

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Life of JOSHUA

**(Moving out to seize the Promises
of God and make them your own)**

BY

DR JOHN C McEWAN

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INTRODUCTION

“The book of Joshua completes the (story of the) redemption of Israel that was begun in the book of Exodus. Exodus is the book of redemption out of Egypt; Joshua is the book of redemption into the Promised Land.” (Dr J Vernon McGee – Through the Bible Commentary - Volume 2, page 1).

Dr McGee’s words sum up the purpose of the book of Joshua well. This book records the conquest of the land under the great leader who followed Moses. The Jewish Talmud records that the author of the book is Joshua, except for the last five verses which were penned by Phinehas. I find little in this book to challenge that ancient belief, although the scribal hands of some son(s) of Levi are seen at times as editors. It may be that the priests were the authors of this book; we will only know for sure in heaven, and until then I am not really interested in speculating further.

Joshua was forty years of age on leaving Egypt, and is eighty at the time of assuming total command, and will die at the age of 110 years. He is the man who remembers the days of slavery, the days of wandering, and the days of conquest. The conquest is only partial and the central mountainous region is alone reasonably pacified. Much of the coastal plain still remained under Canaanite control, where their chariot forces were able to keep the foot soldiers of Israel at a disadvantage, and the Israelites at a distance. They do not claim the full promise of the Lord, depend upon His mighty power, and take all the land from these people. The opportunity is lost to seize all the land, and it will only be four hundred years later, in the days of Saul, David, and Solomon that the land will be fully won.

For centuries the land of Canaan had been under the sovereignty of either the Old Hittite Empire or the Egyptian Empire. At this very time that Joshua leads the people across Jordan the New Kingdom of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt is in its middle years, and disinterest in Canaan was the norm for the pharaohs of this period. Some of the key figures from this dynasty are well known to modern people due to excavations in Egypt. Hatshepsut is the famous female pharaoh, who styled herself, “pharaoh’s daughter”, and I believe is the woman who finds Moses. Exodus 2:5. Pharaoh Amenhotep IV changes his name to Akhenaton, and builds a new capital at Amarna (Akhetaton).

We have access today to the Amarna Letters from this very period (mid fourteenth century BC) and they record the dismay of a number of the city states of Canaan with the attacks of the “Habiru/Apiru” at this time. The Egyptian Pharaoh does not listen to their pleas for help. The Egyptians send no aid to them and all the Shephelah (the hill country from Beersheba through to Dan) falls to the Israelites. One of the last pharaoh’s of this dynasty was Tutankhamun, whose tomb’s discovery by Howard Carter early last century was one of the great finds of Egyptian archaeology. Refer to the Commentary on Exodus chapters 1 -2.

THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THIS PERIOD

The period from 1400 – 1350 BC provided a unique “window” of opportunity to seize the land without interference from the major powers of the day and build population levels to that which was required to hold the land. The Lord uniquely opens the door to seize Canaan by ensuring all the great powers are disabled or distracted through this period. The failure of the Israelites to seize all the land and firmly hold it in God’s power will open the door to the Philistine invasion around 1200 BC, and the re-emergence of Egyptian control of parts of the land also.

The destruction of the city of Hazor provides an important date point for the invasion of the land, but one which excites a lot of debate amongst scholars. Hazor falls in a fiery destruction dated to around the year 1400 BC. I believe this is destroyed by the Israelites. Joshua 10:1-10, 11:11-13. Joshua records the absolute destruction of only three cities in Canaan by the invading Israelites; the rest were captured and lived in. The biblical account of the invasion indicates that the Israelites produce little collateral damage in the land, and so there are few sites (only the three cities, Jericho, Ai, and Hazor) that give us any clues as to the Israelite entry into the land.

Jericho gives little help as it was rebuilt again and again and is of mud brick construction and so any exposed older area “dissolves” with rains after a few years. A mud brick refugee camp/village inhabited in 1949 is just outside the modern town and is nearly all decayed away by the wind and rain! Ai has only just been securely identified and proper excavation is in early stages with any certainties only just beginning to emerge. Read the Biblical Archaeological Review for updates on this (www.biblicalarchaeology.org). Hazor gives us the more solid dating. It is fiercely debated however, as liberal “scholars” do not want to acknowledge the reality of an Exodus-Conquest at all!

Note carefully however, there is no biblical warrant to look for an “invasion-destruction strata” in the land apart from the three named cities. The biblical record indicates the Israelites took the cities, and used the houses in them, even to using the pots and pans! Distinctive Israelite pottery only emerges later as they need to replace the things looted from the captured cities and towns.

As you read texts on the Exodus, or the Pentateuch generally, you need to be aware that all satanic might has been concentrated upon the elimination of the early books of the Bible as history. As more information emerges from archaeological excavations however, the evidence grows for the record of Joshua being considered history. Do not expect it to be widely accepted, for acceptance of this book before us has serious historical implications for the rights of modern Israel to the land, and vested interest does not want the truth of this book accepted at all. Liberals will always

appeal to “scientific scholarship”, and you must recognize that such a term may cover any number of vested opinions. Always remember that the phrase, “most scholars agree” will tend to indicate a falsehood, just as it did in Galileo’s day.

The traditional date for the Exodus was set at around 1450 BC, with the conquest being from 1410 – 1390 BC. This was seriously challenged in the late 1950s by Dame Kathleen Kenyon’s interpretation of her excavations at Jericho. Her view on the data from Jericho, and the conflicting nature of the data from that site, have made most very cautious about her views in more recent times. Most liberal texts quote the work of Kenyon as if it is “gospel”, yet it is sixty years old, and more recent digs have uncovered conflicting data to hers.

I hold to the early date for the Exodus, around 1440 BC, and an entry into the land around 1400 BC. At this distance it is impossible to be precise as all the dates for the Egyptian pharaohs may be plus or minus 10-30 years, so remember that the dates for pharaohs given below (or anywhere else) may be out by 10-30 years. This period of fifty years, from 1400 – 1350 provides a historical “window” of opportunity for the invasion of Canaan by the Israelites. Egyptian interest in Canaan wanes after the reign of Thutmose IV, who does send an expedition north around 1420 BC.

If my belief is correct, this would have occurred while Israel was in the Midianite lands of Arabia during their wandering years, although I suspect he is trying to find and destroy the Israelites if he can find them. All pharaohs after Thutmose IV were sidetracked by pursuit of pleasure (Amenhotep III) or the pursuit of a new religion of monotheistic worship of the sun-god (Amenhotep IV – Akhenaton), or by more general distractions.

The new Hittite Empire under Suppiluliumas rises again by the mid 1360s BC and begins to re-assert its interest in the Coastal regions of Syria and Canaan. The new Assyrian Empire begins to grow in power under Assur-Uballit around the 1350s BC and begins to challenge for power also in this region. Egyptian power resurges back into Canaan under Seti I (1320 – 1305 BC) and Ramses II (1305 – 1235 BC). Both Seti and Ramses conducted extensive campaigns against the Hittites and pushed them back into Lebanon. Each time they surged forth, they marched their army up the coastal strip of Israel. This occurs during the period of the early judges. The lack of mention of the Egyptians in Judges is an indication that the Egyptian stuck mainly to the coastal strip and didn’t try to capture the hill country as it had no real interest to them. Egypt was of no real concern to Israel either, as they were focused on the “raiders” of the land as threats. The pharaoh after Ramses, Merneptah (1235 – 1223 BC), actually mentions defeating Israel in the Jezreel Valley area in the fifth year of his reign, (Circa 1231 BC).

It is clear that by this date Israel is an established power in the hill country and the Egyptians have re-asserted their sovereignty over the remaining Canaanite City States on the coast. Egyptian fortresses along the coast, protecting their army’s route for attacking the Hittites, were manned through this period. In the book of Judges the Egyptians are not mentioned as a “scourge” to Israel at all, and so were considered by the authors disinterested in the interior, and only interested in their passage to and fro up the coastal strip. The Philistines, who arrive later, will try to control all the land, possibly with the encouragement of Egypt to punish Israel.

Archaeological excavations contain massive destructive layers on many sites through the thirteenth and twelfth centuries. These destruction levels were initially seized upon as evidence of the Israelite invasion, but this was due to not taking the biblical account seriously. As we will see in our study Joshua will specifically indicate that they damaged little in their invasion, but seized the places they could intact and lived in them, using all the captured goods as their own. The significant number of destruction levels in sites wide spread over Israel, dated to later centuries is testimony to the reality of the violence of daily life in the period of the Judges.

Massive destruction was caused around 1230 BC by the arrival of the peoples known in the Bible as the Philistines. They appear to have been a mixed race/culture group of peoples from the Aegean area or even further a field. They may have had Mycenaean affiliations, and they certainly had proto-Greek type religious practises and pottery that appears to draw upon Minoan-Mycenaean types. They had at least six tribal groups within their loose “nation”; the Dardani, Masa, Pitassa, Arawanna, Kirkisa, and Lukka. Around this time they invade the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and destroy the Hittite capital of Hattusas, and the cities of, Tarsus, Carchemish, Sidon, Kition, and Ugarit. These were all major centres of culture and political power, and their destruction indicates the warlike nature and the significant numbers of these peoples.

They invade Egypt itself around 1190 BC, and are possibly not fully beaten by the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses III. It is now thought that the pharaoh “buys them off”, after numerous indecisive battles, with the offer of cities in Canaan. They seize these places, kill or enslave the local Canaanites, and take over the coastal strip under the nominal sovereignty of Egypt. They seize and rebuild as city states, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath. Significant excavations have occurred in these places and uncovered the nature of their conquest and occupation. The two groups that Ramses gives “permission” to settle in Canaan he calls, the Peleset and the Tjekker. From the first group we get the name Palestine. We will meet these ruthless, warlike, and iron using people, in the book of Judges. They may operate as the “proxy hit-men” of Egypt, we cannot be sure at this distance.

Joshua lives, fights, and dies, well before these great events. Joshua’s name means “JHWH Saves”. He was a man who was true to his name, for he expresses his faith in the deliverance of the Lord in every action he fought. Once again Dr McGee sums this up wonderfully. “Joshua was a man of courage, dependence upon God, faith, leadership, enthusiasm, and fidelity. He is a type of Christ in his name and in his work.”

