

TAKING GOD'S GIFT OF THE PROMISED LAND – SPIRITUAL VICTORY IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

by Paul G. Apple, March 2005

CLAIMING GOD'S PROMISES FOR SPIRITUAL VICTORY REQUIRES ENGAGING AND CONQUERING THE ENEMY BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

“Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”
(Joshua 3:5)

For each section in the Book of Joshua:

- Thesis statement ... to focus on the big idea
- Analytical outline ... to guide the understanding
- Devotional questions ... to encourage life application
- Representative quotations ... to stimulate deeper insight

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BACKGROUND

Redpath:

I would suggest that the clue to the interpretation of this Old Testament book is found in the epistle to the Ephesians and in the epistle to the Hebrews. For example, in the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews we find that the land of Canaan is a picture of the spiritual rest and victory which may be enjoyed here on earth by every believer, a rest of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, the Ephesian letter speaks of life “*in the heavenly places*” – not in heaven, but in the experience of oneness with our Risen Lord in His victory here and now, the place of the fullness of God’s blessing. I believe that we shall understand the real significance of the book of Joshua only if we recognize that what it is in the Old Testament the epistle to the Ephesians is in the New. This suggestion, of course, has to be substantiated from the Word of God itself.

Therefore, as in this opening chapter we survey the book and its meaning as a whole, I want you to think of the analogy between the land of Canaan and the land of full salvation which is the portion of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

First of all, we realize that Canaan was the goal to which God was leading His people. When He appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He pledged Himself not only to deliver the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, but also to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey. . .

In other words, the deliverance from Egypt was only in preparation for the enjoyment of Canaan. The passover, the shedding of the blood, the crossing of the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh’s hosts, all would have been useless unless they led to the place of rest in Canaan. Furthermore, it was only by possession of the land of Canaan that the promise of God to Abraham could be fulfilled. . .

The foundation of our faith – regeneration and justification – are deeply laid in order that they may carry the superstructure of sanctification and holiness. . . Yet is it not true that the majority of Christians come far short, and are content with a wilderness experience – justified, but not enjoying the possession of all their inheritance in Christ” . . . Full blessing in the Christian life is not bestowed except to eager, hungry people who press in to receive it. . . He desires every one of His children to press in against all the assaults of the enemy, that we may lay hold of that which is our inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that every foe we shall ever meet in that battle already has been met and conquered by our Joshua.

Therefore, from these analogies which I have drawn I think you will see that this book of Joshua will open up for us what will be, to many people, new areas in God’s plan of redemption for us all, new possibilities of spiritual victory, new secrets of the way of blessing. This book of Joshua will cease to be, if indeed it is now to any of my readers, a mere record of historic events, and will become a revelation of what God can do in and through the life that is utterly yielded to Him.

Stedman:

The book of Joshua falls into three main divisions. Chapters one through four concern the entrance into the land and all that involves. If you are struggling right now with how to enter into a life of victory with Christ, how to move out of the wilderness of doubt, restless wanderings, and mere subsistence into the full blessing of the Spirit-led

experience, then this is the section you ought to be concerned with -- Israel's entrance into the land -- out of the wilderness and into Canaan. Chapters five through twenty-one cover Israel's conquest of the land through many battles and conflicts as they came into the land of promise. Chapters twenty-two through twenty-four, including many passages from Joshua's own lips, set before us the perils and dangers in the land that we must guard against in order to remain in the place of victory that the land represents.

The land of Canaan is a picture, as we have mentioned, of the Spirit-filled life -- the life that God intended for every Christian to live. There are no exceptions to this. The Spirit-filled life is not just for certain advanced saints, but is provided by God for every one of his people. . .

The idea is, you can have all that you will take. You can have every bit of the spiritual life that you want. You will never get any more. God will never give you more than you are ready to take. So if you are not satisfied with the degree of your real experience of victory, it is because you haven't really wanted any more. You can have all that you want. "Every place where the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you."

One of the first things we learn in coming into this place of walking in the Spirit is that although it is a place of conflict, every conflict can be a victory. There need not be any defeats. It is a frontier, if you like, and there is nothing more exciting than life on a frontier. This life is especially frontier living in the victory of Christ.

The secret of living in the land includes both a promise and a presence; an obedient heart and an empowering spirit. . .

F. B. Meyer: Traces 5 parallels between the Rest of the Book of Joshua and the "heavenlies" described in Ephesians which stands for: "that spiritual experience of oneness with the risen Saviour in his resurrection and exaltation which is the privilege of all the saints, to which, indeed, they have been called, and which is theirs in him."

I. Each was the destined goal to which God's purpose led His people --
Are you still in the wilderness, or have you entered the Land of Promise? . . .
Test yourself by the promises made to Israel, which are types and shadows of eternal realities; and if they do not foreshadow facts in your spiritual experience, understand that you frustrate the purpose of God in your redemption. Leave those things which are behind to reach forth to the goodly land beyond the Jordan, apprehending that for which you were apprehended of Christ Jesus.

II. Each was impossible by the means of Law --

III. Each was entrusted to a representative --

IV. Each was missed by many --

The state of his Church must be a bitter sorrow to the heart of her Lord. Notwithstanding his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion; in spite of the earnest remonstrance of his Word and Spirit; thought he fair land of Canaan lies within view – et so few comparatively appear to have realized what he intended. All around, souls, redeemed by his blood, who have been numbered among his people, are perishing outside the land of blessedness in graves of worldliness, of self-indulgence, and masterful sin. We descry here and there a Joshua, a Caleb, or a tribe of Levites. But the majority seem to have come short.

V. Each was infested by many adversaries –

Palau: List of the Promises for Spiritual Victory we should be experiencing:

1. CONTROL OVER THE LAW OF SIN (Rom. 8:2)
2. THE SENSE OF NEARNESS TO OUR FATHER AND THE EXPERIENCE OF HIS GUIDANCE (Rom. 8:14-16)
3. ALL THE EXPERIENCES OF LIFE UNDER HIS SOVEREIGN CONTROL (Rom. 8:28)
4. VICTORY OVER CIRCUMSTANCES (Rom. 8:37)
5. PEACE IN THE INNER PERSON, THE SPIRIT (Col. 3:15)
6. SELF-CONTROL (2 Tim. 1:7)

Davis: The Book of Joshua contains at least four important theological themes which have practical values for today. First, the book is a lesson on the covenant faithfulness of Jehovah. The power of God was not only declared in covenant agreement, but also demonstrated. Secondly, the book demonstrates the importance of the written word of God (Josh. 1:8; 8:32-35; 23:6-16; 24:26-27). There was an authoritative body of written Scripture in the days of Joshua and this consisted of the books of Moses. There is no appeal to contemporary customs or oral tradition. Thirdly, the book points out the utter failure of human effort apart from divine directives. When Joshua and the children of Israel were faithful to God's word and His will, there was victory. When they abandoned His will in favor of their own genius, there was failure and frustration. Finally, the book is a commentary of God's holiness and His judgment of sin. The destruction of the cities of Canaan with their inhabitants was not merely to give Israel military control of the area, but it was, in effect, a judgment of God upon the wickedness of that land (cf. Gen. 15:16; Deut. 7:5-6).

TEXT: Joshua 1: 1-18

TITLE: COMMISSION TO GO TO WAR

BIG IDEA:

CLAIMING GOD'S PROMISES FOR SPIRITUAL VICTORY REQUIRES A COMMITMENT TO COURAGE AND OBEDIENCE

INTRODUCTION:

Today we are embarking on a four part study of the first four chapters of the Book of Joshua. 2 Reasons for choosing this study:

- 1) OT has been neglected lately in my studies
- 2) I chose this because I have a hunger for a greater level of spiritual victory in my Christian life. So this will not be the testimony of one who has scaled the Mt. Everest of Christian experience and is looking down on the rest of the poor struggling souls and exhorting them to climb higher. Hopefully, it is more in keeping with the spirit of what we have just studied in the Sermon on the Mount ...

Coming to you as *“poor in spirit”*; *“mourning over sin”* and yet *“hungering and thirsting for righteousness”* along with my brothers and sisters in the faith.

We have some important background information to nail down today to set the stage so that we can fully appreciate the challenge before us in Joshua Chapter 1 (which is an OT Great Commission passage).

BACKGROUND:

2 TRAPS TO AVOID in Studying the Book of Joshua:

Trap #1 – Confusion about identification of Joshua –

Joshua is not a type of Pastor Brian or Pastor John MacArthur (or name any radio personality you listen to); The people of God today want a **human Joshua** to follow rather than the invisible Lord Jesus Himself who is the Captain of our Salvation; that is why we must have a plurality of undershepherds ... no one leader can bring to the table all that we need; Joshua is not a type of some super single pastor model of leadership ... but spiritual leaders do need to pattern themselves after Joshua in many important respects (so there are a lot of leadership lessons ... and hence a lot of lessons for those of us who are called to submit to our spiritual leaders as well)

It must be remembered throughout this study that Joshua (name means *“Yahweh is salvation”*) is a **type of Christ** who leads us to spiritual victory and into His rest – not in heaven – but on earth as we submit fully to Him, trust in His power and come to experience the abundant life He desires for us.

Trap #2 – Confusion about Identification of Canaan –

Thinking that crossing the Jordan represents a transition from this life through death into the joys of heaven; But Canaan was a place of conflict and conquest! God's people must take responsibility to be strong and courageous and fight the good fight of faith; Don't settle for **victory one day in heaven**; God wants us to experience victory right

now in the midst of our enemies; surrounded on every side by challenges; yet obeying Him and experiencing His grace in giving us the victory.

For some ... a crisis experience putting them on a different level of intimacy with the Lord ... for others ... more of repeated experiences of crossing the Jordan River ... but in both cases: God has **greater levels of spiritual victory** that He would like to give us in His grace

(Two books especially helpful: Redpath, J Sidlow Baxter ..they recognize that the OT lessons are types and examples to guide us in our new life in Christ)

THEME OF JOSHUA: TAKING GOD'S GIFT OF THE PROMISED LAND

Both a gracious gift from our sovereign God

Yet personal responsibility and commitment required on our part

FIRST 4 CHAPTERS: CORPORATE COMMITMENT TO GO TO WAR -- ENGAGING THE ENEMY

Kids, you all know the story of Joshua and the walls of Jericho falling down ... these are the preparation steps leading up to that great victory
Going to war is a topic much in our headlines these days; stories of heroism, sacrifice, casualties ... but a much more important war taking place in the spiritual realm

3 OBSTACLES TO TAKING GOD'S GIFT OF THE PROMISED LAND (SPIRITUAL VICTORY)

1) **People Paralyzed by Fear** – *Grasshopper Mentality* –

Root Problem = Lack of Faith = the Mission is Impossible

We are nobody ... we are just going to get squashed

Kids, do you ever wonder what ants think of humans?

Hebrews 11 records the Faith Hall of Fame – all those heroes of the faith – but there is a significant gap between **verses 29-30** = the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness; That is where our story takes place ... what has to happen in order to lead up to the walls of Jericho falling down? What are our walls of Jericho in our life?? What has to happen to make them fall down?? So that we can live as heroes of the faith as well??

Num 13-14 – Report of the 12 Spies

Interesting that the Lord commissioned them to go check out the land – to get a vision for victory = “*Spy out the land I am going to give to you*” (13:2)

Not charged with determining whether or not to complete the assigned mission

This was an issue of Obedience vs Rebellion – same with us

The Lord had demonstrated His glory and power over and over again in amazing ways ... yet the people refused to trust and obey

Issue: Do we believe that *the Lord is with us* and able to give us the victory ...

Or do we look at ourselves vs the obstacles and see ourselves as grasshoppers and the obstacles as Giants that can't be conquered?

God specializes in killing Giants – remember David and Goliath ... fall of Jericho ...

What Giants do you face that want to keep you from experiencing God's victory and blessing? Have to face our giants ... not run from them

How many times did Jesus have to address His disciples with the simple command:
“*Fear not*”

Need a **Vision of Victory** – focusing on God’s Promises

2) **People with a History of Failure** – *Victim Mentality* –

Root Problem = Lack of Faith = We are too weak

We are abused and neglected ... we will never amount to anything

Look at the generation Joshua was trying to rally – a lot of baggage:

40 years wandering in the wilderness ... experiencing death; tasting death everywhere they turned; waking up every day to the same old routine – where is the promised victory in the land of milk and honey – we have blown it and we will never experience God’s blessing ... (true for their parents – entire generation died out) Settling for less than the Lord’s best; conditioned to just make the best of things Isn’t that how we often live as believers? That’s just the way I am ... given up on fighting certain battles ...

Attitudes of discontent; murmuring; grumbling; resisting God’s appointed leadership; Inexperienced in knowing how to trust and obey – now stepping up to a difficult mission;

The Hope of the Gospel: “You can be what you are not now” – turning Simon into Cephas (Peter) – the rock; turning Saul into Paul

Need an **Attitude of Hope** – focusing on God’s Promises

3) **Leadership Meltdown/Blowup** – *Big Shot Mentality* – huge trap for leadership
Root Problem = Exalting Self (Defined as Lack of Faith/Rebellion – making it all about the leader rather than all about God) – Moses commended as *meekest* of all men ... but failed in that very area and was severely disciplined

“We are too important to be treated this way by the hoi poloi”

Numbers 20:1-13 Sin of Moses and Aaron

Simple command (vs 8) “*Speak to the rock before their eyes that it may yield its water*”

Provoked to anger: “*Listen now, you rebels*” – Moses had had it with the people

Before he was quick to intercede on their behalf that the Lord might spare them; he was the meekest of all men, not taking offense ... putting up with a lot ... now he lashes out in anger

What was so wrong about striking the rock twice with the rod??

(cf. Exod 17:6 at Rephidim – similar incident – told to strike the rock in that instance)

Not treating the Lord as **holy** before the people

Seems like such a harsh penalty for just a procedural error??

Primarily a **sin of unbelief** (same as the people) – **Discontent with their lot** just like the people were -- unbelief in the sovereignty and providence of God – Moses was on the hot spot – not content with letting the Lord do things His way

(Aside: He had trusted the Lord many times previously – using that same rod in obedience to the Lord as an effective leader –

Exod 7:20 – on the spot before Pharaoh: struck the water that was in the Nile and it turned into blood ... part of the plagues – the Lord came through

Exod 14:16 – on the spot before the Red Sea – about to be overtaken and destroyed by the pursuing Egyptians ... *“lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it”* – the Lord came through huge)

The Lord wants to be seen as the one giving the victory – we cannot drum up victory
Key to the whole book of Joshua: Victory is due to the arm of faith (*“this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith”* -- **1 John 5:4**) -- **Baxter**

Why were Moses and Aaron not excited at the opportunity for the Lord to be exalted in the eyes of the people; where was the quiet confidence of faith? Not content with how the Lord was running the show; felt that they deserved more support and exaltation
Need a **Submitted Will** – Focusing on God’s Promises (again, you should be detecting a theme here)

WHAT WERE GOD’S PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE? What’s at stake?

1) A LAND TO POSSESS – PLACE OF REST AND INHERITANCE

Sovereignly given by God to His chosen people

No more wandering ... but settled down with roots and security

Requires Victory over strong enemies – Satan not giving up this ground without a fight; as many as 7 different heathen nations to defeat and drive out

For us, spiritual rest is to be found in the person of Christ who is our Inheritance

2) A LAND TO ENJOY – RICHES OF GOD’S BLESSING

“a land which flows with milk and honey”

Not just manna to sustain them physically, but giving them richly all things to

Enjoy

Parallels to book of Ephesians – all the riches of our spiritual blessings in Christ

(Handout: J. Sidlow Baxter: Study the parallels between earthly inheritance of God’s people described in Joshua with heavenly inheritance described in Ephesians – note points of similarity)

3) A LAND TO SHARE – TESTIMONY TO THE WORLD OF GOD’S GLORY

Not as a monument to their own glory and power but as a testimony of God’s mercy and grace

we share Christ with others as the supreme revelation to the world of God’s glory

This is what we hunger and thirst for this morning: a deeper experience of

- grabbing hold of our spiritual rest and victory in Christ

- contentment and appreciation and worship and thanksgiving for all of our Blessings

- compassion and love for others that they too might share in these riches

BIG IDEA:
CLAIMING GOD'S PROMISES FOR SPIRITUAL VICTORY REQUIRES A COMMITMENT TO COURAGE AND OBEDIENCE

First Section in Joshua: **CORPORATE COMMITMENT TO GO TO WAR – TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY**

Once they have crossed the Jordan River, they are fully committed; no turning back ...no calling the rescue helicopters for a quick extraction ... God is not going to part the waters and facilitate their retreat ... Victory or Death ... those are the options

We tend to think about our own individual spiritual warfare – our struggles for victory; for claiming God's promises; We forget that we are called to go to battle together as the church of God; we need one another; everyone needs to be pulling their weight; It takes a lot of energy and commitment to overcome inertia and step out in faith and engage the enemy – but that was the first assignment for Joshua as a leader stepping into the shoes of Moses – quite a challenge

With our country making commitments lately to go to war in Afghanistan and then in Iraq ... we see a lot of parallels to spiritual warfare...

COMMISSION TO GO TO WAR -- really a RECOMMISSION – the people had failed earlier under the leadership of Moses and Aaron
Commission issued by the Commander in Chief to His appointed leader

I. (:1-9) COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF LEADERSHIP – BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS
THE COMMISSION OF JOSHUA

A. (:1-5) Reaffirming the Mission and the Promises

1. (:1) Transition in Leadership

“Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ servant, saying”

A type of transition from the dispensation of law to grace –

“For the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

The law could never lead us into possession of the promises. It must be all by grace. Again, Joshua is a type of Christ ... so you couldn't have a better leader.

So this book should shed important light on the relationship between the law and grace – having been granted a new nature in regeneration we now have a radically changed disposition and attitude to the law as well as power to obey all righteousness after the pattern of our Lord (Pink)

Joshua had been faithful for many years in his role as Moses' servant before ever he was elevated by God into this realm of tremendous responsibility. (Num. 27 – only a part of Moses' spirit rested on him)

Meaning of the name Joshua (“*Yahweh is salvation*”)

Transitions can be precarious – I have experienced several

PEF – college fellowship group

Teen Haven – inner city ministry in Phila.

At least here you did not have to battle with the difficulty of former Leader (who was also the founder of the ministry) letting go – Moses was no longer in the picture

Would have been easy for Joshua to feel all alone

2. (:2) Foundational Mission

“Moses, My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.”

We lose sight of what a monumental crisis it was for these people to cross the Jordan and expose themselves to the enemy; Privilege as well! River at flood stage – no simple task to have 2 million people cross over; It would be a clear declaration of war. A commitment to engage the enemy.

Jensen: The fact that the large size of the Israelite band is not made a prominent factor in the record of the book of Joshua speaks well for the orderliness and discipline with which Joshua maneuvered the hosts. In strict military fashion, reflecting the training he had received under Moses, Joshua delegated the offices under him to mobilize the people to the state of readiness.

What side of the Jordan are you living on?

God desires spiritual victory and rest for all of His children ... not just some small elite group

Think of the spiritual giants who have gone before us ... great missionary pioneers ... out to fulfill the Great Commission; they are now home with the Lord ... we are the ones left to fulfill the mission

Are we motivated by a **sense of Mission** – God has called us to Great Things – things that are not humanly possible But divinely enabled; Let other people busy themselves with the tasks that don't require God's power

3. (:3-4) Scope of the Promise – It's HUGE – how big is our thinking??

“Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun, will be your territory.”

