



WHO WILL YOU
SERVE?

— STUDY WEEK 2024 —

STUDY NOTEBOOK 2024

Hello Study Weeker!

THE BEST TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE IS INTO YOUR OWN LIFE

We see Joshua uphold this principle **in his life**, every day. Joshua both **meditates** on God's word and **puts it into action**. Throughout the book, we repeatedly read that Joshua "rose early", eager to seek the Lord's instruction and **lead** the people in **obedience** every morning; diligently following the **command given to him by God**:

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Josh 1:8 ESV

Just as "The LORD is not slack concerning his promise" (2 Pet 3:9 NKJV) neither was Joshua. Using God's Word as a lamp to guide his paths, Joshua was **diligent** in his service to God, shepherding his people with passion and humility, whilst also manifesting the character of His God. All of this stemmed from his **desire** to **internalise God's Word** and practice it within himself, his family and his people. Just like Joshua, we too have been called to consider the **Word of Life** which is able to instruct us in **righteousness** and make us wise unto salvation through faith. Therefore, let the Bible have power in your life, to guide our decisions and be diligent so that we may prosper and **inherit the promise of eternal life**. Then we can say:

"[our] delight is in the law of the LORD and on His law do we meditate day and night"

Psa 1:2 ESV

Welcome!



Joshua's story is perhaps one of the most **action packed** and inspiring books in God's Word. Filled with snapshots of incredible miracles, challenging decisions and decisive battles; this story is designed to immerse you in **practical, spiritual lessons** captured in memorable stories that teach us the value of choosing to rely on God and obey His word. As you navigate through Joshua's story, we will see him **grow** from the young assistant of Moses, into a courageous spy and finally into a valiant leader with the **unwavering belief** that his God will deliver his people into the Promised Land. During his lifetime, Joshua faces a wide array of situations and characters, each one honing his faith and ultimately **strengthening his resolve to proclaim** at the conclusion of his life:

*"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
Josh 24:15*

For us, Joshua's story is a faithful reminder that no matter the challenges we encounter, if we are *"strong and of good courage"* (Josh 1:9), **God can and will resolve** our present fears and trials if we trust in Him. You will find that leadership grows through: humility, service, reliance on God and proactive, faithful decisions that have wide-reaching impacts, all of which are seen in the life of Joshua. Regardless of our past, God wants us to make the **decision** to serve Him today. For **He is faithful** who has **promised** us an inheritance far greater than just the Land of Israel!

There is more to Joshua than just meets the eye! It's a metaphor of our **own battle** against the seemingly insurmountable challenge of human nature and sin. To do so, we too must **meditate on God's Word** and look to our greater Joshua - Jesus Christ, who leads us to deliverance. Young person, we will end our story in **Joshua 24**, with an old man, on his deathbed, reminding his people of the victories God had shown them. There, he insists they **make a choice** and it's the same choice that we as young people, 3500 years later, face today... *Who will you serve?*

Romans 6 tells us there is a choice and we make an answer even in indecision. We are either a servant of sin and death, or a **servant of righteousness** and **everlasting life**. We want you to make the right decision this week!

The book and character of Joshua is one that is so relevant to you today, study weeker. It's a story that teaches us:

- How to **stand up for God**, even when it's the unpopular opinion
- No matter your past mistakes, **God will work with you**
- Why **OBEDIENCE** is a necessary part of our relationship with Yahweh
- How our battle with sin with **must be fought** without compromise
- The **importance** of making the right choice - **salvation!**

These notes are designed to encourage you to **study this amazing story**, pick out lessons and contribute to discussions at Study Week that will **change your life!** So take the time now to get to know Joshua and appreciate his story, because it will **build up to a critical point** on your Study Week journey. That critical point is not really **STUDY WEEK 2024**, but as the camp draws to a conclusion, it's the path you choose:

WHO WILL YOU SERVE?

Bible Study Tips

for some helpful guidance



ALLOCATE TIME: Create a set time during the week to dedicate yourself to this workbook, otherwise **time WILL slip away**. By building a habit you will be more productive and get more out of each session.



HAVE A PLACE: Use a specific place to experience solitude with your God and **build on your spiritual relationship**. Take away any distractions so you can focus on God's Word.



PRAY: Always begin Bible study with a prayer. This prepares your heart and mind to **allow God's word to impact your life**. Plus, who better to ask for guidance as we study it than the Author Himself?



READ INTENTIONALLY AND CAREFULLY: The more you read, notice details and **immerse yourself into the story of Joshua**, the more you will begin to understand its message. The more personal you make this, the more you will be able to **apply these lessons**.



MARK UP YOUR BIBLE: Make your Bible personal to you so it's meaningful to your spiritual journey as you embrace the lessons from Joshua's story. **Make it come alive** with quotes, references and colours!



GET A STUDY BUDDY: Find a friend that you can complete the notebook with. Just like a gym buddy, having a **study partner** helps you to **strengthen each other** and be accountable to. It will also help you see God's Word from different perspectives and reinforce these lessons.

Remember: read the chapter before you answer the questions

Notebook Key

to really help you get into your study



INVESTIGATE: Dig Deeper into God's word.

"I directed my mind to know and to investigate, and to seek wisdom and an explanation, and to know the evil of foolishness and the foolishness of insanity."
Ecc 7:25 (NASV)



ACTIVITY: Mark it in your bible, colour it, draw it, plot it on a map and discuss God's word with a friend.

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads... Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" Deut 11:18, 20 (NIV)



PIERCING PONDERINGS: Challenge yourself to really know God's word so it can penetrate your mind and heart.

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb 4:12 (NKJV)



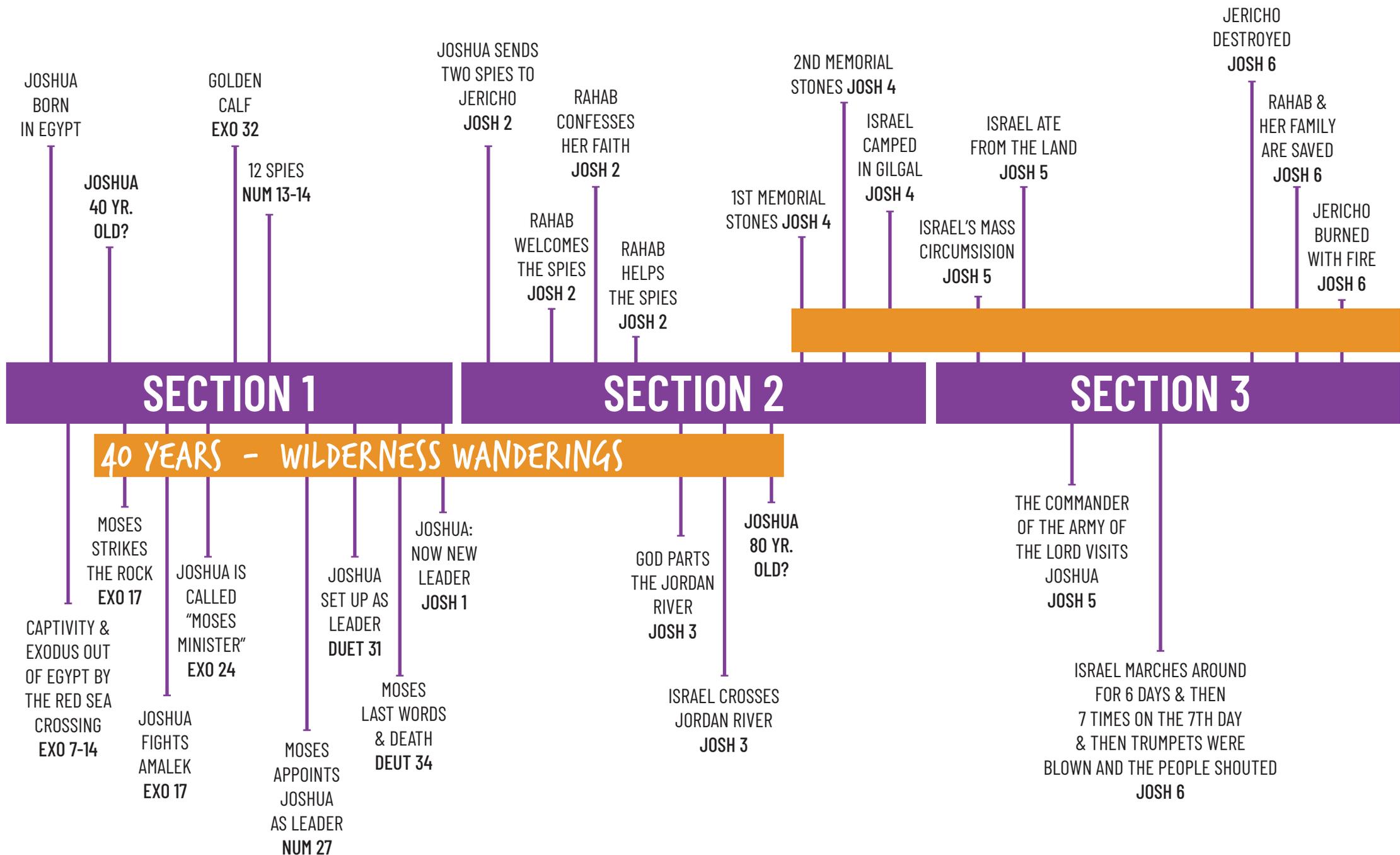
REFLECT: Introspect to see if God's word is active in your life and central in your decisions.

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified."
2 Cor 13:5 (NKJV)



SNEAKY SELAH: Pause and meditate on God's word.

"I will meditate on Your precepts, And contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word." Psa 119:15-16 (NKJV)



JOSHUA'S TIMELINE

30 YEARS - IN THE PROMISED LAND

SECTION 4

DEFEAT
AT AI
JOSH 7

ISRAEL
COMMITTED
A TRESPASS
JOSH 7

SIN OF
ACHAN
JOSH 7

ACHAN
AND HIS
FAMILY
ARE
STONED
JOSH 7

ACHAN, HIS FAMILY
AND ALL OF HIS
POSSESSIONS
ARE BURNED
JOSH 7

COVENANT
RENEWED
JOSH 8

ISRAEL
DESTROYS
AI IN
BATTLE
JOSH 8

KING OF
AI HUNG
ON A
TREE
JOSH 8

ISRAEL
BURNS AI
MAKING IT
DESOLATE
JOSH 8

SECTION 5

TREATY WITH
THE GIBONITES
JOSH 9

DECEPTION
OF THE
GIBONITES
JOSH 9

JOSHUA CURSES
THE GIBONITES
AND MAKES THEM
SLAVES UNTO ISRAEL
JOSH 9

THE SUN
AND THE
MOON
STAND
STILL
JOSH 10

"SOUTHERN
CONQUEST"
JOSH 10

5 AMORITE
KINGS HUNG
ON A TREE
JOSH 10

"NORTHERN
CONQUEST"
JOSH 11

THE PROMISED LAND
IS DIVIDED AMONG
ISRAEL ACCORDING
TO TRIBES
JOSH 13-22

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL
ADDRESS TO THE
ELDERS AND LEADERS
JOSH 23

SECTION 6

JOSHUA'S FINAL
WORDS TO
ALL ISRAEL
JOSH 24

ISRAEL RENEW
A COVENANT
JOSH 24

ELEAZAR DIES
AND IS BURIED
JOSH 24

JOSHUA
DIES AND
IS BURIED
AT 110
YEARS OLD
JOSH 24

JOSHUA'S JOURNEY



Servant in Training

**EXODUS 17, 32-33 & NUMBERS 13 - 14, 27
& DEUTERONOMY 31, 34 & JOSHUA 1**

In Joshua 1, the author jumps right into the story without much introduction to who Joshua is or his background, making it confusing. By chapter 1, Joshua is already a prominent and experienced spiritual leader known by all of Israel! To discover how this came about, come with us back to Exodus and rewind the clocks 40 years to see how Joshua grew into the role of Moses' successor.



JOSHUA'S STORY PART 1

Warrior

EXODUS 17

Open to **Exo 17:8-16**. This is Joshua's very first mention in the Bible. What is the context to **Exo 17**? What has just happened? What would Joshua have just witnessed (think big picture)?

Where was Joshua born? Where must he have grown up?



 **ACTIVITY:** Using Google (or a Bible Atlas if you're fancy), mark the listed locations onto the map on pg. 8 as we trace where Israel has been and where they're heading to now:

- Egypt
- Elim (**Exo 15:27**)
- Rephidim (**Exo 17:1**)
- Mt Sinai (**Exo 19:1**)
- Canaan
- Kadesh (**Num 13:26**)

3 months have passed between **Exo 16** and **Exo 19:1**. Within this short space of time, Joshua has caught the attention of Moses as a capable leader in battle. Consider what you may already know about Joshua from Sunday School. Why do you think he received this attention from Moses? (don't worry if you don't know, you'll get a pretty good idea shortly).

Back in **Exo 17:9**, Moses entrusts Joshua to choose warriors to take into battle. We have no record of Joshua being an experienced warrior here, yet he does not hesitate at this calling. Practically, what difficulties would Joshua have encountered when fulfilling Moses' request?

 **REFLECT:** Just by his very first mention in the record, we see Joshua as an obedient 'go-getter'. Would you be the kind of person to quickly accept difficult tasks that require self-sacrifice in your ecclesia?

Reading through the account of **Exo 17**, how was the battle with Amalek won?



PIERCING PONDERING: God could have swiftly given Amalek into Joshua’s hands. Instead, He intentionally prolonged the process, seemingly to prompt Joshua to reflect on the situation. The question arises: why did God choose this way?

This battle is meant to be an allegory for mankind’s battle with sin, which points forward to our saviour Christ. Amalek is a symbol of sin, an enemy of Israel (and us) throughout generations (**Exo 17:16**). Joshua (Hebrew for Jesus), leads the people as their captain of salvation (cp. **Heb 2:10**), yet it was the work done by a man on the top of a hill, arms outstretched and the power of God in hand (symbolised in the rod) that brought about victory. However, Moses wasn’t able to keep his arms outstretched alone - he required Aaron and Hur by his side. Together they represented the Law (Moses), the Priesthood (Aaron) and the Prince (Hur) - all also fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Ultimately it was the power of God that gave Israel their first victory in battle. This is why Moses names the place ‘Yahweh-nissi’ - Yahweh my Banner. (Read more about God’s Banner/ensign in **Isa 11:10-12**). This entire allegory would require some intense contemplation by Joshua to uncover why God worked in this way. If nothing else, it ultimately proved to Joshua that our “*weapons of warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty through God*” (**2 Cor 10:4**).

Referring to **Num 13:16**, we discover Joshua has been renamed. What is Joshua’s old name and who renamed him?



INVESTIGATE: What is the significance of this name change? Look up the definitions of these names in Strong’s/e-Sword:

Jehoshua/Joshua: _____ Oshea: _____

In **Exo 17:14** (KJV), God clearly thinks that this story is crucial for Joshua’s development and commands Moses to recite it in his ears. What lessons do you think God is trying to show Joshua through this story (in relation to his name change)?

Minister

EXODUS 32, 33

For context turn to **Exo 24:13**. What role did Joshua have?

In **Exo 32:15-18**, we see Joshua was in a privileged position being halfway up Mount Sinai waiting for Moses to return with God’s law. During this time what was Israel doing that Joshua didn’t partake in?

Look at **Exo 33:11**. Joshua would not depart from the tabernacle (*or Tent of Meeting in the ESV*). This was a place where the people would seek God in the absence of the official Tabernacle (**v7**). What do you think this might indicate about Joshua’s attitude here?



REFLECT: Do you have the same attitude in your spiritual life? What might be holding you back? What’s one (realistic) way you could be more involved in your ecclesia or youth group?

Interestingly in **Exo 33:11** Joshua is described as a young man. How old? Many commentators estimate him to be about 30-40 years of age here.

Think of some other examples in the Bible where mentorship is displayed. List three!



REFLECT: Have you spent your youth under mentorship? This could be an older brother or sister, a leader of your youth group, even your parents! Write down the name of someone who is or could be a mentor to you to help you grow in your spiritual life? Plan how you can build this relationship with them:



PIERCING PONDERING: Another example of his mentorship is in **Num 11: 24-30**, a unique (almost strange) story about how God shares His spirit of prophecy with the 70 elders and two random Israelites, Eldad and Medad. When Joshua sees this, what is his reaction? What does this add to your understanding of his character?

Joshua's loyalty is misplaced, shown to Moses instead of God, as it was God who had shared His spirit with the camp of Israel. In **Acts 2:17-18**, we see that God ultimately desires for all people to be filled with His spirit. Here, God is wanting ALL Israel to be involved in His plan as a kingdom of priests and holy nation (**Exo 19:6**). Joshua misses that point out of reverence for Moses, however in **v29** Moses reminds him of the bigger picture.

Clearly Moses' and Joshua's relationship was real and deep as Moses took Joshua under his wing for 40 years and mentored him in everything he knew about leading Israel! Keep an eye out for echoes between their leadership styles.

Spy

NUMBERS 13,14

In **Num 13:1-16**, who is being chosen here and for what role? (Which names do you recognise?)

This is quite the task for all twelve men here. Continue reading **v17-20**. What would this task have required from Joshua?

Read **Num 13: 25-33** and summarise in 4 dot points what the story.

Come to **Num 14:1**. Why were the people upset and what was their resolution to this?

Through reading **Num 14**, we see Israel faced with a decision to return to slavery in Egypt, or go forward in faith to the land of inheritance. Similarly we struggle with this choice. Refer to **Gal 4:9**, what does Paul say we are in bondage to?

There is a contrast in response between Moses and Aaron (the older current leaders) and Joshua and Caleb (the younger future leaders) who confront Israel. Consider **1 Tim 4:12-16** in light of **v5**. What is the lesson?

Joshua and Caleb were sure of God's victory here. Why were they so sure of it? Look up **Exo 23:22-33**.

How do the people react to Joshua and Caleb's faithful stance in **v10**?

Compare **v10** to **1 Pet 3:14-18**. What mindset are we instructed to have in a world which is quickly setting itself against God's principles?



ACTIVITY: Unlike Israel, Joshua and Caleb are operating by another means. Mark **2 Cor 5:7** in your margin corresponding to **v7-9**.

Their confidence in God's deliverance should echo our conviction that God will too deliver us into His Kingdom! Check out **Luke 12:32**, what does Jesus say to assure us about God's attitude towards us?



REFLECT: Despite the positive and faithful attitude of Joshua and Caleb, it was the negative, faithless attitude of the other spies that prevailed. It's a stark lesson for us to recognise that unspiritual cynicism and negativity can spread like wildfire. So be careful in the opinions you express.

Consider, when you feel life presents you with battles that are unable to be conquered, is your first instinct to trust God?

Let's take a look at Caleb. What kind of an influence was Caleb on Joshua? See **Num 14:24** and **Josh 14:6-15**. What kind of character was Caleb? (even 45 years later).



REFLECT: This begs the question: what kind of influence do you have on your friends? Is it a positive, spiritual one? This chapter clearly shows that these influences can make all the difference in the decisions our peers make.

