

Reading Through the Bible Week 12: Joshua

Success depends on Obedience

Overview:

The Book of Joshua details Israel's conquest and settlement of Canaan, marking the transition from the giving of the Law and wilderness wandering to a historical account of nationhood under Joshua's leadership. It shows God's faithfulness in fulfilling promises made to Abraham, highlighting themes of covenant loyalty, courage, and obedience to the Law. The text is divided into crossing the Jordan (1-5), conquering the land (6-12), dividing the territory (13-22), and final covenants (23-24).

Named after its central figure, Joshua ("Yahweh saves"), the book was likely penned by Joshua himself or a contemporary scribe, as it includes firsthand accounts (indicated by "we" in chapters 5) with later additions regarding his death.

It acts as a direct continuation of the Book of Deuteronomy and chronicles the establishment of Israel, and to teach the necessity of covenant loyalty.

The book of Joshua chronicles events taking place approximately between 1405 BC and 1380 BC, following the death of Moses.

Joshua documents a roughly 25-year period of the Israelites entering and conquering Canaan, starting around the Jordan River, and concluding with the allotment of land to the tribes. Joshua, Moses' longtime assistant and a former spy, is commissioned to lead the new generation of Israelites across the Jordan River into Canaan.

However, theologically the Book of Joshua is not just history, it documents the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham regarding the land and exhibits that God's promises do not fail, but it highlights the necessity of covenant loyalty to maintain possession of the land.

Theme:

The primary theme of the Book of Joshua is God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises. It serves as "Part Two" of Israel's redemption, documenting how God finally brought His people into the Promised Land after their 40-year wilderness wandering, completing the promise made centuries earlier to Abraham.

Underlying the primary themes are secondary themes which include:

Divine Faithfulness: The book emphasizes that "not one of the good promises which the Lord had made... failed; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:45).

Strength and Courage: A recurring command is for Joshua and the people to be "strong and courageous" (Joshua 1:6, 9) because God's presence is the key to their success.

Obedience and Covenant Loyalty: Success is tied directly to following God's Word. The narrative of Achan shows that disobedience leads to disaster, while Rahab illustrates that faith and loyalty lead to redemption, even for an "outsider." And entering and settling the land is depicted as the fulfillment of a long-awaited rest for God's people.

The Lord as Divine Warrior: The conquest is presented as God's battle rather than a human military feat, with the Lord acting as a righteous judge against the Canaanites.



Narrative Arc of Joshua:

Similar to the thematic organization in Mosaic law, Joshua uses a chiasmic structure. The Book of Joshua is organized into four major sections: entry into the land (1–5), the conquest of the land (6–12), the distribution of the land (13–22), and Joshua's farewell and covenant renewal.

General Chiasmic Structure (macro & micro)

A. Preparation and Entry into the Land (Chapters 1-5)

Joshua 1:1-18 (Commissioning)

- A:** God promises presence ("I will be with you") as with Moses.
- B:** Command to be strong and courageous.
- C:** Instruction to lead the people and obey the Law of Moses.
- X:** Promise of success wherever you go.
- C':** Exhortation to meditate on the Law - day and night.
- B':** Command to be strong and courageous.
- A':** Reassurance of presence ("LORD your God will be with you")

Joshua 2:1-24 (Rahab & Spies)

Joshua 3:1–4:24 (The Jordan Crossing)

- A:** Preparation to cross (3:1–6)
- B:** God promises safety/success (3:7–13)
- C:** Israel's faith and obedience (3:14–17)
- X:** The Memorial Stones set up (4:1–10a)
- C':** Israel's faith/action remembered (4:10b–13)
- B':** God's promises fulfilled (4:14–18)
- A':** Reflection on the crossing (4:19–24)

Joshua 5:1-15 (Consecration at Gilgal)

B. Joshua 6-12 (Conquering the Promised Land)

B'. Joshua 13-22 (Dividing the Promised Land)

A'. Joshua 23-24 (Joshua's First Farewell & Covenant Renewal)

- A:** Ancestors served other gods (24:1-2)
- B:** Land given to Esau (24:3-4a)
- C:** Bringers out of Egypt (24:4B-7a)
- X:** Dwelling in the wilderness (24:7b)
- C':** Bringers into the land (24:8-12)
- B':** Land given to Israel (24:13)
- A':** Serving YHVH (24:14-15)



Study Points & Commentary

The Book of Joshua is the sixth book of the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament, serving as the first book of the Deuteronomistic history, which is a systematically structured chronicle of Israel's conquest of Canaan around the fulfillment of God's promise to the Babylonian exile.

Reading the Book of Joshua requires special considerations because it is a complex historical narrative that functions as a bridge between the wilderness wanderings and Israel's settlement in Canaan. It is heavily theological, focusing on God's faithfulness to His promises, but also contains challenging accounts of warfare. As such, the book is systematically structured into four primary movements that detail the transition from wilderness wandering to settled inheritance.

The Book of Joshua is characterized as a "prelude to Judges," documenting the successful establishment of Israel, which immediately contrasts with the subsequent failures in the Book of Judges.

The Book of Joshua requires specific interpretive considerations because it is a historical narrative focusing on the "holy war" conquest of Canaan, which presents complex theological, ethical, and historical challenges to modern readers. Key approaches include reading it as a narrative of God's faithfulness, understanding the unique historical context, and interpreting its violent narratives through a theological lens rather than an expository one. Following are some special considerations to take into account when reading the Book of Joshua:

- **Recognize the Literary Genre (Historical Narrative):** Joshua is not just a list of facts but a carefully crafted narrative designed to teach theological lessons, often using "epic" language to describe God as a warrior fighting for Israel.
- **Interpret Violence and "Holy War":** The descriptions of total destruction (*herem*) are considered by many scholars to be non-literal, hyperbolic language common in ancient Near Eastern battle reports, rather than a command for literal genocide. It is important to see these stories as God acting as judge over the Canaanites' wickedness (specifically child sacrifice and sexual immorality) rather than encouraging violence today.
- **Contextualize as "Already/Not Yet":** The book highlights a tension where God gives the land (fulfillment of promise), yet many inhabitants remain to be conquered. This parallels the "already/not yet" nature of God's victory in the New Testament.
- **Focus on God as the Main Character:** The primary focus is on God's covenant faithfulness and power, not on Joshua's military skill.
- **Acknowledge the "Hard" Sections:** The extensive land distribution lists (chapters 13-21) are essential for understanding the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, even if they appear as "dry" reading.



Theological Chiastic Structure for the Book of Joshua

A: God's Commission and Preparation (1:1–5:12): This section marks the transition from the law (Moses) to the land (Joshua), where God prepares a new generation to inherit the promise. It highlights that success is rooted in obedience to God's Word rather than human strength. Following is an analysis on the transition of leadership, the preparation for conquest, and the theological significance of entering the Promised Land.

1. The Commission and Preparation of Joshua (1:1–18)

❖ **Key Events**

- **Divine Commission (1:1–5):** Following Moses' death, God directly charges Joshua to lead Israel across the Jordan. He promises that every place Joshua sets his foot is already "given" to them, establishing a theme of divine gift over human achievement.
- **The Mandate for Courage (1:6–9):** God commands Joshua three times to be "strong and courageous". This strength is explicitly tied to unwavering meditation on and obedience to the "Book of the Law".

Note on Courage: Three times the command to be "strong and courageous" (v. 6, 7, 9) is given and acknowledges the fear associated with the task but promises divine presence as the remedy (see Week 11 study on Psalm 91, which follows Deuteronomy chronologically, where the psalmist writes that Yahweh removes fear).