Prophetic events still to transpire related to the fulfillment of this promise. God is not done working with the nation of Israel. Geography not my strong suit ... Karen is my navigator ... but apparently Israel did not enjoy dominion that far east until days of David and Solomon. (Jensen)
But our concern this morning is what we can learn about spiritual victory in our day.
There is no possession without appropriation.
Stepping out in faith is the key ... we must take that initiative in response to God's direction.
Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

4. (:5) Assurance of Divine Presence and Protection (Prospering them)
"No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you."
Incredible promise of success and victory; what military commander has ever enjoyed such a guarantee?
How was God with Moses?
- as a baby – his ship was almost sunk before it got launched
- before Pharaoh and his court
- before the pursuing Egyptian army, trapped against the Red Sea
- before the riotous and mutinous mob in the wilderness
No abandonment; No disappointments in trusting Christ.
Plenty of enemies will try to oppose us and defeat us .. but they will not be able to stand and succeed; Christ is building His church; the gates of hell shall not overpower it

B. (:6-9) Responsibilities and Resources

1. (:6) Be Strong and Courageous – Victory is Guaranteed
"Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."

bravery, valor, fearlessness, heroism, confidence, nerve, guts, grit, backbone

Our reaction: How can you command something like that? We think: either you have the Right Stuff or you don't; either you are a Tom Cruise or a Charlie Brown

It doesn't take any courage to lie on the couch and watch TV ...
Resting in our comfort zone doesn't require courage
Engaging the enemy on the spiritual battlefield ... that takes courage

God remains faithful to all His promises;
What spiritual promises has Christ made to the church with respect to

victory over Satan, sin, self and this fallen world?

How can we be strong and courageous? How did David strengthen himself in the Lord? Importance of Ephes 6 – armor of God

2. (:7-8) Be Strong and Courageous -- Obedience is Essential / God's Word is Sufficient

“Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”

Importance of meditating on the Word – reflecting on it; digesting it
Slowly; Kids: don't chew your food too quickly ... take your time
No deviation from God's instructions allowed
Prosperity and Success should be the goal ... don't settle for anything less

3. (:9) Be Strong and Courageous -- God's Presence is the Difference Maker (implies God's favor in protecting and prospering)

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Cf. the Lord's promise of His presence in the Great Commission passage
Cf. the quote in Heb. 13:5

Why does the Lord have to repeat this basic command so many times?

II. (:10-18a) COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE – BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS THE CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE

- A. (:10-11) Preparations for Invasion – Logistical Details of Organization

“Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, ‘Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you, to possess it.’”

Combination of Human Responsibility and Divine Sovereignty in action

- The victory requires careful planning and execution
- But God gives the victory

Ryrie: The mission of the spies (chap. 2) apparently took place before this command to prepare was given. What is described in 3:2 may be the same as in 1:11, or may have followed it.

Redpath: The hardest thing for any of us to do is to sit still and do nothing, to wait until we inherit the promises. But God has a great purpose to fulfill in every waiting time, although so often His people miss the purpose because of impatience with the Lord

during the time of waiting. I want to think with you about that waiting time, the sitting still and counting the cost of what it means to inherit the blessing in Jesus our Lord.

B. (:12-15) Everybody Must Pull Their Weight
(Some People Don't Catch the Vision??)

Special Circumstances of Certain Tribes (Reubenites, Gadites, half-tribe of Manasseh)
(Cf. Numbers 32) – they had requested land east of the Jordan which was good for raising livestock; but they were still responsible to take their part in the military conquest alongside all of their countrymen

Principle: Fighting valiantly proceeds Resting in the Victory

Principle: As believers, we can make choices that limit our entrance into the promised land and taking hold of God's promises. There is something hugely negative here about these tribes who preferred their own selection of land over what God had promised to them.

More Christians today living on the wrong side of the Jordan River – closer to the wilderness wanderings than the land flowing with milk and honey

Redpath: Look through the terrifying record of the consequences of that choice made by those two and half tribes. Read I Chronicles, chapter 5. You will discover that these tribes, who had tasted of God's best and enjoyed God's victory, who had led the army of the people of God into the land of blessing, were the first to be captured by Assyrians when they invaded Israel. Taken captive, they never returned. They went down to defeat and into bondage, even though at one time they had led the people of God in the way of blessing. Judges 5:16 says this: "*For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.*" I should think there were! They chose, they tasted of blessing, they had entered into the land of promise, but they hankered after the world, its pleasures, its indulgence, and its sin, and they were trapped and caught and ensnared in it.

C. (:16-18a) Commitment to Obey God's Appointed Leadership Unconditionally
"And they answered Joshua, saying, 'All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the Lord your God be with you, as He

was with Moses. Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death.”

Main application is our commitment to obey the Lord Jesus Himself unconditionally and to meditate upon His Word with the goal of applying it.
Can't pick and choose when it comes to the Commands of Christ –
Great Commission: teaching them to observe **all** that I commanded you

We know the history ... not an easy mission for the Israelites; they only experienced mixed success; Why didn't the Lord give them instant and complete success??
Cf. quote from Arthur Pink below

(:18b) CONCLUSION

“ONLY BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS”

Commitment to Courage and Obedience – How are we doing in those 2 key areas?
The gift of victory is there for the taking ... but we must be committed to step out in faith and engage the enemy
Matt 28: 18-20 – in closing ... note the parallels in our Great Commission

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How are we doing in terms of being “*strong and courageous?*” Where could we improve? What practical steps can we take?
- 2) In what sense should modern day pastors model their leadership after Joshua? In what sense are the circumstances different and they need to respect those differences?
- 3) Is our meditation on the Word of God geared towards obedience as its goal?
- 4) How does our commitment and expression of willingness to follow the Lord in whatever He commands fall short in various areas?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Redpath: The Man God Uses –
A faithful past, a sound vocation, a filling with the Word of God – what can we do to prove worthy of Him? Let us take our weakness, and our trembling, and our fears before Him; let there be an absolute submission to the indwelling power of His blessed Spirit. Let us ask that all these qualities that were revealed in Christ be imparted to us, that they may be real in your life and mine.

There is a price to be paid. Are you willing to pay it? Cancel every responsibility in your life other than what you believe to be God's will for you. Deliberately refuse any engagement which will keep you from meditation on His Word. We are living in an age which has lost the art of being silent with an open Bible and waiting for God to speak.

Holwick: A Time of Crisis:

- 1) Replacing a beloved (and inspired) leader.
 - a) Moses had brought them out of Egypt.
 - b) He had led them 40 years in the wilderness.
 - c) Now he was dead.
- 2) Holding diverse tribes together.
 - a) Book will reveal tensions between the groups.
 - b) Even a few defections would bring about defeat.
- 3) Facing a huge task - conquering the Promised Land.
 - a) This had been a disaster the first time around.
 - b) The land was filled with fortified cities.

Holwick: Courageous leaders make an impact:

When Chuck Swindoll was a small boy, he attended church every Sunday at a big Gothic Presbyterian fortress in Chicago.

The preaching was powerful and the music was great.

But for Swindoll, the most awesome moment in the morning service was the offertory.

Twelve solemn, frock-coated ushers marched in lock-step down the main aisle to receive the brass plates for collecting the offering.

These men, so serious about their business of serving the Lord in this magnificent house of worship, were the business and professional leaders of Chicago.

One of the twelve ushers was a man named Frank Loesch.

He was not a very imposing-looking man, but in Chicago he was a living legend, for he was the man who stood up to Al Capone.

In the prohibition years, Capone's rule was absolute.

The local and state police and even the F.B.I. were afraid to oppose him.

But singlehandedly, Frank Loesch, as a Christian layman and without government support, organized the Chicago Commission. This group of citizens was determined to take Mr. Capone to court and put him away.

During the months that the Crime Commission met, Frank Loesch's life was in constant danger.

There were threats on the lives of his family and friends.

But he never wavered.

Ultimately he won the case against Capone and was the instrument for removing this blight from the city of Chicago. Frank Loesch had risked his life to live out his faith. Each Sunday at this point of the service, Swindoll's father, a Chicago businessman himself, never failed to poke him and silently point to Frank Loesch with pride.

Doug Goins: A Hard Act to Follow

Even godly leaders like Moses don't lead forever. There comes a time in every ministry when God calls for a new beginning with a new generation and new leadership. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the old generation of Jews had all died during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, and Joshua was commissioned to lead this new generation into a new challenge that he had never faced before---entering and conquering the promised land.

I remember being in London and seeing the grave of John Wesley, the great English revivalist of the 1700s and founder of Methodism. There is a plaque on his grave that says, "God buries his workmen, but his work goes on." It was God who had chosen Joshua, and everyone in Israel knew that he was their new leader. . .

God commissioned Joshua to do three things: to lead the people into the land; to defeat the enemies they would face in all the fortified cities, all the Canaanite tribes in the land; and to claim the inheritance of the land. God could have chosen some supernatural means to accomplish these things, such as sending an angel. But he chose a person just like us, and he promised to give that person the power he would need to get the job done.

Joshua himself is a type of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 2:10 calls Jesus the captain of our salvation. He has already won the ultimate victory over sin and death and hell. And now Jesus leads us in triumph through our own battles to possess the land. He shares the spiritual resources of his inheritance with us. He gives us his spiritual blessings---everything we need to follow in obedience to God's call in our lives. . .

What are you being called of God to arise and do today? What obedience to truth is required of you? How has God personally commissioned you to serve him and his people? Is there someone in whose giant shadow you will be serving, a loved leader you're being asked to follow, perhaps as a Sunday School teacher, staff person, or whatever? I talked to a woman this week who is being called of God to stepmother a family of children who desperately need to be loved, and she doesn't feel at all adequate for that calling from God. If none of these questions connects with you, then you have a different issue to deal with. It might mean that you're idling in neutral--gradually sliding backward, losing ground. Perhaps the call to you is to stand up and step out. Maybe it means saying, "Okay, Lord, what do you want me to do? What do

you want me to possess? What do you want me to move into?" I pray that you're encouraged by this text, that it strengthens you and gives you a brave heart.

Steve Malone :

The reason many of the first century Christians had joy in spite of hardships and turned their world upside down, is because they did not stop at going "almost", THEY WENT "ALL THE WAY" with God. THEY CROSSED OVER WHAT CAN BE CALLED THEIR SPIRITUAL JORDAN AND they ENTERED THE CHRISTIAN PROMISED LAND.

A land where they realized and enjoyed the forgiveness of sin and no longer let guilt stifle their walk.

A land where they truly knew that Christ was with them, they felt His presence as their Lord, Savior and Friend.

A land where they walked in the newness of life, leaving behind the old.

A land where they had true joy, a joy that was based on the unmovable rock of Jesus Christ and their relationship to Him, a joy resulting in an unquenchable praise and adoration.

A land where they allowed the spirit and the Word to help them be more Christ-like.

A land where they believed, used and saw in action the powerful privilege of prayer.

A land where they gained victory over sin through the blood and power of the Lamb.

A land where their cup was full and their hearts were satisfied.

A land where they could stare death in the face and see it as sweet victory. Because for them TO LIVE WAS CHRIST AND TO DIE WAS GAIN".

SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE DOESN'T IT. ACROSS THE RIVER IS LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY. A LAND WHERE EVERY CHRISTIAN will EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF SALVATION AND RISE ABOVE MEDIOCRITY AND SERVE CHRIST WHOLEHEARTEDLY. LIKE THE ISRAELITES GOD HAS ONLY ONE PLACE THAT HE INTENDS FOR CHRISTIANS TO LIVE AFTER HE DELIVERS THEM FROM BONDAGE. AS WE STUDY THE EARLY PART OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA TODAY, WE WILL SEE THAT OUR JOURNEY INTO OUR PROMISE LAND IS LIKE THE ISRAELITES JOURNEY IN 4 RESPECTS.

I. WE LIKE THEY, NEED TO LEAVE SOMETHING BEHIND

Hebrews 12:1, *"LET US THROW OFF EVERYTHING THAT HINDERS AND THE SIN THAT SO EASILY ENTANGLES - AND LET US RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE THE RACE MARKED OUT FOR US."*

II. WE LIKE THEY, MUST DEVELOP GENUINE FAITH

III. WE LIKE THEY, MUST BE FULLY ARMED -- Ephes 6:10-18

IV. WE LIKE THEY, MUST FOLLOW GOD

Jensen: But the foes of Israel were many and formidable. Whether it was a flooded river to cross, a strong fortress to destroy, or an alliance of armies to conquer, the entrance and possession were impossible—without God. But God was with Israel, and

God fought for Israel, and this made the difference. How very vital for the Christian intent on having God's best to learn that the enemies (so many!) of his soul are not driven out by his impotent efforts, well intended as they may be, but by God's devastating dynamite; not by the arm of flesh, but by the whole armor of God (Eph 6).

Blaikie: *"I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,"* – an assurance which is extended in the Epistle to the Hebrews to all who believe. We are so apt to view these promises as just beautiful expressions that we need to pause and think what they really mean. A promise of Divine presence, Divine protection and guidance and blessing all the days of our life, is surely a treasure of inexpressible value. It is no slight matter to realize that this is in God's heart – that He has a constant, unvarying feeling of love toward us, and readiness to help; but we must believe this in order to get the benefit of it; and, moreover, He must be left to determine the time, the manner, and the form in which His help is to come. Alas for the unbelief, the suspicion, the fear that is so prone to eat out the spirit of trust, and in our trials and difficulties make us tremble as if we were alone! What a profound peace, what calm enjoyment and blessed hope fall to the lot of those who can believe in a God ever near, and in His unfailing faithfulness and love! Was it not the secret alike of David's calmness, of our Lord's serenity, and of the cheerful composure of many a martyr and many a common man and woman who have gone through life undisturbed and happy, that they could say – *"I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved"*? God grant us all that, like Abraham, we may *"stagger not at the promise of God through unbelief, but that being strong in faith we may give glory to God, and believe that what He hath promised He is able also to perform."*

...

First of all, the land had to be conquered; and there is no difficulty in seeing how necessary it was for one who had this task on hand to be strong and of a good courage, and to meditate on God's law. Then the land had to be divided, and the people settled in their new life, and Joshua had to initiate them, as it were, in that life; he had to bind on their consciences the conditions on which the land was to be enjoyed, and start them in the performance of the duties, moral, social and religious, which the Divine constitution required. Here lay the most difficult part of his task.

Pink: Why didn't the Lord drive out all the Canaanites completely and immediately? (Ex. 23: 29,30) – *"little by little"* – thus Israel was kept in a state of constant dependence before the Lord. That is one of His principal designs in all His dealings with people; to wean them from self-reliance and teach them to lean more and more upon Himself.

The spiritual application to the Christian of the above is simple and informative. God has nowhere promised to give him victory over all his enemies at once, and therefore he should not expect it. Nor would it be good for him if He did – pride and self-esteem would be the immediate outcome. *"Therefore will the Lord wait that He may be gracious unto you"* (Isa. 30:18). He has many things to say unto us, but we cannot bear them now (John 16:12); and He has victories to give us, but we are not yet fitted for them. As Israel were not to be discouraged by the slowness of their arms, neither must we be dismayed if victory be not ours at once – still less entertain the

thought that success will never be achieved by us. In like manner, the possessing of our possessions, the present entering into and enjoyment of our heritage in Christ, is not attained all in a moment, but it is a progressive experience – “by little and little.” Growth in grace is not an instantaneous thing like the new birth, but a gradual one: patience has to have her perfect work.

F. B. Meyer: Re Joshua afflicted with his inadequacies and so charged here with courage and strength:

It is when men are in this condition that God approaches them with the summons to undertake vast and overwhelming responsibilities. Most of us are too strong for him to use; we are too full of our own schemes, and plans, and ways of doing things. He must empty us, and humble us, and bring us down to the dust of death, so low that we need every straw of encouragement, every leaf of help; and then he will raise us up, and make us as the rod of his strength. The world talks of the survival of the fittest; but God gives power to the faint, and increase might to them that have not strength; he perfects his strength in weakness, and uses things that are not to bring to naught things that are. If Ehud had been right-handed, he might never have judged Israel; if Gideon had been the greatest instead of the least in his father's house, he would never have vanquished Midian; if Paul had been as eloquent in his speech as he confesses himself to have been contemptible, he would never have preached the Gospel from Jerusalem round to Illyricum.

Let us consider the sources of Joshua's strength:

- I. A Faithful Past –
- II. A Distinct Call –
- III. The Sense of the Presence of God –
- IV. The Indwelling of the Word of God --

TEXT: Joshua 2: 1-24

TITLE: AVOIDING THE GRASSHOPPER MENTALITY /
SPIRITUAL RECONNAISSANCE: SWOT ANALYSIS
(STRENGTHS / WEAKNESSES / OPPORTUNITIES / THREATS)
THE MISSION OF THE TWO SPIES

Bad report given by initial 10 of 12 spies:

“we became like grasshoppers in our own sight” (Num. 13:33)

BIG IDEA:

GOD ASSURES HIS PEOPLE OF VICTORY BY EXPOSING THE FEAR AND DEFEATIST ATTITUDE OF OUR ENEMIES

(HERE HE USES A PROPHETIC PROSTITUTE – RAHAB)

INTRODUCTION: TURNING THE TABLES

I had an interesting experience earlier this week at my conference for Caterpillar dealers out in Las Vegas that directly illustrated the main point we want to grab hold of in today’s message. We had over 300 management representatives from most of the 58 dealerships in N Amer gathered together in one large ballroom to get pumped up and to think big about where our business is headed (in this case talking about our rental business and our sale of compact equipment). Cat corporate just achieved their overall goal of \$30 billion in annual revenue ... a couple of years ahead of schedule. The Cat executive opening up the conference challenged the group with this line of thinking:

“We are the 800 pound gorilla in the industry. Nobody can stand before us. We will be victorious in what we set our mind to accomplish. If one of our competitors were to walk into this ballroom right now and see what combined resources he was up against, he would be quaking in fear ... knowing that he didn’t stand a chance.”

(Well maybe if I worked for John Deere ... I’d say the same thing ... I’d be wrong of course ... just kidding ... that’s not the point)

The point of Joshua chapter 2 is that we can’t have a **Grasshopper Mentality** – God has called us to an agenda of spiritual victory and we need to move out in faith with an expectation of success. We as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ are much more than the 800 pound gorilla ... we will see the testimony of Rahab in this chapter ... we are Connected ... our God is the Master of the Universe –*“the God in heaven above and earth beneath.”*

Turning the Tables: We are not the ones who should be in fear and trembling. The victory has been won for us; Satan was defeated at the cross. Our enemies know that they cannot stand against the power of the Almighty. They are ready to be driven out. We must step out in faith and take the land that has been promised to us.

2nd message in series of 4 covering first 4 chapters of Joshua. Last week we looked at the **Commission to Go to War** and the required **Commitment to Courage and Obedience.** (*“be strong and courageous ... obey”*)

We saw 3 Obstacles to claiming God's promises for Spiritual Victory – those obstacles will be the subject of the next 3 sermons ...

- Today: Avoiding the **Grasshopper Mentality**
- Next week: Avoiding the **Victim Mentality**
- Finally: Avoiding the **Bigshot Mentality**

GOD ASSURES HIS PEOPLE OF VICTORY BY EXPOSING THE FEAR AND DEFEATIST ATTITUDE OF OUR ENEMIES

I. (:1-7) PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION MAKES US UNTOUCHABLES AND FRUSTRATES OUR ENEMIES

You can't be thinking Grasshopper thoughts when you realize that God protects us against all odds

KING OF JERICHO TRIES TO CAPTURE THE TWO SPIES BUT FAILS

Most powerful leader in the land extremely frustrated by his inability to accomplish his mission of capturing the two spies (like trying to squish 2 little grasshoppers)

- he had the right intelligence on the ground – those spies were right under his nose ... still couldn't find them ... sort of like WMDs
- he had all the cards in his favor; home field advantage; the world vs 2 – pretty good odds
- snookered by little old Rahab the harlot

“some trust in horses and some in chariots but we will remember the name of the Lord our God” – no room for grasshopper thinking

A. (:1a) Visualizing Victory -- Top Secret Reconnaissance Mission of the Two Spies
“Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, ‘Go, view the land, especially Jericho.’”

