jericho would happen to them if they disobeyed God’s commands. God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). He does not treat people preferentially. The people of Jericho did not want to obey God. The result: Destruction. Likewise, if we are disobedient and do not agree with God we will share in that same destruction.

Verse 19: *“But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.”*

Consecrated: Holy.

The treasury of the LORD: The house/tabernacle of the Lord. These vessels were to be used for the purpose of worship and for honouring God. They were not to be used by the people for common purposes.

Verse 20: *“So the people shouted when the priests blew the shofars. And it happened when the people heard the voice of the shofar, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, a man against another, and they took the city.”*

The people shouted: They shouted a shout of praise/agreement because of the supernatural victory God was providing for them. ‘Shouting’ is a word of worship. It's a word that acknowledges God and His Presence in a situation. This is what worship is truly about.

Verse 21: *“And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and lamb and donkey, with the edge of the sword.”*

Verse 22: *“But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, “Go into the harlot’s house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her.”*

Verse 23: *“And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and set them outside the camp of Israel.”*

Note: All of these people went into Rahab’s home to wait for their salvation. This implies that Rahab did not sit by idly, but she brought people into her home so that they too could be saved. Rahab had received a promise of life, and she wanted to share that life with others. Anything or anybody who was in Rahab’s house did not suffer the consequences of God’s destruction on Jericho. Rahab’s house was situated in the walls of Jericho. From a purely natural point of view, it would seem to be a dangerous place to be in – considering the walls were going to collapse. God, however, supernaturally protected Rahab and those who were with her. A dangerously situated place, for those who trust in the Word and faithfulness of God, turned out to be a safe haven.

Verse 24: *“But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.”*

Verse 25: *“And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.”*

Joshua spared Rahab: Joshua was faithful to uphold the word of the two spies. The will/purposes of God are never advanced through deceitfulness. Rahab preserved the lives of the two spies. The measure she used was measured back to her – her life, and those of her loved ones, was also preserved.

She dwells in Israel to this day: God elevated Rahab. We are not called to participate, in any way, in the evil plans (unrighteousness) of the enemies of God. Rahab behaved righteously when she protected the spies. Scripture elevates and emphasises this to us.

Verse 26: *“Then Joshua swore to them at that time, saying, “Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.”*

Joshua swore to them: Joshua took a prophetic oath. He is revealing something that God had placed upon his heart. Joshua warned the people about what the consequences would be if anyone took it upon themselves to rebuild Jericho.

Before the LORD: This tells us that God would be the One to render this judgment. Joshua is not speaking on his own, but he is speaking according to the revelation of God.

Cursed be the man ...who rises up and builds this city Jericho: It was not God’s will for anyone to rebuild and live in Jericho.

Note: Those who reestablished and rebuilt Jericho did suffer loss like this prophecy prophesies. This does not mean that the people who have resettled and who live in Jericho today are in spiritual darkness and cannot find God’s grace. Luke 19:1-10 recounts the story of Zacchaeus – an unrighteous tax collector who lived in an unrighteous city...Jericho. When the message of salvation came to Zacchaeus (like it had come to Rahab) he responded, was redeemed and his life transformed.

He shall lay its foundation with his firstborn... and with his youngest he shall set up its gates: The person who rebuilt Jericho would personally suffer the consequences for his actions (i.e. this suffering would not continue to afflict future generations).

Verse 27: *“So the LORD was with Joshua, and his reputation spread throughout all the country.”*

His reputation: His name became well known. It was because the Lord was with Joshua that he gained a name – not for his own sake, but for the Lord’s sake.

Throughout all the country: The Rabbinical scholars say that his name was not only known in the land of Canaan, but it was known all around the world.

Note: The children of Israel entering into the Promised Land is a paradigm (it is likened to) for believers entering into the Kingdom of God. Before God’s Kingdom is established on earth (the millennial reign of Messiah) there is going to be a battle. God’s people are going to be supernaturally victorious!

Chapter 7

Part 1: Joshua 7:1-12

God wants to give victory to His people, and He is able to do so. However, when we violate His Word, and there is sin in our lives, we are going to be adversely affected. When we have sin in our lives, we are not going to experience the power, anointing and victory that God wants us to have.

Verse 1: *“But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the devoted things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.”*

Committed a trespass: In modern Hebrew the word used here is the word for embezzlement. The children of Israel embezzled - they took that which was not rightly theirs (i.e. they took something that belonged to someone else).

Achan the son of Carmi: One person's sin can have a highly adverse outcome that affects many people. As children of God, we do not live our lives as islands. We are all in this together – we are one, united people. When there is sin in the 'camp' there are serious consequences.

Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah: All this information teaches us that this was a real person. What happened here was a real, historical event. This was not a made-up story.

Anger: Wrath

The anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel: Sin brings defeat and loss.

Note: No one yet knew that Achan had done this thing. Even though it was still undisclosed to humanity, God, who sees what is done in secret, knew that Achan had committed this sin. Hidden sin in our lives may not be seen by other people, but God knows about it.

Unconfessed sin that is not dealt with properly can have an adverse outcome in our lives.

Even if sin is confessed and under the blood of Messiah (i.e. forgiven eternally), we may, at times, still have to walk out the consequences of our sin while we are alive on this earth.

Verse 2: *“Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside the house of Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, “Go up and spy out the land.” So the men went up and spied out Ai.”*

Joshua sent men from Jericho: Jericho now belonged to the children of Israel.

Ai, which is beside the house of Aven, on the east side of Bethel: This tells us the location of this place called Ai.

Go up and spy out the land: Joshua and the Israelites were on a mission to take possession of the land of the Canaanites. Jericho, the strongest Canaanite city, had been taken with ease – because God had been with the children of Israel. Theoretically, the rest of the land would have been far easier to conquer and take possession of.

Verse 3: *“And they returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few.”*

Note: These men based their decisions on assumptions and not on revelation from God. They looked at the situation in Ai through human eyes, and not from God’s perspective. God had given them the strategy for how to defeat Jericho. He should have been the One to be allowed to determine the battle plan for Ai.

Strike: Deal them a death blow.

Verse 4: *“So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai.”*

Three thousand men: Joshua acted upon the intelligence he had received. He decided to be ‘safe rather than sorry’ and so sent the largest delegation of soldiers that had been suggested. Biblically, three is a number associated with revealing something (a revelation). In this account it was revealed that there was sin in the camp. Sin always needs to be dealt with.

They fled before the men of Ai: This should have been a very easy battle for the Israelites to fight. But, unbeknownst to Joshua and these men, there was sin in the camp, and this unconfessed sin hindered their success in this battle.

Verse 5: *“And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.”*

Struck down: Killed

Chased them from before the gate: If those at the gates of the city were overpowered it meant the city had fallen. Taking the gates was a sign of victory. The people of Ai successfully defended their gates. Israel was not able to capture it.

Shebarim: This is a word which means ‘broken’ (it can also refer to quarries – the places where stones are quarried/broken into fragments). We learn this principle from this verse: when we have sin in our lives we are going to be broken – i.e. we are not going to function properly.

The descent: Nothing in Scripture is redundant – it is all important, and it all has meaning. These soldiers were running downhill when they were struck down. They found themselves in a position opposite to the upward call of God (Philippians 3:14). If we are not responding to the upward call of God in our lives then, by default, we will be on a downward slide. The children of Israel went down in defeat.

The hearts of the people melted and became like water: From a spiritual standpoint this is the view we have of what was happening in the hearts of the children of Israel. They were giving in to fear. Fear paralyses people. Instead of having strength and confidence, relying on God for the victory, they began to doubt.

Verse 6: *“Then Joshua tore his garments and fell on his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.”*

The ark of the LORD: The ark reminds us of the Presence of God. Joshua fell on his face (humbled himself) before God.

Put dust on their heads: This was a sign of shame, embarrassment, remorse and repentance. Joshua knew that Israel had been defeated because there was sin in the camp.

Verse 7: *“And Joshua said, “Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!”*

Alas (אֲחַהֲ): In Hebrew, this is a word that can mean different things at different times. It is a word of declaration. It is a word which is full of emotion. It is also a word that displays a degree of understanding. Joshua understood how serious this defeat was.

Oh, that we had been: In colloquial terms – ‘I wish we had been’.

Been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan: This gives us insight into how affected faithful Joshua was by this disaster. Being on the other side of the Jordan was not God’s will for Joshua or for His people. Being on the other side would not have brought about God’s plans and purposes for the Jewish people, and nor would it have brought about His plans for the world (Genesis 12:3). We should never be content to compromise or settle for anything less than God’s perfect plan.

Verse 8: *“Please, O Lord, what can be said when Israel turns its back before its enemies?”*

Israel turns its back before its enemies: To have ones back to the enemy is humiliating. It gives us an image of the children of Israel fleeing before their enemies. Joshua is concerned about the ramifications of being defeated so soundly by a relatively small group of Canaanites.

Verse 9: *“For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?”*

All the inhabitants of the land: This could be referring to all the people in the whole world.

Our name...Your great name: God had placed His Name on His people (Numbers 6:27). They were the people of God, but they had been defeated. Joshua was concerned about God’s reputation/Name being dragged through the dirt.

Verse 10: *“So the LORD said to Joshua: “Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face?”*

Note: The Lord wanted to know why Joshua was so surprised by what had happened. This was not because of bad luck or them being victims of circumstance. There was sin in the camp which needed to be dealt with.

Verse 11: *“Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the devoted things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own vessels.”*

Transgressed My covenant: Israel had broken the covenant that they had made with God. Where there is sin there will not be victory. Like David, we need to go regularly before God and ask Him to examine us to see if there is any sin in us that we may be unaware of (Psalm 139:23-24). If God reveals sin to us, we need to confess it, repent of it and turn away from it. *Deceived:* The stolen goods were concealed. What was not theirs they took and made as if it was their own – as if it belonged to them.

Note: If we have sin in our lives (in the way we speak, behave, etc) we need to allow the Holy Spirit to convict us. If we are doing things which are in conflict with God’s Word, it is going to have an adverse effect in our lives. We need to repent quickly of our sins and then turn away from doing them.

Verse 12: *“Therefore the children of Israel could not rise up before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.”*

The children of Israel could not rise up before their enemies: When there is sin in our lives we are heading for defeat. The effects of defeat may not take immediate effect, but it is only a matter of time before the consequences of sin will catch up with us. The longer it takes for the consequence of sin to find us out, the more severe those consequences are going to be. *Turned their backs before their enemies:* This is a sign of humiliation. Sin brings humiliation or great shame into our lives.

Doomed to destruction: Utterly destroyed. Sin causes us to become broken – a people who are unable to function properly or see things clearly. Sin brings nothing good into our lives. When we accepted Yeshua, being reconciled to God, it was because we had a desire to turn away from sin. This means that we no longer had a desire to continue walking in our sinful ways. The closer we draw near to God, the further away we get from our desire to sin. Receiving God’s grace should never lead to us flirting with how much sin we can get away with. Receiving God’s grace should lead us to desiring, even more, to live holy lives – lives that are pleasing to God (Titus 2:11-14). Sin does not lead to joy. At times, sin may gratify our flesh for a brief period of time, but this gratification is fleeting and quickly departs, leaving us feeling empty, guilty and ashamed.

Unless you destroy: What God was saying to Joshua was that if this sin was not dealt with in the proper way, then Israel was going to be destroyed. If we do not deal radically with sin (destroy it) then it will destroy us.

Note: It is in God’s nature to bless. However, if people are faithless, they are not going to reap the reward of God’s blessings. God did not cast away or retract His covenantal promises with those in the wilderness who continued to walk in their faithlessness. However, these people died without ever receiving the rewards that God had promised to those who faithfully served Him.

Chapter 7

Part 2: Joshua 7:13-26

Romans 6:23 tells us that the wage of sin is death. Those who never accept Yeshua as their Lord and Saviour will be judged by their sin, and the punishment for their sin is eternal separation from God. When we believe in Yeshua as our Lord and Saviour, our sin is dealt with through the blood of Yeshua, and it no longer separates us, eternally, from God. However, even as believers, we do still sin. Believers, filled with the Holy Spirit, are called to be people who are spiritually sensitive. This means that we need to understand our spiritual predicament – radically dealing with (post salvation) sin in our lives - as a failure to do so can lead to disastrous consequences in the natural. Sin in the life of a believer leads to humiliation and gives the enemy power over us to defeat us so that we cannot function in a spiritually successful way. One of the primary reasons why we may be struggling in our lives, and not living in the fullness of God, is due to sin.

Verse 13: *“Get up, sanctify the people, and say, ‘Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus said the LORD God of Israel: “There is a devoted thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot rise up before your enemies until you take away the devoted thing from among you.”*

Sanctify: Sanctification involves holiness (fulfilling the purposes of God), but it, first and foremost, implies a change/alteration. God wanted the people to change from the condition they found themselves in.

Tomorrow: The people had to prepare themselves (in advance) for a future event. Sanctification prepares us for what God wants to do in the future. God could have done this work in the past – but sin did not allow it. This does not mean that sin has more power than God. God, more often than not, chooses to work within the parameters of the spiritual/natural laws which have been set in place. God is above these laws but chooses to function within them.

There is a devoted thing in your midst: God desired that the children of Israel would not behave like the nations – clinging to worthless idols/the things of this world. He wanted them to be a unique people – looking to Him to provide their needs. He did not want them coveting the things of this world. In many instances, God required them to utterly destroy the things that the world places value on. The goal of God’s children should not be about gaining wealth. Our highest goal should be lives lived in obedience to God.

You cannot rise up before your enemies until you take away the devoted thing from among you: An entire nation found themselves in a spiritually compromised situation and they suffered for one man’s sin. It is not only the person who has sinned who suffers. Sin can also adversely affect those who are innocent of that sin. Undealt with sin, within a believing community, can lead to the empowerment of the enemy over the people of God – over those who are innocent and guilty.

Verse 14: *“In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man.”*

Morning: A word that reminds us of revelation, illumination.

Takes: The word used here is a word for capturing. It is usually thought of as a military term – taking hostage, taking captive.

Note: Spiritual warfare is being alluded to here. Sin takes us hostage and allows our enemy to control or rule over us.

The tribe which the LORD takes: The tribe that the Lord ‘captures’ is the tribe that is marked as the guilty tribe.

Verse 15: *“Then it shall be that he who is taken with the devoted thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a despicable thing in Israel.”*

Despicable: That which is loathsome. The word that is used here is usually used to refer to an animal that is dead and its carcass has been there for a while and has begun the process of decay. It looks and smells disgusting. This is what God is saying concerning sin and disobedience. When we are moved by fleshly desires, rather than by the Spirit of God, it is something that is loathsome and repulsive in the sight of God.

Verse 16: *“So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken.”*

Note: God had (has) a strategy on how He exposes sin. God neither tolerates nor ignores sin. Sin has an adverse effect in the lives of God’s people, so He works to expose sin so that it can be properly dealt with. Sin never goes away on its own. It has to be dealt with. If it is not dealt with, it begins to fester and eventually leads to humiliation and defeat. Ultimately, if not dealt with, sin leads to death (Romans 6:23).

Verse 17: *“He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken.”*

Verse 18: *“Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.”*

Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah: God pinpoints the sin – getting right to the source of the problem.

Verse 19: *“Now Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and declare to me now what you have done; do not conceal it from me.”*

My son, I beg you: Joshua is not speaking to Achan out of anger, but he is speaking to him in a compassionate way.

Make confession: Joshua knows that Achan is guilty of this sin that has affected the whole nation of Israel. Confessing our sins (pre and post salvation) is very important for us to do. In 1 John 1:9 we are told that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from our unrighteousness.

Do not conceal it: It is never wise to hide our sin. It is better to get our sin into the open so that it can be dealt with promptly and correctly (James 5:16). We will not be able to fulfil the purposes of God for our lives if we are clinging to sin in our lives.

Verse 20: *“And Achan answered Joshua and said, “Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done:”*

Indeed I have sinned: Achan acknowledged that he had sinned. He did not try to conceal it.

This is what I have done: Confessing our sin is necessary. However, another aspect of confession is specifying what we have done (why we did the sin, how we feel about what we did, etc).

Verse 21: *“When I saw among the plunder a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”*

I saw: So frequently, sin begins through what we see with our eyes. This is why it is so important to guard our eyes - not looking upon those things that we ought not to, those things which are immoral and in conflict with the righteous standards of God.

The plunder: This was all meant to be destroyed or devoted to God (placed in His treasury – Joshua 6:19). None of the plunder was meant to benefit any person individually.

Garment: In this context this robe could be referring to a garment of prestige or a garment that indicated that someone was set apart. This reveals to us that Achan was operating out of pride. He wanted to be someone distinguished, someone set apart or elevated in the eyes of men. The fact that it was a Babylonian robe (a non-Jewish cultural treasure) could also possibly mean that Achan had a desire to assimilate. Israel was set apart from the nations. It was wrong for them to assimilate with the nations or become like the people around them.

Verse 22: *“So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it.”*

Messengers: These were probably Joshua’s servants.

Hidden: From a human standpoint, Achan could have gotten away with this sin. None of the children of Israel would have ever known that Achan had done this, if the Lord had not highlighted it to them. Sometimes in life we can get away with our sins – from a human perspective. We may never be caught by the law or stand trial. No one may ever know what we have done. We may go through our entire life seemingly never adversely affected by our hidden sins. But we need to realise a judgment day is coming. Nothing is hidden from God. Our sin will be exposed on this day. Even though our hidden sin may not affect us physically in this life, it will damage us spiritually.

Verse 23: *“And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and they spread it out before the LORD.”*

Them: The robe, the silver and the gold.

Spread it out: The word used here is a unique word in Hebrew. It is a word that has to do with casting a mold, pouring something into the mold to set (eg liquid silver or gold etc) and then once this liquid has hardened, we are left with the exact replica of that mold.

Note: It was not by accident that this sin was spread out (exposed) before all the people of Israel and before the Lord. This robe, the silver and the gold were laid out very purposefully and specifically. The people saw with their own eyes (something so small and seemingly insignificant) what had led to their defeat and humiliation in the battle against Ai, and the reason why 36 of their men were killed in this battle.

Verse 24: *“Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor.”*

Note: Everything that had a close connection to this man shared in his punishment. Sin affects every aspect of our lives – those closest to us, our possessions, etc. Sin cannot be contained. It spills into every aspect of our lives and contaminates all that is around it – eventually bringing death (Romans 6:23).

Joshua, and all Israel with him: This sin was dealt with in a very public way. Sin had made Israel vulnerable to the attack of their enemy. Their hearts had melted in fear. This very graphic and painful picture would have helped the people to realise that the One they needed to fear was God – not their enemies. The fear of God (giving God priority and radically dealing with any sin in their lives – no matter how small or seemingly insignificant) led to the people triumphing over their enemies.

Achor: This is a unique word which means ‘trouble’. It is a word that alludes to intense suffering and hardship.

Verse 25: *“And Joshua said, “For what purpose have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.” So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.”*

For what purpose have you troubled us: Joshua wanted to know what was so valuable to Achan that he would have been tempted by these things and, in so doing, bring trouble to so many people.

Stoned them: Achan, his family, his livestock and all his possessions were stoned with stones and burnt with fire. Achan’s sin had an adverse effect on his wife and on his children. Sin robbed them of any hope for the future.

Note: Sin never produces anything that's good. That is why God is never behind any sin. He never moves to influence or encourage anyone to sin. God is always in opposition to sin. God, who is Sovereign, however, can use sin for His purpose. For example: Although God was not behind Achan’s sin, God used Achan’s sin as a teaching tool to reveal Biblical truth to the children of Israel, just as He is using it to teach us about sin today.

Verse 26: *“Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So 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.”*

Raised over him a great heap of stones: Stones were usually heaped up as a memorial – when people saw them, they were a reminder of what had happened in that place.
The LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger: Israel, under Joshua's leadership, dealt properly with sin.

Note: When we willfully sin, we are inviting trouble into our lives. That trouble we receive is usually going to be disproportionately related to our sinful offense. This means that the trouble we receive is excessive compared to the sin that was committed. Achan took a few things, but his judgment was great. People may sin for a relatively short time on earth (in light of eternity), but if they do not repent and accept Yeshua as their Lord and Saviour, they are going to face an eternal judgment of fire.

Chapter 8

Part 1: Joshua 8:1-17

God is a God of renewal. He brings about a newness in us after we have confessed and dealt properly with our sins. As believers, from an eternal standpoint, our sin has been dealt with – it will never separate us from an eternity with God. However, from an earthly standpoint, as believers, we may still suffer earthly consequences for our sin.

Verse 1: *“Now the LORD said to Joshua: “Do not be afraid, nor 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.”*

Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed: God is encouraging Joshua that because Achan's sin was properly dealt with, Israel no longer needed to be concerned about their enemies.

Dismayed: This is a word of confusion. It alludes to someone not being able to discern the order or will of God.

Arise, go up to Ai: It was God's purpose for the children of Israel to overcome their enemies. Now God is recommissioning the people to fulfil His purpose – i.e. conquering the land.

Go up: God is calling the people back into His upward call for their lives (Philippians 3:14). When we are committed to the purposes of God, we are fulfilling His 'upward call' for our lives.

See: To perceive this.

The king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land: This alludes to a total and complete victory. Sin robs us of victory. However, when sin has been dealt with, we can prepare ourselves to receive victory from God.

Verse 2: *“And you shall do to Ai and her king as you did to Jericho and her king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it.”*

You shall take as booty: God allows them to take some plunder for themselves from this battle against Ai.

Lay an ambush for the city behind it: God has a strategy for victory. No matter what situation we find ourselves in, or no matter how bad things may appear, God has a way/path for victory – even in seemingly hopeless circumstances.

Verse 3: *“So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valour and sent them away by night.”*

Joshua arose: Joshua was a man of obedience.

Go up: The upward call of God again being alluded to.

Mighty men of valour: Scripturally this is a term used for men who are committed, loyal and submissive to the purposes of God.

Night: God’s work of redemption often begins in ‘the night’, Scripturally. It was at night that God struck the firstborn of Egypt. Ruth went to Boaz at the threshing floor at night, etc. Many times, darkness or night is related to God moving (Matthew 24:29-31 speaks of Yeshua, the light of the world, coming while it is dark).

Verse 4: *“And he commanded them, saying: “See, you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready.”*

Ready: This is a word which relates to correctness - that which is right or proper. It can also be derived from a word which means to be prepared or ready for a specific purpose.

Verse 5: *“Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as at the first, that we shall flee before them.”*

They come out against us as at the first: This was the second time that the Israelites came against this city. Like the first time, a handful of them (together with Joshua) would act as the 3000 men did the first time – they would pretend to be fleeing from before these people. This time, however, the Israelites would not be fleeing in fear. Part of God’s strategy was to give the warriors in Ai a false sense of superiority and over confidence, so that they would think that they were going to be victorious.

Verse 6: *“For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, ‘They are fleeing before us as at the first.’ Therefore we will flee before them.”*

Drawn them: This is the same root from the word used in Joshua 4:18 which spoke of a disconnect. In Joshua 4:18 when the priests disconnected their feet from the riverbed the waters flowed back into position – the river went back into the natural order of God. God’s order is again being alluded to here, as implied by the use of this word.

