

JOSHUA

Joshua believed that God is all-powerful.

Joshua believed that God always keeps His promises.

Joshua believed that God would always be with him.

Today we live in a time when the world system seems to be winning, and the church seems to be losing. The church is under attack from popular opinion.

God expects us to be like soldiers.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 Share in the troubles we have like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ A soldier wants to please the enlisting officer, so no one serving in the army wastes time with everyday matters.

Today many Christians do not look like soldiers; they look more like prisoners of war. The book of Joshua tells us how to be victorious soldiers. Joshua teaches us how we can receive our spiritual inheritance in Jesus Christ. We learn how to be strong and full of courage when the enemy confronts us. And we learn how to claim new territory for the Lord.

The book of Joshua is the book of new beginnings for the people of God. Many Christians today need a new beginning. The people of Israel had traveled for 40 years through the wilderness. Now they were ready to share the treasures of their inheritance.

Joshua seems like the main character of the book, but the main character really is God. When the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, Joshua reminded them that the living God was among them. God Himself would overcome the enemy. Joshua wanted all the people on the earth to know the Lord and fear Him. At the end of his life Joshua gave God all the glory.

Joshua was born a slave in Egypt. When he was born, he was named “Hoshea” which means “salvation.” (Numbers 13:8) Moses changed his name to “Joshua” which means “God is salvation.” (Numbers 13:16) Joshua is the Hebrew form of the name Jesus.

Joshua was a helper (servant) to Moses. (Exodus 24:13)

Joshua was one of the 12 spies who looked at the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb were the only two spies who believed God would give Israel victory.

Moses led the nation of Israel out of Egypt (slavery), up to the Promised Land (freedom). But then Moses died, and Joshua was chosen to lead the nation of Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Joshua was a very successful soldier. He led many battles so that Israel could overcome the enemy and occupy the Promised Land.

There were four different geographic locations in Joshua’s life.

1. Egypt. A place of death, bondage and slavery. Like where we lived before we made Jesus our Lord.
2. The Red Sea. They went through the Sea to safety. Our salvation is through faith in Jesus.

3. The wilderness. That is like Christians who live in unbelief and disobedience. Instead of marching through life like conquerors, they wander through life and never enjoy the fullness of what God has planned for them.
4. The Promised Land (Canaan). This represents what our Christian life should be: conflict, victory, faith, obedience, spiritual riches and rest.

A victorious Christian life is not a once-and-for-all triumph that ends all our problems. It is a series of conflicts and victories. We defeat one enemy then another enemy appears. We have more victories. We claim more of our inheritance in the glorious kingdom of God.

Examine your own life. Are you wandering in the wilderness or are you living as an overcomer? Just like God's instructions to Joshua, God wants us to ENTER the promised land, OVERCOME the enemy, and OCCUPY the land with victory!

God Encourages His Leaders

Encouragement from God's commission

Joshua 1:1 After Moses, the servant of the Lord, died, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. ² The Lord said, "My servant Moses is dead. Now you and all these people go across the Jordan River into the land I am giving to the Israelites.

Hebrews 2:10 God is the One who made all things, and all things are for his glory. He wanted to have many children share his glory, so he made the One who leads people to salvation perfect through suffering.

Encouragement from God's promises

Joshua 1:3 I promised Moses I would give you this land, so I will give you every place you go in the land. ⁴ All the land from the desert in the south to Lebanon in the north will be yours. All the land from the great river, the Euphrates, in the east, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west will be yours, too, including the land of the Hittites. ⁵ No one will be able to defeat you all your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forget you. ⁶ "Joshua, be strong and brave! You must lead these people so they can take the land that I promised their fathers I would give them.

Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world.

Revelation 3:8 I know what you do. I have put an open door before you, which no one can close. I know you have little strength, but you have obeyed my teaching and were not afraid to speak my name.

Encouragement from God's written Word

Joshua 1:7 Be strong and brave. Be sure to obey all the teachings my servant Moses gave you. If you follow them exactly, you will be successful in everything you do. ⁸ Always remember what is written in the Book of the Teachings. Study it day and night to be sure to

obey everything that is written there. If you do this, you will be wise and successful in everything.

Psalm 1:2 They love the Lord's teachings, and they think about those teachings day and night.

Encouragement from God's commandment

Joshua 1:9 Remember that I commanded you to be strong and brave. Don't be afraid, because the Lord your God will be with you everywhere you go."

Luke 1:37 God can do anything!

The Leader Encourages The Officers

Joshua 1:10 Then Joshua gave orders to the officers of the people: ¹¹ "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your supplies ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan River and take the land the Lord your God is giving you.'" ¹² Then Joshua said to the people of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh, ¹³ "Remember what Moses, the servant of the Lord, told you. He said the Lord your God would give you rest and would give you this land. ¹⁴ Now the Lord has given you this land east of the Jordan River. Your wives, children, and animals may stay here, but your fighting men must dress for war and cross the Jordan River ahead of your brothers to help them. ¹⁵ The Lord has given you a place to rest and will do the same for your brothers. But you must help them until they take the land the Lord their God is giving them. Then you may return to your own land east of the Jordan River, the land that Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave you."

(12)... **Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh**... 136,930 men ready for battle. But only 40,000 fought in the battle. The others stayed and protected the women and children.

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing the Good News, and people hear the Good News when someone tells them about Christ.

The Officers Encourage Their Leader

Joshua 1:16 Then the people answered Joshua, "Anything you command us to do, we will do. Any place you send us, we will go. ¹⁷ Just as we fully obeyed Moses, we will obey you. We ask only that the Lord your God be with you just as he was with Moses. ¹⁸ Whoever refuses to obey your commands or turns against you will be put to death. Just be strong and brave!"