***SPIRITUAL RECONNAISSANCE: SWOT ANALYSIS
(STRENGTHS / WEAKNESSES / OPPORTUNITIES / THREATS)***

Timing Issue: when did this take place in the context of chaps 1-2

Remember 1:11 – the date was set – 3 days of preparation and then they would enter the land ... so things are being presented out of order here chronologically ... The spies had already returned with the critical intel info before Joshua set this timetable

Acting in FAITH consistent with being SMART about it; acting with PRUDENCE --

1. Extremely dangerous mission for these 2 spies
 - no support or fallback – on their own to fend for themselves; had to be very brave and resourceful
 - Joshua must have selected 2 very heroic leaders for this important mission
He remembered what was required from his earlier heroics with Caleb

- tried to slip into the country unobserved and blend in
- must have been good swimmers! No parting of the Jordan for their crossing

2. Extremely sensitive mission

- didn't communicate up front to the rest of the nation
- Leadership needs to present the right message at the right time – here Joshua still wanted to get his ducks in a row before going public

3. Extremely strategic mission

- significance of Jericho as the necessary stronghold from which to further invade the land

A small city (maybe 6 acres) on the plains just West of the river Jordan and Northeast of Jerusalem. A city of great power and wealth guarded by a great 30' tall wall. In fact a double wall ... 12 feet between the walls (inner wall very thick, outer wall very thin); people felt secure; impenetrable / Fortress mentality

B. (:1b) Friends in Low Places – the Assistance of Rahab the harlot

“So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.”

1. Selection of Rahab --

Why or How did they end up here?? Providence of God – unexplained to us

Rahab's house accustomed to having male visitors come and go; reputation well-known; the spies needed somewhere to stay

Rahab's house was the only place where the men could stay with any hope of remaining undetected and where they would be able to gather the information they were seeking. Moreover, her house afforded an easy way of escape since it was located on the city wall. (**Keathley**)

2. Significance of Rahab: A model of Gentile faith – commended highly in the NT

Commended for her faith in welcoming and protecting the spies in **Heb. 11:31**

“By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace”

Commended for her model of faith in action; living faith in **James 2:25**

“And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?”

Commended most importantly by being included in the royal line of Joseph – Establishing the legal right of Jesus to be the promised Messiah of the Seed of David; Her descendants became the kings of Israel and Judah!
Matt. 1:5

Isn't it interesting that in Matthew's account of the lineage of Jesus, the only three women mentioned were all involved in sexual sin, Rahab, a prostitute, Bathsheba, an

adulteress, and Tamar, who committed incest with her father-in-law. Oh the amazing grace of God. (Robert Massey)

3. Surprising Model of Rahab... who does she represent??

- she is a Canaanite – “*while we were yet enemies Christ died for us*”

The Canaanites were the enemy. According to God’s own command they were to be exterminated. All of them. Yet here is one of the enemy showing kindness and compassion to the Israeli spies.

- she is a woman – second class citizen; but not in God’s eyes

- she is a prostitute – could never amount to anything; beyond Forgiveness in the eyes of most; tainted forever

- she is a trophy of God’s grace – the type of instrument He loves to use to accomplish His purposes

Did you notice how the designation is “Rahab the harlot” ... our sense of God’s grace would be greatly magnified if we were labeled according to our past as well ... Here is Paul the self-righteous; Clyde the drunkard; Wilma the gossip ... we tend to look down on certain sins ... but the Holy God recognizes the same root depravity and rebellion against His righteousness

Here is the least impressive member of society being selected by God to play a critical role in world history (HIS Story) ... by grace through faith made some key right choices (despite having an embarrassing history of making incredibly destructive choices)

You think you are a nobody ... that God can’t use you for something impressive??

Think again; we can never try to excuse ourselves from some mission God is calling us to by claiming to be too small and unimportant for the task – the gifts and calling belong to God – He is the one who equips and enables

C. (:2-3) Enemies in High Places -- Blown Cover

1. (:2) Mission Exposed to King of Jericho

“And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, ‘Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.’”

Satan has always been *the accuser of the brethren* – whether it is bringing lies into our minds to try to make us deny the truth God has revealed about who we are and our relationship to Him (e.g. we are not grasshoppers!); or whether it is accusing us in some fashion by galvanizing opposition to us and to the program of God

He is active in the world behind the scenes right now – going about as a roaring lion; seeking whom he can devour – we don’t want to treat him lightly – but remember: the tables have been turned and he is the one who should be cowering in fear ... not us

2. (:3) Intimidating Ultimatum Issued to Rahab

“And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, ‘Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.’”

Watershed decision: *Who is on the Lord's side; who will serve the king?*
Will Rahab remain loyal to Baal and to the king of Jericho; or commit treason and align with the God of Israel? -- both a political and religious decision

D. (:4-6) Providential Protection -- Risky Protection Provided by Rahab

"But the woman had hidden the two men"

Dangerous game of Hide and Seek – a lot at stake

Rahab had made a lot of bad choices in her life ... but she turned things around when she risked everything and started making choices of faith

No matter how stained our past; no matter how humiliating; what type of bondage sin has created ... there are oppts today for choices of faith

but will require repentance – casting off certain aspects of one's lifestyle

* * * * *

Aside : Don't want to get off track here debating the issue of Situation Ethics ...

Was it OK for Rahab to be deceptive in this situation?

Simple Answer: Yes – (many won't agree ... I don't want to debate ... not the point of this account) – just two quick observations:

- Rahab consistently commended in the Scriptures for her brave behavior here

- The Spy Game in the context of warfare brings with it a different set of rules than what we would be dealing with in the case of Situation Ethics when it comes to our personal behavior

Enough said... we are moving on

* * * * *

E. (:7) Futile Opposition -- Rabbit Trail Pursuit

"So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate."

The fortifications and weapons of our spiritual enemies cannot frustrate the sovereign plans of God

The king of Jericho thought he had all his bases covered ... but he was clueless

II. (:8-11) PROPHETIC INSIGHT REVEALS THE DEFEATIST STATE OF THE ENEMY

God wants His people to wake up and appropriate the victory He has already secured. Note how long the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness when they could have already been enjoying rest in the land of milk and honey. The enemies are quaking in their boots ... have been for a long time ... wondering when their defeat will be executed.

A. (:8-9) Summary Admission of Defeat

1. Intellectual Acknowledgment of Defeat

"I know that the Lord has given you the land"

2. Emotional Dread of Defeat

“and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.”

Sometimes our enemies don't look scared:

Why wasn't Goliath scared when David approached him? Enemies can be just plain dumb and uninformed as well ... but where they are clued in ... they know their fate

B. (:10) Conclusive Examples of the Power of the Lord

1. Removing all Obstacles -- Crossing of the Red Sea

“For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt”

What are the huge obstacles that prevent you from claiming God's promises for spiritual victory? You need to give those over to God in faith

2. Defeating all Enemies who stand in our way –

Destruction of Sihon and Og (two kings of the Amorites)

“and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed.”

Deut 2:24-25 *“shall tremble and be in dread because of you”*

Deut 3:21-22 – important principle – God is fighting for us

Imagine a tag team fight where whenever you need help, God jumps into the ring and delivers the knockout blow

Satan knows what Christ accomplished on the Cross

Back to Gen.3 – the serpent bruised the heel of the seed of the woman

But the promised Messiah crushed the head of the serpent—He is finished

We sell compaction equipment that does a pretty good job if you want to use it to crush something ... while I was off in Vegas this week, I imagine most of you spent

Valentine's evening listening to a special promotion on 98 Rock ...

There you would have heard jilted lovers bringing momentos of past relationships gone sour to a touching event where they could have our big yellow machine crush those momentos to smithereens and thus gain some sense of closure for their bitterness ...

Real high class stuff

God specializes in Crushing His Enemies ... not just slapping them on the wrist ...obliterating them

“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” -- (Heb 10:31)

Matt. 8:29 – demons cast out into the herd of pigs

“Have you come to torment us before the time?”

Col. 2:15 – *“made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him”*

James 2:19 – the demons intellectually acknowledge the existence of God and shudder

C. (:11a) Losing All Heart

“And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you”

since they heard of this they have been expecting defeat

What would you think of someone who was given an inheritance of \$25 million dollars and then took 40 years to get over to the bank to sign the papers so they could start using the funds?

The enemy was wondering: what took you guys so long to get here?

D. (:11b) Confession of Absolute Sovereignty

“for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”

Significant testimony for one raised in a culture of polytheism and idolatry

Same lesson that King Nebuchadnezzar had to learn the hard way ...

This is where we need to hang our hat – Psalm 139 – Romans 8 --

Smart to get with the program

Do God’s people act like they truly believe this?

Goins: This powerful confession of God's absolute sovereignty suggests that Rahab isn't just gripped by fear, but deep inside she has a growing spiritual sensitivity to the supernatural God at work through all of these events.

Schaeffer: How did she know that? We are not told. Often in Scripture we find that people knew things, though we are not told how they came to know them. But Rahab knew! And what she knew was totally against her culture. She believed in a new God, a God totally and diametrically opposed to the gods of Jericho but a God above all other gods, a universal God. In the midst of the Canaanites, the Ammonites, the Amorites – in the midst of their horrible, polluted worship, laden with sex symbols and sex practices – Rahab affirmed a true theological proposition about who God really is.

III. (:12-21) PASSOVER TYPE DELIVERANCE (REDEMPTION) COMES FROM A SIMPLE COVENANT COMMITMENT

You can't help but see here the parallels to the Passover account where God delivered His chosen people from out of the bondage of Egypt.

Here God both delivers the two Jewish spies from the clutches of the enemy and then pledges deliverance for the Gentile family of faithful Rahab.

We won't ever think like grasshoppers if we remember our powerful redemption.

We are precious to the one who has gone to such great lengths to redeem us

A. (:12-13) Plea for Covenant Mercy

1. Based on mercy shown by Rahab

“since I have dealt kindly with you” Heb. hesed

Think of the huge reward that would have been hers for turning in the spies
“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” Matt. 57

2. Extended to Her Household

“that you also will deal kindly with my father’s household”

Not just saving her own skin

B. (:14) Brokering the Deal

“So the men said to her, ‘Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when the Lord gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.’”

Look at the Compassionate Heart of God – now we have more insight into why this reconnaissance mission was necessary – God didn’t need any help with the logistics of how to knock down the walls at Jericho; but He was giving this gracious opportunity to deliver a Gentile family from judgment and destruction

C. (:15-16) Logistics of Escape for the Two Spies

1. (:15) Logistics of Escape from Jericho

“Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall.”

- Providential that she was living on the wall

2. (:16) Logistics of Escape from the Pursuers

“And she said to them, ‘Go to the hill country, lest the pursuers happen upon you, and hide yourselves there for three days, until the pursuers return. Then afterward you may go on your way.’”

- Significance of three day wait

D. (:17-21) Logistics of Deliverance for Rahab and her Family –

Symbol of God’s Promised Blessing Upon the Gentiles (part of Abrahamic Covenant)

The Sign of the Scarlet Thread

Turning the shame of the scarlet letter A for adulteress into the trophy of the scarlet thread of God’s redemption and deliverance

She was told to leave a scarlet rope, the color of blood. This was no coincidence. Throughout the Scriptures blood is shown to cover our sin. Without the shedding of blood there is no redemption of sin. It is the blood of Christ that rescues us from destruction. (Keith Andrews)

(:22-24) CONCLUSION: SPIES REPORT BACK TO JOSHUA WITH MESSAGE OF ASSURANCE OF VICTORY

“And they said to Joshua, ‘Surely the Lord has given all the land into our hands, and all the inhabitants of the land, moreover, have melted away before us.’”

Successfully completed their very difficult mission.
What mission lies before each of us?

What spiritual battles for victory do we face
 Against Satan and our foes
 Against the world and its attractions
 Against our flesh and its enticements

Don't forget the irony of this passage:
the inhabitants were looking at Israel's God and were shaking in their sandals. The Israelites, who had seen the mighty works of God over and over again, were looking at their problems rather than God and were terrorized into unbelief. (Keathley)

As we leave here this morning, let's leave behind any grasshopper thinking and have the Vision of Victory and the assurance that God has provided for us.

* * * * *

Homework / Memorize / Meditate:

NT Statements of Victory:

“I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.”
-- Matt. 16:18

“the fields are white unto harvest” – John 4:35

“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”
-- Romans 8:37

“but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
-- 1 Cor. 15:57

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.”
-- 2 Cor. 2:14

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” – Gal. 5:1

“Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.” -- Ephe. 6:13

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” -- Phil. 1:6

“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” -- Col. 3:4

“Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” -- 1 Thess. 5:24

*“But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”
-- 2 Thess. 3:3*

“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” -- 1 John 4:4

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What challenges or obstacles give rise to grasshopper type thinking on your part?
- 2) What are some other NT passages that indicate that Satan and his demons already know they have been ultimately defeated?
- 3) If the Lord was going to hang a label on us (like He did on *“Rahab the harlot”*), what would the designation read?
- 4) What parallels do you see between the Passover experience of the Jews back in Egypt at the time of the exodus and Rahab’s experience here?

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Blaikie: A little explanation is needed respecting the time when Joshua said the Jordan must be crossed – *“within three days.”* If the narrative of the first two chapters be taken in chronological order, more than three days must have elapsed between the issuing of this order and the crossing of the river, because it is expressly stated that the two spies who were sent to examine Jericho hid themselves for three days in the mountains, and thereafter recrossed the Jordan and returned to Joshua (ii. 22). But it is quite in accordance with the practice of Scripture narrative to introduce an episode out of its chronological place so that it may not break up the main record. It is now generally held that the spies were sent off before Joshua issued this order to the people, because it is not likely that he would have committed himself to a particular day before he got the

information which he expected the spies to bring.

Goins: It's interesting how the Israelite armies that advanced were to know which house was hers. The location of that house in or on the city wall would make it easy for the spies to escape and also for the house to be recognized by the advancing army. For about 250 years biblical critics claimed that this story was mythological, or at best historical fiction, because there was no evidence that there were houses built into city walls in the ancient near east. But the excavations in Jericho after the turn of the century showed that the city was surrounded by double walls with twelve feet between them. And they found evidence that simple houses were built on top of timbers that were spread between the two walls. These were like poor squatter's houses sitting on top of the city wall. . .

Two New Testament books mention Rahab, Hebrews and James. Hebrews makes a tremendous statement about her, comparing her to other heroes of faith. She is one of only two women listed in the hall of fame in Hebrews 11. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is mentioned as a woman of faith, and then it says of Rahab, "By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had given friendly welcome to the spies" (11:31). Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." That describes the saving faith of Rahab. She was surrounded by unbelieving Canaanites, and yet she stood alone in faith.

James 2:21, 25 mentions two people who demonstrate a living, spiritual faith-the man Abraham and the woman Rahab. They are the only two people mentioned: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?...And in the same way was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?" The issue of works means that faith is demonstrated, expressed, or exhibited. What they believed spiritually, they each acted on in the choices they made. Abraham demonstrated his faith at tremendous cost, but he was willing to trust God and offer his son. Rahab, as well, had a faith that had teeth to it, structure and strength. She stood alone against the entire culture that surrounded her. Until Jericho fell she had to stand for the unseen spiritual realities against the seen physical realities. She had to make a choice to trust the God of Israel whom she couldn't see, against the king of Jericho and the armies and the fortifications of that great city that she could see. By her faith, Rahab the harlot was deemed righteous.

Jensen: Outline

THE SPIES	VERSES	RAHAB
1. Spies are dispatched	1	
2. Spies are protected	2-7	Rahab's works
3. Spies are informed	8-11	Rahab's faith
4. Spies promise safety	12-22	Rahab's reward
5. Spies give report	23-24	

The place of Rahab in the history of Israel was twofold. *First*, she was chosen by God to provide the information which He desired Israel to have at this time, namely, that He had melted the hearts of the enemy in fear of Joshua and his hosts even as Moses had prophesied earlier (Exodus 15:13-18). *Second*, Rahab would be for all centuries to come a vivid example of the sinner, through whom God accomplishes His purpose and in whose heart He works a change. Concerning this latter, it is to be observed that a harlot is Israel's helper.

Robert Massey: heard the story recently of two friends who were talking to each other. One remarked to his friend and said, "Man, you look so depressed. Whatever could you be thinking about to depress you so?" His friend quickly replied, "My future". "Your future?" his friend said. "Whatever in the world would make it look so hopeless?" to which his miserable friend sighed and unhappily said "My past." Wouldn't it be great if we never had problems in our past? However, most of us know that the past can load us down with baggage like guilt, depression, and fear. The past can certainly affect us and push us down. Everyday people carry scars from their past, and often these scars are still painful and tender.

Darren Ethier: So these three things stand out about Rahab's faith in this story. Her faith was based not on who she is but on who God is, her trust in God arose out of what she heard about God not necessarily from what she personally experienced, and Rahab's faith led to action!!

Barnhouse (quoted by J. Oswald Sanders): The death of our Lord Jesus Christ destroyed – brought to nought – "*him that had the power of death, that is the devil.*" The word "*destroy*" has no suspicion of any such meaning as annihilation but rather that of rendering harmless, useless, worthless. Thus the Lord made a public example of Satan, and immediately proved the decline of Satan's power by taking the keys with which Satan pretended to some authority over the righteous spirits and, entering among them until the three days and nights should be accomplished, announced the freeing of those who had been detained.

TEXT: Joshua 3: 1-17

TITLE: STEPPING OUT IN FAITH – CROSSING THE JORDAN / AVOIDING THE VICTIM MENTALITY

BIG IDEA:

STEPPING OUT IN FAITH SEEMS RISKY BUT IS THE ONLY COURSE OF ACTION THAT ALLOWS THE LIVING GOD TO WORK ON OUR BEHALF

Crossing the Jordan River to engage the enemy and attempt to claim God's promises for Victory was a great **Crisis of Faith** for a generation that had a lot of baggage – Last week we looked at avoiding the **Grasshopper Mentality** = that mindset that sees obstacles as Giants and ourselves as powerless grasshoppers – but through the eyes of Rahab, God gave the two spies that were sent to check out Jericho the vision that the enemy was quaking in their boots and aware of the awesome power of the God of Israel

Today we are going to look at a second obstacle to claiming God's promises for spiritual victory in our Christian walk: **the Victim Mentality**
3 Manifestations of a **Victim Mentality**: (Instead of a Victor Mentality) – children of Israel were locked into these types of negative thought patterns as they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness ... missing out on God's best for them –

1) Playing the **Beat Yourself Up Game (Woe is Me Game)** -- Mindset that bad things are destined to happen to you – expectation that things will go wrong; self pity party
We aren't going to have anything to drink – We aren't going to have anything to eat ...
God has led us out into this wilderness and forgotten all about us ...
Meanwhile, God is performing one spectacular miracle after another to demonstrate His glory and to show the people His Providential love and provision for them

2) Playing the **Blame Game** -- Mindset that it is not ultimately your fault for your bad lot in life – blaming environment or someone else; never facing your own responsibility – Placed the blame on Moses and Aaron – determined to appoint new leaders that would take them safely back to bondage in Egypt

3) Playing the **Bitterness Game** – sense of resignation; giving up
“Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!”

Stepping out in Faith is the only answer to the Victim Mentality

INTRODUCTION (:1) FAITH INVOLVES A COMMITMENT TO ACT ON GOD'S PROMISES AND WAIT UPON GOD'S TIMING

“Then Joshua rose 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.”

- No Procrastination – when the time is right, let’s get moving
Cf. trying to get an early start on vacation trips ... lots of details to take care of, never goes as smoothly as you want
- Deliberate, careful action; counting the cost
- No small feat – Chap3 of the book of Joshua is about crossing over from the futile Christian walk of self-effort and defeat to the victorious life of faith that overcomes the world.
- A nation of 2.5 million people involved here; talking about quite a bit of real estate in the Jordan River ... not some small path as is pictured in Sunday School stories

What has been causing us defeat in our Christian walk? Where do we need the victory? What types of Jordan Rivers ... impossible boundaries ... do we need to cross today?

What were the people thinking as they spent these three days of preparation waiting for the command to move out? How impossible the situation must have looked to them. They did not yet know how they were even going to cross the Jordan River.

Goins: There is a similar tension for the disciples of Jesus implied at the end of Luke and the beginning of Acts, after his resurrection and his ascension into heaven. Jesus had said, "...Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). And for forty days the disciples had to wait for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, the resource they needed to live a life of overcoming faith. Remember, the power of God was demonstrated for the church at Pentecost, and it would be demonstrated here for Israel on the fourth day at the Jordan in a miraculous crossing over into the promised land. But **waiting on the Lord** is hard to do.