He leads his people into the battles of Canaan, not the “rest of Canaan”. The land of Canaan was a place of battle and temptation to the evils of satanic religion. It was the place of enticement and of opportunity. The nature and work of Joshua is an example to us of pastoral leadership, as was the life of Moses. He mentors leadership in the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict. With Moses and David, he is to be an example to the Jewish leaders of the Great Tribulation period.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

(After that of Dr J Vernon McGee – Through the Bible Commentary – Volume 2)

Section 1 The Land Entered

- Chapter 1 Joshua’s Commission and Command
- Chapter 2 Rahab enters the Plan of God
- Chapter 3 Crossing the Jordan River
- Chapter 4 The Two Memorials
- Chapter 5 Circumcision and the first Passover in the Land of Canaan
- Chapter 6 The Fall of Jericho
- Chapter 7 Failure at Ai
- Chapter 8 Victory over Ai
- Chapter 9 The Gibeonites
- Chapter 10 The Battle of the Five Kings
- Chapter 11 The Northern Campaign
- Chapter 12 The conquest successes listed

Section 2 The Land Divided

- Chapter 13 Confirmation of the East bank of the Jordan to the two and a half tribes
- Chapter 14 Caleb given Hebron and its surroundings
- Chapters 15-19 The tribes receive their land parcels by lot
- Chapter 20 The Cities of Refuge
- Chapter 21 The Cities of the Levites set aside for them
- Chapter 22 The Altar of the Lord made

Section 3 Joshua’s Last Words

- Chapter 23 Joshua’s call to courage and certainty in the Plan of God
- Chapter 24 Call to consecration and devotion to the Covenant
Joshua’s death recorded

Notes

CHAPTER 1**JOSHUA 1:1-18**

1:1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. 5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. 10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it. 12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, 13 Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; 15 Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as he hath given you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising. 16 And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. 17 According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. 18 Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 2. The English nation has kept these words as the heart of their announcement after the death of a monarch. They will announce the death, "The King (or Queen) is dead; long live the king." They recognize the death of one simply means the reign of another has begun. In God's plan there is always a new leader to replace the one who has gone to their heavenly rest and reward. Moses has served and gone to glory, and the Lord had prepared his replacement and trained him for forty years to take over from Moses. Joshua will serve his people as their leader and judge for thirty years. In effect he will become the first of the Judges of Israel.

Notice the title of Moses is "servant of God". This is the honoured title of all who seek the Lord's place for their lives. The early Church leaders delighted in the same title, making it even more humble by using the Greek word for bond-slave (doulos) for themselves. Romans 1:1, Colossians 4:12, James 1:1, 2 Peter 1:1, Jude 1.

The narrative from the end of Deuteronomy simply carries on into this book, so the hand that writes the end of Deuteronomy is the same hand that records these words. Joshua served Moses as his administrative assistant and as what would be called in the Armed Forces, his "batman". This means Joshua was there to dress Moses and prepare for each day with him. By closely serving the great leader Joshua learned to be a great leader himself. He was ready to do all menial tasks to assist Moses, and in humility he learned to serve the Lord and his people.

He had already been set aside publicly for leadership of the people, but after the mourning period for Moses the Lord speaks with him directly and encourages him to take up the burden of leadership with focused courage and determination. Numbers 27:15ff, Deuteronomy 3:28, 31:3-7.

The call is to go over the Jordan River and seize the land that the Lord has already given them. The words of verse 3 echo back to the initial words to Moses recorded in Exodus 23:20-33, and Deuteronomy 11:22-25. The challenge for Joshua, as for us every day of our life, is the challenge of "Faith-Rest". This is the challenge to believe God's Word and rest upon its promises as certainties.

It is the challenge to rest upon the truth of the plan and power of God and move forward into the new day with confidence in God's ability to perform all that He has promised to do with us. There is a time for quiet reflection and for mourning, but then it is to be followed by action that expresses obedience to the commands of God.

Verses 3 – 4. Every place it is possible to tread upon the land will be the Israelites, "if" they tread there. The promise of the Lord is that the land is theirs, but they must walk the walk! They have to boldly seize the land. This means

they have to prayerfully attack the great Canaanite cities on the coast also to seize their lands. They will fail to do this, for the sight of their chariot armies will frighten them, and so, by not walking that part of the land they do not receive it, whereas David and Solomon will believe, and will seize those places from the Philistines who had defeated the earlier Canaanites.

The promise of the land was given to Abraham, repeated to Isaac and Jacob, and repeated to Moses and now to Joshua. The land belongs to the descendants of Israel and is theirs by right and gift from God Himself. Can you see why this little book before us is unpopular with the liberal theologians? Notice the boundaries of the land given to Israel, for it stretches from the River Euphrates across to the Mediterranean Sea, from the mountains of Gilead and Moab across to the Mediterranean, and goes right down to the River of Egypt, just below Gaza. Deuteronomy 11:24.

The Israelites have never fully controlled this area, even under Solomon, but they will in the Millennial Kingdom. It remains their "Promised Land", even though it presently comprises much of Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories. Israel will have this area under the Lord. All others have temporary leasehold tenure only under the grace of God and due to the failure of Israel to fully believe the Lord under Joshua.

It is of interest that the Hittites are referred to as the power of the north at this time, and they were the ones that the Israelites were authorized to dispossess of sovereignty. Their failure to take on the challenge in this meant that the pharaoh's of the Nineteenth Dynasty of Egypt would fill the power vacuum, and so they would exercise rule over Canaan and Syria.

Even though the Israelites fail to fully seize the land given to them, and suffer for four hundred years as a result, their "cursing" will be turned to blessing by David and Solomon, who will form a significant empire through obedience to the Lord. It is another reminder to us, that disobedience will lead to loss of blessing, but confession and renewed obedience will bring blessing back. The Lord is gracious towards us and seeks our blessing. Numbers 6:24-27, 23:20-23, Deuteronomy 15:1-6, 10, 18, 28:1-15.

Verses 5 – 7. Joshua receives a personal promise of victory in every battle he fights. No man will stand against Joshua all his life. This promise is an amazing one, for it means had he marched his small army against the Coastal Canaanite armies he would have defeated them, and had he marched north he would have defeated the Hittites. He saw his small numbers and the smallness of the Israelite population and he didn't want to push this promise too far and so there were not any battles fought against the coastal cities of the chariot using Canaanites, nor did he head north beyond the Sea of Galilee. We will see later in this book the way the author describes those battles and the withdrawal back to the Shephelah.

God offers the Israelites a countryside that they could have filled well before the Egyptians moved back to the north to challenge them. They settle for a small area, in accordance with their present population rather than step out in faith and seize the larger area that they could have grown into. There is a significant challenge to us in this. Do we settle for a "good enough" objective when the Lord has actually called us to an exceptional objective?

God says to Joshua that, exactly like his care over Moses, he will "never leave nor forsake him". God's promise to Moses and to Joshua is ours also! Deuteronomy 31:5-8, Isaiah 41:8-14, 43:1-2, 10-13, Matthew 28:18-20, Hebrews 13:5-6. Joshua is to find contentment in his faith in the Lord. He is to find rest in the promises of God over him. He is to rest upon the Lord as he urges his troops forward in battle. He is to be assured that the battle is the Lord's, not his, and as such the Lord will win every time he is obedient and leads the troops forward. 1 Samuel 17:47.

Joshua is to find strength through faith in the truth of God's Word. God promised the land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he has delivered on this promise to the generation Joshua leads. Genesis 21:15-18, 26:1-5, 35:9-15, Psalms 105:8-11. He is to express that inner strength in his courageous actions as he leads the people forward. He is told to divide the land for the tribal groups and this is evidence of God's certainty that they will get to this point and he will be able to divide the land into parcels for each tribe. Psalms 27:14, Isaiah 35:3-4, Daniel 10:18-19, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Hebrews 12:11-14.

The only limitation upon Joshua is the depth of his faith in the Lord's ability to deliver on His promise to him. If he has courage he will find victory, but if he does not believe and move forward in faith he will not achieve all he could have achieved. Sadly he will fall short of the mark the Lord sets him for 100% success. The word for courage is qualified; he is to be "very courageous" to achieve what God sets before him.

It is the first indicator that we have that the task Joshua is given can only be achieved in extra-ordinary faith and power. God has made the promise, and so God will provide the power. Joshua is to access that power by advancing in faith in the direction the Lord has set, without any distraction or deviation to the right or the left. He is asked to do the humanly impossible and he will go a long way towards achieving the goal.

He is a mentor to us all in his faith, and our challenge is to walk as he did and go even further in our walk with the Lord. The Lord keeps on "lifting the bar" for us in this life, for he wants us to grow in obedience and build success upon success. No believer is ever meant to rest on his laurels and have a "retirement mentality". We are left here upon the earth to fight in the Angelic Conflict until the last day of our earthly life. To settle down is not on the Christian's agenda any more than it was meant to be on Joshua's agenda.

Verses 8 – 9. The central factor for faith to be strong is for the facts upon which the faith is based to be right! Joshua is to build his strength upon the certainty and absolute standards of God's Word. The Law is to be his standard and his foundation. He is to be saturated in the Word of God, and he is to be thinking about God's Law day and night. The purpose of his knowledge is to be his daily obedience to all of that which he reads written therein. The path of success is dependent upon his obedience to the Law. If he walks with God in obedience to the Law, then he will reap the rewards associated with that path of God, but if he deviates to other paths he will reap their rewards! Matthew 7:7-14.

Mental strength fails people when they get overwhelmed by events that they are not ready for. Joshua will be strong as he rests upon the Word, and through its truth he will receive the guidance and encouragement he needs to be successful in the difficult path ahead. The command to be courageous is repeated. Notice that it is a command of God. We are ordered to have courage. This reads strangely to our eyes, for we are used to seeing courage as a gift or character trait that some have.

The Lord's direct order here tells us that from God's perspective courage is a by-product of faith in action. If we have biblical faith we will have courage to step out in that faith. Once again we face the challenge that James will later give to the early churches; to deepen their faith in the Lord and let that real faith work out in courageous actions. Real faith will always work out in action. James 1:19-25, 2:14-26.

Notice that Joshua has the promise that God will be with him "wherever he goes" in obedience to the Lord's command. God's presence is for action as we move forward, not for comfort as we sit at home and relax. God's command is for courage in action, not worship in safety at home. Joshua is to say "Amen" to the Lord in action as he leads the people forward. The stress of adversity is to be faced by faith-resting in the promises of God and advancing obediently into the open doors that the Lord provides. Hebrews 4:1-12, 11:1.

Verses 10 – 11. Joshua expresses his faith in his first action by ordering the people to ready themselves to march across the Jordan River to begin the campaign to seize the land. The people were ordered to prepare to march, to prepare battlefield food for eating on the march, and to ready their weapons and wagons to move across the river to enter the land. Notice Joshua is thinking as he gives this order. He has not reacted to the Lord's command by ordering the attack across the Jordan that day, for had he done that in emotional fervour, he would have crossed with an unprepared army and been vulnerable. He will also use this time to send out the spies to check out the land and city of Jericho, their first objective.