"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?" Corrie ten Boom

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his great power.

A CONVERT IN CANAAN

Courageous Faith

Joshua 2:1 Joshua son of Nun secretly sent out two spies from Acacia and said to them, "Go and look at the land, particularly at the city of Jericho." So the men went to Jericho and stayed at the house of a prostitute named Rahab. ² Someone told the king of Jericho, "Some men

from Israel have come here tonight to spy out the land.”³ So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house. They have come to spy out our whole land.”⁴ But the woman had hidden the two men. She said, “They did come here, but I didn’t know where they came from.”⁵ In the evening, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know where they went, but if you go quickly, maybe you can catch them.”⁶ (The woman had taken the men up to the roof and had hidden them there under stalks of flax that she had spread out.)⁷ So the king’s men went out looking for the spies on the road that leads to the crossings of the Jordan River. The city gate was closed just after the king’s men left the city.

Hebrews 11:31 It was by faith that Rahab, the prostitute, welcomed the spies and was not killed with those who refused to obey God.

James 2:25 Another example is Rahab, a prostitute, who was made right with God by something she did. She welcomed the spies into her home and helped them escape by a different road.

Confident Faith

Joshua 2:8 Before the spies went to sleep for the night, Rahab went up to the roof.⁹ She said to them, “I know the Lord has given this land to your people. You frighten us very much. Everyone living in this land is terribly afraid of you¹⁰ because we have heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea when you came out of Egypt. We have heard how you destroyed Sihon and Og, two Amorite kings who lived east of the Jordan.¹¹ When we heard this, we were very frightened. Now our men are afraid to fight you because the Lord your God rules the heavens above and the earth below!

Concerned Faith

Joshua 2:12 So now, promise me before the Lord that you will show kindness to my family just as I showed kindness to you. Give me some proof that you will do this.¹³ Allow my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all of their families to live. Save us from death.”¹⁴ The men agreed and said, “It will be our lives for your lives if you don’t tell anyone what we are doing. When the Lord gives us the land, we will be kind and true to you.”

Proverbs 11:30 A good person gives life to others; the wise person teaches others how to live.

Covenant Faith

Joshua 2:15 The house Rahab lived in was built on the city wall, so she used a rope to let the men down through a window.¹⁶ She said to them, “Go into the hills so the king’s men will not find you. Hide there for three days. After the king’s men return, you may go on your way.”¹⁷ The men said to her, “You must do as we say. If not, we cannot be responsible for keeping this oath you have made us swear.¹⁸ When we return to this land, you must tie this red rope in the window through which you let us down. Bring your father, mother, brothers, and all your family into your house.¹⁹ If anyone leaves your house and is killed, it is his own fault. We cannot be responsible for him. If anyone in your house is hurt, we will be responsible.²⁰ But if you tell anyone about this, we will be free from the oath you made us swear.”²¹ Rahab answered, “I agree to this.” So she sent them away, and they left. Then she tied the red rope in the window.²² The men left and went into the hills where they stayed for three days. The king’s

men looked for them all along the road, but after three days, they returned to the city without finding them. ²³ Then the two men started back. They left the hills and crossed the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them. ²⁴ They said, “The Lord surely has given us all of the land. All the people in that land are terribly afraid of us.”

The people of Israel were not yet ready to cross the river and conquer the enemy. They still had “unfinished business” to take care of before they could be sure of the blessing of the Lord.

FORWARD BY FAITH

The Word of Faith

The officers’ message to the people

Joshua 3:1 Early the next morning Joshua and all the Israelites left Acacia. They traveled to the Jordan River and camped there before crossing it. ² After three days the officers went through the camp ³ and gave orders to the people: “When you see the priests and Levites carrying the Ark of the Agreement with the Lord your God, leave where you are and follow it. ⁴ That way you will know which way to go since you have never been here before. But do not follow too closely. Stay about a thousand yards behind the Ark.”

Joshua’s message to the people

Joshua 3:5 Then Joshua told the people, “Make yourselves holy, because tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.”

Psalm 77:13-14 God, your ways are holy. No god is as great as our God. ¹⁴ You are the God who does miracles; you have shown people your power.

Joshua’s message to the priests

Joshua 3:6 Joshua said to the priests, “Take the Ark of the Agreement and go ahead of the people.” So the priests lifted the Ark and carried it ahead of the people.

The Lord’s message to Joshua

Joshua 3:7 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to make you great in the opinion of all the Israelites so the people will know I am with you just as I was with Moses. ⁸ Tell the priests who carry the Ark of the Agreement to go to the edge of the Jordan River and stand in the water.”

Joshua’s message to the people

Joshua 3:9 Then Joshua said to the Israelites, “Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. ¹⁰ Here is proof that the living God is with you and that he will force out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites. ¹¹ The Ark of the Agreement with the Lord of the whole world will go ahead of you into the Jordan River. ¹² Now choose twelve men from among you, one from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³ The priests will carry the Ark of the Lord, the Master of the whole world, into the Jordan ahead of you.

When they step into the water, it will stop. The river will stop flowing and will stand up in a heap.”

James 2:26 Just as a person’s body that does not have a spirit is dead, so faith that does nothing is dead!

Romans 10:8 This is what the Scripture says: “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart.” That is the teaching of faith that we are telling.

The Walk of Faith

Joshua 3:14 So the people left the place where they had camped, and they followed the priests who carried the Ark of the Agreement across the Jordan River. ¹⁵ During harvest the Jordan overflows its banks. When the priests carrying the Ark came to the edge of the river and stepped into the water, ¹⁶ the water upstream stopped flowing. It stood up in a heap a great distance away at Adam, a town near Zarethan. The water flowing down to the Sea of Arabah (the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed the river near Jericho. ¹⁷ The priests carried the Ark of the Agreement with the Lord to the middle of the river and stood there on dry ground. They waited there while all the people of Israel walked across the Jordan River on dry land.