In contrast to faithless Israel, how does God reward Caleb and Joshua's faithful decision in **v30**?

Despite Joshua and Caleb's faithfulness, they still had to bear the consequences of Israel's faithlessness for 38 years (**v33-34**). What might Joshua and Caleb have been thinking during this time?



SNEAKY SELAH: The fate of faithless Israel is found in **Num 14:29**. All those 20 years and upward are sentenced to wander in the wilderness for 38 years until their death. We might think that 20 years of age is still young, but clearly God considers this old enough to make a crucial decision. **Rom 6:16-17** tells us that even through indecision, we are making a decision. We either serve sin or serve righteousness. There is no third option. Make your decision today and choose life!

There is a juxtaposition between **v36-37** and **v38**. What is it?

Leader

NUMBERS 27 & DEUTERONOMY 31, 34

Let's begin in **Num 27: 15-23**. Moses came to God with a concern for the future of Israel in v15 - 17. What was it?

What was the context behind Moses' thinking here? What had happened in **Num 27:1-11** and **Num 27:12-14**?

Moses was concerned here, and uses a very specific phrase in **Num 27:16** "*the God of the spirits of all flesh*". Look at **Num 16:22**, what happened in this story, and why is this relevant to Moses' concern?

In **Num 27:17**, Moses likens a good leader to a shepherd. In the verses below, what makes a shepherd such a good leadership figure?

1 Sam 17:34-35 _____

Psa 23: 1-2 _____

Exo 34:11-16 _____

John 10:4, 7-14 _____

Remember, the children of Israel had no idea who the next appointed successor would be; however they may have seen some other potential leaders. Look at the following verses. Who else could have been in the running to be Moses' successor?

1. **Num 14:24** _____

2. **Num 25: 7-11, Num 31:6** _____

3. **Num 20:28, Deut 10:6** _____

Why do you think these three weren't chosen?

In **Num 27:18**, what does it mean that Joshua is "*a man in whom is the spirit*"? (Hint: Take a look at **Deut 34:9**)

History has shown that Israel continuously rebelled against the leadership of Moses. What does Moses do to ensure Israel knows that Joshua is their next leader?

Think about some of the differences between the reactions of Moses and Joshua when they are called to leadership. (Hint: see **Ex 3:11, 13, 4:10-15**)

Come to Deuteronomy and read **chapter 3**. In this account, Moses repeats a number of stories from Israel's recent history to encourage the people. Look specifically at **Deut 3:1-6**. What happened here?

Why might this be encouraging for Joshua to consider? Look to **Deut 3:21-22**. What does God want Joshua to understand?



ACTIVITY: Look at **Deut 31:1-8**, there are five repeated phrases. Can you identify and colour them in your bible?

" _____ " **v3, v3, v4,v5, v6, v8, v8**

" _____ " **v6, v8**

" _____ " **v6, v8**

" _____ " **v3, v8**

" _____ " **v6, v7 v23**

Focus on the last repeated phrase, why do you think Moses emphasises to Joshua to "*be strong and of good courage*" in **Deut 31**?

Moses also worries about another challenge Joshua might face in the future. What warning does God give in **Deut 31:16-21**?

Another great example of a leadership handover can be found in **2 Tim 2:1-5**. In your own words, what is Paul telling Timothy?

Turn to **Deut 34** and read the chapter through first



SNEAKY SELAH: It appears that this part of Deuteronomy was written by a different author. Three reasons for this are:

1. It couldn't be Moses, as it records his death in **v5**
2. The author makes the statement in **v6** that no one knows where Moses was buried "*to this day*", indicating a later time.
3. **v10** records that there hasn't been a prophet like Moses since in Israel. Therefore there had to be some considerable time for other prophets to arise.

It is therefore theorised this book was written by Ezra the scribe as a postscript and we think this makes the most sense. There are other suggestions too; however, God's the ultimate author.

In **v10**, the author is alluding to a prophecy made by Moses. Come to **Deut 18:15-19**. What is the prophecy?



SNEAKY SELAH: If it is Ezra writing this, it means that the Prophet (the Messiah) still hasn't come yet. If so, then it is clearly affirming that Joshua didn't fit this description either and that they were still waiting in Ezra's day for the coming Prophet.

Why do you think **v9** is inserted here? What is the author trying to demonstrate about Joshua?



INVESTIGATE: That said, v9 makes clear allusions to someone else. Underline the phrase “full of the spirit of wisdom” and come to the marginal reference, Isa 11:1-2. Who is Isa 11:1-2 meant to be about? What 7 characteristics do they have?

From v9 (and what you already know about Joshua) what kind of relationship do you think he has with his God?



PIERCING PONDERINGS: In this passage there is a shadow of what was to come. As Moses’ death was necessary to pave the way for Joshua to bring the children of Israel into the land of promise, likewise it was necessary for the Law (which Moses was symbolic of), to make way for the new Joshua, that is Jesus Christ to lead many sons to glory! (You can explore this foreshadowing more in Rom 7, Heb 9:15)

Notes

Character Profile

JOSHUA

And there you have it! The building blocks for the man we will come to know so well at Study Week 2024. Although Joshua had huge boots to fill, he rises to the task of succeeding Moses. As you go through the book hopefully you are able to spot the lessons that resonated most with Joshua from his years in mentorship.

In the table below, fill out the character profile to summarise everything we have just learnt about Joshua.

Names and Meanings:	
Place of Birth:	
Approximate Age:	
Family:	
Current Residence:	
Close Friends:	
Personality Type and Characteristics:	
Likely Favourite Bible Verse:	
Experience:	
Mentor:	
Previous Roles:	
Mission/Goal/Hopes:	

Commander

JOSHUA 1

How does **Josh 1:1** begin? Why do you think it starts this way?

The words 'servant' and 'minister' occur 3 times in **v1-2** alone. Turn to **Mark 10:45**. Who is saying this and what is the message here?



ACTIVITY: Phil 2:3-8, Luke 22:24-27 and Matt 20:26-28 are some great passages that illustrate the mind God wants us to have. Mark this in your margin. List some ways you can practise having a humble and servant-like attitude?



INVESTIGATE: Joshua is referred to by his full name/title, "Joshua the son of Nun" in so many important parts of his life. The name "Nun" means Perpetuity or Continuing. What then is the meaning of Joshua's full title, and why is this significant? (Hint: look up the strong's number for each part of his title)



ACTIVITY: There are a few phrases repeated in this chapter, it is worth colouring them in:

- "Moses my/the servant" (5 occurrences)
- "Land that have I given unto you" (5 occurrences)
- "Be strong and of good courage" (4 occurrences)



PIERCING PONDERINGS: The phrase "hath given" stems from the Hebrew word 'nâthan' and doesn't just appear here in Chapter 1! In total there are 48 occurrences across the book, illustrating that it was by God's strength, not Israel's, that they were inheriting the land. It's a very humbling mindset to recognise EVERYTHING is given to us by our God and instils a sense of wonder, reliance and gratefulness to our lives.

Look at **v3** in context with **v2** and **v4**. There is an echo here from something Israel has heard before, to whom was this said? (Check your margin)

Why is this promised land so important in Israel's history and to God? Take a look at the following passages:

Gen 12:1-3, 7 _____

Gen 13:14-17 _____

Ex 3:8-17 _____

Ex 23:20-33 _____

In conjunction to this, why does God say this land is so important in **Josh 1:6**?

Coming back to the promises, why is the geography of **v4** important? See **Gen 15:18**.



PIERCING PONDERINGS: Don't you think it's strange that the people in the land are called the 'Hittites' rather than the usual Canaanites. The reason for this? Well the Strong's root word for 'Hittite' is the Hebrew word 'cheth' meaning 'Terror'. Despite being this land of terror, inhabited by walled cities and giants, God's message to Joshua is to be strong and have courage.

What's the underlying message in **v5-7**. Do you think this gives us any indication as to how Joshua was feeling about the task ahead?



REFLECT: Life is filled with trials and seemingly insurmountable tasks. **Josh 1** is one of those chapters that we can read and be encouraged by when we feel overwhelmed. God was encouraging Joshua to develop a sense of internal fortitude to lead the people and face the natural fears of the task ahead. What are some fears that you experience in your life?

In **Rev 21:8** what is the first characteristic of those who will not inherit the Kingdom. Why do you think that is?

What is your go-to piece of scripture that gives you the confidence that God is by your side? Write it below (If you can't think of one, **Rom 8:31-39** is a pretty good place to start).



REFLECT: What situations in your life may require you to be strong and of good courage, spiritually?



PIERCING PONDERINGS: The phrase in **v5**: "*I will not fail thee nor forsake thee*", is referenced in **Heb 13:5**. Given the context, it's an odd place to quote this. We think the reason it is here is to remind us that God has promised to be with us always. Not just scrutinising us when we do evil, but he is also just as present when we do good. **V1-5** lists out a number of behaviours we should be practising: being hospitable, pure and content. Therefore if we want God to continue to be our help, we must live a life as outlined in these verses of **Heb 13**. And if we do, we can also say from **v6**, "*The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man will do to me.*"

God is preparing Joshua to face a literal battlefield in **v6**. He ensures Joshua knows that He is with him, yet what condition does He command Joshua to follow in preparing for this task?

God quotes **Deut 5:32-33** here in **v7**, directing Joshua's mind back to the Law he is meant to consider. Look up this reference. What was God's ultimate desire with his people? (read surrounding verses for context).



REFLECT: We are also facing a personal battlefield. What does **Rom 7:18-25 (NIV)** say this battle is? What then do we strive to serve? What is the solution?



INVESTIGATE: In **Josh 1:8**, the command is to meditate on God's law. What does the word "meditate" mean in Hebrew and how might we apply this today when we consider God's Word?

There is a comparison in **Psa 1** between two types of people. What is it and what is the difference between the two characters?



PIERCING PONDERING: Without God's Word, it is impossible for God to be with us, or for us to be strong and have courage, as the Bible is his means of communicating to us. Not only is it important for us but it's a crucial ingredient to being a good leader. **Deut 17:18** commands that every King in Israel needed to have copied every word from the Law of Moses during his reign. And here Joshua, as a leader, was asked to do the same. In our modern world; where the number of distractions from our Bibles is probably at the greatest of all time, we must have God's word embedded in us. As a result we can be strong and courageous and fight the good fight of faith like Joshua.

Straight after this encouragement, Joshua doesn't hesitate but takes action in **v10**. What is Joshua's first command? These verses give us insight into the overall purpose of Joshua's leadership. What is it?

Why does Joshua tell the people to prepare food? (**Josh 5:12**)

Reading **v12-18**, we find that two and a half tribes are singled out by Joshua. What is the backstory behind this confrontation? Read **Num 32:16-32**, **Deut 3:12-20** and summarise.

These tribes now had an inheritance and personal rest (see **v12-13**). However their rest was not complete until all Israel experienced this too. How do you think this lesson is related to Paul's words in **1 Cor 12:12-27**?



ACTIVITY: On the map on pg. 8, colour in the part that Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh inherited. (This is also a handy map to see the dispersion of the peoples of Canaan.)

What is their response in **v16-18**. Is there anything odd or resounding in what words they choose to say?

Section 1 is complete, congratulations! Joshua's background and first chapter have given us a lot to think about. List below three lessons that have struck you most in this section.



God Given Confidence

JOSHUA 2 - 4

Tasked with the enormous responsibility of leading God's people, It's only natural that Joshua may have felt overwhelmed. In Section 2, God demonstrates that He is truly with him by providing two incredible wonders! In response, Joshua is seen as a man of implicit action, acting without hesitation or anxiety, confident in his God. We will see a strong faith develop further, as God gives him a great deal more to believe in. A true example of faith with works!



Faith through Hearing

JOSHUA 2

First read **Josh 2:1**. Don't you think it's odd that Joshua sends out two spies? Where has he got this idea from, and why two?

Who were the spies? Refer to **Josh 6:23** for a small extra detail.

Why do you think that Joshua is spying out the land in the first place?

We know from **Josh 1:2 & 11** that the people had to cross the Jordan river to begin taking the land. When in the sequence of events do you think the spies were sent out? (It's worth comparing **Josh 1:11**, **Josh 2:1, 16** and **Josh 3:1-2** before writing your answer).

Compare **Josh 2:1** to **Josh 6:25** and **Jam 2:25**. These verses use a different word when referring to "spies". What is this word and why do you think the writers use this word instead?



ACTIVITY: Take a look and Bible mark the similarities between this account of the spies and the angels who save Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Joshua 2: Two Spies (Messengers)	Genesis 19: Two Angels (Messengers)
2 spies (Josh 2:1)	2 angels (Gen 19:1)
Came <u>before</u> destruction of Jericho (Josh 2:1)	Came <u>before</u> destruction of Sodom (Gen 19:1)
2 spies entered the house (Josh 2:1)	2 angels entered the house (Gen 19:2-3)
Rahab & her family were saved (Josh 6:23)	Lot & his family were saved (Gen 19:15-16)
King of Jericho demanded Rahab to 'Bring out the men' (Josh 2:3)	Men of the city demanded Lot to 'Bring out the men' (Gen 19:5)
City is destroyed (Josh 6:20)	City is destroyed (Gen 19:25-29)
Spies went in and brought them out (Josh 6:20)	Angels went in and brought them out (Gen 19:15-16)

What do we know so far about the city of Jericho? Where is it located? (Hint: Infer from **Num 36:13**)



SNEAKY SELAH: Put yourself in the sandals of the spies. Imagine how gut-wrenching and heart-racing the situation must have been as they approached the city gate. It would have been absolutely terrifying for the spies to enter an unknown, enemy city of people who were on high alert for the invading force of Israel! You can only imagine that their prayer to God in that moment was similar to **Psa 16:1** "Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge". What might your prayer have been?

v1 tells us the spies entered the house of a harlot. What might be some of the strategic reasons behind this decision?



PIERCING PONDERING: Imagine you came across Rahab in your own life, today. How many of us would see her as potential 'Christadelphian preaching material'? Although we might shy away from an opportunity to speak with someone who has a questionable past (like Rahab), God clearly sees Rahab as a woman of faith (**Heb 11:31**) and someone he wants in his family. How amazing is our God who looks past our chequered history and instead looks on the heart, not willing that any of us should perish, but repent and live! (**1 Sam 16:7, 2 Pet 3:9**)



REFLECT: Read **1 Cor 6:9-11**. The Corinthian ecclesia was made up of believers who had previously led very immoral lives. What type of people had God chosen here? Do you think your life prior to baptism could be described in a similar or different way to the pre-converted Corinthians?

Read through the verses below, what kind of people receive the gospel?

Mark 2:13-17 _____

Matt 21:31-32 _____

Acts 9:1-15 _____

Acts 10:9-16, 34-35 _____



REFLECT: The story of Rahab's calling is incredibly encouraging for us young people because it reminds us that our past doesn't dictate our future! Think about how God has called and drawn you to the truth (however that might have occurred). How has God shown you grace and been working to bring you to this point in your spiritual life, despite your past.

Whatever the reason might have been for entering the harlot's house, it's obvious the spies' undercover operation didn't work too well as they were spotted very quickly in v2-3. What are some things that might have given them away? (Hint: **Lev 19:27**)

What predicament is Rahab faced with in v4-6? How does she resolve it?

In v7, the men in Jericho take Rahab's word without questioning her. Little do they know the spies they were looking for were right under their very noses! Why do you think the men of Jericho react the way they did?

When it comes to Rahabs' actions, there are two perspectives here:

Rahab's Lie was a sin	Rahab's Lie was necessary
<p>God is defined by His Truth! It is part of His character in Exo 34:6 and is also known as "the God of Truth" (Isa 65:16). It is impossible for God to lie (Heb 6:18) and we too are called to be like him.</p>	<p>Without Rahab's lie, how else could she have shown her faith? Jam 2:25 tells us that she was "justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out another way". Meanwhile Heb 11:31 tells us that "she perished not... when she received the spies with peace".</p>
<p>God makes it clear what He thinks about lying. What do the below verses say?</p> <p>Lev 19:11 _____</p> <p>Prov 12:22 _____</p> <p>Col 3:9-10 _____</p> <p>Acts 5:1-5 _____</p>	<p>There are instances in the bible where people are blessed for their deceit. Summarise the story in Exo 1:15-22.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Lying rarely brings about good. What happens in these stories?</p> <p>Gen 12:10-20 _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Gen 27 _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>1 Sam 21:1-7, 22:7-18 _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Decisions in life are complicated when there are two conflicting moral choices to make - hand the spies over to their inevitable death, or lie to keep them safe. What other choice could she make if she had chosen to pledge her allegiance with Israel's God? How else could she have provided evidence of her allegiance if she did not protect the Israelite spies from death at the hands of her own people?!</p>
<p>Arguably Rahab knew that lying was wrong like many cultures/religions know today?</p>	<p>Arguably Rahab knew Israel and their God, but thought lying to save a mans life was worth it?</p>

Ultimately God does not condemn Rahab's lie, but neither does He condone it.

Remember, this was a unique situation and therefore we cannot be dogmatic as we will likely never face a similar situation to Rahab.



INVESTIGATE: Look up the word, "the LORD", in e-Sword. Why is it significant that Rahab uses this title?



ACTIVITY: This choice of words is amazing given it is a fulfilment of God's prophecy in **Exo 9:16**. Mark this quote in your margin against **Josh 2:9**.

What is the contrast between Rahab's statement in **v9** and the Israelites attitude in **Num 13:31-14:4** and **Deut 1:28**?



ACTIVITY: Rahab chose to be courageous when others around her were afraid. The word "faint (or melt)" is mentioned a few times; **Josh 2:9, 11, 24; 5:1, 7:5**. Colour these in! This also is exactly what God had prophesied to Israel in **Exo 15:15-16** and **Deut 2:25**! Mark these links against **v9**.

In **v10**, Rahab states that she has only "heard" these signs, what do the following verses say about hearing?

John 20:29-31 _____

Rom 10:17 _____

What is the difference between Rahab's experience of God's wonders versus Israel's? (Hint: **Josh 5:6**).

Why do you think that Rahab in **v10** specifically chooses to mention the Red Sea crossing and the destruction of Sihon and Og, out of all the other wonders (e.g. plagues)?

At the end of **v11**, Rahab is directly quoting from the Law. Where is she taking this from and why is this so amazing?

Compare **v12-13** to **Deut 10:18-20**. Do you think Rahab might be appealing to the spies to make a covenant with their God on her behalf, using their own laws?

There is a parallel in **v13** to another Bible character, whose faith also saved an entire household. Who is it?

Rahab asks for a sign (or token). Who else in scripture asked for a sign as an assurance? (There are a few examples!)



PIERCING PONDERING: Interestingly, Rahab's desired that her family's lives would be delivered from death. The Hebrew word she uses indicates that there was no hope in death and therefore no afterlife. This is in contrast to the rest of Canaan who all believed in an immortal soul or afterlife!

Before we delve into the spies' response to Rahab's request, come to **Deut 7:1-4**. What does God specifically command here? What reason does He give for this measure?