The pause of three days is sufficient for all the people to be ready and feel prepared as they move out. They will move therefore with inner certainty, preparation, and strength. The great Battle of Hastings in 1066 changed English history. King Harold of the English moved in too much haste, and his army was neither up to strength, nor well fed when they met the Norman forces. His haste led to his death and defeat and the loss of all England to the Normans. Haste is very rarely God's path! The Lord's path is a deliberate, prayerful, prepared, and provisioned path.

Verses 12 – 18. Joshua now very specifically calls the two and a half tribes who have requested land on the east of Jordan to fulfil their vows now. They are to gather their forces over the next three days and be ready to cross over the river armed, leading the army of Israel. They are not to leave too many men this side of Jordan to protect their own women and children, but they are to trust the Lord to protect them, and advance across the river with their brethren.

They have already enjoyed the houses of their enemies and their goods to use for daily life. They alone do not have to live in tents, but have the cities of their enemies to dwell in already. They are not to be slack concerning their promises made to Moses. Numbers 32:1-32, Deuteronomy 3:18-20. Joshua reminds them that the Lord has given them the land they now enjoy rest within, and the covenant they have made is to be honoured. They are to march and fight with their brethren to seize their lands before they return to settle east of Jordan permanently.

To share in the blessing means they have the solemn responsibility to share in the battles for the others, just as they have shared in the battles to deliver the eastern lands to them. The armies of the two and a half tribes are not to return to their lands and rest in them until the other ten tribes have rest in their lands. Until the final battle is won their army is to stay in the field and fight with their brethren. They respond to this challenge and make a solemn promise to fight wherever Joshua orders them to go and to keep fighting until they have gained the victory.

Their promise to be with Joshua as they were with Moses is however a little guarded. They lack complete faith that the Lord will be with Joshua as he was with Moses. They almost plead with Joshua to ensure that he walks as Moses walked so that the Lord will indeed be with him as he was with Moses. Doubt has entered the nation.

Note also the words of these men in verse 17. They bluntly say that anyone who disobeys the orders of Joshua will be put to death, and they then urge him to have courage, for they believe that it is Joshua's courage that will fire them up to the heights of courage themselves. The fact that they have to promise to execute their own men for disobedience means they have to consider such action even at this point. Their armies are not as prepared to do what they promised to Moses as when the promise was made. When you start to think this way you have problems!

Courage and determination is failing this group already. These verses are a portent of things to come. The writer of Joshua will put the best spin on events as he describes them, but these verses are the first hint that the armies of the Lord are not totally grounded in the promises of the Lord. They march in the faith of Joshua, not their own faith.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Hasty actions are rarely God's Will and rarely achieve God's purposes. God is not caught out by events, and if we are, it is only because we have not been walking carefully before the Lord. Let us pause and reflect upon the path the Lord would have us walk and prayerfully advance down that path.
2. We must march into the battles of the Angelic Conflict in our own strong faith, not the faith of our pastors or other leadership. We are called to stand in the faith of our fathers, but make it our own. We have the challenge from the Lord to stand in fullness of faith and obey His Word. Let us stand as our forefathers stood and make their faith our own through belief in and obedience to the Word of God.
3. Doubt is destructive to advances in our faith walk with God. Doubts are to be taken to the Lord and cast at the foot of the Cross as the sinful thinking they are. 1 Peter 5:6-7. All doubt reflects human viewpoint, and the Lord's challenge to us is to walk in divine viewpoint and trust His Word above our fears and doubts.
4. All great leaders are the "servants of the Lord", and that is the way great men and women desire to be known. Let us seek this title above all others.
5. When the Lord sets before us an exceptional opportunity, do we settle for a smaller scale objective because we look at how things are presently, rather than how things could be if we grow in faith? Let us step out in faith and see things as God sees them rather than as we see them through our weakness now. We are not here upon this earth to retire, but to keep on fighting in the Angelic Conflict and winning the objectives for the Lord until the end of our lives. We are only overwhelmed when we face situations that we are not prepared for. Bible Doctrine prepares us with the facts of God to deal with the doubts of man. Let us feed ourselves upon the Word of God daily, and let us feed the Lord's people under our care with the truth that will keep them safe from doubt.
6. To win reward we must share the hazards of the battles of the Angelic Conflict. We are called to fight, not relax upon this earth. Let us ensure we keep a battle ready mental attitude through each and every day. This means we eat well, physically stay as fit as we can, and study our master's Word to receive all the daily orders for our walk.

We must stand with our brethren just as Joshua orders the two and half tribes to stand with their brethren. This means we support all mission and ministry we can in difficult places. We cannot live in gilded halls and our brothers live in mud huts, without feeling the responsibility to assist their work for the Lord! We are not called to build them houses, just as the Reubenites were not called to build houses for the men of Judah. We are called to stand in the battle with them in prayer, material, spiritual, and financial support. Let us stand with our brethren.

REFLECTION UPON THE NATURE OF BIBLICAL FAITH

1. The Christian life can be divided into three sections or stages.
 - a) Stage 1 - Salvation.
 - b) Stage 2 - The Christian Walk
 - c) Stage 3 - The Christian in Heaven.
2. Man has three means of obtaining knowledge:
 - a) Faith - to believe or trust that something is true
 - b) Reasoning - using human logic to deduce that something is true
 - c) Experimentation - to test and prove something to satisfy yourself that it is true
3. The only acceptable method of gaining grace is by faith, since this means depending upon God without our human merit.
 - a) Stage 1 - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved - salvation (Acts 16:31).
 - b) Stage 2 - Trusting in the promises and principles of the Word of God - the Christian walk.
 - c) Stage 3 - Trusting in God's provision - Heaven.
4. To illustrate belief and unbelief we follow the Jews from the plagues in Egypt to crossing the Jordan:

Incident	God's Promise	Scripture	Response	Result
Last plague	Passover Lamb	Exodus 12:21-30	Trust	Jews spared last plague.
Egyptian Army	Red Sea Crossing	Exodus 14:1-31	Trust	Moses leads Jews over Red Sea.
No Water	Water	Exodus 17:1-7	Trust	By striking rock (Christ) water obtained.
Gold Calf	God's Doctrine	Exodus 32:15-28	Distrust	Sons of Levi (Priests) slaughtered for leading
Quails	Manna	Num 11:10-33	Distrust	Many deaths due to quails
Giants	Enter Canaan	Num 13:1-14:38	Distrust	Death of fearful spies.

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				Wandering in desert
No water	Water	Num 20:2-13	Distrust	Moses strikes rock in disobedience. Will not enter Promised Land.
Wanderings	Cross Jordan	Joshua 3:1-17	Trust	Israel crosses Jordan on dry ground

5. Salvation faith is the complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for your sins and rose from the dead to give you eternal life. (Acts 16:31, Romans 4:20-25)
6. Anything added to becomes works, and therefore nullifies faith (Romans 4:4)
7. Faith is shown outwardly by confession with the mouth. (Romans 10:9-10)
8. Since faith does not depend on our own abilities, anybody can believe. Even little children (Matthew 18:2-4)
9. Assurance is by faith (Hebrews 10:22)
10. Faith is trust which does not ask to know all about God but believe all that God has said.
11. Salvation faith receives Christ as Saviour and Lord. (John 1:12, 3:16, 3:36)
12. Faith of salvation is the complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as having been delivered from our transgressions and raised again for our justification. (Romans 4:20-25)
13. By Faith God gives the soul assurance of the reality of things never yet seen by the natural man. (Hebrews 11:1-3)
14. The triumphs of faith in daily life are illustrated for the believer in Hebrews 11:1-39. Abel, Noah, Moses etc.
15. Faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)
16. Faith is the only non meritorious means of understanding things the other being rationalism and empiricism.
17. To become like a little child is an analogy to faith as a young child only has faith. (Matthew 18:2-4)

Notes

CHAPTER 2**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter begins as the two spies head out to Jericho. We will find these spies return before Israel crosses the river, so they must be sent out, either late the day before Joshua's speech, or before dawn of the day that Joshua briefs the people and calls them to be ready. The spies spend three days hiding in the hills on the West Bank before their return. I suspect Joshua sends them out before the dawn of the day he briefs the people, as none would notice anything strange about their leader detailing off two men to do an errand at that time in the camp. Joshua briefs the people later that day and gives them three days to prepare, and they will move on the following day. The briefing day is not counted in the three days, so it is the fifth day before they cross the Jordan.

Joshua was a spy on that first mission thirty nine years before. Numbers 13-14. This current spying mission is kept secret from the people lest a repeat of the "ten scared spies" occur. Joshua is taking no chances with the people sabotaging his mission in any way, and he is not sending the spies to see if the land is good, or well fortified, for he knows that. He is sending them out to see what the moral and mental state of the enemy now is. Genesis 18:16ff. The spies will confirm that these people are indeed ripe for the Lord's judgment upon them, and that the Israelites are the agents of that judgment.

Joshua has the promises of God regarding victory, but he wants more facts about these people as they are now, thirty nine years after his last visit, and he wants to remind himself of the lie of the land, or actually learn of this area for the first time, as Caleb and he may have travelled in another area. God sets his seal upon this mission and leads the spies to the right person and place, and ensures all that is done here is in His plan. There is also a family to save – that of Rahab although Joshua is not thinking of that.

We know that Joshua was right in sending this mission because of who the spies meet, for she will become an ancestor of David and the humanity of the Lord Himself. Rahab will marry one of the spies, and their son will be Boaz. Ruth 4:17-22, Matthew 1:5. The spies go prayerfully and they meet the right person, and the salvation of a household is achieved. God always finds those who have positive volition towards Him and will always provide the message of salvation to all who will hear. Hebrews 11:31, James 2:25.

JOSHUA 2:1-24

2:1 And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. **2** And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. **3** And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. **4** And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: **5** And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. **6** But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. **7** And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate. **8** And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; **9** And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. **10** For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. **11** And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. **12** Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: **13** And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. **14** And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. **15** Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. **16** And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. **17** And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. **18** Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. **19** And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. **20** And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. **21** And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window. **22** And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. **23** So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them: **24** And they said unto Joshua, Truly the

LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

REFLECTIONS

Verse 1. The mission and its first day are described briefly here. As noted above this is a secret mission and only Joshua knows of it. This level of secrecy is essential in all military operations. Only those who “need to know” about a mission are told of it. These two men must cross the Jordan River away from a ford that would be watched, and swim across the swollen river that is at this time of year in full flood.

I believe these men are sent in the earliest dawn so that they can cross the river in semi darkness unseen by any guards on the other side and so any guards have the rising sun in their eyes. The king of Jericho will have guarded the fords from the time of Israel’s arrival on the plains of Moab to ensure early warning is given the city of any attack.