Psalm 47:4 He chose the land we would inherit. We are the children of Jacob, whom he loved.

The Witness of Faith

The stones placed at Gilgal (see 4:19)

Joshua 4:1 After all the people had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, ² “Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe. ³ Tell them to get twelve rocks from the middle of the river, from where the priests stood. Carry the rocks and put them down where you stay tonight.” ⁴ So Joshua chose one man from each tribe. Then he called the twelve men together ⁵ and said to them, “Go out into the river where the Ark of the Lord your God is. Each of you bring back one rock, one for each tribe of Israel, and carry it on your shoulder. ⁶ They will be a sign among you. In the future your children will ask you, ‘What do these rocks mean?’ ⁷ Tell them the water stopped flowing in the Jordan when the Ark of the Agreement with the Lord crossed the river. These rocks will always remind the Israelites of this.” ⁸ So the Israelites obeyed Joshua and carried twelve rocks from the middle of the Jordan River, one rock for each of the twelve tribes of Israel, just as the Lord had commanded Joshua. They carried the rocks with them and put them down where they made their camp.

Joshua set up the monument in the middle of the river

Joshua 4:9 Joshua also put twelve rocks in the middle of the Jordan River where the priests had stood while carrying the Ark of the Agreement. These rocks are still there today.

1 John 5:4 because everyone who is a child of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world—our faith.

The Israelites entered the Promised Land

Joshua 4:10 The priests carrying the Ark continued standing in the middle of the river until everything was done that the Lord had commanded Joshua to tell the people, just as Moses had told Joshua. The people hurried across the river. ¹¹ After they finished crossing the river, the priests carried the Ark of the Lord to the other side as the people watched. ¹² The men from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and East Manasseh obeyed what Moses had told them. They were dressed for war, and they crossed the river ahead of the other people. ¹³ About forty thousand soldiers prepared for war passed before the Lord as they marched across the river, going toward the plains of Jericho. ¹⁴ That day the Lord made Joshua great in the opinion of all the Israelites. They respected Joshua all his life, just as they had respected Moses. ¹⁵ Then the Lord said to Joshua, ¹⁶ “Command the priests to bring the Ark of the Agreement out of the river.” ¹⁷ So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up out of the Jordan.” ¹⁸ Then the priests carried the Ark of the Agreement with the Lord out of the river. As soon as their feet touched dry land, the water began flowing again. The river again overflowed its banks, just as it had before they crossed. ¹⁹ The people crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and camped at Gilgal, east of Jericho. ²⁰ They carried with them the twelve rocks taken from the Jordan, and Joshua set them up at Gilgal. ²¹ Then he spoke to the Israelites: “In the future your children will ask you, ‘What do these rocks mean?’ ²² Tell them, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry land. ²³ The Lord your God caused the water to stop flowing until you finished crossing it, just as the Lord did to the Red Sea. He stopped the water until we crossed it. ²⁴ The Lord did this so all people would know he has great power and so you would always respect the Lord your God.’”

They were in the Promised Land, but they were not yet ready to meet their enemy. There was still some spiritual preparation needed – for the people and also for Joshua.

PREPARING FOR VICTORY

Renewing the Lord’s Covenant

Joshua 5:1 All the kings of the Amorites west of the Jordan and the Canaanite kings living by the Mediterranean Sea heard that the Lord dried up the Jordan River until the Israelites had crossed it. After that they were scared and too afraid to face the Israelites.

Restoring their covenant relationship

Joshua 5:2 At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make knives from flint stones and circumcise the Israelites.” ³ So Joshua made knives from flint stones and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth. ⁴ This is why Joshua circumcised the men: After the Israelites left Egypt, all the men old enough to serve in the army died in the desert on the way out of Egypt. ⁵ The men who had come out of Egypt had been circumcised, but none of those who were born in the desert on the trip from Egypt had been circumcised. ⁶ The Israelites had moved about in the desert for forty years. During that time all the fighting men who had left Egypt had died because they had not obeyed the Lord. So the Lord swore they would not see the land he had promised their ancestors to give them, a fertile land. ⁷ Their sons took their places. But none of the sons born on the trip from Egypt had been circumcised, so Joshua circumcised them.

Testing their faith

Joshua 5:8 After all the Israelites had been circumcised, they stayed in camp until they were healed.

Hebrews 6:12 We do not want you to become lazy. Be like those who through faith and patience will receive what God has promised.

Removing their disgrace and shame

Joshua 5:9 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “As slaves in Egypt you were ashamed, but today I have removed that shame.” So Joshua named that place Gilgal, which it is still named today.

Remembering the Lord’s Goodness

Preparing the people to eat the Passover

Joshua 5:10 The people of Israel were camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho. It was there, on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, they celebrated the Passover Feast. ¹¹ The day after the Passover, the people ate food grown on that land: bread made without yeast and roasted grain. ¹² The day they ate this food, the manna stopped coming. The Israelites no longer got the manna from heaven. They ate the food grown in the land of Canaan that year.

Proclaiming the Lord’s presence

Joshua 5:13 Joshua was near Jericho when he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a sword in his hand. Joshua went to him and asked, “Are you a friend or an enemy?” ¹⁴ The man answered, “I am neither. I have come as the commander of the Lord’s army.” Then Joshua bowed facedown on the ground and asked, “Does my master have a command for me, his servant?” ¹⁵ The commander of the Lord’s army answered, “Take off your sandals, because the place where you are standing is holy.” So Joshua did.