They are fleeing before us as at the first: God’s strategy for victory is perfect. Part of God’s strategy for this battle was that the Israelites would flee – not out of fear or confusion, but that would flee in obedience to His Word. Fleeing before an enemy (at the command of God) requires great faith and trust. Fleeing places soldiers in a vulnerable position – more easily open to attack – their backs are turned toward the enemy and they cannot see where the enemy is or what he is doing.

Verse 7: *“Then you shall rise up from the ambush and take possession of the city, for the LORD your God has given it into your hand.”*

You shall rise up from the ambush: This is not referring to the Israelite soldiers who were pretending to flee. This is referring to those soldiers who had positioned themselves behind the city while they waited for the men of Ai to exit the city in pursuit of the Israelite decoy soldiers. As the men of Ai exited the city, the city became vulnerable and open to attack.

Take possession of: This is a word for inheriting.

The LORD your God has given it into your hand: All of this is as an outcome of God’s provision – His provision of victory.

Verse 8: *“And it will be, when you have taken the city, that you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do. See, I have commanded you.”*

You: Written in the plural.

Set the city on fire: The people of Ai were rebellious idolaters who participated in evil. They knew that they should submit to the children of Israel, but they did not want to do this. God commanded the Israelites to set this city on fire once they had captured it. So often in the Bible, the wrath of God is depicted as being poured out in the form of fire. God wanted an expression of His wrath to be poured out upon this city of Ai. The fullness of God’s wrath has never fallen upon the children of Israel – despite their sin. This is due to the fact that the children of Israel (through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) have a covenantal relationship with God. We should never underestimate the significance of being in a covenantal relationship with God - especially a New Covenant relationship, through Messiah Yeshua.

Verse 9: *“Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people.”*

Note: The 30 000 Israelite soldiers were split into two groups – the group who went behind the city and lay in wait (+25 000 soldiers), and the decoy soldiers (+5000 soldiers) who would pretend to advance on the city and then flee in order to draw the Ai warriors out of the city of Ai. Joshua was with this second group of soldiers – the decoy soldiers, i.e those who were in the most vulnerable position.

Verse 10: *“Then Joshua rose up early in the morning and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai.”*

He and the elders of Israel: Joshua and the leadership of Israel took up their positions in the most vulnerable part of the army.

Verse 11: *“And all the people of war who were with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now a valley lay between them and Ai.”*

Note: These decoy soldiers went to a very specific location. There was a valley between where they camped and Ai.

Verse 12: *“So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city.”*

He took: Referring to Joshua. Everything was being done under Joshua’s leadership.

Verse 13: *“And when they had set the people, all the army that was on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.”*

Note: This is referring to when all the Israelite soldiers had taken up their positions – 5000 at the north side of the city, and 25 000 at the west side of the city of Ai (these ones are called the rear guard). Joshua arranged these men strategically – according to the strategy given to him by God.

Verse 14: *“Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw it, that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he did not know that there was an ambush against him behind the city.”*

The king of Ai saw it: The king of Ai saw the Israelite soldiers camped on the other side of the valley.

The men of the city: The king of Ai’s troops – his army.

Appointed: This is a word usually used to refer to the designated times/the festivals of the Lord. Here it refers to a designated place for war.

The plain: The desert plain.

Verse 15: *“And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them and fled by the way of the wilderness.”*

Wilderness: The desert. Biblically the desert is often depicted as the place where God takes His people when He wants to teach them to trust and depend on Him. Joshua and the elders of Israel fled into the desert. This is a picture which depicts their dependence on God.

Verse 16: *“So all the people who were in Ai cried out to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city.”*

Cried out: This was not a cry of despair. This was a battle cry.

Drawn away: Disconnected from.

Verse 17: *“There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel.”*

There was not a man left: Every single man in both Bethel and Ai pursued after Joshua and the decoy soldiers – they all wanted a taste of what they assumed would be victory. They left their cities completely unguarded and unprotected. Because of Israel’s loss the first time around, these men were overconfident and were easily deceived into thinking that they had no reason to defend their cities.

Chapter 8

Part 2: Joshua 8:18-35

Victory, for a believer, is not about getting what we want. Victory is about submitting to the Lord's plan, carrying out His will and becoming faithful servants of His desires. In so doing, we find joy, true satisfaction and a peace that passes all understanding. We need to realize that we are in a spiritual conflict with an enemy that is stronger than us in our natural condition. It is only when we submit to the instructions of God that we will have His perspective and the provision we need to overcome that powerful enemy. God's will for our lives is that we will be a victorious people (victorious through Him).

Verse 18: *"Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that was in his hand toward the city."*

Spear: A weapon used in battle.

Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai: This was a symbolic act that God commanded Joshua to perform. Many times, God may give us instructions which seem to have no relevance or effect (initially) in the natural. However, it is through being obedient to God's instructions and performing the symbolic acts in the natural that a change is brought about in the spiritual. It is this spiritual change which produces a change in the natural.

I will give it into your hand: God is making a proclamation. If Joshua is obedient to do what God has commanded, God will defeat Joshua's enemies. Obedience is the key to victory.

Joshua stretched out the spear: Joshua was obedient to God's command.

Verse 19: *"So those in ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire."*

Arose quickly...ran...entered the city and took it: These men, who were waiting in ambush behind the city, were waiting for the right timing – God's timing. When the time was right, they quickly responded. This is the first physical effect we see after Joshua, at God's command, performed the symbolic act with his spear.

Hurried to set the city on fire: Even though God was allowing the people to take some plunder from this city, it was not the plunder that was first and foremost on their minds – it was the instruction of God to set this city on fire. They were more concerned with God's instruction than their own desires.

Verse 20: *"And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers."*

The smoke...ascended to heaven: This phrase informs us that there was more than just a physical victory taking place here. The source of this victory was spiritual – it was a heavenly victory, because Joshua had led the people to implement the instructions of God.

Note: This Scripture is teaching us that we need to take the principals of Scripture and implement them in our lives. When we do so, it brings Godly activity into our circumstances. If we do not trust God, if we do not demonstrate faith, if we do not submit and obey His words of instructions, then there will not be a positive response from God. He will not provide. He will not give us His perspective. We will not experience His anointing of power, and, therefore, will be unable to implement or carry out His will (i.e. we will fail, and the enemy will have victory).

They had no power: They were so grief stricken by what had happened to their city that they lost their ability to flee – let alone, fight.

The people who had fled to the wilderness: Referring to the 5000 decoy soldiers that Joshua had been leading.

Verse 21: *“Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai.”*

Saw...they turned back and struck down: Joshua and all Israel were encouraged when they saw the smoke of the city. They realised everything was going according to plan. When we submit to God, we can expect that His plans will become a reality in our lives.

Verse 22: *“Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were caught in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they let none of them remain or escape.”*

They let none of them remain or escape: There were no survivors or refugees. There was a total loss of life in Ai. God is a God of extremes. This world does not like extremes. The world prefers to sit on the fence, in the middle – neither this way nor that. Neutral (politically correct) ground.

Verse 23: *“But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.”*

Verse 24: *“And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.”*

Slaying all: This is emphatic.

They were consumed: They all came to a complete end. In the Hebrew Bible there is a gap/space after this phrase. After this pause, (which gives us time to stop to let this annihilation sink in), we are then led into the conclusion of the Israelite warriors going into Ai to finish the job that they had started out to do.

Verse 25: *“So it was that all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand—all the people of Ai.”*

All who fell: This is an idiom which means ‘all who died’.

That day: In Hebrew these are the words that are used to refer to (the final) Judgment Day. These words put a text within the context of judgment. It is after judgment that God's Kingdom will be established.

Twelve: (whether 12, 24, 144, 1200, 12000, etc) This is a number which is related to the Kingdom of God (See Revelation). This teaches us a Kingdom principle. In the last days Israel is going to demonstrate this principle: they are going to be victorious over their enemies and this is going to usher in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Verse 26: *"For Joshua did not withdraw his hand with which he reached out with the sword until he had **utterly destroyed** all the inhabitants of Ai."*

Verse 27: *"Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had commanded Joshua."*

Livestock: The domesticated animals (cows, sheep, goats and oxen).

Booty: Reward. When we obey the Lord, we receive a reward or a blessing from Him.

According to the word of the LORD: They did everything according to the commandments of God.

Verse 28: *"So Joshua burned Ai and made it an eternal heap, a desolation to this day."*

Eternal: A Kingdom word. Therefore, again, setting this passage within the context of the Kingdom of God, and all things related to it.

To this day: When Joshua wrote the book of Joshua, Ai was still a heap of rubble.

Verse 29: *"And the king of Ai hung on a tree until evening. And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raise over it a great heap of stones that remains to this day."*

The king of Ai hung on a tree: The king had been put to death and his corpse had been hung on a tree. Hanging a corpse is an act that shames the dead person. The king of Ai had ignored the facts that were right in front of his eyes (God's favour on the children of Israel to give them the land of Israel as their possession, them miraculously crossing the Jordan river and the walls of Jericho falling down etc) and he had rebelliously refused to submit to God's will and plan. If he had submitted to God's plan – to serve and to be a blessing to the children of Israel – he and all his people would have been spared and they would have had life – being brought into the kingdom of the children of Israel.

Corpse: The word used here is a word that speaks of something repulsive or loathsome (similar to an animal carcass which is rotting and decaying).

Cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city: The city gates were synonymous with a place of judgment. The elders of the city would sit at the gates of the city and there they would pronounce their judgments (much the same concept as the courts of today).

Raise over it a great heap of stones: His shame was marked as a memorial. When people saw these stones, it was a testimony to them that those who rebel and who fight against the people of God are going to experience a shameful end.

Verse 30: *“Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal,”*

Mount Ebal: Moses commanded the Israelites that when they entered the Promised land, they were to proclaim blessings from Mount Gerizim and curses from Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 11:26-32. Deuteronomy 27 goes into greater detail on what needed to be done on Mount Ebal). God sets before His people blessings and curses (life and death). It is up to us to choose one or the other. Depending on what we choose, God will either bless us or curse us. There is no position in between.

Verse 31: *“as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: “an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron tool.” And they offered on it burnt offerings to the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings.”*

Written in the Book of the Law of Moses: Deuteronomy 11: 29, Deuteronomy 27: 2-8.

Whole stones: God wanted His people to be different from the nations. The nations would cut their stones into perfect square or rectangular blocks and then these stones would fit nicely together. God did not want the stones on His altar to be cut into perfect shapes. He wanted His stones to remain whole – even though the stones were shaped differently from one another.

Burnt offerings: These were offerings of thanksgiving and a testimony to how things were completely done.

Peace: Peace is more than just an absence of conflict. Peace is what we experience as the will of God is worked out and completed (brought into its entirety) in our lives.

Note: There are two reasons why we worship God:

1. First and foremost, because of who He is
2. For what He has done – everything that God does is worthy of praise. His actions should lead us to worship Him.

Verse 32: *“And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written.”*

He wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses: Victory prepares us to obey the commandments of God. We find victory through obeying His commandments, but once we are victorious, we are even more prepared to carry out the commandments of the Lord. When we meet the righteous requirements of the law (Romans 8:4) the glory of God is manifested.

Verse 33: *“Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on one side of the ark and on the other (side) the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the sojourner as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.”*

Officers: Those who ensure the law is being adhered to. They enforce the law.

Stood on one side of the ark and on the other (side): Half of the people were on one side of the ark of covenant (standing before Mount Gerizim) and the other half were on the other side (standing before Mount Ebal) – just as Moses commanded.

The ark of the covenant: The covenant of the Lord is a covenant of blessing. If we do not submit to it, it becomes a covenant of curse. This is true for all people – from the highest leaders in Israel to the tiniest children born to the Gentiles.

The sojourner: The non-Jew

Note: The fact that the children of Israel were in this place was a testimony to God's faithfulness to bring them into the Promised Land – to the places He had told Moses He would take them. These people were now fulfilling what had been foretold by Moses. It was a reminder to the children of Israel that what God said God would do. He brought them to that place (as a fulfilment of His Word) to show them that He truly was a God who would bless them for their choice of obedience, He truly was a God who would curse them if they chose to disobey. God is the God of eternal life. However, He is also the God of eternal condemnation.

Verse 34: *“And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law.”*

The Book of the Law: Throughout this book of Joshua, so far, there has been an emphasis on the law of the Lord.

Verse 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, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.”*

Assembly: Congregation. This congregation included the women, children and the Gentiles who lived among the Israelite people.

Strangers: The Gentiles who lived among the Israelite people. Israel is supposed to be a nation who invites many others to join in and be a part of her congregation. She is supposed to be a blessing to the nations. When we are victorious, we should be inviting others in (people for whom this is a foreign concept) to experience victory with us, so that they too can know the same truth that we know.

Chapter 9

Part 1: Joshua 9:1-15

The things in the natural tend to hide the spiritual reality. When we look at things through our natural eyes, and make decisions based on what we see naturally, we are going to often make the wrong decision. We need to train ourselves, through prayer, to ask the right questions – going before God to get His wisdom and perspective on things and then make God honouring decisions based on what the Lord reveals to us. Prayer oftentimes positions us and gives us insight to see things from God’s perspective.

It would be a mistake to assume that conflict in our lives means that we are doing something wrong. The Israelites faced conflict while they were doing exactly what God had called them to do. It is often when we are obedient to God that we face conflict. The world hates those who adhere to God’s standards of morality.

Verse 1: *“And it came about when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan, in the mountain and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard about it,”*

This side of the Jordan: This is referring to the kings on the western side of the Jordan (Jericho is on the western side of the Jordan). This refers to the land between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea.

The Hittite, the Amorite...: People groups may be in opposition to each other, but the purposes of God cause opposing groups to unify (form an alliance) in their objective against the purposes of God. Often the enemies of God tend to be more unified in their objectives than the people of God tend to be.

The mountain: Possibly referring to Jerusalem.

Note: 6 people groups are mentioned here. Biblically 6 is the number associated with grace. It is only when we are walking in grace that we are able to serve God. Grace has multiple purposes. One of the functions of grace is to produce in us a desire to obey God. It is only through God’s grace that we are able to obey God’s commands and accomplish His will/purposes.

Verse 2: *“that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one mouth.”*

Gathered together to fight: These 6 people groups put aside their conflicts with each other and they united together to fight against Joshua and the people of Israel.

Fight: War

One mouth: They all spoke the same words. Their thinking and their rhetoric were aligned. Fighting against the purposes of God united these people groups. Enemies who are against the will of God are frequently unified in opposing the things of God. Frequently God’s people do not tend to be unified, or if we are unified, we are unified in the wrong thing. The reason for this is because we do not prayerfully get counsel from God. Therefore, we do not make decisions as an outcome of prayerful diligence, but continue to see things from a natural rather than a Godly perspective.

Verse 3: *“But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai,”*

The inhabitants of Gibeon: These people did not join with the kings to make an alliance against the children of Israel. They chose to pursue a different strategy. In a sense, these people of Gibeon were wise. They realised that it was not going to do them any good to fight against the children of Israel.

Verse 4: *“they worked craftily and went and pretended to be diplomats. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended,”*

Craftily: Cunning. Deceitful. Genesis 3:1 tells us that satan (the serpent) was the craftiest of the animals. This word alludes to deceit. It is a word for a lie or for a falsehood in order to deceive someone else. If these people had gone to Joshua and spoken truth to him, and submitted to his leadership, they would have experienced a far different outcome. However, deceit was second nature to them and so they did not think to tell the truth but they chose to deal in lies.

Diplomats: Ambassadors (sent ones).

Old: In modern Hebrew this is a word used for ‘wear and tear’. When something becomes old it depreciates and loses value.

Verse 5: *“old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy.”*

Note: These people came to Joshua with fabricated appearances and possessions. Their purpose was to deceive the children of God.

Verse 6: *“And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.”*

We have come from a far country: Like their appearances, their words were also a lie. These people were locals in the land of Canaan.

Now: This is a word of urgency. These people acted like they were in a hurry.

Make a covenant: When people cut a covenant together it should be mutually beneficial for both parties. The people of Gibeon, however, were making this covenant to benefit themselves.

Verse 7: *“Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?”*

Perhaps you dwell among us: The Israelites are aware of what might be going on here. They are aware that there might be some deceitfulness at play here.

Verse 8: *“But they said to Joshua, ‘We are your servants.’ And Joshua said to them, ‘Who are you, and where do you come from?’”*

We are your servants: These people were willing to be the servants of the children of Israel. So why the deceit, lies and dishonesty? They were afraid of the repercussions if they told the truth.

Verse 9: *“So they said to him: “From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt,”*

From a very far country your servants have come: Another lie.

Name: Character. They had heard of God’s character/reputation. They are now telling the truth.

Verse 10: *“and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth.”*

Note: They knew the situation very well. They had taken careful note of what God had done for the children of Israel.

Verse 11: *“Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, ‘We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.’”*

Our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us: Another lie interspersed with the truth.

Verse 12: *“This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy.”*

Note: This unverifiable ‘fact’ is what they used to back up their claim that they were from a far away land.

Verse 13: *“And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.”*

Verse 14: *“Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; and the mouth of the Lord they did not ask.”*

The men of Israel took some of their provisions: The moldy bread, worn out garments and the wine skins were taken into possession by the leaders of Israel so that they could examine them. What is being emphasised here is that they were paying more attention to the natural – what they could see – rather than to hearing from God.

The mouth of the Lord they did not ask: The Israelites did not pray or seek revelation from the Lord regarding these people and how to handle this matter.

Verse 15: *“So Joshua made peace with them and cut a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.”*

Made peace with them and cut a covenant with them to let them live: According to the words of Joshua and the children of Israel the people of Gibeon had to be kept alive, and nothing could be done against them. The people of Gibeon had lied and given false evidence. It should have stood to reason that a promise founded on lies could be declared null and void. However, this is not the case with a covenant. There is power in a covenant. Once a covenant is enacted, regardless of the circumstances surrounding it, the covenant needs to be carried out. The children of Israel, despite the lies, deceit and false evidence that was provided to them, had to honour the covenant that they had made. God honours covenant and He is always faithful to His covenant. When we receive the gospel, we may not understand every aspect of what we have obligated ourselves to. God, however, is faithful and He will show Himself to be One who honours His covenant obligations. In this case, the children of Israel had to do the same thing.

The rulers of the congregation swore to them: The people of Israel were obligated to keep their word because they had sworn an oath.

Chapter 9

Part 2: Joshua 9:16-27

God is a God of truth. Therefore, we should be people of truth. When we give our word, regardless of the circumstances, we need to be faithful, true and accountable to what we have said. We need to stand in truth - regardless of what others may have said or may be doing.

Verse 16: *“And it came about at the end of three days, after they had cut a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them.”*

Three days: This is a good example of the number ‘three’ relating to revealing or declaring something. After three days the people received revelation.

They were their neighbors: The children of Israel found out that the people of Gibeon had lied to them and that they in fact lived near to them. According to God’s commands these people should have been completely annihilated. However, because Israel had entered into an agreement with them (and because they had not prayed and sought Godly counsel) the children of Israel were obligated to keep their word. This should never have happened – but it did. Now it had to be dealt with in a God honouring manner.

Verse 17: *“Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim.”*

Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim: All of these cities were very near to Jerusalem – a significant location.

Verse 18: *“But the children of Israel did not strike them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers.”*

Did not strike...because the rulers ... had sworn to them: Even though these people had lied to the Israelites, and the covenant was cut under false pretenses, the Israelites were still expected by God to honour their word. Yeshua taught us in Matthew 5:35-37 that it is better for us to never make a vow but to let our yes be ‘yes’ and our no ‘no’. In this life we are bound to make poor decisions which we are going to suffer for. However, we need to be people of integrity and seek to have a good witness as we walk out the consequences of poor decisions.

Verse 19: *“Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, “We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them.”*

All the rulers ... all the congregation: There was unity among the leadership, just as there was unity within the congregation.

The LORD God of Israel: This name of God not only reminds us of His Sovereignty in this world, but it also reminds us of His Sovereignty and faithfulness to His Word for eternity. We can rely on God’s Word. He is faithful to do what He has said. As people of God, when we violate our word and do not walk in truth, we are poor representatives of God and sully His reputation in the eyes of the world. God is a God of truth. We need to represent Him well – being people of truth.

We may not touch them: We may not cause them any harm. If these people were harmed by the Israelites, then the Israelites would be breaking their vow.

Verse 20: *“This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.”*

This: In Hebrew, when this word stands by itself (like it does here), it is a word that speaks about the primary/main thing within a Biblical passage.

Lest wrath be upon us: The Israelites entered into this covenant out of their own free choice. If they had inquired of God, God would not have allowed them to enter into this agreement. Now they were obligated to keep their word.

Wrath: The hot anger of God.

We swore to them: The deceit of others does not give us the liberty to be deceitful. When we make an oath in the Lord, we are required to honour the covenant we have made. God always honours His covenant/s. As His people, who seek to be like Him and to behave like Him, we need to do the same.

Verse 21: *“And the rulers said to them, “Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them.”*

Note: The people of Gibeon were very aware of the power of God as well as the blessings of God upon the children of Israel. Even though the Gibeonites had extracted a covenant from the Israelites through deceitful means, they were a people who were willing to serve.

They were going to have their lives (i.e. they were not going to be put to death) but they had to spend their lives in service to the children of Israel. These people did not become part of the children of Israel. Because their lives had been paid for through deceit it had no eternal implications for them. They were not a part of the Kingdom of God (not part of God's family). Their covenant was not a covenant of redemption, it was a covenant of physical sustenance – which would only last for a season. Their concern was worldly – not eternal.

Verse 22: *"Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, 'Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell near us?'"*

Why have you deceived us: Joshua now knows the truth, but he came to know it too late. The covenant was already in force.

Verse 23: *"Now therefore, you are cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves—woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."*

You are cursed: Many people lie and think because they have benefitted from their lie that they did a good thing for themselves. This may be the case from a human perspective, but it is not the case from God's perspective (Hebrews 9:27). These people had no Kingdom hope or expectation.

None of you shall be freed from being slaves: None of these people were ever going to know freedom.

The house of my God: This is a reference to the temple. They were going to serve the temple purposes but not in worship. They had to serve as a consequence of who they were – a faithless people who did not seek the mercy of God (like Rahab did).

Verse 24: *"So they answered Joshua and said, 'Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore we were very much afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing.'"*

Clearly told: It was utterly told to them and left no room for doubt. They knew it completely. *God commanded ... to destroy all the inhabitants of the land:* God, in His omniscience, knew that these individuals were not willing to submit to Him.

Verse 25: *"And now, here we are, in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us."*

We are, in your hands: We are under your authority.

Verse 26: *"So he did to them thusly, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them."*

Note: Because the leadership of Israel had given their word, they did not allow the children of Israel to kill the Gibeonites.

Verse 27: *“And that day Joshua appointed them woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, in the place which He would choose, even to this day.”*

That day: In Hebrew this is a phrase that refers to that final Judgment Day.

Woodcutters and water carriers ... for the altar of the LORD: A lot of sacrifices were made on the altar. This required a lot of wood to keep the fires burning and a lot of water to wash away the blood. This is what the Gibeonites were tasked with doing. Christian and Jewish commentators point out that they were slaves to the altar, but they never received any of the benefits of it. The principle is this: when we lie, we are not going to receive any Kingdom blessing. Lies put us into servitude – they make us slaves.

In the place which He would choose: God chose this place. He chose that His people would live in the land of Canaan. He chose that His Name would dwell in that place (Deuteronomy 12:11).