The spies respond in **v14** and make a covenant with Rahab which breaks some of the most fundamental laws God gave them. To act so rashly was disobedience! Or was it?... Keep reading **Deut 7:5-11**. Think about what Rahab has said, and who God is. Why do you think an exception is made?

In **v14**, the spies give Rahab an assurance that they will deal "*kindly and truly*" (AKA in *goodness and truth*). Where else have you heard, '*goodness and truth*' used before in the Bible? What then would have been in the forefront of their minds?



ACTIVITY: Draw the scenario of **v15** in the box below. Take a photo and send it to our Instagram ([#gotostudyweek](#)). The best voted picture will win a free coffee during the week!

In **v16**, why do you think Rahab sent them to the foothills? Think both practically and what has been said in **Josh 1:11**.

What was the real reason the men of Jericho were not able to find the spies? (Refer to **Psa 32:7-8**)



INVESTIGATE: What does the word "line" (**v15**) in Hebrew mean both literally and figuratively in e-Sword? Why might this be important to Rahab after the story we just read?

List the conditions placed on Rahab's salvation in **v17-20**.

Compare imagery from **v17-20** to **Exo 12:1-13, 22-23**. What are the similarities between Rahab's experience and the Passover? What is the deeper spiritual significance?

The spies don't make it easy for Rahab. In hanging a scarlet cord from her window, (a cord large enough to allow the spies to climb down), it would be an open display of faith for both Israel and her own people. For Israel, this cord allowed them to easily identify which house they had to save, but for her own people of Jericho, they may have seen this as a possible entry point into the city, which could have raised some suspicion and pointed questions.



SNEAKY SELAH: Do we serve God openly so that it is known to others around us or do we try and keep it hidden?



REFLECT: Think about Christ's words in **Luke 9:23-26** and **Matt 5:14-16**. Starting tomorrow, what's a way that you can be actively more open about your faith?

The spies return in **v23-24** and give their report. Whose words do they use in their report?

What is the difference between this report and the one brought to Moses in **Num 13:27-33**?

What does their report confirm for Joshua?

Rahab's story is super encouraging! We are young, and often make mistakes that can taint our past. Yet we see here a real-life example in Rahab of how God can blot out our past transgressions if we choose to side with Him! (**Psa 51:1**) How do you think she feels at this point?

Rahab is now on the brink of receiving an entirely new identity. What does **Eph 2:19-22** tell us of who we were before, and who we are in Christ?

God in the Midst

JOSHUA 3



ACTIVITY: There is a theme in Joshua's life recorded for us in Josh 6:12,15, 7:16, 8:10 find the phrase and colour it in.

We find that God makes a note that Joshua "rose early" each morning. Why do you think this is a recorded habit in Joshua's life?

Who else follows this pattern? Look at the following verses and write down who rose early and what for.

Gen 22:3 _____

Exo 8:20 _____

1 Sam 17:20 _____

Mark 1:35 _____



SNEAKY SELAH: Challenge yourself! We are all great procrastinators and looking at the list above, we have great spiritual reason to take action today! Even if the day ahead looks tough, overwhelming or uncertain, start tomorrow by getting up early! (You can determine how early!) and read aloud Psalm 63 to start your day!



ACTIVITY: There is a phrase that is mentioned 10 times in this chapter. What is it? When you find it, colour the 10 occurrences in! (Hint: it's an object)

OVERVIEW: Ark of the Covenant

What was the ark of the covenant? (Look this up in a Bible Dictionary and compare Exo 25:10-22)

In Exo 25:22, how does God use the ark?

What then was the ark symbolic of?

Where does the ark usually reside in the camp? (Num 2:17)

See Num 10:33. Why does the ark lead here?

Why do you think there is such an emphasis on the ark then in Josh 3?

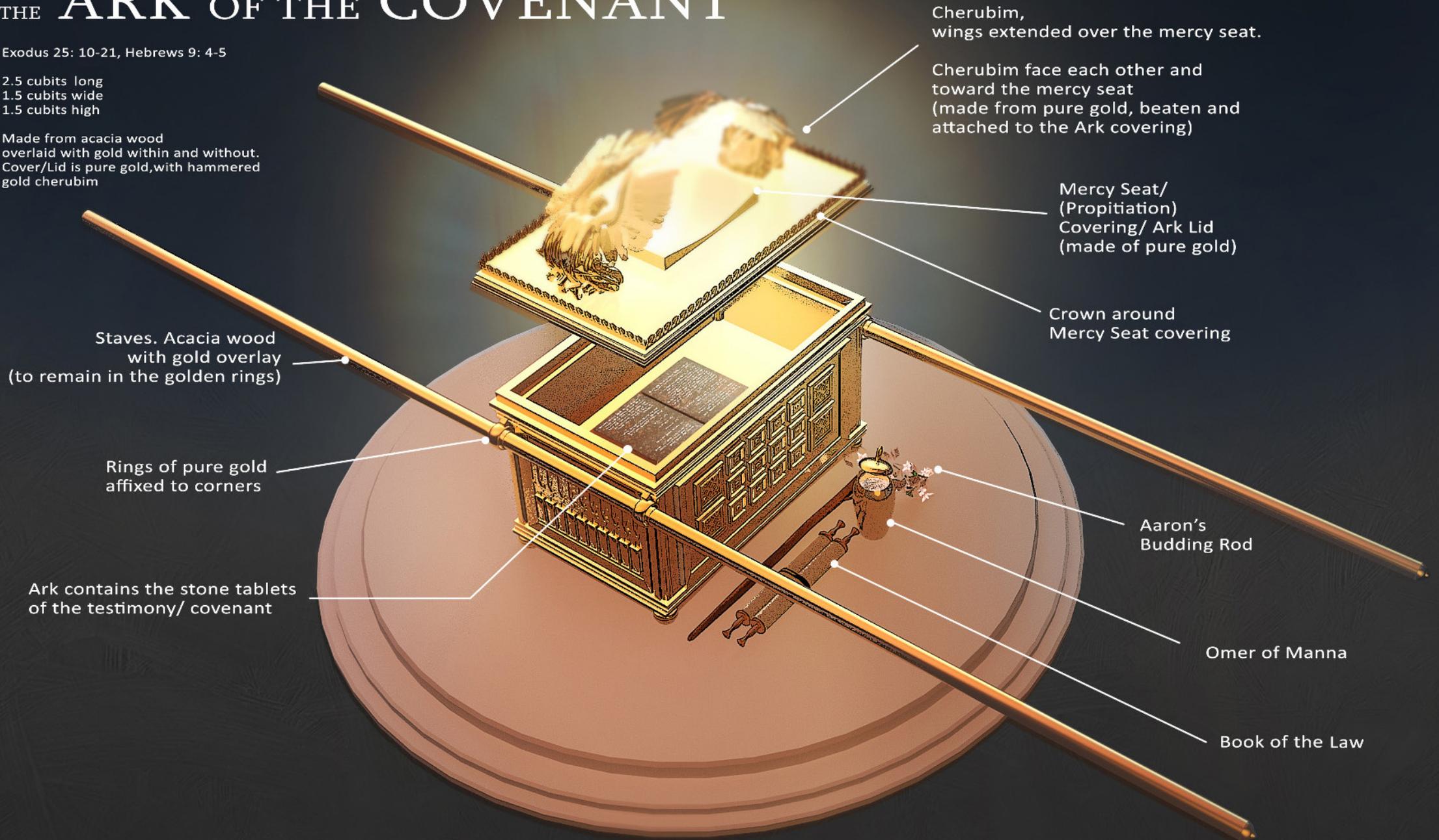
Since we are on our own journey into the Land of Promise, what then is the ark of the covenant for us? What is our relationship with it?

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Exodus 25: 10-21, Hebrews 9: 4-5

2.5 cubits long
1.5 cubits wide
1.5 cubits high

Made from acacia wood overlaid with gold within and without. Cover/Lid is pure gold, with hammered gold cherubim



Cherubim,
wings extended over the mercy seat.

Cherubim face each other and
toward the mercy seat
(made from pure gold, beaten and
attached to the Ark covering)

Mercy Seat/
(Propitiation)
Covering/ Ark Lid
(made of pure gold)

Crown around
Mercy Seat covering

Staves. Acacia wood
with gold overlay
(to remain in the golden rings)

Rings of pure gold
affixed to corners

Ark contains the stone tablets
of the testimony/ covenant

Aaron's
Budding Rod

Omer of Manna

Book of the Law

*"And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel."
- Exodus 25:22 (NKJV) -*

Why do you think Joshua makes such a deal of separation between the children of Israel and the ark in **v4**?

Practical reason: _____

Spiritual reason: _____

Israel is commanded to sanctify themselves in **v5**. What does this mean for Israel? (See **Exo 19:10**).



REFLECT: We can see that God requires us to approach Him on His terms. How then, can we sanctify ourselves before God today? (Start by looking at **Eph 5:26** and **Heb 13:12**).

What outcome does God's miracle have for Joshua in **v7**?

Reading **v8**, where else were the children of Israel commanded to stand still previously?

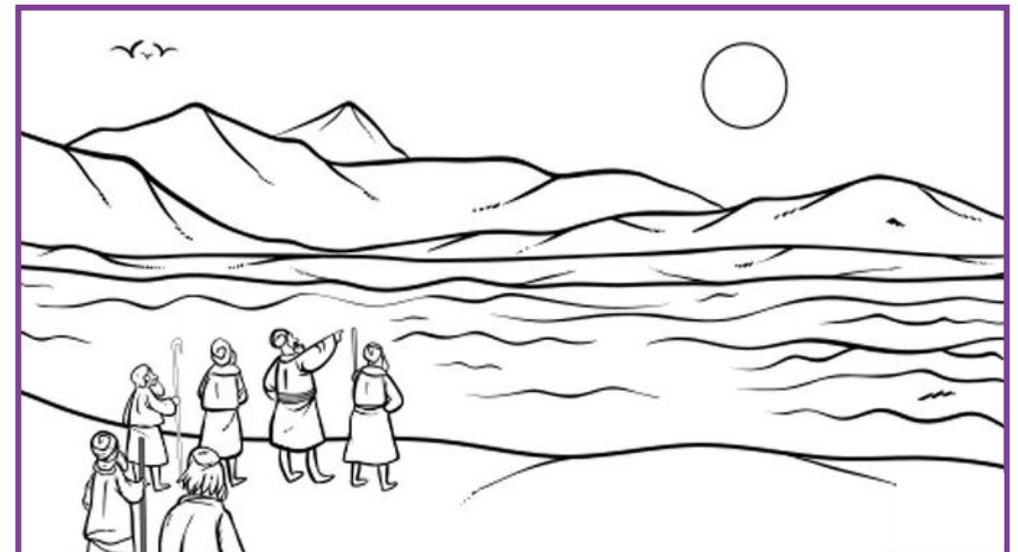
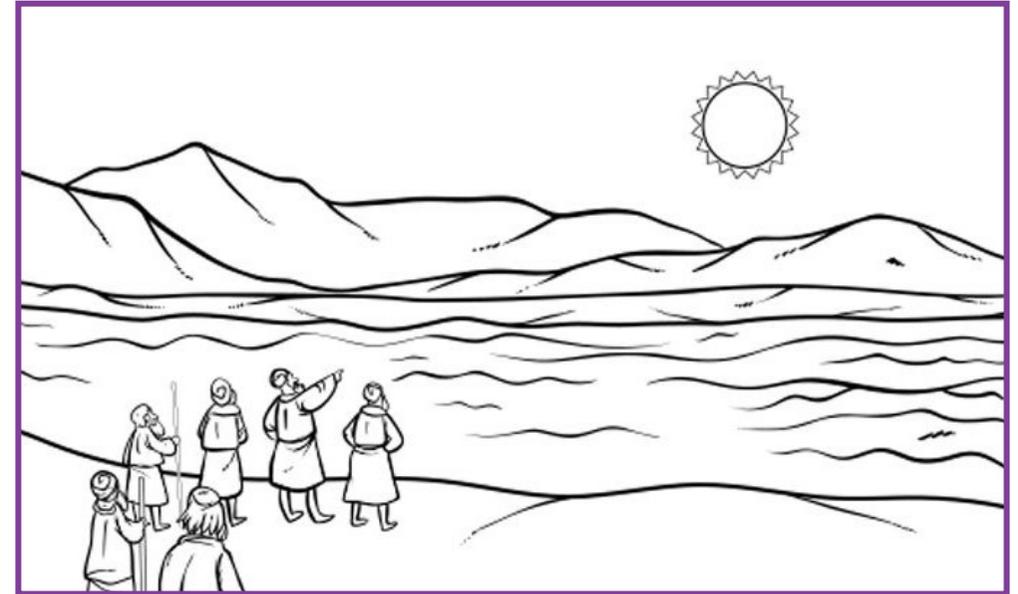
What title does Joshua give God in **v10**? Who else has used this in the Old Testament (both past and future)?

Sometimes we forget that He is the "Living God" for us too. Look up **Matt 22:31-32**, what is the power of this title?

Israel is faced with a giant obstacle: the Jordan River. What does **v15** tell us about the added difficulty, given the time Israel were to cross?

What does God tell Joshua the solution to this problem will be in **v13**?

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE! THERE ARE 8.



As the soles of the priest's feet touch the Jordan in v15-16 what happens? (The KJV may complicate the logistics of how this occurred, so also consider Psa 114:3-5)



PIERCING PONDERING: Oddly, v16 is incredibly specific in naming where the waters go: the city of Adam to the sea of the plain (literally meaning, 'sterile' i.e., the Dead Sea). There must be a meaning for us! First of all, we are reminded by Adam, the first man to journey through from life to death. If nothing else, this miracle is simply recorded to show that God is not bound by the laws of the natural world. Of course water "comes down" the river, and yet God simply sends it back. In the same way, so too can God defy the natural progression of our life to death and bring us into His Promised Land. Just as Joshua is the instigator of this interruption in the natural course of the river to save his people, so too is Jesus Christ the instigator in interrupting his family's certain journey to death to give us eternal life!



INVESTIGATE: Look up the word "Zaretan" in Strongs and see its root word of origin. This is definitely something for the margin when you consider the context of how we have been given a hope of life!



REFLECT: Put yourself in the sandals of the 4 priests! They stood in the middle of a riverbed holding a heavy 24 carat gold box, whilst an entire nation passed them by and yet they are described in v17 as "standing firm". Can we have a similar role in our communities? Have a look to Luke 14:27 what are we asked to carry and what does this actually look like in the 21st century?

What do these stones mean?

JOSHUA 4

Once the children of Israel have all crossed, Joshua commands twelve men to select twelve stones from the Jordan in v1-9. Where are these twelve men from? Why do you think this was important?



INVESTIGATE: Where did the twelve men take these stones? Compare v3 to v20. Look this up in a Bible Atlas, how far was this from Jordan?

For them to carry it this far, there must have been a significant reason. What reason does Joshua give for setting up this memorial (v6-7)?

Littered throughout Joshua we find Israel setting up memorials for future generations to ponder the significance of. It is incredibly similar to what Moses commands Israel in Deut 6:6-15. What does he tell them to do there and what is the reason given?



REFLECT: What memorials do we have today and how do they impact our life? (Or have we become desensitised to them?)

It's sad to find out that this is exactly what happened, Israel forgot the significance of these stones. Take a look at what **Hosea 9:15** says about Gilgal and what Israel had turned this significant site into.

In **v12-13**, Joshua first sends across the 40,000 armed men of the two and a half tribes first before the rest of Israel. Why do you think he has done this and what does it reveal about Joshua?

In any case, these verses are proof that these tribes were faithful and obedient to the word they had proclaimed to Joshua in **Josh 1:16**. What does **v14** establish and what has been fulfilled here?



ACTIVITY: Reading **v19-24**, we find that Israel's new base camp is Gilgal, where they stay for a substantial time. Mark in your margin that they remain there in **Josh 5:10, 9:6, 10:6, 10:43, 14:6**.

In **v23**, God likens this event to the Red Sea crossing, something most of the people would not have experienced. What does **1 Cor 10:1-2** say that the crossing symbolises? What consequently must be our course of action before we can enter our Promised Land?

The last verse directs our attention to the reason this wonder was done in the first place: "so that all people of the earth might know Yahweh". God has given us today an even greater sign that shows His power and love. What is it?

Jesus Christ himself was to be the greatest sign Israel would ever witness. The prophet Isaiah in chapter **7:14** tells us that his birth alone was a sign that was unparalleled, yet the more important sign Christ tells the Jews, would be his death and resurrection in **Matt 12:39-40**. It's this moment in history, the sacrifice of God's only begotten son, that He wants us to remember! To the Jews this sign was a stumbling block and to the Greeks it was simply folly, yet to us, it is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption! (**1 Cor 1:22-31**). What then should our response be? How does Jesus instruct us to remember this incredible sign?

Finally, write out **Psa 135:13**.



A Call to Obedience

JOSHUA 5, 6

The Israelites crossing the Jordan in a flood (a seemingly impossible task!), their unparalleled number and their God, (who commands every realm of nature), caused Israel's reputation to spread like wildfire throughout the land of Canaan. Rahab had already reported to the spies that the Canaanites feared Israel, but now that the only obstacle in Israel's way had been divinely removed, their hearts melted knowing their fates were now sealed.



JOSHUA'S STORY PART 3

Spiritual Revival

JOSHUA 5

The Caananites' response in Josh 5:1 should not have come as a surprise to Israel. What had God told Israel in Exo 23:27-31 and what was the ultimate goal?

Read Josh 5, and write down the four events that occurred after Israel's crossing to encourage them?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

In v2, we notice that God's first priority was to ensure all the men are circumcised. Circumcision was designed as a symbol to remind Israel of something...Let's take a look at when this symbol was first established, to see what God is trying to teach Israel here. Read Gen 17:1-2, 8. What is the covenant God promises to Abraham's descendants?

Staying in Gen 17, check out v9-14. What were the children of Abraham commanded to do to show they were of this covenant?



ACTIVITY: It's worth colouring in the words: 'covenant' and 'circumcision', in Gen 17 to show how intertwined these two ideas are!

What do the following verses say about the spiritual significance of circumcision for us?

Deut 30:5-6 _____

Rom 2:29 _____

1 Cor 7:19 _____

Col 2:10-15 _____



REFLECT: Summarise in your own words how we can "*circumcise our hearts*"

Back in Josh 5:3-7, what had disrupted the practice of circumcision for Israel?

All the people who were once circumcised are dead, and all the new generation are now required to be circumcised. With all of this context, why then is it so important that God re-institutes this practice of circumcision now?

From a human military perspective, why is circumcising the entire nation probably not such a great idea at this time in v8? Hint: Gen 34:20-26.

Despite this, the spiritual significance of re-establishing the covenant promises of Abraham with Israel was of great importance to God even though it may seem foolish to man!

In v9, God pronounces that he has "*rolled away the reproach of Egypt*" and that's why they named the place Gilgal. What was this reproach? (See Exo 13:3 and Josh 24:17 if you are stuck)

How is this same reproach relevant to us when we read **Heb 2:15** and **Rom 8:15**?