I. (:2-6) FAITH RALLIES AROUND THE PRESENCE OF GOD – COUNTING ON HIS BLESSING – STAYING FOCUSED ON HIM

A. (:2-3) God Always Leads the Way – We Must Follow

“When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.”

Notice how many times the ark of the covenant is referred to in this chapter (10 references in 17 verses – pretty significant – that is what I highlighted in my Bible) – the ark plays the central role – not the courageous leadership of Joshua or the willingness of the valiant warriors ... It represents the presence of the Lord and His covenant commitment to bless His people as they obey His law
Important occasion – Levitical priests instructed to carry it here; normally the Kohathites had that responsibility

Keeping our eyes on God is the message here

“Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” – one of my favorite hymns; remember Peter taking his eyes off Jesus

Heb 12 – *“fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith”*

B. (:4) Do Not Act Presumptuously and Profane what is Sacred

“However, there shall be between you and it a distance of about 2,000 cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know by which you shall go, for you have not passed this way before.”

Don't Crowd God's Holy Space – would not want to accidentally bump into it ...

We have been called to a relationship of intimacy with God ... so much so that Jesus is not ashamed to be called our brother ...

But we are never to forget God's awesome Holiness and Majesty and Transcendence – The Creator is far above the creature and to be feared and respected as such

2 Purposes mentioned for maintaining this space:

1) Need a clear line of sight so that everyone can keep their eyes fixed on the Ark; we are not called to depend on the sight and faith of another;

Our faith is a personal commitment through the only mediator that can faithfully represent us to the Father ... the God-man Christ Jesus

2) Striking out into new territory – We need God's guidance and presence

Think of the exciting tension there must have been to travel to the moon and take that first step onto unknown terrain ... God calls us at times to leave our comfort zone and step out in faith and tackle new frontiers and challenges ... but we can be confident of His presence with us

C. (:5) Consecration Precedes Any Demonstration of God's Power

“Then Joshua said to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.’”

God Demands our Personal and Corporate Purity before He is willing to work wonders on our behalf

The urgency of crossing the Jordan and getting moving did not rise above the necessity of having prepared hearts

Sometimes we can be all about action when we have neglected our devotion and worship

What steps did the Israelites take to consecrate themselves:

- probably involved fasting
- probably involved abstinence from sexual relationships
- certainly involved asking the Lord to search their hearts for any sin

Remember the message of **Isaiah chapter 1** – God tells His covenant people that their idolatry is a stench to Him ... He is sick of their sacrifices and prayers and offerings and solemn assemblies because their heart is not right – lots of activity – but no blessing from God – Repentance and faith have always been the conditions for God's blessing:

“Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan; plead for the widow.” Then He offers that great promise of forgiveness if we will repent and seek purity:

“Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.”

There can be no consecration if we have never humbled ourselves before the Lord; admitted our sinfulness and inability to save ourselves; and placed our faith in the death of Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sins. This is how we receive the free gift of forgiveness of sins and are able to be united with the resurrection life and power of our risen Lord.

But maybe we are hanging on to some sins that we just have been unwilling to give up ..There is no victory in that type of lifestyle ... the message of Joshua is *‘Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.’*”

D. (:6) Obedient, Faithful Leaders Encourage the Faith of God’s People

“And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, ‘Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over ahead of the people.’ So they took up the ark of the covenant and went ahead of the people.”

Do you think it was an easy thing for the priests who were leading the way to walk out into the raging current of the Jordan River in its most volatile flood stage?

No, it was a crisis of faith for them .. but someone has to lead the way and encourage the others

God doesn’t usually reveal to us all of the details of His plan for our future ... He wants us to take one step at a time, trusting in Him and looking for Him to guide us into the next step

When **Abraham** was called to leave his homeland of Ur of the Chaldees .. he didn’t know all that was ahead of him ...

“by faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going”

neither did **Moses** – *“by faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen”* – He had his eyes set on the Lord

II. (:7-13) FAITH THAT IS WILLING TO TAKE GREAT RISKS WILL SEE DRAMATIC RESULTS

A. (:7) God Validates His Chosen Leaders to Confirm Their Calling (or Giftedness)

“Now the Lord said to Joshua, ‘This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.’”

What an encouragement to Joshua! Remember, he is primarily a type of Christ ... it was on the cross that God the Father lifted up His Son and exalted Him and then showed by raising Him from the dead that this truly is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ... and this very Lord Jesus will be the one ultimately exalted so that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess His Lordship

We need to be confident of God's presence with us

B. (:8) Faith Puts Us At Risk Where We Then are Called to Stand Still and See the Deliverance of the Lord

"You shall, moreover, command the priests who are carrying the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'"

Leaving our comfort zone; river over a mile wide

The "Jordan River" – is not a wide river. Normally... It was about 40 feet wide at the widest point.

In the springtime – the normally narrow river flooded its banks. In places it could be around 150 feet deep and as much as a mile wide.

Not even easy to keep your balance in a raging river – especially when you are carrying something bulky like the ark of the covenant

I wonder if there were spies from Jericho that were watching these events unfold and wondering at these strange tactics for entering into warfare

C. (:9-13) The Demonstration of the Power of God Assures Us of Victory Over Our Powerful Enemies

1. (:9) The Power of God's Word

"Then Joshua said to the sons of Israel, 'Come here, and hear the words of the Lord your God.'"

When we are entering into battle, we can't get too much of the Word of God; that is our offensive weapon; the sword of the Spirit; that is how we combat Satan just as Christ did in His temptation

2. (:10) The Power of God's Presence

"And Joshua said, 'By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.'"

We don't need to be experts in all of the nuances of these different enemies ... we need to be confident in the power of the living God who is on our side and fighting for us

3. (:11) The Majesty of God's Presence – His Reputation is at Stake
“Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over ahead of you into the Jordan.”

Theme of difficult cross overs we may be facing; natural fear of change; times of transition are difficult

Theme of reaching our potential; fulfilling our dreams despite disappointments of the past

4. (:12) The Power of Plural United Leadership
“Now then, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe.”
5. (:13) The Demonstration of God's Awesome Power
“And it shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above shall stand in one heap.”

III. (:14-17) STEPPING OUT IN FAITH REQUIRES THE PERSEVERANCE TO FULLY CARRY OUT GOD'S PLAN

A. The Obedience of the Priests (who carried the ark of the covenant)

They were charged with a very difficult and courageous assignment.

Talk about *“Be strong and courageous!”*

They had to stand in the middle of the Jordan and be the last to cross over

Being a Leader in God's Army has always been about **being a Servant**

The priests did not have some cushy job where everybody catered to their needs and bowed down before them and served them hand and foot; the priests worked hard and sacrificially on behalf of the people; here they are charged with doing the dangerous duty on the front lines of the invading force

B. The Obedience of the People

Leaving their comfort zone – *“when the people set out from their tents”*

Walking into new territory ... yet with the history of how the Lord had enabled the nation to cross the Red Sea in fleeing from Egypt

Obedience is Faith in Action – whole book of James written to illustrate this point ... it's a dead faith that just sits around and agrees intellectually with what God has said ... but God is a living God and He demands living faith of us ... faith that steps out and acts on what He has commanded

C. The Sovereign Control Over Nature and Circumstances

- heaping up the waters of the Jordan River; flood season of course
- shutting off the inflow from the streams and tributaries

- causing the land to be dry ground for the crossover

Being a **Victim** means you see yourself as limited by the circumstances that are dealt you; Being a **Victor** means you see yourself as under the Providential protection and guidance of an all powerful God who is working all things together for your good

Goins: Although the Jordan River was only about a hundred feet wide most of the year, during the spring flood season it overflowed its banks and became up to a mile wide. But as soon as the Levites carrying the ark put their feet into the water, the river immediately stopped flowing and stood up like a wall about twenty miles upstream near the city of Adam. This was a miracle of God in response to the faith of the people.

D. The Dominant, Victorious Presence of **the Ark of the Covenant**

Referred to 10 times in this chapter ... the dominant element

There could be no doubt whose doing this was; God does not like to share His glory with another – we will be looking at that concept next week in Chapter 4 when we study how to overcome the mentality of Big Shots

Goins: The ark symbolized the presence and power of God with his people. The ark was the sign that God was leading them. They weren't just a migratory people optimistically yet futilely thinking that they could go into the land of Canaan. They had to know that they were God's people, being led by him. The ark also symbolized the specific teaching and direction that God had given to his people. They had the assurance of his guidance and leadership as they moved into the new, completely unfamiliar territory. If they didn't follow the Lord, as symbolized by the ark, they would get lost and disoriented; they wouldn't know where to go or how to live.

CONCLUSION:

I like the worship song from Singspiration Music:

*Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?
God specializes in things thought impossible -- He does the things others cannot do.
(By Oscar Eliason (c) 1945, 1971 Singspiration Music.)*

When it comes to claiming God's promises for spiritual victory, we can't look at ourselves as grasshoppers And we certainly can't look at ourselves as victims.

"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you!"

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What helps to remind us of the presence of the Lord with us at all times? (since we don't have the ark of the covenant to look at)
- 2) What steps should we take to consecrate ourselves?
- 3) Where do we see evidence all around us that the living God is among us and working in the midst of our church?
- 4) What are the mountains, the rivers, the obstacles that stand in the way of us fully claiming God's promises for victory?

Finally, are you willing to sanctify yourself today, to confess sin or uncleanness that needs to be washed by the blood of Jesus? Are you willing to consecrate yourself anew to God's purposes for you, to experience the wonders that he wants to accomplish in you and through you in the people that you live in community with and work with?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Redpath: The floods, the opposition of principalities and powers to the child of God, can never get past what our triumphant Lord Jesus conquered. The passage of Jordan means facing the impossibility, following the dying, rising, ascending Jesus into the place of all power. Get a clear view of Him who can deal with the impossibility of your life before you have reached it. For in the name of the Lord Jesus I declare this truth, that, however subtle, however strong it may be, there is no attack of Satan on the child of God but first has struck the heart of the Lord. He overcame it at the Cross, and He bids us, His children to get a clear view of Him, to face again the impossibility that we have faced so often, then look up into His face and say, "Now, Lord Jesus, I believe that, although I cannot, you can." In that moment the roar of Jordan will be silent, its violence be checked, and we will go through on dry land. The path of the child of God from the wilderness to Canaan is by way of facing the impossible and looking up to a Risen Christ and getting hold of Him.

Goins: In the opening verses of Joshua 3, God illustrates for us three essentials for moving ahead by faith, claiming all that he has for us. This is what God desired for Israel and also what he desires for us. First, the Israelites were willing to wait on the Lord even when it was difficult to wait. Second, they were willing to follow the Lord unconditionally. And third, they were willing to consecrate themselves before the Lord.

Goins: The only way to go on is by faith. Faithlessness, or unbelief, says, "No, let's go back to where it's safe." But faith says, "Let's go forward to where God is working." Forty years before, Joshua and Caleb had assured the Jews with these words: "Let us go up at once, and occupy it; for we are well able to overcome it." That's faith. But the

people said that they weren't able to. That's faithlessness. That unbelief cost the nation forty years of discipline in the wilderness. The apostle John assures us today, "And this is the victory that has overcome the world---our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Caselman (from Lucado):

Escaping The Victim Mentality From: RWCaselman@aol.com

Date: 97-01-31 00:54:34

Escaping The Victim Mentality

Reading John 5.1-15

I want to begin by reading this piece from Max Lucado.

It is the heroin of the emotions, the angel dust of the spirit, the cocaine of the soul.

Injected into our system with the intentions of recovery, it has the capacity to kill.

It's available and alluring and its dealers and users are often Christians.

The name of the drug is pity.

No one dependent upon pity ever intended to get that way.

The first experiment with the drug is usually a legitimate problem; a sickness maybe, cancer, a cold, a broken leg.

Perhaps it was taken to weather a crisis, death, bankruptcy, a divorce.

Whatever the cause, the treatment is the same, well meaning friends treat us with pity, kind words, sympathetic jesters, empathic tears.

Most of the time the treatment has its intended results.

Healing occurs and we pick ourselves up and we continue with our lives.

There are times, however, when a habit is formed.

The attention and compassion feel good.

The sudden flood of love and warmth gives us a type of high.

Well intentioned friends inject our veins with kindness, fill our room with the smoke of understanding.

My, it feels nice.

In fact its been a while since we felt such warmth and sympathy.

So, instead of fighting to get back on our feet, we allow ourselves to ease into this addiction.

Motivation wains.

Creativity disappears.

Initiative exits.

Paralyses enters.

We love the process of healing so much that we don't want to get healed.

Instead of getting better, we convince ourselves that we're worse.

In time, we become pity junkies.

We thrive on the compassion of others.

We become masters of reciting our woes and will gladly retell the tale to anyone who will listen.

We bear our wounds to all who pass, begging for a sympathetic touch.
As is true with drugs, each dose of pity is less effective.
Soon the pity from others is not stout enough, so we manufacture our own.
We convince ourselves that we are a victim of everything.
Our parents didn't raise us correctly.
My boss doesn't respect me.
I was potty trained too early.
Society expects too much of me.
Nobody loves me, everybody hates me.
I think I'll eat some worms.
For those who follow this cycle to its end there's a predictable final
step, anger.
We've become so efficient at convincing ourselves that we are victimized by
the world, that the only logical reaction is anger.
Anger at the world, anger at family, anger at the church, anger at society.
Self pity has paralyzed us to the point that we become useless to the family,
to the church and community.

Church, the truth is, few people ever overcome self pity, this angel dust of
the soul.
Its so very easy, because we are all susceptible aren't we?
We all have the potential for self pity.
We all have problems in life, we all have situations in that are unfair.
We all have reasons to feel sorry for ourselves at some time or another.
Tragedy strikes:
Often times loving, caring friends,
The church, come to support us
As well they should.
We all need that kind of comfort and help in times of need.

And yet there are times that we don't get over our problem and move on.
We begin to enjoy that comfort....this pity.
We begin to enjoy those listening ears.
We search out only those friends who will pity us.
It becomes an ugly scene people needing people to further their victim
mentality.
What Lucado calls pity junkies.

In this relationship, we learn to blame anyone, every one and everything for
who we are, and what we are doing.
Our conversations change to the point that they are only focused on self.
No matter what someone else may say or bring up, we always have a way to
bring the conversation back around to us and our problems.
We begin to be bitter toward life.
You see, addiction to self pity has tell-tale signs in our speech.
¥ I am not treated right.

¥ My boss doesn't respect me.
¥ I am not paid enough to do that.
¥ My coworkers expect too much of me.
¥ My children and spouse don't appreciate me, even though I work and slave for them.
¥ My parents never did like me.
¥ I was abused as a child.
¥ Even when I go to church, no one speaks to me.
It so easy to get addicted..... Isn't it?
Let me ask you a question Is this where you live?

Perhaps we know someone who is addicted to this victim mentality.
How do we change...if its us.
Or how do we help someone else who is suffering from this heroin of the soul?
That's what the lesson is about tonight.
I want to do two thing with this lesson.
¥ Number one, I want to insist that we become people persons...Because Jesus was.
We'll see this in the narrative.
¥ Number two, I want us to note how to overcome the victim mentality.

Robert Massey: Obstacles on the Way

The dictionary defines obstacles as “something that stands in the way or opposes”.
Something that is between where you are, and where you want to go. Life is filled with obstacles.

- I. BE SENSITIVE REGARDING THE PRESENCE OF GOD
- II. BE SERIOUS REGARDING THE PURITY OF GOD
- III. BE SECURE IN THE POWER OF OUR GOD

John Hamby: Stepping out on Faith

- 1. FAITH MAY REQUIRE THAT WE WAIT (vv. 1-2a)
- 2. FAITH RECOGNIZES THAT SOMETIMES GOD CHOOSES TO WORK IN NEW WAYS (vv. 2b-4)
- 3. FAITH MEANS THAT WE ARE WILLING TO STEP OUT (vv. 5-8)
- 4. FAITH IS AN OPPORTUNITY THAT CAN BE REJECTED (vv. 9-13)
- 5. FAITH AFFORDS GOD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE HIS POWER (vv. 14-17)

Keith Andrews:

You want to be great for God. And you want God to do great things through you. But hear you sit at an obstacle. The obstacle of past rejection, or past failure, or fear of failure, or fear of commitment, or just plain laziness has been put in front of you and you are paralyzed.

TEXT: Joshua 4: 1-24

TITLE: *AVOIDING THE BIGSHOT MENTALITY / COMMEMORATING THE SPIRITUAL MILESTONE OF CROSSING OVER*

BIG IDEA:

ESTABLISHING PHYSICAL MEMORIALS TO SPIRITUAL MILESTONES REINFORCES THE REALITY OF GOD'S POWER IN OUR LIVES AND ENHANCES OUR WORSHIP

REVIEW:

Finishing up our 4 week series in Joshua

Just a quick review of some of the key spiritual disciplines that we have touched on but that deserve more study: **THE SEVEN STEPS TO SPIRITUAL VICTORY**

Chapter 1:

1) **Strengthening ourselves in the Lord** so that we obey the command to **be Strong and Courageous**

2) **Meditating on the Word of God** so that we are careful to **Obey it** completely

Chapter 2:

3) Avoiding the **Grasshopper mentality** by focusing on a **Vision of Victory**

Chapter 3:

4) **Consecrate yourselves – Waiting on the Lord** in preparation for the Lord doing wonders among you -- Will involve repentance; an undivided spiritual focus; separation

5) **Step out in Faith** – Avoiding the **Victim Mentality** by keeping our **Vision on Christ** – God does not start working until we step out in faith .. that is when the waters of the Jordan in our life our rolled back

6) **Persevere in Faith** – not enough to just stick our toes in the water – we need to live on the other side of the Jordan River – united with Christ experientially in His death, burial (crossing the Jordan) and resurrection (Romans 6-8)

7) Fundamentally, appreciate that **Spiritual Victory is a Gift** from our Sovereign God – Drives a positive attitude of Thanksgiving which puts the focus on God rather than us

How can it be a gift you say ... look at all the spiritual disciplines we are called on to exercise .. we can only be successful in any of those by the Grace of God ... not by our own efforts ..

INTRODUCTION:

We could stop here ... we have all we need for spiritual victory ... but we are going to study chapter 4 ... because there is one more major obstacle to claiming God's promises for spiritual victory in our lives... and this one usually rears its ugly head after we have had some measure of success already ...

The Big Shot Mentality – looking back at our past experience and giving ourselves too much credit instead of giving God all the glory – especially dangerous for spiritual leaders

We love to cultivate a hero worship type of mentality – look at all the memorials we erect to key leaders (usually after they have passed away)

You don't have to go far to view these ... the Washington Monument; the Lincoln Memorial; it is the same in the realm of sports: Babe Ruth Museum; Vince Lombardi Trophy; or in the realm of entertainment – let's give them an Oscar; let's give them a Star on Hollywood

sometimes we honor groups in a collective sense – memorials to the fallen veterans of WWII or the Vietnam world

Not wrong to recognize significant accomplishments ... but in the spiritual realm we need physical memorials to keep us focused on God's Power and Presence in our lives .. so we don't get puffed up with pride and start to rely on the flesh

Isn't that what **Baptism** is all about – the testimony of our conscience to the saving power of God in redeeming us from our sinful past and giving us new life in Christ – Do you think back on your baptism and see that stake in the ground where you publicly proclaimed your faith in the Lord Jesus – but that was a long time ago for most of us

That is what the **Lord's Supper** is all about – that type of physical memorial of the death of Christ on our behalf – we remember His death and our victory in Him until He comes ..