Chapter 10

Part 1: Joshua 10:1-15

This world is opposed to the righteous standards of God. When we walk in obedience to the will of God we are going to encounter conflict with the world. This conflict is going to increase more and more as we approach the last days. We need to learn how to deal with those who are opposed to us. We need to be found faithful in the midst of conflict - living a praiseworthy and a God honouring life.

Verse 1: *“Now it came about when Adoni-Zedek the king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them,”*

Utterly destroyed: God allowed some plunder, for a specific purpose, but the vast majority of things in Ai were destroyed.

The inhabitants of Gibeon ... were among them: The areas that the Gibeonites lived in were areas which were very close to Jerusalem. The king of Jerusalem was concerned because the Gibeonites were dwelling among his people, and he was afraid that this would pose a threat to his people. These Gibeonites were joined with the children of Israel. The king of Jerusalem did not want this to become a trend where other nations joined with the children of Israel, and therefore made him weaker and Israel stronger.

Verse 2: *“that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.”*

They feared greatly: They were exceedingly afraid.

Like one of the royal cities: This means that the city of Gibeon had great assets and resources.

Greater than Ai: There were more inhabitants in the city of Gibeon than there had been inhabitants in the city of Ai.

Its men were mighty: The men in Gibeon were powerful warriors.

Verse 3: *“Therefore Adoni-Zedek the king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying,”*

Note 1: The king of Jerusalem was trying to form his own coalition. He wanted the kings in the surrounding areas to join with him for the purpose of destroying Gibeon. He was hoping that if they were able to destroy Gibeon it would discourage other people groups from joining with the children of Israel.

Note 2: Five nations are mentioned here. The number five, Biblically, is a number that speaks of something which is incomplete - that which is lacking. When we oppose the things of God, we will find ourselves in lack, we will have shortages. We will not have what's necessary to accomplish what we want to do. This lack produces a spiritual frustration. When we are opposing the will of God we can expect to be frustrated and to have no peace. Instead, we will experience fear and spiritual confusion.

Verse 4: *“Come up to me and help me, that we may strike Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.”*

Note: The king of Jerusalem did not want any nation to have a relationship with Joshua or the children of Israel. He saw the Israelites as a threat and wanted to discourage others from joining with them.

Verse 5: *“Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.”*

Note: This threat to go to war against Gibeon became a reality.

Verse 6: *“And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, “Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us.”*

Do not forsake your servants: Because the men of Gibeon had a covenant with Israel, they were calling on the Israelites to come to their assistance – to deliver them from this five-nation coalition who were coming against them.

Verse 7: *“So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.”*

Joshua ascended ... and all the people of war with him: Because of their agreement, the children of Israel were obligated to defend the residents of Gibeon. They responded to the call for help.

Note: God is going to use this for the good of His people. They had to fight, and they had to take possession of the land.

By helping the people of Gibeon, they were keeping their word (honouring their covenantal obligations) but they were also seeing their enemies being defeated. God gave them the power to do what He had instructed them to do – to take possession of the land of Canaan.

Verse 8: *“And the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.”*

Do not fear them: When we are doing the right thing, we do not need to fear our enemy.

Note: God is causing the fear of the Lord to fall upon His enemies. When others are in opposition to the will of God, they are not going to have peace. They are going to have a spiritual paranoia – crippling fear.

Verse 9: *“Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal.”*

Came upon them suddenly: The Amorite coalition were not expecting the Israelites. They were caught by surprise. When we are called to do God’s will, we should never procrastinate or delay. We need to be quick to respond to God’s call. When we have an opportunity to serve God we need to respond with urgency and with quickness. Any unwarranted delay in responding to the call of God in our lives gives the enemy an advantage.

Verse 10: *“So the LORD disturbed them before Israel, and killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to the house of Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah.”*

Note: When we are serving God, we will experience conflict. What we need to realise, though, is that, because we are serving God and doing His will, He is at work even in the midst of the conflict. In the midst of conflict, God is with us.

Disturbed: This is a word that can also be related to a loud noise that is very unsettling and brings about confusion – they do not perceive things correctly [it is interesting to note that Sonic and ultrasonic weapons (USW) are weapons of various types that use **sound** to injure or incapacitate an opponent]. God confuses those who are opposed to Him.

Azekah and Makkedah: These places were about 30km (18.6 miles) from Jerusalem. The Israelites pursued these people for a great distance in order to ensure that their enemy was put to death.

Verse 11: *“And it came about, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of the house of Horon, that the LORD cast down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the stones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.”*

On the descent: They were going down. Throughout Scripture, this is generally not a good direction to be going in.

The LORD cast down large stones from heaven on them: The Lord Himself entered into this warfare. The Lord fights on our behalf when we are in His will and committed to His purposes.

More who died from the stones than the children of Israel killed with the sword: The Israelites did put some people to death, but the greatest destruction and death of the enemy came from God Himself.

Verse 12: *“Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said before the eyes of Israel: “Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.”*

Note: Take note of the progression in this chapter. God strikes the people with fear and confusion. Then God does the supernatural in order that the enemy is totally defeated (God gives absolute victory to His people).

Joshua spoke to the LORD: A verbal and audible prayer, prayed in a public way.

The LORD delivered up: The Lord gave. This speaks of the Lord’s Sovereignty - God is able to do all things.

He said before the eyes of Israel: All Israel was watching. Usually, we would think of speaking as affecting the ears and not the eyes. Eyes, however, are related to revelation. God was giving revelation to all the people of Israel through the words spoken by Joshua.

Sun, stand still ... And Moon (stand still): Both the sun and the moon were spoken to and commanded to remain still over these two specific places.

Verse 13: *“So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had vengeance upon their enemies. Is this act not written in the Book of Uprightness? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.”*

The sun stood still, And the moon stopped: A scientist would say that if the sun and moon just stopped in their place it would cause a cosmic disaster in this world (in the natural). This verse teaches us that this world is not dependent upon the natural but upon God. God is able to do all things, and He is the maintainer of all things. This should have been a revelation to Israel, and a sign to the nations that God was so powerful that He could supernaturally suspend the order of things way beyond man’s reach. God moves supernaturally for His people so that we can be vindicated and have victory. We need to remember this when we are facing difficult times – times of hardship and spiritual conflict.

Vengeance: Vengeance belongs to God (Romans 12:19). When we are in His will, God moves in order for us to be vindicated.

People: The word used here is the word which is usually used to refer to the nations (non-Jews who do not have a covenantal relationship with God). The Abrahamic covenant teaches us that Israel is going to become a great ‘nation’ (Genesis 12:2). Prophetically when the people of Israel are brought into obedience and are a faithful (rather than a faithless) people, God calls them by this name – a reminder that He is faithful to fulfil His covenant promises (a promise that included making them a great nation).

The Book of Uprightness: ‘Jasher’ is not the name of a person. It is a word that speaks of something which is straight or upright. Many of the Rabbinical scholars point out that this is called ‘the upright book’ or the book of that which is straight. The children of Israel could have refused to get involved and fight for the Gibeonites. They could have reasoned that God was giving them a way out of the covenant, that they never should have made, by raising up the five-nation coalition against Gibeon. If these nations wiped out Gibeon, then Israel would be released from her covenant. Israel did not act in this way though.

They acted righteously (straight and upright) when they honoured their word and helped the Gibeonites to fight against these nations.

Verse 14: *“And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.”*

There has been no day like that, before it or after it: This was a very unique event.
The LORD heeded the voice of a man: Joshua had asked for the sun and moon to stand still. God had paid attention to this and did what Joshua asked.
The LORD fought for Israel: What we find here is restoration. The children of Israel did the wrong thing when they made an agreement with Gibeon. However, they had given their word, and they stayed true to their covenantal obligation. God responded to His people because they did the right thing in these circumstances.

Verse 15: *“Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.”*

Gilgal: Gilgal is uniquely tied to circumcision – the death of the flesh, and the reproach of Israel being rolled away. When we are obedient to God (i.e. walking in redemption – their first Passover in the land of Canaan was celebrated at Gilgal) it is going to weaken our flesh and bring about its destruction. The weakening of our flesh allows us to become stronger spiritually – alive and functioning in the Spirit (Romans 8:4). Obedience causes us to be committed to the will/purposes of God. When we are committed to God’s will, we inherit the promises of God.

Chapter 10

Part 2: Joshua 10:16-27

When we (through the leading of the Holy Spirit) decide to be faithful to God, we not only embrace the truth of Scripture, but we demonstrate that belief by obedience. When we do this, the enemy rises up against us and we are going to experience conflict. Punishment/judgment against our enemies must be executed. Although vengeance belongs to the Lord, we have been commanded to execute justice in this world (Jeremiah 22:3).

Verse 16: *“But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah.”*

Verse 17: *“And it was told Joshua, saying, “The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah.”*

It was told Joshua...The five kings have been found hidden: It had been revealed to Joshua where these kings were hiding. Joshua was now faced with a choice and needed to decide what had to be done with these kings. The people of Israel had been commanded to destroy the people in the land – this included the kings. To have compassion on these kings would have been a misplaced grace. It would have compromised and gone against the command of the Lord. When we fail to execute justice, it gives the enemy another opportunity (then or at a later stage) to once again attempt to thwart the purposes of God.

Verse 18: *“So Joshua said, “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them.”*

Note: Joshua closed these kings in and posted a group of soldiers at the entrance of the cave to guard them and make sure they did not escape.

Verse 19: *“And do not stay there yourselves, but pursue your enemies, and strike them at the rear. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand.”*

Do not stay there yourselves: The children of Israel’s battle was not with the five kings. Joshua encouraged them to pursue after the people who were ruled over by these five kings.

Pursue your enemies: The Scripture does command us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44). However, Ecclesiastes 3:8 tells us that although there is a time for love there is also a time for war. Through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and through His prompting in our lives, we need to have discernment to know whether to be acting in love or in war in the situations (seasons of our lives) we find ourselves in. There is a time for mercy but there is also a time for punishment/judgment. We need to have discernment to know which one is required and when.

Strike them at the rear: Joshua commanded the soldiers to attack the stragglers first. Those in the rear were weaker and slower than their brethren. This was a time for judgment on these people. This was not a season for compassion or mercy. To be compassionate in this case would have been to go against the Word of the Lord. The children of Israel would have been misguided if they had offered a compromising hand to their enemy.

The LORD your God has delivered them into your hand: It was God’s will for these people to be judged. This testifies that those who attempt to thwart the will of God suffer judgment. There is a very serious consequence to rebellion and disobedience.

Verse 20: *“And it came about, when Joshua and the children of Israel had finished striking them, a very great strike, until their end, that those who escaped entered fortified cities.”*

A very great strike: The Kingdom of God on earth is only going to be established after a very great judgment – the pouring out of the wrath of God on this world and on its inhabitants (trumpet and bowl judgments – Revelation 8&9, Revelation 16). This passage gives us an understanding of the pattern/paradigm of what God is going to do in the last days.

Until their end: All who could be killed in that moment were killed.

Those who escaped: There were some survivors. These ones got away, but it was not because Israel allowed them to escape.

Verse 21: *“And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace. No one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.”*

No one moved his tongue: This is an idiom. Sometimes it is applied to a dog barking. It simply means that there was no opposition from their enemies. Their enemy had been utterly defeated.

Verse 22: *“Then Joshua said, “Open up the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave.”*

Bring out those five kings: Although these kings had had a temporary reprieve they had not been allowed to escape and Joshua knew that they also needed to face judgment. It is a requirement (a spiritual law) that those who rebel against God will be judged. As believers, who have repented of our sins and who have been washed clean through the blood of Yeshua, we are not going to be judged eternally for our sin. However, we may need to face the consequences of our sin while we are still alive.

Verse 23: *“And they did so. They brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.”*

They brought out those five kings to him: It does not help to flee from judgment. God’s judgment will find out everyone (Revelation 6:15-17). The only way to escape eternal judgment is through the gospel – through the blood of Yeshua we enter into a covenantal relationship with God.

Cave: This word can also be used for a ‘tomb’. These kings thought they were going into a safe place, but they were actually entering into a tomb.

Jerusalem...Hebron...Jarmuth...Lachish...Eglon: 3500 years ago, these were very significant cities. The kings formed a coalition. However (like the number 5 suggests, Biblically) this coalition was incomplete or lacking. There will be a lacking or an incompleteness in anyone who tries to thwart the purposes of God.

Verse 24: *“And it came about, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, “Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.” And they drew near and put their feet on their necks.”*

All the men: This was to be done in front of all the men of Israel as a testimony.

Captains: The officers or important military leaders

Put your feet on the necks of these kings: This is a way of showing total victory (Ephesians 1:22). It shows that the enemy has been absolutely defeated and can no longer stand in opposition.

Verse 25: *“Then Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, **for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.**”*

Dismayed: This is a word related to confusion. The Biblical principle here is this: When we fear (give priority) to what we ought not to (ie we do not fear/give priority to God), we will become confused. Confusion hinders the work of the Holy Spirit’s leadership in our lives, and it causes us to make wrong decisions.

Be strong and of good courage: When we are committed to the will of God, we will not have confusion in our lives. Not being confused (i.e. having spiritual clarity) leads to us becoming strong and courageous.

Courage: The desire and commitment to carry out the task that God has prepared in advance for us to do.

Verse 26: *“And Joshua struck them afterward and killed them and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening.”*

Hanged them on five trees: The one who hangs on a tree is cursed (Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Galatians 3:13). Hanging on a tree is also a message of shame. Those who are not committed to the priorities of God receive judgment. In this case, these kings died a shameful death (Romans 6:23). A curse came upon these five kings because they attempted to thwart the will of God.

Verse 27: *“And it came about at the time of the setting of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave’s mouth, which remain until this very day.”*

Cast them into the cave where they had been hidden: What they had thought would be a safe place, a place of escape, turned out to be their tomb.

Which remain until this very day: This testimony was written down after the fact. These rocks were still blocking the entrance to this cave when the book of Joshua was written.

Chapter 10

Part 3: Joshua 10:28-43

Judgment is necessary. Judgment puts things into Godly order – removing that which is evil and contrary to the things of God.

Verse 28: *“And Makkedah Joshua took on that day, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them—all the people who were in it. He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.”*

That day: This Hebrew expression is a term for Judgment Day – often a reference to the final Day of Judgment. It is a term that has Kingdom implications. From this event, that happened 3500 years ago, we learn principles that will be relevant for the last days when Yeshua comes to establish His Kingdom on earth (the millennial reign of Messiah).

Utterly: Completely. Joshua spared nothing whatsoever of this city. This is how it is going to be at the end when the wrath of God is poured out – only a remnant (who presumably will have a change of heart when they see God’s wrath being poured out) are going to survive.

He let none remain: There were no survivors.

As he had done to the king of Jericho: Victory of Jericho was foundational. It set a precedent.

Verse 29: *“Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah; and they fought against Libnah.”*

Libnah: This was another city in the land of Canaan. It too was taken and destroyed by the children of Israel.

Verse 30: *“And the LORD also delivered it and its king into the hand of Israel; he struck it and all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword. He let none remain in it but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.”*

He let none remain in it but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho: The fact that there were no survivors is repeated and emphasised, as is the fact that the kings shared the same fate as the king of Jericho.

Note: Makkedah and Libnah both fell on the same day.

Verse 31: *“Then Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish; and they encamped against it and fought against it.”*

Encamped: The Israelites set up camp and spent the night near to this town of Lachish.

Verse 32: *“And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, who took it on the second day, and struck it and all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libnah.”*

The LORD delivered: Joshua and the Israelites did not bring about their own victory. It was the Lord who fought for them and delivered them. Joshua and the Israelites were simply obedient servants in this war.

Struck it and all the people ... according to all that he had done to Libnah: There is a consistency here. The people who were opposed to the things of God all suffered the same consequences – no matter which town or city they came from. God is not a respecter of persons. If we do not have a covenantal relationship with God, through Messiah Yeshua, then we can expect total defeat and annihilation.

Verse 33: *“Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people, until he left him none remaining.”*

Horam: This king was also in opposition to what God was doing.

None remaining: There were no survivors.

Verse 34: *“From Lachish Joshua passed to Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it and fought against it.”*

Verse 35: *“They took it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword; all the people who were in it he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.”*

That day: Again, a reference to Judgment Day.

Note: It did not matter who the enemy was or where they were located. God gave His people complete and thorough victory. No one is able to stand against the purposes of God. For the Israelites, God was fulfilling His promises by means of judgment. God’s judgment brings about righteousness – that which glorifies God.

Struck it with the edge of the sword: In the Bible, putting someone to the sword is not just talking about killing them. It is also speaking about the consequence of rebelliousness.

Verse 36: *“So Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, to Hebron; and they fought against it.”*

Verse 37: *“And they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword—its king, all its cities, and all the people who were in it; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon, but utterly destroyed it and all the people who were in it.”*

He left none remaining: We should beware of misunderstanding God’s grace. God is love. He is gracious. He is merciful. However, in order to receive His love, grace and mercy we HAVE to be in a covenantal relationship with Him. Those who are not in a covenantal relationship with Him are in rebellion. They are either rebelling against the truth of God, or they are rebelling against seeking Him. Those who sincerely seek God will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13-14, Romans 1:20). Those who reject a covenantal relationship with God are going to suffer His wrath – none who are rebellious will survive, but all will be cast out and will not enter into the Kingdom of God (John 6:37, Revelation 22:14-15).

Verse 38: *“Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and they fought against it.”*

Verse 39: *“And he took it and its king and all its cities; they struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed all the people who were in it. He left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had done also to Libnah and its king.”*

King: The king was the leader. He was the one who influenced and led the people to rebel. We need to be careful of who we follow, avoiding those who have an ungodly influence in the lives of people (false teachers, etc). We can suffer for making poor spiritual decisions in regard to our spiritual leaders.

He left none remaining: The judgment is consistent from city to city, town to town, and place to place. Everyone received the same treatment – no matter where they lived. They all had knowledge of God, but they all rejected Him.

Verse 40: *“So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded.”*

Joshua conquered all the land: Joshua still had opposition, but for the most part Israel was in control of the land.

The South: The Negev – i.e the desert area.

The lowland: The coastal areas

As the LORD God of Israel had commanded: Everything that Joshua did, he did out of obedience to the Lord. Judgment is a glorious thing for the people of God. It is the way that God vindicates His people. Our victory comes through judgment and destruction of the enemy. In Revelation 18:20 the heavens are commanded to rejoice at God’s righteous judgment.

Verse 41: *“And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon.”*

Kadesh Barnea: After their exodus in the wilderness this was their entry point into the land of Canaan.

As far as Gibeon: Close to Gibeon.

Note: The places mentioned here are primarily found in the southern portion of Israel. Controlling this southern area gave the Israelites the upper hand over all the other inhabitants of the land of Canaan.

Verse 42: *“All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.”*

All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time: This was a phenomenal and rapid victory.

At one time: An appointed time. When Yeshua comes to bring about a Kingdom change (from the kingdom of this world to the Kingdom of our God) it is going to come through judgment, and it is going to come about very quickly.

The LORD God of Israel fought for Israel: Exodus 15:3

Verse 43: *“Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.”*

Note: See Joshua 10:15. Gilgal is a place that should remind us of redemption (the death of the flesh so that we can live and walk in the Spirit). This should also remind us that there is no inheritance without redemption.

Chapter 11

Joshua was a man of faith. Biblical faith leads to obedience. Faith gives us access to grace. Grace, together with the indwelling Holy Spirit, moves us to agree with God, to walk with Him and to serve Him (i.e. obey Him). God is pleased with us when we are obedient to Him. This chapter reveals to us the Presence, faithfulness and blessing of God in the midst of war. When we rely upon/trust God, we can expect that He will benefit His people – even in the midst of the attack of the enemy. God can give His people victory in times of hardship, war, obstacles or conflict.

Verse 1: *“And it came about, when Jabin king of Hazor was hearing these things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph,”*

Hearing: Written in the present tense. This is a tense that is rarely used and so it emphasises a passage.

These things: Referring to the victories that the children of Israel were having over the kings and the cities of Canaan.

He sent: Jabin responded to what he heard – not in faith, but in rebellion. All of us respond to God in either faith or rebelliousness. There is no position in between.

Verse 2: *“and to the kings who were from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights of Dor on the west,”*

Lowland: The coastal plains.

Verse 3: *“to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpah.”*

Hermon: Referring to the Golan Heights area.

Mizpah: This word comes from the root word of being able to see or to observe something. This is talking about an elevated area – a land of observation.

Note: The places mentioned here encompass a vast area of the land of Canaan. This is no longer talking about a few people groups rising up against Israel. This is speaking about a large coalition of enemies coming together, in unity, to destroy the children of Israel.

Verse 4: *“So they went out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots.”*

Note: See Zechariah 12:3, Zechariah 14:2-5

Sand that is on the seashore: A very vast number of people came (and will come) against Israel.

(Very many) horses: The word used here for ‘many’ is often used to not only speak of a very great number, but it speaks of something that is so large that it almost seems as if it has a supernatural aspect to it. A stunningly large enemy assembled against one people group - the children of Israel.

Verse 5: *“And when all these kings had met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.”*

Met together: They took counsel together (Psalm 2:1-5)

Note: Joshua is following the instructions of the Lord, yet the enemy is just getting larger and larger and larger. Now he has a very great obstacle to overcome. The principle to overcoming remains the same, no matter how big the obstacle is: OBEY God!

Verse 6: *“But the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not fear from before them, for tomorrow about this time I am giving all of them as corpses before Israel. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.”*

Do not fear from before them: This passage instructed Israel not to be fearful of their enemies. This was applicable then and will also be applicable in the last days when every nation will rise up against Jerusalem. The same unchanging God gave victory to His people then and He will again give them victory in the future.

I am giving: Present tense verb. It is used for emphasis.

Corpses: In modern Hebrew the word used here is a word for outer space. For the most part there is nothing/emptiness in outer space. This is what is being alluded to here – these bodies are going to be empty, devoid of souls.

Before Israel: God refers to 'Israel' and not to 'the children of Israel'. This teaches us that the term 'Israel' is a victorious term. Only with God can Israel be prosperous and successful.

Verse 7: *"So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them."*

Came against them suddenly ... and they attacked them: Most Scholars see this as informing the reader that the enemy never thought that the children of Israel would attack such a vast army made up of multiple nations. Israel, however, took them by surprise and attacked them first. This attack shows faith and demonstrates trust. It was an act of obedience, based upon the instructions of the Lord.

Verse 8: *"And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, to the Brook Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining."*

Greater Sidon: This is in Lebanon. This shows how great this victory was – it extended beyond the borders of Canaan.

They left none of them remaining: This victory was complete. When we do things God's way we will have victory.

Verse 9: *"So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire."*

Note: Joshua was totally obedient to the instructions of the Lord.

Verse 10: *"Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms."*

Hazor: This was a very significant strong and fortified city. The king of Hazor was the leader of all of the land of Canaan.

Verse 11: *"And they struck all the people who were in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. There was none left breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire."*

They: The children of Israel.

Note: This was a leading city and a very wealthy city. All of its wealth and people were utterly destroyed. Hazor suffered total loss.

Verse 12: *"So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, just as the Lord commanded Moses His servant."*

Just as the Lord commanded Moses His servant: The instructions that God gave Moses were faithfully passed onto and taught to Joshua. Moses was faithful to disciple and to train up Joshua (the next generation). This training produced great dividends.