THE CONQUERING BEGINS

Before the Challenge: Remember We Fight FROM Victory and FOR Victory

The fear of the Lord

Joshua 6:1 The people of Jericho were afraid because the Israelites were near. They closed the city gates and guarded them. No one went into the city, and no one came out.

The promise of the Lord

Joshua 6:2 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Look, I have given you Jericho, its king, and all its fighting men.

The instructions of the Lord

Joshua 6:3 March around the city with your army once a day for six days. ⁴ Have seven priests carry trumpets made from horns of male sheep and have them march in front of the Ark. On the seventh day march around the city seven times and have the priests blow the trumpets as they march. ⁵ They will make one long blast on the trumpets. When you hear that sound, have all the people give a loud shout. Then the walls of the city will fall so the people can go straight into the city.”

John 12:31 Now is the time for the world to be judged; now the ruler of this world will be thrown down.

Romans 8:31 So what should we say about this? If God is for us, no one can defeat us.

During the Challenge: Remember We Overcome the Enemy by Faith

Joshua 6:6 So Joshua son of Nun called the priests together and said to them, “Carry the Ark of the Agreement. Tell seven priests to carry trumpets and march in front of it.” ⁷ Then Joshua ordered the people, “Now go! March around the city. The soldiers with weapons should march in front of the Ark of the Agreement with the Lord.” ⁸ When Joshua finished speaking to the people, the seven priests began marching before the Lord. They carried the seven trumpets and blew them as they marched. The priests carrying the Ark of the Agreement with the Lord followed them. ⁹ Soldiers with weapons marched in front of the priests, and armed men walked behind the Ark. The priests were blowing their trumpets. ¹⁰ But Joshua had told the people not to give a war cry. He said, “Don’t shout. Don’t say a word until the day I tell you. Then shout.” ¹¹ So Joshua had the Ark of the Lord carried around the city one time. Then they went back to camp for the night. ¹² Early the next morning Joshua got up, and the priests carried the Ark of the Lord again. ¹³ The seven priests carried the seven trumpets and marched in front of the Ark of the Lord, blowing their trumpets. Soldiers with weapons marched in front of them, and other soldiers walked behind the Ark of the Lord. All this time the priests were blowing their trumpets. ¹⁴ So on the second day they marched around the city one time and then went back to camp. They did this every day for six days. ¹⁵ On the seventh day they got up at dawn and marched around the city, just as they had on the days before. But on that day they marched around the city seven times. ¹⁶ The seventh time around the priests blew their trumpets. Then Joshua gave the command: “Now, shout! The Lord has given you this city!

After the Victory: Remember to Obey God’s Commands and Give Him the Glory

Devote the entire city to God

Joshua 6:17 The city and everything in it are to be destroyed as an offering to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and everyone in her house should remain alive. They must not be killed, because Rahab hid the two spies we sent out. ¹⁸ Don’t take any of the things that are to be destroyed as an offering to the Lord. If you take them and bring them into our camp, you yourselves will be destroyed, and you will bring trouble to all of Israel. ¹⁹ All the silver and gold and things made from bronze and iron belong to the Lord and must be saved for him.”

Rescue Rahab and her family

Joshua 6:20 When the priests blew the trumpets, the people shouted. At the sound of the trumpets and the people's shout, the walls fell, and everyone ran straight into the city. So the Israelites defeated that city. ²¹ They completely destroyed with the sword every living thing in the city—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, and donkeys. ²² Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house. Bring her out and bring out those who are with her, because of the promise you made to her." ²³ So the two men went into the house and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, and all those with her. They put all of her family in a safe place outside the camp of Israel. ²⁴ Then Israel burned the whole city and everything in it, but they did not burn the things made from silver, gold, bronze, and iron. These were saved for the Lord. ²⁵ Joshua saved Rahab the prostitute, her family, and all who were with her, because Rahab had helped the men he had sent to spy out Jericho. Rahab still lives among the Israelites today. ²⁶ Then Joshua made this oath: "Anyone who tries to rebuild this city of Jericho will be cursed by the Lord. The one who lays the foundation of this city will lose his oldest son, and the one who sets up the gates will lose his youngest son."²⁷ So the Lord was with Joshua, and Joshua became famous through all the land.

DEFEAT IN THE LAND OF VICTORY

The Disobedient Soldier

Joshua 7:1 But the Israelites did not obey the Lord. There was a man from the tribe of Judah named Achan. (He was the son of Carmi and grandson of Zabdi, who was the son of Zerah.) Because Achan kept some of the things that were to be given to the Lord, the Lord became very angry at the Israelites.

Matthew 6:33 Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well.

A Defeated Army

Joshua 7:2 Joshua sent some men from Jericho to Ai, which was near Beth Aven, east of Bethel. He told them, "Go to Ai and spy out the area." So the men went to spy on Ai. ³ Later they came back to Joshua and said, "There are only a few people in Ai, so we will not need all our people to defeat them. Send only two or three thousand men to fight. There is no need to send all of our people." ⁴ So about three thousand men went up to Ai, but the people of Ai beat them badly. ⁵ The people of Ai killed about thirty-six Israelites and then chased the rest from the city gate all the way down to the canyon, killing them as they went down the hill. When the Israelites saw this, they lost their courage.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride leads to destruction; a proud attitude brings ruin.

A Discouraged Leader

Sorrow

Joshua 7:6 Then Joshua tore his clothes in sorrow. He bowed facedown on the ground before the Ark of the Lord and stayed there until evening. The leaders of Israel did the same thing. They also threw dirt on their heads to show their sorrow.

Rebuke

Joshua 7:7 Then Joshua said, “Lord God, you brought our people across the Jordan River. Why did you bring us this far and then let the Amorites destroy us? We would have been happy to stay on the other side of the Jordan.

