

Bible Study # 19
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Old Testament Series—Joshua

We are focusing in on the book of Joshua this evening. It has an important theme. We noticed as we went through the account of the Exodus **the parallels there are to the Christian life. There are continuing parallels in the book of Joshua.** It shows the irresistible power of God's strength to overcome the world, providing they maintained trust in God's strength and as long as the people were faithful to God and went forward. God told Joshua to be strong and of good courage, and as long as the people trusted and obeyed God, there was nothing or no one that could stand in their way. When they let things come in, there definitely were problems.

Joshua picks up the story in the conclusion of the wandering and the death of Moses and carries through for about 25 years. It covers the conquest and division of the land. Israel crossed the Jordan River right above the Dead Sea. They had been on the east side, which is now modern-day Jordan. The east side was the area the Reubenites and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh were to inherit.

Moses died on the east side of the Jordan. He looked across, but was not allowed to cross over. They remained there for 30 days; then it was time to move on. They crossed the river and observed the Passover in the Promised Land. It was in the midst of that that they conquered the city of Jericho, the major city of the Canaanites. We pick up the story here in the book of Joshua.

Joshua 1:1-5, "After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 'Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. Everyplace that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 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 leave you nor forsake you.'"

Joshua was Moses' assistant and had been ordained by Moses to take his place

(Deuteronomy 31:14). God had a job for Joshua to do. He was to pick up where Moses left off and they were to go forward. It was time for the Israelites to enter into God's rest, in a physical sense. There was a six-year period of subduing the land and on the seventh year they rested. That was the first sabbatical year.

Verses 6-9, "'Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'"

God stressed to Joshua to be strong and of good courage. He was to be a conqueror. The word "conquer" is also translated "overcome."

Revelation 2 and 3 have different messages to seven Churches, but one thing that all have in common is that each message ends up with the statement, "to him that overcomes." Joshua stands out as an example of a conqueror. Where did that sense of courage and strength come from? I want you to note just a little bit later where that courage came from.

Joshua 5:13-15, notice, "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, 'Are You for us or for our adversaries?' So He said, 'No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.' And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, 'What does my Lord say to His servant?' Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, 'Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.' And Joshua did so." This is right before the conquest started, before they conquered Jericho.

It is very apparent to Whom Joshua was talking. Was he talking to an angel? It is apparent that he was not. That can be shown in various ways. The simplest place to go to demonstrate that it was not an angel would be Daniel 8:16-18 and Revelation 22:8-9. When a vision was shown

and an angel appeared, they fell down before the angel, and you find the angel always told them to get up, 'I am a servant of God like you are.' This Being said, 'You better take your shoes off, you are standing on holy ground—you are standing in the very presence of God, the One we know as Jesus Christ.' Joshua was checking out the area and knew he was to conquer the land. Here was this Man standing in full battle array, and Joshua said, 'Are You for us or against us?' And the Being said, 'I am in charge. You thought you were the one in charge, and I wanted you to know who really was.' Needless to say, he was completely overwhelmed. 'What do You want me to do?' 'Take off your shoes for the place where you stand is holy' (v. 15).

What was the source of his courage? Joshua knew that God was fighting the battle. That is the key to our overcoming. We are not the one who is out leading the battle. Jesus Christ is the Captain of our salvation. All we have to do is "fall in" and follow. He will conquer.

John 16:33, "...be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." This was the strength and encouragement that Joshua had.

It was a pretty intimidating thing. Moses' shoes were pretty big things to fill; God had used Moses in a way that He had not with anyone else. He had used Moses to establish His covenant and lead Israel for 40 years. There was never a time when the adults who came into the land couldn't remember when Moses was not on the scene—the same as us with Mr. Herbert Armstrong. Now Joshua is in the role of taking over. God encourages him here in the beginning.

Joshua 1:12-15, "And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 'Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, "The Lord your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land. Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land that Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, until the Lord has given your brethren rest, as He has given you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the Lord your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise.'""

God said, 'You go forward and do what I said.' He gave special instructions to the half tribe of Manasseh and the tribes of Gad and Reuben.

What were their men supposed to do? This was the agreement they had made with Moses. They were to help the Israelites conquer the west side of Jordan. *The entrance into the land is called "entering into rest."* That is important to understand because it is a spiritual analogy that Paul draws back in Hebrews 3 and 4.

Hebrews 3:11, "So I swore in My wrath, "they shall not enter My rest.'""

Hebrews 4:1, 3, 5, "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it... For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: 'So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest'...and again in this place: 'They shall not enter My rest.'""