Verse 13: *“But as for the cities that stood on their mounds, Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, which Joshua burned.”*

The cities that stood on their mounds: In Israel today there is a city called ‘Tel Aviv’. A ‘tel’ is a mound. (Tel Aviv literally means ‘the mound of Spring’). Joshua razed these cities to the ground (made them a heap/mound of rubble) but he did not burn them. The only one of these rubble heaps that Joshua burnt was Hazor.

Verse 14: *“And all the spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing.”*

Spoil: Wealth

They left none breathing: The Israelites took the wealth and the livestock from the cities, but they killed every single person in these cities.

Verse 15: *“As the LORD had commanded Moses His servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. There was not a word that was removed from all which the LORD had commanded Moses.”*

There was not a word that was removed: Moses was totally faithful in sharing God’s instructions with Joshua – the next generation. Prophetically ‘the next generation’ is thought of as the Kingdom generation. This emphasis on Moses instructing Joshua places this passage within a Kingdom context. Joshua learnt to submit to the authority of Moses, just as Moses submitted to the authority of God.

Verse 16: *“Thus Joshua took all of this land: the mountain country, all the South, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan plain—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands,”*

Joshua took all of this land: This was a total victory.

Verse 17: *“from Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and struck them down and killed them.”*

Mount Halak: Literally ‘the smooth mountain’.

Seir: The mountain of Esau. The Edomites (and their mountains) play a major role prophetically in the last days (Obadiah, Isaiah 63:1-6).

Mount Hermon: In the Golan Heights

Captured all their kings: God gave the land to the children of Israel. So too will God give great victory over all the enemies of the world who come against Jerusalem in the last days. This victory in the last days will usher in a Kingdom experience – the millennial reign of Messiah.

Verse 18: *“Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.”*

Note: Joshua put these kings to death one after the other. Israel experienced victory after victory. The enemy experienced defeat after defeat.

Verse 19: *“There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle.”*

Hivites: Also called ‘the inhabitants of Gibeon’ or the ‘Gibeonites’ (2 Samuel 21:1-6).

All the others they took in battle: War opened up the way for the Israelites to receive/inherit the blessings of God. This is going to hold true for the last days as well. When the enemy makes war against Israel (at the end) they are going to go forth not in fear but out of obedience - trusting in God that the victory is going to be theirs.

Verse 20: *“For it was of the LORD to strengthen their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, and that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.”*

It was of the LORD to strengthen their hearts: We should not take this phrase out of context. God does not harden the hearts of people in a vacuum. These people knew what the Lord had done (at the Red Sea, the utter defeat of the two kings -Sihon and Og, the miraculous crossing of the Jordan, etc). They saw those around them being supernaturally defeated, and yet they refused to make peace with the Israelites (like the Gibeonites had done) and continued to rebel against the purposes of God. This is the context we should read into these words. When we are given truth, but we reject it, our hearts are strengthened/hardened in the wrong way.

They might receive no mercy: They did not receive mercy because they did not desire to submit to the Lord but chose rebellion instead.

He might destroy them: God (who is omniscient) knew that these people were going to rebel. He therefore used their rebellion for His purposes – to utterly destroy them and give absolute victory to Israel.

Verse 21: *“And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities.”*

Anakim: Giants

Joshua utterly destroyed them: There is a supernatural aspect to this victory.

Verse 22: *“None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.”*

Gath: This is the city where Goliath came from.

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

Inheritance: This is a Kingdom word.

According to their divisions by their tribes: Godly order was established in the land. 11 of the tribes were given land. The tribe of Levi was not given land (Joshua 13:14, 33)

The land rested from war: Quietness or stillness comes through obedience to the Word of the Lord.

Chapter 12

To experience victory, we need to apply the truth of God to our lives. As we walk in His revelation, we find His will for our lives. As we do His will, we receive His provision – everything we need in order to serve Him. We only receive from God when we are in a right relationship with Him – through Messiah Yeshua. When we have been born again (are a new creation) we can expect (eternal) victory.

In this chapter, Joshua breaks up the enemies of Israel into two groups - those who were on the east of the Jordan River (Sihon and Og), and those who were on the west (31 kings). All 33 of these kings were defeated by the children of Israel, because Israel was in submission to the Lord (33 is an important number with Kingdom implications – David ruled for 33 years in Jerusalem, Yeshua completed His ministry when He was 33 years old). The principles we learn through the victories of Joshua, in conquering the land of Canaan, are the same principles we can apply to the Kingdom victory that is going to take place in the last days.

Verse 1: *“These are the kings of the land whom the children of Israel struck, and whose land they inherited on the other side of the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern desert plain:”*

The land: The Promised land.

The rising of the sun: On the east side of the Jordan.

Note: The first part of this chapter is not dealing with the land of Canaan but is dealing with the land known as ‘Jordan’ today.

The River Arnon: This is a river that is dry in the summer and only flows in the winter.

Mount Hermon: The source of the Jordan River.

Verse 2: *“One king was Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon and ruled half of Gilead, from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, from the middle of that river, even as far as the River Jabbok, which is the border of the Ammonites,”*

Sihon: Sihon was a very powerful king.

From the middle of that river: This king controlled the river – the flow of water, who travelled on the river, etc

Verse 3: *“and the eastern Jordan plain from the Sea of Chinneroth as far as the Sea of the Arabah, the road to Beth Jeshimoth, and southward below the slopes of Pisgah.”*

The Sea of Chinneroth: The Sea of Galilee

The Sea of the Arabah: The Salt Sea (i.e. The Dead Sea)

Note: All of this land had been ruled by Sihon, but the children of Israel had defeated Sihon and had taken all of this land.

Verse 4: *“Og king of Bashan and his territory, who was of the remnant of the Rephaim, who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei,”*

Rephaim: This is not the word for ‘giant’, although some commentators have associated this people group with being giants. It is, however, the name of a people group that had existed in the land of Canaan. Not many from this group were still alive. Og was part of their remnant.

Ashtaroth ... Edrei: Where Og had his headquarters.

Verse 5: *“and reigned over Mount Hermon, over Salcah, over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.”*

Verse 6: *“These Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel had conquered; and Moses the servant of the LORD had given it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.”*

Note: Under Moses's leadership, the children of Israel took all the land on the Eastern side of Canaan (Og and Sihon's territories). Many of these people, because their lands were conquered, moved across the Jordan River onto the western side of Canaan. This made the Canaanites stronger and larger in number.

Conquered: Written in the plural.

It: The land that Sihon and Og had ruled over.

Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh: These 2.5 tribes lived on the Eastern side of the River Jordan (However these 2.5 tribes had to assist their brethren in conquering the western side of Canaan before they could settle in the land that the Lord had given to them as their inheritance).

Note: In the Hebrew Bible there is a space between verse 6 and verse 7. This teaches us that we are dealing with a related but separate issue. Joshua 12:1-6 dealt with the conquering of the enemy on the Eastern side of the Jordan River - under the leadership of Moses. From Joshua 12:7 onwards there is a transition. Moses (who was buried in the mountain on the eastern side of the Jordan River) is no longer with the people and Joshua is their new leader.

Verse 7: *“And these are the kings of the land which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their divisions,”*

Conquered: Written in the singular. In Joshua 12:6 this word was written in the plural – referring to Moses together with the children of Israel. In this verse, in a very unique way, it speaks of Joshua taking the credit for striking the enemy. Joshua is a paradigm for Messiah. In the last days it is Messiah alone who will defeat the enemy who stands in opposition to the will of God (Isaiah 59:16-19).

According to their divisions: According to their tribes.

Verse 8: *“in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the Jordan plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the South—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites:”*

The lowlands: The coastal plain

The Jordan plain: A desert area

The Hittites, the Amorites...: 6 people groups are mentioned here. 6 is the number of grace. God's victory comes through grace. We find the purposes of God through the grace of God.

Verse 9: *“the king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one;”*

One: After every king the number ‘one’ is mentioned. This is a number that speaks about unity. Conquering the enemy (in obedience to God), one at a time, brings us into unity with God. Conquering them leads us into the purpose and will of God. It allows us to inherit the promises of God.

Verse 10: *“the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one;”*

Verse 11: *“The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one;”*

Verse 12: *“The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one;”*

Verse 13: *“The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one;”*

Verse 14: *“the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one;”*

Verse 15: *“The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one;”*

Verse 16: *“the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one;”*

Verse 17: *“the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hepher, one;”*

Verse 18: *“the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one;”*

Lasharon: This could also be translated “of Sharon” – speaking of the central section of the Israeli coastal plain, or it could be speaking of a different area (an area unrelated to the Sharon).

Verse 19: *“the king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one;”*

Verse 20: *“the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one;”*

Verse 21: *“the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one;”*

Verse 22: *“the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one;”*

Carmel: The Carmel is a coastal, mountainous region in Northern Israel.

Verse 23: *“the king of Dor in the heights of Dor, one; the king of the people of Gilgal, one;”*

Verse 24: *“the king of Tirzah, one—all the kings, thirty-one.”*

All the kings: Referring to all the kings on the west of the Jordan. Israel conquered the 2 kings on the east side of the Jordan river and 31 kings on the western side – 33 kings in all. The number ‘33’ reminds us of the number of years of Messiah’s life (Yeshua began His ministry when He was about 30 years old – Luke 3:23. John mentions 3 Passovers that Yeshua took part in during His ministry, therefore causing scholars to conclude that Yeshua’s ministry lasted for approximately 3 years – John 2:13, John 6:4 and John 11:55. 30+3=33 years in total). It is only through the life, death and resurrection (triumph over death) of Messiah that we have Kingdom victory. It is only through a Kingdom victory that we can take hold of the covenantal promises of God.

Note: In Joshua there is an emphasis on the people going back to the land of Israel – the land that God had promised to give to the Jewish people (the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). The conquering of this land was necessary for the purposes of God to come about (some of these purposes included the building of the temple, and for Messiah to enter into this world to do His work on the cross). Similarly, we see today, undeniably, that God is bringing the people of Jewish heritage back to the land of Israel (especially since 1948, when the land of Israel was reestablished as a nation for the Jewish people). This is a fulfillment of God’s prophetic word. The physical land of Israel plays a key role in end time prophecy and the return of Messiah for His second coming (Zechariah 14:3-4).

Chapter 13

Our God is a God of order. When we submit to His instructions He begins to bring His order into our lives. We need His order in our lives if we want His Presence, blessings and greater revelation – revelation to know where we can position ourselves so that we can serve Him victoriously. Do we want to be people who desire to do God’s will? Many people turn to Messiah because they do not want to suffer eternal damnation and separation from God, but many are not really committed to His ways and purposes. Choosing God only as a means for eternal salvation is an exploitation of the grace of God. We need to be people who are submitted to the purposes of God and who are obedient to His instructions. Only then will we experience true victory, joy and contentment.

Note: Up to this point in Joshua we have seen the children of Israel victoriously conquering their enemies. In this chapter God begins to divide up the land – blessing the children with their inheritance. This chapter deals with the land given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh – i.e. the land east of the Jordan River.

Verse 1: *“Now Joshua was old, come into many days. And the LORD said to him: “You are old, and have come into days, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.”*

Note: Years have passed, and the land is not yet fully conquered. Nevertheless, it is going to be distributed by God to the tribes.

Days: Although many years have passed, the word that appears here is not the Hebrew word for years but is the word for days. ‘Days’ is written in the plural, which means that they were abundant, many days had passed.

You are old and have come into days: God is recognising the reality of Joshua’s situation – old age is upon him. God wanted to give Joshua an assignment to bring about God’s order among the people. Joshua had led the people well in battle. They had conquered the land. However, there is a difference between conquering the land and inhabiting the land. Battles needed to be won, but then the land needed to be settled, taken possession of and lived in. The land needed to be maintained (looked after).

Much land yet to be possessed: Much of the land had not been inhabited. God wanted this to change.

Verse 2: *“This is the land that yet remains: all the territory of the Philistines and all that of the Geshurites,”*

Note: It is not known where many of the places mentioned here are located today.

Historically, though, these were actual (physical) locations in the land of Canaan (Israel).

The Philistines: They were a people group who wanted to thwart the will of God. They were enemies of God’s kingdom (the kingdom eventually ruled by Saul, David, Solomon, etc), as they wanted to be the ones to rule over the land.

Geshurites: These were individuals who were also problematic for the children of Israel.

They were considered to be part of the Canaanite people and were bent against the will of God.

Verse 3: *“from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); the five tyrants of the Philistines – the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites; “*

The Avites: These were a people group who were not part of the Philistines or the Geshurites (the Canaanites), but they were also a problem people group for the Israelites. They lived in the general area where all these mentioned people groups lived.

Verse 4: *“from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians as far as Aphek, to the border of the Amorites;”*

Note: The land mentioned here is a very large portion of land. Despite the great victory that Israel had had (eliminating 33 kings), this large portion of land remained unconquered.

Verse 5: *“the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; “*

Note: The land mentioned in this verse is to the north of the Promised Land.

The sunrise: Toward the east. This land is close to the Mediterranean coast.

Mount Hermon: The chief mountain in the Golon Heights. Some of the places mentioned in these verses are known today. These known places give us a general idea of which areas these verses are alluding to. God’s desire and plan was that the children of Israel would inhabit all of these places mentioned here.

Verse 6: *“all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as the Brook Misrephoth, and all the Sidonians – them will I drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you.”*

Them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: God makes this personal. He was going to deal with the Sidonians Himself as a way of blessing Israel and showing His commitment to His covenantal obligations.

Only divide it by lot: God was going to drive out Israel’s enemies – that was His work. The work of Joshua and the Israelites was to make sure that the land was divided up correctly and then to ensure that the tribes went into the land and began to live in it (take possession of it).

Verse 7: *“Now, therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh.”*

The nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh: The tribe of Levi did not receive land for their inheritance. However, the tribe of Joseph received a double portion – a portion for Manasseh as well as a portion for the tribe of Ephraim.

Note: The land on the East of the Jordan was divided between Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh. The land on the western side of the Jordan was divided between the tribes of Judah, Ephraim, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Benjamin and the rest of the tribe of Manasseh (9.5 tribes).

The rabbis teach that the 12 tribes + the tribe of Levi = 13 tribes. '13' is a number that reminds us of the unity between God and Israel (12+1).

Verse 8: *"With the other half tribe the Reubenites and Gadites received their inheritance, which Moses had given them, beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the Lord had given them."*

The other half tribe: Half of the tribe of Manasseh

Verse 9: *"from Aroer which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and the town that is in the midst of the river and all the plain of Medeba as far as Dibon;"*

Note: This is the boundary of the land that these two and a half tribes were to inherit.

Verse 10: *"all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon;"*

Sihon: Sihon and Og are repeatedly emphasised in the text. They were mighty and powerful kings who had a connection to the giants who lived in the land in those days. They were seen as a powerful enemy. The victory that the Israelites had over these two kings is frequently mentioned in the Scripture because of how great this victory was.

The children of Ammon: The Ammonites

Verse 11: *"Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far as Salcah;"*

Note: All of this was being given for an inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River.

Verse 12: *"all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who ruled in Ashtaroth and Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for Moses had defeated and cast out these."*

Verse 13: *"Nevertheless the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day."*

The Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day: The children of Israel did not drive out these two people groups. Because of this, they did not inherit or possess the land that these two people groups lived on.

Verse 14: *"Only to the tribe of Levi he had given no inheritance; the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as He said to them."*

The sacrifices ... made by fire are their inheritance: The inheritance of the Levites was to serve in the temple and to worship God in a very unique way.

As He said to them: This was not new revelation. The people of Israel knew that the Levites would not inherit land when they went into the Promised Land.

Verse 15: *“And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben an inheritance according to their families.”*

Given ... an inheritance according to their families: Not only one man was given the land. The land was divided up among each family in the tribe.

Verse 16: *“Their territory was from Aroer, which is on the bank of the River Arnon, and the city that is in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba;”*

Verse 17: *“Heshbon and all its cities that are in the plain: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon,”*

Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon: These are the names of the cities that the tribe of Reuben were to inhabit.

Verse 18: *“Jahaza, Kedemoth, Mephaath,”*

Note: The names of some cities in the territory of Reuben.

Verse 19: *“Kirjathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the mountain of the valley,”*

The mountain of the valley: There was a valley and a mountainous area around this location.

Verse 20: *“Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth—”*

Verse 21: *“all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses had struck (down) with the princes of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, who were princes of Sihon dwelling in the country.”*

Verse 22: *“The children of Israel also killed with the sword Balaam the son of Beor, the soothsayer, among those who were killed by them.”*

Balaam the son of Beor: A faithless, false prophet. Even though he was called to be a prophet, he was a sorcerer (Numbers 22-25).

Among those who were killed by them: Balaam was killed together with all of the people who lived in this area.

Verse 23: *“And the border of the children of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This was the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their courtyards.”*

Courtyards: This is not the word for ‘villages’. It is a word that refers to places of (governmental) administration.

Verse 24: *“Moses also had given an inheritance to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families.”*

Verse 25: *“It came about to them the border of all Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which is before Rabbah,”*

As far as Aroer: The Gadites border fell right next to the Reubenites border (Joshua 13:16).

Verse 26: *“and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir,”*

Ramath Mizpah: This is a high area of land.

Verse 27: *“and in the valley the house of Haram, the house of Nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as its border, as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth, on the other side of the Jordan eastward.”*

Beth: This means ‘the house of’.

The Sea of Chinnereth: The Sea of Galilee. The Jordan River flows into the Sea of Galilee in the north, and it also exits the Sea of Galilee as it flows south.

Verse 28: *“This is the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and their courtyards.”*

Courtyards: Places of administration. This is a word that sometimes has to do with judgment. It's where the rulers were located.

Verse 29: *“Moses also had given an inheritance to half the tribe of Manasseh; it was for half the tribe of the children of Manasseh according to their families:”*

Verse 30: *“Their border was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, sixty cities;”*

All Bashan... sixty cities: This was a large and significant area. Even though it was only half of the tribe of Manasseh, this half tribe received a significantly large portion of land.

Verse 31: *“half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, were for the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir according to their families.”*

Machir: A prominent family member within the tribe of Manasseh.

Verse 32: *“These are the areas which Moses had distributed as an inheritance in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward.”*

The plains of Moab: Desert plains.

Most of the land given to these 2.5 tribes (a large strip of land from the north to the south side of the country, on the east side of the Jordan River) is not possessed by Israel today. Currently, this land belongs to the country of Jordan. Israel today does not reflect the will of God. It is not always going to be this way. Prophetically we know that God is going to bring about a change and is going to bring this land back into His order and plan – as an inheritance for the children of Israel. The world is calling for the land of Israel to become smaller, but on God’s agenda the land is going to increase.

Verse 33: *“But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as He had said to them.”*

Note: This is very similar to the verse found in Joshua 13:14

Chapter 14

When the children of Israel received their allotment of land in the land of Canaan, it was a testimony to the faithfulness of God to keep His promises.

Caleb and Joshua were the only two men who were faithful in the 40 years of desert wandering, and now they were at the forefront of the inheritance and distribution of the land of Canaan.

Verse 1: *“These are the areas which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them.”*

The areas: These were the areas, within the land of Canaan, that the children of Israel would inherit.

The heads: The leaders

Verse 2: *“Their inheritance was by lot, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe.”*

Their inheritance was by lot: The land was not given to them based on human desire. It wasn’t based on what seemed right to the people. The land was distributed according to God’s will, as determined by the lot.

By the hand of: Under the authority of.

Verse 3: *“For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them.”*

The Levites he had given no inheritance: Repetition shows emphasis. In this book it is emphasised that the Levites received no inheritance of the land. Their portion was unique. They were set apart as servants of God, set apart to serve in the tabernacle.

Verse 4: *“For the sons of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for their livestock and their property.”*

Their livestock and their property: The Levites were given grazing rights on the land for their cattle, and they were allowed to purchase what they needed for themselves. Although they did not own land, they were allowed to live in homes, in the cities, and they could acquire possessions.

Verse 5: *“As the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.”*

As the LORD had commanded Moses: It is the authority of God that is always emphasised. Everything we do should be under the authority of God.

Note: In the Hebrew Bible there is a gap between Joshua 14:5 and Joshua 14:6. This lets the reader know that we are going on to a related but separate issue.

Verse 6: *“Then the sons of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: “You have known the word which the LORD spoke to Moses, the man of God, concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea.”*

Gilgal: Gilgal is a place that reminds us of redemption. The children of Israel were circumcised there, and they observed Passover there. This inheritance is being tied to a Passover experience. For believers today: it is only when Messiah is our Passover Lamb that we can receive a Kingdom inheritance (an inheritance of rewards and blessings – related to the promises of God). If Messiah Yeshua is not our Passover Lamb, then we have no hope of a portion/inheritance in the age to come.

You have known: Written in the past tense.

Verse 7: *“I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart.”*

Forty: Biblically the number ‘40’ is a number associated with transition. God intended for the people to transition from the wilderness into the Promised Land when Caleb was 40 years old. It was because of the faithlessness of the other ten spies that this transition did not happen at that time. The Israelites had to wander in the desert for another 40 years before the transition came about.

Sent me ... to spy out the land: Caleb went out to spy with 11 other men. Only Caleb and Joshua brought back a good report.

Verse 8: *“But my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the LORD my God.”*

But: This is a very important conjunction. It is a conjunction of contrast.

My brethren who went up with me: Referring to the ten faithless spies.

Made the heart of the people melt: Instead of fearing God and giving Him priority, these people feared their enemy – giving their enemy priority and therefore the upper hand in their lives.

But I wholly followed the LORD: Caleb and Joshua were different to the other ten spies. These two men did not doubt, but their desire was to take possession of the land and they knew that God could help them do it. They had heard the Word of the Lord, and they trusted in it.

Verse 9: *“So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children’s forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.’”*

That day: Words that allude to Judgment Day. When the majority of the spies returned with a bad report, and they instilled fear within the people, God was displeased with the children of Israel and He judged them with an extended stay in the wilderness.

Forever: Unto the Kingdom.

Verse 10: *“And now, behold, the LORD has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old.”*

As He said: Caleb is emphasising the faithfulness of God. The people had not acted and behaved in a way that showed that they believed that God was faithful and greater than their enemies.

Forty-five years: The Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years after the report of the spies. That would have meant that Caleb was 80 years old when he entered into the Promised land. An additional 5 years had passed whilst in the Promised Land – 5 years of taking possession of the land. Biblically ‘5’ is a number that speaks of something which is incomplete. Taking possession of the land was incomplete at this stage – Joshua 13:1.

Note: Caleb is talking to Joshua about God fulfilling His Word. God had kept Caleb alive, had brought Him into the Land, and now Caleb had an expectation that God would fulfil His promises to him. Caleb also expected Joshua to agree with him and to uphold the Word of the Lord to Caleb, as given through Moses.

Verse 11: *“As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.”*

Strength: Power. Caleb had not weakened over 45 years. Although he was old in years, he had remained young in strength.

Both for going out and for coming in: Caleb was still prepared to fight (to go out into battle) and to victoriously return from fighting. Caleb was a man of faith. He was completely committed to doing the purposes of God. As vigorously committed as he was to the call of God at 40 years of age, was how vigorously committed he was to the call of God at 85 years of age. Caleb had no thoughts of retiring from doing the will of God.

Verse 12: *“Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said.”*

Give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day: It appears as if the Lord had made a promise to Caleb – a promise to reward him for his faithfulness with a specific piece of real estate (a very important and significant mountain which included the city of Hebron – Joshua 14:14. The patriarchs were buried in Hebron – Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah).