In biblical numerology, the number 3 signifies completeness, divine perfection, and stability. It appears frequently to indicate something significant, holy, or fully established. It is considered one of the four "spiritually perfect" numbers, alongside 7, 10, and 12 (two odd prime numbers and two even number): $3+7=10$, $10=5+(2+3)$, $10+2$ and $7+5=12$ forming a numerical chain.

In biblical numerology, the numbers 2, 3, 7, 10, and 12 are linked by symbolizing different facets of divine perfection, completeness, and spiritual order. They progress from personal witness (2) and divine witness (3) to spiritual completeness (7), ordinal perfection/law (10), and ultimately, governmental perfection/foundational authority (12).

- **Preparations for Invasion (1:10–15):** Joshua assumes immediate command, ordering officers to prepare provisions and reminding the Transjordan tribes (Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh) of their obligation to fight alongside their brothers.
- **Covenantal Response (1:16–18):** The people pledge absolute loyalty to Joshua, echoing God's command for him to be courageous and warning that anyone who rebels will face death.

2. Rahab and the Spies in Jericho (2:1–24): Here we have the narrative of Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute in Jericho who hides two Israelite spies. She risks her life to protect them, confessing faith in Yahweh as the true God. Consequently, Rahab and her family are saved, demonstrating the inclusion of Gentiles and the transformative power of saving grace.



❖ Key Events

- **The Mission (v. 1):** Joshua sends two spies secretly from Shittim to scout Jericho; they stay at Rahab's house.
- **The Confrontation (v. 2-3):** The King of Jericho demands Rahab release the spies, who are identified as Hebrew agents.
- **The Deception/Protection (v. 4-7):** Rahab hides the spies under flax stalks on her roof and lies to the king's men, sending them on a false pursuit toward the Jordan.
- **The Confession of Faith (v. 8-11):** Rahab tells the spies that she knows the Lord has given Israel the land, citing fear of Israel's God, acknowledging His power in heaven and earth.
- **The Covenant (v. 12-21):** Rahab bargains for the safety of her family, using a "scarlet cord" tied in her window as the sign for safety during the impending siege.
- **The Escape and Report (v. 22-24):** The spies escape through a window and report that the Lord has delivered the city, as its inhabitants are terrified.

3. Crossing the Jordan (3:1–4:24): The narrative of Crossing the Jordan (Joshua 3:1–4:24) serves as a pivotal theological bridge between the wandering in the wilderness and the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. It emphasizes God's presence, the necessity of human obedience, and the establishment of a perpetual memorial of His power.

The seven nations conquered by Joshua, as outlined in Deuteronomy 7:1 and Joshua 3:10, are the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. These groups occupied the land of Canaan, and their defeat represented the fulfillment of God's promise to the Israelites upon entering the land.

- **Hittites:** Descendants of Heth, located in the hill country.
- **Girgashites:** One of the seven nations mentioned specifically in Deut. 7:1.
- **Amorites:** A powerful, widespread group located on both sides of the Jordan River.
- **Canaanites:** Occupied the coastal regions and the Jordan Valley.
- **Perizzites:** Lived in the mountainous regions of Canaan.
- **Hivites:** A group including the Gibeonites who surrendered to Joshua (ch. 9).
- **Jebusites:** Occupied the area around Jerusalem.

Joshua's campaign involved both southern and northern efforts, capturing 31 kings, including those of Jericho, Ai, and Hebron, to secure the territory.

❖ Key Events

- **Preparation for the Crossing (3:1–5):** Israel lodges at the Jordan for three days. Joshua instructs them to follow the Ark of the Covenant, maintaining a distance of 1,000 yards to see the path, and orders the people to "consecrate" themselves.
- **The Ark Leads (3:6–13):** Priests take up the Ark, representing God's presence. God affirms Joshua, promising to exalt him in the sight of the people just as He did with Moses.



- **The Miracle (3:14–17):** As the priests' feet touch the overflowing Jordan, the waters upstream cease, piling up in a heap near Adam, while the flow to the Dead Sea stops, allowing the entire nation to cross on dry ground.
- **Memorial Stones Gathered (4:1–8):** Twelve men—one from each tribe—take twelve stones from the middle of the riverbed (where the priests stood) to set up at their lodging place, Gilgal, as a sign to future generations.
- **The Mid-Jordan Memorial (4:9–14):** Joshua sets up a second set of twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan River, which remains there as a marker of the miracle.
- **Final Crossing and Return of Waters (4:15–18):** When the priests carrying the Ark come out of the river, the Jordan immediately returns to its flood stage, confirming the supernatural nature of the event.
- **Setting up at Gilgal (4:19–24):** The people cross on the tenth day of the first month, paralleling the start of the first Passover. The stones at Gilgal are officially designated as a memorial so that "all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty".

4. Consecration at Gilgal (5:1–12)

❖ Key Events

- **Fear and Response (v. 1):** The news of God drying up the Jordan River caused the Canaanite kings' hearts to melt. This divine intervention provides the safety needed for Israel's vulnerability during the subsequent rituals.
- **The Second Circumcision (vv. 2–9):**
 - **The Problem:** The generation born during the 40 years of wilderness wandering had not been circumcised, resulting in a break in the covenantal sign established with Abraham (Gen 17).
 - **The Act:** Joshua circumcised the new generation using "flint knives," symbolizing a return to the foundational practices of their ancestors.
 - **The Location:** The site was named Gilgal (translated "to roll"), because God declared, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you" (v. 9).

5. Theological Insights

- **Continuity and Succession:** The passage emphasizes that while leaders (e.g., Moses) pass away, God's work and promises remain constant.
- **Sovereignty and Grace:** The land is a "gracious gift" from God, yet it requires human agency to possess. God's presence is the ultimate source of victory, ensuring that no enemy can stand before Joshua.
- **The Centrality of Scripture:** Success is redefined from military prowess to spiritual fidelity. Meditating on the Law "day and night" is the prerequisite for "prosperity and success."
- **Sovereignty of Grace:** Rahab is a "triple outsider"—a woman, a Canaanite, and a prostitute. Her redemption proves that no person is beyond the reach of God's mercy.
- **Faith and Works:** The New Testament holds Rahab up as a model of faith (Hebrews 11:31) and justification through works (James 2:25). Her faith was not just intellectual; it resulted in life-risking action.
- **Universal Inclusion:** Rahab's inclusion in Israel (and eventually the genealogy of Jesus) foreshadows the "ingrafting" of Gentiles into the people of God.



- **Judgment and Salvation:** The scarlet cord serves as a type of the Passover blood, signifying that salvation occurs even in the midst of impending judgment.
- **Presence of God:** The Ark of the Covenant leading the people symbolizes that God goes before them. It demonstrates that the success of the conquest is entirely dependent on His presence, not military strength.
- **Consecration/Sanctification:** Before crossing, the people were told to "consecrate" themselves (3:5), emphasizing that approaching a holy God requires being set apart from sin and prepared for holy work.
- **Divine Empowerment vs. Human Effort:** The miracle happened when the priests' feet touched the water, not before (3:15). God demands action that shows faith.
- **Passing the Torch:** This event establishes Joshua's authority, fulfilling God's promise to exalt him as the new leader, just as Moses was honored at the Red Sea.
- **Memorializing God's Acts:** The twelve stones taken from the Jordan (4:3-9) serve as a perpetual memorial, ensuring future generations know of God's power and faithfulness (4:6-7).
- **Covenant Renewal & Separation:** Circumcision was a physical sign of being set apart (holy) for God. The act at Gilgal was a mandatory "separation from the wayward and wandering past" before entering the blessing of Canaan.
- **Removal of Reproach:** The "reproach of Egypt" likely refers to the shame of slavery and the subsequent disobedience in the wilderness. By cutting away the foreskin, God formally rolled away the shame of their past, marking them as free children of God, no longer slaves.
- **Consecration Before Conquest:** The text highlights that spiritual obedience and proper covenant standing are more crucial for victory than military strength. They were vulnerable for several days after, trusting entirely in God's protection.
- **Passover as Victory Celebration:** Passover commemorates redemption. Celebrating it at Gilgal highlights that their victory is not because of their prowess, but because of God's redemptive power.