Even in full flood it is always possible for trained military units to cross rivers and this was well known in the ancient world, and we have some paintings of soldiers crossing rivers using inflated animal skins as buoyancy aids. These could then be deflated and hidden in bushes ready for the return swim. This was likely the means the two men used, as simple swimming in a flooded river would have led to drowning. This was still a risky operation at best and God alone secures their safe arrival in Jericho.

The journey from the camp of Israel directly to Jericho would have taken no longer than a few hours, and by doing the swim across using the current upstream they could have arrived, deflated their skins, dried their clothes, and entered Jericho by mid-day of the day the people were being briefed. It is most likely however that they headed to the north of the city and entered its gate from the road facing in that direction, pretending they were travellers from the northern lands.

The Israelite had captured enough cities in the Gilead to secure captured clothing from Syria and further north and the spies would each have been carrying a package of clothing that would act as a disguise for them. It is always best to dress as the wealthiest and most professional person if you are trying to slip past guards, as the most suspicious people are always perceived to be tough looking and rough dressed. The common language of the time was still Akkadian, and that would have been used by all travellers, as later the early Church missionaries will use Greek.

Had they done what I have suggested above they would have taken most of the day to position themselves to look like men of the north, and would have entered the city late afternoon as if they had been on that road all day. This would have attracted less attention, but they do attract some attention, for the city is on high alert to the possibility of spies from their enemies. They head for the logical place that well dressed pagan travellers would go, the best “up market” local Inn. These often provided sexual as well as other services, and Rahab may be called a “prostitute” in the sense of “Inn Keeper”.

This may be the case in a sexual sense, or it may be that she simply kept a high quality Inn, but was seen in the category of people who made their living from strangers. All this has been speculated upon by commentators down the centuries. Let us discuss this identification of Rahab as a “prostitute” and “Inn Keeper” next, for I want to raise serious objections to what has previously been said by some.

Common prostitutes working in the tough inns of ancient cities would not be physically or morally healthy in a day and culture where sexually transmitted diseases killed people young, and was the main cause leading to the judgment that was coming. The more I reflect upon this story the more I suspect the truth about Rahab’s designation as “prostitute” is in one of two possible areas. The first is that she was an official “Inn keeper”, where prostitutes may have at times plied their trade, but to obtain information about the travellers, not just for money. Now it is clear that she “lodged strangers”, but only those who were perceived as “important” people, and such people would always be “checked out” by a trusted city leader, and I suspect Rahab is in this category. The reason we know this is that her house was on the city wall. The city wall was an important part of ancient cities and only the most trusted were allowed to live upon it, for it was the defensive line of the city.

We will see later that she is also a family oriented person, and one who cares for her siblings and parents as this woman does is not normally in the business of common prostitution. In my counselling practise I have had to work with, and assist, a significant number of women who were prostitutes, and without exception, all were women without loving or stable families of origin, often from sexually abused backgrounds, drink or drug addicted, and their dysfunctions made them very self focused. Rahab is not the profile of any standard prostitute.

The profile of this woman Rahab is not that of a poor woman making her money from sexually selling herself and running another cash business (Inn keeping) on the side. That deduction makes no sense at all, as prostitution would not be needed for money making if she ran an inn on the city wall! This was an intelligent, able, respected, and efficient professional woman, whose family looked up to her and respected her words, so that even her parents follow her counsel. This is a woman of status in this community, and respected by her parents as their decision maker.

In light of what we are told of her, the only other possibility regarding her identity within “prostitution”, was that Rahab was what was called in the ancient pagan world, a “sacred prostitute”, and that she was associated with the pagan temple of fertility in Jericho. She may have been the physical presence of the “sex/fertility goddess” of her city, and as such she saw the futility and emptiness of her religion, and the reality of the power of the real God. If she held such a

cultic position she would receive information about the Israelites that others would not hear, and she would receive respect from her fellow citizens through her role.

Had she been a common prostitute the men of the city would not have asked at her door about the strangers she was lodging, they would have smashed the place to pieces to look for them. Had she been a common prostitute she would not have been living on the city wall. To do so was to hold a key defensive position for the city and only the most trusted were living in such strategically positioned houses. These were the houses with a view, and receiving the cool breezes in the summer heat, and were reserved for the wealthy, respected and important people of the city. She is respected in this city.

I believe we have debased Rahab by shoddy exegesis in past generations, whereas the facts about her indicate a far more significant person and a more powerful spiritual conversion than most commentators have identified! I now firmly believe this woman was an important member of the religious-political structure of her city, but one who had seen the futility and emptiness of the sexualised religion that she possibly led, and one who was ready to cast aside all that she had previously believed and followed, and accept the one true God.

Verses 2 – 6. The common inns of the cities of the ancient world were in alley ways of the town, and were dirty, immoral, and dangerous places. This woman is on the city wall (light, airy and with a view), and her house is multi-storied, and large enough for her entire extended family and some special guests to be lodged safely within. The King of Jericho receives information from his guards that two well dressed strangers have entered the city. The suspicion is that they are Israelites. Now how would the king know this? No other Israelite has crossed the river to tell him this. We do not know the answer to this, although the two most logical means would be either, a satanic oracle within the pagan temple has revealed their presence, or the men guarding the fords have found the damp skins used to swim the river and know there are two spies on the loose.

It may be that both things have occurred. Rahab certainly knows these men are spies, and it may be she was in the temple and was privy to this information. It may even be that important visitors to the city were always sent to her house, (because of her position in the leadership) so that she could vet them by questions, and spy on them for the city authorities. Whatever the background the king sends messengers directly to her to inquire of the men's whereabouts.

The messengers of the king are respectful to her and, as noted above, this indicates again a respected position is held by this lady. Her use of a scarlet rope to let the spies down and then bind around her window frame (verses 15ff) tells us that she was a woman of wealth and position, as scarlet rope (or cloth that could be bound to make a long belt/rope) was rare and expensive and normally associated with rulership. In her case I would speculate that the red rope is made of her priestly garments from the sexualized religion of the fertility goddess of the city. The city soldiers do not attempt to violently search the house. This also is unusual and indicates that we are dealing with a politically powerful and religiously respected woman here. This is no common prostitute; this is a civic, and possibly a religious leader! This woman has been captured by the Holy Spirit from the very centre of Jericho's satanic political-religious system. Amos 7:12-16, Acts 9:1ff.

This woman is also very cool under pressure. If discovered in her deception she faces certain death at the hands of her neighbours and fellow leaders as a traitor to her religion and her people. She acts with calm and with certainty that the Israelites are God's people and their God is the only one who is truly God. She hides the men within stacks of drying flax on her roof top. She quickly and effectively lies to the officials of the king.

Many commentators agonize over this fact, but ethically there is nothing to agonize over here. Lies are not always wrong, and this passage underlines that fact. We mustn't try to squeeze around such things, but confront them! There are some people who are simply not entitled to the truth, for they will use the truth to work evil. To tell the truth to such evil people is to become a servant of evil. It is this step of faith and morality that James praises Rahab for. James 2:25-26.

She expressed her faith in her lie to the evil men of her city. In her case the lie she deliberately tells was her expression of faith, for by it she firmly tied her destiny to that of God's people. I am disturbed by some commentator's agony at this point, for I know by their words that I could not trust them in a battle situation to lie to the enemy and thereby serve their country, their comrades, or their God! To lie to evil men in order to protect the innocent is not to open the floodgates of dishonesty; it is to stop evil.

Those who do not think clearly on this issue are a concern to me, and I would never place them in charge of a public toilet, let alone a church! God's men and women who exercise leadership must be tough in their faith, not pathetic! We are to stand for God's truth, and that means looking satanic evil in the face and saying anything to the enemy that will protect the innocent and deceive the enemy. We are at war, and the denial to the enemy of any useful information to him is the duty of every soldier. Joshua is proud of these men, and one becomes an ancestor of the humanity of the Lord.

Rahab boldly lies to the officials, stating first that she didn't know where the spies were from, and secondly that they left shortly after their arrival, as if suspicious that they were betrayed. Her story is a good one and indicates she was becoming suspicious of them herself; that they possibly felt that and slipped away. She indicates that this has just occurred and that she has not had time to inform the authorities. She may even have expressed thanks that the officials have arrived, and so saved her the trip to "city hall". She certainly encourages their active and vigorous pursuit in the direction of the fords of Jordan. This is one very cool and courageous woman, and she later tells the spies of her reasons for such courage.

Verses 7 – 14. The pursuit is quickly organized and the troops leave the city, heading for the fords of Jordan, and the gates are shut to ensure no-one can enter or leave from that point. As soon as the troops have left Rahab goes up to the roof and speaks with the two men inside the stacks of drying flax. Her statements make her faith and her commitment to the God of Israel clear.

Firstly she identifies that she believes the Lord God has given the land of Canaan to Israel; that her own people have lost their tenure to the land of their fathers. She then notes that fear of Israel grips her people and all the Canaanites. They are so scared they faint at the mention of the name of Israel. Morally they have no fight left in them to oppose Israel. This is vital information to encourage Joshua. She then notes that they are very well informed as to the miracles done by God and the victories gained in their battles fought to date. She has heard of the parting of the Yam Suf. Exodus 14. She has heard of the defeat of the kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og. Deuteronomy 3:1-11.

The news of the parting of the Sea of Reeds (Yam Suf), and the destruction of the Egyptians was significant enough, but their recent defeat of the powers of the East Bank of the Jordan was a significant shock to the Canaanites. The Israelites in effect “disappear” into the Arabian wilderness for thirty nine years, and nothing is apparently heard of them in Jericho until they burst across the Arnon River and destroy the Amorite coalition, and seize their entire land. After the drama of their exodus from Egypt the rulers of the City States of Canaan must have been warned by the Egyptians to report any information on the whereabouts of the Israelites.

Canaan was under Egyptian sovereignty through this period, even though the Egyptians took only limited interest. During the period of the Arabian wanderings one pharaoh (Thutmose IV) does conduct a military operation in Canaan, and it may be that he was even looking for the Israelites. It was not in the nature of the Egyptians to forget and forgive the defeat they suffered in the Yam Suf, where they lost their entire ready response army group. Refer to the Commentary on Exodus 14.

Rahab does not apparently mention the defeat of king Arad the Canaanite several months before the invasion of the East Bank, and it may be that news of this defeat has not reached Jericho yet. Deuteronomy 21:1ff. The Israelite’s dealings with Edom and Moab are also not referred to by Rahab in the speech as recorded here. It may be she does not know of these, or that what we have in Joshua’s account is an abbreviated version of her words to the spies. I suspect this is the case and that their conversation is far more detailed than what we have recorded here.