We now come to **v10**, and Israel celebrates the first recorded passover in their history since **Exo 12**! Interestingly, what was a prerequisite for participating in a Passover in **Exo 12:48**?

Ask yourself, what was a Passover all about again? What did it point forward to? Read through **Exo 12** if you need and list some ideas below.

There's a strong link between the symbols God gave Israel in circumcision and the passover to our service as Gentiles today. List those symbols. To complement this, read **Eph 4:22-24** and in order list the two things we need to do in our service and how we practically do those things.

Past Service of Hebrews	Our Service as Gentiles
Circumcision (Hint: Rom 2:25-29) Symbol: _____	1. _____ (Eph 4:22) _____
Passover (Hint: 1 Cor 5:7) Symbol: _____	2. _____ (Eph 4:24) _____



PIERCING PONDERING: The impact of this practice can be clearly seen in Christ's parable of the unclean spirit in **Matt 12:43-45**. We must first cleanse our lives by cutting off the flesh to follow Christ, that is a necessity. However, it is all in vain unless we replace it with the things of God, otherwise our old ways (or worse!) will naturally fill the vacuum in our hearts and minds with the flesh again. Perhaps you may have thought **Josh 5** would be a little awkward to speak about in a discussion group, but these first 10 verses unlock the key to transforming our lives to serving God.

Josh 5 is filled with firsts! In **v11**, Israel partakes of their first crops from the Promised Land! Next to **Josh 5:11**, note the reference; **Deut 6:10-12**. What had God promised there and how had Israel just fulfilled this?



PIERCING PONDERINGS: It's interesting that Israel ate of unleavened bread in **v11**, exactly as had been commanded by their fathers in **Exo 13:3-6**. Leaven in the Bible is symbolic of something infectious. Sometimes it is used positively (e.g the kingdom of heaven in **Matt 13:33**), but more often than not, is used to describe sin, such as in **1 Cor 5:6-8**. Just as circumcision reminded Israel to cleanse out infectious things that were corrupting their relationship with God, we too are encouraged to do the same if we want to enter the Promised Land!

In **v12** we see it would have been a monumental moment for Israel, to finally eat the produce of the land. God could have ceased the provision of manna earlier, even the day immediately after they crossed the Jordan. Instead, He waits until they are able to collect the corn of the land first. Look up **Neh 9:20-21 (ESV)**. Write out the verse to see what the Levites praise God for?

Christ also comments on this same characteristic God has to us in **Matt 6:25-26**. What can we have confidence in our God about here?



ACTIVITY: We find Joshua by the city of Jericho in **v13**. Brainstorm with a friend; what do you think Joshua was doing there by himself?

It's here in **v13** that Joshua sees a man with a sword drawn, what is his immediate reaction and what pointed question does he ask?

What is so peculiar about the response given in **v14** by the angel appearing as a man? What point do you think is being made to Joshua?



SNEAKY SELAH: It's a confronting question to ask yourself internally. Who's side are you really on? Because if the answer is our own, it's not God's. We have to make the decision to be on His side, each and every day. To really prick your conscience, try to spend the rest of the day asking yourself if what you are doing aligns with God's side or your own.

We get a clue who this angel is meant to be; compare **Exo 23:20-23**. Who had sent this angel and for what purpose?

Consider Joshua's attitude when he realises this is God's angel. What does Joshua do in response to this revelation?

Physical: _____

Verbal: _____

Joshua describes himself as a servant here, as a true expression of humility. In this he resembled his predecessor Moses, the servant of God in **Josh 1:1-2**. Would you naturally describe yourself as God's servant? What does **Phil 2:2-8** say about what attitude we should have and who we are emulating?

You've probably noticed already: there are a number of similarities between this story and Moses at the burning bush. See how many you can come up with in the box below!

Exodus 3:1-6	Joshua 5:13- 15

The final words of **Josh 5:15** are: "And Joshua did so." It really frames what kind of man Joshua was: obedient.

How does God feel about obedience? Look at the following verses to find out:

Exo 19:5 _____

Deut 4:30-31 _____

1 Sam 15: 22-23 _____

Isa 1:19 _____

1 John 5:2-3 _____

It is a certainty that our God is merciful and longsuffering when we do the wrong thing! Yet that does not mean we can be complacent with our desire to be obedient to His command. It's only through listening to Him that we are also provided deliverance. We are going to see this idea developed further in the story of Jericho.



REFLECT: Think about and write down some things you can change in your life to be more obedient to God. How can you better honour your God, who fights for you?

City of JERICHO

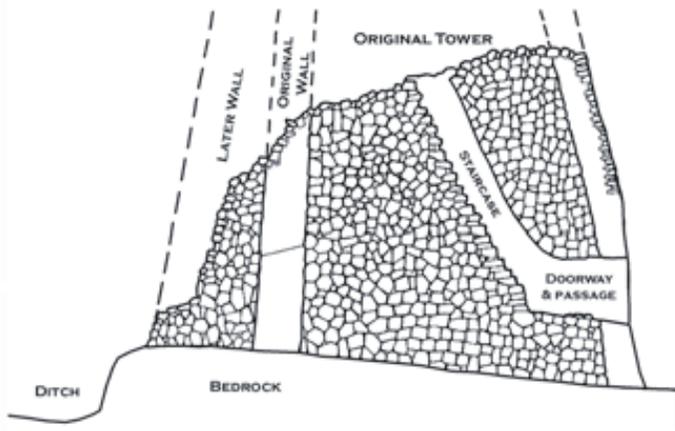
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To help us understand why this chapter is so monumental; it's worth considering what exactly this ancient city looked like. By consulting the verses we read about Jericho, Archaeological Study Bibles and other historical sources, this is the description we have of the city:

- In **Deut 34:3**, Jericho is described as the 'city of palm trees'. It's just one piece of evidence that indicates that it was built right in the midst of fertile lands and therefore likely a wealthy city.
- The city's usual day-to-day population was thought to have been approximately 3000 people. In times of war, this number would have swelled immensely as farmers in lands around came to seek shelter.
- We know from **Josh 7:21** that it must have been a prominent and wealthy trading city where a Babylonish garment (a city that was over 1000 km away) was found in the city.
- The city had two sets of walls, (as seen in the picture). Which makes **Josh 6:1** so much more significant when it says that they were "shut up inside and outside" (ESV).
- Both of these walls were entrenched within an earthen embankment for foundations. The outer wall was 5 metres tall, 4 metres thick and made of stone. The inner wall on the other hand was 2 metres tall and made of mudbrick.

The point is: Jericho was a formidable city and a challenging first obstacle for any nation to attack! Israel may have safely crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land, yet this was no time to celebrate. The Land of Canaan was filled with enemies and God had commanded Israel to utterly destroy them (**Deut 7:2**). Today, we might see this command as cruel and difficult to comprehend, but let's explore why God commanded this in the first place and why it was necessary.

JERICHO'S CITY FORTRESS



God gives the VICTORY!

JOSHUA 4

God had promised Abraham that the entire land of Canaan would be his, all the way back in **Gen 17:8**. Initially Abraham had actually co-existed with some of the Canaanites, such as the Amorites in **Gen 14:13** who were allied to Abram. Yet God doesn't deliver the entire land of Canaan into Abraham's hand for two reasons in **Gen 15:13-21**:

1. Abraham's children would need to go into captivity into Egypt.
2. The "iniquity" (or sins) of the people of the land (particularly the Amorites **v16**) was not complete.

So right from Genesis, we get a clue as to why God would command their destruction: their iniquities. In **Lev 18:3 (ESV)**, God speaks to Israel and says: "You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes." He then lists a number of grievous immoralities that Israel were forbidden to do, which Canaan must have been practising.

Come to **Deut 9:1-5** and summarise what God is explaining to Israel here in 4 dot points.

Why did this concern Israel so much? Come to **Deut 20:16-18**, what other reasoning does God give for their destruction?

This is why God wanted the Canaanites utterly destroyed, they were in the land He promised Abraham and they were wicked people that would influence His own people to sin! Just remember, God is both merciful and just. For those who are wicked, yet repent of their ways and love God's commands, He will accept them. We are going to see an entire Canaanite family saved in this chapter and a city saved in **Josh 9**. Yet for the majority of the Canaanites (and indeed the world around us), they refused to turn to God and therefore had to be destroyed!

We find that God speaks to Joshua in **Josh 6:2-5**. What is the first thing that God tells Joshua? Where does this echo from?

Read **Psa 118:8**. How does this verse contrast the two perspectives of the Canaanites in **v1** and God's encouragement to Joshua in **v2**.

Then in **v3-5**, God gives Joshua instructions on how he was to take Jericho. What are these instructions?

What might an average Israelite's initial thoughts be of this plan?



SNEAKY SELAH: There is a lot of emphasis on the number 7 in **v4**. In scripture, the number 7 is used to signify 'completeness'. Think 7 days of creation (**Gen 2:2-3**), 7 years of plenty and famine (**Gen 41:2**), 7: seals, trumpets, thunders and vials (**Rev 5:1, 8:2, 10:3, 15:7**). God is indicating here that Jericho was set for complete destruction! Yet this plan would only work with faith!



PIERCING PONDERINGS: The word "rams' horns" in **Josh 6:4** is the Hebrew word 'yôbêl', most often translated as the word 'Jubilee'. The Jubilee was one of Israel's most sacred and significant feasts, with the details recorded in **Lev 25**. This feast would occur every 50th year (likely only occurring once in the lifespan of an Israelite) on the 'Day of Atonement'. The trumpet blast would announce a time of celebration as every servant would be freed from their master, debts would be forgiven and every possession would be returned to its original owner (see **Lev 25:10**). It was therefore a time of great jubilation in Israel, and where we get the name from.

These same ram horns ('yôbêl') that the priests blew in **Josh 6:4** to announce the triumph over Jericho, were the same they would blow to announce the commencement of Jubilee. The connection? God is drawing our attention to the fact that the land of Canaan was about to be returned to its original owner, the children of Israel. Furthermore, just as the defeat of the Canaanites resembles the defeat over sin, so too would Israel be freed from being slaves unto sin at its defeat (symbolically in Jericho).

In **v6-7**, what was Joshua's response to God's instruction?

It's important to remember how significant faith is to our relationship with God. Today, we might look up to the enormous walls of sin in our life and think there is no possible way we can conquer it. Yet, just like Jericho, God has provided a way of deliverance that is without our direct involvement at all, through the crucifixion of His only begotten son, Jesus Christ. It's for this reason that Christ is the author and finisher of our faith and who invites us to run this race toward eternal life!

OVERVIEW: Faith

What bible verse would you go to to define faith in the Bible?

Define faith in your own words:

Why does **Heb 11:6** and **Rom 1:17** say faith is so important?

How do we develop faith? **Rom 10:17**

How do we demonstrate our faith (**Jam 2:18**)? List some examples.

In **Josh 6:6-7** list how Joshua and the Israelites are demonstrating their faith in this situation?

Finally, how then are we saved by faith in **Rom 4:3-8** and **5:1-2**?



ACTIVITY: From v6-13 two phrases are repeated, colour them both in:

- "the ark of the LORD" (note how many times it appears)

- "armed"



ACTIVITY: They are significant together because, although it is God who brings about the victory (symbolised in the ark), He still requires Israel to be armed for battle. Just like our own fight with sin, despite God providing the victory, we too are instructed to put on the entire armour of God to wrestle with the flesh! See Eph 6:10-18 and draw a labelled diagram of you wearing the armour of God in the box below.



ACTIVITY: How does v9 set out the structure of the army of Israel marching around Jericho? Draw the four parties and Jericho at its centre in the box below.

In v10 Joshua adds another command to the list of instructions. What is it, and why do you think this is a crucial component to the plan?



REFLECT: Each day, (v11&14) the armed men of Israel would return back to their camp in Gilgal, about 13 km away! It was no easy feat and would have tested their faith each passing day as to whether all this effort was necessary. God may have assured victory in v2, but following His commands also requires effort from our part, so remember that in your own walk!

Seven days the Israelites marched in this strange procession around Jericho. What do you think the people of Jericho were thinking as they observed this?

What do you think Rahab was thinking as she was watching this?

We've already looked at Joshua's daily ritual where he gets up early and in v12 he does it again from day one of the siege. What then happens on the final day in v15?! What does this indicate about the people?

This story is also an allegory of God's victory over sin. Compare v16 to the quotes found in 1 Thess 4:16 and 1 Cor 15:52. What similarities do we find between this story and the last days in our time?



INVESTIGATE: We read in **v17** (KJV) that the city is “*accursed*”. What do other Bible versions translate this word to be?

In **v18-24**, everything from the city was to be devoted to God . What does **Lev 27:28-29** say about items that are devoted to God?



PIERCING PONDERING: Jericho was the first city to be delivered into Israel’s hands, however God demanded that it be dedicated to him, just like the firstfruits. In **Exo 23:19** God tells Israel: “*The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God*”. Just as all the produce of the land was provided to them by God’s hand, so too would the deliverance of all the Canaanite cities. Yet God only asked for a small part to be dedicated to Him; the first part, as a show of appreciation to Him for His kindness. By Israel respecting this command, they were in turn dedicating their spoils to God in thanks.

Where were these spoils to go (**v24**)?

The only exception to this utter destruction was Rahab the harlot who was saved for the kindness that she showed to the spies (**v25**). In a small part (along with our faith), that’s how we will be saved too, by the kindness we show to others. Read through **Matt 25:31-46**. How will you show kindness to Christ this week?

So with a shout and a blast of the trumpet the walls of Jericho come crashing down in **v20-21**. Yet what does **Heb 11:30** tell us really brought down these walls?

Who had Joshua commanded to rescue Rahab in **v22-23**? Why do you think this was most appropriate?

Who else exited the city with Rahab (**v23**)? What did this mean she was doing?



SNEAKY SELAH: What an amazing woman Rahab is, she is a living lesson to us to never be complacent with our own salvation, but to preach and influence those around you as well! It is the same message that the Epistle of James ends on. “*He (or she) who turns a sinner from the error of his way, will save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins.*” (**Jam 5:20**). Never underestimate God’s ability (through you!) to redirect the paths of those around you, as it can alter their lives forever! Rahab is the first Canaanite to be saved and invited into the Promise of Israel! Think about where else we find this faithful woman Rahab (a Canaanite) mentioned in Scripture. It’s not the last time.



ACTIVITY: There are a number of similarities between the story of Jericho and the Leprous House of **Lev 14**. In **v34**, God says, “*When you enter the land of Canaan... and I put a mark of leprosy on a house in the land of your possession*” then they would do the following in **v36-46**. Consider the table on the next page and write it in your margin.



Sanctified to Success

JOSHUA 7, 8

Joshua and Israel would have been at one of their greatest spiritual peaks following the battle of Jericho. They had seen first hand that their God was with them and even the Canaanites around knew that the LORD was with them (Josh 6:27). Despite what Israel might have been feeling, when we come to Chapter 7, God gives us a deeper insight into the state of the congregation. In v1 "The children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things". One man had committed a trespass, but all of Israel are implicated in it.



Trouble!

JOSHUA 7

Why do you think God includes all of Israel as being participants in this act in v1? (Note: We will also be exploring this concept further, later on in the notes).



PIERCING PONDERING: Interestingly, it's actually what God had told Israel would happen back in **Josh 6:18**, "when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it". God is saying here; when one person commits a trespass, the entire congregation can be affected by it. It may seem bizarre, but it's the same principle our ecclesias are built off today.



INVESTIGATE: What do these two New Testament verses below tell us about our relationship with our ecclesia?

Rom 12:4-5

Eph 4:15, 16

If we are all one body, what mindset should we have? (1 Cor 12:12-27).

What (specific) metaphor does Paul use in 1 Cor 12? What is the principle he instructs the Corinthians to take away in v24-27?

In the same token, we also have the responsibility to care for the Ecclesial body and keep it holy. In 1 Cor 5, Paul deals with a specific situation in the Corinth ecclesia where a member was openly committing a form of sexual immorality in their midst. Their individual behaviour significantly impacted the reputation and holiness of Christ's ecclesia and his message. Paul instructs this evil to be purged from the body. In 1 Cor 5:6-8, why does he instruct for such a harsh resolution?



PIERCING PONDERING: This concept stems right back to the law and as we will see in **Josh 7**; the congregation are making known God's name to all the nations. They therefore must honour his commandments as it is written in 1 Pet 1:16 "Be holy, for I [God] am holy."



INVESTIGATE: Come back to **Josh 7:1** Who was the culprit of this trespass? What does his name mean in Hebrew (hint: look up in E-sword)?



ACTIVITY: Given this word's meaning, mark **Prov 15:27** against **Josh 7:1**. What advice does the author of Proverbs give to the reader in relation to possessions?

This wasn't just greed at play here - this trespass was also a result of direct disobedience of God's command about the 'devoted' thing (**Josh 6:17**). Funnily enough, that's exactly what the word 'trespass' means in the Hebrew: 'treachery' - to cheat or betray. This wasn't just Achan missing the mark, this was a direct robbery of God's House!



ACTIVITY: The next city Israel comes across is Ai in v2. Go to pg. 8 and mark the locations of Ai and Bethel on your map.



INVESTIGATE: Now this isn't the first time Ai is mentioned in the bible. Its first reference is in the life of Abraham in **Gen 12:8** and is called 'Hai' (KJV). We know it is the same place because it uses the same description of its location in **Josh 7:2**, in respect to Bethel. Let's investigate why the author on both occasions orients the reader to both the locations of Ai and Bethel. Pick up a Strong's Concordance (or e-Sword) and write down the definitions of these two cities:

Bethel _____

Ai (look at the root) _____

In the life of Abraham, Abraham was at a crossroads at this exact location and was forced to make a choice. Come to **Gen 12:7-10**. What decision does Abraham need to make and why?

From this decision, Abraham is faced with more difficult, life-threatening situations, all because he tried to trust in himself instead of relying on God. Mercifully, God delivers him from all his troubles and he returns back to the land of Canaan with riches and safety. Where does Abraham return to after this venture into Egypt in **Gen 13** and what does he do?



SNEAKY SELAH: Like their forefather Abraham, Israel was about to face the same decision, in the same location. The author wants us to think back to this record and recognise that this decision is universal. Do we trust in God, or trust in ourselves?



REFLECT: When was the last time you decided to trust in yourself instead of God? How did it go?



ACTIVITY: Look up **Prov 3:5-6** and copy it in your own words below.

Joshua, without any recorded consultation with God, sends men to view the city of Ai in **v2**. What strategy for attacking Ai do these spies suggest in **v3**?

Read carefully, at the end of **v3**, what two reasons do they state to justify this strategy?

It's a cautious warning for us to always consult God to ensure our decisions are God-Centred.



PIERCING PONDERINGS: Remember, this whole campaign into Canaan was designed to symbolically teach Israel a lesson as to how God requires us to deal with sin. He wants it utterly destroyed from the face of the earth and from our lives. To do that, it requires 100% effort, not just a half-hearted response, otherwise it will prevail over us! How often do we find ourselves making the excuse of being too tired? How often are we complacent in our own spiritual fight with sin?