6. Hamartiology Analysis

- **The Sin of Unbelief:** The 40-year wilderness wandering was the direct result of the previous generation's rebellion and lack of faith. Joshua's commission is a call to break this cycle of sin through radical trust.
- **Corporate Responsibility:** Joshua reminds the Transjordan tribes of their duty, illustrating that sin (in the form of neglect or selfishness) by one part of the community affects the whole "team".
- **Judgment and Holiness:** The command to "put to death" those who rebel against the commission (1:18) highlights God's zero-tolerance for rebellion (sin) within the covenant community, which is necessary to maintain the holiness required for God's miraculous presence. The account of Rahab presents several ethical and hamartiological tensions:
 - **The Moral Dilemma of the Lie:** Interpreters often debate Rahab's deception (vv. 4–5).



- **Lesser of Two Evils:** Some argue that while lying is a sin, it was the lesser evil compared to betraying innocent lives.
- **Hierarchicalism:** Others view this as "graded absolutism," where the duty to protect life supersedes the duty to tell the truth to those seeking to do evil.
- **Narrative Reporting:** Some note that the Bible simply records her lie without explicitly commending it; it highlights her faith despite her imperfect methods.
- **The Sinner as Instrument:** Rahab's past as a prostitute (Hebrew *zonah*) is not brushed over by the biblical writers. Her sin is part of the narrative to emphasize that God's grace is not based on human merit but on His sovereign choice to redeem and transform.
- **Separation and Holiness:** A 2,000-cubit distance (about 3,000 feet) was required between the people and the Ark (3:4). This space highlights the gap between a holy God and sinful humanity, emphasizing awe and reverence.
- **The Necessity of Consecration:** The call to consecration (3:5) addresses the issue of sin within the community, acting as a prerequisite to experiencing the miracle of God's power.
- **The Danger of Disobedience:** The crossing is framed as entering a new life where obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings curses (reiterating Deut. 30:18-20), highlighting the consequences of sin in the context of covenant loyalty.
- **Disobedience of the Exodus Generation:** The 40-year delay was a direct consequence of the previous generation's refusal to trust God to enter the land (Numbers 14).
- **Neglect of the Covenant Sign:** The failure to circumcise the next generation was not merely a logistical failure but a lack of fear of God and a disregard for his covenant.
- **The "Reproach of Egypt" (The Heart of the Issue):** The "reproach" represents the lingering bondage of Egyptian mentality—the desire to return to slavery rather than trust God's provision. It is a state of spiritual immaturity and partial unbelief.
- **The Need for "Cutting":** The flesh, in the old covenant, had to be literally cut away to signify that sin cannot enter the Holy Land. This foreshadows the "circumcision of the heart" required in the New Testament (Col 2:11).

B: Conquest of the Land (5:13–12:24): This section covers the core of Israel's military conquest of Canaan, transitioning from spiritual preparation (circumcision, Passover) to active warfare, featuring the fall of Jericho, the sin of Achan, the conquest of Ai, the Gibeonite deception, and the southern/northern campaigns.

The overall narrative teaches that the land is a gift, but holding it requires holiness. Success is guaranteed by God (Yahweh as the Divine Warrior who fights for His people), but it is contingent on faithful obedience by His people (Josh 11:15).

❖ Key Event Notes

- **Joshua 5:13–15: The Encounter with the Commander:** Before attacking Jericho, Joshua meets a "man with a drawn sword" who identifies as the "commander of the army of the LORD." This establishes that the war is not Joshua's, but God's.



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Teacher: Dr. David Utzke

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These verses describe a pivotal encounter between Joshua and the "Commander of the army of the LORD" just before the siege of Jericho. This passage marks the final stage of Joshua's spiritual preparation for the conquest of Canaan. The identity of the "man" (Hebrew: *'iysh* - meaning male person) identifies the figure's appearance as a male figure unlike the term *adam* (humanity). This is clearly a theophany (an encounter with the Divine God), specifically a **Christophany** (a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ). The evidence of divinity, unlike angels who refuse worship (e.g., Revelation 19:10), this figure accepts Joshua's worship. The command for Joshua to remove his sandals because the ground is "holy" (v.15) directly mirrors God's words to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:5), identifying this "Commander" with the God of Israel. In verse 14, Christ identifies as "captain [*śar*] of the hosts [*tzva*] of the LORD [*YHVH*]" (translated as Sar-Tzava-Yehovah). However, Joshua addresses the "captain of the LORD's host," as *adoni* ("...*māh 'ădōnî mādabbêr 'el-'abdōw*" transliterated as "What saith my lord unto his servant?") Unlike the divine plural name *Adonai* (capitalized) reserved for God, *adoni* is used to address superiors or divine beings with high respect. The distinction is that the captain reveals he is Yahweh, and in context, he is widely understood to be a divine manifestation (theophany), leading to Joshua's worship.

- **Joshua 6: The Fall of Jericho:** A non-conventional military strategy (marching) followed by a shout leads to the supernatural collapse of the walls. The city is placed under *ḥērem* (the ban), meaning it is devoted to God for destruction. Jericho is six miles west of the Jordan river with a population of approximately 1,200-1,500 people. With a circumference of 600-700 yards, it is without a doubt that the entire population of Israel was able to circle the city Jericho seven times in a single day.
- **Joshua 7: The Sin of Achan and Defeat at Ai:** Israel fails at Ai because Achan stole items dedicated to God. This highlights that hidden sin breaks the covenant and halts God's power.
- **Joshua 8: The Victory at Ai and Covenant Renewal:** After Achan's judgment, Ai is destroyed through a strategic ambush. Joshua then renews the covenant at Mount Ebal, reading the Law and building an altar, emphasizing that life in the land is governed by obedience.
- **Joshua 9: The Gibeonite Deception:** The Gibeonites trick Israel into a treaty. Israel errs by not seeking God's counsel, highlighting that even in victory, vigilance and reliance on God are required.
- **Joshua 10: The Southern Campaign:** God intervenes with hailstones to aid Israel against a coalition of Amorite kings. The sun and moon stand still, allowing complete victory.
- **Joshua 11: The Northern Campaign:** Joshua defeats a massive, technologically superior coalition at the waters of Merom, hamstringing their horses and burning chariots, showing trust in God over military strength.
- **Joshua 12: Summary of Conquered Kings:** A, listing 2 kings conquered by Moses in the East and 31 by Joshua in the West, acting as a final record of divine victory.