Joshua 2:1, "Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, 'Go, view the land, especially Jericho.' So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there." Joshua gives them instructions to spy out the land. They came to the house of Rahab the harlot. The term translated as "harlot" can also refer to "an innkeeper." This was a logical place to come. God had led them there.

Verses 2-3, "And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, 'Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.' So the king of Jericho sent 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 country.'" The king of Jericho already knew that they were there.

Verse 4, "Then the woman took the two men and hid them; and she said, 'Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.'" This was not true, but that was the least of her problems.

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

Verse 9, "and said to the men: 'I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are faint-hearted because of you.'"

What Rahab had learned was that she believed God.

Verses 10-11, "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of

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

What she heard was that He must be the true God. This is what she had learned from what she had heard, ‘I don’t know much about Him, but from what He has done for His people, He must be the true God.’ She had faith and had an attitude that God took note of. The others had heard the same thing, but they had not come to believe that this was the God of heaven above.

Verses 12-13, “Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father’s house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.” She asked that she and her family be extended mercy.

Verse 14, “So the men answered her, ‘Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the Lord has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you.’” ‘Our life is in your hands now, and if you don’t betray us and are faithful with us, we are certainly going to keep faith with you.’

Verse 15-16, “Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. And she said to them, ‘Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way.’” She led them down and gave them instructions as to how to get away.

Verse 23: “So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them.” The spies told Joshua what had occurred.

Joshua 3:5, “And Joshua said to the people, ‘Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.’” He told the people to get prepared.

Verse 7, “And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘This day I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.’” God purposed to work a miracle through Joshua similar to what He did with Moses. God wanted to show that He was still in charge and to demonstrate to the people that He was working through Joshua as He had with Moses.

Verses 14-17, “So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests

who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest), that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.” The people walked across dry sod.

Joshua 4:19-20, “Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal.” They set up 12 stones as a monument.

Verses 21-24, “Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: ‘When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, “What are these stones?” Then you shall let your children know, saying, “Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land; for the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”’”

By taking these stones out of the river, it stood as a reminder that the only place you could get these stones was from the river and a reminder that it had parted. This was where God parted the Jordan River, and the proof of that are these stones that came out of the river. Notice the results also.

Joshua 5:1-5, “So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who were on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted; and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel. At that time the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.’ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. For

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

Verses 8-9, “So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp till they were healed. Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.’ Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.” All those born in the wilderness were circumcised.

Verses 10-12, “So the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. Now the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.” They were eating of the produce of the land on the morrow after the Passover.

Notice here that they could not eat of the new harvest until the wave sheaf was offered. This is a key verse to understand one technical point: *the wave sheaf was always offered on Sunday, the day after the Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread* (Leviticus 23:11). In this case, the Sabbath did not occur during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The Passover day was a Sabbath; the First Day of Unleavened Bread was on a Sunday; and the Last Day of Unleavened Bread was on a Sabbath. Normally it wasn’t a problem, but here the days started on a Sunday and ended on a Sabbath.

How do you count for Pentecost? Do you start from the Sunday, the first day during the Days of Unleavened Bread or the Last Day of Unleavened Bread? This verse settles it. *They ate the new produce on the day after the Passover.* The Passover had to have been a Sabbath, and they could not eat the new produce until the wave sheaf. So it is apparent that the wave-sheaf Sunday, in this case, coincides with the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread. We begin the Pentecost count from the first Holy Day which would be the wave-sheaf Sunday. This is really the only place you can go to prove which way you count. *The manna ceased on the second day of Unleavened Bread.* They ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan.

Verses 13-15, “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him

with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, ‘Are You for us or for our adversaries?’ So He said, ‘No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant?’ Then the Commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so.” This was when the Captain of the Lord’s host introduced Himself.

Joshua 6:1-5, “Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua: ‘See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. Then it shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him.’”

During the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, the children of Israel were marching around Jericho. They were told to compass the city once every day for six days. On the seventh day, they were to go around it seven times. The priests were to blow the trumpet and the people were to shout. God wanted them to know that He was the One providing for them when He brought them through the land. When you get ready for an invasion, you don’t circumcise the whole army. Levi and Simeon had used this as a trick to wipe out a whole city (Genesis 34). Now they were told to walk around Jericho. God wanted them to know that He was giving them the land, and He wanted the Canaanites to know also.

Verse 20, “So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.”

Verse 25, “And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father’s household, and all that she had....” Finally on the seventh day, the trumpets blew, and the people shouted and all the walls came

tumbling down—except the section where Rahab was.