So Israel sends about 3000 men to Ai. Clearly they were confident that this small host could conquer the city. Yet to their horror, we read in **v5**: "*And the men of Ai, smote of them about thirty and six men*" (ESV). What warning had God issued to Israel in **Deut 28:15, 25**?

Yet due to the greed and selfishness of one man, 36 innocent lives are lost in one day. Perhaps we may think that our sins are minor and without consequence, yet here is a story which demonstrates the ramifications of this. What is another Bible example you can think of where one sin has dire and exponential consequences?

At the end of v5, we find that *"the hearts of the people melted"*. Where have we heard this before and why is this contrast so interesting?



REFLECT: For Joshua, the leader of Israel, the responsibility of this failed attack fell on his shoulders. So in v6, he rends his clothes, falls on his face in front of the ark and cries to his God. How do we react when we are in despair and things don't go as we imagined? Do we try to resolve them ourselves? Do we turn from God because we feel He has forsaken us? Or do we turn to Him in prayer?



ACTIVITY: When you face these times, here are 3 really encouraging verses to keep in mind: **Psal 46:1, 55:22 & Jam 5:16**. Get creative, stick them around your room, or make it your screensaver on your phone or laptop.

When we read through Joshua's prayer in v7-9, we find that he is a very distraught man. Where have we heard similar words in Joshua's life? List a few examples below: (Hint: Try Num 14)

In v9, what two reasons does Joshua give for his (understandably) intense distress?

This mimics the response Moses had in **Num 14:13-20**. What had caused God's anger here and what was the result of Moses' prayer?

It shows us how much of an impact Moses made on Joshua! What then is God's reaction to Joshua's prayer in v10? Why do you think Joshua's prayer warranted such a response from God?

Read v11 and list the four ways that Israel has transgressed against God and his covenant:



ACTIVITY: Go back to **Deut 7** and read v24-26 (ESV is a helpful translation for the next few questions). God had promised to Israel that *"No one shall be able to stand against you"* for the duration of their conquest in Canaan (v24). But in the very next verse he had also pre-warned that if they were to take something that was devoted to destruction into their house then *"you, like it, will be devoted for destruction..."* (v26). [Keep a finger in **Deut 7**] Read **Josh 7:11-15** and notice the repetition of the word *"accursed"* (KJV), or *"devoted"* in the ESV). Colour it in!

(With **Deut 7:24** in mind) What does God say in **Josh 7:12-13**, is Israel's position in relation to their enemies, as a direct result of having taken "accursed/devoted" things?

Both **v12, 13** specifically mention: "they have some of the devoted things... and put them among their own belongings" and "There are devoted things in your midst, O Israel." So in **v12**, as a result of having a devoted thing within the Israelite camp; what have the people become? (as pre-warned in **Deut 7:26!**)

What does God say they must do to the accursed/devoted things to reverse this? (**v12,13**)



ACTIVITY: Write in your margin against **v12-13: Deut 13:17, Deut 7:26**. What should Israel's relationship have been with the accursed (devoted) thing?

God also instructs Joshua to sanctify the people in **v13**, implying that they are currently unsanctified (all because of the actions of one man!) Where had Israel had to sanctify themselves before? Outline the process of sanctification and what it included:

Why were they commanded to sanctify themselves? See **Lev 11:44**



PIERCING PONDERINGS: The commands of **v13-15** are spoken to all the people, nobody was unaware of what was to follow. So each family was left to examine themselves overnight. It is the same process Christ made his disciples go through when he said, "One of you shall betray me". It's also the same process Paul instructs us to take every time we eat the bread and the wine in **1 Cor 11:28**: "Let a man examine himself". These moments are powerful, only if we are truly honest with ourselves. So take some time to examine your position with God now.

In **v14-15**, the process of identifying the guilty party of Israel was long. Why do you think God engineered it this way?



SNEAKY SELAH: The man who had committed the trespass could have confessed at any time. Either because he was too proud, or he thought he might get away with it. It makes us think, we have been given the night (this life) to confess our sins before the day comes (the kingdom). How long do we take to confess our sins? Do we see a sense of urgency? Take a moment to consider if there is any sin you haven't properly confessed to God and take some action now.

God commands that the accursed thing and man who caused offence to be burnt with fire in **v15**. What is the significance of it being burnt with fire? (Think practically and see **Josh 6:24** for reference)

Why do you think God's punishment is so severe in **v15**?

This hasn't just been devised here, come back and read **Deut 13:5-18**. Why do you think this method of punishment was commanded to be implemented by Israel? What would be the ripple-on effect?



ACTIVITY: Read **v16-21** in conjunction with this commentary.

"The atmosphere would have been tense. Uneasy, troubled, uncertain as to what would happen, the people anxiously awaited the outcome of the upholding drama. They had been told *"the tribe that Yahweh marks out by lot"* and *"the clan that Yahweh marks out by lot"* would be the process of elimination whereby the offender would be revealed.

The tribe of Judah was *"taken"*.

A hushed stir of disbelief and feat would have rippled through the ranks of the people of Judah.

From within the tribe, Yahweh's *'lot'* would fell upon the clan - or family - of the Zarhites....

At this point, observing the unerring accuracy of the Hand of Providence, Achan could have come forward and admitted his guilt. That he failed to do so is indicative of his disposition: he persisted in his crime and remained hardened in sin. Right to the moment of disclosure."

John Ulman 'Joshua His Life and Times' pg. 81

Joshua entreats Achan in **v19**, almost softly, to do the right thing, calling Achan his *'son'*. God clearly knew the sin Achan had committed, despite this, Joshua emphasises the importance of confession. It was what had been commanded of Israel in **Num 5:6,7**. It's a simple lesson from Sunday School that we so often forget. God is everywhere present and sees all things. Therefore, He knows the sins we commit. **Num 32:23** tells us to *"be sure, your sin will find you out"*. Can you think of another situation in the Bible where someone thought they could hold back and hide from God?

What does **Heb 4:12-16** inform us of and what then does the author encourage us to do?

For Achan, the judgement had already been proclaimed, yet for us, we have a different hope. Why does **1 John 1:9** encourage us to confess our sins?

In **v20-21**, Achan describes his crime to Joshua. What three things had he taken?



ACTIVITY: **1 John 2:16** describes the usual process of how sin manifests itself. In the table below, list the three stages of sin (in John) and link them to Achan's process in **v21**.

Stages of sin (1 John 2:16)	Achan's sin process (Josh 7:20-21)

When specifically dealing with wealth, what do these two verses warn us about coveting?

1 Tim 6:6-10 _____

Jam 5:1-3 _____

What could Achan have done differently if he had read these verses?



PIERCING PONDERINGS: Of the three things Achan took, they weren't all that much. Certainly not enough to lose your life over. The 200 shekels of silver amounted to 2.3kg and the 50 shekels of gold to 0.6kg. Interestingly the 'Babylonish' garment is better translated as a 'Shinar' garment. Shinar appears early in Scripture in **Gen 10:10** as the first Kingdom of man. It then appears in **Gen 11:2** as the location of the tower of Babel, where men openly turned their backs on God and tried to make a name for themselves in reaching heaven. By Achan choosing this garment, he was choosing the Kingdoms of men, the very symbol Israel was meant to be destroying and not with God. We must be careful to ensure we are not sacrificing our relationship with God for a small worldly prize now.



ACTIVITY: Circle the word "hid" in **Josh 7:21** and make a reference in your margin back to the first people who hid when they also sinned. (No hints this time - you should know this one!)

Come to **Matt 6:19-21**. What wealth does Christ encourage us to pursue and why?

In **v22-26**, there are a number of similarities and contrasts between the characters of Achan and Rahab. Look at the table below and perhaps make reference to some of these in your margin.

RAHAB (Josh 6)	ACHAN (Josh 7)
Canaanite (Gentile)	Israelite (Jew)
Hid 'Israel' in her house	Hid 'Jericho' in his tent
Hid spies on her roof	Hid the loot under his tent
Prostitute	Tribe of Judah
Joshua sends the messengers to her house to bring her family out	Joshua sends messengers to his tent to bring the accursed things out
Her family survived	His family died
Her nation perished	His nation prospered
Only heard about God, but still believed	Witnessed amazing acts of God, but disobeyed
House survived, city burned	Tent was burned & destroyed
Cattle, sheep, donkey of Jericho died	Cattle, sheep, donkeys of Achan died
Became an Israelite	Became associated with Canaan

Now that the guilty party was identified and his sin revealed. What do you notice about the pronouns being used, in **v23-24**? Whose responsibility was it to render this judgement?

Achan had stolen from and identified with Jericho in this act, so they did the same thing as they had previously done to the city of Jericho and consumed them with fire. Why do all of Israel stone Achan in **v25**?



PIERCING PONDERINGS: Why Achan's Family? You might think that it was harsh for Achan's entire family to be killed alongside him. Isn't that unfair? In **Eze 18:14-17**, God makes it very clear that He does not punish the son for the sins of the father. A great example of this is seen in the life of Korah, where his family is spared in **Num 26:10-11**, because they do not stand alongside their father. This can only mean one thing for Achan: His family were all privy and consenting to his sin, and therefore were just as responsible for the 36 innocent men killed at Ai!

There is an odd, specific detail that keeps cropping up in this story of Achan. Three times it is listed that he is "*the son (or of the line)*" of Zerah (**v1, v18, v24**). God must be trying to tell us something here. Well first of all, who was Zerah? He was Achan's great grandfather, certainly, but the lesson is deeper. Come back to **Gen 38:27-30** where we find out about his birth. Summarise the story below.

Zarah (or Zerah - see **Num 26:20**) was meant to be the firstborn of Judah and receive the first allotted portion of inheritance. He was given a red cord to conclusively show he was the firstborn. And yet, he withdraws his hand, and in doing so; allows his brother Pharez to become the firstborn, therefore losing the inheritance. In the same way, his great grandson Achan had been so close to inheriting the land of promise, and yet withdrew at the last minute, costing him everything! Where though, had that red cord of inheritance reappeared? In the window of Rahab, as a symbol of '*tikvah*' - **HOPE!** Someone who was by birth; doomed to miss out on the inheritance, yet is given it by faith! Too much of a longbow? Look at **Matt 1:3-5**. Who does Rahab marry and which line is he from?

And so, the author of Joshua (God) is showing us how history has repeated itself here. Whilst one line of hope perishes, another line opens.

But that is not the end for Achan. In **v26**, he is buried in the Valley of Achor - Trouble. Yet this is not the last we hear about this place: come to **Hos 2:15**. What does God say he will transform this place into in the Kingdom?

The Valley of Achor is a necessary pathway for people to take up to Jerusalem. In the Kingdom, it will be a place which causes them to be reminded of these two individuals, Achan and Rahab who were given a line of hope to inherit. Whilst one turned aside and forsook it, the other gave up everything in this life to cling onto that blessing of life. In doing so, we are reminded of the two characteristics of God, His goodness and His severity. Let us therefore, never forsake this opportunity and this line of hope for anything that this world can offer!

Victory and Vows

JOSHUA 8

It's sad to think that all Achan needed to do was to be patient and wait and he would have received abundantly more than what he had taken from Jericho! Now that the sin of Achan had been dealt with, we find in **v1** that God encourages Joshua to "*Fear not and not be dismayed*". Where have we heard these words said to Joshua before and why are they being said yet again? (Hint: Section 1)



REFLECT: God's words here are such a contrast to what they were in **Josh 7**. How do you feel when you fall down and miss the mark and then are expected to get back up again? Can you relate to this situation? What are some strategies you use to get on track after you have fallen short before God? If you don't have any, take some encouragement from **Josh 8:1**.

So God gives Joshua the assurance that the King of Ai, its people and the land would be delivered into the hand of Israel. What opportunity does God give to Israel in **v2** that was different to Jericho?

However we find that a new battle plan is instituted for Ai's destruction. Summarise the battle plan in **v3-13**.



PIERCING PONDERINGS: Although God had made it clear to Joshua in **v1-2** that He was with him; it didn't mean that the journey ahead would be easy or straightforward. This was a complex and strategic battle God was getting Joshua to involve Israel in. It's a reminder for us that, although God might be with us in something, it might not be easy and so we are expected to persevere along the road to victory. As **1 Cor 9:24-25** tells us, we run and strive to obtain the incorruptible crown before us, so put in the effort now!

Why do you think God emphasises for Joshua to bring all the people of war (**v1**)? Compare this with **Josh 7:3**.

In **v9, 10**, where do we find Joshua this time?



REFLECT: If this was Joshua's attitude, to be completely involved, how involved do you make yourself in God's family? What's one way you could be more involved?

Joshua rises early in **v10**, but so does the King of Ai in **v14**. Why do you think he also rises up early and hurries to meet Israel? (Think about the contrast to how the King of Jericho reacts)?

In **v15-17** Israel, utilises the overconfidence that the men of Ai had from **Josh 7** to delude them into believing that they were facing the same situation as before. By feigning their defeat again, Israel was luring the men of Ai out in order to begin their pincer manoeuvre!

What does Joshua hold out in **v18** and **v26**? What does this remind you of in a previous story we have considered?



ACTIVITY: Read **v19-22** and track along with the map of the battle on the next page. Maybe try and draw a simple version of this in your Bible.

CONQUEST OF AI

An Israelite ambushing force advances upon the town of Ai the day before the main assault. With his troops divided into two units, Joshua moves towards Ai then carries out a fake retreat.

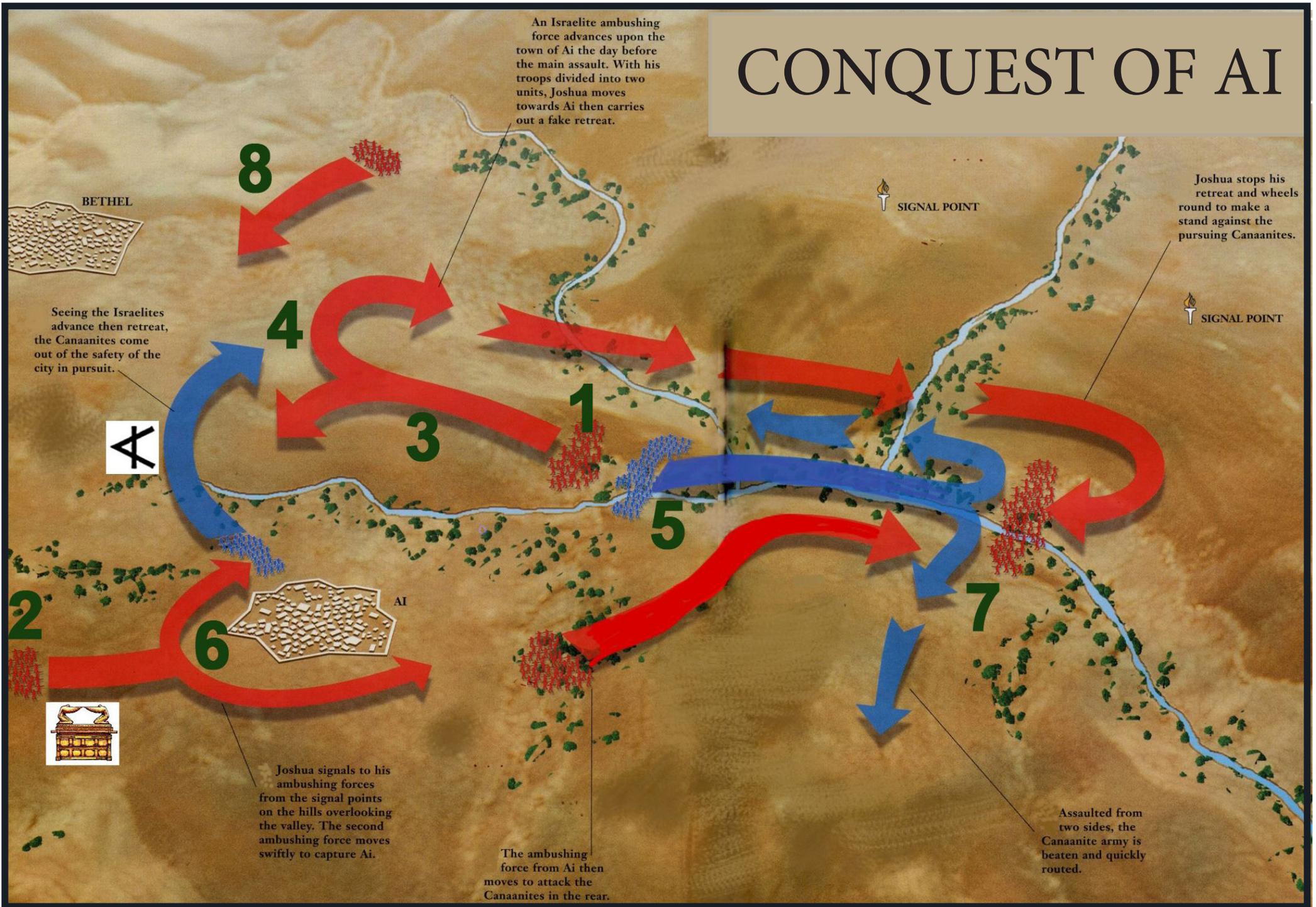
Joshua stops his retreat and wheels round to make a stand against the pursuing Canaanites.

Seeing the Israelites advance then retreat, the Canaanites come out of the safety of the city in pursuit.

Joshua signals to his ambushing forces from the signal points on the hills overlooking the valley. The second ambushing force moves swiftly to capture Ai.

The ambushing force from Ai then moves to attack the Canaanites in the rear.

Assaulted from two sides, the Canaanite army is beaten and quickly routed.



Why does Israel burn the city of Ai in v28?

What other cities are burnt with fire and what does it mean symbolically? (See Gen 19:28 and Rev 19:3)

And so, Ai fulfils the very definition of its name - ruin, just as God had commanded Israel back in Deut 7:2. Yet we find in v23 that Joshua keeps the King of Ai alive, what do they do with him in v29?

Why does Joshua do it in this way? Maybe refer to Deut 21:22-23 to help you with your answer.

We will soon find that Joshua employs this practice again in Josh 10:26 to another five individuals. Who were these people?

Why were they displayed in such a specific way to Israel? Why were the king's deaths different from their subjects' deaths in v24-26?

This same method is echoed in Acts 5:30, who else is hung on a tree here?

What we find then is God drawing our attention to how these stories are paralleled: the Kings of Canaan, and the King of the Jews. The Kings of Canaan represented sin, through and through, and so had to be put to death in such a way that all could see the consequences.

How then is Christ alike? Come to 1 Pet 2:21-25 and summarise below:

"The King of Ai was taken captive. He typifies the "king of ruin" - which is sin (cp. Rom 6:12, 16) It was necessary for him to be slain and brought to "ruin". Thus Joshua 'hanged' him on a tree. The type is clear: the flesh must be crucified (Rom 6:6, Gal 5:24)"
John Ulman 'Joshua His Life and Times' pg. 94

How then must we treat sin? What does Rom 6:1-6 tell us our relationship with sin should be?