Hebrews 6:1 So let us go on to grown-up teaching. Let us not go back over the beginning lessons we learned about Christ. We should not again start teaching about faith in God and about turning away from those acts that lead to death.

Repentance

Joshua 7:8 Lord, there is nothing I can say now. Israel has been beaten by the enemy. ⁹ The Canaanites and all the other people in this country will hear about this and will surround and kill us all! Then what will you do for your own great name?”

Rebuke

Joshua 7:10 The Lord said to Joshua, “Stand up! Why are you down on your face? ¹¹ The Israelites have sinned; they have broken the agreement I commanded them to obey. They took some of the things I commanded them to destroy. They have stolen and lied and have taken those things for themselves. ¹² That is why the Israelites cannot face their enemies. They turn away from the fight and run, because I have commanded that they be destroyed. I will not help you anymore unless you destroy everything as I commanded you. ¹³ “Now go! Make the people holy. Tell them, ‘Set yourselves apart to the Lord for tomorrow. The Lord, the God of Israel, says some of you are keeping things he commanded you to destroy. You will never defeat your enemies until you throw away those things. ¹⁴ “‘Tomorrow morning you must be present with your tribes. The Lord will choose one tribe to stand alone before him. Then the Lord will choose one family group from that tribe to stand before him. Then the Lord will choose one family from that family group to stand before him, person by person. ¹⁵ The one who is keeping what should have been destroyed will himself be destroyed by fire. Everything he owns will be destroyed with him. He has broken the agreement with the Lord and has done a disgraceful thing among the people of Israel!’”

Jeremiah 17:9 More than anything else, a person’s mind is evil and cannot be healed. Who can understand it?

The Sinner is Discovered

The investigation

Joshua 7:16 Early the next morning Joshua led all of Israel to present themselves in their tribes, and the Lord chose the tribe of Judah. ¹⁷ So the family groups of Judah presented themselves, and the Lord then chose the family group of Zerah. When all the families of Zerah presented themselves, the family of Zabdi was chosen. ¹⁸ And Joshua told all the men in that family to present themselves. The Lord chose Achan son of Carmi. (Carmi was the son of Zabdi, who was the son of Zerah.)

The confession

Joshua 7:19 Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, tell the truth. Confess to the Lord, the God of Israel. Tell me what you did, and don’t try to hide anything from me.” ²⁰ Achan answered, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. This is what I did: ²¹ Among the things I saw was a beautiful coat from Babylonia and about five pounds of silver and more than one and one-fourth pounds of gold. I wanted these things very much for myself, so I took them. You will find them buried in the ground under my tent, with the silver underneath.” ²² So Joshua sent men who ran to the tent and found the things hidden there, with the silver. ²³ The men brought them out of the tent, took them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and spread them out on the ground before the Lord.

The judgment

Joshua 7:24 Then Joshua and all the people led Achan son of Zerah to the Valley of Trouble. They also took the silver, the coat, the gold, Achan’s sons, daughters, cattle, donkeys, sheep, tent, and everything he owned. ²⁵ Joshua said, “I don’t know why you caused so much trouble for us, but now the Lord will bring trouble to you.” Then all the people threw stones at Achan and his family until they died. Then the people burned them. ²⁶ They piled rocks over Achan’s body, and they are still there today. That is why it is called the Valley of Trouble. After this the Lord was no longer angry.

TURNING DEFEAT INTO VICTORY

*“A mistake is an opportunity to begin again, more intelligently.”
Henry Ford*

A New Beginning

An encouragement, instruction, and promise

Joshua 8:1 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Don’t be afraid or give up. Lead all your fighting men to Ai. I will help you defeat the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. ² You will do to Ai and its king what you did to Jericho and its king. Only this time you may take all the wealth and keep it for yourselves. Now tell some of your soldiers to set up an ambush behind the city.”

A New Strategy

Joshua 8:3 So Joshua led his whole army toward Ai. Then he chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night. ⁴ Joshua gave them these orders: “Listen carefully. You must set up an ambush behind the city. Don’t go far from it, but continue to watch and be ready. ⁵ I and the men who are with me will march toward the city, and the men in the city will come out to fight us, just as they did before. Then we will turn and run away from them. ⁶ They will chase us away from the city, thinking we are running away from them as we did before. When we run away, ⁷ come out from your ambush and take the city. The Lord your God will give you the power to win. ⁸ After you take the city, burn it. See to it! You have your orders.” ⁹ Then Joshua sent them to wait in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai. But Joshua stayed the night with his people. ¹⁰ Early the next morning Joshua gathered his men together. He and the older leaders of Israel led them up to Ai. ¹¹ All of the soldiers who were

with Joshua marched up to Ai and stopped in front of the city and made camp north of it. There was a valley between them and the city. ¹² Then Joshua chose about five thousand men and set them in ambush in the area west of the city between Bethel and Ai. ¹³ So the people took their positions; the main camp was north of the city, and the other men were hiding to the west. That night Joshua went down into the valley.

A New Victory

Ai emptied

Joshua 8:14 Now when the king of Ai saw the army of Israel, he and his people got up early the next morning and hurried out to fight them. They went out to a place east of the city, but the king did not know soldiers were waiting in ambush behind the city. ¹⁵ Joshua and all the men of Israel let the army of Ai push them back. Then they ran toward the desert. ¹⁶ The men in Ai were called to chase Joshua and his men, so they left the city and went after them. ¹⁷ All the men of Ai and Bethel chased the army of Israel. The city was left open; not a man stayed to protect it.