It is interesting. In Matthew 1:4-5, Rahab became the wife of Salmon, the son of Nasson and the mother of Boaz, Jesse's grandfather. Jesse's was the father of David. Rahab became the mother of the line from which sprang David and eventually Jesus Christ. Salmon (her husband) may have been one of the spies whose life she saved. She was the mother of Boaz who married Ruth (Ruth 4:18-22).

Hebrews 11:31, she is mentioned, "By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace." There was a complete repentance and turning around in her life. She turned towards God's way. Now notice what they were told when they came to Jericho.

Joshua 6:17, "Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent." Only Rahab shall live.

Verses 18-24, "And you, by all means keep yourselves from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord." So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, 'Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her.' And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord."

Joshua 7:1, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the

accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel." Here was a problem. They were to come in and wipe out the whole city and not take the wealth of that city. But there was one guy, Achan, who simply couldn't resist. He thought nobody was going to know, so he took some and thought, 'What difference does that make?'

Verses 2-3, "...So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, 'Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for the people of Ai are few.'" There was a small city, Ai; you might compare Jericho and Ai with Lafayette (medium size) and Broussard (smaller). They were thinking, 'Look what we did; we wiped out Jericho.'

Verses 4-5, "So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the man of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water." They went over to Ai. The men of Ai came out and smote Israel, and Israel ran. Nobody could understand what had happened.

Verses 10-11, "So the Lord said to Joshua: 'Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff.'" God told Joshua Israel had sinned.

Verses 12-13, "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. Get up sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.'""

Verses 16-20, "So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken; and he brought the family of Zarahites; and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. So

Joshua said to Achan; ‘My son, I beg you, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.’ And Achan answered Joshua and said, ‘Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done.’”

Brethren, do you think it is an accident that the Church quit growing in the 70s; even in some cases, it went backwards. You are reading the story right here of what happened. Until the problems were purged out, He wasn’t going to bless it and go forward. There was a serious problem contaminating God’s people. God said it has to be purged out. God says, ‘If you want My blessings you are going to have to be clean as a people.’

Verses 25-26, “And Joshua said, ‘Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.’ So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him, a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.” It was apparent that God would not allow sin in the midst. It was a very serious matter.

Joshua 8:26-29, “For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the Lord which He had commanded Joshua. So Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening....”

Verses 30-33, “Now Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: ‘an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded any iron tool.’ And they offered on it burnt offerings to the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings. And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the

servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.”

Verses 34-35, “And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.” That has to be the longest sermon on record. He read all the words of the Law. He read the whole thing. They all stood there. He told them, ‘You guys had better get the point. God has made it plain; the only way you will go forward and receive what God has for you is that you have to do so in obedience to God, wholehearted in your commitment, not adding or taking away from it.’ God is not going to bless something when there is sin and corruption tainting the whole thing.

Joshua 9:1-6, “And it came to pass when all the kings who were on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon—the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jevusite—heard of it, that they gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one accord. But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. 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.’”

They didn’t want to be wiped out. ‘We have come from a long, long way. We want to make a treaty with you.’

Verse 14, “Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord.” Joshua made a mistake here. He didn’t ask council of God.

Verses 15-16, “So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them. And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them.” They were their neighbors.

Verse 18, “But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the Lord God

of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the rulers." Everybody was upset.

Verse 19, "Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, 'We have sworn to them by the Lord God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them.'" They had made an agreement.

Verses 20-21, "'This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.' And the rulers said to them, 'Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them.'"

A decision was made as to what was going to happen. The decision that occurred was because the Gibeonites had practiced deception; they would become bondsmen. They were to become the servants and slaves to the Levites.

It is interesting that in recent years, there was a great bit of publicity that accompanied a migration of Falasha people from Ethiopia to Israel. They were commonly known as the Black Jews. Various questions were raised as to where they came from. They were the descendants of the Gibeonites. They were in Judah until the destruction of the temple. When Judah was taken into captivity, they fled into the area of Egypt. They settled in Ethiopia and have remained there until this day. The Levites had made such good Jews out of them that they practiced the religion of the Old Testament up until our day. Josephus and other historians bring that out.

Joshua 10:1-4, "Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it—as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king—and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai and all its men were mighty. Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, 'Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.'"

Take note here. In Genesis 14, Melchizedek (the One we know as Jesus Christ), the King of Salem was at the site of what is Jerusalem today. "Adoni-Zedek" means "lord of righteousness." He came along and established his headquarters in Jerusalem and usurped to himself the title and prerogative of God. They were upset that the Gibeonites had made peace with them. They were going to make an example out of Gibeon.