❖ Theological Insights

- **Divine Sovereignty & Holy War:** The narrative begins with Joshua encountering the "Commander of the army of the LORD" (Josh 5:13-15), establishing that the war belongs to God. Victory depends not on human military might but on alignment with God's side. The conquest is a divine enterprise where God is the active warrior, and Israel is subordinate. It is described as judicial judgment against Canaanite idolatry, not mere ethnic cleansing (Gen 15:16; Deut 9:4-5).
- **Judicial Judgment:** : The destruction of Canaanite cities is presented as a "judicial devotion" (*herem* or "the ban"). It was a righteous sentence upon a culture that practiced child sacrifice, ritual prostitution, and extreme idolatry once their "iniquity was complete." The "devoted" items (like Jericho) are God's property, not spoil for humans. Taking them is stealing from God.
- **Holiness as a Condition for Victory:** God requires Israel to be spiritually prepared through circumcision and Passover before the first battle (Jericho). Victory is linked to corporate obedience; when sin enters the camp (Achan), divine support is withdrawn until the community is purified. Before fighting, Israel must be holy. The circumcision and Passover in ch. 5 signify consecration, marking the new generation as God's set-apart people.
- **Grace Amidst Judgment:** Rahab's sparing and the Gibeonite treaty indicate that grace is extended to those—regardless of origin—who turn to YHWH and acknowledge His power.

❖ Hamartiology Analysis

- **Covetousness as the Root:** Achan's sin began with coveting (a Babylonian garment, silver, gold), echoing the sin in the Garden of Eden and the tenth commandment.
- **Corporate Sin:** Achan's sin was hidden, but it affected the whole nation. The "camp" became accursed, illustrating that hidden iniquity brings judgment on the community.
- **Failure of Self-Sufficiency:** The first defeat at Ai was due to arrogance, assuming a small force could win without God's direction.
- **The Consequence of Neglecting Prayer:** The Gibeonite treaty failure was caused by failing to seek counsel from God, showing that spiritual apathy is a sin in leadership.
- **Judgment on Idolatry:** The total destruction of cities was to eradicate practices like child sacrifice and ritual prostitution, protecting Israel from the "disease" of pagan idolatry.

X: The Central Pivot - Allotment and Rest (Chapters 13-21): This is the pivot that represents the "Book of Inheritance" of the book of Joshua, marking the transition from the chaotic, violent conquest (Ch. 1-12) to the structured organization of life within the Promised Land (Ch. 13-21). The theological core is that while God gives the land as a gracious gift, Israel must possess it by faith, with the detailed allotment serving as proof of divine faithfulness.

❖ Key Event Notes

- **Overview of Remaining Land (13:1-7):** God instructs an aged Joshua to divide the land despite it not being fully taken.



- **Transjordan Inheritance (13:8-33):** Re-ratification of the land east of the Jordan for Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh, given by Moses.
 - **Caleb's Special Request (Ch. 14):** Caleb, at 85, asks for Hebron—a city filled with giants—showing faith, and he drives them out.
 - **Allotment of Judah (Ch. 15):** The largest and most prominent allotment is given first, including the city of Jerusalem (which is still held by Jebusites).
 - **Allotment of Joseph's Descendants (Ch. 16-17):** Ephraim and Manasseh are assigned land, but they complain that it is too small, showing a lack of faith in tackling the forest land and the iron chariots of the Canaanites.
 - **The Assembly at Shiloh (18:1):** The Tabernacle is set up, centering the community, and the final seven tribes receive their allotment by lot.
 - **Allotment of Remaining Tribes (Ch. 18-19):** Detailed boundaries are set for Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan.
 - **Joshua's Inheritance (19:49-50):** The leader is given his portion last, serving as a model of selfless service.
 - **Cities of Refuge and Levites (Ch. 20-21):** Specific cities of refuge are established, and the Levites are given 48 cities within other tribes' territories.
- Key Takeaway:** "Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass" (Joshua 21:45).

❖ Theological Insights

- **Fulfillment of Promise (Theological Center):** These chapters prove that God is a keeper of promises, turning an abstract pledge to Abraham into tangible, named territories for specific clans.
- **The Inheritance as a Gift (Grace):** The land is deemed an "inheritance" (*naḥălâ*), a gift that cannot be permanently sold or stolen, symbolizing that the land belongs to God, not to human owners.
- **The Role of Lots:** The casting of lots (14:2) was a sacred act of divine appointment, preventing favoritism and ensuring that God, rather than a human, determined the inheritance, thus reinforcing theocratic rule.
- **Levitical Integration:** The Levites received no large territory, but 48 scattered cities (Chapter 21). This symbolizes that God is their inheritance and ensures that spiritual leadership is dispersed among all tribes. The land is not portrayed as a mere conquest, but as a sacred *naḥălâ* (inheritance) bestowed by God, rooting the land in the Abrahamic covenant.
- **Theocratic Distribution:** The allotment was determined by the casting of lots before the Tabernacle in Shiloh, overseen by Joshua and Eleazar the priest. This signifies that Yahweh, not human strategy, is the ultimate owner of the land and decides the territory.
- **The Levites' Special Inheritance:** The tribe of Levi received no consolidated territory, as "the Lord God of Israel is their inheritance" (Josh 13:33). Instead, they were dispersed by giving them 48 cities scattered throughout the other tribes to act as spiritual anchors and teachers of the Law to serve as the spiritual backbone. This reinforces that the land is holy and dedicated to God.
- **The Theology of "Rest" and Unfinished Work:** Joshua 13 opens with a crucial statement: "Joshua was old... and there remains yet very much land to be



possessed." The "rest" brought to the land (11:23) is a "rest from war," not a complete occupation. The land has rest, but it must be possessed. In this context, "rest" refers to more than the cessation of war, it is a theological state of security where Israel can finally dwell with God in the land. Hebrews 4 later interprets this rest as a shadow of the eternal rest found in Christ. The "rest" (*nuakh*) in Josh. 11:23 is a temporal, geographic, and political peace. In contrast, the "rest" (*shabbat*) from the study of Genesis 2:2-3 is a theological, divine, and eternal rest established by God upon completing creation, setting a pattern for sanctified, weekly Sabbath.

- **The Theology of Equity and Social Justice:** The allotments were designed to ensure that every family had an ancestral home, providing an alternative to the oppressive systems of the surrounding nations.
- **The Daughters of Zelophehad (17:3-6):** This event, a re-visitation of Numbers 27, demonstrates that God's word is a "living tradition" that protects the weak and ensures that even women could inherit, ensuring that no family lineage was lost.
- **Cities of Refuge (Ch. 20):** These designated cities were created to protect those who committed accidental homicide from the "avenger of blood," ensuring justice and protecting the land from unnecessary bloodguilt.

❖ **Hamartiology Analysis**

The danger of partial obedience - these chapters encompasses the gap between God's promise and Israel's occupation, which highlights a subtle yet profound spiritual failure: the sin of partial obedience and spiritual complacency.

The "hamartiology" (study of sin) in these chapters focuses not on overt rebellion (like Achan), but on **complacency, partial obedience, and failure to complete the task.**

- **"Very Much Land Yet to Be Possessed" (13:1):** The fundamental issue is that while God conquered the *major* powers, He left remnants to allowed each tribe to build faith and God while developing their respective tribal military prowess. But Israel failed to occupy the entire promised area.
- **Coexistence with Idolatry:** Instead of removing the Canaanites (15:63, 16:10, 17:12), Israel allowed them to remain, which directly violated God's command and set the stage for the idolatry cycle in the book of Judges.
- **Fear & Apathy vs. Faith:** The tribes (specifically Ephraim and Manasseh) complained that their area was too small or that the Canaanites were too strong (17:14-16). Joshua calls them to act on their faith and cut down the forests, rather than fearing the iron chariots.
- **Spiritual Complacency:** The "rest" they received was misused to focus on comfort rather than the "radical", full commitment required to fully take the land.
- **Failure to Expel the Canaanites:** Repeatedly, the text notes that the Israelites "did not drive out" the inhabitants (e.g., 13:13, 15:63, 16:10, 17:12). This incomplete obedience is a direct violation of God's command (Deut 7:2-6) and acts as a seed of future sin. The presence of the Canaanites allows idolatry to persist in the land, which eventually leads to the cycle of rebellion detailed in the Book of Judges.
- **Laziness and Contentment:** The tribes became content with their current, partial territory, lacking the zeal to fight the remaining "giants" (17:15-18).