The king of Ai is therefore buried in the gate of his own city in v29. What might the significance of this be? (Hint: think about the promises in Genesis!)



ACTIVITY: Now that Ai is defeated, there are a number of logical decisions Israel could have made next to put themselves in a secure position in the land. Instead, v30 tells us that Joshua has his mind set on travelling to Mt Ebal. Go to your map on pg. 8 and mark in Ebal and Gerizim.

Look at where they have come from and where they are heading. Why, potentially, is this not a very strategic move?

The reason for this move is because God had commanded it to Moses. Come back to **Deut 11:26-29**. What had God commanded Israel to do when they entered into the land and for what purpose?



ACTIVITY: In **Deut 27:1-14**, God provides the specifics of how this ritual was to be done. Fill in the table below where the similarities are found. It'll show us that Joshua knew what was obedient to the letter! As commanded back in **Josh 1:8**.

Joshua 8:30-35	Deut 27:1-14
"Built an altar unto the LORD" v30	
"In Mt Ebal" v30	
"Moses the servant of the LORD commanded" v31	
"Altar of whole stones, No man lifted iron" v31	
"Offer burnt offering and peace offering" v31	
"Wrote a copy of the law of Moses written in presence of children of Israel" v32	
"All israel, sojourner, elder officers" v33	
"Half on Gerizim and Half on Ebal" v33	
"Read words of law, blessings and cursings" v34	

In **v31**, God commands that the altar be built with 'whole' stones, on which no iron tool had been used. In **Exo 20:25**, God reasons that stones that are hewn and modified are polluted. In short, God is teaching Israel that he desires things not altered by the hands or imaginations of man, but rather left to be shaped by Himself.

Where else (later) in Scripture does an unhewn stone present itself. What did this symbolise?



PIERCING PONDERINGS: Moses had commanded Israel: offer burnt offerings and peace offerings in **v31**. Why these two specific offerings? We find both of these offerings were voluntary offerings (**Lev 1:3, 7:16**), dedicated because they WANTED to give unto God. **The burnt offering:** was symbolic of the offerer dedicating themselves completely unto God, 100%. **The peace offering:** was given as a thanks and praise offering to demonstrate fellowship with God. They gave God a "sweet savour" that He delighted in! (**Lev 1:9, 4:31**). Therefore, Israel offered these two offerings to show their dedication to Yahweh, their thanks and their desire to fellowship with Him!

So Joshua had made another memorial of stones to remind the people and their children of what had occurred on these two mountains. On these stones, he writes a copy of the law in the eyes of all Israel! Why does **Deut 31:11-13** say this had to be done in front of all Israel?

Joshua wrote all the words of the law on these stones on Mt Ebal. Where should we have the law engraved in? **2 Cor 3:2-3** and **Heb 8:10**





REFLECT: In **Rom 2:14-15 (NIV)** we find that the new Gentile converts, though they did not have the law of Moses, were intuitively living by the principles behind the law. Paul tells us this is what it means to have “*the law written on their hearts.*” Consider your own life and write down some ways you can show you have God’s law written on your heart this week (See **Matt 22:36-40** and **Gal 5:14**)

In **v33**, we find that Israel divides themselves (as written in **Deut 11:29**) between Ebal and Gerezim. It was at Mt Ebal the cursings were read out and at Mt Gerizim; the blessings. Mt Ebal was the taller of the two mountains, sitting at about 1000 metres high, whilst Mt Gerizim sat at about 800 metres. Interestingly, Mt Ebal means ‘*bald/ barren*’ and had an overwhelming absence of vegetation (as seen in the image on the previous page), almost as if it had been cursed itself. Gerizim on the other hand means ‘*cutting off*’; the only way in which the blessings can be inherited!

Fun fact: in **v33** it’s the first mention of the word “*stranger*” in Joshua! Who might “*the stranger*”, in **v33**, be in reference to?

Then in **v34-35** the words of the law, specifically the blessings and the cursings were read out loud to the entire congregation from **Deut 28**. It’s a long chapter, but check it out! What is the main message from the words Israel would have heard that day?



ACTIVITY: How is this relevant to us today? Well Christ himself gives his own versions of blessings and cursings in the book of Matthew. Blessings to his disciples in **Matt 5:1-11** and cursings (woes) to the elders of the people in **Matt 23**. Just like Israel’s inheritance of the land was dependent on obedience to God’s Word to receive the blessings, so is ours! And Christ tells us that they come with certain characteristics.

List out the 8 characteristics of the blessed in **Matt 5** and jot down how you could develop this trait a little better this week.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____



Covenants & Conquest

JOSHUA 9-10

Although Israel has two amazing victories over the Canaanites, there is no time to be complacent as they had grabbed the attention of the entire land of Canaan. The Canaanites were now watching nervously to see who would be Israel's next target. In this section, we are going to see the two different tactics the Canaanites use to maintain control over the land. God, however, is working behind the scenes to ensure a certain victory for Israel over their adversaries. We, like the Israelites, are facing the same opposition today! Will we seek God's guidance and trust in His strength, or will we rely on ourselves?



JOSHUA'S STORY PART 5

Old Shoes & Mouldy Bread

JOSHUA 9

What news had the Canaanites heard and how did they react to this news in v1-2?



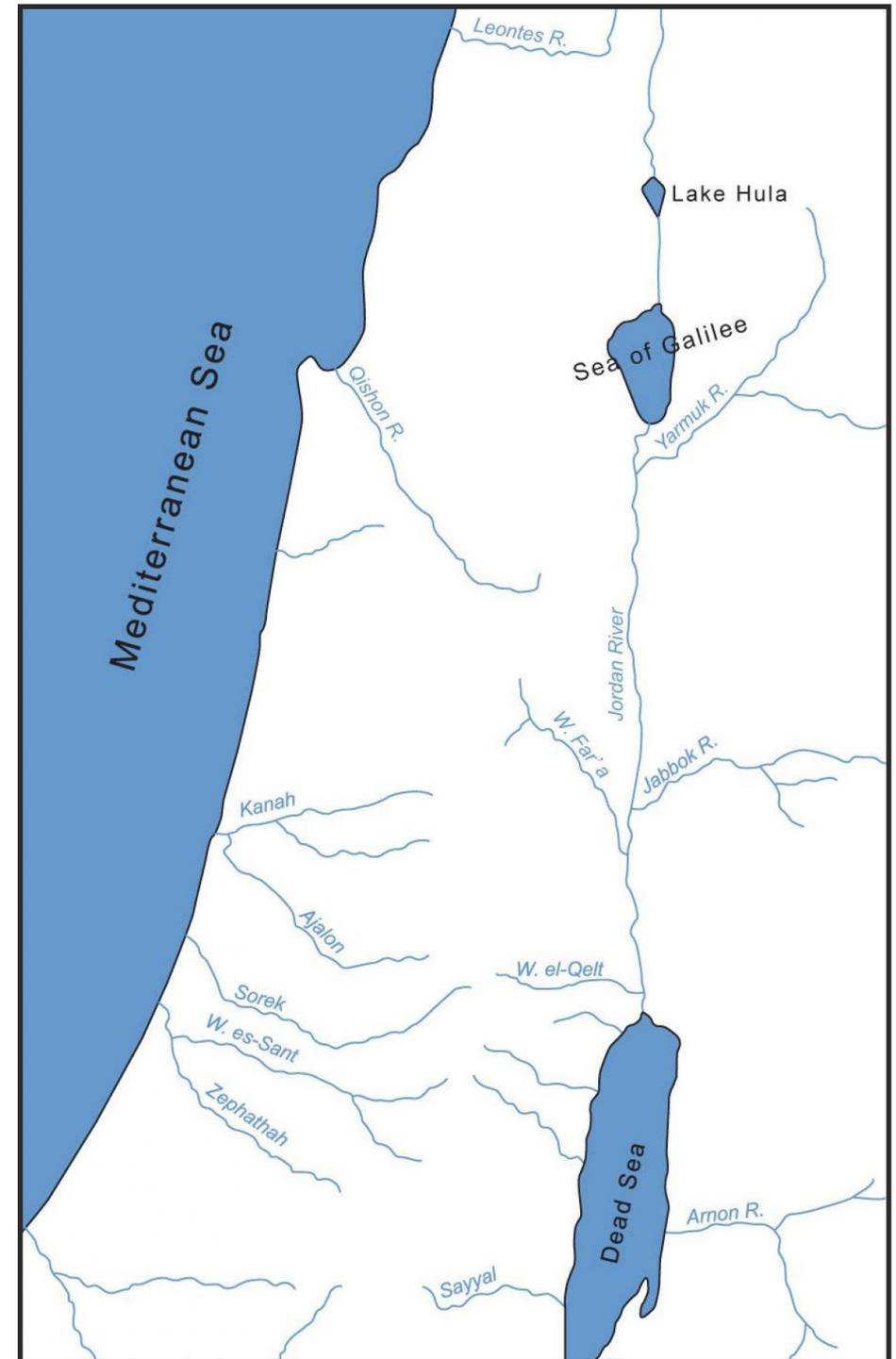
ACTIVITY: Previously, the Canaanites had a very passive approach to Israel. Each city was responsible for their own defences and for barricading themselves in for a siege. Now they realise this approach isn't working. Instead they decide to take a more proactive strategy: to take the fight to Israel. All these nations that unite here are the exact same ones we find God had listed for destruction in **Deut 20:16-17**. Using a Bible Dictionary, find where these nations are and mark them on the map to the right of the page.



REFLECT: Israel now had to face the challenge of being surrounded by a joint force of their enemies. Perhaps this is something we can relate to when it seems the world unites against those who love God. What might be some of the ways you feel the world unites against God's people today?



ACTIVITY: We find this united front against Israel is true for all the Canaanites, except for one group of cities: the Gibeonites. First, let's take a look at who the Gibeonites are. Look at your Bible Dictionary and mark Gibeon on the map on pg. 8.



What sort of city does **Josh 10:2** say Gibeon was?

The Gibeonites were actually made up of 4 cities. What other cities allied themselves with Gibeon? See **Josh 9:17**.

Gibeon was the largest of the cities we have considered so far. It was walled and set on a hill right at the centre of Canaan. It stood approx. 10 km from Ai and 11 km north from Jerusalem. In terms of its culture; it was a city made up of commercial and industrial traders and was known for their cultivation of vineyards and wine. It was a very prosperous city and would have been the fiercest adversary Israel faced to date.



PIERCING PONDERINGS: In **v7** we find that the Gibeonites are actually referred to as 'Hivites'. One of the first references in Scripture to these people is in **Gen 34**. This is a confronting story centred around Jacob's daughter, Dinah, who is taken by Hamor the Hivite and defiled. The Hivites of the city try to broker peace between Jacob and his sons, and a covenant is made for them to join with them by marrying Dinah. A crucial part of this deal was that the Hivites were to circumcise themselves to be part of God's covenant. Despite the promise that was made, Simeon and Levi break their covenant with the Hivites and slaughter the entire city.

Here, in **Josh 9**; God is working behind the scenes to rectify this evil committed by Israel. A covenant had been made with the Hivites that had not been fulfilled for 400 years, and this was the divine opportunity to restore it.

Israel however, doesn't make the first move. What attitude do the Gibeonites take when they hear of the things Israel did? **v3-5**

There is a lesson here showing how a group of people all hear the same report, yet their attitudes differ entirely. For Canaan, they are set to oppose Israel. For Gibeon, they see no other logical way to survive than to join Israel. There is a parable in the New Testament which speaks about a similar principle; about people receiving the same message yet reacting in different ways. What is this parable? What lessons should it teach us in how we should (or shouldn't) respond to the gospel?



INVESTIGATE: In **Josh 9:4**, what does the word 'wily' (KJV), 'craftily' (NKJV) or 'cunning' (ESV) mean in Strong's? (Note: This Hebrew root, word can have both positive and negative connotations)

What strategy then, do the Gibeonites employ to preserve themselves from destruction in **v3-6**?

What were the Gibeonites specifically requesting for, in **v6**?

And what were the two hesitant questions Israel asked the Gibeonites in return? **v7-8**

In **v8-13**, the Gibeonites employ several tactics to deceive Israel. We have listed these tactics below. From the verses, list how the Gibeonites actually used these tactics on Israel.

v8 (Misrepresentation) _____

v9 (Emotional Appeal) _____

v9 (Exaggeration) _____

v9 (Deception) _____

v9 (Flattery) _____

v11, 12,13 (Props) _____

Just like Rahab does in **Josh 2:10**, the Gibeonites recall the recent history of Israel and the wonders their God, Yahweh, had wrought (**v8-13**). What do the Gibeonites strategically leave out in their praise of Israel's victories? Why do you think that is?



ACTIVITY: There are three phrases in **v8-13** that the Gibeonites really emphasise in their dialogue to Israel: 'Servants', 'far' [country, or, from you] and 'Long journey'. Colour these in.

Now come back to **Deut 20:10-18**. What information must the Gibeonites know and how are they using it to their advantage by repeating these phrases?

You might be asking, how would the Gibeonites know about this reference in Deuteronomy? It's clear they have some understanding of it. Your guess is as good as ours. We suggest one of two answers, either:

- Bits of God's law had been conveyed by travellers who had come into contact with Israel before they crossed Jordan.
- The Gibeonites had hiked up Mt Ebal and read the stones on which Joshua had written God's law.

Whatever way you look at it, the Gibeonites play this to great effect!



PIERCING PONDERINGS: See what the Gibeonites say in **v13**, do you think the Israelites could relate? Come back to **Deut 29:5** and think about what would have come into Israel's mind when they saw the Gibeonites present them with their 'evidence'.

What are we told that Israel specifically does wrong here in dealing with the Gibeonites? **v14**

It raises the question; how often are we mindfully looking for God to direct our paths when there is a choice to make? Take a look at the advice from the following verses and note down some pointers below:

Prov 3:5-6 _____

Prov 19:20-21 _____

Isa 11:2-3 _____



REFLECT: How then are we meant to seek God's advice today? And in what instances should we include God? Call up your study buddy and jot down some ideas below. Two verses to help you are: **Matt 7:7** and **Jam 1:5**.

Contrast **Josh 9:15** to what God had commanded Israel in **Exo 23:32**.

We see in **v16-18** Israel were deceived and had therefore unintentionally broken God's commandment. When they discover this, they are left with a choice:

- Break their oath with Gibeon and keep God's command
- OR
- Keep their oath yet enter into an allegiance with the Canaanites.

It's another difficult decision for Israel to choose between. The irony is that God allowed this sequence of events to unfold in order for His plan to be fulfilled.

What is the inference in **v19**, by the princes' response, of how Israel wanted to resolve the situation?



SNEAKY SELAH: When we find ourselves backed into a corner after having made a mistake, how do we resolve it? What guides our decisions? Do we consult God's word and pray? Or do we follow our instincts and do what seems best to us?

It reminds us of what Joseph says in **Gen 50:20** (NIV), "*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives*". Thinking about the story of Joseph, what similarities are in his story, to **Josh 9**. How had God used evil to bring about good in his life?

The princes (and Joshua) rightly opt to keep their oath with Gibeon (**v20-21**) instead of obeying God's explicit law to wipe out the Hivite. Why?

Read **Deut 23:21-23** and summarise what God demanded of Israel here.

Why do you think it is so important to God that man keeps his vows? What do we learn about God in **Exo 34:6** and **Heb 6:16-18**?

What advice does **Ecc 5:2-5** give to mankind when we make vows?

Finally, what does Christ tell us our standard practice should be with the words we say in **Matt 5:33-36**?

What was the fate of the Gibeonites then, now that this covenant was made? (**v22-23**)
What do they reveal their motive for this deceit is? (See **v24**)



PIERCING PONDERINGS: God is a God of Truth and therefore expects us, (who are meant to emulate His character) to be the same. In this world, we see business, politics and even friendships blurring the lines of what honest speech and truth is. The lesson for us is clear, God expects us to keep our word, no matter the cost, even when others may not. Think about how often you keep to your word? Especially in the smaller things of life. We might say we don't lie, but if you had made plans to do something with someone yet get a better offer, would you decline that offer to keep your initial word? Have you said "yes" to doing a task/role in your ecclesia, family or workplace but then fail to carry it out? What about our oaths we make in baptism? These aren't to be taken lightly either! By returning to our old ways, we are breaking that covenant we made with God! Let's strive to be truthful!

List the similarities in **Deut 29:2-15** to the story of the Gibeonites. How does **Deut 29** demonstrate the amazing foreknowledge of God?

Although their actions were motivated by self-preservation; the Gibeonites clearly believed that Yahweh was the true God and were right to fear Him! They recognised two very important facts about Yahweh that are crucial for us today.

- Yahweh is a God of truth, and once a covenant was made, Gibeon knew that God would expect Israel to keep their Word. In the same way, we can take courage that God will keep His Word to us, in the promises that He has made of life eternal to those who believe in the name of Jesus Christ.
- The Gibeonites saw that it was only through Israel that they could receive salvation. The same applies to us today: while we may not be part of literal Israel, we are required to be grafted into the same olive tree as Israel to receive salvation! (See **Rom 11** to see this in action).

So in **v26,27** Joshua ensures that Israel upholds their covenant and Gibeon is saved! What location are the Gibeonites assigned to, to carry out their service? And what effect do you imagine this may have had on them?

So what happened to the Gibeonites?

In **Josh 21:17** we read that the city of Gibeon is allocated to the Benjaminites.

Sometime after the times of Joshua, King Saul kills a number of Gibeonites for no reason, breaking the covenant made here in **Josh 9**. It isn't recorded specifically when Saul does this, but we suggest it happens in **1 Sam 22** when Saul kills the priests at the tabernacle.

What does God do about this in **2 Sam 21:1-2** and what do you think this tells us about God?

As a result of this: King David returns the evil Saul committed upon Saul's own house, requiring the blood of his sons to square the debt. Whilst Saul's house is forgotten, we find that the Gibeonites are remembered and keep popping up throughout the Bible.

For example: **1 Chron 12:4** tells us that a Gibeonite was one of the chief warriors in David's army and in **Neh 3:7** we find the men of Gibeon return back to Jerusalem after Babylonish captivity.

The point? From here on, the Gibeonites are integrated into Israel's society. God deems them to be as much an inheritor as any blood-born Jew of Abraham, showing the depth and integrity of God's promise to them!

What then does **Gal 3:26-29** tell us about our ability to inherit as non-Jews?

The LORD fought for Israel

JOSHUA 10

Unknown to the Gibeonites, their actions had set in motion a chain of events. God was working with the circumstances encountered by the Israelites, to bring about the swift deliverance of the rest of the Canaanites into Israelite hands. Before you begin to look at **Josh 10**, go back and read **Josh 9:1-2**. Now come back and compare them to **Josh 10:1-5**.

Who is the Canaanite instigator of this battle and what does his name mean in Hebrew?

Why do they fear greatly?