The early church probably celebrated that weekly at their corporate meetings ... imp to participate on a regular basis

ESTABLISHING PHYSICAL MEMORIALS TO SPIRITUAL MILESTONES REINFORCES THE REALITY OF GOD'S POWER IN OUR LIVES AND ENHANCES OUR WORSHIP

2 Special Stone Monuments:

- 1) **Stones of Burial** – set up in the middle of the Jordan River
- 2) **Stones of Resurrection** – set up on the west bank in Gilgal

(Would be good Memorial Day message)

I. (:1-7) COMMUNICATING THE LEGACY OF GOD'S SAVING POWER TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS – INSTRUCTIONS FOR ESTABLISHING THE MEMORIAL

A. (:1-3) Instructions from the Lord to Joshua Re Establishing the Memorial

The memorial of the 12 stones should encourage our faith in 3 key areas:

- 1) (:1-2) **Unity** -- All genuine believers are united in the one Body of Jesus Christ –

“Now it came about when all the nation had finished crossing the Jordan, that the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, ‘Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from each tribe’”

emphasis on ALL the nation; every tribe represented; no one left out

Ephes 4:4-6 (lot of parallels between book of Ephes and book of Joshua)
“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”

Certainly not united organizationally ... but don't let our points of distinction overrule our unity on the fundamentals of the faith

2) (:3a) **Connectivity** -- Necessary to revisit our past – remember where we came from

“and command them, saying, ‘Take up for yourselves twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet are standing firm”

don't forget that the only reason we are living in this resurrection life is because we already died with Christ and were buried with Christ

can never completely lose touch with our past – we are the redeemed ... but from what/ the converted .. but from where / ... the saved ... but how / ... the elect ... but why

3) (:3b) **Intimacy** – love relationship expressed in worship – stirred up by the memorial that is set up right where we make our home; base camp for Israelites; Concept of Abiding

“and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge tonight.”

Note: Effort, Work involved in worshipping

How were the priests able to hold the ark of the covenant all day long??

Had to carry these 12 stones to Gilgal on their back – not some little pebbles

B. (:4-5) Instructions Relayed from Joshua to the People

“So Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the sons of Israel, one man from each tribe; and Joshua said to them, ‘Cross again to the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel.’”

Must have seemed like a strange request to these leaders ... we have just come out of the danger zone ... now you want us to go back to the middle of the riverbed?

But that is where the ark still is ... we are always safe when we are walking by faith with our eyes fixed on the Lord

C. (:6-7) Explanation of the Significance of the Memorial – Legacy for Next Generations of God’s Saving Power

We have a bad tendency to forget or overlook what God has done for us

“Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ Then you shall say to them, ‘Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.’ So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever.”

Some kids ask more questions than others ... Why this ... Why that ... a lot of times they stump us with unexpected questions we can’t even answer ...

Perhaps you have heard the story of the little boy who asked his father, "How tall is the Eiffel Tower?" His father said, "I don't know, son; I don't have any idea." The boy said, "How far is it from here to China?" His dad said, "I just don't know, son." "Well, how deep is the deepest part of the ocean?" His father said, "I really don't have any idea." The little boy said, "Daddy, how-oh never mind." His dad said, "That's all right, son. Ask questions. It's the only way you can get answers!"

Do we have the type of communication in our homes where our kids ask us:

What did your baptism mean to you? Why are we celebrating the Lord’s Supper? Why are we going to worship service this morning? What is our response?

Must be real to us before we can communicate that significance to our children

How genuine is our faith and our love relationship with the Lord Jesus ... as perceived by our kids?

Legacy is a powerful theme – at work I am involved in a major marketing campaign to push the newer smaller Caterpillar products – called compact construction equipment – we are the leader in the industry in the big machines ... but we are new to the game in some of the smaller equipment – Campaign called the Legacy Campaign ... because the whole theme is we have taken everything good about our traditional equipment and applied it to the smaller equipment

Same tough genes

Same generation of tough

Everything you’ve come to expect but now in a smaller package

We have a significant legacy to pass on to our children and to the next generation ... how effective are we at getting that job done?

Significance of “Crossing Over” or “Coming Up From”

Sermon by **David Roper** brings this out

Look at how many times those phrases appear in this chapter

II. (:8-14) EXALTING THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S ARMY – WHO LEADS HIS PEOPLE INTO VICTORY IN THE PROMISED LAND BUT AVOIDING THE BIGSHOT MENTALITY

A. (:8) **Obedience** to the Lord's / Joshua's Instructions – The Lord is the one running the show

“And thus the sons of Israel did, as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, just as the Lord spoke to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel and they carried them over with them to the lodging place, and put them down there.”

B. (:9) Second Monument Created by Joshua in the Jordan River

“Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan at the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing, and they are there to this day.”

Probably took them from the middle of the river and arranged them in some fashion:

In a circle?? Piled them up?? Like an altar?? Won't be visible once the waters flow back over

Your reaction is probably the same as mine ... Why not some type of an expedition to try to locate these stones on the river bed of the Jordan?

Look at all the efforts directed at finding Noah's Ark . . .

But why did Joshua make the effort to do this?? No one would ever be able to see this monument? What was the purpose?? Thanksgiving to God – He sees the memorial

- Marking the spot: God was here in a powerful way!

- **Stones of Death and Burial** – symbolic of our union with Christ in His death and burial – we passed that way ... but are not going back – act of personal worship on the part of Joshua – avoiding the Big Shot Mentality – act of humility in recognizing that he too needed to pass through that death and burial symbolic experience – putting the attention back on God where it belongs

Stedman: The other memorial was a series of twelve stones in the middle of the river which were to be placed where the priests stood while all of Israel passed over to the other side. The stones were put in place before the waters came back. This is a picture for us of how Jesus Christ stays in the place of death long enough for every area of our lives to pass out of the control of self and into the control of Christ.

C. (:10-11) Central Focus on the Ark of the Covenant – Key to Victory is the Presence and Favor and Power of the Sovereign God (not due to Joshua)

(This will be developed further as our third point in verses 15-18)

Leadership of Joshua derived from Moses / Role of the priests / obedience of the people

“For the priests who carried the ark were standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything was completed that the Lord had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. And the

people hurried and crossed; and it came about when all the people had finished crossing, that the ark of the Lord and the priests crossed before the people.”

How long do I have to trust the Lord in this difficult area?? Not up to us to determine the length of required perseverance ... It's not over until the Lord says it's over .. The people hustled ... but it still took all day to fully carry out all that God had commanded

D. (:12-13) Commendation of Certain Tribes ??

(Or is it -- Aside Regarding the Partial Obedience of the Reluctant Tribes ??)

“And the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over in battle array before the sons of Israel, just as Moses had spoken to them; about 40,000, equipped for war, crossed for battle before the Lord to the desert plains of Jericho.”

(Although they seem to be commended here ... so not sure how to take this)

Ryrie: This was less than half the total number of fighting men in these tribes, the others remaining on the E. Side of the Jordan to protect their lands and families. These 40,000 men led the crossing.

Davis: Verse 13 indicates that 40,000 men of the two and a half tribes actually crossed over the Jordan. It is clear from Numbers 26:7, 18 and 34 that the total potential fighting force of these tribes numbered about 110,580 men. Why, then, did only 40,000 cross over? The answer is probably found in the situation on the east bank. The conquest might take some time, and the eastern tribes could not afford to leave their cities undefended. We might presume therefore that the remaining parts of their armies stayed on the east side for purposes of local protection.

E. (:14) Exaltation of Joshua

“On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; so that they revered him, just as they had revered Moses all the days of his life.”

1) First application is to Christ

2) But as we are in Christ, there is application to leaders of the church as well -- If we humble ourselves .. God will exalt us at the appropriate time; there is a type of respect that is appropriate to show to spiritual leaders

III. (:15-18) FOCUSING ATTENTION ON THE ARK OF THE COVENANT AS THE KEY TO GOD'S MIRACULOUS POWER

A. (:15-16) Command from the Lord to Joshua

“Command the priests who carry the ark of the testimony that they come up from the Jordan.”

Ritchie: This Ark was a symbol of the very presence of God. It was a wooden box within which were kept the **Ten Commandments** -- the second set, the first being broken by Moses because of anger -- **the Pentateuch**, the first five books of the Old Testament, a symbol of God's desire that we have his word in our hearts, the **Manna**, which is the symbol of God's provision for us of the Bread of Life, and **Aaron's rod**, a dead staff of wood which had budded as a sign confirming Aaron's authority as High Priest, and which is a symbol of resurrection out of death, of life from death.

B. (:17) Command Relayed from Joshua to the Priests

“So Joshua commanded the priests, saying, ‘Come up from the Jordan.’”

C. (:18) Miraculous Power of God Demonstrated in the Reversal of the Miracle

“And it came about when the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord had come up from the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet were lifted up to the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and went over all its banks as before.”

IV. (:19-24) EXPLAINING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MEMORIAL

A. (:19-20) Erecting the Memorial at Gilgal

1. Providential Timing

“Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth of the first month”

Just in time to observe the Passover (chap. 5); exactly 40 years after leaving the land of bondage they now enter the promised land

2. Base Camp established at Gilgal – Significance of location

“and camped at Gilgal on the eastern edge of Jericho.”

Etymology of the word unknown; possible that it already referred to *“a circle of stones”* – cf. **Josh 5: 9** – play on the root of the word *“roll”*

Goins: Names always are significant in the Old Testament. The word Gilgal means, *“The reproach has been rolled away.”* A beachhead has been established in the land of promise. Forty years of spiritual defeat and failure have been rolled away. And the fact that they have this beachhead at Gilgal means that they are now ready to follow the Lord wholeheartedly into the land that he is giving them.

Appropriate base camp for attacks on the hill country

Continued to be a prominent city – one of the three cities on Samuel’s traveling route (1 Sam. 7:16)

Saul, first king of Israel, made king there

3. Memorial Set Up – Celebrating **Spiritual Victory**

And those twelve stones which they had taken from the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal.”

B. (:21-23) Recounting the Miraculous Event

1. (:21) Memorial Aimed at Generations to Follow
“And he said to the sons of Israel, ‘When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What are these stones?’”
2. (:22) Memorial Testifies to the Miraculous Event
“then you shall inform your children, saying, ‘Israel crossed this Jordan on dry ground.’”
3. (:23) Miracle Patterned After Earlier Crossing of Red Sea – 2 major events
Prophets never lost sight of these 2 events
“For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the Lord your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed.”

What He’s done for others ... He’ll do for you!

C. (:24) Restating the Special Significance

1. Impressing our Enemies and Witnessing to the World: Reinforcing the Reality of God’s Power in Our Lives
“that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty”
2. Enhancing our Worship and Commitment to God’s Authority in our lives
“so that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”

CONCLUSION: What are the stones we have erected in our families to mark milestones? Where has God shown Himself strong on our behalf?

ESTABLISHING PHYSICAL MEMORIALS TO SPIRITUAL MILESTONES REINFORCES THE REALITY OF GOD’S POWER IN OUR LIVES AND ENHANCES OUR WORSHIP

Special stories associated with each of these major events:

(Brian was just telling me about Linda Olson filling scrapbooks of memorial items for each of her kids)

- 1) God’s Direction in my life – Prov 3:5-6 – verse engraved on piece of redwood tree
- 2) Marriage Partner – special kind of marriage certificate – from college fellowship group
- 3) Provision of Needs at Seminary – story of the frozen pot pies when I was down to my last nickel
- 4) Karen pregnant with our first child – after difficulty becoming pregnant

5) Provision of the house we have lived in for the past 23 years – special plaque

Good exercise sometime today ... sit down with your family and try to point out the significant stones in your life

As we press forward to claim God's promises for spiritual victory in our lives, we will want to remember these **stones from the book of Joshua** –

Stones of Burial – showing we have left behind our old life of living in the flesh and by our own effort

Stones of Resurrection – showing we have crossed over the Jordan and are living on the other side where we are united with the life of Christ and have our rest in Him ... no lack of battles and challenges ... but the presence of the Lord to show Himself strong on our behalf

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DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) What stones of remembrance have we shared with our family to remind us all of the reality of God's power at work in our lives?
- 2) Why do you think Joshua created that second memorial in the middle of the Jordan River if it was only going to be covered over with the returning water?
- 3) What have we left behind in our journey as we have crossed over the Jordan? How does this passage connect with the message of Romans 6-8?
- 4) What type of answers do we have to the questions our children ask about spiritual realities? Can they sense the genuineness of our faith?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Roper: As you may know, Joshua is concerned with the conquest of Canaan. Within one generation, the small group of Israelites that came out of Egypt dispossessed the entire population of Palestine. We are so accustomed to reading the account and having it told to us as children that we sometimes lose sight of the monumentality of that achievement. It is absolutely unparalleled in history. There has never been anything like it. From the literature of this time we know that for a thousand years or more before the Israelites conquered Palestine, the Canaanite city-states were laid out geographically in patterns designed to optimize their ability to support one another militarily, and they had proven absolutely impregnable. They had stood against all the powers of the ancient Near East.

Yet when Joshua and his group of ex-slaves invaded the land, within one generation they had displaced almost the entire population! That is something unique in history. It never happened before, and has not happened since. It is so extraordinary that most modern, liberal, Old Testament historians have taken the approach that the book of Joshua is untrustworthy, and they have developed very radical re-interpretations of Israelite history in order to explain this conquest. It is unparalleled, so they presume it could not have occurred.

Chapters 3 and 4 of Joshua deal with the most significant event in the conquest. It is not the actual campaign, as we might expect. It is the entrance into Canaan across the river Jordan. There are two events in the history of Israel which the prophets refer to time and time again as the most significant in the history of Israel. The first is the deliverance from Egypt and the passage through the Red Sea with Moses. That is when they became a nation. From a group of slaves they became a people. The New Testament says that they were "baptized into Moses", identified with Moses, and they became a nation at this point in their history. The second most important event was the journey, as one of the prophets describes it, "from Shittim to Gilgal"--this short, six-mile march from the east bank of the Jordan river to the west bank. This was so significant because it was in this action that they received the Land. From this point on, they were fighting a battle which was already won. By an act of the will, they crossed Jordan. And, by that act, Canaan was theirs. Though there were still battles to be fought, and the campaign had to be carried out, and there were some very difficult things that transpired; nevertheless the Land was theirs. God told Joshua, "Every spot of ground that your foot rests upon is yours." It was theirs by right of inheritance, and they entered into it by stepping across Jordan. . .

We have already said that this was one of the most important events in the history of Israel. For them, it signified the cutting off of their past. They made the decision to step into the land, and all of the old life was cut off from them. In fact, I am convinced that the name "Hebrew" comes from this event. Seven times this book says they "crossed over". The Hebrew verb which is used is the term from which the word Hebrew comes. They knew themselves to be people who had crossed over, who had left something behind.

Ritchie: In your life what are some of the physical, emotional and spiritual memorial stones representing apparent impossible circumstances where Yahweh rolled back the waters so that you could walk over on dry land and begin to enjoy the fruit of his promises which he has given to us in Christ Jesus? What are the circumstances in your life by which the world can recognize that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that our hearts are filled with respect for him? What are some of the "physical" stones we have on display so that our children seeing them and touching them can ask, "What do these stones mean?" I encourage you parents to start diligently arranging your lives so that your children can indeed see and touch such memorial stones in your homes. Thereby you can share your life, share how God overcame the most impossible situation and set you and your loved ones free to walk across a flooding river on dry land. I encourage you to use those teachable moments to prepare the next generation

and the next generation and the next generation to follow Yahweh, Jesus Christ, our Lord and wonderful Savior.

Goins: That's what happened to Israel at the Jordan River. They were cut off from all the other peoples and from their old pagan lifestyle. Israel was a new nation, a new entity. God had given them a new law, a new way of doing things that was completely different, completely disassociated from their history of self-effort and striving. The nation had to make a clean break with the past. They were never to think of going back across the river. The first half of chapter 4 focuses on the depth of the river with its stones of memorial and really of burial. Those stones were to remind Israel that their old life was buried under the waters of the Jordan. That old life was dead. The second half of the chapter focuses on the coming up, the deliverance from the river, the stones of resurrection--for the monument in Gilgal was really a monument of resurrection. That was to remind Israel that because of the miraculous power of God they were now able to walk in newness of life.

John Hamby:

- There are **memories of places**, places that trigger memories just as the memorial stones in Gilgal. There are some significant places in your life that elicit memories. . .
- There are **memories of people**. These are memories of people who God has used in your life.
- There are also **mementos of the past**. If you were to come into my office and look around you would see miscellaneous objects that are reminders to me of life experiences, mission trips, etc. Each of those objects triggers memories of what happened then, of the things that God did and that I experienced, experiences that have changed my life.

TEXT: Joshua 5:1-15

TITLE: FIRST THINGS FIRST -- STEPPING OUT IN FAITH REQUIRES
SUBMISSION TO THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

BIG IDEA:
**MAKING HOLINESS AND WORSHIP TOP PRIORITY PREPARE GOD'S
PEOPLE FOR VICTORY IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

(:1) INTRODUCTION -- CONTEXT
**THE TESTIMONY OF GOD'S AWESOME POWER REDUCES THE MOST
POWERFUL OF ENEMIES TO DEMORALIZED DEFEATISTS**

A. Powerful Enemies

1. Kings of the Amorites

*"Now it came about when all the kings of the Amorites who were
beyond the Jordan to the west"*

2. Kings of the Canaanites

"and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea"

B. Testimony of God's Awesome Power

*"heard how the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the sons of
Israel until they had crossed"*

C. Demoralized Defeatists

*"that their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer, because of
the sons of Israel."*

Very important for otherwise they would have been bold to strike the Israelites at once
while they were vulnerable and recuperating from the circumcision procedure.

**I. (:2-7) MAKING HOLINESS TOP PRIORITY (DEMONSTRATED HERE IN
SUBMISSION TO CIRCUMCISION) PREPARES GOD'S PEOPLE FOR
VICTORY IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

A. (:2-3) Obeying the Command to Circumcise the People – Covenant Commitment

*"At that time the Lord said to Joshua, 'Make for yourself flint knives and
circumcise again the sons of Israel the second time.' So Joshua made himself
flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth."*

Ex. 4:25 – flint knives were the surgical instrument of choice

B. (:4-7) Explaining the Need for Circumcision at this Juncture – Covenant Failure

1. (:4) All the circumcised men had died in the wilderness because of
disobedience

“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, died in the wilderness along the way, after they came out of Egypt.”

2. (:5) Their children who were born in the wilderness had not been Circumcised

“For all the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised.”

3. (:6) Disobedience Disqualified Them From Entering the Promised Land

“For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, that is, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the Lord, to whom the Lord had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.”

4. (:7) Reinstitution of the Privilege of the Covenant Sign

“And their children, whom He raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way.”

John Rea: The people had not purposely neglected the rite since Sinai, but apparently God had prohibited its practice because the nation was under his judgment. The people had rebelled against Jehovah repeatedly, had practiced idolatry, and had refused to enter the land (Num 14:1-10) promised them in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 15:18; 17:8); hence they were forbidden to place on their children the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, which in spirit and in reality they had broken.”

II. (:8-12) MAKING WORSHIP TOP PRIORITY (DEMONSTRATED HERE IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER) PREPARES GOD’S PEOPLE FOR VICTORY IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

A. (:8) Vulnerability (and time to reflect/worship) During the Healing Process

“Now it came about when they had finished circumcising all the nation, that they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed.”

Trusting God can put us in a vulnerable position.

Goins: Imagine yourself as an Israeli soldier who has just been circumcised, waiting to get better, looking at this city in front of you, and thinking, "Why couldn't we have done this on the other side of the river? We can't move for a few days, and if they come after us, we're sitting ducks." It was a tremendous act of faith to remain in their places, waiting to heal. Joshua had to exercise faith in performing this amazing act on all these men. The people had to wait, obey the Lord, and trust him even though they were weak,

in pain, and vulnerable to attack at this time. But the spiritual reality is that in that weakness they were made strong.

B. (:9) Victory Vindication

“Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.’ So the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.”

C. (:10) Observance of Passover

“While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal, they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho.”

D. (:11-12) Diet Upgraded – First Fruits of the Promised Land

“And on the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. And the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.”

III. (:13-15) THE VISION OF THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF REINFORCES THE PRIORITY OF WORSHIP AND HOLINESS

A. (:13-14a) The Surprising Visitor – Vision of the Commander in Chief

“Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, ‘Are you for us or for our adversaries?’ And he said, ‘No, rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord.’”

This will not ultimately be a conflict between the Israelites and the Canaanites ... it is the Lord Himself who is in charge and who will win the conflict as we submit to His leadership.