- **The Lesson on Sin:** The "remnants" of the enemy are the most dangerous part. By allowing small areas of compromise in their spiritual life, Israel allowed the potential for "generational sin" and future disobedience.

B': Response and Unity of the Tribes (Chapter 22)

Joshua 22 details the return of the Eastern tribes (Reuben, Gad, Manasseh) to their lands after aiding in Canaan's conquest, marked by a crisis of unity over a massive altar they built. It is a study in communication, where a misunderstood gesture almost triggers civil war, resolved by dialogue rather than immediate judgment.

❖ Key Events

- **Commendation and Return (vv. 1–9):** Joshua praises the eastern tribes for their faithfulness, loyalty, and obedience to Moses' commands, then sends them home with blessings and rich spoils to share with those who remained.
- **The Altar of Misunderstanding (vv. 10–12):** The eastern tribes build a "large" and "imposing" altar by the Jordan. The Western tribes, fearing rebellion and apostasy, immediately gather for war.
- **The Delegation (vv. 13–20):** Before fighting, Israel sends Phinehas the priest to investigate, raising the theological gravity by recalling the disastrous Baal-Peor incident (Numbers 25) and Achan's sin (Joshua 7).
- **The Defense and Resolution (vv. 21–34):** The Eastern tribes explain the altar is not for sacrifices, but a witness of unity—to ensure their descendants are not excluded from worshiping Yahweh. The leaders are satisfied, calling it "Ed" (a witness), and the threat of civil war is averted through communication.
- **The Discharge of Eastern Tribes (vv. 1–9):** After seven years of fighting alongside the other tribes, the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh are formally dismissed by Joshua to return to their inheritance east of the Jordan.
- **The Altar of Witness (v. 10):** Before crossing the river, the eastern tribes build a "great, impressive altar". This triggers an immediate reaction from the western tribes, who gather at Shiloh to prepare for war against their brothers.
- **The Delegation and Inquiry (vv. 13–20):** Instead of attacking immediately, Israel sends a diplomatic mission led by Phinehas the priest and ten tribal leaders to investigate the perceived rebellion.
- **The Reconciliation (vv. 21–34):** The eastern tribes explain that the altar was not for forbidden sacrifices but served as a "Witness" (Ed) to remind future generations that those across the Jordan still belong to the Lord. The explanation is accepted, and war is averted.

❖ Theological Insights

- **Centralized Worship (Deuteronomy 12):** The primary theological tension stems from the Mosaic Law, which mandated that all sacrifices be offered only at the central sanctuary (then the tabernacle at Shiloh). A rival altar was viewed as a direct violation of God's holy order.
- **Covenant Unity:** The chapter emphasizes that geographical separation by the Jordan River did not mean spiritual separation. The "Altar of Witness" was intended to bridge this gap, ensuring that the eastern tribes maintained their "portion in the Lord" despite being physically removed from the tabernacle.



- **Faithfulness to God's Promise:** Coming after the heavy theological weight of Joshua 21:43–45 (God's fidelity to His word), Chapter 22 highlights **Israel's required fidelity** in response to God's unwavering faithfulness.
- **The Theology of Unity and Worship:** The altar, though intended as a witness to common faith (a "copy" of the Tabernacle altar), was perceived as a rival altar, which would have violated the law of centralized worship.
- **The Danger of Misunderstanding:** The narrative heavily critiques assuming the worst motives (hamartiology of judgment). The Western tribes were right to defend the purity of worship but wrong in not first asking the purpose of the action.
- **Covenant Fidelity:** Joshua 22:5 acts as a pivotal theological reminder: to love the Lord, walk in His ways, keep commandments, and hold fast to Him.
- **Separation vs. Communion:** The Jordan River could have become a chasm of religious separation. The altar was intended to prevent this by symbolically bridging the two sides.

❖ Hamartiology Analysis

- **Potential False Accusation:** Had Phinehas not gone, the Western tribes would have committed a sin of rash judgment and unnecessary bloodshed, potentially tearing Israel apart.
- **Misrepresented Actions:** The Eastern tribes acted within their rights, but in a way that *appeared* suspicious. Good intentions in ministry or faith do not excuse actions that cause confusion or disunity.
- **The Danger of Isolation:** The concern was that a, geographical separation would lead to spiritual separation, cutting the Eastern tribes off from the, presence of God (a form of spiritual death).
- **Sin as Corporate Treachery:** The western tribes characterize the altar as "treachery" or a "breach of faith" (*ma'al*) against God. They view the potential sin of two and a half tribes as a threat to the entire nation's survival.
- **The Warning of Past Sins:** Phinehas cites two historical examples to illustrate the danger of rebellion:
 - **The Iniquity of Peor:** Where sexual immorality and idolatry led to a plague that killed 24,000.
 - **The Sin of Achan:** Demonstrating that the hidden sin of one individual can bring wrath upon the whole congregation.
- **The Nature of Misunderstanding:** The chapter reveals how actions taken with good motives (building a memorial) can be misconstrued as sin if they have the "appearance of evil". It underscores the importance of **biblical conflict resolution** (Matthew 18) by seeking truth before passing judgment.

A': Final Farewell and Covenant Renewal (Chapters 23–24)

Joshua 23–24 contains Joshua's farewell addresses, urging covenant loyalty, exclusive worship of Yahweh, and separation from Canaanite influences to avoid divine judgment. Key events include the leadership assembly (ch. 23), the covenant renewal at Shechem, the declaration "as for me and my house" (24:15), and the covenant stone memorial, highlighting the theological themes of God's faithfulness and the danger of idolatry.



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Teacher: Dr. David Utzke

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❖ Key Event Notes

- **Chapter 23: Final Warning to Leaders:** An aged Joshua addresses the elders, judges, and officers, reminding them that God fought for them and warning them to remain separate from the remaining nations.
- **Chapter 24:1-13: Recounting History:** Joshua gathers all tribes at Shechem and recounts God's faithfulness from Abraham to their present occupation of Canaan, highlighting that God gave them victory, not their own strength.
- **Chapter 24:14-15: The Great Challenge:** Joshua calls on Israel to put away foreign gods and make a choice: serve false gods or serve the Lord, famously declaring: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord".
- **Chapter 24:16-24: Covenant Renewal:** The people commit to serving God, but Joshua warns them of the difficulty and cost of serving a holy God. The people reiterate their vow.
- **Chapter 24:25-28: The Memorial Stone:** Joshua records the promise in the Book of the Law and places a large stone under an oak tree as a witness against them if they break the covenant.
- **Joshua's First Farewell (Joshua 23):** Gathered at an unspecified location, Joshua addresses the **leaders of Israel** (elders, heads, judges, and officers). He emphasizes God's past faithfulness as the basis for their future obedience.
- **The Assembly at Shechem (Joshua 24):** Joshua gathers **all the tribes** at Shechem, a site of great ancestral significance where Abraham first received the promise and Jacob buried his household's idols.
- **Covenant Renewal Ceremony:** Joshua recounts Israel's history from Terah to the conquest, highlighting God's sovereign initiatives. The people publicly pledge their loyalty, and Joshua sets up a **large stone** as a permanent witness to their vow.
- **Death and Burials:** The book concludes with the death of Joshua at age 110, the burial of Joseph's bones (brought from Egypt), and the death of Eleazar the priest.