Ai captured

Joshua 8:18 Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Hold your spear toward Ai, because I will give you that city.” So Joshua held his spear toward the city of Ai. ¹⁹ When the Israelites who were in ambush saw this, they quickly came out of their hiding place and hurried toward the city. They entered the city, took control of it, and quickly set it on fire. ²⁰ When the men of Ai looked back, they saw smoke rising from their city. At the same time the Israelites stopped running and turned against the men of Ai, who could not escape in any direction.

Ai's army and people destroyed

Joshua 8:21 When Joshua and all his men saw that the army had taken control of the city and saw the smoke rising from it, they stopped running and turned to fight the men of Ai. ²² The men who were in ambush also came out of the city to help with the fight. So the men of Ai were caught between the armies of Israel. None of the enemy escaped. The Israelites fought until not one of the men of Ai was left alive, except ²³ the king of Ai, and they brought him to Joshua. ²⁴ During the fighting the army of Israel chased the men of Ai into the fields and desert and killed all of them. Then they went back to Ai and killed everyone there. ²⁵ All the people of Ai died that day, twelve thousand men and women. ²⁶ Joshua had held his spear toward Ai, as a sign to destroy the city, and did not draw it back until all the people of Ai were destroyed. ²⁷ The people of Israel kept for themselves the animals and the other things the people of Ai had owned, as the Lord had commanded Joshua to do. ²⁸ Then Joshua burned the city of Ai and made it a pile of ruins. And it is still like that today. ²⁹ Joshua hanged the king of Ai on a tree and left him there until evening. At sunset Joshua told his men to take the king's body down from the tree and to throw it down at the city gate. Then they covered it with a pile of rocks, which is still there today.

A New Commitment

Joshua built an altar

Joshua 8:30 Joshua built an altar for the Lord, the God of Israel, on Mount Ebal, as ³¹ Moses, the Lord's servant, had commanded. Joshua built the altar as it was explained in the Book of the Teachings of Moses. It was made from uncut stones; no tool was ever used on them. On that altar the Israelites offered burnt offerings to the Lord and fellowship offerings.

Joshua wrote the law on stones

Joshua 8:32 There Joshua wrote the teachings of Moses on stones for all the people of Israel to see. ³³ The elders, officers, judges, and all the Israelites were there; Israelites and non-Israelites were all standing around the Ark of the Agreement with the Lord in front of the priests, the Levites who had carried the Ark. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Ebal, and half stood in front of Mount Gerizim. This was the way the Lord's servant Moses had earlier commanded the people to be blessed.

Joshua read the law

Joshua 8:34 Then Joshua read all the words of the teachings, the blessings and the curses, exactly as they were written in the Book of the Teachings. ³⁵ All the Israelites were gathered together—men, women, and children—along with the non-Israelites who lived among them. Joshua read every command that Moses had given.

Romans 8:4 He did this so that we could be the kind of people the law correctly wants us to be. Now we do not live following our sinful selves, but we live following the Spirit.

THE ENEMY LIVES NEXT DOOR

Believing the Enemy

Joshua 9:1 All the kings west of the Jordan River heard about these things: the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. They lived in the mountains and on the western hills and along the whole Mediterranean Sea coast. ² So all these kings gathered to fight Joshua and the Israelites.

What the Gibeonites did

Joshua 9:3 When the people of Gibeon heard how Joshua had defeated Jericho and Ai, ⁴ they decided to trick the Israelites. They gathered old sacks and old leather wine bags that were cracked and mended, and they put them on the backs of their donkeys. ⁵ They put old sandals on their feet and wore old clothes, and they took some dry, moldy bread.

What the Gibeonites said

Joshua 9:6 Then they went to Joshua in the camp near Gilgal. The men said to Joshua and the Israelites, "We have traveled from a faraway country. Make a peace agreement with us." ⁷ The Israelites said to these Hivites, "Maybe you live near us. How can we make a peace agreement with you?" ⁸ The Hivites said to Joshua, "We are your servants." But Joshua asked, "Who are

you? Where do you come from?" ⁹ The men answered, "We are your servants who have come from a far country, because we heard of the fame of the Lord your God. We heard about what he has done and everything he did in Egypt. ¹⁰ We heard that he defeated the two kings of the Amorites from the east side of the Jordan River—Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan who ruled in Ashtaroth. ¹¹ So our elders and our people said to us, 'Take food for your journey and go and meet the Israelites. Tell them, "We are your servants. Make a peace agreement with us.'" ¹² "Look at our bread. On the day we left home to come to you it was warm and fresh, but now it is dry and moldy. ¹³ Look at our leather wine bags. They were new and filled with wine, but now they are cracked and old. Our clothes and sandals are worn out from the long journey."

Why they succeeded

Joshua 9:14 The men of Israel tasted the bread, but they did not ask the Lord what to do. ¹⁵ So Joshua agreed to make peace with the Gibeonites and to let them live. And the leaders of the Israelites swore an oath to keep the agreement.

Enlisting the Enemy

Joshua 9:16 Three days after they had made the agreement, the Israelites learned that the Gibeonites lived nearby. ¹⁷ So the Israelites went to where they lived and on the third day came to their cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim. ¹⁸ But the Israelites did not attack those cities, because they had made a promise to them before the Lord, the God of Israel. All the Israelites grumbled against the leaders. ¹⁹ But the leaders answered, "We have given our promise before the Lord, the God of Israel, so we cannot attack them now. ²⁰ This is what we must do. We must let them live. Otherwise, God's anger will be against us for breaking the oath we swore to them. ²¹ So let them live, but they will cut wood and carry water for our people." So the leaders kept their promise to them. ²² Joshua called for the Gibeonites and asked, "Why did you lie to us? Your land was near our camp, but you told us you were from a far country. ²³ Now, you will be placed under a curse to be our slaves. You will have to cut wood and carry water for the house of my God." ²⁴ The Gibeonites answered Joshua, "We lied to you because we were afraid you would kill us. We heard that the Lord your God commanded his servant Moses to give you all of this land and to kill all the people who lived in it. That is why we did this. ²⁵ Now you can decide what to do with us, whatever you think is right." ²⁶ So Joshua saved their lives by not allowing the Israelites to kill them, ²⁷ but he made the Gibeonites slaves. They cut wood and carried water for the Israelites, and they did it for the altar of the Lord—wherever he chose it to be. They are still doing this today.