Name *“captain of the host of the Lord”* is a reference to the invisible realm of angels that were present there to fight the realms of darkness and achieve victory for the people of God

B. (:14b) Reinforcing the Priority of Worship

“And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, ‘What has my lord to say to his servant?’”

C. (:15) Reinforcing the Priority of Holiness

“And the captain of the Lord’s host said to Joshua, ‘Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.’ And Joshua did so.”

Goins: What Joshua experienced alone on the plain of Jericho can be true for us as well. No matter what we're facing, no matter how complicated or difficult the problem in our

life is, it just provides more opportunity for God to demonstrate his power. He is King Jesus, the Captain, the Commander-in-Chief. He is the one who gives us orders, asks us to listen and take him seriously, and then he gives us his strength to live one day at a time.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How have we made **Holiness** a top priority in our lives? How careful are we to keep short accounts with the Lord and confess our sins? How sensitive are we to the voice of our conscience?
- 2) How have we made **Worship** a top priority in our lives? How consistent are we in our personal devotions, our family worship and gathering together with our church family?
- 3) Do we have an expectation of **spiritual victory**? Do we understand that our enemies have already been defeated and are demoralized?
- 4) Do we understand that while Satan is the “*accuser of the brethren*” we should never put ourselves down because God has already rolled back whatever **reproach** we might have deserved?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

David Roper: It seems very significant to me that the conquest of Canaan should have begun with pain. Before Israel could draw the sword on their enemies, they had to draw the knife on themselves in the reinstatement of circumcision. The nation that came out of Egypt had observed this rite; the entire male population had been circumcised. But during the years they wandered in the wilderness the practice was forsaken. We know from the prophetic books that they worshipped the stars, and became idolatrous, and forgot the covenant they had with the Lord. The rite of circumcision, which was the sign, or seal, of that covenant, was neglected. Now they are enjoined to reinstitute it. . .

We know from the New Testament that circumcision also signifies the putting off of the flesh, the cutting off of the old life, with its power of condemnation over us. The guilt and shame and disgrace and embarrassment of our past are gone; they have been cut off. The past no longer can affect us, it cannot control us, its power is broken. The passage through the Jordan signifies the fact of our identification with Christ--our being placed into his death, burial, and resurrection. Circumcision symbolizes the effects of that identification the cutting off of the old life, and the placement into a new kind of relationship.

Goins: The logic of the narrative in verse one would seem to lead to an immediate attack on Jericho after the crossing of the Jordan River. The spies had told Joshua when they came back from reconnaissance that the people were demoralized. Joshua had extensive military experience, and his army was united behind him. But instead of allowing the people to attack, God asks them to stop for a period of spiritual preparation before the battle. They must focus on two important acknowledgments of their covenant relationship with Him: the covenant sign of circumcision and the covenant meal of Passover. So in verses 2-10 both of those things are reinstated in the life of the people. This is a section that focuses on the necessity of spiritual preparation or conditioning before we're ready to serve the Lord.

Steven Simala Grant: We only learn what it means to trust when we are vulnerable. I see an incredible act of faith in the obedience of Joshua and the Israelite army. They made themselves completely dependant on God for protection, they opened themselves up to attack from their enemies which could have been fatal. The whole conquest could have been squashed right then if the men of Jericho had come out and attacked right after the Israelites had been circumcised. They learned what it meant to trust God through their obedience to His command.

I see the same principle in our lives as well. We only learn what it means to trust when we are vulnerable, when we feel like life is out of our control, when things start to go bad, when we face things that are beyond our ability to heal and to manage. Those are the times we cry out to God for help, we cry to Him because we know we can't handle the situation on our own, when we are powerless to change something. And I believe that is sometimes why God allows us to experience those difficult times, to teach us to trust Him.

And yet the truth is that we are never in control, we are always vulnerable. It is true that we make decisions every day, and those decisions have consequences, but ultimately we need to recognize that God is the one in control. He is the one in charge of the universe. Faith and trust are about that recognition – that we are in God's hands, that He is sovereign over all. And that is ok, because we know He is good.

So the point is that we need to recognize our need for God, our dependence on Him, and trust Him as we walk with Him daily.

Mike Hullah: Remembering the past became an excellent preparation of faith for the tests of the future. The partaking of the Passover brought change; they ate of the food of the land, the manna ceased. The manna was to sustain them in their wilderness wanderings; the fruit of the land speaks of an actual participation in the promises of God. Passover not only looks back to what was accomplished but also looks forward to those things to come! For God's covenant people, deliverance from Egypt included the promise they would inherit the land, a land of abundance, a land of wheat, barley, fig trees, olive oil and honey (Deut. 8:8-9). It spoke of their new beginning, of their new life as the people of God delivered from judgment and rock solid in the place of blessing. The principle: the Passover not only looked back, but it looked forward to

their new life in the land enjoying its abundant blessings by the power of God. Thus, eating of the produce was an act of confirmation of God's abundant blessing. Enjoyment of the Produce (vs. 11).

F. B. Meyer: The battle is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift; but each to those who are living lives separate from the world, and dedicated to God. The vessels which are meet for the Master's use are pure ones. Cleanness, rather than cleverness, is the prime condition of successful service. And then it is only out of such a heart that the faith can spring which is able to wield the forces of the unseen and spiritual and divine.

TEXT: Joshua 6: 1-27

TITLE: FAITH CELEBRATES VICTORY BEFORE THE WALLS EVEN FALL /
ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

BIG IDEA:

WHEN PROPERLY PREPPED FOR BATTLE, GOD'S ARMY VANQUISHES ITS FOES BY A SIMPLE VICTORY SHOUT THAT UNLEASHES SUPERNATURAL POWER AND LAYS CLAIM TO GOD'S PROMISES

BACKGROUND

Don't forget the **preparation** for battle in Chapters 1-5 – that is where the victory was won; by being strong and courageous and obeying God's Word; by having a vision for victory and avoiding the Grasshopper mentality; by stepping out in faith to cross the Jordan River and avoiding the Victim mentality; by giving all the glory to God and avoiding the Big Shot mentality; by putting a priority on Holiness and Worship and submitting to circumcision as the sign of the covenant

I. (:1-5) UNORTHODOX BATTLE PLAN

God's ways are not man's ways – no surprise here

A. (:1) The Enemy: Secure and Impenetrable (but Fearful)

“Now Jericho was tightly shut because of the sons of Israel; no one went out and no one came in.”

a heavily fortified, secured city

This was a closed system; no one could go out or in; no Trojan Horse was going to be the undoing of Jericho; imagine the scouts from Jericho checking out the Israelites crossing the Jordan ... that should have been the strategic moment to attack ... but when they saw the Jordan River heaped up ... they all ran back inside their fortress and locked the doors; what terror must have filled their hearts; they had been dreading this day for 40 years; maybe the Israelites will just bypass them and move on??

B. (:2) The Promise: the Gift of Victory and Conquest over Powerful Foes

“And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors.’”

It was evident to all that Jericho did not have the stomach to come out and fight; confirmation of the report of the spies from chap. 2 that the people in the land were living in fear of the God of Israel

C. (:3-5) The Game Plan

1. (:3) Six Days of Obedient Repetition – Victory Parade

“And you shall march around the city, all the men of war circling the city once. You shall do so for six days.”

2. (:4) Seventh Day of Intensified Activity

“Also seven priests shall carry seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark; then on the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.”

3. (:5) Climactic Conquest

“And it shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead.”

Did the wall fall inward or outward??

II. (:6-14) SIX DAYS OF OBEDIENT REPETITION – THE VICTORY PARADE OF THE ARMY OF GOD

A. (:6) Ark of the Covenant Remains the Focus

“So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, ‘Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark of the Lord.’”

B. (:7-9) Armed Men Leading the Procession and Guarding the Rear

C. (:10) Restrained Silence Leading Up to Climactic Shout of Victory

“But Joshua commanded the people saying, ‘You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, ‘Shout!’ Then you shall shout.’”

Palau: Don’t Talk So Much

Can you imagine asking a million and a half Israelites to keep quiet? Can you imagine that? They were simply supposed to keep their mouths shut and walk around the city. Silence before God! What a rare commodity! How difficult this is to achieve. If we’re not speaking verbally, then there are a thousand mental voices inside our thoughts, each vying for the last word. Listen to God? How can He possibly get a word in edgewise?

D. (:11-14) Six Days of Repetition Recounted

1. (:11) First Day Recounted

“So he had the ark of the Lord taken around the city, circling it once; then they came into the camp and spent the night in the camp.”

2. (:12-14) Days 2-6 Repeat the Identical Process of One Circuit Around Jericho

III. (:15-21) SEVENTH DAY OF INTENSIFIED ACTIVITY AND CLIMACTIC CONQUEST

A. (:15) Seven Circuits on the Seventh Day

“Then it came about on the seventh day that they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times.”

Israelites should have been tired out by now ...

City encompassed about 9 acres – you could walk around it in half an hour

Cf. Rin Tin Tin

Schaeffer: Since Jericho was a small city, as was normal for the walled cities of that time, the Israelite army was large enough to completely encircle it. So by the time the first troops had marched around the walls, the last troops would just be starting. On the seventh day when the army cried out and the walls fell, all that the soldiers would have to do is march straight ahead to the center of the city and thus capture it from all sides at once.

B. (:16) Climactic Shout Expressing Confidence in Victory from the Lord

“And it came about at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, ‘Shout! For the Lord has given you the city.’”

C. (:17-19) Valuable Loot Devoted to the Lord – Warning about the Ban

1. (:17) Rahab and family the only exception

“And the city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the Lord; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent.”

2. (:18) Prophetic Warning Against Covetousness and its Consequences

“But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, lest you covet them and take some of the things under the ban, so you would make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it.”

3. (:19) Valuables Devoted to the Lord

“But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.”

D. (:20-21) Climactic Conquest: Flattening the Walls

1) (:20) Miraculous Victory – by Grace through Faith

“So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and it came about, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.”

Goins: Now, it wasn't sound waves that knocked those walls down. The writer of Hebrews gives very clear commentary on the story: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days" (11:30). The apostle John expands the principle: "...And this is the victory that overcomes the world-our faith" (1 John 5:4). They walked around the walls by faith day after day. They had been given one demonstration after another that God's word and his power could be trusted. The Lord had opened the Red Sea, defeated the Egyptian army, kept them in the wilderness, opened the Jordan River, and brought his people safely into the promised land. How could they do anything else but believe him? Even though the plans didn't make a lot of sense to them, they could ultimately trust God. They expressed their faith by obeying the instructions that God had given to Joshua and to them. The priests, the people, and the army followed them completely.

2) (:21) Judgmental Destruction

"And they utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword."

Goins: This is very stark, and it is disturbing. God commanded every living thing in Jericho to be killed. But isn't our God a God of mercy? It's one thing to kill enemy soldiers, but why kill women and children, and even animals? In terms of historical context, it's important to know that this commandment was not a new one. God had given this word to Moses years earlier. Deuteronomy 7 and 20 spell out God's law for the nation of Israel regarding holy warfare on God's behalf. That law made a clear distinction between attacking cities that were outside the land and attacking cities that were inside the land of Canaan where Israel was to dwell. Before they would besiege a city that was outside the land of Canaan, they were to offer a truce to the people. If the people responded to the offer of peace and surrendered, they were to spare the lives of the people. But the people of the land of Canaan were to be destroyed completely, their cities burned. Why this horrible demand?

There were two reasons, in summary. First of all, the civilization in Canaan was completely wicked and debased. . .

The second reason that the Canaanites were to be destroyed was that they had been given plenty of opportunity to repent and turn to the Lord, as Rahab and her family did.

IV. (:22-25) SAVING FAITHFUL RAHAB (AND FAMILY)

A. (:22-23) Rescuing Rahab's Family

B. (:24) Burning the City (with the exception of the valuable metals)

"And they burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord."

C. (:25) Perpetual Testimony of Rahab

“However, Rahab the harlot and her father’s household and all she had, Joshua spared; and she has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, for she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.”

(:26-27) CONCLUSION: LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES OF VICTORY

A. (:26) Curse on Resurrection of our Foes

“Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, ‘Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his first-born he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates.’”

When our spiritual enemies have been defeated, don’t ever backslide and give them another foothold in our lives.

Rea: The curse was a prohibition against refortifying Jericho, not against inhabiting the site (cf. Josh. 18:21; Jud 3:13; II Sam 10:5). It was fulfilled during the reign of Ahab, when Hiel rebuilt the walls at the cost of his two sons (I Kgs 16:34).

B. (:27) Exaltation of the Captain of our Salvation

“So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

1) Do we think we can wall off certain areas of our life and not allow God admission? Do we try to create little Jerichos in our own heart where we don’t want God to penetrate?

2) What was the purpose of the repeated walking around the walls for this seven day span? Why the intensified activity on the seventh day? What was God trying to accomplish?

3) What walls has the Lord knocked down for you to give you victory in certain areas? What methodology did the Lord use to accomplish this?

4) Why is the deliverance of Rahab and her family such a significant event?

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QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Lewis G. Scharpf, Jr.:

"Joshua Fit de Battle of Jericho"
(Traditional American Tune)

"...and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city."
Joshua 6:20

INTRODUCTION

And the soldiers did march, and the trumpets did blow,
and the people did SHOUT, do you know who
tore the wall down, down, down, down.

REFRAIN

Joshua fit de battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho,
Joshua fit de battle of Jericho,
and the walls came a tumbalin' down, down, down, down.

VERSE 1

You may talk about your men of Gideon,
you may talk about your men of Saul,
but there's none like good old Josh-a-ua,
at the battle of Jericho, that morning;

VERSE 2

Joshua rose early in the morning,
that is when the trumpets blew,
they marched around the city,
at the battle of Jericho.

VERSE 3

Right up to the walls of Jericho,
he marched with spear in hand,
Joshua commanded the children to SHOUT,
and the walls came a tumbalin' down, down, down, down;

LAST REFRAIN

Joshua fit de battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho,
Joshua fit de battle of Jericho, the trumpets they did blow, so,
Joshua fit de battle of Jericho, and the walls came a tumbalin' down.

ENDING

**Joshua fit de battle of Jericho, now you know, Jericho,
Joshua fit de battle of Jericho, and the walls came a tumbalin' down.
Now you know who tore the wall down,
now you know who tore the wall down, down, down,
Joshua!(in a whisper)**

<http://www.ajoyfulnoise.net/joshuak.htm>

Redpath: Why had they walked thirteen times around that place in silence? I suggest it took that long for every one of them to realize that it was utterly impossible for them to capture Jericho if God were not with them – thirteen big long looks at the enemy, until they become convinced that they were no match for those behind the walls. God made the Israelites walk around the great fortification until within themselves they died to every hope of conquest unless God should intervene.

Is there a counterpart in our experience? You are conscious that God has brought you along in the Christian life and manifested Himself in blessing to you, but there is still the Jericho that haunts you: the Jericho within your human personality, or the Jericho outside.

The greatest difficulty in the Christian life is to get to the place where one is prepared to admit that the whole thing is too big for him, and that the power of the enemy is too great for him, and if his Jericho is to fall, then, somehow, God must bring it about. I believe that before God entrusts any of His people with a real measure of spiritual power, victory, and blessing, He brings them to a place from where they have surveyed Jericho so long that they have come to see that its conquest is absolutely hopeless. God expects nothing more from us than failure, yet we spend years trying to make ourselves something other than a failure. So long as we think we can do it alone, the omnipotent resources of God in Jesus Christ our Risen Lord cannot help us.

John Rea (Wycliffe) – Re “*ram’s horn*”

It seems to have a religio-ceremonial significance, announcing the arrival of Jehovah as King, whether to his people to complete his covenant or proclaim release and liberty, or to his enemies to judge and smite them. The “*trump of God*” (I Thess 4:16) will have this dual purpose in announcing Christ’s second advent. Seven priests bearing seven trumpets for seven days signified that the judgment would be complete.

Goins: In chapter 6 we're starting a new section of the history of Israel. Remember, in chapter 1 God called and commissioned Joshua to leadership in the nation, and promised him three things: First of all, he promised that Israel would enter the land of Canaan. Our studies in chapters 1-5 have examined the wonderful fulfillment of that promise; chapters 3 and 4 covered the crossing of the Jordan River and chapter 5 the period of spiritual preparation at Gilgal. Second, God promised Israel that they would have victory over all of their enemies in the land. In 1:5 God said, "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 fail you or forsake you." Beginning in chapter 6 and continuing through

chapter 12 will be the record of battle after battle that God fights on behalf of his people and wins, beginning with Jericho. Third, God promised Joshua that he would be able to divide the land as an inheritance for the conquering tribes. In the last section of the book, chapters 13-22, the land is divided up, the tribes are settled, and there is peace in the land.

Israel's victory in Jericho here in chapter 6 is going to illustrate four principles for spiritual conflict and victory that are very important for us today, no matter what spiritual battle we're called to fight, no matter what "Jericho" may loom before us in terms of personal challenge. (1) Before the spiritual conflict, remember that we fight from victory, not just for victory. (2) During the spiritual conflict, remember that we overcome the enemy by faith. (3) After the spiritual victory, remember to continue to obey the Lord's direction. (4) After the spiritual victory, remember to give the Lord all the glory.

Holwick:

Everybody's got a Jericho.

A. What is the biggest problem you face right now?

1) Maybe not as big as the President's problems, but you have some.

2) Your marriage...job...kids...finances...some habit...

B. Can God handle it?

TEXT: Joshua 7: 1-26

TITLE: SIN SNATCHES DEFEAT FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY

BIG IDEA:

**THE MOMENTUM OF DEFEAT SNOWBALLS UNTIL RENEWED
CONSECRATION DEALS WITH THE SIN IN OUR MIDST**

(:1) INTRODUCTION / SETTING – SIN STIRS UP GOD’S ANGER

“But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel.”

Make not mistake ... God takes sin very seriously.

I. (:2-5) WITHOUT GOD NOTHING IS POSSIBLE – UNEXPECTED DEFEAT AT AI

A. (:2-3) Natural Reconnaissance is No Substitute for Seeking the Lord’s Guidance

3 Signs of Confidence in the Flesh:

1) Self-Willed -- Not seeking the Lord’s will up front

2) (:2) Natural Perspective -- Evaluating the situation from the perspective of the externals alone

“Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Bethaven, east of Bethel, and said to them, ‘Go up and spy out the land.’ So the men went up and spied out Ai.”

Roper: Ai was a little town about twelve miles west of Jericho, up in the central highlands--a very important strategic objective, from the standpoint of the conquest of the Land. Ai, along with its sister-city, Bethel, straddled the north-south caravan route through Canaan. This was the only way armies could travel north and south in Canaan at the time, so it was very important that the Israelites take this place. This was also Abraham's second campsite when he came into the Land from Haran. Thus this particular location was not only strategic from a military standpoint; it also held rich historical associations. So the Israelites were eagerly anticipating victory as they marched toward the city from Jericho.

3) (:3) Overconfident -- Imagining that superior numbers equates to a favorable outcome

“And they returned to Joshua and said to him, ‘Do not let all the people go up; only about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few.’”

Goins: The march from Jericho to Ai is over very difficult terrain. The elevation gain in fifteen miles is about twenty-five hundred feet, because Jericho is eight hundred feet below sea level, and Ai is about seventeen hundred feet above sea level. That's why in verse 3 the spies say, "Don't make the whole army toil up there." It's really a hard march.

B. (:4) The Failure of the Flesh Can Be Just as Dramatic as the Victory of the Spirit
"So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai."

We think something is a snap because we have experienced success earlier in a similar realm. God will surprise us if we are not depending on Him.

C. (:5) Defeat Can be Costly and Deflating
"And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water."

II. (:6-9) SPIRITUAL LEADERS CANNOT LET DEFEAT SNOWBALL INTO A DEFEATIST ATTITUDE

Joshua responds to the defeat with the wrong diagnosis and starts to question the plan of God. He immediately falls into the trap of the 3 obstacles to faith which we studied earlier:

- Grasshopper Mentality
- Victim Mentality
- Big Shot Mentality

A. (:6) Misdirected Mourning – should have been directed towards the cause (the sin of the people) rather than the effect (the defeat itself)
"Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening; both he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads."