In response to this; the 5 kings ally themselves together. What does **v2, 4** tell us that the unexpected catalyst for this allegiance was?

Brainstorm: why do you think the five kings weren't targeting the Israelites? What do you think their military strategy might have been?



PIERCING PONDERINGS: Similar to the name Adonizedec, we find his (likely) great ancestor, from the same town recorded in **Gen 14:18**, Melchizedek.

There are some interesting similarities and contrasts between these two kings recorded for us and therefore how they are remembered in Scripture. Complete the table on the right.

	Melchizedek	Adonizedek
Name meaning:		
King of:		
Personality Traits:		
Relationship with the Hebrews:		

Now read through **Gen 14** and identify three similarities between the story of **Josh 10** and **Gen 14**.

- _____
- _____
- _____

So in **v3-5**, the five kings gather at Gibeon's doorstep and encamp there to besiege the defectors.

Naturally in **v6**, the Gibeonites request for the help of their newfound allies; Israel. What do you think the children of Israel might have been thinking when they heard of this situation and request?

Regardless of what conflicting opinions were held in the camp, Joshua is steadfast and is determined to keep his promise to Gibeon. So in **v7** he, and all Israel, leave Gilgal and ascend into the mountain region towards Gibeon.

What can we gather about Joshua's character from his immediate action?



REFLECT: Suggest one way you could demonstrate a similar confidence in God this week (whether at school or work).

Joshua did not hesitate in being proactively responsive to someone in need. Christ tells his disciples a parable with a similar message in **Matt 25:31-46**. After reading this parable: What is the common mindset of the people who were responsive? What might that indicate to us about how we should be performing good works?

Back in **Josh 10:8**, God encourages Joshua with similar words to what we saw in Chapter 1: *"Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand"*. This situation was different, because it wasn't just a single city, but a coalition of nations gathered together, making it Israel's biggest battle to date!

Josh 9:17 tells us how long the journey regularly took from Gilgal to Gibeon. Now compare this to how long it took them in **Josh 10:9**! Why do you think this is?

The journey was approximately 27 km, yet despite the rough, mountainous terrain, the men completed it in a single night. And leading the pack was Joshua, who is over 80 years of age.

What do you suppose Scripture is trying to teach us about what true leadership looks like here?

With the Israelite warriors travelling with remarkable speed, they took their enemy by complete surprise! Adonizedek likely assumed the five armies could clean up Gibeon before Joshua could make it to the battle! Yet in the morning, with the sunrise, Joshua and all Israel were upon the five kings.

Now despite the warriors great efforts, whose victory is it?



ACTIVITY: This is a major theme of the chapter. Colour in '*the LORD*' and what He did (the verb afterwards). You'll find this phrase in verses: **10, 11,12, 14, 15, 19, 25 , 30, 32, v42** (KJV)

The word: "*discomforted*" in **v10** means to '*put in commotion*' or '*disturb*' in Hebrew. It is first used in **Exo 14:24** as the word "*troubled*". Who did God trouble here and how did He do so?

The battle begins in Gibeon, but quickly the enemy retreat. Where do they retreat to at the end of **v10** and how far is this from Gibeon?

It tells us how distressed the Canaanites were to run this far and how impassioned the Israelite warriors must have been to travel over 60km (combined with their night journey from Gilgal).

We have seen right through Joshua's life, God had encouraged Joshua with the fact that He would be with him (**Josh 1:5**). God isn't just with Joshua in spirit behind the scenes, He is an active participant in this battle.

What mechanism does God use to slay the Canaanites and where would Joshua have seen this before? (See **v11**).



ACTIVITY: God uses this natural method of destruction because it comes from above, ensuring nobody is mistaken of where it has originated from and is a very fitting symbol of God's divine judgement. This same word: 'discomfort' is used in **Psa 18:12-14** in an illustration of some of the judgements God uses on man. Look this up and mark it in your margin!

It's with the same extent of power and zeal that God fiercely fights for Israel here in **Josh 10!**

Why do you think God uses such a great show of force here against the Caananites?

The use of hailstones would have wrought utter destruction, why was this utter destruction necessary? (Think back to Section 3)

Such was the ferocity of God's judgement, we find that the hailstones killed more Caananites than what the children of Israel could with the sword. We aren't given a number, but considering they are fighting against the combined forces of five separate armies; we can assume it was a great multitude. So great was the number that, in **v12**, Joshua requests a miracle like no other in the Bible, he commands the sun and moon to stand still.

First of all, what do you think was the purpose behind this request?

We know that there are a number of various theories out there as to how this miracle practically occurred. Whilst it is interesting to hypothesise, this notebook will be taking this miracle on face value: the day was lengthened. So when Joshua looked up throughout the length of the battle - the sun and moon didn't move from their position in the sky.

Joshua's request was unlike anything that had ever been done before. Sure, the 10 plagues and the crossing of the Red Sea was phenomenal, but to disrupt the natural course of the Sun and Moon was unheard of! Yet with unwavering faith, Joshua asks and God answers him.

It's really encouraging when we consider that, without hesitation, Joshua's prayer was answered by God in **v13**. What does Christ say in **Mark 11:22-24** about what mindset we should come to God with, in prayer?

Psa 145:17-21 is an encouraging prayer of praise by David. What echoes are there in this Psalm to **Josh 10?**

There is no doubt that God has the power to do anything, including deviating the course of nature. What is required of us is that we have faith and believe. The caveat, of course, is that our requests have to be asked with the right motives; to glorify Him, as Joshua had done here! God has actually already assured us that He WILL deviate the course of nature for us; by raising us up, out of death, and changing our physical mortal body into immortality. (**1 Cor 15:50-52**)



REFLECT: Take a moment and reflect, how has God answered your prayers in the past?

With Joshua's prayer answered, the people now had no reason not to fulfil God's command in utterly destroying their enemy, as was commanded them in **Deut 7:1-2** and **Deut 20:17**. With heightened conviction and faith, they were committed to wholeheartedly carrying out God's will.



SNEAKY SELAH: Are we the same? Do you have the same attitude of Joshua, towards sin? Do you wish you had more time in the day to battle sin? It's certainly something to think about.

Joshua had immense faith; and he demonstrated that through his actions. He asked for the sun to stand still and then he fought until they had chased down every last soldier. The Epistle of James addresses how we must be eager to be filled with action and good works when we are given the opportunity, not just to be lazy. What does **Jam 2:14-26** tell us about the balance between faith and works?



PIERCING PONDERINGS: We find in **v13** that this event was written in the 'book of Jasher'. What was this? Well we have no direct record of what this book contained, but it is mentioned again in **2 Sam 1:18** in David's song about Saul and Jonathon's death. The word Jasher means 'upright' and Bro. John Ullman believes this was Israel's book of heroes which included a detailed account of poems and stories but has since been lost to history.

V14 tells us that this is a unique moment in history: God has never hearkened to the voice of a man like this before! What reason does the verse give for this and what does it tell us about Joshua's relationship with the Father?

In **v15**, it seems that the Israelites believed that the battle was over and began to return back to their camp at Gilgal. What had Joshua been told earlier that incites him and the people back to battle?

In **v16-17**; it's probable that the kings were found hiding here; seeking refuge from the hailstones.

How does the Bible contrast the leadership styles of Joshua and the five kings of Canaan? (See **v7,12**)

So with new-found strength, the Israelites realise the kings and the Canaanites are on the back foot and pursue their enemies. Why was there such a sense of urgency in Israel's unyielding efforts in **v19-20**?

Scripture includes a specific detail in **v21**, that against all odds, all the people returned back to the camp in peace. Not a single soldier was lost that day, proving beyond any doubt that God was with Israel!

Now that Israel had returned, Joshua was to make an example out of the five kings of the Caananites. There is a clear allusion, in the details included about these kings, to the death of Jesus Christ. In the table below, use the following verses about the death of Christ and write them next to the detail (in the death of the five kings) which they correspond to. See **Gen 3:15**, **John 20:17**, **Matt 27:60,66**, **Gal 3:13** and **Matt 28:2**.

Death of the Five Kings - Josh 10	Death of Jesus Christ
V18 Great stones are rolled upon the mouth of the cave, trapping the five kings, guards set over the cave.	
V22 The mouth of the cave is opened and the kings brought out alive	
V24 Feet were placed to crush the heads of the kings	
V26 The kings hung upon trees until evening	
V26-27 The kings are slain and thrown back into the cave to descend into the earth	

Although they suffer similar events; their final outcome is a total contrast: Whilst the five kings are cast into an eternal grave, Jesus Christ exits the grave as the immortal Son of God, never to return to it again.

In **v24**, why did Joshua command the captains of Israel to put their feet on the necks of the kings? (On a surface level, what does this action symbolise?)

From a spiritual perspective, what greater symbol does the author want us to think of and why? (Think **Gen 3**)

In **v25**, before the kings are killed, Joshua proclaims something to the captains. What is it, where have we heard it before and why do you think Joshua is saying this now?

In **v26**, Joshua then slays the five kings and hangs them on five trees on display for all Israel to see. This was, in symbol, showing what would happen to those who come against the LORD God and how sin should be dealt with (see page 55 for notes on this).

We know by now, (given the number of times he's done it already) Joshua really likes to make landmarks out of great stones. This time, he uses stones to block off the burial place of the five kings, **v27**.

First of all, how many times have we seen memorial stones set up in Joshua so far? What number is this?

Why do you think Joshua uses stones? (Hint: Consider the purpose of stones for Israel, and also why other materials were unsuitable.)



REFLECT: Brainstorm some 'memorial stones' you can set up in your life, that remind you of God throughout your day?



ACTIVITY: From **v28** to **v39**, a number of cities were conquered and taken by the children of Israel. List these cities below. Then (using a bible atlas) mark these cities on the map on page 8 and draw the route which Israel must have taken.



ACTIVITY: Using your map on page 8 and **v40** (KJV), identify what region Joshua conquered of Canaan?



ACTIVITY: From **v28-40**, a phrase appears 5 times. Colour it in and tell us, what does it echo back to?

The author wants us, as the reader, to take away from this chapter a clear message in **v42**. The essence of this verse is similar to the message found in **Psa 44:1-8**. What is it?

This battle was not about Israel or what they achieved, but about Yahweh their God and His victory. Just like He fought for Israel, He too fights for us today and is "not far off from each one of us" (**Acts 17:27**).

Take a look at **Psa 33**. This Psalm describes God's ability to deliver His chosen ones. Choose three encouraging verses from this chapter that strengthen your trust in God and your reverence for him. Copy them below.

Why do you think Israel defeats Canaan incrementally? See **Deut 7:20-22** to see God's logical reasoning behind this strategy.

The Future Battle

Before we finish, don't you find it odd how much detail is recorded for this battle in **Josh 10**? Compare this to **Josh 11**, where the content is much more broad in its description of Israel's victory. It certainly appears that the author of Joshua is trying to convey something to us. Can you think of a future battle **Josh 10** could be foreshadowing? Summarise what you understand about this future event:

There is only one occurrence of Armageddon in the Bible, in **Rev 16:16**, but there are a number of Bible references that point towards this great battle before the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, called the '*Day of the LORD*'. You can read more about this battle in **Ez 38-39**, **Joel 3** and **Zech 14**.



ACTIVITY: In short though, the battle we have just considered is meant to point forward to this final battle. Take a look at the table to the right and fill out what verse you have heard it from in Chapter 10. Mark them in your bible if you wish.

Armageddon	Joshua 10
Psa 2:1-7 The kings of the earth will join together against God's anointed.	
Rev 16:14 The kings of the earth would be gathered to battle in the " <i>great day of God Almighty</i> "	
Jude 1:14 Jesus will lead the army of saints	
Dan 11:44 The Lord's army will come from the way of the east.	
Zech 14:6-7 In that day, the evening time will be light.	
Rev 16:21 Great hail will fall from heaven.	
Zech 14:3 The LORD will fight for Israel.	

In addition to pointing forward to a literal battle, this story is portraying the spiritual war we all have to face internally (as seen throughout Joshua). That battle starts here and now, today! We eagerly look towards the time where God wins us this victory:

"O death, where is thy sting?

O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (NKJV)

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you.

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

1 Cor 15:54-58 (NIV)

So then, let us fight this spiritual battle, assured of this victory we can share over sin with our Lord Jesus Christ.

JOSHUA 11-22 SUMMARY

JOSHUA 11: Israel faces the northern kings of Canaan who unite together with more men than “the sand on the sea shore in multitude” (v4). Predictably, they are no match for the Mighty God who delivered them into the hand of Israel. This meant that Israel now had possession over the entire land with the Kings of the South and the North defeated in chapters 10 and 11.

JOSHUA 12: To highlight this fact; every king and every city Israel defeats is listed in Chapter 12, (all 31 of them!) as a record of Israel’s victory over the Canaanites and the fulfilment of God’s promise in Josh 1:2-4.

JOSHUA 13-19: The land is divided and given to each of the tribes by random lot. In each of these chapters, precise detail is given to the boundaries of each tribe. This section may be a little intense for us during the daily readings, but remember this was the official, authorised record for each tribes’ inheritance, outlining exactly where their property borders would lie. So this section would have been of great importance for Israel!

JOSHUA 20: The cities of refuge are appointed: cities dispersed throughout the land, acting as safe houses for people who, by accident, cause the death of another (manslaughter) They were: Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth and Golan (where you will be staying at Rathmines Bible School!)

JOSHUA 21: The Levites are given their cities, as they aren’t given their own allotment of land. The reason for this is in Josh 13:14; God (the sacrifices of the tabernacle) was their inheritance!

JOSHUA 22: As the land is now occupied, the two and a half tribes from Josh 1:12 are released from their promise (which God counted as fulfilled), sending them back to their own land across the Jordan. (There is another excellent story in this, but that’s for another day!) And that brings us to Joshua 23.



Who Will You Serve?

JOSHUA 23, 24

The final two chapters of Joshua are by far the most important, as they give us the crux of the matter and the meaning for us. Israel may have defeated the Canaanites, yet the battle wasn't over, and never will it be, this side of the Kingdom. Joshua recognizes the true war isn't with people, but with sin. Within the pages of Joshua 23 and 24, we see an old man mustering his last breath to address his people one last time. In his address, he pleads with them to be courageous, keep God's commandments and choose to serve Yahweh their God, for life.



Yahweh YOUR God

JOSHUA 23

In these last two chapters of Joshua, Israel's leader, now an old man, calls together the elders (in **Josh 23**) and all the people (in **Josh 24**) to provide a final exhortation to them before his death. Before commencing this section: we recommend reading **Josh 23-24** in their entirety. This will help you get a clearer grasp of what exactly Joshua wants to impart to them.



REFLECT: If you had only an hour to talk to someone (either a friend, family member or an interested friend) to help them choose the right path before you were gone forever, what would you say?

In **Josh 23:1**, the chapter starts out by acknowledging the status of the land, and the direct reason for this. What does it acknowledge and why do you think this is brought to the forefront of Israel's mind?

Heb 4:8-12 picks up this idea of Joshua's rest. Read these verses in the ESV. What is the author of Hebrews prompting the reader to consider?

What does **Heb 4:11** say is the approach we need to take to enter this rest?

Coming back to **Josh 23:1**, the verse tells us that Joshua "*waxed old and (was) stricken in age*". From your reading of **Josh 23-24** (presuming his speeches were given right before his death) how old was Joshua?

In **v2** why do you think Joshua specifically calls for the elders, heads, judges and officers to hear his words in **Josh 23**?

Who else had brought the people together to address them one last time before their death? Why is this significant?

Joshua begins his speech in **v3** by reminding the elders of all they had seen YAHWEH do. He wasn't asking them to engage their faith for this, but to recall what they had witnessed with their very own eyes, the evidence of God's existence and relationship with Israel. What three things might the elders have remembered first?

John Ullman says this about Joshua's opening remark:

"In one succinct pronouncement, Joshua effectively unified his hearers, for none could contradict what he had said. All were immediately reminded of the abundant blessings which Yahweh had heaped upon the nation."

John Ulman 'Joshua His Life and Times' pg. 236



REFLECT: What are some things you have witnessed that prove God's existence in your life?

Joshua could easily have reminded the elders of what he had done, but in humility, he gives all the glory to God.



ACTIVITY: In doing so, he repeats this phrase continually through his speech: "the LORD your God". Colour every occurrence of this phrase in **Josh 23** (It occurs 13 times).

Why do you think Joshua makes such an emphasis on this phrase?

Similarly, God Himself pleads with Israel in **Eze 20:18-19** to make Him their God too. In these verses, what does God require for us to make Him our God too?

Just like Moses had said in **Deut 20:4**, Joshua reminds the elders, in **v3-4** that it was God who had fought for them and provided the victory for them, fulfilling His part of the promise. This is important, because shortly Joshua will ask the people to fulfil their part of the promise too.

Why in **v5** does Joshua say that God "shall" expel the nations before Israel? Hadn't this already been done?

The following verses trace us through the evolving state of the land after Joshua's death. Summarise the events of each verse to piece together what transpired.

Josh 18:1 _____

Judg 1:1,19 _____

Judg 1:21, 27-28 _____

Judg 2:20-23 _____

Judg 3:1 _____

After examining these verses, why would there still be Canaanites in the land?

Joshua was reminding the elders that God had done the heavy lifting in destroying the strength of Canaan, just as He had promised in **Exo 23:27-28**. What then does Joshua encourage the elders to do in **v6-8**?

What advice does Joshua pass down to the elders in **v6**? Where have we heard these words before and why is it so significant?

In this life, God has given us the freedom to choose to do as we please. However, in **v6**, we are given clear guidance of what we should do: use our freedom to choose obedience to God's Law, to let His words guide our paths and not turn from it.

What do the following verses teach us about what our walk should look like?

Matt 7:13-14 _____

Luke 9:62 _____

Heb 12:1-2 _____

To “not turn to the right hand or to the left” of God’s Law means we have to know it and therefore read it. As young people, we can so often get distracted by other priorities and forget to read God’s Word.

Look up the three quotes below and summarise them in your own words to motivate you to make a diligent effort to read God’s Word.

Matt 4:4 _____

2 Tim 3:15-17 _____

Prov 3:1-4 _____



REFLECT: What are some strategies you can add to your life to ensure you don’t get distracted from reading God’s Word daily?

Just remember, faith can only come by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). So don’t neglect to read your Bible!

Back in **Josh 23:7-8**, Joshua reminds the elders that they must cleave to God and remain separate from the nations around. We’ve seen earlier in this notebook why this was commanded (see **Deut 7:1-6**).



INVESTIGATE: Look up the word “cleave” in Strongs or a Bible dictionary and write down what it means in your own words. Where do we first find this word in the bible and what kind of relationship is “cleaving” specifically connected to?



ACTIVITY: Here Israel had the choice to cleave to God (v8) or to the nations (v12). Circle this word in these two verses to make it stand out for you!

Although we aren’t surrounded by Canaanites, we are probably more exposed to the world’s influences than Israel ever was. How much more applicable is this lesson for us then, as we are constantly being bombarded by the world’s influence via the media and internet. What does Paul advise the 1st century ecclesia in **2 Cor 6:14-17**? What are the four sets of opposites Paul refers to and what do they teach us?