One of these men falls in love with this woman and will marry her, so their contact with her was only a few hours but it was significant. Certainly enough time was spent talking together for Salmon to respect, admire, adore, and fall in love with Rahab. This woman is impressive in her beauty, her nobility, her intelligence, her raw and calculating courage, and her spiritual perception. She is beautiful, and she is intelligent, and she is tough.

She acknowledges her faith in the one true God and recognizes that this is the God of Israel. She recognizes that God is Lord of heaven and earth, and that the so called “gods” are nothings! She then requests that she be shown kindness when they take the city, just as she has shown them kindness in hiding them from her people. She asks them to swear in the name of the Lord their God that she and her family will be safe. In God’s name she accepts their assurance.

She also asks for a visual sign, or “token”, as a testimony of their commitment to her. The word for token here indicates a significant visual identifier, such as a signal, a monument, a flag, a clear sign to all that she is with them. By asking for such a thing she recognizes that when the city falls she will need something to stop the blood lust of the attackers from overwhelming and killing her with the others.

This woman is going to see all her neighbours and extended family, who do not share her new faith, killed by the Israelites. She must commit herself to the Lord and leave all the people she grew up with, and even led in pagan worship, to their chosen fate. It is this level of faith and commitment to the Lord that leads James to praise her. She had to walk away from all care for those who chose to stay in their paganism. She had to accept the righteousness of the judgment that will fall upon her past friends and devote herself to her new life and her new family of faith within Israel. Luke 9:59-62, 14:26-27, 33.

She is also asking for a thing that may give her away to her own people. To do anything that will draw attention to her self before the fall of the city is to possibly give away the fact that she is with the enemy. Flashing signals by polished metal mirror was the way armies communicated in this time, and all defensive posts would have been on alert to anyone who may have been signalling the enemy. Rahab was right on top of the city wall and her family would have been tasked with guarding that portion of the city defences. She and her family must be on duty and fully armed, as if they are ready to fight the Israelites every day until the very moment the rest of the walls fall down.

Rahab is asking for a sign that may be her death warrant from her own people. She must express her faith after the spies leave by binding a scarlet rope in her window, and to do such a thing may draw attention to her. She must lay her life on the line here, and trust in the Lord God to protect her until the Israelites take the city. The two men offer their lives for hers if anything happens to her family. They promise kindness and truth/integrity in their dealings with her and her family.

Verses 15 – 20. Rahab advises the two men on the mountain to go to hide upon until the pursuit is called off. She tells them that they must lie low for three days. She knows how long the soldiers will be off on any pursuit of the spies, and this is further evidence that she knows the orders that are given to the soldiers of her city. Only an old soldier,

or an official, would know the exact time frame for the pursuit orders given to detachments. Rahab is well informed of the defensive preparations of her city. She points to the mountain she suggests them hiding upon, and it will likely be either to the south or west of the city, given that they probably approached the city initially from the north, and the pursuit will be more likely to focus north and east.

The other reason for the pursuit group to focus to the north would be the flow of the Jordan. For the spies to reach their camp again they will have to swim back across the river and the current will carry them down stream, so the further north they enter the river the more likely it is that they will get across to their camp rather than end up in the Dead Sea.

The men then ask her to keep three conditions for her own safety, and for them to keep their oath. Firstly she must tie the very rope they are going down the wall from on her window and leave it there. It is a red or crimson rope and so will stand out and be clearly seen against the mud brick wall of the city. This is a testimony to her faith in their return and victory, and her faith that the Lord will keep her, even though her people may believe she is signalling to the enemy.

The second condition is that all her extended family, and like Noah's Ark, anyone of her father's family she wishes to save from death, must be inside her house when the attack is launched. Anyone who leaves the house and walks in the street will have to take the consequences of their actions. It is clear that she is to bar her door against anyone entering or leaving. The third condition is that the arrangement they have made is to be kept absolutely secret. None are to be told of the deal they have struck together until the city falls. It may be that even her family were not told all the details of this deal either. They are saved through her faith. 1 Corinthians 10:1ff.

Verses 21 – 24. They agreed together, and her affirmation, recorded in verse twenty one is the formal acknowledgement of the understanding they have come to. She sends them on their way and binds the scarlet rope to her window. It is probably the same one they used to escape down. The rope is not hung down the wall to the bottom, as that would be directly attracting attention, but is "bound" into or around the window framing. Her window is framed with the red rope in some way. This may be a similar sign to the Passover blood around the doorway of the Israelites. Exodus 12:7.

The crimson cloth was made by crushing the life blood out of the sea worm/slug from the Mediterranean Sea. It was rare and expensive, and it was the colour of kings, and spiritually spoke of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross. Psalms 22:6, Isaiah 53:1-7, Hebrews 9:18-23. This woman has affirmed her faith in the one true God, and she will ensure her family know that this is why she is keeping them within her house as the siege unfolds.

The crimson rope directly reminds us of the blood that is the covering of Rahab here, even before she knows fully about the Israelite sacrificial system. It also was the colour of the fabric used as part of the cleansing of the leper who had been healed. Leviticus 14:1-8. It was also the colour of the covering cloth for the table of Shewbread, speaking of God's provision for man through the blood shed on their behalf. Numbers 4:8. It was also burnt as part of the sacrifice of the "Red Heifer" as part of dedication of the new High Priest. Numbers 19:2-7.

The spies have to travel to the mountain through the darkness, where the dark shape is all they have to go by to find their way silently, and they hide there in a cave or undergrowth for three more days. They will return across the Jordan on the third night, arriving back in camp at some point in the early hours of the day the Israelites are due to break camp and head across the Jordan.

These men are well trained commandos. The great skill of the true commando is firstly the ability to march all day and night without any sound or sign of distress or fatigue, and secondly to be able to lie still for long periods of time and simply watch the enemy. They wait and watch, and at the end of the third day they see the men of Jericho return to the city. They slip away once it is dark and make their way back to the river. They may have to swim back without major buoyancy aids, if theirs were discovered, or it may be that they receive provisions from Rahab, including animal skins for inflation later to assist their return. Rahab has done even more for these men than is recorded here in the text, (for without water and food they would not survive the hiding period, and without some buoyancy assistance in getting across the river they would drown).

Their return journey is a story of great drama in itself, but it is quickly glossed over, in the manner that soldiers tend to do when telling of their heroic deeds. A non-combatant would really tell the story of heroic return, but soldiers tend to tell the story of such an operation as this in exactly this manner. There is battle courage where a soldier is able to yell and fight for hours with focused energy against the enemy, but there is also the commandoes courage here, where long periods are just lying very still and waiting, praying in the soul, and watching the enemy without making a sound. The description of this commando operation is further evidence to me that General Joshua is the likely author of this book.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. There is a time for soldiers to take courageous action, demonstrate their stamina, and do anything to reach an objective. As soldiers in the Lord's Army we are called to be ready to undertake any operation he selects us for. The two spies were trained, willing to hazard all, fit, and prayerful. They were able to speak clearly and think under pressure. They were able to sum up who they could trust and commit to them, and they were able to be silent for days, when silence was required. They were able to be used in one of the most daring commando expeditions recorded in scripture. If we wish to be used in interesting activities we need to be ready, in mind, body and spirit for anything that the Lord requires of us. Let us examine ourselves in this and undertake to do anything we need to do to build our fighting fitness.

2. Let us see the hand of God here and look for the hand of God in our own lives also. These men were led to the right person at the right place in the right time. When we walk with the Lord that is how He provides for us. Let us be alert this day to the leading of the Lord. Let us prayerfully seek the Lord's hand over all our dealings with people, in all things this day, that we might meet those whom the Lord leads to us and minister His truth to them.

3. Rahab is a great picture of saving faith. She believes the truth and acts upon it to the saving of the spies and her whole household. God calls us to lives of action, not private contemplation. James 2:12-24. Rahab says "amen" to her faith in deeds that express it. She is prepared to walk away from all she has ever known, and see her whole nation destroyed in their comfortable and chosen path of error, but she will stand for truth and build a new life in it with her new family of faith. She is ready to walk away from everything, and she does by faith. She is a mentor of what biblically real faith truly means. She has visible fruit of her salvation, and the Bible is clear in its teaching, that those without such fruit are to be suspected of being hypocrites (play actors with faith, rather than real believers). Let us take the Lord's words seriously. Matthew 7:15-20, 12:33-37, Galatians 5:13-26.

NOTES

CHAPTER 3**INTRODUCTION**

The crossing of the Jordan River in full flood required a miracle. In the dry season a man can walk across the Jordan in places in around a metre of water, but in flood the river can run to three or four metres deep. The miracle here involves a natural process in a supernaturally precise time table. It involves a landslip up river which blocks the river's course for a number of hours and then releases the water again after the Israelites have crossed over. Exactly the sort of blocking of the flow of the river as is described here occurred in recorded history in 1267AD, 1906, and most recently in 1927. The landslip occurred upstream at such a distance that the people crossing couldn't see it at the time, but later identify exactly where it was.

The historic landslides that have blocked the Jordan have occurred about fifteen miles (20 kilometres) upstream from Jericho. This may be the exact spot for the one in Joshua's day. The miraculous element here is the timing of the landslide, at exactly the moment the Levites approach the river, so that as their feet touch the water the flow starts to abate, and stops altogether over the next minutes. The people have to express faith in their crossing of the dry river bed, just as their parents had to at the Yam Suf, (Sea of Reeds), as they cannot know when the water will flow back into the river bed again. Exodus 14:16ff.

JOSHUA 3:1-17

3:1 And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. **2** And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; **3** And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. **4** Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore. **5** And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you. **6** And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. **7** And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. **8** And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan. **9** And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God. **10** And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. **11** Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. **12** Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. **13** And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap. **14** And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; **15** And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) **16** That the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. **17** And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 - 4. Early on the morning of that fifth day since the spies left the entire camp of Israel shifts to the banks of the Jordan. The tribes are in their marching battle order with their army drawn up as they had been in the wandering years, and the people in tribal groups behind, with their animals behind them. Numbers chapter 1. They march from the main campsite at Shittim to the banks of the river and there wait in their ranks another three days. This delay of a further three days is not to make rafts or other means of getting across, but while Joshua waits upon the Lord for a full and final instruction as to how they are to pass over the river.

Joshua understands the basic mechanism of guidance here, for the cloud and pillar of fire will go before them, and the Ark is to go before them across the River Jordan this time. This is different to the order of march through the wilderness years, for then the Ark and the Tabernacle were placed in the midst of the Army divisions. Numbers Chapter 2. Refer to the Commentary studies of this in both the first and second chapters of Numbers. The mass of the people will sleep by their wagons, and the men will sleep in their ranks at the head of each tribal column, ready to stand and move out at a minutes notice across the river, which is still running past in full flood before them.