❖ Theological Insights

- **Covenant Loyalty & Exclusivity:** The central theme is a demand for total, unconditional loyalty to Yahweh, who is greater than all local and ancestral deities.
- **Remembering as a Covenant Foundation:** Joshua recounts the history of Israel from Abraham to the conquest to show that God is the primary actor who has faithfully fulfilled his promises. Faithfulness is rooted in remembering God's past actions (the Exodus, conquest), not just current emotions or obedience. The theology of remembrance in Joshua 23-24 centers on recalling God's past faithfulness and miraculous actions (e.g., deliverance from Egypt, conquest of Canaan) as the foundation for present loyalty and future obedience. Joshua uses historical rehearsal to urge the Israelites to reject idols and renew their covenant commitment, ensuring they continue to possess the land. These chapters emphasize that intentional, active remembering is necessary to sustain spiritual devotion and prevent a return to the "wilderness" lifestyle. The theology of remembrance serves as the vital link between Israel's past salvation and their future covenant loyalty. As Joshua prepares to die, he uses communal



memory as a primary tool for spiritual formation, ensuring that the next generation understands their identity through the lens of God's past actions. The theology of remembrance serves as the vital link between Israel's past salvation and their future covenant loyalty. As Joshua prepares to die, he uses communal memory as a primary tool for spiritual formation, ensuring that the next generation understands their identity through the lens of God's past actions.

- **Divine Faithfulness:** It is a defining trait of God's character. In the Old Testament, God maintained His covenant with Israel despite their frequent unfaithfulness, as seen in His promises to Abraham, Moses, and David.
- **Human Response:** Believers are called to mirror this loyalty through **wholehearted allegiance** and **obedience**. It is a proactive love that prioritizes God's will over personal convenience or other competing loyalties.
- **New Covenant Fulfillment:** In Christian theology, Jesus Christ is the ultimate embodiment of covenant loyalty. His sacrificial death established a "New Covenant," and believers are invited to live out that same steadfast love toward God and one another.
- **Relational Impact:** Beyond the divine relationship, the Bible highlights covenantal loyalty in human friendships and family, such as the bond between David and Jonathan or Ruth and Naomi.
- **Dependability:** Being reliable and keeping one's word even when circumstances are difficult.
- **Mercy & Forgiveness:** Choosing to remain committed despite the failures or shortcomings of the other party.
- **Generational Blessing:** Faithfulness that extends beyond the immediate moment to impact future generations.
- **A Call to Exclusive Loyalty:** Based on this remembrance, the people are urged to "fear the Lord and serve him in faithfulness" and to throw away foreign gods.
- **"As for Me and My House":** Joshua 24:15 serves as the climax, where remembrance of God's grace drives a personal and communal commitment to worship Yahweh alone.
- **Stones as Living Witnesses:** After the people renew their covenant, Joshua sets up a "large stone" under an oak tree (Joshua 24:26–27) that act as a tangible witness against the people if they forsake the covenant, highlighting that remembrance leads to accountability. This stone is personified as a witness that "heard all the words the Lord said," serving as a permanent, public reminder that prevents the people from "denying their God" (Joshua 24:27). In addition, like the earlier 12 stones at Gilgal, these markers are designed to spark questions from future children, creating an opportunity for parents to retell the testimony of God's mighty hand.
- **The Consequence of Forgetting:** The passages implicitly warn that failing to remember God's faithfulness leads to breaking the covenant, as foreshadowed by the coming dangers of disobedience and the cycle of the Judges. Joshua grounds his final exhortations in a detailed historical review (Joshua 24:1–13). This "remembering correctly" is not just nostalgia; it is a theological necessity. Joshua emphasizes that every victory and piece of land was a gift



from God, not a result of Israel's own "sword or bow" (Joshua 24:12), recalls God's faithfulness from the time of Abraham through the Exodus and the Conquest, remembering that "not one of the good promises the Lord your God made to you has failed" (Joshua 23:14) provides the confidence needed for future faithfulness.

- **The Danger of "Spiritual Forgetfulness":** The text presents a stark warning about forgetting God's past deeds leads directly to covenant infidelity. Joshua warns that if they forget God's exclusive work on their behalf, they will inevitably "associate with" and "intermarry" with pagan nations, leading to the worship of false gods (Joshua 23:7, 12). And disloyalty born of forgetfulness is portrayed as a breach of covenant that leads to perishing from the "good land" God has given them (Joshua 23:13, 16).
- **Covenant Renewal as Active Remembrance:** The act of renewal at Shechem is itself a theological performance of remembrance. Joshua forces the people to "choose this day" (Joshua 24:15) whom they will serve, effectively bringing the past decisions of their ancestors into the present moment. This demonstrates that biblical remembrance is **participatory**; to remember God's work is to actively "throw away foreign gods" and "yield your hearts to the Lord" (Joshua 24:23).
- **Separation & Purity:** The Israelites are strictly forbidden from intermarrying or adopting the worship practices of the remaining Amorite/Canaanite cultures. Joshua commands Israel to maintain strict separation from surrounding Canaanite nations to ensure spiritual purity and covenant loyalty. He warns against intermarriage, adopting idolatrous practices, and social mixing, urging exclusive devotion to God, who fought on their behalf. Failure to separate would lead to judgment.

The final chapters emphasize that true worship requires exclusive devotion (**purity**) and a deliberate choice to be different from the surrounding culture (**separation**).

- **Separation from Foreign Influences (Chapter 23):** Joshua focuses on the danger of "mixing" with the remaining nations in Canaan. He frames separation not as racial or ethnic, but as a safeguard against spiritual corruption.
 - **Prohibition of Intermarriage:** Joshua warns that marrying into idolatrous nations will lead to spiritual compromise.
 - **The Danger of "Clinging":** He cautions that if they "cling" to these nations, the people will become "snares and traps" to them, leading to their destruction.
 - **Religious Boundaries:** Israel is commanded to not even mention the names of foreign gods, let alone serve or bow to them.
- **Purity and Wholehearted Devotion (Chapter 24)**

In his final address at Shechem, Joshua challenges the people to a deeper, internal purity of devotion.

 - **Spiritual Single-Mindedness:** Purity in this context is defined as "spiritual single-mindedness" or "wholeheartedness". Joshua famously challenges them: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve".



- **Inward Cleansing:** He instructs them to "throw away the foreign gods that are among you" and "yield your hearts to the Lord". This suggests that even then, some were practicing secret idolatry.
- **God's Holiness:** Joshua warns that God is "holy and jealous," meaning He will not tolerate "divided affections" or "nominal religion".
- **Key Aspects of Separation and Purity (Joshua 23–24)**
 - **Separation from Nations (Joshua 23):** Joshua warns against intermingling with the remaining Canaanite populations, predicting they will become "snares and traps" if Israel does not maintain distance.
 - **Prohibition of Idolatry (Joshua 23:7):** The people are commanded to avoid honoring, serving, or swearing by the names of foreign gods, ensuring total dedication to Jehovah.
 - **Prohibition of Inter marriage (Joshua 23:12):** Joshua specifically warns against marrying into the local population, as this would inevitably lead to turning away from God and adopting foreign cultural practices.
 - **Call to Total Commitment (Joshua 24):** Joshua forces a decision at Shechem for the people to reject ancestral idols (from beyond the Euphrates and Egypt) and serve God alone.
 - **The Covenant Token (Joshua 24:26-27):** Joshua creates a memorial stone as a witness to the vow of purity and faithfulness the people made, highlighting the need for a distinct identity.
 - **Result of Compromise:** The passage warns that failure to remain separate will cause God to cease driving out the nations, leading to Israel being destroyed in the land.
- **Divine Sovereignty & Faithfulness:** The core theme is that **God fought for Israel**. Joshua asserts that "not one thing has failed" of all God's promises, grounding theology in historical reality rather than abstract philosophy.
- **Conditional vs. Unconditional Covenant:** While God's overarching promises to Abraham are unconditional, the individual generation's enjoyment of the land is **conditional** upon their obedience and love for Yahweh.
- **The Holiness of God:** Joshua 24:19 presents a "jealous" and "holy" God. Joshua warns the people that God will not tolerate syncretism or lukewarm devotion, as His nature demands exclusive loyalty.
- **Christological Foreshadowing:** Joshua (the "lesser Jesus") functions as a mediator who points to the New Covenant. While Joshua's warnings focus on the "faithfulness to curse" for disobedience, Christ's sacrifice removes the curse of the law, offering a covenant grounded in the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill what the Israelites could not.