What might cleaving to “the nations” look like today? Likewise, what might cleaving to God look like?

In **Josh 23:9-11**, Joshua again draws their attention to what God had done for them and therefore, the appropriate response they should have is to “love the LORD your God”.

What does Joshua say would happen if Israel cleaved to the nations instead of their God in v12-13?

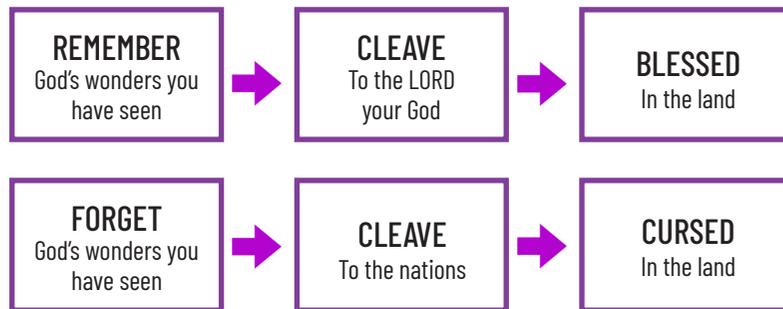
Consider **Prov 22:3-5**. What does it confirm about the lesson Joshua is teaching the elders here in v13?

In the final 3 verses of **Josh 23**, Joshua states 3 clear facts for the elders:

- He would soon die, meaning they will be left to decide the fate of Israel (v14)
- They knew for certain that God had fulfilled His promise in blessing Israel (v14-15)
- Therefore, if God had fulfilled His word to Israel when they obeyed His voice, He would certainly fulfil His Word to curse them if they disobeyed. (v15-16)



ACTIVITY: Joshua was very clever and logical in his address to the elders. In essence he is stepping them through a simple flowchart. Copy this diagram at the top of **Josh 23** in your bible.



As you would have noticed throughout the book, Joshua did everything in his power to provide Israel with future reminders of the work God had done within his lifetime. The next generation would pass by these many monuments, altars and ruins as they worked and travelled around the land and be assured that everything written in the book certainly happened.



REFLECT: What is your personal evidence that God is true and will fulfil His promises to us? Do you have Bible verses that could help you preach to someone about this? If so list them too.

The same message of **Joshua 23** is reiterated by the apostle Peter in **2 Pet 3** as he encourages the 1st century ecclesia:

*"The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.
Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God..."*
2 Pet 3:9-12 (ESV)

We are Witnesses

JOSHUA 24

We now come to Joshua's final address, where he gathers all of Israel, in v1. Consider the magnitude of the event: all the people rallied from every part of the land, together in one place! Consider what the people knew would soon happen to Joshua. Imagine you are present at this gathering and describe what the atmosphere might have been like:



ACTIVITY: Joshua chooses Shechem as the location for this gathering. Locate Shechem on the map (pg. 8).

What are two major geographical landmarks that surround this city? (Hint: Israel has been here with Joshua before).

When were they last at these two landmarks and what were they there for?

Lets take a look at the history of Shechem: Shechem is a vital part of Israel's history as it has significance to two of their patriarchs. First of all, it's the first recorded place Abraham stopped at when he entered Canaan. Turn to **Gen 12:6-7**, what happens at this location?

The word "plain" of Moreh in **Gen 12:6** is correctly rendered by the ESV as an "oak". Throughout the ancient land of Canaan, people would use these massive oak trees as markers to identify where they were and seek refuge in their shade. They acted as significant landmarks for Israel in the future.

Shechem is also mentioned in **Gen 35:1-4**. Where was Jacob heading and what does he do at Shechem?

Using this knowledge regarding the importance of Shechem's history from Genesis, why do you think Joshua chooses to bring Israel here for his final address? (Consider the content he is about to address with them).

And so Israel gathers at Shechem, at the base of the two mountains, (Ebal and Gerizim) to make a choice: to turn to the mountain of blessing, or to turn to the mountain of cursing.

Who were Israel really presenting themselves before in v1?

Although Joshua is doing the speaking, it is the LORD God of Israel who is speaking to them in v2-13.



ACTIVITY: To make this extra apparent, colour in the word "I" followed by the verb He uses in v2-13. (For example "I took" in v3, as this is God speaking). Here God is making it clear that He alone did all of this for Israel, not any of the gods worshipped by the nations.

What event from Israel's past does God first call to their remembrance in **v2** and what choice did this company of people make?

Which two gods are mentioned in **v2**? (Keep this in mind as you read through: God repeatedly contrasts Himself to His [so-called] competition).



ACTIVITY: In **v3-13** God highlights several stories for them to reflect on. Fill in the table on the next page - you may need to enlist a friend, older sibling or parent to help you with this one!

Having completed the table, why do you think God highlights these particular stories? What connects these stories and what is He trying to draw Israel's minds back to?

Hopefully you can see the clear emphasis on God being intertwined in Israel's history from their birth as a nation. In their 500 years of history, there were numerous times their very existence was threatened, yet here they were gathered at Shechem today.

God wanted Israel to recognise three things:

1. God Himself, was instrumental in delivering Israel to this point. Without Him they would not exist.
2. Almost every occasion God mentions, there is a contrast between Him and the gods of the nations; Whether the gods of Terah, the gods of Egypt or the gods of the Amorites. Yahweh reminds Israel how each of these gods fared against the One True God.
3. Each historical figure in Israel's history had to make a choice as to who to put their trust in. Here Israel would have to make a choice of their own.

God is assuring Israel He was there in their past, to assure them He is there now and will be in the future.



REFLECT: Thinking about this same principle in your own life; write down at least one specific thing which demonstrates to you that God has been involved in your past:

Coming back to **Josh 24:2-13**, a minor theme in these stories is to trace the bodies of water that have been crossed in **v2-3, 6-7** and **v8**. What are they?

What do these water crossings symbolise? If you are struggling look at **1 Cor 10:1-2**. (Hint: It's more than a one-word answer)



ACTIVITY: In **v12**, God says that he sent the hornet before Israel. Whether this was literal or metaphorical, we aren't sure, but it was something that was promised in **Ex 23:28** and **Deut 7:20** as a sign of what God would do to prepare the land for Israel's occupation. Mark these two verses in your margin against **Josh 24:12**

God conveys a final emphasis in **v13**: it was He who laboured for this land, and not Israel, reminding them of the position He had graciously bestowed on them.

Who did they choose to serve?

Name of Israel's historical figure	Terah	Abraham	Isaac	Esau	Jacob	Moses & Aaron	"Fathers out of Egypt"	Balak & Balaam	7 Nations of Canaan & Israel
Verse in Joshua 24						v5			v11-13
Where the story is originally recorded		Gen 11:30-Gen 12:3, Gen 21:1-5							
What problem did they face?	He served the gods on the other side of the river Euphrates.				Famine in the land of Israel.		Destruction from the nations that surrounded them (whether Egyptian or Amorite).		
Who was their choice between?			Choosing between his two sons, Esau who he loved, or Jacob, who was to be the seed of promise.						
What was the result and who gave them this solution?				Esau chose to despise his birthright and serve himself. God respects this choice and blesses him in earthly things (rather than spiritual) and give him a kingdom in Mt Seir.				Balaam is forced to bless Israel and God delivers Israel from the hand of Moab and Midian in Num 31.	

In **v14**, the tone shifts as Joshua gives his final words of advice to Israel; an appeal to choose to serve Yahweh their God.

To do this, he follows the example of Moses who puts a similar proposition to the old generation in **Deut 30:15-20**. What similarities can you identify in these verses to what you've read in **Josh 23-24**?

What is Joshua identifying as likely Israel's largest, recurring problem in the future?



ACTIVITY: Colour in the word "serve" throughout this chapter. (There should be 14).

What does it mean to "Fear the LORD"? (hint: see **Deut 10:12,20**)

What is the result from fearing God in these verses:

Psa 111:10 _____

Psa 115:11 _____

Prov 3:7 _____

Rev 14:7 _____

What does a non-fearing man look like in **Psa 36:1-4**?



INVESTIGATE: Joshua uses a strange phrase, to serve God in sincerity and truth? What do these words mean in Hebrew:

Sincerity: _____

Truth: _____



REFLECT: What then would this look like for you? How can you serve God in sincerity and truth? (See **Psa 51:6-16** if you want some ideas).

Between **v14-25**, Joshua tells Israel they have to make a choice, between the LORD, or the gods which their fathers once served.



ACTIVITY: To make this stand out, colour in "gods" throughout these verses in **Josh 24**.

In **v15**, we come to the very heart of Joshua's speech. Joshua gives Israel a directive. Within that directive, was a choice that had to be made:

"(choose you this day who you will serve)"

This choice is the same one that has faced humanity since Creation. It's the choice we all make today which impacts our eternity. For this reason, it became the unrivalled Study Week slogan.

What does **Matt 6:24** say about how many masters we can serve and why?

You see, God has given us the freedom to choose who we serve, but as we make the choice of who we will serve, we are simultaneously choosing our final outcome. In **Rom 6:16-18**, we are told what these two options are. What are they and what is the outcome for each choice?

In essence, **Rom 6** is telling us that there is no middle ground! By not making a choice to serve God, we are, by default, choosing sin and therefore set against Him. **Rom 5:10** explicitly tells us this: we are enemies to God in this state! God never wishes us to remain in this state though, for the previous verse (**v9**) says: *"but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Christ tells us exactly how we should serve God in **Matt 22:37**. Copy this passage in your own words below:

False gods

Joshua identifies Israel's greatest weakness as their recurring inclination to serving the same false gods as their fathers. You might be thinking, *"I'm not worshipping an idol! How does this relate to me?"* First of all, come to **Deut 13:1-11**. What particular issue here is God warning Israel about?

If you are serving an idol, what does it show about your relationship with God in **v3-4**?

In **Isa 44**, God tells Israel how bizarre it is that they serve these gods in the first place. What does God highlight in **Isa 44:6-10, 13-19** that exposes how ridiculous it is that Israel serves these gods?

How is it relevant to us? Just like Israel, we create our own gods who take us away from our Creator! This doesn't change just because we aren't in Ancient Israel (see **Rom 1:23-25**).

What is John's final message to the 1st century ecclesia in **1 John 5:19-21**?

Paul provides us an answer to our question in **Col 3:5-9**. Read this in the ESV and write below in your own words, what does Paul identify as 'modern day idolatry'?



PIERCING PONDERING: Along with the behaviours Paul lists, his overall point is incredibly powerful: we are serving a false God (idolatry) if we have returned to our *"old self"*, when our sinful desires controlled our lives (read **Rom 6:6, 12-14!**). In essence: WE are our own idol! We therefore, are faced with the exact same challenge that Israel was faced with at Shechem. To put away our gods (ourselves).



REFLECT: Take a moment to identify idolatry (serving self) in your own life: What things are you prioritising over God? What do you devote your time, effort, enjoyment and commitment to? They can be objects, goals, people, work, hobbies, self-image, plans, etc. List the big three for you below:

Make a plan for how you can turn away from your personal idols and choose to serve Yahweh in those aspects of your life:



REFLECT: **Col 3:12-17** shows us what the opposite of idolatry looks like. Read through these verses and compare yourself to the behaviours listed. Does your behaviour reflect who you want to be serving? _____

Back in **Josh 24:15**, what choice does Joshua say he has chosen and who with?

In relation to this, what does Paul identify in **1 Tim 3:1-5** as essential for a bishop or leader of the ecclesia? (Particularly look at **v4-5**).



PIERCING PONDERING: It's one thing to make the choice to serve God yourself. It is another to influence others to do the same. Joshua's words here in **v15** should give us encouragement that your mindset can be the positive influence on others in making Godly decisions. So make your choice public and known, as this in itself is a form of great leadership, even if leadership might not be present in your family, friend-group or ecclesia. **Matt 5:14-15** tells us that we must shine bright to give light to everyone in the house! Especially as you leave Study Week, that decision will be up to you.

Interestingly, the Bible doesn't actually give us any information about Joshua's family tree or his descendants despite his statement here in **v15**. It is somewhat similar to that of Christ, who embraces us as his own house (family) if we align ourselves with him (**Heb 3:6** and **1 Peter 2:5**).

In response to Joshua, Israel affirms that they would not forsake God in **v16-18**. What reason do they give for their choice?

How does Israel describe God here?

Read **v19-22**. Joshua's response back to Israel in **v19** seems harsh:

"You cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions and sins".

Firstly, what possible reasons do you think Joshua might be saying this to Israel for?



INVESTIGATE: A translation that explores one of these possible solutions is the Contemporary English Version (CEV). What does this translate **v19** as?

Joshua is clearly not telling Israel that it is impossible for them to serve God, as he accepts their affirmation that they will serve Him in **v22**.

Two possible reasons for this strong language is:

1. Joshua is challenging Israel and wants them to fully commit to serving their God.
2. Joshua is acutely aware of what mankind is like, and that (as the context of **v20** suggests), it would be impossible for them to serve God IF they did not forsake their false gods.

Regardless of which interpretation it is, Joshua is making Israel reconsider and count the cost of the decision that they are making. Christ says something similar in **Luke 14:26-33**. What is the lesson for us from this passage?



INVESTIGATE: Joshua describes God as “jealous” in **v19**. Using the Cambridge Dictionary, what is the definition of the word ‘jealous’?

Look at how the word “jealous” is used in the Bible. Who is feeling jealous in these verses, who are they jealous towards and why?

Ex 20:4-5 _____

1 Kings 19:10 _____

Zech 1:14-15 _____

2 Cor 11:2 _____



PEIRCING PONDERING: Scripture describes that we have a relationship with God just as a husband does with a wife (see **Isa 62:4-5**, **Jer 31:32**, **Hosea** and **Rev 21:2**). When we turn from Him, in effect, we forsake our relationship and are unfaithful to Him (**Jer 3:20**). God feels jealous for us in the same way that a husband or wife feels jealous over their spouse’s love and devotion. Joshua therefore warns Israel that, although we have the privilege of having such a relationship with the God of all the Earth, we also must “cleave” (**Josh 23:8**) to him so that we do not evoke His jealousy.



ACTIVITY: In **v19**, “He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins” seems to be a challenging verse, given what we know about God’s mercy. **Deut 5:8-10** puts this verse in context and is a good verse to write in your margin.

How do these verses clarify who will receive mercy and who will receive judgement for their iniquities?

In **v20**, Joshua makes it very clear that if they were to turn back from God after everything He had done, His goodness would quickly turn into severity whilst they were in the land (a concept seen in **Rom 11:22**).

Undeterred, Israel reaffirms to Joshua that they “will serve the LORD” in **v21**! In response, Joshua invokes what we might call today, a legal contract.

- A covenant (or deed) is made in **v21**
- It is then witnessed in **v22**
- Finally it is written down in **v23** (effectively signed and dated by Israel).

What startling discovery does Joshua reveal to us in **v23** which may indicate why he has been using such strong language with Israel?

In like fashion, we have been commanded to incline (or draw near) our hearts unto Yahweh. What does **Isa 55:3** tell us the result will be if we do this?



REFLECT: In **v24-25** Israel verbally agrees to this legally binding covenant. As **1 John 3:18** puts it, “let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” Our verbal commitments must be followed with our actions. How good are you at keeping your covenant with God and inclining your heart to Him?

V26-27 - For Israel, they had a stone lodged at Shechem that had witnessed their promise and would act as an eternal reminder to them of what they had committed to.

What is the new covenant we are (or can be) a part of (**Matt 26:28**) and how did we (or can we) bind ourselves to it (**Rom 6:3**)



REFLECT: If you have not yet undertaken this ritual to commit yourself to Yahweh; what is the reason for this and what can you do to change this?

Jesus, like Joshua, has left us with a physical memorial to remind us of the covenant we have made! What does the memorial involve? (Matt 26:25-27) And what exactly is it a reminder of (1 Cor 11:24-27)?

Go back to Josh 24:26; Israel has set up their reminder at the oak of Shechem; the same tree that their father had made the choice to bury his idols at, long ago. Now - would they?

This conclusion of Joshua is remarkably similar to the conclusion of Deuteronomy. Come over to Deut 31:24-31 and identify three similarities between Moses' and Joshua's last words.

What had Moses predicted the response of Israel would be back then?

What do we find however is the result of this speech in Josh 24:31?

Why do you think this was? (Compare Judg 2:7-10 in your answer).

That is what Joshua's leadership style had all been about, providing Israel with the ability to REMEMBER what God had done for them, many years into the future. All the gathered stones and the ruins Joshua had left as MEMORIALS were designed for this moment, when he was dead and buried, so that Israel could remember. Now it was up to them. It is also up to us, who have been given those same words to REMEMBER too.

In v29 we find that Joshua dies at the age of 110. For the first time in his life, he is called the "Servant of the LORD". Think back, who was last called the 'Servant of the LORD' and why is this such a monumental compliment for Joshua to be described as such?

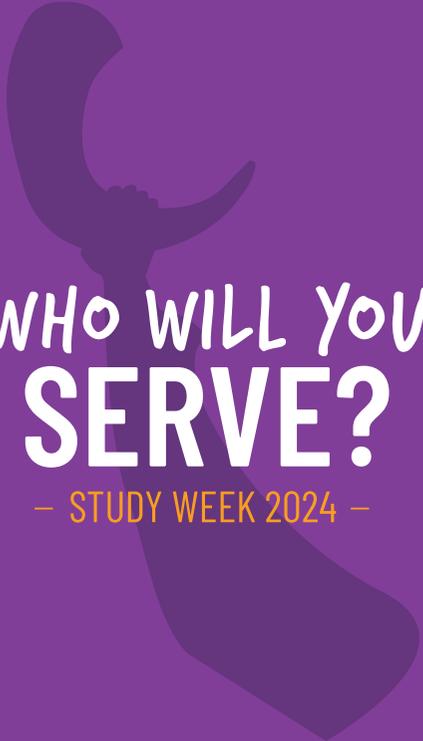
Why do you think we are provided with the details of where Joshua was buried in v30?

Remarkably, Joshua isn't the only person buried at the end of this book: the bones of Joseph, the forefather of Joshua, are buried as well in v32. Look up Gen 50:24-26. Why had the children of Israel taken Joseph's bones in the first place and why do you think Joseph makes such a point of this to them?

So from Exo 13:19 until Josh 24, the children of Israel had carried Joseph's bones to his final burial place in Shechem. Of all the faithful things Joseph does in his life, it is this request that earns him a place in Heb 11:22. Why do you think this is?

But why wait until now to mention Joseph's bones here?

If you haven't worked it out, the lesson of Joseph's final request is pretty monumental. It demonstrates his steadfast belief in his God. He was certain that Yahweh would deliver Israel back to the Land of Promise, despite their current settlement in Egypt at the time of his death.



WHO WILL YOU SERVE?

— STUDY WEEK 2024 —

“But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve!
Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates?
Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live?
But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”
Joshua 24:15 (NLT)