Verse 6, "And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp at Gilgal, saying, 'Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us.'" The Gibeonites came to Joshua and he told them not to worry.

Verses 7-11, "So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. And the Lord said to Joshua, 'Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you.' Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. So the Lord routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the children of Israel killed with the sword."

We find that Joshua led the Israelites up from Gilgal and fought against the Canaanites.

Verse 12, "Then Joshua spoke to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: 'Sun, stand still over Gibeon; and Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon.'" A tremendous miracle occurred; he told the sun to stand still.

Verses 13-14, "So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. And there has been no day like that; before it or after it, that the Lord heeded the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel."

Here was one of the greatest miracles that ever occurred. Just a matter of days earlier, Israel was smitten, they ran, and here they were facing the entire confederation of the Canaanites. The day was lengthened by 12 hours. There is no limit to what God can do for his people if they are faithful to Him, but if sin and corruption are tolerated in their midst, God will allow all kinds of problems. God would fight their battles when they were faithful to Him. When there were serious sins in the midst, God's blessing was removed. According to Jewish tradition, this day occurred on a Friday.

Verse 25, "Then Joshua said to them, 'Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good

courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.”

Verses 40-43, “So Joshua conquered all the land: the mountain country and the South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded. And Joshua conquered them from Kadesh Barnea as far as Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel. Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.” We saw the miracles that God worked with the sun and moon standing still.

Joshua 11:19, “There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All the others they took in battle.”

Verse 23, “So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war.” The land rested from war. They entered into rest.

Joshua 12:1-24 lists all the 31 cities the Israelites took.

Joshua 14:6-9, “Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: ‘You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. So Moses swore on that day, saying, ‘Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children’s forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.’”

Caleb came to Joshua and said, ‘I want the inheritance that I am to have.’

Verses 10-11, “‘And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.’”

‘I am as strong as I was when Moses sent me out.’ Caleb was 40 when he went to spy out the land (v. 7) one year after the Exodus. He was 39 at the time of the Exodus, and now 45 years from the time he spied on the land, he is 85, 46 years after the Exodus. He was 85 when the land received the rest.

Verses 12-15, “‘Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.’ And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba, for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war.”

Caleb was 85 when the land received rest. Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years, now six more years subduing the land. From the time they crossed the Jordan and had their rest was six years. The seventh year was to be a sabbatical year. What better year for them to enter into rest; so that is what happened. There are a lot of spiritual analogies drawn here.

Joshua 13:1-33 describes the boundaries. It enables us to draw a map of the Promised Land because it mentions everyone of the towns. We know where every tribe was.

Joshua 15 lists which cities were included.

Joshua 16 gives the various lots.

Joshua 18:1, “Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of meeting there, and the land was subdued before them.” God established a headquarters and placed the tabernacle here at Shiloh. This was in the territory of Ephraim.

Verses 2-3, “But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: ‘How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers has given you?’” So he took the area, divided up the rest of it and gave them detailed instruction down through chapters 18 and 19.

Joshua 20:9, “These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who sojourned among them, that whoever killed any person accidentally might flee there, and not die

by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.” They designated cities of refuge.

Joshua 21:41, “All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel were forty-eight cities with their common lands.” There were 48 cities with their suburbs. Israel was divided into 48 Levitical administrative districts. The United States started with 13 states, as Israel had 13 tribes—ironies that God built in that showed that.

Joshua 21:44-45, “The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.”

Joshua 22:4, “And now the Lord your God has given rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan.”

Hebrews 3:10-11, “Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, “they always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.” So I swore in My wrath, “they shall not enter My rest.””

Verses 18-19, “And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

Hebrews 4:1-3, “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: ‘So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,’...” If the rest Joshua gave them was all that there was, David would not have spoken of a rest in a future tense.

Psalms 95:11, “So I swore in My wrath, ‘they shall not enter My rest.’” David wrote about a future rest 400 years after Joshua led them into the Promised Land.

Isaiah 14:7, “The whole earth is at rest and quiet...”

Isaiah 11:10, “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.”

Joshua was not the ultimate rest, but a physical type of a spiritual rest. You can’t understand

Hebrews 3 and 4 if you don’t understand that. Paul showed that the rest God gave to Joshua’s time was not the ultimate rest. We look forward to the time of Tomorrow’s World when we enter into God’s rest.