That day: Judgment Day is not a good day for the enemies of the Lord, but it is an excellent day for those who are faithful to God. Judgment Day is a day when God’s people are vindicated. On Judgment Day, God’s people receive their reward and inheritance – as an outcome/‘payment’ for their faithfulness to God.

Anakim: Written in the plural, therefore referring to an abundance of large giants.

I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said: Caleb did not doubt that the Lord would drive out the giants from before him. The Lord had said it, Caleb knew He would do it.

Verse 13: *“And Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance.”*

Hebron: The Rabbinical scholars teach that Hebron (the burial place of the patriarchs and matriarches – Genesis 23) was a place of great spiritual significance – it was seen as a spiritual foundation: those who were buried there had lived and died with faith. They had believed in the promises of God – Hebrews 11:8-16. King David began his reign in Hebron – not in Jerusalem. He reigned from Hebron for 7.5 years – 2 Samuel 5:1-5. The word ‘Hebron’ means ‘to join together’. The implication is that when we have faith like the patriarchs, we too will be joined together with, and inherit, the Kingdom promises of God. Hebron is a place that reminds us of the faithfulness of God to keep His promises.

Verse 14: *“Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.”*

He wholly followed the LORD God of Israel: This is the reason why Caleb inherited this place of great power and spiritual significance. Scripture has repeated (therefore emphasised) that Caleb whole heartedly followed the Lord. This is the type of faith that brings about an inheritance, a unity and a joining together between God and His people.

Verse 15: *“And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.”*

Kirjath: This means ‘the city of’.

Arba ... the greatest man: Arba was the name of a man who was great among the giants. This city was named after him. ‘Arba’ is also the number ‘4’ in Hebrew. The number ‘4’, Biblically, is a number that is related to the world. This city, when it was ruled by these giants, is a picture to us of the world. The people who named this city gave too much authority, attention and priority to the world and to the things of this world.

Caleb saw the giants. He saw that the battle was against the things of this world, yet he believed that God would give him this land, and his life reflected this belief.

The land had rest from war: Caleb took possession of Hebron. His faithfulness in serving God, and bringing things into Godly order, led to the land receiving quietness/rest.

Note: Hebron holds a highly significant place in Israel's history – it is a place which is foundational to the purposes of God in the land of Israel. Today it is a capital Palestinian city within what is called the 'West Bank' (it is about 30kms from Jerusalem). Only a handful of Jewish people live in Hebron today. It is highly likely that (like in Caleb's day) the city of Hebron will play a major role in the last days. Once Hebron was taken by Caleb the land of Israel experienced rest. Could this be a paradigm for the last days?

Chapter 15

Part 1: Joshua 15:1-19

Lots were used in Scripture in an attempt to discern and embrace the will of God.

Verse 1: *"So this was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families: The border of Edom at the Wilderness of Zin southward was the extreme southern boundary."*

The border of Edom: Judah's allotment of land bordered the land that was given to the offspring of Esau – the Edomites. The Edomites were a wicked people. It is not by coincidence that the tribe of Judah (a Messianic tribe – i.e. Messiah comes from this tribe) and Edom border one another. Before Messiah establishes His Kingdom on earth, He is going to destroy the mountain of Esau – Mt Seir (Ezekiel 35, Isaiah 63) – in order to bring deliverance to the children of Israel.

Southern: The word used here is a word that can be translated in two different ways – it could either be referring to the southernmost border of Israel ('south'), but it is also the name given to the country of Yemen. In this context it is most likely referring to the 'south' of the land of Israel.

Verse 2: *"And their southern border began at the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward."*

Their: Referring to the tribe of Judah.

The Salt Sea: This is the Biblical name for what we call the 'Dead Sea' today.

Verse 3: *"Then it went out to the southern side of the Ascent of Akrabbim, passed along to Zin, ascended on the south side of Kadesh Barnea, passed along to Hezron, went up to Adar, and went around to Karkaa."*

Akrabbim: A word which means 'scorpions'.

Zin: This is a desert area.

Verse 4: *“From there it passed toward Azmon and went out to the Brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border.”*

Went out to the Brook of Egypt: This is a very significant location. It was a fulfilment of what God had said to Moses (Numbers 34:5).

The border ended at the sea: The Sea was Judah’s western boundary.

Verse 5: *“The east border was the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan. And the border on the northern quarter began at the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan.”*

The mouth of the Jordan: Referring to the Jordan River.

Note: All of the information that the Scripture gives to us (the boundaries, the cities, the locations) is historically factual. This should not surprise us.

Verse 6: *“The border went up to Beth Hoglah and passed north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben.”*

Beth: ‘The house of’.

Arabah: Usually this term means a flat area, like a valley, which is long and goes on extensively. It forms part of a desert.

Verse 7: *“Then the border went up toward Debir from the Valley of Achor, and it turned northward toward Gilgal, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, which is on the south side of the valley. The border continued toward the waters of En Shemesh and ended at En Rogel.”*

Note: In this area there is a dry riverbed which fills up in the rainy season. When it is not the rainy season, people walk through this valley (empty riverbed) from Jericho to Jerusalem.

En: A well.

Verse 8: *“And the border went up by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the Jebusite city (which is Jerusalem). The border went up to the top of the mountain that lies before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the Valley of Rephaim northward.”*

The Valley of the Son of Hinnom: Even today, this is a well-known area. This valley is very close to Jerusalem.

The Jebusite city (which is Jerusalem): It should not surprise us that Jerusalem would fall within the boundaries of the the tribe of Judah.

Westward: Westward is a direction pointer that informs us that this is in the direction of the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 9: *“Then the border went around from the top of the hill to the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and extended to the cities of Mount Ephron. And the border went around to Baalah (which is Kirjath Jearim).”*

The fountain: The spring

Verse 10: *“Then the border turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, passed along to the side of Mount Jearim on the north (which is Chesalon), went down to Beth Shemesh, and passed on to Timnah.”*

Note: Judah inherited a large portion of land.

Verse 11: *“And the border went out to the side of Ekron northward. Then the border went around to Shicron, passed along to Mount Baalah, and extended to Jabneel; and the border ended at the sea.”*

At the sea: This was their western boundary.

Verse 12: *“The west border was the coastline of the Great Sea. This is the boundary of the children of Judah all around according to their families.”*

The Great Sea: The Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 13: *“Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, namely, Kirjath Arba, which is Hebron (Arba was the father of Anak).”*

Hebron: Because of Caleb’s faithfulness to the Lord, he received a personal inheritance, which the city of Hebron was a part of.

Anak: This is the Hebrew word for a giant. Arba was the father of the giants. The giants had resided in Hebron.

Verse 14: *“Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak from there: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak.”*

Verse 15: *“Then he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir was Kirjath Sepher).”*

Verse 16: *“And Caleb said, “He who attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife.”*

Verse 17: *“So Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife.”*

Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb: Othniel was Achsah’s first cousin.

Verse 18: *“Now it was so, when she came to him, that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So she dismounted from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, “What do you wish?”*

She persuaded him ... she dismounted from her donkey: Achsah sought Othniel’s approval for what she wanted to do before she went and did it.

What do you wish: What is your request.

Verse 19: *“She answered, “Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water.” So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.”*

Give me a blessing... springs of water: Water is oftentimes thought of as a blessing in the Scriptures.

He gave her: Caleb gave Achsah.

Upper springs and the lower springs: Caleb generously gave her more than she had asked for.

Chapter 15

Part 2: Joshua 15:20-63

Note 1: This portion of Scripture reveals to us the names of 112 cities which were included in the allotment of land that God gave to the tribe of Judah (The locations of some of these cities are known today, the locations of some are unknown). The distribution of this land (and therefore, by default, these cities) was by lot. The people did not choose the land they would receive as an inheritance, and nor did they choose the cities they would live in. They inhabited the places that God choose for them. They did not make requests and petition God according to their own desires, but they submitted to His will (as revealed through the casting of the lot). These people recognised and received God’s order – They submitted to His way for building up His Kingdom.

Note 2: When God allocated the land to the twelve tribes (excluding the tribe of Levi but including the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh – the tribe of Joseph was broken down into these two tribes) He did so in a particular order. He started with the request of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, which they had made regarding the eastern side of the Jordan River. The tribe of Judah was the first tribe who was given their allotment of land west of the Jordan River. The key city that Judah received as part of their inheritance was the city of Jerusalem. Judah took precedence over the other tribes because Judah is the Messianic tribe - the tribe Messiah comes from.

Note 3: From history, we know that the Southern portion of the land of Israel and the Northern portion of the land of Israel split up after Solomon died. The Southern portion became known as Judah (and, as we shall see, most of the land in this southern portion belonged to Judah) and the northern portion (consisting of most of the tribes) became known as ‘Israel’ and/or ‘Ephraim’.

Verse 20: *“This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:”*

Tribe: The word used here in Hebrew is a word that can mean a tribe, but it is also a word that alludes to leadership (staff, rod, branch, etc). The land was distributed to the leaders of the tribe. They then portioned it out among the families within the tribes. These families then possessed the land, that they were given, and they ruled over it (Genesis 1:26).

Verse 21: *“The cities at the limits of the tribe of the sons of Judah, toward the border of Edom in the South, were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur,”*

The limits: The outermost/border cities of the land which they were given.

The border of Edom: This was on the east side of Israel, in its southern portion.

Verse 22: *Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah,”*

Verse 23: *“Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,”*

Hazor: Hazor is mentioned three times in this chapter. Although we do not know the location of this city today, it seemed to have been a very significant and key city in Judah in Joshua’s day (Joshua 11:10-11).

Verse 24: *“Ziph, Telem, Bealoth,”*

Verse 25: *“Hazor, Hadattah, Kerioth, Hezron (which is Hazor),”*

Verse 26: *“Amam, Shema, Moladah,”*

Verse 27: *“Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet,”*

Verse 28: *“Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Bizjothjah,”*

Beersheba: This is the capital city of the Negev region (a southern, desertous region) in Israel. It is one of the largest cities in Israel today. Although Beersheba is not in the exact location of ancient Beersheba, it falls within the general area of where the original Beersheba used to be.

Verse 29: *“Baalath, Ijim, Ezem,”*

Verse 30: *“Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah,”*

Verse 31: *“Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah,”*

Verse 32: *“Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities are twenty-nine, with their courtyards”*

Note: These cities and villages were found on the southeast portion of the land of Israel. *All the cities are twenty-nine, with their villages:* Above is how the Masoretic text renders these city names – altogether 38 cities are named here and not 29 as claimed.

****Note:** This is the same portion (Joshua 15:21-32) but from the Septuagint...

²¹And their cities were cities belonging to the tribe of the children of Judah on the borders of Edom by the wilderness, and Baeseleel, and Ara, and Asor ²²and Icam, and Regma, and Aruel, ²³and Cades, and Asorionain, and Maenam, ²⁴and Balmaenan, and their villages, ²⁵and the cities of Aseron, this *is* Asor, ²⁶and Sen, and Salmaa, and Molada, ²⁷and Seri, and

Baephalath, ²⁸ and Cholaseola, and Beersabee; and their villages, and their hamlets, ²⁹ Bala and Bacoc, and Asom, ³⁰ and Elboudad, and Baethel, and Herma, ³¹ and Skelac, and Macharim, and Sethennac, ³² and Labos, and Sale, and Eromoth; twenty-nine cities, and their villages.**

Courtyards: The word used here in Hebrew is not the usual word used to refer to a village. It is the word that speaks of a courtyard – a place of administration.

Verse 33: *“In the lowland: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah,”*

The lowland: In Israel today this piece of real estate is called the ‘Shephelah’. It is a transitional region of soft-sloping, rolling hills in south-central Israel stretching over 10–15 km (6.2–9.3 mi) between the Judean Mountains and the Coastal Plain. It is an area which is close to the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 34: *“Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam,”*

En: A word that refers to a well.

Verse 35: *“Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah,”*

Verse 36: *“Sharaim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their courtyards;”*

*** This is how the Septuagint renders Joshua 15:33-36:*

*³³ In the plain country Astaol, and Raa, and Assa, ³⁴ and Ramen, and Tano, and Iluthoth, and Maeani ³⁵ and Jermuth, and Odollam, and Membra, and Saocho, and Jazeca, ³⁶ And Sacarim and Gadera, and its villages; fourteen cities, and their villages; ***

Villages/Courtyards: Their places of administration.

Verse 37: *“Zenah, Hadashah, Migdal Gad,”*

Verse 38: *“Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel,”*

Mizpah: An elevated city – a city used as a lookout city.

Verse 39: *“Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,”*

Verse 40: *“Cabbon, Lahmas, Kithlish,”*

Verse 41: *“Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their courtyards;”*

Verse 42: *“Libnah, Ether, Ashan,”*

Verse 43: *“Jiphtah, Ashnah, Nezib,”*

Verse 44: *“Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their courtyards;”*

Verse 45: *“Ekron, with its (daughters) and courtyards;*

Daughters: The word used here is not the word for ‘towns’ but is the word for ‘daughters’. This probably refers to small towns (towns being the daughters of cities).

Verse 46: *“from Ekron to the sea, all that lay near Ashdod, with their courtyards;”*

Verse 47: *“Ashdod with its (daughters) and courtyards, Gaza with its towns and courtyards —as far as the Brook of Egypt and the Great Sea with its coastline.”*

Ashdod: Ashdod was an important and significant city – hence why it (like Hazor) is mentioned again.

The Brook: This is a word that speaks about a wadi (a valley, ravine, or channel that is dry except in the rainy season).

The Great Sea: The Mediterranean Sea.

Note: The Mediterranean Sea and the Brook of Egypt formed the southwest border of the land of Israel.

Verse 48: *“And in the mountain country: Shamir, Jattir, Sochoh,”*

Note: The Southeast of Israel is a very desertous area. The Southwest is made up of a coastline and a plain. This is now dealing with a different area – a mountainous region.

Verse 49: *“Dannah, Kirjath Sannah (which is Debir),”*

Verse 50: *“Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim,”*

Verse 51: *“Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their courtyards;”*

Verse 52: *“Arab, Dumah, Eshean,”*

Verse 53: *“Janum, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah,”*

Verse 54: *“Humtah, Kirjath Arba (which is Hebron), and Zior: nine cities with their courtyards”*

Verse 55: *“Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah,”*

Verse 56: *“Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah,”*

Verse 57: *“Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their courtyards;”*

Verse 58: *“Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor,”*

Verse 59: *“Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their courtyards”*

Verse 60: *“Kirjath Baal (which is Kirjath Jearim) and Rabbah: two cities with their courtyards.”*

Kirjath Jearim: This city is about 12 kilometers west of Jerusalem.

Verse 61: *“In the wilderness: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah,”*

In the wilderness: This desertous region is not as far south as the desert area that borders the land of Edom.

Verse 62: *“Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En Gedi: six cities with their courtyards.”*

En Gedi: En Gedi is on the border of the Dead (Salt) Sea.

Verse 63: *“As for the Jebusite, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah were not able to take possession of them; but the Jebusite dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.”*

Jebusite: In Hebrew this is written in the singular and not in the plural.

The Jebusite dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day: Jerusalem was not captured by Joshua. At that time (and even at this time), Jerusalem was not fully controlled by the people of Judah – they shared it with the Jebusite people (Gentiles).

Note: The distribution of land in Joshua’s day has Kingdom implications. It is a paradigm through which we can understand and view last day events (it teaches us principles that will be in play in the last days). What we can learn from this verse is that in the last days Jerusalem will be a divided, and a contested for, city (which it is). Many are going to leave Jerusalem in the last days, but a remnant of Jerusalem will not be cut off (Zechariah 14:2).

Chapter 16

This chapter focuses on the sons of Joseph – Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim comes from a Hebrew word that relates to fruitfulness. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was frequently called ‘Ephraim’. Prophetically we know that God is going to once again work with His people to make them abundantly fruitful. This fruitfulness is going to come about because of redemption (when they finally receive the gospel of Messiah Yeshua).

Note 1: On the west side of the Jordan, Judah (the Messianic tribe) was the first tribe to receive an inheritance. Ephraim was the second tribe to receive an inheritance. Again, this is prophetic. Ezekiel (in Ezekiel 37:15-28) talks about two sticks – Judah and Ephraim – that are going to be made one. There is going to be a reunification of this divided monarchy/kingdom, and it's going to come together under the leadership of Messiah. This is going to be a last day event, and so we should expect a return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel before Messiah returns.

Note 2: Although Ephraim was younger than Manasseh, Ephraim received preference when Jacob blessed Joseph's sons (Genesis 48:13-20). In the last days there is going to be a change – a restoration of the tribes into their correct order [Revelation 7:4-8 – Manasseh is mentioned in the sealing of the tribes, the tribe of Dan (a faithless tribe who did not accept the allocation of land God gave to them as an inheritance) and the tribe of Ephraim are not mentioned in this sealing].

Note 3: 1 Chronicles 5:1-2 reveals to us that Reuben did not receive the inheritance of the firstborn because of his profane activities. His sin caused the right of the firstborn to be taken from him. He did not receive the blessing of the firstborn; the sons of Joseph received this blessing (the double portion). This is very prophetically significant. Ephraim and Manasseh received the status and blessing associated with the firstborn son.

Verse 1: *"The lot fell to the sons of Joseph from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to Bethel,*

The lot: This inheritance was not given to the children of Israel according to their own desires or according to human design. This inheritance was decided for them by God.

The sons of Joseph: Although Joseph is named, the emphasis is on his two sons.

From the Jordan: The Jordan is a long river that begins north of the Sea of Galilee. It feeds into the Sea of Galilee and exits the Sea of Galilee on its south side. It then passes through the Jordan River Valley and goes past Jericho before it enters into the Dead Sea.

To the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goes up from Jericho: The tribes of Joseph did not receive all of the land on the Jordan river, but they received a portion of it – the city of Jericho forming part of their boundary (The city of Jericho is east of Jerusalem).

The wilderness: The desert. A very dry, arid place. Some of this land is also very mountainous.

Bethel: A settlement north of Jerusalem. Bethel was one of the key cities included within the allotment of land given to Ephraim.

Verse 2: *"then (this border) went out from Bethel to Luz, passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth,"*

Ataroth: This city is mentioned a couple of times in the Scripture. This reveals to us that this was a key city.

Verse 3: *"and went down westward to the boundary of the Japhletites, as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon to Gezer; and it ended at the sea."*

Westward: In the direction of the Mediterranean Sea.

Lower Beth Horon: The lower portion of this city of Horon (the upper portion of this city will be allocated at a later stage. This city has a dual purpose – a dual inheritance. The reason for a dual inheritance is to keep the tribes united, to bring unity amongst the tribes).

Verse 4: *“So the sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.”*

Manasseh and Ephraim: There is some overlapping between the lands of Ephraim and Manasseh. This shows unity. Half of the tribe of Manasseh inherited land on the east side of the Jordan River. Ephraim, and the other half of the tribe of Manasseh, inherited land on the west side of the Jordan River. The half tribes on each side of the river ensured that a connection remained between the tribes on the east and the west. Those in the east needed to be reminded that they were part of the same heritage as the majority of the tribes in the west. In this way, the tribes on the east would not become isolated and lose connection with their brothers.

Verse 5: *“The border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was thus: The border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth Addar as far as Upper Beth Horon.”*

Ataroth Addar: In Joshua 16:2 this city is alluded to in shortened form. Here this city receives a more specific designation.

Upper Beth Horon: See Joshua 16:3. The lower and upper portions of Beth Horon were divided in such a way as to unify the tribes.

Verse 6: *“And the border went out toward the sea on the north side of Michmethath; then the border went around eastward to Taanath Shiloh and passed by it on the east of Janohah.”*

Toward the sea: The sea indicates that this went in a westerly direction.

Michmethath: This city was a northern point on the western border.

Shiloh: Once the Israelites inherited the land of Canaan the tabernacle did not move around from place to place but it was set up (in a long-term way) in Shiloh. For approximately 400 years the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh.

Verse 7: *“Then it went down from Janohah to Ataroth and Naarah, reached to Jericho, and came out at the Jordan.”*

Verse 8: *“The border went out from Tappuah westward to the Brook Kanah, and it ended at the sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families.”*

Ended at the sea: The allotment of the land of Ephraim included access to the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 9: *“The separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their courtyards.”*

Separate: Possibly referring to the isolated cities.

The separate cities for the children of Ephraim were among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh: The tribe of Joseph – Ephraim and Manasseh – was foundational in keeping unity between the tribes.

Among: In the midst of. There was an overlapping of land between the two tribes that made up the tribe of Joseph. This established a connection between the tribes on the east and west sides of the Jordan River.

Courtyards: Key places used for the purpose of administration.

Verse 10: *“And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.”*

They did not drive out: They did not inherit. They did not take possession of. They did not destroy.

Forced laborers: The Israelites forced the Canaanites to work for them as a tribute or a payment for being able to live/survive on the land. The Canaanites were allowed to exist, but they were ruled over.

Chapter 17

Verse 1: *“And it came about a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph: namely for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore he was given Gilead and Bashan.”*

A lot: God’s selection. It is God who decides what each person receives, when they receive it, and what each person is called to do with what they have received.

Manasseh...the firstborn of Joseph: Ephraim was the son of preference (according to God’s choice) and he received a unique blessing. However, Manasseh was the actual firstborn of Joseph. After Ephraim’s allotment, Manasseh (the half tribe on the west of the River Jordan) received his inheritance.

Gilead and Bashan: These were two very strategically important pieces of land. They were a good land - land related to the promises of God.

Verse 2: *“And it came about a lot for the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families: for the sons of Abiezer, the sons of Helek, the sons of Asriel, the sons of Shechem, the sons of Hephher, and the sons of Shemida; these were the male sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families.”*

The male sons: It was normal for the males to inherit the land. Therefore, it is unusual that the males inheriting is clarified (and therefore emphasised) here.

Verse 3: *“But Zelophehad the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. And these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noa, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.”*

Zelophehad: Zelophehad had no sons – only daughters (Numbers 27:1-11). When a man had no sons, God made it permissible for the daughters to inherit as well.

Mahlah, Noa, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah: These women (like their inheriting male counterparts) are named. Women at that time did not receive an inheritance. It was unique to Israel that their daughters were allowed to inherit in the absence of brothers.

Verse 4: *“And they came near before Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, “The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers.” Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among their father’s brothers.”*

They: Written in the feminine plural – therefore referring to these women.

Eleazar the priest: Eleazar was the ruling high priest at this time.

Rulers: The exalted leaders – i.e the main leaders of the families.

Eleazar...Joshua...the rulers: This ruling was sanctioned and approved by all. Everyone was in agreement and submitted to what God had commanded Moses in regard to these women receiving an inheritance.

Our brothers: Referring to all the other families within the tribe of Manasseh.

Verse 5: *“Ten regions fell (by lot) to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which were on the other side of the Jordan,”*

Note: The tribe of Manasseh inherited land on both sides of the Jordan River.

Verse 6: *“because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh’s sons had the land of Gilead.”*

Verse 7: *“And the territory of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath, that lies east of Shechem; and the border went along south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah.”*

The territory of Manasseh was from Asher: The tribe of Manasseh shared a boundary with the tribe of Asher. All of the tribes had their individual inheritances, but they shared their borders with the other tribes within Israel. These shared borders established and kept a connection between the tribes.