The people and their armies are to be in ranks ready to move out on each of these three days, and they are to watch the Ark from a distance of about 2000 cubits (about 1 Kilometre). From this instruction I take it that the twelve tribes are drawn up in twelve columns (or more probably twelve battle lines abreast) 1 Kilometre back from the river facing the Ark, which is right by the river bank. This is what in military terms is called, "a broad front". This will ensure that all the tribal

leaders (and if they are line abreast – all the men also) can see the Ark simultaneously and take their order to move from its movement forward.

Some commentators have thought that they will then form into a long file with the twelve battalions of the army one behind the other, and then the people, and all will file past the Ark, (which will by then be in the middle of the river), but this would not be militarily sensible. It would appear from the text that the most likely advance is going to be on a broad front with the twelve battalions marching across in their twelve units, in line abreast, six battalions on either side of the position of the Ark. This will mean that the army (and the people) are in two divisions with a kilometre between each and the Ark.

This would make their front as they cross the river at least three kilometres wide, and that would be the best military approach to cross the then dry river bed, for in that way their army is in battle order at all points, and with the two separate divisions could manoeuvre well and fight instantly and flexibly if they were attacked. The people behind each army battalion would also be grouped tightly together in their twelve separate tribal groups, each behind their own men folk, and so they could gather around their wagons for protection if they are attacked.

Joshua awaits the direct orders from the Lord to move forward, and has everyone alert and ready to move at a minutes notice. They must hold their position and while they may still sleep in their tents (verse 14), they have to break their camp and pack ready to move each day, and then stand in their ranks for each of the three days. He has positioned the people in the place where obedience can be instant, and there he awaits final orders from the Lord. This is a beautiful picture of the “positional obedience” of the believer. We are often in places where we know the Lord’s general will, but are unclear as to timing for a move forward, or the exact/precise decision to make. In such situations we are to position ourselves in the best place for instant obedience when the order finally comes in God’s perfect timing.

This is our call at all times; to be ready to do whatever the Lord orders quickly and efficiently. This means being positioned in the best place to move forward into the general direction the Lord has indicated we are to take. The river bed will be dry for a few hours only (in the year 1267 the river dried for seventeen hours, and in the later instances of this in the twentieth century for shorter times) and the people are to advance across quickly, but in good battle order. Joshua will get them to form an altar in the middle of the river also and only then will the Ark leave the river bed. The river will then break through the landslip and return to its original bed and the flood will continue to flow until the end of the harvest season. Hebrews 3:7 – 4:11.

Let me use an illustration of “positional obedience” of the sort we see here. Personally I have had to move house a number of times, and each time the Lord has made it clear in advance that a move was coming, but the exact timing was unclear. In such a situation I got everything ready inside and outside the house, so that we could move with speed, and/or sell the house with no defects or overdue repairs that would slow us down at the last minute.

I am in this situation again as I write these words. I have in the last months repainted this two storied house, repaired all electrical and other maintenance problems, repaved all areas that required it, and replanted and restored the back and front yard for maximum sale value when the moment to sell and move comes. All goods that can be packed are packed and ready to move into a removal truck. This is obedience to the Lord.

I am now awaiting the final order of the Lord again, and I am ready for the final order to move, just as Joshua was. These words were written in 2008 and I still stand ready to move as I revise these words in 2014. I wait upon the Lord! The following are the verses I have recently received to encourage me in my waiting upon the Lord my God. Psalms 37:1-4, Isaiah 49:23, Haggai 2:4, Philippians 4:6-7. While I have waited I have kept working and written over 40 further books.

Many young believers ask about the will of the Lord for themselves, yet they do not wait in an active mode; they are not prepared to be guided and move instantly. While waiting for the Lord’s final orders we are to wait actively; that means doing everything that needs to be done so that when the order comes we can be instantly obedient. This may mean packing in advance, but it may also mean gaining additional qualifications for ministry, or learning new languages, while they await the final order to move out. Let us be ready to move, and position ourselves at the place from where we can launch ourselves into the next path the Lord wants walked. Like all soldiers, we are to be ready for orders to “move out” to a new theatre of operations at all times, and stay fit, healthy, and fully armed daily. Ephesians 6:10-18.

The people are required to stand at their posts for three days facing the flooded river. This is a testing time for their faith, and deliberately so. Their parents moaned when facing impossible situations, and the challenge for this generation is to wait, look at the impossible situation, pray, and trust that the Lord will find a way through the river that they cannot see until the very moment it comes. They are to stand, sit, and sleep facing their faith challenge, and they are not to moan about the impossibility of the situation, rather they are to trust the Lord and Joshua. They pass the test that their parents failed again and again. Exodus 14:10-14, 15:23-26, 16:1-8, 17:1-7, 32:1-6, Numbers 11:1-10, 14:1-10, 16:1-3, 20:1-8.

After three days the Lord gives Joshua the message that the time to move forward is close, and the officers go around the people and remind them to move straight ahead when they see the Ark move forward into the river. They are told that the next day is the day to move forward, and they are to stay at least 1 kilometre from the Ark so that they can all take their bearings from it. This would indicate that the closest tribal battalion on each side of the Ark as they pass it in the river bed will be 1 kilometre from it.

Verses 5 – 6. The people are to prepare for the crossing of the river that third night. To “sanctify” themselves means to set themselves apart from the normal worries of the day/night, and devote all their attention to the things of the Lord that they might be ready the next day to do what the Lord requires of them. The entire people are to set themselves apart through this night by prayer and are to be ready to march the next day into the midst of a miracle. There is a time for an all night prayer meeting, and this is the night they are to devote to preparing themselves spiritually for the challenge they will face.

The dawn of the next day the order is given to the priests to lift up the Ark and advance before the people into the river ahead of the army and the people. The Levites are to be the first to express their faith in the promise of the Lord and the orders Joshua has received. They are to march boldly towards the river, which is still in full flood, and expect the Lord to do a miracle for them. They are the spiritual teachers and leaders of the people, and so they must lead from the front. This is always the Lord’s leadership principle; the pastor-teacher must be able to say “follow me”. He must always be leading by example, for he cannot lead the people further than he himself has gone with the Lord. Philippians 3:12-17, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 2 Timothy 2:22, 3:10-17, 4:2-5, 14-18.

Verses 7 – 8. Joshua gives the orders to the people through their leaders. Having himself stepped out in faith and given the first general order to be ready to advance, the Lord now speaks again and gives him a specific instruction, and the reasons for the miracle that is about to happen. Faith is the issue in all these things, and Joshua understands this fact. He has given the general order to advance, and now he gives the second specific order to the priests. The Lord has told him that the priests are to advance boldly to the very brink of the river, and when their feet touch the water they are to halt and stand still.

Joshua is to express his faith in the Lord’s ability to open up a way through the waters as he did at the Yam Suf, Exodus 14:13ff, and boldly give the order to advance. The priests are to express their faith in obedience to Joshua’s words and walk steadily towards the flooded river, knowing that the entire army of their people will take their lead and also advance in line abreast a kilometre behind and to both sides of them towards the swollen river. If they are wrong, the people will be entering a swollen river and will all drown, or panic. They must all lay their faith on the line and trust the Lord to open up a path through the swollen river.

We must see in our own lives this same principle; that God is more interested in the development of our faith than any physical detail of our life that is often the centre of our prayers. Joshua does not pray for the Lord to open up the river for them, he prays for strength as he approaches the river and crosses into the land so that his faith will not fail him. We pray about things, (either to get things to help us, or to deal with things that are problematic) but the Lord’s focus for us is spiritual growth through faith, and the things of this life are just “props” to use to learn more faith. Ephesians 4:20, Philippians 4:8-11, Hebrews 5:7-14, 2 Peter 3:14-18.

Our challenge is to see every detail of life as just that, a mere detail. We are challenged to focus our prayers upon the path of the Lord for us and boldly advance down that path in faith that the Lord will sort out the details of life. The “details of life” are all matters of money, physical shelter, jobs, health, and all other things that are to be left in the Lord’s hands. Faith like this does not mean we do not do all we can to position ourselves for usefulness, and work hard in our job area, but it means we do all things in faith-rest that the Lord will provide what is needed to achieve His goals for our life. Matthew 6:25-34, 1 Corinthians 7:32, 16:10, Hebrews 11:6.

Verses 9 – 13. The people are told to break ranks and gather around Joshua at this point for their last briefing before they advance across the river. This was a common thing amongst the armies in World War II, when a visiting leader would inspect the parade of the army all fallen in into ranks and then call them all to gather around so he could address them all as a single group. After the briefing they all return to their standards and fall in back into their battle or marching order. Joshua briefs them about what the Lord is going to do. It is a faith briefing – he is stating what he believes the Lord will do, and expresses totally confidence in the plan the Lord has given him to follow.

He puts his leadership on the line here, for if he is proved false he will lose his credibility as a leader. He is certain of the Lord’s words to him and he steps out in faith in these words from the Lord. He re-affirms the Lord’s promise that he will drive out their enemies from before them; that the Canaanite coalition forces will all be defeated. He tells them to look to the Ark as their banner and their guide, and reminds them that this is the visible presence of the Lord of all the earth. They do not worship and follow any local demon/god, but the ruler of the entire universe.

He tells them to select one man from each tribe, and these men will stand with Joshua by the Ark, or on the far bank, and will each be given the privilege of taking one stone from the Jordan River bed where the Ark will be standing, and with these twelve stones they will make an altar on the other side at their camp site at Gilgal. Joshua 4:8. Joshua will also set up twelve stones in the midst of the river as a further memorial altar to the presence of the Ark of the Lord in the midst of the river. There will be two memorial altars/cairns; one will be visible and one will be hidden.

Joshua now tells the people that when the soles of the feet of the Levites carrying the Ark enter the water the waters will dry up around them, and that upstream the water will be “piled up in a heap” (behind the earth dam that a landslip will form). He tells them that as the priest’s feet touch the river the river will run dry and they will cross a dry river bed to the other side. As he says this the people can look out to a swollen and raging river that has overflowed its normal banks. This is the challenge to faith that they face. The people formally break camp for the last time and stand in their ranks ready to move forward. The Ark moves forward.

Verses 14 – 17. The river is “full to the brim” and the time of year is given as “harvest time”, which in this land was April-May. The harvest time invasion is perfect for the attacker as the crops may all still be in the fields and therefore open to use by the Israelites as they advance through the land. Records of the river reaching this very high flood level abound in the nineteenth and twentieth century, and the depth of the water at such times is well over six meters and the distance across the river is several hundred metres from the dry plain on one side to the other. Even at the low season the river is ten to twelve feet deep around Jericho and the current is swift. At this time of flood the river must have resembled a raging torrent hundreds of metres wide. The miracle will be a sign to them of Joshua’s call as their leader, and the greatness of their God. \

The actual site of the landslide that blocked the river is now given, although the designation of the place names of the towns doesn’t help us as these places have changed name down the centuries and we can only guess at the actual site. It is likely around the place where the river blocked in the thirteenth, and early twentieth century, which is about twenty kilometres upstream from Jericho. The river ran dry in minutes as the priest’s feet touched the water, and they then marched to the centre of the now dry river bed and stood firm there, well below the level of the previously raging river. The people advanced over in battle order, with the army groups on either side of the Ark in their two divisions. The priests stood where water had raged minutes before over fifteen feet above the level of their heads!