❖ Hamartiology Analysis

- **The Idolatry Trap:** The greatest sin (hamartia) facing Israel was syncretism—blending Yahweh worship with Canaanite idols (Baal/Asherah). This "idolatry trap" was an attempt to keep God while adapting to cultural pressures for agricultural prosperity. It was dangerous because it involved adopting immoral, pagan rituals, challenging God's exclusive claim on Israel's loyalty.
- **The Nature of the Trap (Syncretism):** The Israelites rarely abandoned God completely; instead, they tried to add Him to a "personal pantheon," effectively



treating the "Great I AM" as just one of many local deities. They "synchronized" their faith, attempting to worship Yahweh while simultaneously maintaining "household gods" or adopting Canaanite fertility rites. In a biblical context, this not just a "mistake" but an offense against God's character and covenant. Joshua 24:14-15 explicitly commands the people to "put away the gods which your fathers served". This implies that even after the conquest, many Israelites still possessed physical idols or maintained syncretistic heart-postures.

- **Context of the Land:** Canaanite religion was deeply tied to the land and agricultural success, making it alluring for the new farming nation to merge their faith with local practices. And yet, God commanded the total destruction of Canaanite, idols, and altars (the "ban" or *herem*) to prevent spiritual contamination. Even when promising to serve the Lord, the people often failed to "remove the foreign gods" from their homes. This failure left them open to moral decline, foreshadowing the cycle of judgment in Judges. Idolatry in Joshua is viewed as "spiritual adultery," breaking the covenant that calls for exclusive allegiance and God rejects worship that imitates pagan or secular culture, demanding that His followers remain distinct.

- **The Danger of Disloyalty:** Joshua warns that failing to separate from the nations will lead to those nations becoming "snares and traps" and "whips on your backs."

In Joshua 23-24, the danger of disloyalty is presented as the primary threat to Israel's survival, focusing on the inevitable consequences of breaking their covenant with Yahweh through syncretism or idolatry. Joshua warns that disloyalty brings divine judgment, transforming the promised land into a source of entrapment and suffering rather than blessing.

The danger of disloyalty is framed not just as a moral failing but as a self-destructive reversal of God's blessings. As Joshua delivers his farewell addresses, he warns that while God is perfectly faithful to His promises, He is equally "faithful" to His warnings of judgment.

- **The Retraction of Divine Protection:** Joshua warns that if the Israelites become disloyal by intermarrying or making alliances with the remaining nations, God will cease to fight for them. The covenant blessings—victory over enemies—are directly tied to loyalty (Josh 23:10). Disloyalty forfeits God's protection, leading to military defeat.
- **Loss of the Land:** The ultimate danger is the total loss of their inheritance. Disloyalty would lead to causing God's anger to burn against them, resulting in the loss of their inheritance and the potential to be wiped out from the land being "perished from off the good land."
- **Certainty of Divine Judgement:** Joshua emphasizes that God's nature as a "holy" and "jealous" God means He will not overlook persistent rebellion. This passage sets the stage for the later O.T. books where Israel's repeated disloyalty eventually leads to the very exile and destruction Joshua predicted. The covenant promises, if broken, turn into curses. The "anger of the LORD" is actively warned against, implying that disobedience leads to divine consequences. Joshua 23:14-16 emphasizes that while God has perfectly fulfilled his promises, the people's future in the land is conditional on their



loyalty to the covenant, making their choice to "serve the Lord" paramount (Josh 24:15).

The people will "perish quickly" and be "destroyed from off the good land" that God gave them. Joshua emphasizes that this judgment is certain because God's faithfulness works both ways: He keeps His promises to bless and His warnings to punish with equal reliability.

- **Affliction and Torture:** The very nations the Israelites were supposed to conquer will instead become "snares and traps" to pull them into sin, "whips on your backs," and "scourges in your sides and thorns in your eyes" symbolizing constant irritation and pain.
- **Active Rebellion:** Sin is not just apathy but a conscious, dangerous choice to serve the gods of their ancestors (Babylon) or current land (Amorites). The Hebrew concept of sin here is depicted as **turning aside** "to the right or to the left" from God's standard (the Law).
 - Sin is fundamentally tied to idolatry and "clinging" to ungodly cultural influences and it inevitably led to religious syncretism—the "mixing of godliness with worldliness".
 - Joshua uses graphic metaphors for the consequences of sin: **snare, trap, whip, and thorn**. This illustrates that sin is not just a legal violation but a destructive force that eventually consumes the sinner.
 - A striking hamartiological point occurs in Joshua 24:19, where Joshua tells the people, "**You are not able to serve the Lord**." This underscores the depth of human depravity and the impossibility of perfect obedience without divine transformation because He is holy; this highlights that true service requires turning away from all false gods, fully committing to *Adonai*, not just adding Jehovah to them.
 - The same God who blessed them will be true to His word regarding the "evil things"—bringing destruction if they break the covenant.
- **Modern Parallel:** The overall theme is that the "good" God is also a "just" God who requires exclusive loyalty, not just in times of war, but in times of peace. the "Idolatry Trap" to current believers, warning against "ideological syncretism"—blending Christian faith with popular cultural ideologies that contradict biblical teaching.

When one makes a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior under the N.T. covenant (Rom. 10:9-10), it should not be a simple recitation of words as some type of "magical charm" to avoid eternal condemnation. A person is entering into a Covenant relationship with Jehovah just as the children of Israel did.

Putting that into the context of Communion as an ordinance, a commemoration, and remembrance that was foreshadowed in Passover by the Israelites. The Israelites were warned to prepare for Passover, and the Church (the Bride of Christ) receives the same warning under the N.T. Covenant - to prepare for Communion (union with Christ). What does that mean?