Note: God established an order within Israel. It is through God’s order that His purposes can be achieved, and His revelation received. When God’s purposes are fulfilled the glory of God is manifested.

Verse 8: *“Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim.”*

Tappuah: Although this border city was on the land given to Manasseh, it was controlled by the children of Ephraim.

Verse 9: *“And the border descended to the Brook Kanah, southward to the brook. These cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh was on the north side of the brook; and it ended at the sea.”*

Note: In certain places the land belonged to one tribe, but the cities on that land belonged to and was controlled by another tribe. This helped to keep the tribes connected with one another.

Verse 10: *“Southward it was Ephraim’s, northward it was Manasseh’s, and the sea was its border. Manasseh’s territory was adjoining Asher on the north and Issachar on the east.”*

Note: These tribes were interrelated. Their shared borders helped them to stay connected to one another. Although they were split into twelve tribes, they remained one people – the children of Israel.

Verse 11: *“And in Issachar and in Asher, Manasseh had Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly regions.”*

Towns: Literally: daughters (suburbs or small towns surrounding the cities)

Megiddo: The place of Armageddon.

Hilly: Elevated places. Elevated places where significant places.

Verse 12: *“Yet the sons of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land.”*

Verse 13: *“And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labour, but did not utterly drive them out.”*

Forced labour: The Canaanites lived in the land of Israel, but they had to pay tribute (taxes) in order to live there. They became servants of the children of Israel.

Verse 14: *“Then the sons of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, “Why have you given us only one lot and one region to inherit, since we are a strong people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?”*

Note: The sons of Joseph wanted more land than was allocated to them. They felt that their inheritance was too small for such a big tribe.

Verse 15: *“So Joshua answered them, “If you are a strong people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you.”*

Clear a place: If they wanted additional land, they needed to create it for themselves.

Verse 16: *“But the children of Joseph said, “The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both those who are of Beth Shean and its towns and those who are of the Valley of Jezreel.”*

The Valley of Jezreel: This is a place also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat or the Valley of Megiddo (where the Battle of Armageddon will be fought). It is in this valley that God is going to judge the nations of the world and bring utter defeat to them in the Battle of Gog and Magog (Revelation 16:16, end of Daniels 70th week). Many consider this battleground to be the “mother of all battlegrounds”.

From a worldly point of view this is going to be a place of great horror. However, for the children of Israel, it is going to be a happy and blessed place because they are going to be given victory there.

Verse 17: *“And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, “You are a strong people and have great power; you shall not have only one portion,”*

Verse 18: *“but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it is wooded, you shall cut it down, and its farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and are strong.”*

You shall cut it down: They had to clean up land and make a space for themselves.

You shall drive out the Canaanites: They wanted more land, so they needed to fight for it and take possession of it. They were a strong people. It was well within their ability to fight for the land as well as to work to clear the land.

Though they have iron chariots: They were a people who were able to overcome the weapons of their enemies.

Chapter 18

Part 1: Joshua 18:1-10

Throughout most of the book of Joshua, a significant emphasis has been upon the land given as an inheritance to the children of Israel. God’s desire was that the land of Israel would be turned from a place of idolatry into a place of true worship.

Verse 1: *“Now all the congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was conquered before them.”*

Congregation: This word can also be translated ‘a witness’. The congregation was called to be a testimony to the truth of God being manifest/demonstrated in their lives.

All the congregation ... assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle of meeting: This verse is set within the context of the tribe of Judah (the Messianic tribe) and the tribe of Joseph (Jacob’s special son who had been used mightily in Egypt to provide redemption for his brothers) having received their inheritance. After these two tribes received their inheritance, and before the other tribes received their inheritance on the western side of the Jordan, the tabernacle of meeting (synonymous with worship) was set up.

Shiloh: This is a word which literally means ‘His gift’ or ‘the gift of Him’. Shiloh should be understood as a place of worship. It is through worship that we find God’s order being brought into our lives. As God brings change into our lives, He moves to provide for His people. The inheritance of the land of Israel was God’s gift to His people.

Verse 2: *“But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance.”*

Note: Only five tribes had received their inheritance at this point – Reuben, Gad, Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Verse 3: *“Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: “Until when please will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you?”*

Until when please: The term used here is a term of petition. Joshua is trying to encourage the people to do, and to finish, what God had called them to do.

Neglect: This is a word that means to be casual about, to not be committed to, to be careless about. Possessing the land was a big deal, but the children of Israel had started to treat it casually. God’s will was that the people would possess and inhabit the land. The people were in a comfortable and safe place, but they were not in God’s will.

Fathers: Patriarchs. This is a word that should remind us of the promises of God. The people had become complacent. They were no longer committed to acting upon the promises of God through faith. We need to be people who respond to the promises of God through faith.

Verse 4: *“Pick out from among you three men for each tribe, and I will send them; they shall rise and go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, and come back to me.”*

Pick out: This is a word for an invitation.

Three: Scripturally, three is a number that speaks about revelation, the revealing of something. God wanted to reveal something to His people.

Three men for each tribe: There were 7 tribes left to inherit: $3 \times 7 = 21$ men.

Rise and go: These 21 men were going to receive a commission (and authority) from God to go through the land.

Go through: The word used here is a word that speaks of a moving forward. It is also a word that alludes to thoroughness.

Survey it: In light of their inheritance, they needed to write down or log/register what they found in the land.

Come back to me: Joshua wanted these men to give a report back to him.

Verse 5: *“And they shall divide it into seven parts. Judah shall remain in their territory on the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north.”*

It: All of this land that they went through.

Judah: The mention of Judah inserts a Messianic context (and perspective) into a text. In the last days Messiah is going to send forth His angels to gather the people back to the land (Matthew 24:31). This simply means that in the last days God is going to take possession of the Promised land and He is going to position His people where they ought to be.

The house of Joseph: Referring to Ephraim and Manassah.

Judah shall remain ... on the south, and the house of Joseph shall remain ... on the north: The land for the remaining seven tribes would be sandwiched between Judah in the south and Joseph in the north. Judah is seen as Messianic, but Joseph is also set apart and is seen as a saviour to his brothers (Joseph is a type of Messiah).

Verse 6: *“You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring the survey here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God.”*

You: Written in the plural – referring to those 21 men.

Survey: Write down. These men were tasked with dividing the remaining land up into seven portions.

Seven: Scripturally the number '7' is a holy number. It is a number that has to do with purpose.

Here: Referring to Shiloh. Joshua was in Shiloh – before the tabernacle of the Lord – when he cast the remaining seven lots (Joshua 18:8).

Before the LORD: Joshua sought the Lord's approval and authority on how this remaining land would be allocated. Joshua wanted the purpose and will of the Lord to be revealed.

Verse 7: *"But the Levites have no portion among you, for the priesthood of the LORD is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them."*

Note: The Levites were given numerous cities to live in, and their animals were allowed to graze on the land, but they themselves were not allowed to own land.

The priesthood of the LORD is their inheritance: In a unique way God was their inheritance. In our lives today we should be pursuing God as our inheritance. It is His Presence and His provision in our lives that we should desire.

Verse 8: *"Then the men arose, and they went; and Joshua charged those who went to survey the land, saying, "Go, walk to and fro through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh."*

The men: The 21 men who were going to survey the remaining land.

To survey the land: Repetition emphasises.

Shiloh: 'Worship' is what should come to our minds when Shiloh is mentioned.

Verse 9: *"So the men went, passed through the land, and wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities; and they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh."*

A book: They wrote this all down in an official document.

In seven parts by cities: These men described the land and marked down the cities within these seven divisions.

Shiloh: The purpose of this inheritance was so that the people would worship God. Everything that God does, and everything that God provides, is for the purpose of worshiping Him (i.e for serving Him). We worship God and seek His provision so that we can serve Him and bring honor and glory to Him.

Verse 10: *"Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions."*

Joshua cast lots for them: Joshua led the people. Through Godly leadership there is Godly order.

Chapter 18

Part 2: Joshua 18:11-28

Verse 11: *“Now the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph.”*

Verse 12: *“Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north and went up through the mountains westward; it ended at the Wilderness of Beth Aven.”*

The side of Jericho: Jericho was a border city.
Westward: Toward the Sea (i.e. the Mediterranean Sea).

Verse 13: *“The border went over from there toward Luz, to the side of Luz (which is Bethel) southward; and the border descended to Ataroth Adar, near the hill that lies on the south side of Lower Beth Horon.”*

Bethel: Many of these places are being repeated because they are border places. They were landmark places that helped to set the boundaries between the tribes.

Verse 14: *“And the border was marked, and it encompassed the side of the Sea on the south, from the mountain that lies before Beth Horon southward; and it ended at Kirjath Baal (which is Kirjath Jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This was the west side.”*

Kirjath Jearim: This city is west of Jerusalem. It was a border city which belonged primarily to the children of Judah.
The west side: The side which faced the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 15: *“The south side began at the end of Kirjath Jearim, and the border extended on the west and went out to the spring of the waters of Nephtoah.”*

Verse 16: *“Then the border came down to the end of the mountain that lies before the valley of the Son of Hinnom, which is in the valley of Rephaim on the north, descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite city on the south, and descended to En Rogel.”*

Verse 17: *“And it went around from the north, went out to En Shemesh, and extended toward Geliloth, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben.”*

The Ascent of Adummim: The upward road towards Adummim.
The stone of Bohan: Literally Eban Bohan. This was a place that was controlled by the sons of Reuben.

Verse 18: *"Then it passed along toward the north side of Arabah and went down to Arabah."*

Arabah: The Arabah was a desert plain.

Verse 19: *"And the border passed along to the north side of Beth Hoglah; then the border ended at the north bay at the Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This was the southern boundary."*

Ended at the north bay at the Salt Sea: Benjamin's allotment of land was tied to the Dead Sea (where the Jordan river ends – ie the southernmost point of the Jordan River).

Verse 20: *"The Jordan was its border on the east side. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, according to its boundaries all around, according to their families."*

The Jordan: A couple of the tribes shared the Jordan River as a boundary marker.

Verse 21: *"Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz,"*

Note: The cities mentioned here are the primary cities that Benjamin received as part of his inheritance in the Promised Land.

Emek: Can be translated 'valley'.

Verse 22: *"Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,"*

Beth: The 'house of'.

Verse 23: *"Avim, Parah, Ophrah,"*

Verse 24: *"Chephar Haammoni, Ophni, and Gaba: twelve cities with their villages;"*

Villages: Courtyards, districts of administration.

Verse 25: *"Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth,"*

Verse 26: *"Mizpah, Chephirah, Mozah,"*

Verse 27: *"Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah,"*

Verse 28: *"Zelah, Eleph, Jebus (which is Jerusalem), Gibeath, and Kirjath: fourteen cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families."*

Jebus (which is Jerusalem): The Jebusites lived in Jerusalem and a remnant of the tribe of Judah were also given a part of Jerusalem as their inheritance (Joshua 15:8, 63).

This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin: God is a specific God.

He gives to us according to His desires – according to His wisdom and knowledge of what we specifically need in order to fulfil His upward call in our lives. The wisest thing we can do is simply trust that whatever God has given to us is for our good and benefit (Romans 8:28). All that the Lord has given to us needs to be received with thanksgiving, as He gives to us perfectly (Proverbs 30:8b-9, James 1:17).

Chapter 19

Part 1: Joshua 19:1-23

Verse 1: *“The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.”*

The second lot came out: The casting of the lot showed a submissiveness, and an acceptance of what God desired.

Verse 2: *“They had in their inheritance Beersheba (Sheba), Moladah,”*

Beersheba: This was (is) a capital city in the centre of the south of the land of Israel. It was a city that was given to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:28). Here we see another name given to the portion of Beersheba that Shimeon received – Sheba (this is a word which can mean ‘seven’ but it is also a word that has to do with an oath).

Verse 3: *“Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem,”*

Verse 4: *“Etolad, Bethul, Hormah,”*

Verse 5: *“Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah,”*

Verse 6: *“Beth Lebaath, and Sharuhon: thirteen cities and their villages;”*

Verse 7: *“Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan: four cities and their villages;”*

Verse 8: *“and all the villages that were all around these cities as far as Baalath Beer, Ramah of the South. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families.”*

Verse 9: *“The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore, the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people.”*

Note: Judah had received a vast portion of land that was too large for them. Therefore, Shimeon shared this land with them.

Verse 10: *"The third lot came out for the children of Zebulun according to their families, and the border of their inheritance was as far as Sarid."*

Verse 11: *"Their border went toward the west and to Maralah, went to Dabbasheth, and extended along the brook that is east of Jokneam."*

Verse 12: *"Then from Sarid it went eastward toward the sunrise along the border of Chisloth Tabor, and went out toward Daberath, bypassing Japhia."*

Verse 13: *"And from there it passed along on the east of Gath Hopher, toward Eth Kazin, and extended to Rimmon, which borders on Neah."*

Verse 14: *"Then the border went around it on the north side of Hannathon, and it ended in the Valley of Jiphthah El."*

Verse 15: *"Included were Kattath, Nahallal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages."*

Twelve cities with their villages: These words are NOT included in the Septuagint.

Verse 16: *"This was the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages."*

Verse 17: *"The fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families."*

Verse 18: *"And their territory went to Jezreel, and included Chesulloth, Shunem,"*

Verse 19: *"Haphraim, Shion, Anaharath,"*

Verse 20: *"Rabbith, Kishion, Abez,"*

Verse 21: *"Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pazzez."*

Verse 22: *"And the border reached to Tabor, Shahazimah, and Beth Shemesh; their border ended at the Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages."*

Their border ended at the Jordan: The territory of the tribe of Issachar also bordered the Jordan River.

Sixteen cities with their villages: These words are NOT included in the Septuagint.

Verse 23: *"This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages."*

This was the inheritance: There is a very important relationship between the fulfillment of God's word and blessing. It is only as God's Word is fulfilled in our lives (when God's Word is our priority and absolute standard) that we are going to find blessing.

If we are casual or careless with applying God's Word properly, literally, to our lives then we are not going to experience blessing.

Chapter 19

Part 2: Joshua 19:24-51

Verse 24: *"The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families."*

Families: God's promises and blessings had relevance for families. God works and moves in the family. Family is important to God.

Verse 25: *"And their territory included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph,"*

Verse 26: *"Alammelech, Amad, and Mishal; it reached to Mount Carmel westward, along the Brook Shihor Libnath."*

Mount Carmel: This is in the northern part of Israel.

Westward: This word indicates to us that this is near the Mediterranean Sea.

Brook: This term 'brook' is absent in the Hebrew text.

Verse 27: *"It turned toward the sunrise to Beth Dagon; and it reached to Zebulun and to the Valley of Jiphthah El, then northward beyond Beth Emek and Neiel, bypassing Cabul which was on the left,"*

It reached to Zebulun: Asher's territory shared a border with Zebulun's territory.

Beth Emek: This means 'the house of the valley'.

Verse 28: *"including Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah, as far as Greater Sidon."*

As far as Greater Sidon: Asher's territory extended very far north – into what is modern Lebanon today.

Verse 29: *"And the border turned to Ramah and to the fortified city of Tyre; then the border turned to Hosah, and ended at the sea by the region of Achzib."*

The fortified city of Tyre: This is another city in modern day Lebanon.

Verse 30: *"Also Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob were included: twenty-two cities with their villages."*

Twenty-two cities with their villages: The city count is NOT included in the Septuagint.

Verse 31: *“This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.”*

Verse 32: *“The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, for the children of Naphtali according to their families.”*

Verse 33: *“And their border began at Heleph, enclosing the territory from the terebinth tree in Zaanannim, Adami Nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; it ended at the Jordan.”*

Terebinth tree: Can also be translated ‘oak tree’.

It ended at the Jordan: Naphtali was another tribe that shared the Jordan River as a boundary. This border is on the eastern side of the land of Israel.

Verse 34: *“From Heleph the border extended westward to Aznoth Tabor and went out from there toward Hukkok; it adjoined Zebulun on the south side and Asher on the west side, and ended at Judah by the Jordan toward the sunrise.”*

It adjoined Zebulun on the south side and Asher on the west side: The tribe of Naphtali shared a border with the tribes of Zebulun and Asher.

Verse 35: *“And the fortified cities are Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth,”*

Verse 36: *“Adamah, Ramah, Hazor,”*

Hazor: A common name, a city in many different locations.

Verse 37: *“Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor,”*

Verse 38: *“Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemesh: nineteen cities with their villages.”*

Nineteen cities with their villages: The city count is NOT included in the Septuagint.

Verse 39: *“This was the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.”*

Verse 40: *“The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families.”*

Verse 41: *“And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh,”*

Verse 42: *“Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Jethlah,”*

Verse 43: *“Elon, Timnah, Ekron,”*

Timnah, Ekron: These are cities that were shared among the tribes (Joshua 15:45, Joshua 15:57).

Verse 44: *“Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath,”*

Verse 45: *“Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon,”*

Bene Berak: This is a famous, ancient city today near Tel Aviv (on the West, close to the Mediterranean Sea).

Verse 46: *“Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region near Joppa.”*

Me Jarkon: This is a river close to north Tel Aviv.

Joppa: Also called ‘Jaffa’. This is a city in the south part of Tel Aviv.

Verse 47: *“And the border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.”*

Took possession of it, and dwelt in it: The children of Dan semi abandoned the allotment of land that the Lord had given to them (the place where the Philistines were) and they dwelt in another place that they secured for themselves. This land (Leshem) is on the modern northern border of Israel today - very close to Lebanon and not that far from Syria.

They called Leshem, Dan: They renamed Leshem, giving it a name of their own choosing.

Verse 48: *“This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.”*

Verse 49: *“When they had made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun.”*

Note: The children of Israel recognised Joshua in a unique way. They gave him a special inheritance among themselves.

Verse 50: *“According to the word of the LORD, they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it.”*

Gave him the city which he asked for: Joshua requested to inherit this city.

Verse 51: *“These were the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel divided as an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So, they made an end of dividing the country.”*

Eleazar the priest: Eleazar was the son of Aaron (Leviticus 10:6). Aaron died in the wilderness. Eleazar succeeded him as the high priest.

Shiloh: The Tabernacle was set up in Shiloh, a more permanent location, when the Israelites entered into the Promised land. It stood in Shiloh for around 400 years before moving to the temple in Jerusalem.

An inheritance by lot ... before the LORD: It is wise for us to allow God to make the decisions regarding our lives – where we will live, what He has called us to do, etc. We would not be wise to follow the desires of our own hearts – which are desires usually rooted in sin. We need to be submissive and responsive to the word, the instructions, of God, so that He can position us where He wants us to be, so that we can do the things that He would want us to do. By submitting to God's Way, we invite His Presence, power, provision, joy, etc into our lives.

Chapter 20

God is a compassionate God. This chapter deals with cities called "Cities of Refuge" (places of shelter).

Verse 1: *"The LORD also spoke to Joshua, saying,"*

Verse 2: *"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses,'"*

Appoint: Set, take, give, to cause to become a reality.

Appoint for yourselves: These cities that they were called to appoint for themselves were going to be cities that helped the community to function in a Godly way. These cities would help to contribute to the well-being of society.

I spoke to you through Moses: Moses taught the children of Israel about the need for these cities of refuge (Numbers 35:9-34, Deuteronomy 19:1-13).

Verse 3: *"that the slayer who kills a person accidentally or unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood."*

The slayer: The killer (i.e someone who takes the life of another unintentionally).

Note: A murderer takes the life of someone else intentionally.

Kills a person accidentally or unintentionally: God is a God of justice. Although it is rare, it is sometimes necessary to act in a way to cause the death of another person (eg: military officers, who may take the lives of others, are not considered murderers. Military officers, by killing a person, may save the lives of many others).

Accidentally or unintentionally: Without intent. It was not his desire to kill. He did not do it purposely - but that doesn't mean that he is absolutely innocent. His innocence has yet to be determined (hence the reason for the city of refuge, where he could flee until such a time as he could be proven innocent or guilty).

The avenger (redeemer) of blood: Blood that is shed always needs to be dealt with. Spilt blood means that things are out of order. The Redeemer/Avenger of blood is the one who atones for the blood of the slain by killing the murderer.

Verse 4: *“And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.”*

One of those cities: Three cities were on the eastern side of the Jordan River (where the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh were located) and three of them were on the western side (where the rest of the tribes were situated). There were six cities of refuge in all. Six is the Biblical number for grace. Through these cities of refuge, God extended grace to those who had accidentally taken the life of another.

The entrance of the gate of the city: The gate of a city was a place for judgment. Cases were put forth and heard by the elders who sat at the city gates.

Declares his case: This one believes he is not guilty of murder (ie he did not kill with intent; it was an accident). A cold-blooded killer was not allowed to take refuge in these cities – only those who seemed as if they had a case for their innocence. The person who believed he was innocent, would give an account of what had happened to the elders at the gates of the city of refuge. Even those who had killed accidentally had to take responsibility for their actions and they had to face the consequences of their deed – even though innocent (one consequence was that they had to live in the city of refuge – which was not a normal city. Their families were not allowed to move into the cities with them. They had a very different type of existence as a consequence of having killed someone – even though it was done in innocence).

Note: These cities of refuge were cities given to the Levites – ie the Levites were allowed to live in them (Joshua 21).

Verse 5: *“Then if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand.”*

The avenger of blood: This was often a family member of the deceased person (ie a family member who desired to avenge the blood of their loved one).

They shall not deliver the slayer into his hand: The slayers were protected, as long as they stayed within the walls of these cities.

Did not hate him beforehand: This was another condition that the slayer had to meet: there must have been no bad blood (animosity or hatred) between the slayer and the one slain.

Verse 6: *“And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.”*

Dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment: He was allowed to stay in the city of refuge while his trial was fully investigated, and judgment could be passed.

Until the death of the one who is high priest: If the judgment was passed in his favour, he was allowed to remain in the city and would be allowed to leave the city only once the presiding high priest died. The high priest (although not perfect) was seen as a righteous man – a man with spiritual authority.

Note: The slayer (even though the death was unintentional) was under a type of arrest while he lived in these cities of refuge.

Verse 7: *“So they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba (which is Hebron) in the mountains of Judah.”*

Appointed: Set apart.

Verse 8: *“And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh.”*

The other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward: This refers to the eastern side of the Jordan River – the land given to the Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh.

Verse 9: *“These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.”*

The stranger: The Gentile. This refers to someone who was neither a Jew nor a proselyte.

The stranger who dwelt among them: Referring to the Gentiles who lived among the Jews in a more permanent way.

Chapter 21

When God’s order governs our lives (according to His plans and purposes), we will see His faithfulness.

Verse 1: *“Then the heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites came near to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers’ houses of the tribes of the children of Israel.”*

The heads of the fathers’ houses: Within every tribe there were men who were placed into authority, within the tribe, as they were considered to be the leaders of key/primary families within that tribe. The tribe of Levi (although there were more families) had three primary families – the Kohathites, the Gershonites and the children of Merari.

Levites: All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests.

Came near: Presented themselves.

Eleazar: The son of Aaron. He became a high priest after Aaron died in the wilderness.

Joshua: Joshua was the governor over Israel. He and the high priest worked closely together.

The heads of the fathers’ houses of the tribes of the children of Israel: All the leaders of each of the tribes of the children of Israel were present at this meeting.

Verse 2: *“And they spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, “The LORD commanded in the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock.”*

They: The leaders of the Levites.