DEFENDING THE ENEMY

The king's call to the armies

Joshua 10:1 At this time Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had defeated Ai and completely destroyed it, as he had also done to Jericho and its king. The king also learned that the Gibeonites had made a peace agreement with Israel and that they lived nearby. ² Adoni-Zedek and his people were very afraid because of this. Gibeon was not a little town like Ai; it was a large city, as big as a city that had a king, and all its men were good fighters. ³ So Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent a message to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon. He begged them, ⁴ "Come

with me and help me attack Gibeon, which has made a peace agreement with Joshua and the Israelites.”⁵ Then these five Amorite kings—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon—gathered their armies, went to Gibeon, surrounded it, and attacked it.

The Gibeonites’ call to Joshua

Joshua 10:6 The Gibeonites sent this message to Joshua in his camp at Gilgal: “Don’t let us, your servants, be destroyed. Come quickly and help us! Save us! All the Amorite kings from the mountains have joined their armies and are fighting against us.”⁷ So Joshua marched out of Gilgal with his whole army, including his best fighting men.

Joshua’s call to the Lord

Joshua 10:8 The Lord said to Joshua, “Don’t be afraid of those armies, because I will hand them over to you. None of them will be able to stand against you.”⁹ Joshua and his army marched all night from Gilgal for a surprise attack.¹⁰ The Lord confused those armies when Israel attacked, so Israel defeated them in a great victory at Gibeon. They chased them along the road going up to Beth Horon and killed men all the way to Azekah and Makkedah.¹¹ As they chased the enemy down the Beth Horon Pass to Azekah, the Lord threw large hailstones on them from the sky and killed them. More people were killed by the hailstones than by the Israelites’ swords.¹² On the day that the Lord gave up the Amorites to the Israelites, Joshua stood before all the people of Israel and said to the Lord: “Sun, stand still over Gibeon. Moon, stand still over the Valley of Aijalon.”¹³ So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped until the people defeated their enemies. These words are written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and waited to go down for a full day.¹⁴ That has never happened at any time before that day or since. That was the day the Lord listened to a human being. Truly the Lord was fighting for Israel!¹⁵ After this, Joshua and his army went back to the camp at Gilgal.

Joshua’s call to his army

Joshua 10:16 During the fight the five kings ran away and hid in a cave near Makkedah,¹⁷ but someone found them hiding in the cave at Makkedah and told Joshua.¹⁸ So he said, “Cover the opening of the cave with large rocks. Put some men there to guard it,¹⁹ but don’t stay there yourselves. Continue chasing the enemy and attacking them from behind. Don’t let them get to their cities, because the Lord your God will hand them over to you.”²⁰ So Joshua and the Israelites killed the enemy, but a few were able to get back to their strong, walled cities.²¹ After the fighting, Joshua’s men came back safely to him at Makkedah. No one was brave enough to say a word against the Israelites.²² Joshua said, “Move the rocks that are covering the opening of the cave and bring those five kings out to me.”²³ So Joshua’s men brought the five kings out of the cave—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon.²⁴ When they brought the five kings out to Joshua, he called for all his men. He said to the commanders of his army, “Come here! Put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So they came close and put their feet on their necks.²⁵ Joshua said to his men, “Be strong and brave! Don’t be afraid, because I will show you what the Lord will do to the enemies you will fight in the future.”²⁶ Then Joshua killed the five kings and hung their bodies on five trees, where he left them until evening.²⁷ At sunset Joshua told his men to take the bodies down from the trees. Then they threw them into the same cave where they had been hiding and covered the opening of the cave with large rocks, which are still there today.²⁸ That day Joshua defeated Makkedah. He killed the king and completely destroyed all the people in that city as an

offering to the Lord; no one was left alive. He did the same thing to the king of Makkedah that he had done to the king of Jericho.

Summary of All Israel Conquered

Joshua 10:29 Joshua and all the Israelites traveled from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it. ³⁰ The Lord handed over the city and its king. They killed every person in the city; no one was left alive. And they did the same thing to that king that they had done to the king of Jericho. ³¹ Then Joshua and all the Israelites left Libnah and went to Lachish, which they surrounded and attacked. ³² The Lord handed over Lachish on the second day. The Israelites killed everyone in that city just as they had done to Libnah. ³³ During this same time Horam king of Gezer came to help Lachish, but Joshua also defeated him and his army; no one was left alive. ³⁴ Then Joshua and all the Israelites went from Lachish to Eglon. They surrounded Eglon, attacked it, and ³⁵ captured it the same day. They killed all its people and completely destroyed everything in it as an offering to the Lord, just as they had done to Lachish. ³⁶ Then Joshua and the Israelites went from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it, ³⁷ capturing it and all the little towns near it. The Israelites killed everyone in Hebron; no one was left alive there. Just as they had done to Eglon, they completely destroyed the city and all its people as an offering to the Lord. ³⁸ Then Joshua and the Israelites went back to Debir and attacked it. ³⁹ They captured that city, its king, and all the little towns near it, completely destroying everyone in Debir as an offering to the Lord; no one was left alive there. Israel did to Debir and its king just as they had done to Libnah and its king, just as they had done to Hebron. ⁴⁰ So Joshua defeated all the kings of the cities of these areas: the mountains, southern Canaan, the western hills, and the slopes. The Lord, the God of Israel, had told Joshua to completely destroy all the people as an offering to the Lord, so he left no one alive in those places. ⁴¹ Joshua captured all the cities from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza, and from Goshen to Gibeon. ⁴² He captured all these cities and their kings on one trip, because the Lord, the God of Israel, was fighting for Israel. ⁴³ Then Joshua and all the Israelites returned to their camp at Gilgal.