1 Cor. 11:27-34 gives Christ's bride a similar warning that was given to the Israelites:



- **1 Corinthians 11:27:** Paul states that whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an **unworthy manner** will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.
- **1 Corinthians 11:28:** Believers are commanded to **examine themselves** before participating. This "heart check" involves reflecting on one's relationship with Christ, and fellow believers, and confessing known sins.
- **1 Corinthians 11:29:** This verse directly links the act to consequences, stating that those who eat and drink without **discerning the body** (recognizing the significance of Christ's sacrifice or the unity of the church) eat and drink **judgment** or **damnation** upon themselves.
- **1 Corinthians 11:30-32:** Paul points out that because some did not take this seriously, many were "weak and sick," and some had even "fallen asleep" (died). However, he clarifies that this judgment is a form of **discipline** from the Lord so that believers "will not be finally condemned with the world."
- The next time you take Communion – **The Lord's Supper** – put yourself in the shoes, or sandals, of the Israelites as they stood in the Promised Land listening to the words of Joshua as he told them to remember the Covenant they made with Jehovah to serve Him only. This is the same Jehovah that we have entered into Covenant with that is established in the N.T. to a God that asks for our loyalty, purity, and separations from the world. The Greek word Paul uses for "Lord's" in the phrase "the Lord's supper" (*kuriakon deipnon*) in 1 Corinthians 11:20 is *kuriakos* (κυριακός), which means "belonging to the Lord," denoting exclusive ownership by Christ, which is consistent with the words written by Paul, breathed to him by the Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a "...and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price;..." The Lord's Supper was being misused and Paul's use of *kuriakos* refocuses the gathering on the unity of believers and the solemn remembrance of Jesus, not on physical satisfaction. Paul's argument is that the *kuriakon deipnon* is a community act of remembrance and the Corinthians' actions were not truly celebrating a meal that "belongs to the Lord," as it lacked love and respect for His body. Communion is a remembrance of the Covenant that has been made between a believer and Yahweh, which is giving Him your life for His glory. The Israelites failed at remembering God and received the curse of losing the Promised Land and a lot more. God has now returned that land to a remnant of Israel as he is preparing to rapture His bride (the Church) and is once again preparing Israel to finish the task they were originally in a Covenant relationship to deliver: being the final witness to the nations before Yahweh returns (the Second Advent) to establish His eternal kingdom and redeem His creation. Praise be to Yahweh!



Supplemental Material

General Chiastic Structure (macro & micro)

1. Entering the Promised Land (Chapters 1–5)

This opening section focuses on the transition of leadership from Moses to Joshua and the spiritual preparation for entering the land.

- **Commission of Joshua (1):** A triple chiasm encouraging Joshua to be strong and follow God's law to receive blessings. God charges Joshua to be "strong and courageous" and to obey the Law.
- **Rahab and the Spies (2):** Centers on the rooftop covenant, flanked by the spies entering and exiting Jericho, highlighting the Passover connection. Joshua sends spies to Jericho, where they are protected by Rahab, whose faith is highlighted as a model for salvation.
- **Crossing the Jordan (3–4):** A miraculous crossing occurs when God stops the Jordan River at flood stage, allowing Israel to cross on dry land, followed by the setting of twelve memorial stones as a memorial to commemorate this event.

These chapters form a micro chiasm:

- A:** Preparation to cross (3:1–6)
- B:** God promises safety/success (3:7–13)
- C:** Israel's faith and obedience (3:14–17)
- X:** The Memorial Stones set up (4:1–10a)
- C':** Israel's faith/action remembered (4:10b–13)
- B':** God's promises fulfilled (4:14–18)
- A':** Reflection on the crossing (4:19–24)

- **Consecration at Gilgal (5):** The new generation is circumcised, Passover is celebrated, the manna ceases as they begin eating the produce of the land, and Joshua meets the "commander of the Lord's army".

2. Conquering the Promised Land (Chapters 6–12)

These chapters describe the central, southern, and northern military campaigns that broke the power of the Canaanite kings.

- **Central Campaign (6–8):** Includes the miraculous fall of Jericho and the eventual defeat of Ai after addressing the sin of Achan.
 - **The Battle of Jericho (ch. 6):** Israel defeats the city through obedience to God's unorthodox instructions (marching). The city falls through divine intervention rather than military might, focusing on obedience to instructions (6:1–27).
 - The supernatural victory at Jericho is followed by failure and eventual victory at Ai (7-8), highlighting the necessity of covenant obedience.
 - Sin at Ai and Victory (ch. 7–8):** Israel fails at Ai due to Achan's sin (taking banned plunder). After dealing with this sin, Joshua wins a second battle at Ai.
 - Defeat and Victory at Ai:** Israel is initially defeated at Ai due to Achan's theft of devoted items, highlighting that sin hinders victory (7:1–26). After dealing with the sin, Ai is conquered (8:1–35).



- **Southern and Northern Campaigns (ch.9–12):** Joshua leads campaigns that secure the southern and northern parts of Canaan. Chapter 12 provides a list of 31 defeated kings.
- **Southern Campaign (Ch. 9–10):** Sparked by a deceptive treaty with the Gibeonites and followed by major victories where "the sun stood still". Joshua conducts successful southern (10:1–43).
 - **Gibeonite Deception (9):** The Gibeonites trick Israel into a treaty, allowing them to survive.
 - **Gibeonite Covenant (9):** The Gibeonites trick Joshua into a treaty, highlighting Israel's failure to consult God despite victory, yet incorporating non-Israelites.
 - **Gibeonite Treaty:** The Gibeonites deceive Israel into a treaty (9:1–27).
 - **Joshua Defends Gibeon (10):** Joshua defends Gibeon and defeats five Amorite kings, and the sun stands still.
- **Northern Campaign (11):** A coalition of northern kings is defeated, concluding with a summary list of 31 defeated kings. northern (11:1–15) campaigns, defeating local kings claiming the majority of the land, though not all inhabitants were immediately removed (11:16-12:24).
- **Summary of Victory (12):** A list of all kings defeated by Moses (east) and Joshua (west).

3. Dividing the Promised Land (Chapters 13–21)

This section shifts from narrative to legal and geographical descriptions, detailing the inheritance of each tribe.

- **Tribal Allotments (Ch. 13–19):** Boundaries are defined for the nine and a half tribes on the west of the Jordan and the two and a half on the east.
 - **Land East of the Jordan (13):** Moses had already allocated land to Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh.
 - **Land West of the Jordan (14–19):** Caleb receives Hebron, and the remaining tribes (Judah, Ephraim, the rest of Manasseh, Benjamin, etc.) receive their inheritances.
- **Cities of Refuge and Levitical Cities (Ch. 20–21):** Specific cities are designated as places of asylum for the accused and homes for the Levites, who received no single land inheritance.

4. Farewell and Covenant Renewal (Chapters 22–24)

The book concludes with Joshua's final charges to the nation as he nears death. It centers on Israel dwelling in the wilderness, framing the history from serving other gods in Egypt to serving Yahweh in the promised land.

- **Eastern Tribes' Altar (22):** Joshua chapter 22 details the honorable return of the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh to their homes east of the Jordan, following their military service in conquering Canaan. However, their building of a massive "witness" altar by the Jordan sparks a near-civil war, as other tribes fear it is a religious blasphemy to Yahweh. It is resolved through communication and a commitment to unity with the eastern tribes explaining they did not build the altar for sacrifices, but as a witness monument to future generations that they are part of the Nation of Israel worshipping the same God despite the physical barrier of the Jordan river.



- **Joshua's Farewell Speech (23):** In Joshua 23, an aged Joshua delivers a farewell address to Israel's leaders, emphasizing God's faithfulness in giving them the Promised Land. He charges them to remain loyal to the Law of Moses, warns against intermingling with remaining nations, and warns that disobedience will result in losing their land.
- **Covenant Renewal/Death and Burial (24):** Joshua warns the leaders and all Israel to remain faithful to the Law and avoid intermingling with the remaining Canaanite nations as it will lead to idolatry. Joshua renews the covenant at Shechem and recounts God's faithfulness from Abraham to the present. He challenges the people with the famous choice: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord".
The book ends with the death of Joshua, the burial of Joseph's bones, and the death of Eleazar.

This chapter also contains a micro chiastic:

- A:** Fathers beyond the River served other gods (24:1-2)
- B:** God gave Seir to Esau (24:3-4a)
- C:** God brought fathers out of Egypt (24:4B-7a)
- X:** Dwelling in the wilderness many days (24:7b)
- C':** God brought them into the land of Amorites (24:8-12)
- B':** God gave them the land they dwell in (24:13)
- A':** Choose to serve Yahweh (24:14-15)