Them: Joshua, Eleazar and the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

Shiloh: The place where the Tabernacle dwelt for a long period of time.

In the hand of: This is an idiom that speaks of a command given under the authority of Moses.

Common-lands for our livestock: The areas around the cities that the Levites received were to become grazing land for the cattle or domesticated animals that belonged to the Levites.

Verse 3: *“So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their common-lands:”*

Gave...from their inheritance: God had given freely to the tribes of Israel, now He required them to also freely give of what they had been given.

At the commandment of the LORD: God is a God of precision. He precisely instructs His people, so that we might serve Him in a proper way. His instructions bring order into our lives. He wants us to be people who reflect His order.

Verse 4: *“Now the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And the children of Aaron the priest, who were of the Levites, had thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of Simeon, and from the tribe of Benjamin.”*

The lot: God chose the cities that He wanted the Levites to live in. The Levites did not get to choose the cities they desired, but they had to submit to God’s choice for the cities that they dwelt in.

Kohathites: The Kohathites were a specific family within the division of the Levites.

Verse 5: *“The rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.”*

Note: The Kohathites received 23 cities in total.

Verse 6: *“And the children of Gershon had thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.”*

The children of Gershon: Another primary Levitical family.

Verse 7: *“The children of Merari according to their families had twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun.”*

Note: The tribe of Levi were given 13 + 10 + 13 + 12 cities = 48 cities in total

Verse 8: *“And the children of Israel gave these cities with their common-lands by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.”*

By the hand of: Under the authority of.

Verse 9: *“So they gave from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon these cities which are designated by name,”*

Verse 10: *“which were for the children of Aaron, one of the families of the Kohathites, who were of the children of Levi; for the lot was theirs first.”*

Note: These cities were cities given by the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Simeon to the sons of Aaron (see Joshua 21:4).

Verse 11: *“And they gave them Kirjath Arba (Arba was the father of Anak), which is Hebron, in the mountains of Judah, with the common-land surrounding it.”*

The father of Anak: Arba was the father of the giants.

Verse 12: *“But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.”*

Verse 13: *“Thus to the children of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Libnah with its common-land,”*

Hebron ... Libnah: Both of these cities had belonged to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:13, 42, 54)

Verse 14: *“Jattir with its common-land, Eshtemoa with its common-land,”*

Jattir ... Eshtemoa: These cities had also belonged to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:48, 50).

Verse 15: *“Holon with its common-land, Debir with its common-land,”*

Holon: This city belonged to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:51)

Debir: Another city that belonged to the tribe of Judah. It was also called ‘Kirjath Sannah’ (Joshua 15:49).

Verse 16: *“Ain with its common-land, Juttah with its common-land, and Beth Shemesh with its common-land: nine cities from those two tribes;”*

Ain: This city belonged to both the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Simeon (Joshua 15:32, Joshua 19:7).

Juttah: A city which had belonged to Judah (Joshua 15:55)

Beth Shemesh: Beth Shemesh was the border city for the tribes of Judah (Joshua 15:10) and Issachar (Joshua 19:22), but was a city allocated to the tribe of Naphtali (Joshua 19:38).

Verse 17: *“and from the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its common-land, Geba with its common-land,”*

Gibeon ...Geba: See Joshua 18:24-25

Verse 18: *“Anathoth with its common-land, and Almon with its common-land: four cities.”*

Anathoth...Almon: These are not mentioned as cities in the allocation of cities to Benjamin.

Verse 19: *“All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, were thirteen cities with their common-lands.”*

Verse 20: *“And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, the rest of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot from the tribe of Ephraim.”*

Verse 21: *“For they gave them Shechem with its common-land in the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer), Gezer with its common-land,”*

Shechem: Joshua 20:7 (Shechem is called ‘Nablus’ today). Joseph was buried in Shechem (Joshua 24:32).

Gezer: Joshua 16:10

Verse 22: *“Kibzaim with its common-land, and Beth Horon with its common-land: four cities;”*

Kibzaim: Kibzaim is not mentioned as a city in the allocation of cities to the Ephraimites.

Beth Horon: Joshua 16:3,5

Verse 23: *“and from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its common-land, Gibbethon with its common-land,”*

Eltekeh... Gibbethon: Joshua 19:44

Verse 24: *“Aijalon with its common-land, and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities;”*

Aijalon...Gath Rimmon: Joshua 19:42,45

Verse 25: *“and from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its common-land and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: two cities.”*

Tanach: This is spelt differently to the name given to the Hebrew Bible. See Joshua 17:11-12.

Gath Rimmon: Allocated to the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:45) but credited here to the half tribe of Manasseh.

Verse 26: *“All the ten cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath.”*

Verse 27: *“Also to the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, from the other half-tribe of Manasseh, they gave Golan in Bashan with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), and Be Eshterah with its common-land: two cities;”*

Golan... Be Eshterah: Joshua 13:29-30, 20:8.

Verse 28: *“and from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its common-land, Daberath with its common-land,”*

Kishion: Joshua 19:20

Daberath: Daberath is mentioned as a border for the tribe of Zebulun (Joshua 19:12).

Verse 29: *“Jarmuth with its common-land, and En Gannim with its common-land: four cities;”*

Jarmuth: A city credited to Issachar here, but listed as one of the cities of Judah in Joshua 15:35.

En Gannim: Joshua 19:21

Verse 30: *“and from the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its common-land, Abdon with its common-land,”*

Mishal: Joshua 19:26

Abdon: Not mentioned in Joshua 19:24-31 in the allotment of cities for Asher.

Verse 31: *“Helkath with its common-land, and Rehob with its common-land: four cities;”*

Helkath...Rehob: Joshua 19:25, 28

Verse 32: *“and from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Hammoth Dor with its common-land, and Kartan with its common-land: three cities.”*

Kedesh: Joshua 19:37

Hammoth Dor... Kartan: Not listed in the cities allocated to Naphtali in Joshua 19:32-39

Verse 33: *“All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families were thirteen cities with their common-lands.”*

The Gershonites: The family of Gershon.

Verse 34: *“And to the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its common-land, Kartah with its common-land,”*

Jokneam: Joshua 19:11

Kartah: ? Joshua 19:15

Verse 35: *“Dimnah with its common-land, and Nahalal with its common-land: four cities;”*

Dimnah...Nahalal: Neither of these cities are mentioned in the allocation of cities for the tribe of Zebulun (Joshua 19:10-16).

Note: It is important to note that most of the modern translations of the Bible base their interpretation of its Old Testament text on the Masoretic text of the Bible. This text is fairly new – in that it was only completed early in the 11th Century AD. The Septuagint (the translation of the Old Testament into Greek) was completed in the 3rd -1st century BC. The Septuagint is therefore the more accurate of the two texts. When we read the Bibles based on the Masoretic text (like the NKJV) we find a few discrepancies between it and the Septuagint. We need to consider, however, that these discrepancies (names of cities omitted, too many cities counted, etc) would not be there if we read these verses in light of other manuscripts which take into account the Septuagint.

Verse 36: *“and from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its common-land, Jahaz with its common-land,”*

Bezer...Jahaz: In the Masoretic text these names are missing in Joshua 13:15-23

Verse 37: *“Kedemoth with its common-land, and Mephaath with its common-land: four cities;”*

Kedemoth...Mephaath: Joshua 13:18

Verse 38: *“and from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Mahanaim with its common-land,”*

Ramoth in Gilead: Joshua 13:25

Mahanaim: Joshua 13:26

Verse 39: *“Heshbon with its common-land, and Jazer with its common-land: four cities in all.”*

Heshbon ... Jazer: Joshua 13:25, 26

Verse 40: *“So all the cities for the children of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites, were by their lot twelve cities.”*

Verse 41: *“All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty-eight cities with their common-lands.”*

Verse 42: *“Every one of these cities had its common-land surrounding it; thus were all these cities.”*

Verse 43: *“So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it.”*

Note: This speaks about God’s faithfulness to fulfil what He has promised. God keeps His promises.

Verse 44: *“The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.”*

The LORD gave them rest: Not only did the Lord give them land, but He also gave them rest. *He had sworn to their fathers:* This is repeated and therefore emphasised. When it says that God has sworn it means that God has taken an oath, He has made a promise. His Word is perfect and true, so what He says can be trusted as we know it will be fulfilled (according to His time and character).

Verse 45: *“Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.”*

Not a word failed: Nothing was left undone. Nothing that God said to the house of Israel fell through the cracks. Everything that God promised became a reality.

All came to pass: In the same way that God was faithful in the days of Joshua, God is going to be faithful through Yeshua. It is in the Kingdom of God that the promises of God for our lives will be completely fulfilled.

Chapter 22

Part 1: Joshua 22:1-16

Verse 1: *“Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh,”*

Half the tribe of Manasseh: Half of the tribe of Manasseh lived on the Eastern side of the River Jordan and the other half of the tribe lived on the Western side of the Jordan. Many commentators, when commenting on this text, say that the reason for the splitting up of this tribe was so that a connection was established between the tribes in the east and the tribes in the west. With the tribe of Manasseh in both the east and in the west, there would always be a link, and not a disconnection, between the tribes. God still desired an interaction and a unity between the tribes. The Jordan River was not intended to be a dividing mark between them. It was simply an obstacle that God overcame in order to bring the people into the Promised Land.

Verse 2: *“and said to them: “You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, you have heard my voice in all that I commanded you.”*

Heard: The word used here is a word for hearing and then taking what has been heard and responding correctly to it by obeying.

You have heard my voice: You have responded properly.

Verse 3: *"You have not left your brothers these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God."*

Left: Abandoned

You have not left your brothers: The Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh had asked God (through Moses) if they could remain on the eastern side of the Jordan because the land was fitting for their livestock, and it was pleasing to them. God had allowed them to stay on that land, on the condition that they fought for possession of the land of Canaan with the other 9.5 tribes (Deuteronomy 3:12-20). At this point, the land now belonged to the children of Israel. It had been divided up between the various tribes. Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had fulfilled their obligations and were now free to go back to dwell in their own land on the east side of the Jordan River.

These many days: This alludes to years.

Have kept the charge of the commandment: They had a good testimony of being faithful to do what they had been commanded to do.

Verse 4: *"And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, just as He spoke to them; now therefore, turn and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave to you on the other side of the Jordan."*

Your brothers: Referring to the nine and a half tribes on the western side of the Jordan River.

Spoke: The word used here is the word for 'spoke'. It is not the word for a promise.

The other side of the Jordan: This was known as 'the land of Gilead'.

Verse 5: *"But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to cling to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."*

Take careful heed: Literally 'keep exceedingly, abundantly'. The word used here is a word that is often used to highlight the importance of something.

To love the LORD your God: The basis for obedience to God is a love for God. If we love God, we are going to keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21, 23-24).

Cling: This is a word that alludes to relationship and to unity. It is first used in Genesis 2:24 when God instructs a man to leave his father's house and to be united to (to cling to) his wife.

Verse 6: *"So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents."*

Blessed them...sent them away...they went to their tents: Here we see things being put back into the order of God. God desired that His people would begin to function, on a day-to-day basis, as a nation – a holy and distinct people, a light/testimony to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:2-3)

Verse 7: *“Now to half the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other half of it Joshua gave a possession among their brethren on this side of the Jordan, westward. And indeed, when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them,”*

Bashan: The Golan Heights – these are at the north of Israel, but on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

This side of the Jordan, westward: ‘Westward’ is a marker that informs us that this was in the direction of the Mediterranean Sea.

Note: This verse reminds us of the uniqueness of this tribe of Manasseh. Half were in the east; half were in the west. This tribe helped to preserve the unity and connection between all the tribes of Israel.

Verse 8: *“and spoke to them, saying, “Return with much riches to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.”*

Spoke to them: Parting words/‘last minute’ instructions are often the most important words that are spoken between people. This holds true here too. Joshua parted from these (‘eastern’) tribes by giving them very important parting instructions.

Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren: Not all of the men from Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had been able to go up and fight. Many of them had had to stay behind to look after and defend the women, children and livestock. Joshua commanded the warriors to go back to the men who remained on the eastern side of the river and to divide the plunder that they had received with those who had remained behind. Those who had stayed behind also needed to receive the spoils of war. The soldiers were not to take for granted or ignore the role that those who had been left behind had played in their absence.

Verse 9: *“So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they had obtained according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.”*

Departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh: Two places have been emphasised in Joshua – Gilgal (the first place where the Israelites camped after crossing the Jordan River; the place of circumcision – death of the flesh; the place of the first Passover in Canaan) and Shiloh. Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle was set up. This was a place related to worship. *According to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses:* God spoke. Moses administrated.

Verse 10: *“And when they came to the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar.”*

To the region of the Jordan which is in the land of Canaan: They were still on the western side of the Jordan – not yet in the territory that God had given to them.

A great, impressive altar: This altar was very large, and it made an impression on all who saw it.

Note: The questions we need to ask regarding this altar are: What motivated these 2.5 tribes to build it? What was the response of the other 9.5 tribes to it?

Verse 11: *“Now the children of Israel heard someone say, “Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel’s side.”*

The children of Israel: Referring to the tribes on the western side of the Jordan River.
On the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan: They erected this altar in a strategic and prominent place – i.e. near the Jordan River where the people crossed over from side to side.

Verse 12: *“And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.”*

Congregation: This is the same word that is used for a witness. A congregation is literally a group of witnesses who come together to testify. As believers (like the children of Israel) we are called to bear witness (Psalm 105:1-2).

To go to war against them: The children of Israel assumed that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh had constructed an altar to be used as an additional place of worship – in place of Shiloh.

Verse 13: *“Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead,”*

The children of Israel sent: The children of Israel sent a delegation to the land of Gilead in order to confront the 2.5 tribes in regard to what they had done.

Verse 14: *“and with him ten rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and each one was the head of the house of his father among the divisions of Israel.”*

Ten rulers: These ten leaders represented the tribes on the western side of the Jordan River.
Each one was the head of the house of his father among the divisions of Israel: These were important men who each looked after thousands of people.

Verse 15: *“Then they came to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying,”*

Verse 16: *“Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD: ‘What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the LORD?’”*

The whole congregation: This is written with different vowel pointings to the vowel pointings found in Joshua 22:12 when speaking of this congregation. Any changes made in the Biblical text are important and need to be noted. What this teaches us is that when we give a proper witness it's not merely a witness of the people of God it is a witness of God.

Treachery: An act of treason. This leadership was telling these 2.5 tribes that they had committed a terrible sin against God.

Turn away this day from following the LORD, in that you have built for yourselves an altar:

This was what the ten tribes perceived the intent of building this altar to be. They assumed that the tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan were building an altar so that they would not have to go to Shiloh to worship God but would worship on the altar that they had built – closer to home.

Note: The way we see the action of someone may be different to the way they intended their action to be viewed. Rather than assuming the worst about people, we would be wise to confront them and ask them about their intent – the reason why they did or said what they did. We are wise, and promote unity, when we give others the benefit of the doubt.

Chapter 22

Part 2: Joshua 22:17-34

Broken relationships (broken due to stress, anger, offense, hurt, etc) means that the connection between people is tense or broken. In the life of (particularly) a believer, the goal of a broken relationship should not be retribution but restoration. Yeshua came into a broken world to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). This means that the work that Yeshua came to do was the work of reconciliation – restoring the relationship between man and God. When a restoration needs to happen, between us and a fellow human being, we should always strive to give the party who has offended us (whether intentionally or unintentionally) an opportunity to defend themselves so that we can try to understand where they are coming from, their perspective of the situation (Matthew 18:15-16). Our primary goal for a broken relationship should always be reconciliation. Sometimes this is not the reality (Matthew 18:17) but it should be the attitude in our hearts.

Verse 17: *“Is the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed till this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD,”*

The iniquity of Peor: Numbers 25. Improper worship happened at Peor. It was in Peor that the children of Israel fell into idolatry. When we worship God incorrectly it is called idolatry. If we worship Him in a way that He did not command us to (i.e. our worship is not Scripturally sound), or not in the place where He has commanded us to worship Him (i.e. if we are not located IN Messiah), then we are worshipping Him in an idolatrous way. Before the children of Israel worshipped God in Jerusalem, they worshipped Him in Shiloh. If any of the tribes had worshipped at this altar that had been set up by the 2.5 tribes, the worship would have been considered idolatrous.

Not enough for us: A word for ‘small’, ‘little’ or ‘insignificant’.

From which we are not cleansed till this day: They were still suffering the consequences of the sin that had taken place in Peor.

Verse 18: *“but that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the LORD, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.”*

Note: Those who lived on the western side of the Jordan wanted to know if Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh were turning away from the Lord. Disobedience is very contagious. The consequences for disobedience are often felt by the wider community.
Tomorrow: A word that speaks of the future.
Angry: Wrath.

Verse 19: *“Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD’s tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the LORD, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God.”*

If the land of your possession is unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD’s tabernacle stands, and take possession among us: If we are living in a place where the enemy is triumphing over us, influencing us to participate in the ways of the world, then we need to change, to move into a place where the Presence of the Lord is more easily discerned. Those on the western side of the Jordan were willing to share their inheritance with those on the eastern side if it would help them to stay true to the Lord.
Do not rebel ... by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God: This is an example of progressive revelation. Initially altars were built all over the place (Genesis 12:8, Genesis 26:25, Genesis 35:7). When the Israelites were in the wilderness the tabernacle moved from place to place. Then the tabernacle was set up semi-permanently in Shiloh and the people were required to meet in Shiloh to worship the Lord. Eventually it was required of the people to worship at the temple in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 12:1-14).

Verse 20: *“Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.”*

Note: The ten tribes wanted Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh to see how they were being perceived from a Biblical perspective.
Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass: They used an example from their recent history to try to get the eastern tribes to understand how they saw things. The account of Achan is told in Joshua 7.
Wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel: For the disobedience of one man, wrath fell on the entire congregation of Israel. The western tribes’ perception of the building of this altar is that what the 2.5 tribes had done was far worse than just one man’s sin.
That man did not perish alone in his iniquity: Many people suffered the consequences associated with the rebellion of one man – Achan.

Verse 21: *“Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions of Israel:”*

Note: The 2.5 tribes responded to the accusation brought against them.

Verse 22: *“The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He knows, and let Israel itself know—if it is in rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day.”*

He knows: They are saying that God, who knows everything, would know that it was not rebellion in their hearts that prompted them to set up that altar.

If it is in rebellion... do not save us this day: These 2.5 tribes did not have in their hearts what they were being accused of. If they were found to have rebellion or treachery in their hearts, they would welcome the punishment meted out to them.

Verse 23: *“If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the LORD Himself require an account.”*

Note: The 2.5 tribes did not build the altar with the intention to offer sacrifices on it.

Let the LORD Himself require an account: If they were found, before the Lord, to have built this altar with impure motives, then they desired the Lord to deal with them accordingly.

Verse 24: *“But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, ‘Tomorrow your sons may speak to our sons, saying, ‘What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel?’”*

Note: They did not build this altar to offer sacrifices on it. They built it because they were worried that the future generations of the children of Israel (the children born to the 10 tribes on the western side of the Jordan River) would disregard a connection to the sons of Israel born to the 2.5 tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan. The eastern tribes desired to always be connected to the western tribes. They desired to always have access to the Lord God of Israel – allowed to enter into the place where He set His name. They built this altar so that they would not be segregated – seen as different and not as a part of the tribes because they lived in a different place.

Tomorrow: In the future.

Verse 25: *“For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD.’ So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the LORD.”*

Made the Jordan a border: The 2.5 tribes were concerned that the future generations would reject their descendants who lived on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

You have no part in the LORD: They wanted the future generations to know that they had a part in the Lord despite not living in the Promised land.

Verse 26: *“Therefore we said, ‘Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice,”*

Not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice: They never intended to use this altar for worship.

Verse 27: *“but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the LORD before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children tomorrow, ‘You have no portion in the LORD.’”*

A witness: A testimony. They did not build this altar as a place of worship. They built it as testimony to the future generations that they were a part of, connected to, the other ten tribes of Israel. They built this altar on the western side of the Jordan in order to show that even though they were on the eastern side they still had a place and an inheritance (their inheritance being the Lord) with the other tribes of Israel.

Verse 28: *“Therefore we said that it will be, when they say this to us or to our generations tomorrow, that we may say, ‘Here is the pattern of the altar of the LORD which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us.’”*

Not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices: Those on the eastern side of the Jordan recognised that Shiloh was where the true altar was – the altar where the sacrifices could be made.

Verse 29: *“Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn from following the LORD this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the LORD our God which is before His tabernacle.”*

Far be it from us: ‘God forbid!’ is what is implied here. They are saying this in the strongest way possible – an altar for sacrifice was never their intent.

Before His tabernacle: In Shiloh

Verse 30: *“Now when Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the congregation, the heads of the divisions of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them.”*

It pleased them: They approved of what the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh said to them.

Verse 31: *“Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, “Today we know that the LORD is in our midst, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.”*

The LORD is in our midst: A separation and a disunity had not occurred. The Spirit of the Lord brings unity. Disunity is an indication that someone has moved away from the truth. *You have not committed this treachery against the LORD:* Phinehas and the leaders of the ten western tribes had assumed that the eastern tribes had behaved treacherously. Now they knew, and it pleased them, that their assumptions had been wrong.

You have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD: If the tribes on the west had attacked the tribes on the east it would have brought God's judgment (a great destruction) upon them.

Verse 32: *“And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the leaders, returned from the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead back to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them.”*

Brought back word to them: They reported the truth of the matter to them.

Verse 33: *“So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.”*

The children of Israel blessed God: This is an idiom for worship.

They spoke no more of going against them: We should never act against others based on our impressions. If we have a problem (even a perceived problem) against others, we need to, in love, confront those we have a problem with. We need to listen to their response with an open mind. What we perceive their intention to be, may not be their intention at all. Right motivations can be perceived incorrectly.

Verse 34: *“The children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar, Witness, “For it is a witness among us that the LORD is God.”*

The LORD is God: The eastern tribes built this altar as a statement or as a testimony that the Lord is God. They had no intention of forsaking the Lord and nor did they ever want their descendants to forsake the Lord or be barred from worshipping Him.

Note: This chapter is a lesson in communication. When we operate on partial information or assumptions the outcome could be disastrous. If the western tribes had gone to war against the eastern tribes, the enemies of Israel in the land of Canaan would have benefitted hugely. When we do not do things God’s way, we are benefitting the enemy’s objectives and not the Lords.

Chapter 23

God frequently revealed to some of the great leaders of His people that they were approaching death. These leaders did not grieve and think only of themselves as their death approached, but they took this knowledge and served God and the people by imparting truth to the people one last time. Joshua was no exception. It was revealed to him that his death was approaching. He did not mourn his impending death, but he began to encourage the people to remain faithful to the instructions of God.

Verse 1: *“Now it came to pass, many days after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, and came into days.”*

The LORD had given rest to Israel: God is always faithful. He is loyal to His Word and to His people. God had brought the children of Israel into the Promised Land and there He had given them rest.

Joshua was old, and came into days: Joshua was coming to the end of his life.

Verse 2: *“And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: “I am old, advanced in age.”*

Joshua called for all Israel: Joshua is getting ready to depart from this world.

Heads: Those who were the leaders of each tribe.

Officers: In modern Hebrew this is the name given to the police officers. These were those who enforced the law and kept order within the country.