Joshua 11:1 When Jabin king of Hazor heard about all that had happened, he sent messages to Jobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Acshaph. ² He sent messages to the kings in the northern mountains and also to the kings in the Jordan Valley south of Lake Galilee and in the western hills. He sent a message to the king of Naphoth Dor in the west ³ and to the kings of the Canaanites in the east and in the west. He sent messages to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Jebusites in the mountains. Jabin also sent one to the Hivites, who lived below Mount Hermon in the area of Mizpah. ⁴ So the armies of all these kings came together with their horses and chariots. There were as many soldiers as grains of sand on the seashore. ⁵ All of these kings met together at the waters of Merom, joined their armies together into one camp, and made plans to fight against the Israelites. ⁶ Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Don’t be afraid of them, because at this time tomorrow I will give them to you. You will cripple their horses and burn all their chariots.” ⁷ So Joshua and his whole army surprised the enemy by attacking them at the waters of Merom. ⁸ The Lord handed them over to Israel. They chased them to Greater Sidon, Misrephoth Maim, and the Valley of Mizpah in the east. Israel fought until none of the enemy was left alive. ⁹ Joshua did what the Lord said to do; he crippled their horses and burned their chariots. ¹⁰ Then Joshua went back and captured the city of Hazor and killed its king. (Hazor had been the leader of all the kingdoms that fought against Israel.) ¹¹ Israel killed everyone in Hazor, completely destroying them; no one was left alive. Then they burned Hazor itself. ¹² Joshua captured all of these cities, killed all of their kings, and completely destroyed everything in these cities. He did this just as Moses, the servant of the Lord, had commanded. ¹³ But the Israelites did not burn any

cities that were built on their mounds, except Hazor; only that city was burned by Joshua. ¹⁴ The people of Israel kept for themselves everything they found in the cities, including all the animals. But they killed all the people there; they left no one alive. ¹⁵ Long ago the Lord had commanded his servant Moses to do this, and then Moses had commanded Joshua to do it. Joshua did everything the Lord had commanded Moses. ¹⁶ So Joshua defeated all the people in the land. He had control of the mountains and the area of southern Canaan, all the areas of Goshen, the western hills, and the Jordan Valley. He controlled the mountains of Israel and all the hills near them. ¹⁷ Joshua controlled all the land from Mount Halak near Edom to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon, below Mount Hermon. Joshua also captured all the kings in the land and killed them. ¹⁸ He fought against them for many years. ¹⁹ The people of only one city in all the land had made a peace agreement with Israel—the Hivites living in Gibeon. All the other cities were defeated in war. ²⁰ The Lord made those people stubborn so they would fight against Israel and he could completely destroy them without mercy. This is what the Lord had commanded Moses to do. ²¹ Now Joshua fought the Anakites who lived in the mountains of Hebron, Debir, Anab, Judah, and Israel, and he completely destroyed them and their towns. ²² There were no Anakites left living in the land of the Israelites and only a few were left in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. ²³ Joshua took control of all the land of Israel as the Lord had told Moses to do long ago. He gave the land to Israel, because he had promised it to them. Then Joshua divided the land among the tribes of Israel, and there was peace in the land.

Joshua 12:1 The Israelites took control of the land east of the Jordan River from the Arnon Ravine to Mount Hermon and all the land along the eastern side of the Jordan Valley. These lands belonged to the kings whom the Israelites defeated. ² Sihon king of the Amorites lived in the city of Heshbon and ruled the land from Aroer at the Arnon Ravine to the Jabbok River. His land started in the middle of the ravine, which was their border with the Ammonites. Sihon ruled over half the land of Gilead ³ and over the eastern side of the Jordan Valley from Lake Galilee to the Dead Sea. And he ruled from Beth Jeshimoth south to the slopes of Pisgah. ⁴ Og king of Bashan was one of the last of the Rephaites. He ruled the land in Ashtaroth and Edrei. ⁵ He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, and all the area of Bashan up to where the people of Geshur and Maacah lived. Og also ruled half the land of Gilead up to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. ⁶ The Lord's servant Moses and the Israelites defeated all these kings, and Moses gave that land to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to East Manasseh as their own. ⁷ Joshua and the Israelites also defeated kings in the land west of the Jordan River. He gave the people the land and divided it among the twelve tribes to be their own. It was between Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon and Mount Halak near Edom. ⁸ This included the mountains, the western hills, the Jordan Valley, the slopes, the desert, and southern Canaan. This was the land where the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites had lived. The Israelites defeated the king of each of the following cities: ⁹ Jericho, Ai (near Bethel), ¹⁰ Jerusalem, Hebron, ¹¹ Jarmuth, Lachish, ¹² Eglon, Gezer, ¹³ Debir, Geder, ¹⁴ Hormah, Arad, ¹⁵ Libnah, Adullam, ¹⁶ Makkedah, Bethel, ¹⁷ Tappuah, Hephher, ¹⁸ Aphek, Lasharon, ¹⁹ Madon, Hazor, ²⁰ Shimron Meron, Acshaph, ²¹ Taanach, Megiddo, ²² Kedesh, Jokneam in Carmel, ²³ Dor (in Naphoth Dor), Goyim in Gilgal, and ²⁴ Tirzah. The total number of kings was thirty-one.