Joshua 22:11-12, “Now the children of Israel heard someone say, ‘Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan, on the side occupied by the children of Israel.’ And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.” A rumor got out. They were ready to go to war.

Verses 13-16, “Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, and with him ten rulers...and they spoke to them saying, ‘Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord: “What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the Lord?”’”

They had jumped to the conclusion that they were building idols. A good example of what can happen when gossip occurs.

Verses 18-19, “...“And it shall be, if you rebel today against the Lord, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. Nevertheless, if the land of your possession is unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the Lord, where the Lord’s tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the Lord, nor rebel against us; by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the Lord our God.””

‘If you are not satisfied with the land, come over here, but don’t rebel against God.’

Verses 21-24, “Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the divisions of Israel: ‘The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, He knows and let Israel itself know—if it is in rebellion, or it in treachery against the Lord, do not save us this day. If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the Lord Himself require an account. But in fact we have done it for fear, for a reason, saying, “In time to come your descendants may speak to

our descendants saying ‘What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel?’” We have not built an altar in rebellion but for fear.

Verses 26-29, “Therefore we said, ‘Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifice, but that it may be a witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the Lord before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, ‘you have no part in the Lord.’” Therefore we said that it will be, when they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, ‘Here is the replica of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us.’ For be it from us that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn from following the Lord this day, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God which is before His tabernacle.”

They said, ‘This altar is not for sacrifice, but for a witness.’ It turned out that there was really nothing out of the way about it. There was almost a war because they had jumped to conclusions. Thankfully, somebody went and asked, ‘why did you do that?’ It was a witness, ‘that we are all part of the same nation. We know better than to build an altar to worship on.’

Ever notice how people can go off “half-cocked.” They jump to conclusions. When you start examining motives as to why they did it, then you are stepping on territories that you know nothing about. You don’t know why they did it. You can’t read their heart. They immediately assume they know, instead of going and saying, ‘I saw you building this thing, why are you building it?’ They thought they knew why they were building it. There is a very important lesson.

Joshua 23:1-2, “Now it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua was old, advanced in age. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them: ‘I am old, advanced in age.’” Almost 22 years had gone by.

Verse 3, “‘You have seen all that the Lord your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the Lord your God is He who has fought for you.’” You see what God has done and you have seen all of these things.

Verses 6-8, “‘Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause anyone to swear by them; you shall not serve them nor bow down to them, but you shall hold fast to the Lord your God, as you have done to this day.’” Be very courageous.

Joshua 24:1-2, “Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods.’” Joshua gathered them all together and began to speak to them. He recounts the history, going all the way back to Abraham, and coming to Jericho.

Verses 14-15, “‘Now therefore, *fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth*, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’”

Joshua says, ‘I know some of you are worshipping idols. It is time to make a choice. Moses is dead and I am getting ready to die. You need to make a choice of what is going to happen to you. Are you going to go back into idolatry or serve God? I know what I am going to do; I am going to serve God in sincerity and in truth.’

We can prove that Joshua wrote Scripture.

Verse 26, “Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord.” He wrote the book of Joshua.

Verse 27, “And Joshua said to all the people, ‘Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God.’”

It is interesting because this was evidently *Jacob’s pillar stone*. It was the symbol of the Covenant that God had made with Jacob and taken into the wilderness through the 40 years. It

was a witness when God had spoken 40 years before. They had taken it with them through the wilderness. It was kept near the tabernacle and in that sense a witness, a reminder. It had been there during all the times God has spoken to them. Jacob's pillar stone—the kings of Israel were crowned on it. Jeremiah took it from Jerusalem to Ireland, and it is still the stone on which the kings of the House of David are crowned.

Verses 28-29, "So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance. Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being one hundred and ten years old."

Verse 31, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the Lord which He had done for Israel." Basically, they obeyed God during the time of Joshua and the contemporaries of Joshua, the elders that had been there. They didn't last very long. We are going to note that when we get into the book of Judges in the next Bible study.

There is an important lesson to learn, and we see it over and over. The people as a whole, when the leadership is strong, tend to reflect the leader and fall into line; when it is not strong, they go the path of least resistance. That is the tendency of human nature. A second generation comes along, takes things for granted, and begins to let it slip. I think we do well to consider the warnings mentioned in Joshua in the context of the end of this age and the Laodicean era. There is a certain parallel we need to meditate on and consider. There is the tendency to develop familiarity and as new generations come along, to not take it too seriously. After Joshua's death and the death of that group of elders, things began to slide. I think we can find parallels in what was happening in ancient Israel that can make the book of Joshua come alive.