Verse 3: *“You have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations before you, for the LORD your God is He who has fought for you.”*

You have seen all that the LORD your God has done: They had seen and could give testimony to the faithfulness of God.

The LORD your God is He who has fought for you: The Israelites did not enter into the Promised land with a vast number of weapons. They were few in comparison to their enemies. They did not control the high places, the lookout points, etc. The only way that they could have taken possession of the land was if God had done it for them. And that is exactly what He did.

Fought for: Gone to war for. When we want what God wants for our lives, we can be assured that He will move to deliver us so that His desires (which have become our desires) can be fulfilled in our lives. When God does deliver us, and He allows us to ‘take possession of the land’, we need to be a good steward of what God gives to us. When we are not faithful to the instructions of God, we suffer loss.

Verse 4: *“See how I have caused to fall by lot the nations that are remaining, an inheritance for your tribes - from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward.”*

I: God is speaking.

An inheritance: It was only because God had fought for the children of Israel that this could have been the outcome. An inheritance speaks of the purposes of God. We receive an inheritance from God so that we can do/carry out the purposes of God.

From the Jordan... as far as the Great Sea westward: This marks the boundaries of the inheritance that the children of Israel were given.

Verse 5: *“And the Lord your God will push them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall inherit their land, just as the Lord your God has spoken to you.”*

You shall inherit: The word used here is a word that informs us that God caused the people to inherit. God inherited or took possession of the land before them. They moved into what God had accomplished for them.

Just as the Lord your God has spoken to you: Our expectation is that God is going to do exactly what He has said He will do. When we base our expectations of God upon what He said (upon His written word) we will never be disappointed. When we know what He has said we are able to position ourselves where He wants us to be so that we can benefit from His faithfulness. When we participate with God we benefit from His activity.

When we participate with God, we receive His provision to carry out His will. As we carry out His will, we bring Him glory. Our greatest desire should be to bring glory to God.

Verse 6: *“Therefore be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left,”*

Strong: The word used here is not the word for ‘courageous’, it is the word for being strong. What makes us strong? What should we do to receive the power that we need to be strong before God and before our enemies?

To keep and to do: This is how we become strong – we keep, and we do (ie place value upon and guard), what is written in the law of Moses. All aspects of the Word of the Lord (including the laws and the commandments) are relevant for our lives. Paul tells us in Romans 7:12 that the law is holy, just and good. In 1 Timothy 1:8 he tells Timothy that the law is good if we use it lawfully. In Romans 8:4 Paul teaches us that if we walk by the Spirit (and not according to our flesh) the righteous requirements (i.e. the intent) of the law is fulfilled in us.

Turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left: We need to be accurate with the Word of God – not turning to the right or left of it.

Verse 7: *“and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them,”*

You shall not make mention of the name of their gods: Do not remember or speak of the name of their gods.

To swear: To take an oath

Note: The implication here is that if we are not strong in the commandments of God it will be easy for us to turn aside and begin to assimilate with the people of the world (unbelievers) - reflecting the character of the nations, rather than reflecting the glory of God.

Verse 8: *“rather in the LORD your God cling, as you have done to this day.”*

Rather: Instead of following or talking about other gods (as in Joshua 23:7).

Cling: If we are not clinging or sticking to God, the enemy is going to move us into the character of those who belong to the nations – those who have no covenantal relationship with God. When we turn away from truth, we begin to embrace foreign gods and will begin to worship them.

As you have done to this day: Under Joshua’s leadership, these people had been faithful.

Verse 9: *“For the LORD inherited from before you great and strong nations; but as for you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day.”*

The LORD inherited: God took possession of these strong and large nations.

No one has been able to stand against you to this day: No one was able to successfully stand against the people of God under the leadership of Joshua.

Under Joshua's leadership, the children of Israel experienced victory (Similarly, through Messiah Yeshua we will be victorious).

Verse 10: *"One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, just as He spoke to you."*

The LORD your God is He who fights for you: They are victorious because the Lord fights for them. They did not need to fear their enemies, because the Lord (who they were in a covenantal relationship with) fought for them.

Just as He spoke to you: In the book of Joshua there has been an emphasis on the written and spoken Word of the Lord. When we know the written and spoken Word of God, the Holy Spirit gives us discernment and His perspective and wisdom in every single situation we find ourselves in. Knowing God's Word leads to us making good decisions.

Verse 11: *"Therefore your souls you guard, that you love the LORD your God."*

Your souls you guard: We need to live our lives in such a way that the very essence of who we are is submissive to God. The law of the Lord is an anchor for our faith. The laws teach us how our faith should function in this world. The laws guide us and give us clarity to know how the Spirit moves in our lives. The laws are not a means of salvation (ie we are not saved by keeping the law) but keeping the law is a fruit of salvation.

Love the LORD your God: This is how we guard our souls – by loving the Lord our God (John 14:15). When we love God, His Word is important to us. When God's Word is important to us, the Holy Spirit teaches us, through that Word that we love, how to live lives that are pleasing to God. In this way, we guard our souls.

Verse 12: *"Or else, if indeed you turn, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you,"*

If ...you ... cling to the remnant of these nations: If we don't cling to God (we cling to Him through His Word, instructions and commandments) we will cling to something else. Joshua warned the people to not cling to the nations.

Make marriages with them and go in to them and they to you: This is an unholy, unredeemed, mixture.

Verse 13: *"know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer take possession of these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you."*

God will no longer take possession: If the children of God mixed themselves with their enemy and followed after the world instead of after God, God would not take action against their enemies. The children of Israel would be left alone, with no Godly influence before the people.

Snares and traps: When we do not see things from God's perspective, we are in danger of walking down the wrong path and being completely destroyed or devastated (it would be the equivalent of a landmine going off under our feet).

Scourges on your sides: This is speaking of being flogged. This is a very painful thing to have to go through.

Thorns in your eyes: When we are disobeying God's Word, when we are not being a distinct or a peculiar people, it is like a thorn in our eyes. This would not only cause a great deal of pain, but it would also cause us to not see properly.

Perish from this good land: This land is synonymous with the will of God. We are not going to remain in His will if we forsake His instructions. God gave them this land for their well being. He gave it to them so that they could demonstrate their faith before Him. If they turned their backs on Him, however, they were going to lose what He had given to them.

Verse 14: *"Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed."*

Going the way of all the earth: He is going to die.

Not one word of them has failed: Joshua is speaking about the faithfulness of God. God is faithful to all the good things that He said. Not one thing was left undone.

Verse 15: *"Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all the evil things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you."*

(Evil): The word used here is not the word for 'harmful' but is the word for 'evil'. God is faithful to bring about His goodness (His will) in our lives. However, if we are not found to be in a position which is based upon faith, submissiveness and obedience to Him, then instead of receiving His will for our lives (His good) we are going to receive evil (evil is anything outside of God's will). God desires to bless us (it is His will to bless us), but if we are not "blessable" then He will curse us. It is neither God's will nor His desire to curse us.

Until He has destroyed you: It is not God's will to destroy His people. However, if His people depart from, ignore or turn aside from His instructions, they will be treated as the nations, and He will bring destruction upon them.

Verse 16: *"When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you."*

Note: This is a prophetic portion. Joshua knew that the people were going to transgress.

Transgressed: The word used here is a word for passing over – going beyond the boundaries that the Lord has set.

You shall perish quickly from the good land: The Northern tribes were taken out of the land of Israel by the Assyrians. A few years later, the Southern tribes were exiled from the land of Israel by the Babylonians.

The good land: The 'good' (i.e. according to the will of God) land has been emphasised in this passage. This land was given freely to the Israelites. When they lived there, they were living in the will of God.

However, when they forsook His will, God moved them out from the place where He wanted them to be. When they were out of His will, and out of His land, He brought destruction upon them.

Note: It is very clear that the children of Israel were either going to worship the God of Israel or they were going to fall into idolatry and worship false gods. In the last days, people are either going to accept (worship) Messiah as the Messiah or they are going to accept (worship) the antichrist.

Chapter 24

Part 1: Joshua 24:1-15

Verse 1: *“Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they took a stance before God.”*

Heads: The leaders of the tribes.

Took a stance: They positioned themselves before God. This implies humility. It implies that they trusted God. It also implies that they wanted to know the stability of the Lord in their lives - they came before Him because they wanted His rule to govern everything that the nation had become.

Verse 2: *“And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus said the LORD God of Israel: ‘On the other side of the River your forefathers dwelt from the ancient of days, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.’”*

Israel: Israel is a Kingdom word. Joshua was concerned about instilling in the people the mindset that they were a Kingdom people (Exodus 19:5-6). The purpose of Israel (a covenant people) was to be a holy nation, a Kingdom of priests serving before the Lord.

River: The river being spoken of here is not the Jordan River, but it is speaking about the Euphrates River.

From the ancient of days: From a long time ago.

Served: Worshipped

They served other gods: They were involved in idolatry.

Verse 3: *“Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him into the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed and gave to him Isaac.”*

Led him: God led Abraham. God moved Abraham. God brought about change in Abraham’s life.

Isaac: The child of promise.

Note: Abraham turned away from serving the foreign gods of his fathers. What made Abraham different? What made him turn from the gods of his father and forefathers (which they had worshipped from ancient times)? Abraham did not have the Scripture, but he did have a conscience (Romans 2:14-16). Through his conscience he would have examined what was being done around him. God is able to speak to us through our consciences. Obviously, it is better to have the Holy Spirit guiding us and the Scripture influencing us, but for those who have neither the Holy Spirit nor Scripture their conscience’s work to a degree.

When we become born again, we become a new creation – regenerated by the Spirit of God. As the Spirit regenerates us, we can grow in our understanding of what God’s expectations are. Those who truly believe will want to fulfill God’s expectations for their lives – to be faithful to God, like the patriarchs were.

Gave to him Isaac: God fulfilled His promise to Abraham: Isaac was the child of promise.

Verse 4: *“To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.”*

To Esau I gave: Esau was a perverse, immoral and ungodly man. Malachi tells us that God hates Esau (Malachi 1:2-3), and yet we see that God gave him a possession.

Jacob and his children went down to Egypt: Due to sin, Jacob and his sons found themselves in bondage, enslaved. Sin leads us into bondage. The brothers sinned against Joseph, and soon after that, God took His covenant people, who were outside of His will, into Egypt, into bondage for a time of discipline (God disciplines those He loves).

Verse 5: *“Also I sent Moses and Aaron, and I struck Egypt with a plague, according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out.”*

What I did among them: God struck Egypt in the midst of His people - they saw the hand of God. And then God led them out of Egypt.

Verse 6: *“Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea.”*

Verse 7: *“So they screamed out to the LORD; and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them, and covered them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. Then you dwelt in the wilderness for many days.”*

Darkness: The word used here is for a thick, unnatural and unique darkness.

Darkness between you and the Egyptians: God moved miraculously. He became their defender. God defends us from our enemy, and He makes us victorious.

Covered them: The Egyptians who pursued the Israelites drowned in the Sea.

You dwelt in the wilderness for many days: As miraculous as the crossing of the Red Sea was, even more miraculous was that the Israelites were able to dwell in the desert for 40 years.

This is supernatural. The desert is an empty place that has no provision. And yet God provided for hundreds of thousands of people to live in the desert for 40 years!

Verse 8: *“And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they went to war against you. But I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land, and I destroyed them from before you.”*

I destroyed them from before you: Why did God move on behalf of one nation against another? Because one nation had a covenant with God and the other nation did not. If we want God to move in our lives (if we want His Presence, revelation, provision, etc), we need to be in a covenantal relationship with Him. Today there is only one covenant that we can enter into – the New Covenant, which is through the blood of Messiah Yeshua.

The New Covenant was made with better promises. These promises are available to Jew and Gentile alike. They are available to ALL who call on the name of the Lord for salvation.

Verse 9: *“Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you.”*

Note: Joshua is reminding the people of the faithfulness of God. God had done so much for them. God’s faithfulness should cause us to trust and depend upon Him.

Balak ... arose to make war: There is always an enemy. In every season of our lives there is an enemy that seeks to destroy us. We do not need to fear this enemy, but, in every season of our lives, we need to fear God (give Him priority in our lives) and He will give us victory over our enemies.

Balak...called Balaam: Balak wanted supernatural assistance, so he went to a sorcerer. God gave Balaam truth, but Balaam did not want to submit to God’s truth because he loved the wages of evil. He was a false prophet who only cared about profit.

Verse 10: *“But I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he continued to (bless) you. But I saved you out of his hand.”*

Bless: There is something unusual about Hebrew. Sometimes we have a word for ‘holiness’ but it’s used in a construction that means the opposite. Sometimes we have a word for ‘blessing’ but it means the exact opposite – i.e. curse. Balaam taught Balak how to cause Israel to stumble/commit idolatry so that God’s face would be turned away from Israel (Revelation 2:14). Balaam was not a blessing to Israel. He was a curse to them.

Verse 11: *“Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you—also the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I gave them into your hand.”*

I delivered them into your hand: God led His people. When they arrived in the Promised land, God led them from one war into another. However, God delivered them each time. When we are listening to God, and are committed to obeying His instructions, no one will be able to stand against us – we will have the victory. Disobedience (as we saw with Achan – Joshua 7) brings about devastation.

I gave them into your hand: They were in a covenantal relationship with God and so were victorious – because God is always committed to His covenantal promises.

Verse 12: *“I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, also the two kings of the Amorites, but not with your sword or with your bow.”*

The hornet ... drove them out from before you: God used natural means to secure a supernatural victory.

The two kings of the Amorites: Sihon and Og. These kings are often mentioned in Scripture, because they were powerful and had massive armies. This was not a problem for God. He easily and miraculously defeated them.

Not with your sword or with your bow: God moved miraculously for His people and brought about a supernatural victory when He defeated these two kings.

Verse 13: *"I have given you a land for which you did not labour, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant."*

Note: God blesses, and supplies the needs of, the people that He is in covenant with.

Verse 14: *"Now, therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord!"*

Now: This is a word for urgency. This is not something that should be put off. It should be urgent.

Fear...serve Him...put away: God provides for and protects His covenant people. This is how we should respond to Him – fear Him (give Him priority in every area of our lives), serve Him and only worship Him.

Sincerity: This is a word that has to do with abundant purity (blamelessly).

The gods which your fathers served: False gods.

The other side of the River: Referring to the Euphrates River. God took Abraham away from the false gods his father served, and God led the Israelites away from Egypt and the false gods they served there. God's desire is to bring His people out from the places where false gods are served. He wants to bring us into a place where He alone is served and worshipped.

Serve the Lord!: We are called to desire to fulfil God's expectations for our lives (i.e. we are called to be committed to His instructions).

Verse 15: *"And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But I and my house will serve the LORD."*

The gods of the Amorites: The gods of a defeated people. Do we want to serve the gods of people who are living in defeat? Or do we want to serve the God who gives His people victory?

I and my house will serve the LORD: Joshua was sincerely committed to and chose publically, in light of his faith, to serve the only true God – the God of Israel.

Chapter 24

Part 2: Joshua 24:16-33

Joshua wanted his life to be founded on truth. As a result, he made a profession that he and his household were going to wholeheartedly serve the Lord. Joshua's desire was that the children of Israel would respond to the faithfulness of God and that they would walk faithfully in His way.

Verse 16: *"So the people answered and said: "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods;"*

Note: They are making a statement of commitment. They did not have a desire to be idolaters, but they had a desire to serve God faithfully.

Verse 17: *"for the Lord is our God for He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves, who did those great signs before our eyes, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed"*

Preserved us in all the way that we went: God had brought them on this journey. He had caused them to pass through dangerous places and among dangerous people, but they had not been defeated or put to death. As we walk with God we are going to encounter opposition. Many in this world stand against the purposes of God. God, however, is greater than any opposition we could face. He is the One who leads us into victory.

Verse 18: *"And the Lord cast out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God."*

We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God: The people had seen the faithfulness of God. They had been delivered from their enemies and God had brought them into His promise. They responded to God, acknowledging Him as their Judge ('Elohim' is the name of God that reminds us that He is the God who judges us. Judgment is a good thing. It is related to the order of God.

Verse 19: *"But Joshua said to the people, "No! You are not able to serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not lift up your transgressions nor your sins."*

You are not able to serve the Lord: There have been many times in Israel's history when they should have requested Messiah, but, as a nation, they did not. When Moses was called to bring the people into the land, he wanted to know where the Messiah (The 'Way') was – who God was going to send with him (Exodus 33:12-13). The people, however, did not think in the way that Moses thought. They had experienced physical redemption (God had brought them up from the land of bondage) but spiritually they had not changed. They had rejected God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:18-19) and were not in a spiritual condition to serve God. They were still in the flesh.

When Joshua was making his profession of faith, the people should have requested Messiah to come and redeem them, to change them and cause them to be a new creation – but they did not do so. A time is coming, yet future, when they will, as a nation, call for Messiah (Matthew 23:37-39).

He is a jealous God: God is zealous for His truth and His commandments.

He will not lift up your transgressions nor your sins: Yeshua had not paid the price yet. The people were still burdened (weighed down) by their sin. When we are weighed down by sin, we cannot carry out the purposes of God. The people did not understand their condition. They did not realise that they needed regeneration – to become a new (Kingdom) creation. It is only when we are a new creation, no longer burdened by the weight of sin, that we are going to be able to truly serve God.

Verse 20: *“For you will leave the Lord and serve foreign gods, and return to the evil that will be to you, and He will bring an end to you after which He has done good for you.”*

Leave: Without redemption, we cannot stay close to the Lord. Without redemption, we soon abandon Him.

Return to the evil: No matter what good intentions we may have, without redemption we will always return to sin. God may have blessed us and done mighty works in our lives, but if we have not been regenerated (by faith, through the redeeming work of Messiah) we will not be in a spiritual condition that is able to do good (i.e. the will of the Lord).

Verse 21: *“And the people said to Joshua, “No, but we will serve the Lord!”*

No: Joshua was a man of faithfulness. He had been in the Presence of God and had been mightily used by God in a unique way. However, here we see the people disagreeing with Joshua.

We will serve the Lord: There is no doubt that the people were sincere. They truly desired to serve the Lord. They were, however, not in a spiritual condition to carry out this service to the Lord.

Verse 22: *“So Joshua said to the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him. And they said, ‘We are witnesses!’”*

Joshua said to the people: Joshua is clarifying for them what they are committing themselves to.

You are witnesses against yourselves: God was listening, and He heard them committing themselves to serving Him. They testified that they understood the nature of God and that they understood the responsibility that they had toward God when they pledged themselves to obeying and serving Him. The problem was, however, that they were not in a new condition. They were not regenerated and did not have the help of the Holy Spirit to enable them to do what they were pledging themselves to do. It is only through being born again (being IN Messiah) that we have the capacity to carry out the testimony of wanting to serve God. This is what Joshua is revealing to the people.

Verse 23: *“Now therefore,’ he said, ‘**remove the foreign gods which are in your midst, and turn your hearts to the Lord God of Israel.**”*

Remove the foreign gods: To serve God it is required of us to get rid of the things which are in conflict with Him.

Turn your hearts: To incline, to move toward, to set our heart upon.

The Lord God of Israel: Israel is a Kingdom word. Joshua’s message to the people is this: They had pledged their allegiance and devotion to serving the Lord. God, therefore, expected them to behave like Kingdom people. The problem was that they were not in a Kingdom covenant (they were not a New Covenant people). They were ill equipped to carry out their promises. New Covenant people, through faith in Messiah Yeshua and having the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, have an entirely different ability and capacity when compared to the Old Covenant people. Every believer has the anointing and power of Messiah upon them to carry out the will of God. This group were not in the condition that we find ourselves in as New Covenant believers.

Verse 24: *“And the people said to Joshua, “The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!”*

The people said: The people testified that they knew that God was a holy God. They knew His expectations for their lives and His commandments. They thought that in their own strength they would be able to do what they had promised. The problem was this: they would not be able to do so.

Verse 25: *“So Joshua cut a covenant with the people on that day and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.”*

Joshua cut a covenant with the people: Because of the people’s proclamation, Joshua made a covenant with them before God. This was not part of the new covenant – it was not a covenant ratified with the blood of the Son of God. Therefore, the people were not going to walk in faithfulness to this covenant.

On that day: In Hebrew, whenever this word appears it is often as a foreshadowing of judgment.

Statute: A law

An ordinance: A judgment. Joshua laid down the law before the people, as well as how they were going to be judged if they did not uphold the laws they had pledged themselves to uphold.

Verse 26: *“Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he (Joshua) took a large stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord.”*

The Law of God: There is a change. Up to this point this book has been referred to as the “law of Moses”. This name ‘The Law of God’ foreshadows a Kingdom people. These people were called, and obligated, to live in the way that Kingdom people live. As Kingdom people, we are called to live according to the Laws of God. These people, at this time, obligated themselves to live as Kingdom people, but they were not in a Kingdom position to do so.

The sanctuary: Referring to the Holy of holies.

Verse 27: *“And Joshua said to all the people, “Behold, this stone shall be against you for a witness, for it has heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be against you for a witness, if you deny your God.”*

Behold: This is a word that means to pay attention to, because what is to follow is important.

Witness: Testimony

Deny your God: To deny God means not to acknowledge Him in all of our ways. On the day that they made this covenant, they pledged absolute and total obedience to God. God was not going to forgive them if they sinned (Joshua 24:19), and they would be held completely accountable before God of their acts and omissions. This is where the Old and New Covenants differ hugely. In a New Covenant relationship with God, through faith in Messiah Yeshua, even though we may struggle and sin, God has promised us that He will ‘remember our sins no more’ (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:12).

Verse 28: *“So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.”*

Each to his own inheritance: The tribes all went to their respective locations - to the plots of land that they had received.

Verse 29: *“Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old.”*

Ten: This is the number used Biblically to speak of completion. 10 is the base number for 100 (10x10). Joshua was a man who had served God fully. He had entirely and completely obeyed God. This does not mean that Joshua was perfect, but he was predominantly faithful to God and to the instructions of God.

Verse 30: *“And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.”*

Ephraim: The name Ephraim means ‘fruitful, fertile and productive’. It is no coincidence that Joshua was buried in a place that was a reminder of abundant fruitfulness. Joshua’s life had been lived in an abundantly fruitful way.

Verse 31: *“Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel.”*

All the days of the elders who outlived Joshua: Part of Joshua’s fruitfulness was that he had raised up elders who were true to the Word of God.

Known all the works of the Lord: These elders had an experiential knowledge. They knew, first-hand, what God had done for them.

Verse 32: *“The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.”*

The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem: The book of Joshua ends with a very important concept: resurrection.

Brought up out of Egypt: In Egypt, the people had been dead in their bondage. Through the blood of the Passover lamb, they had come up out of Egypt. This was a type of resurrection. Joseph had had faith that his people would leave Egypt, and he did not want his bones to be left in exile. Joseph desired to be buried in the land of Israel.

Verse 33: *“And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill belonging to Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.”*

Eleazar the son of Aaron: Joshua was the spiritual leader, but he also had a priest by his side. Joshua trusted Eleazar’s counsel. Eleazar, the high priest, was a blessing to Joshua.

Phinehas: When Eleazar died, Phinehas took over as the high priest in Israel.

Ephraim: Eleazar was also seen as abundantly fruitful in his lifetime. When the word ‘Ephraim’ appears in a passage it should remind us of fruitfulness. Through faith, and in obedience, we are called to bear/produce much fruit (John 15:5).