B. (:7a) Blaming God is Never the Right Approach
"And Joshua said, 'Alas, O Lord God, why didst Thou ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?'"

C. (:7b) Lowering Expectations is Never the Right Approach
"If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan!"

D. (:8-9a) A Defeatist Attitude Can Never be Tolerated
"O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned their back before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth."

- D. (:9b) Selfish Appeals to God's Glory Lack the Power of Faith
"And what wilt Thou do for Thy great name?"

III. (:10-15) REPENTANCE AND RENEWED CONSECRATION ARE THE ONLY REMEDY

- A. (:10) Rebuke of Response that demonstrated a lack of faith
"So the Lord said to Joshua, 'Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face?"
- B. (:11-12) Simple Diagnosis: Sin Leads to Failure
- (:11) Diagnosis of Sin – Don't mix the holy and the profane
"Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things."

Note how the sin of one family was imputed to the entire nation so that it can be said that *"Israel has sinned"* (Ryrie).

- (:12) Expectation of Failure – The Presence and Favor of God have been Removed
"Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn their backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst."
- C. (:13) Call for Renewed Consecration
"Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the Lord, the God of Israel, has said, There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst.'"
- D. (:14-15) Accountability for Transgression
- (:14) No Escaping the Eye of the Lord
"In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the Lord takes by lot shall come near by families, and the family which the Lord takes shall come near by households, and the household which the Lord takes shall come near man by man."

John Hamby: There is no such thing as a secret sin.

- (:15) God's Discipline Demonstrates How Seriously He Takes Sin
"And it shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has

transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.”

IV. (:16-21) CONFESSION OF COVETOUSNESS VINDICATES THE GLORY OF GOD

A. (:16-18) Process of Pinpointing the Sinner

B. (:19) Exhortation to Repent to Vindicate the Glory of God

“Then Joshua said to Achan, ‘My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.’”

C. (:20-21) Confession of Covetousness

“So Achan answered Joshua and said, ‘Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it.’”

Schaeffer: What Achan took is also instructive. He took two kinds of things. First, he took two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight. We can understand easily why he took something which had monetary value. But he also took a “goodly Babylonish garment.” Why did he bother with this? The Hebrew literally calls it “a mantle of Shinar.” Because Shinar is Babylonia the Authorized Version translates it “Babylonian garment.” Babylon was one of the great cities of the world. Babylon became the cultural leader of Mesopotamia. It was the mark of success and power. Anything from Babylon was chic. . . So this mantle of Shinar was not just an old shepherd’s cloak, but a very stylish garment. It marked somebody as being “in,” as really being “a man of the world.” Achan wanted to be marked with success, to be chic. Achan’s sin, then, had two parts: simple theft and prideful desire deep in his heart.

V. (:22-26) THE HARSH REALITY OF JUDGMENT STANDS AS A SOBER MEMORIAL TO THE HOLINESS OF GOD

A. (:22-23) Urgency of Exposing the Sin

“So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it. And they took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the Lord.”

B. (:24-26) Sad Execution of Discipline

1. (:24) Staging the Discipline – make sure you get all of the cancer

“Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his

donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor.”

2. (:25) Reaping What You Sow

a. Sin Hurts the Entire Body

“And Joshua said, ‘Why have you troubled us?’”

b. Discipline Derives from the Lord

“The Lord will trouble you this day.”

Play on name of location = Achor

c. Stoning to Death – corporate participation

“And all Israel stoned them with stones;”

d. Burning with Fire – removing all traces of the sin

“and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.”

3. (:26) Sad Memorial – another monument of stones

“And they raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day.”

“Achor” means “trouble”

Holwick: Come clean before it is too late.

- 1) Achan was remembered by a pile of rocks.
- 2) What will your life be remembered for?

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why do believers think they can get away with sin and not suffer painful consequences?
- 2) When have we experienced surprising defeats in our Christian life due to complacency and failure to seek the Lord’s guidance?
- 3) Do we have a tendency to blame God when things go in the tank? What is our first blush train of thought?
- 4) Why was Achan’s family included in the judgment?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Roper: Re Now Achan is found out. I really believe that had he repented earlier, he would have been forgiven. The Scriptures say that if we judge sin in our lives, then we will not have to be judged. But if we do not put to death sin in our life, then sooner or later God, in his mercy, will have to "find us out" in that area. Sin must be brought out into the light. God is committed to bringing us into the fullness of our inheritance in Christ. Anything which impedes that program must be dealt with. So if we do not judge it, he will have to judge it in some other way--not in any eternally condemning way, because that sort of condemnation was paid for when Christ died and rose for us. But he will have to find out the sin. It is interesting to me that throughout this entire process, even through the loss of life, Achan does not respond. This indicates something of the hardness of his heart. He was committed to rebellion. And now these few trinkets are brought out. They are certainly insignificant when compared with the loss of thirty-six of Israel's fine young men. I am certain that Achan now saw the paltriness of those articles.

Goins: Let me say this in conclusion about the story. The temptation to sin is an ever-present danger in the life of every Christian. At the heart of the story of Achan and Ai is this crucial spiritual issue: Sin will either master us, or we will master sin. The Lord himself first said this in Genesis 4 in the story of Cain and Abel. God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but he did not accept Cain's, because Cain's heart was not right. Cain grew to hate his brother. So God showed up and confronted Cain: "...Sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it" (4:7). In essence, sin is like a lion waiting to devour you. It will control you and destroy you unless you gain mastery over it. God also promised Cain in that passage that if he did master the sin, he would be lifted up; he would have God's resources. In Romans 6:15-23 Paul says that we were created to be slaves, to be mastered by something, either sin, which leads to death, or obedience to Christ, which leads to righteousness. We gain mastery over sin by obeying Jesus.

There cannot be any ground of neutrality toward sin for us. Our problem is that we don't believe that. We think that we can play with sin just a little, with just certain sins--nice, agreeable, likable, pleasurable sins that won't really hurt anybody. We think that we can keep sin under control, limit its influence or our involvement. But we don't realize that in reality we will fall under its control little by little, and it will master us. . .

The Valley of Achor in the memory of the nation Israel became a proverbial expression for the good results of discipline in the life of the people.

Israel went on from the Valley of Achor to conquer Ai. We'll see that in chapter 8. And then it took only seven short years to complete the conquest of Canaan. Continuing victory grew out of the difficult experience they had at Ai and then at Achor. What appeared to be a great disaster was a learning experience for the whole nation. In Hosea's words, it became a door of hope, a door of expectation. They entered into a renewed relationship with God.

Holwick: III. Five principles on sin.

A. A holy God cannot tolerate sin.

- 1) One sin can make all the difference in the world.
 - a) It made a difference for Israel. (defeat)
 - b) It made a difference for Achan. (death)
 - c) It can make a difference for you. (damnation)
- 2) God does not "grade on curve," but on absolutes.

B. Sin is never purely private.

- 1) ISRAEL has sinned, THEY have stolen, THEY have lied. 7:11
 - a) Yet Achan is only one to be revealed.
- 2) One bad apple ruins the barrel.
 - a) Reason - toxic gas is given off, encouraging rot.
 - b) Same in churches.
 - c) Unchecked sin by one person can pull everyone down.
- 3) Private sin off-limits? Not to God. 22:20 . . .
- 4) Danger of Clinton scandal.
 - a) Many commentators have said his behavior is not an issue.
 - 1> Only abuse of power or perjury really matter.
 - 2> Effect could be that adultery becomes acceptable.
 - b) James Dobson - the problem is all of us.
 - 1> Our standards have slipped, we are unshockable.

C. Secret sin is still sin.

- 1) What are you hiding from others?
- 2) What are you hiding from God?

D. Sin will be found out.

- 1) God can reveal it. Num 32:23
 - a) Gordon MacDonald and fling in hotel room.
 - b) Ananias and Sapphira in book of Acts.
- 2) Christians should expose sin. Eph 5:11
 - a) Pastors harp on sin too much?
 - 1> Maybe we harp on petty sins.
 - 2> Sign of genuine church is concern for sin.
 - 3> Becomes more harmful if allowed to go on.
 - b) Duty of genuine prophets. Lam 2:14
 - c) Be careful: Final judgment rests with God. 1 Cor 4:5

E. Pain of exposure is better than pain of concealment.

- 1) Should pain be avoided?
 - a) Clinton - rip apart nation? Hurt economy?
 - b) Some argue church leaders should be exempt.
 - 1> Bible says leaders set an example.

- 2) Punishment is not most painful part of sin.
 - a) It eats away at our soul.
 - b) Even when hidden, it corrupts us and our relationships.
 - c) A little yeast works through whole dough. 1 Cor 5:1-6
- 3) Pain is inevitable, but healing can come.

John Hamby: The seventh chapter of Joshua opens with the ominous word “but.” The use of the little conjunction of contrast is designed to drive home the reality that victory is often followed by the threat of defeat. Suddenly we are presented with a series of failures that stand in striking contrast to the victories of the past six chapters. Israel had just experienced a miraculous victory over Jericho, “but” now they are going to experience defeat. The gladness of victory was soon replaced by the gloom of defeat, all

this because of the disobedience of one man. This story has much to teach about the devastating effects of sin.

Maurice Brown:

A concise outline of this magnificent book

1. Crossing the River Jordan Chs.1-5
2. Conquering the Enemy in the Land 6-12
3. Claiming the Promised Inheritance 13-24 . . .

1. We can become so self confident in ourselves and our ability
2. We can reach the point when we no longer need God, except for the big challenges.
3. Most times we can manage by ourselves.
4. That’s what happened here. Not once did Joshua ask for God’s help! . . .

God always gives us more than enough time to repent.

1. In order to find the culprit, the tribes present themselves, then the clans.
2. This was followed by the families, and finally individuals.
3. God was giving Achan opportunities to repent before he was personally confronted. He did not avail himself of any of these.
4. Only when there was no way out, he confessed - I HAVE SINNED.

TEXT: Joshua 8: 1-35

TITLE: REGAINING LOST GROUND -- SUCCESSFUL CONQUEST OF AI – THE SPIRIT SUCCEEDS WHERE THE FLESH FAILED

BIG IDEA:

OUR MERCIFUL GOD STANDS READY TO LEAD US INTO VICTORY (WHERE PREVIOUSLY WE HAVE FAILED) BY ENCOURAGING US TO COURAGE AND FAITH IN OBEYING HIS BATTLE PLAN AND ALLOWING HIM TO BLESS INSTEAD OF CURSE

INTRODUCTION:

Jensen: Achan's sin shattered the momentum which Israel had attained in its miraculous marches across a river and around a city. Israel's courage was gone, its hope all but faded. But God, having now turned from the fierceness of His wrath, set about to accomplish another work of grace and thereby restore the people's courage.

I. (:1-9) FOLLOWING GOD'S BATTLE PLAN GRANTS VICTORY WHERE PREVIOUSLY THERE HAD BEEN DEFEAT

A. (:1-2) Lord's Instructions to Joshua

1. Courage to step out in faith remains the starting point
"Now the Lord said to Joshua, 'Do not fear or be dismayed.'"

Courage and faith especially needed when you are attempting to recover from backslidden condition of defeat and discipline.

Goins: In my own life, I've had two reactions when I experience sinful failure: I'm discouraged about the past, and I'm apprehensive about the future. I look back and remember the sinful mistakes I made. I look ahead and wonder whether there's any future for someone like me who has failed so foolishly. The answer to our discouragement and our fear is in hearing and believing the word God spoke to Joshua: *"Do not fear or be dismayed."*

2. Corporate Participation still key – Victory required all to join arms
"Take all the people of war with you and arise"
3. City to Conquer is the very place you experienced defeat previously
"go up to Ai"
4. Conquest is a gift from God and includes 4 key components
 1. The King
"see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai"
 2. *"his people"*

3. *“his city”*

4. *“and his land”*

5. (:2a) Change of Rules: Spoil is Allowed this time

“And you shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves.”

Ryrie: This time the Israelites could keep the spoil. Achan should have been more patient!

Goins: Why does God propose a whole new strategy for Joshua? There is an important implication here for us as well. Because he is a God of infinite variety, I think he changes his strategies on purpose so that we don't relax into depending on habit patterns, on history, on our own personal experience. He wants us to always be looking at him, depending on him, relying on his promises.

6. (:2b) Concealed Troops = Key Tactic

“Set an ambush for the city behind it.”

B. (:3-8) Joshua Relays Instructions to the People – Setting the Ambush

This would be the commando squad that would enter the city and set it on fire

C. (:9) Night of Preparation – Rallying the Troops

“So Joshua sent them away, and they went to the place of ambush and remained between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua spent that night among the people.”

II. (:10-17) BAITING THE ENEMY CAN MAKE HIM VULNERABLE TO A SNEAK ATTACK

A. (:10-11) Setting Up Camp in the face of the Enemy

1. (:10) Leadership of Joshua and the elders

“Now Joshua rose early in the morning and mustered the people, and he went up with the elders of Israel before the people to Ai.”

2. (:11) Valiant Warriors committed to engaging the enemy

“Then all the people of war who were with him went up and drew near and arrived in front of the city, and camped on the north side of Ai. Now there was a valley between him and Ai.”

B. (:12-13) Setting the Trap

5,000 warriors clearly involved here; this is a second group distinct from verses 8-9 that would offer protection against any help from Bethel and would aid in surrounding and cutting off any escape opportunities for the men from Ai

C. (:14-17) Taking the Bait

III. (:18-23) TRAPPING THE ENEMY ELIMINATES ALL POSSIBILITY OF ESCAPE WHEN THE LORD IS DIRECTING THE CAMPAIGN

A. (:18) Sign that the Lord is Running the Show

“Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Stretch out the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand.’ So Joshua stretched out the javelin that was in his hand toward the city.”

Ryrie: Joshua’s javelin signaled the ambushing party by reflecting the sun from its flat blade.”

B. (:19) Executing the Ambush

“And the men in ambush rose quickly from their place, and when he had stretched out his hand, they ran and entered the city and captured it; and they quickly set the city on fire.”

C. (:20-22) Complete Slaughter of the Trapped Enemy – No way of escape

D. (:23) Capture of King of Ai

“But they took alive the king of Ai and brought him to Joshua.”

IV. (:24-29) ANNIHILATING THE ENEMY CREATES A PERPETUAL MEMORIAL TO THE POWER AND SOVEREIGNTY OF ALMIGHTY GOD

A. (:24) Complete Slaughter of rest of population of Ai

“Now it came about when Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the field in the wilderness where they pursued them, and all of them were fallen by the edge of the sword until they were destroyed, then all Israel returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword.”

B. (:25) Impressive Total Body Count – Nobody Escaped

“And all who fell that day, both men and women, were 12,000 – all the people of Ai.”

C. (:26) Significance of the Sign of the Javelin

“For Joshua did not withdraw his hand with which he stretched out the javelin until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.”

D. (:27-29) Taking Care of Business

1. (:27) Legitimate Spoil
“Israel took only the cattle and the spoil of that city as plunder for themselves, according to the word of the Lord which He had commanded Joshua.”
2. (:28) End of Ai (Amen!)
“So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation until this day.”
3. (:29a) Humiliation of the King (Deut. 21: 22, 23)
“And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at sunset Joshua gave command and they took his body down from the tree, and threw it at the entrance of the city gate”
4. (:29b) Another Monument of Stones
“and raised over it a great heap of stones that stands to this day.”

V. (:30-35) CELEBRATING COVENANT VICTORY SHOULD INVOLVE WORSHIP, SACRIFICE, AND RECOMMITMENT TO THE LAW OF OUR MERCIFUL GOD

- A. (:30-31) Worship and Sacrifice on the Altar (Deut. 27:1-26)
“Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord, the God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones, on which no man had wielded an iron tool and they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings.”

This required a pilgrimage into the heart of enemy territory .. but the occasion warranted the risk.

Jensen: The instruction called for the building of two stone structures: one, a *stèle* made of very large whitewashed stones, on which the words of the law were written (Deut. 27:2-4, 8); the other, a stone altar for burnt offerings and peace offerings (Deut. 27:6-7).

- B. (:32-35) Recommitment to the Law of God – Blessing vs. Cursing

Redpath: The Christian has not finished with the law of God. He has finished with its sentence, but he cannot avoid its standards. And, in plain language, that means that holiness is not optional. *“Without holiness no man can see the Lord.”* . . . The Christian is no longer facing the law as an obligation; he is facing it as a sheer delight to do the will of God, and from within him the love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit.

Schaeffer: We see in the reading of the blessings and curses not only a continuity of the authority of the written, propositional Scriptures but also an emphasis on the fact that

bare knowledge is not enough. It was not that the Pentateuch gave these people knowledge, and that was the end of it. This knowledge demanded action.

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Do we presume against the sovereignty of the Lord in being lazy or sloppy in making shrewd tactical plans for victory and carrying out those plans with courage and discipline and perseverance?
- 2) Do we attribute all of our success to the hand of the Lord and His grace at work in our lives?
- 3) Does spiritual success intensify our passion to worship the Lord and offer Him the sacrifices that are pleasing in His sight?
- 4) Does spiritual success renew our commitment to following the Lord's instructions in His Word?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

Redpath: Much of Chapter 8 of the book of Joshua is a record of the ultimate victory at Ai after the humiliating experience of defeat. I could not pass over this particular portion without recommending that you read the story of the strategy which Joshua had to adopt in order to recover the ground that had been lost. . . Ai was much less formidable than Jericho, but after the experience of defeat it was much more difficult to overcome. If you were to sit down alone with your Bible and reflect on that record, I believe you would find yourself indelibly impressed with the fact that the recovery of lost ground in Christian experience is the most difficult problem of all. Thirty minutes of willful disobedience in the life of a child of God has often resulted in thirty years of being out of blessing. . . Lost ground is mighty hard to regain, and if that lesson could be seared with a hot iron on your conscience, you would find it more difficult than at present you do to slip into willful sin.

Blair: The text gives us some difficulty here, for there seems to be a discrepancy between verses 3-9, which speak of 30,000 men being set in ambush on the west side of the city, and verse 12, which gives the number in the same position as 5,000. Numbers are notoriously subject to copyists' errors, and it may be that such a mistake has been made here. Another more attractive explanation, however, is that there were two ambuscades, one of 30,000 in the hills nearer to Bethel, and the other of 5,000 close to Ai. Verse 17 tells that the men of Bethel – a city two miles from Ai but hidden by intervening heights – joined in the pursuit after Israel; and it seems reasonable to

assume that Joshua would make preparations to guard against such an attack from Bethel.

Baxter: In this chapter we see faith re-empowered and going forth in renewed triumph. Sin confessed and judged and put away restores the cord of communion, and the Divine power begins to flow again.

Goins: Once the nation of Israel judged the sin that had defiled their camp, then God was free to speak forgiveness, to extend mercy, and to once again direct them in the conquest of the land. That is how the Lord cares for us in our failure. Psalm 37:23-24 is wonderfully encouraging: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholds him with His hand." I hope you have a sense of how much God delights in you and in the path that you're following. We will fall, but the Lord is right there to pick us up. He delights in us even when we fail, if we turn to him and ask him to pick us up. That is the good news, no matter what mistakes we may have made. In a sense, the worst mistake we can make is to give up and not try again. . .

This tells us that immediately after the battle, Joshua and the army go back to Gilgal, collect two million men, women, and children, as well as all their animals, and go back fifteen miles up to the summit of the spine of the Judean hills. Then they travel thirty miles straight north to the valley of Shechem, between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. This would have been an opportune time to push the conquest and attack more cities, with momentum on their side. But Joshua, at least from a human standpoint, stops it dead, and they spend a number of days in this valley before the Lord as a community at worship. What Israel is doing here is fulfilling the commands of Moses that he gave on the plains of Moab before his death. Yet it is amazing that in the middle of conquest, they would take this time. It doesn't seem very productive in terms of taking the land that God had called them to. But what this provides for the nation Israel is an opportunity to worship the Lord, to focus on his presence and his power; we're going to see that the ark of the covenant is central to everything that happens in this valley. It also gives them a chance to reflect on their identity as God's people, as people of the covenant. And it gives them a chance to express their hearts and their wills verbally in a renewal of their commitment to be submissive to the law, the revealed word of God.