This whole operation is an example of faith in action! The entire population would have been able to advance over the five hundred metres of the flood plain of the Jordan in several hours. The priests had to stand still through that time frame, and as we will see in the next chapter, through that time the twelve chosen men will be doing rock collecting!

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Faith involves stepping out in the direction the Lord calls us to advance along, even though there are insurmountable obstacles in the way. The river was still in flood as the Levites carrying the Ark moved forward. The river showed no sign of easing in it’s flow until their feet touched the outer rim of the swollen flood. The army was already moving forward at that point, with the people and all the animals behind them. Their advance began on their broad front as soon as the Ark moved forward. The Army and the people will not pause and stop until they get to the other side. They all step out in faith, and when the direction is clear, that is exactly what we are also to do.
2. When a miracle is required the Lord will produce one exactly when and where it is needed. Our job is not to ask for miracles, but just to relax and advance down the path the Lord has called us to walk and expect the Lord to move the obstacles out of our way. Whatever your swollen Jordan River, simply advance towards it and do what is required. Nothing is too hard for our God in the fulfilment of His plan. Genesis 18:14, Jeremiah 32:17-27.
3. “Positional Obedience” is required of every believer. We are to position ourselves in the place where we can be used for service, and from where we can be directed to a new theatre of operations. We are not to be attached to a spot upon this earth, but always be ready to move out to serve in some new way and place. We are to stand facing the direction the Lord seeks us to head in. We are to face the impossible difficulties He asks us to face and move forward towards them trusting the Lord to shift them ahead of us. We are not to be like the Exodus generation and moan, but like this generation before us and boldly obey the words of the Lord and advance into the land the Lord has called us to seize for His glory.
4. There is a time for an all night prayer meeting and we are to know when we ought to call for such a thing. These people need to sanctify themselves before the great move forward across the river. They need to centre themselves in the promises of God and the power and plan that are behind the promises. We also need to do this same thing every time we advance on a great venture for the Lord. Let us walk prayerfully and with absolute certainty into the plan ahead of us.

REFLECTION UPON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF “SIGNS”

1. A sign is something which stands for, or looks forward to something else.
 - a) Things such as- The Temple, Regalia, Stars and Uniforms.
 - b) Festivals such as the Jewish Feasts which spoke of the Plan of God.
 - c) Sacrifices such as Levitical Offerings which spoke of the work of Jesus Christ.
 - d) Customs such as Circumcision.
 - e) Names including the names of People and Places.
 - f) Supernatural Acts such as Miracles.
2. So called “Signs Gifts” were given by God to individuals as a proof of their authority. (Deuteronomy 13:1-4, Judges 6:17, Ezekiel 12:6,11, Hebrews 2:4)
3. Signs appearing in the community through the hands of godly servants of God were a warning for unbelieving Israel of coming judgment. (Isaiah 20:3, 28:11, Jeremiah 6:1, Ezekiel 4:3)
4. Signs for believers were for reminders of God's Grace, (Exodus 13:9) such as the Covenant, (Exodus 31:13,17) and His Holiness. (Ezekiel 14:8)
5. The life and ministry of the Lord was a sign. (Matthew 12:38-42, Luke 2:34-35, John 6:30-35)

6. His death and resurrection were also signs. (Matthew 12:39, 24:30, John 2:18-22, 3:14-15)
7. The Apostles had temporary but significant sign gifts to prove their authority from God. (Act 14:8-28, 1 Corinthians 1:22, Acts 19:11-12 cf 1 Timothy 5:23, Philipians 2:25)
8. Asking for signs is not a sign of spirituality. (Matthew 12:38-39, John 6:30-35, 12:32-34)
9. Signs of the First Advent in Luke.
 - a) The virgin birth itself, in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy; the visitation of the angels both to Mary and Elizabeth, were all miraculous events. (Luke 1:26-38)
 - b) The attendant birth of John the Baptist is also described with its associated signs, and the recognition by the baby in the womb of Elizabeth was a sign of things to come. (Luke 1:5-25, 43-45 cf Psalm 110:1)
 - c) Mary's prophecy of her son's role as Saviour and Sacrifice. (Luke 1:54-56)
 - d) The signs associated with John's birth. (Luke 1:65-66)
 - e) The prophetic song of Zachariah. (Luke 1:67-80)
 - f) The angelic visit to the shepherds. (Luke 2:10-11)
 - g) The song of Simeon. (Luke 2:25-35)
 - h) The song of Anna. (Luke 2:36-38)
 - i) The sign of the prophet Isaiah in the preaching of John the Baptist. (Luke 3:3-18)
10. The Seven signs in John.
 - a) Wedding at Cana at Galilee. 2:1-11
 - b) Healing of the Nobleman's son. 4:46-54
 - c) The Cripple by the Pool of Siloam. 5:1-16
 - d) The feeding of the Five Thousand. 6:1-14
 - e) The healing of the Blind Man. 9:1-38
 - f) The raising of Lazarus. 11:1-46
 - g) The resurrection of the Lord. 20,21

NOTES

CHAPTER 4**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter could be titled "Twenty Four Rocks". It tells the story of the placing of the two memorials to the crossing of the Jordan River by the Israelites. One memorial is hidden in the midst of the river, and one is left at Gilgal permanently. It is a reminder to us that we need visible things to remind us of the truths of God's Word, and we also need to hide them deep within our hearts. The last thing I would have thought of crossing that dry river bed was gathering stones; my sole thought would be to get everybody out of that river bed before the river returned. Joshua is relaxed however, and he is thinking about the permanent reminder that he knows subsequent generations will need to steady them in their own faith.

He receives the order of the Lord and puts the twelve men to work to build the hidden altar/cairn first, and then gather the twelve large stones for later erection at Gilgal. He orders this done, and from the text I believe that he is standing with the Ark all the way through the crossing of the people. He leads by example, and mentors courage to all, and I believe he is right there with the Levites until the last man is out of the river bed before the landslip is driven away by hydraulic pressure upstream and the flooded river returns to its course. When the last Levite steps onto the plain out of the river bed the river bursts back to cover the river bed again.

JOSHUA 4:1-24

4:1 And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, **2** Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, **3** And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. **4** Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: **5** And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: **6** That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? **7** Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. **8** And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. **9** And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. **10** For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hastened and passed over. **11** And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people. **12** And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them: **13** About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho. **14** On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. **15** And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, **16** Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan. **17** Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan. **18** And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before. **19** And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. **20** And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. **21** And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? **22** Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. **23** For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: **24** That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1-5. The twelve men have already been chosen. Joshua 3:12. It is only after all the people have crossed the river that the Lord tells Joshua what they are to do. These men will be standing with Joshua through the time of the crossing of the people, either by the Ark, or on the top of the West bank of the river so that he can see the entire crossing. I suspect that as the people are across, and the animals are in the final stages of crossing, that the Lord gives him these orders here and he will enter the river bed himself with the twelve men to supervise the selection of the twelve great stones for the later altar to be built at Gilgal.

After these stones have been chosen the twelve men leave the river with a great rock each upon their shoulders, and head for the temporary camp on the plains where the people are gathering. Joshua himself stays behind in the river and, from the text, personally erects the cairn/altar in the middle of the river where the priests have stood, and then he moves

to a high point on the west bank of the river, and then calls the Levites to come right out of the river once he can see that all people and animals are across.

Verses 6 – 8. The purpose of the altar in Gilgal is clear. It is to be a sign of the Lord's deliverance of them. It is to be a lasting reminder of the Lord's precise deliverance for them to cross the river. They are to say that the river was cut off "before the Ark of the Lord". They are to see that it is not because they are special or deserving, but because of grace that the Lord delivered them. They were blessed through the presence of the Ark. God's presence is their protection in all things. The stones were carried to the temporary resting place, until the Ark joins the people on the plain, and they will be erected later in the camp at Gilgal.

It is useful to have these "touch stones" at places and in times that are encouragements to people. We still do this sort of thing today when we open a building and dedicate it with a plaque upon which is written a message for later generations. Often these messages are bland, when they should be specific and strong! Let us commemorate the work of God and set up memorials in our heart and in our world that remind us of the faithful provision of the Lord.

Verses 9 – 10. The twelve stones are set up in the middle of the river where the priests stood. This tells us that they must have moved a few metres at least, for they do not leave the river until all the people and animals are assuredly over. Joshua himself sets up this hidden cairn of twelve stones and it remains under the water. The final writer/editor of the book notes again that it remains under the water, "unto this day". This is a sign that these words are not written by Joshua but appear to be the work of the later Levite who edits this book. Notice also that the people did not hesitate or dawdle across the river, but moved very quickly across. This was no leisurely crossing, but one executed under military precision and with speed and efficiency. No-one knew when the water would return, but they all knew that the "heap" of water Joshua had described would flow back into its place with violence at some point soon.

Verses 11 – 13. The Levites carrying the Ark do not receive the order from Joshua to leave the river bed until he is sure that everyone is out of the river bed. The Ark and the Levites are then called out of the river and they join the people on the other side. The writer also records that the two and a half tribes who stayed behind on the eastern bank of the river have sent their soldiers across at the head of the army. The numbers here are not accurately translated into English as the word translated as "thousand" (ELEPH) here may be any "unit" and so the numbers could be anywhere from 400 – 4000. They join their brethren on the plains of Jericho and the people assemble there for their march to Gilgal where the camp will be set up that night.

The plains are not a place to set up camp when they fight the Canaanites, as they used chariot forces and so open and flat country was potentially dangerous to stay on as it was a favourite battle field area for chariots. The camp will be in the higher hill country around Gilgal. It was well away from existing Canaanite habitations. The army will march back to the plain each and every morning for the encirclement of the city.

Verses 14 – 18. The effect of this great miracle of the crossing of the Jordan gave Joshua the leadership status that was Moses before him. The people had experienced a miracle every bit as powerful to them as the crossing of the Yam Suf was to their parent's generation. They now knew for certain that Joshua was Moses successor and every bit as much God's man as Moses was. They knew that with Joshua there would be victory, for he was blessed by God.