Jeffries: Israel's total annihilation of Jericho and Ai had the strategic military effect of cutting Canaan in two. There would be a northern campaign and a southern campaign but, as we shall see in our study this morning, there would be yet another "pause" in the conquest of the Promised Land. This time the entire nation -- not just the "mighty men of valor" -- would travel some twenty miles north to the city of Shechem, situated between the "twin peaks" of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. God had given His people great victory and, in the midst of this good success, it was important that they keep them-selves spiritually focused.

Jensen: The measure of courage is in the test. God assured Joshua that he would take Ai, but there would not be the ease of watching its walls fall as at Jericho. Instead, the manner assigned was by military ambush, which meant danger, suspense, precaution, and alertness. This was Israel's test of courage, and Joshua and the warriors rose to the challenge.

Armerding: Then in the altar, the ark, and the Book, we see three fundamental things, which if rightly apprehended will save, sanctify, and strengthen the people of God. Moreover, the ark, which has the central place here, was really God's throne, for He dwelt between the cherubim (Ps. 80:1). Thus did He walk in the midst of them (Deut. 23:14), and therefore they could say with the psalmist, *"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah."*

Davis: Joshua was commanded to select 30,000 men, and send them away by night to make the thirteen-mile journey to Ai, and then to lie in wait on the west side of the city (vv. 3-4). The next day, Joshua took the main army of Israel up to the north side of the city of Ai (v. 11). In addition to that move, another 5,000 were sent to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai (v. 12).

TEXT: Joshua 9:1-27

TITLE: RASH COMMITMENTS – DECEPTION TAKES ADVANTAGE OF OUR LIMITED PERCEPTION

BIG IDEA:

SPIRITUAL VICTORY IS COMPROMISED WHEN WE MAKE RASH COMMITMENTS APART FROM SEEKING THE GUIDANCE OF THE LORD

(:1-2) CONTEXT – SOUTHERN ENEMIES UNITE TO PROTECT THEIR TURF

A. Enemies Fear the Inevitable

“Now it came about when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard of it”

B. Enemies Rally Together to Make Last Ditch Stand

“that they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel.”

Robert Massey: When the enemy realizes that he is defeated, he does one of two things, he surrenders, or he throws everything he has into the battle. The devil is throwing everything he has into the battle. He is gathering every demon and every principality and they are throwing everything they have into the battle for your soul. He is a powerful foe and without Christ you can not stand against him.

I. (:3-15) DECEPTION OF THE GIBEONITES LEADS TO UNWISE, COMPROMISING PEACE TREATY

A. (:3-5) Concocting the Crafty Scheme – Example of Strategic Planning

1. (:3) Motivated by Desperation = Their Mission (save their lives)

“When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai”

2. (:4a) Relying on Deceit = Their Strategy

“they also acted craftily”

3. (:4b-5) Pretending to be Innocuous = Their Tactics

Looking they had traveled from a long distance away

B. (:6-13) Convincing the Skeptical Israelite Invaders

1. (:6) Pleading their Case

“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.’”

2. (:7-11) Politicking for their Story

a. (:7) Confronted with the Relevant Question

“And the men of Israel said to the Hivites, ‘Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?’”

b. (:8) Interrogated as to their True Identity

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

c. (:9-10) Programmed to Base Appeal on Flattery ... or Faith??

d. (:11) Charged with Securing This Peace Treaty

“So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, ‘We are your servants; now then, make a covenant with us.’”

3. (:12-13) Proving their Identity

a. (:12) Stale Bread

“This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled.”

b. (:13a) Worn out Wineskins

“And these wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn”

c. (:13b) Worn out Clothing

“and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey.”

Dan Morrison: They appeared harmless; honorable; and honest; the leaders, and Joshua would not have fallen for this deception had this not been the case; they knew how to deceive; Satan used these techniques through them to stop the progress of the taking of the land

C. (:14) Crucial Mistake on the Part of the Israelites

1. Taking the Bait

“So the men of Israel took some of their provisions,”

Must have been pretty hard up for provisions if this stuff looked
Appetizing

2. Failing to Seek the Lord's Counsel

"and did not ask for the counsel of the Lord."

Acting rashly and presumptuously rather than performing due diligence
This is the key phrase to the chapter

D. (:15) Closing the Deal – Affirming the Peace Treaty with a Binding Oath

"And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them."

II. (:16-21) EXPOSING THE SCAM BUT STILL MAINTAINING THE OATH

A. (:16) Discovering the Painful Truth

"And it came about at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within \ their land."

B. (:17) Checking out the Situation

"Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim."

C. (:18) Paying the Price for Foolish Decision-making

"then the sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders."

D. (:19-21) Trying to Make Lemonade out of Lemons

III. (:22-27) MAKING THE BEST OF A COMPROMISING SITUATION

A. (:22-23) Holding the Deceivers Accountable

1. (:22) Indictment by way of Rhetorical Question – Seeking Their Motive

"Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, 'Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you.' When you are living within our land?'"

2. (:23) Curse of Slavery

"Now therefore, you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."

B. (:24-25) Resignation to Their Fate

1. (:24) Motive of Desperation and Fear of God

“So they answered Joshua and said, ‘Because it was certainly told your servants that the Lord your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing.’”

2. (:25) Surrender to Their Prescribed Punishment

“And now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us.”

C. (:26-27) Maintaining the Oath but Making Them Slaves

1. (:26) Sparing Their Lives

“Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them.”

2. (:27) Making Them Slaves

“But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord, to this day, in the place which He would choose.”

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why do Satan and his co-horts continue to fight if they know they are ultimately defeated? What are the implications of knowing that deception will always be found out?
- 2) What are some of the rash decisions and commitments we have made? What were the consequences for not spending time waiting upon the Lord?
- 3) Do we put a supreme value on keeping our word and commitments ... even at great cost to ourselves? What does this story teach about the importance of keeping our promises?
- 4) How should leaders respond when their people start grumbling about specific issues?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

David Holwick: Human wisdom has its limits.

- 1) The Jews are suspicious.
 - a) They suspect the Gibeonites might live nearby. 9:7
 - b) They ask for more details. 9:8

- c) They check out the moldy provisions. 9:14
- 2) Our wisdom is superficial.
- a) We tend to look on outward appearances.
- b) Do you look at life that way?
"There is a way that seems right to a man,
but in the end it leads to death." Prov 14:12
- C. They should have sought God. 9:14

Jeffries: Remember, Canaan was not a "nation," as we know it. It was a land dotted with "kingdoms," each of which comprised little more than a city and surrounding lands. Some of these city-states were relatively large and powerful, like Jericho; others were quite small. Each was ruled by a "king" who provided protection for his surrounding "subjects" who, in turn, provided the economic base for the region. In this way the land of Canaan was much like Europe in the Middle Ages. . .

So the Gibeonites are spared. Reduced to the permanent status of *"woodcutters and water carriers,"* they are nonetheless brought within the veil by the grace of God. Their history in Israel is a long one.

a. The city of Gibeon itself was assigned to the priestly family of Aaron (Joshua 21:17), so it became a center for training in God's Word and worship. Later, during the reign of Solomon, the tabernacle was at Gibeon (2 Chronicles 1:3, 5)

b. "When David was King in Israel, he learned that the cause of a three-year famine was that Saul had killed many Gibeonites in his misplaced zeal for the Lord. The famine was the Lord's punishment for breaking the oath made centuries before by Israel's leaders.

2 Samuel 21:1-9)."

(NavPress "Life Change" Series: Joshua)

c. "When the Jews returned from exile in Babylon, the list of those who could prove Jewish heritage included the Gibeonites (Nehemiah 7:25). Gibeonites helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:7). Thus, it seems that the Gibeonites were eventually absorbed into the covenant people because, like Rahab, they transferred their allegiance to the Lord."

(NavPress "Life Change" Series, Ibid)

Robert Robb: As a result of this impetuous decision that was based solely on carnal reasoning they in effect not only allowed an enemy battalion that should have been destroyed of the hook but also allowed the enemy into their camp. It was a mistake, a foolish mistake, and Joshua and the people had to live with the consequences of their mistake and all because they didn't seek guidance from God on the matter. They took a hasty decision about an important matter, based solely upon their own powers of human reasoning and without seeking clear guidance from God, and they got it wrong. If only they had taken the time to bring the matter before God. . .

Robert Massey: Here is a little story that shows how dangerous compromise is. Winter was coming on and a hunter went out into the forest to shoot a bear out of which he planned to make a warm coat. By and by he saw a bear coming toward him and raised his gun and took aim.

“Wait,” said the bear, “why do you want to shoot me?” “Because I am cold,” said the hunter. “But I am hungry,” the bear replied, “so maybe we can reach an agreement, or a compromise.” In the end, the hunter was well enveloped with the bear’s fur and the bear had eaten his dinner. We always lose out when we try to compromise with the devil and sin. It will consume us in the end.

Ray Scott: LESSONS:

1.- Your Enemy Will Surprise You

- Satan is a master of disguise – 2 Corinthians 11:14, 2:11

2.- Don’t Jump To Conclusions

- That’s how rumors get started – John 8:44

- Don’t assume everything you hear is the truth.

3.- Don’t Be Flattered Into Sin Or Disobedience

- Flattery is used to manipulate or control you ... to get you to let your guard down.

4.- Seek Counsel From God – 9:14

- Appearances are deceiving – John 7:24

- What is obvious isn’t always best – Proverbs 14:12

5.- Bad Decisions Have Consequences – 9:16-21

- God expected them to honor an oath made in His Name.

- They had to live with the consequences of a bad decision.

6.- Deception Will Ultimately Be Exposed – 9:16

- Lies will find their way back home – Proverbs 12:19

7.- Bad Actions Have Consequences

o For the Gibeonites – 9:22-23, 25-27

o For Joshua – 9:18

- Take your problem with someone to that someone first – Matthew 18:15

- When someone admits their mistake & repents, forgive them and go on.

TEXT: Joshua 10:1-27

TITLE: UNLIMITED DIVINE WEAPONS AND RESOURCES --
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ON STEROIDS!

BIG IDEA:

**WE CAN ROUT OUR ENEMIES BY RELYING ON THE LORD'S
UNLIMITED WEAPONS AND RESOURCES**

- DEADLY TARGETED HAIL
- MIRACULOUS EXTENDED DAYLIGHT

INTRODUCTION:

Hamby: How big is your God?

I. (:1-5) FUTILE ALLIANCE FOR THE SAKE OF SURVIVAL

A. (:1-2) God's Exploits Earn Notoriety

1. (:1a) Impressive Testimony: Defeat of Ai and Jericho

"Now it came about when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured Ai, and had utterly destroyed it (just as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king)"

Robert Robb: The opening verses of chapter 9, 10 and 11 make interesting reading. In each case the writer puts on record the fact that with each success Israel enjoyed there was a corresponding intensification of enemy opposition against her.

2. (:1b) Buffer Zone Eliminated: Surrender of Gibeon

"and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were within their land"

3. (:2) Reaction of Desperate Fear

"that he 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."

B. (:3-4) Joining Forces in an Attempt to Reverse the Tide

"Therefore Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem sent word to Hoham king of Hebron and to Piram king of Jarmuth and to Japhia king of Lachish and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, 'Come up to me and help me, and let us attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the sons of Israel.'"

C. (:5) Trying to Gain a Foothold for Defense

"So 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 with all their armies, and camped by Gibeon and fought against it."

II. (:6-11) COVENANT COMMITMENT SUPPORTED BY THE LORD

A. (:6-7) Faithfulness to Covenant Commitment – Answering the Cry for Help

“Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, saying, ‘Do not abandon your servants; come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites that live in the hill country have assembled against us.’ So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him and all the valiant warriors.”

Keathley: Humanly speaking, this was the perfect opportunity for Joshua to get rid of the Gibeonites. Why shouldn't Joshua just ignore the very people who had deceived them? Why not let the coalition destroy them and rid him of the embarrassment? There were at least two reasons he could not do that: First, as a man of integrity who honored his word, Joshua did not consider that an option. They had given their word and were duty bound to honor it. Second, this now provided a unique military opportunity. Rather than a long, drawn out campaign against one city at a time, this gave them the opportunity to defeat and destroy several armies at once.

B. (:8) Divine Assurance of Complete Victory

“And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you.’”

C. (:9-10) Stepping out in Faith ... but the Battle is the Lord's

1. (:9) Stepping out in Faith

“So Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal.”

2. (:10) The Battle is the Lord's

“And the Lord confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon, and struck them as far as Azekah and Makedah.”

D. (:11) Divine Stoning -- Nothing Wrong with the Lord's Aim

“And it came about as they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, that the Lord threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.”

III. (:12-15) LORD'S POWER NOT LIMITED BY DIMENSIONS OF TIME AND SPACE

A. (:12) Asking for the Impossible

“Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, ‘O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon.’”

B. (:13) Accomplishing the Impossible

“So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.”

C. (:14) Answering with Unimaginable Intervention

“And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the Lord listened to the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.”

D. (:15) Arriving back at Camp

“Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp to Gilgal.”

IV. (:16-21) YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE

A. (:16) Crawling into a Hole

“Now these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in the cave at Makkedah.”

Remember the sorry hole that Saddam Hussein crawled into and was hauled out of

B. (:17-19) Capturing them for Future Execution

“And it was told Joshua, saying, ‘The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah.’ And it was told Joshua, saying, ‘The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah.’ And Joshua said, ‘Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and assign men by it to guard them, but do not stay there yourselves; pursue your enemies and attack them in the rear. Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the Lord your God has delivered them into your hand.’”

Don't be distracted from the task at hand

C. (:20-21) Calming any Voice of Dissension

“And it came about when Joshua and the sons of Israel had finished slaying them with a very great slaughter, until they were destroyed, and the survivors who remained of them had entered the fortified cities, that all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace. No one uttered a word against any of the sons of Israel.”

V. (:22-27) STEPPING ON THE NECK OF THE DEFEATED ENEMY

A. (:22-23) The Frightened Five Amorite Kings who had opposed Israel – Cowering in Defeat

“Then Joshua said, ‘Open the mouth of the cave and bring these five kings out to me from the cave.’ And they did so, and brought these five kings out 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.”

- B. (:24-25) The Reinforced Courage of the Leaders of Israel – Symbolism of Conquest
“And it came about when they brought these kings out to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, ‘Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings.’ So they came near and put their feet on their necks. Joshua then said to them, ‘Do not fear or be dismayed! Be strong and courageous, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.”

How bold is our confidence in the Lord?

- C. (:26-27) The Execution and Humiliation
“So afterward Joshua struck them and put them to death, and he hanged them on five trees; and they hung on the trees until evening. And it came about at sunset that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden themselves, and put large stones over the mouth of the cave, to this very day.”

Nothing aggravates me more in movies than when the good guys fail to finish off the bad guys ... who end up rearing their evil heads and renewing the conflict; we want to make sure that we completely defeat our enemies so they don't pop back up and continue to cause us problems in the future

The rest of the chapter recounts the defeat of each of the five cities in turn ... now that their king had been executed

* * * * *

DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did they choose to attack Gibeon if their real target was the Israelites?
- 2) What are some other verses that would speak to this issue of effectual prayer? What made this incident so unique in God's eyes?
- 3) Why was it important for the leaders to step on the necks of their conquered enemies?
- 4) Why was it appropriate for Joshua to humiliate and desecrate the bodies of these defeated Amorite kings?

* * * * *

QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

John Hamby:

Illustration

“About twelve years after he graduated from Princeton , Donald Grey Barnhouse was invited to preach in chapel, and when he arrived, he notice [his old Hebrew professor Robert Dick Wilson] had taken a place near the front to hear him. When the service was over, his old Hebrew professor came up to Barnhouse and said, ‘If you come back again. I will not come to hear you preach. I only come once. I am glad that you are a big-godder. When my boys come back, I come to see if they are big-godders or little-godders, and then I know what their ministry will be.’

Barnhouse asked Wilson to explain. He said, ‘Well, some men have a little god, and they are always in trouble with him. He can’t do any miracles. He can’t take care of the inspiration of the Scriptures and their preservation and transmission to us. They have a little god, and I call them little-godders. Then there are those who have a great God. He speaks, and it is done. He commands, and it stands fast. He knows how to show himself strong on behalf of those who fear him. You have a great God and he will bless your ministry.’ ”

[James Montgomery Boice. Joshua: We Will Serve The Lord. (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1989) pp 114-115]

William Morris: Re vv. 16-27

A. We Must Control Our Enemy (16-18)

1. When Joshua discovered that the 5 kings were in a cave, he had it sealed up so they couldn’t escape.

B. We Must Confront Our Enemy (22-25)

1. He brought them out and publicly declared victory once the battle was won.

C. We Must Conquer Our Enemy (26-27)

1. Once again we see that the only way victory can be assured is to put our enemy to death. There can be peace between God’s people and the enemies of God. No peace treaty, only death.

Goins: These are the last recorded miraculous interventions that God makes in the history of the conquest in this book.

God's provision goes beyond the physical material resources of our natural existence. He is willing to use supernatural resources to achieve His sovereign purposes. I'm not talking about miracles on demand. I'm talking about sovereign decisions on God's part to reverse the natural order for his honor and glory, to further the work of his kingdom on earth.

In the miracle of the hailstones, the Lord is assisting an army that is weary. Remember, they have hiked all night, twenty-five miles uphill; engaged in hand-to-hand combat through most of the day; then pursued the Amorite army, which was in flight, down through this narrow mountain pass. So God providentially sends in reinforcements of heavenly artillery, machine-gun fire of hailstones. These hailstones are sort of like the "smart" bombs we saw in the Gulf War, which could identify the targets to hit. The hailstones hit only Amorite soldiers, never Israelite soldiers. The text says that there are more Amorites killed by hail than by the conventional military weaponry of the Israelite army.

But that miracle of hailstones is nothing compared to the miracle of extending the daylight hours so Israel can secure a complete victory over the enemy. If nightfall came, it would be easy for the enemy to escape. So Joshua says, "Lord, I want them where I can see them. Keep the daylight hours here. My men are tired, we want to finish the battle." And God hears Joshua's cry to reverse the natural order. He extends the hours of the day long enough so that Israel can finish the battle.

Wil Pounds: *What do you have hidden in your cave?*

Do you have some kings in your life that need to be killed? Can't I just humiliate the kings or make a public symbol out of them and let well alone? Evil kings have to be exterminated. Victory means putting to death the enemy. These kings were all under ban. They were devoted to God's judgment. The evil kings that reign in your heart are under ban! If they are not destroyed they will rise up to try to destroy you again and again. You can't leave your kings sulking in a nice comfortable cave. You have to take them out, put your foot on their necks and kill them. All of them. That is your responsibility and mine in the spiritual warfare. The only behavior that ever changes is observed behavior. You have to make a commitment and you have to follow through. Go back over that list we first looked at in Galatians 5:19-21. King lust bow down: immorality, impurity, and sensuality. What are you doing with old king lust? If you are having an affair don't call it love; call it what it is—lust. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." In other words, kill it! Put your foot on its head. Kill it! King of the evil spiritual world bow down: idolatry, sorcery. Put your foot on its head. Kill it! King hatred bow down: enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing. Put your foot on its head. Kill it!

Let's quit playing with it. Let's kill it! What is in your cave today? William Law wrote, "The heresy of all heresies is a worldly spirit."

How about your thought life? Our "weapons of warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete" (2 Corinthians 10:4-6).

Confession of sin implies rejection of sin. The power of sin is broken only as we are in

harmony with the cross of Jesus. The cross is an ugly thing. It is the place of execution. It is the place where we pull out the kings and nail them to the cross. The cross is no place for concealment, of hiding, or covering sin. It is the place of execution. It is the place where we break with sin, the place of exposure, where we drag out the kings and reckon them dead. God says, "cut off," "pluck out," kill it. It is mine and your responsibility to break with sin—"let no sin therefore reign." God's way of victory is through crucifixion. Deliverance is only through death. "Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

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