Once Joshua can see that the entire riverbed is empty of people and animals he calls the Levites to leave the river bed. These men have been faithful and courageous in a fearful situation, calmly standing where the river raged over the level of their heads just minutes before they entered the river. They now calmly carry the Ark out of the river bed, and as their feet get to the flat plain on the other side the river returns to its bed with a violent rush, and it fills the bed again to the brim, even overflowing the banks again. The miracle of timing is seen here and the people all see that the Ark is the sign of God's presence amongst them.

Verses 19 – 24. It is the tenth day of the Month Nissan, just four days before Passover when they leave the river bed and arrive in Gilgal. Joshua takes the twelve stones and sets them up as an altar or cairn at the campsite. The centre of the camp is the Ark and it may be that these were set up outside the main gate of the Tabernacle, or on a hill overlooking the camp. This detail is not given to us.

The people are reminded of what they are to say as their children and grand-children ask about these stones. They are to tie these stones back to the crossing of the Sea of Reeds (Yam Suf) and also to the crossing of the Jordan. They are to be a sign of God's power. The purpose is that all might remember the power of God in bringing about his plan. The purpose is that all might look at this cairn of stones and fear the Lord, but never fear their enemies. The fear of the Lord is safe, and it eliminates the fear of all others from us. We either fear our enemies or we fear the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom! Psalms 19:9, 23:4, 25:14, 27:1-3, Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, 14:26-27, 15:16, 33.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS.

1. Leadership means standing in the place of danger and the place from where direction can be given. It means at times standing still, in an exposed position facing the enemy. It means standing without any fear other than the fear of falling short of the Lord's expectation of us as His servants. Joshua mentors true leadership courage here. He leads by example with complete confidence in the Lord. He himself is not hesitant to get his hands dirty, and having assigned a rock to each of the twelve men he takes twelve rocks himself and sets them up in the riverbed. No task is to be beneath the "dignity of the clergy", for there is no such thing. We get our "dignitas" as pastor-teachers by doing the things the Lord

orders done without complaint, and with joy in our hearts to the Lord. We live to serve and we rejoice in service; anything less than this falls short of God's standard for leadership.

2. There is a need for the altars in the soul, and for the altars outside that we can go to and touch and remember that the Lord is good and can be trusted. Aids to memory come in all sizes and shapes; the only thing that is required of them is that they bring us to the Lord and remind us of His faithfulness and power. Let us remember the power and plan of the Lord and advance down the path He has called us to walk this day.

REFLECTION UPON "GODLY FEAR" AND UNGODLY PANIC

1. Fear is seen in two ways in scripture.

[a] Firstly as a mental attitude sin that is incompatible with our status as children of the most high, the ruler of the universe.

[b] Secondly it is used to describe the correct attitude towards God the Lord for all his creatures.

There is "godly fear", awe, and respect for God as God, and there is inappropriate fear, which is the cringing fear of one who believes the other is able to, and about to hurt them. This second kind is wrong for us as children of God, for none can harm us without God's permission, for we belong to Him. 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23, 1 Peter 3:4.

2. Our occupation with the persons and majesty of God is often spoken of as "fear" in the legitimate sense for believers. 2 Samuel 23:2-3, Nehemiah 5:9, Job 28:28, Psalms 19:9, 34:11-12, 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, 10:27, 22:4, Malachi 3:16, Ephesians 5:21.

3. Fear as a mental attitude sin is spoken of in, 1 Samuel 17:11, 24, Proverbs 29:25.

4. In God's grace plan for us fear has no place. His plans for us are always divinely good, and any testing situation is for our good. Romans 8:28.

5. Fear is an expression of a failure of faith in the plan. Exodus 14:13-14, Deuteronomy 31:6-8, Joshua 8:1, 1 Chronicles 28:20, Isaiah 41:10, 2 Timothy 1:7.

6. Spiritual death is one way of describing Satan's kingdom and is the place of the source of fear. Hebrews 2:14,15

7. In spiritual death, Adam was afraid. Genesis 3:10, this fear motivated Adam to produce religious activity (fig leaves) and lies. Genesis 3:7

8. Salvation removes the basis of fear, which is condemnation from the Justice of God (spiritual death).

9. Spiritual maturity provides freedom from fear. 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 13:6, 1 John 4:18, 1 Corinthians 13:5b

10. Carnality and any form of religious activity that leads us away from grace and daily obedience to the Word enslaves the believer to Satan through fear. Galatians 5:1; Romans 8:15

11. The mature believer is commanded to fear nothing he may suffer in life, for by means of God's grace provision all we ever may need is provided for us. Revelation 2:10

12. The baby believer is sustained by believing God's Word, obeying his commands hour by hour to daily life, and rest upon his promises. Hebrews 4

13. As we become mature believers we continue with this resting on the promises but in addition to this we are sustained by our understanding / application of entire categories of God's Word - we have then moved beyond the promises to confidence in the very character of God itself.

14. Illustration: A woman who asks every hour, "Do you love me?" needs assurance through many promises, and many actions backing the promises up. Once she gets to truly know her husband, and her love is fully established in him through his faithfulness to her, she has absolute assurance, and doesn't need constant reminders of his love by specific words. She is full of confidence through knowledge of her husband's character.

15. Chapter's 3-6 of Hebrews deal with the falling away from growth and confidence by these believers. The spiritual principle of Chapter 4 is the means of getting them back on target.

16. In Hebrews 13:6, we see the objective of the writer, freedom from fear by their daily, moment by moment living the awareness of the love of Christ for them, and the power of Christ available to them.

17. The writers of Scripture identify correctly that when the believer is fearful, he imitates the unbeliever ("cowardly" – Revelation 21:8), and that is not right given our great position. Hebrews 11:27 "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is unseen." This is our standard!
18. Fear is a mental attitude sin that shows our mind has moved away from thinking of the Lord. 1 Samuel 17:11,24
19. Fear is a sign of falling back into domination by the "prince of this world". 1 Samuel 18:12,29 21:12 28:20
20. Absence of fear is a big part of maintaining a dynamic mental attitude. Hebrews 13:6 11:27
21. There is only one legitimate fear; it is the fear of failure to enter spiritual maturity. Hebrews 4:1
22. Love demands absence of fear. 1 John 4:18. They are two opposing mental attitudes.
23. Fear is not part of the Divine Plan for the Believer. 2 Timothy 1:7 Exodus 14:13-14 Joshua 8:1 Isaiah 41:10 2 Samuel 1:7
24. Courage and lack of fear is a sign of mature spiritual status. Psalm 3:6 Psalm, 56:3 Hebrews 11:27
25. Fear is the power by which the Evil of Satan rules among mankind. Hebrews 2:14-15 Genesis 19:30 (Lot) 1 Kings 18:9-14 (Obadiah), both Lot and Obadiah show how the failing believer lives in constant fear.
26. Fear is the word used to mean "Occupation with Christ" when related to the attitude of the mature Believer toward Christ. 2 Samuel 23:3 Nehemiah 5:9,15 Ephesians 5:21 Job 28:28 Psalm 19:9 34:10 Proverbs 1:7 9:10 Proverbs 10:27, 1 Peter 2:17

REFLECTION UPON "WALKING" THROUGH THIS LIFE AS JOSHUA DID

1. Physical walking is analogous to the faith rest life: step by step. Romans 14:5,6, Ephesians 5:16-18, James 4:13-15.
2. Being regularly filled with the Spirit and feeding on the Word are similar to walking.
3. Attacks on believers occur when they are caught off balance. Romans 13:13.
4. Walking depicts the pattern and function of the believers life in time. Philippians 3:18, Ephesians 4:17.
5. It can also represent a backsliding believer who are said to be walking backwards. Ephesians 4:17.
6. We are all told to:
 - a) Walk in the spirit. Galatians 5:16, 25
 - b) Walk in the faith. 2 Corinthians 5:7, Colossians 2:6, 4:5
 - c) Walk in doctrine 3 John 3.
 - d) Walk in the truth 2 John 4
7. Walking is a analogy for spirituality
 - a) Walk not after the flesh (Romans 8:4)
 - b) Walking in Love. (Ephesians 5:2)
 - c) Walking in newness of Life. (Romans 6:4)
 - d) Walking worthy of our vocation. (Ephesians 4:1)
 - e) Walking worthy of the Lord. (Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12)
 - f) Walking honestly as in the day. (Romans 13:13)
 - g) Walking in good works. (Ephesians 2:10)
 - h) Walking in light. (Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 1:7)
 - i) Walking in Christ Jesus. (Colossians 2:6)
 - j) Walking circumspectly. (Ephesians 5:15,16)
 - k) Walking as ye ought. (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

NOTES

CHAPTER 5**INTRODUCTION**

To lead God's people we must have had an encounter with the Lord our God in a personal and powerful way. We must not just know about the one true God, but we must know God, and we must be aware that we are known of Him. It is only personal knowledge of and experiences with God's deliverance that allow us to lead the Lord's people in the manner God calls His servants to lead.

This is why the training of ministers by the Lord is always far more rigorous than the training colleges of men. The Lord puts us into all sorts of circumstances to test our faith and strengthen it as we advance, and He does these things to ensure we trust Him and can urge, with passionate certainty, others to do likewise. Refer to the BTB studies, of CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFIDENCE, CONSECRATION, DOUBT, OVERCOMER, OVERCOMING BY FAITH, SUBMISSION, TEMPTATION, and WISDOM. Refer also to the EBCWA CD or website www.ebcwa.110mb.com and copy the book – Christian leadership - Book 112 from the Christian Living file.

JOSHUA 5:1-15

5:1 And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel. **2** At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. **3** And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. **4** And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. **5** Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised. **6** For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD swore that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD swore unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. **7** And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. **8** And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. **9** And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day. **10** And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho. **11** And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. **12** And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. **13** And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? **14** And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? **15** And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.

REFLECTIONS

Verse 1. These words are a personal recollection and read like they are the very memory of Joshua. He remembers as he writes these words that the Amorites said when they saw the miracle, just as the Israelites experienced it and benefited from it. The crossing of the Jordan River was not a secret event, but seen by many, just as the later acts of the Lord were seen by many. Acts 26:25-26. The camp of Israel posed the greatest threat to the Canaanites in their history to date, and they had seen the fate of the Amorites in the south, and on the East bank. Numbers 21.

The fords of Jordan would have been constantly watched by the enemy from Jericho at very least, but given the threat posed by the Israelites on the East Bank, I suspect there were Canaanite Coalition forces there on the West Bank also that day the Israelites crossed. This was another reason the army came across in full battle order in two divisions so that they were ready to fight at a seconds notice and protect the flanks of their people from cavalry/chariot attack. Can you imagine the impact of this miracle upon the guards watching the river from the Canaanites cities? They would have been camped by the swollen river to ensure the Israelites did not send any spies across the river, and then they see the entire army and people cross in the time of flood. This was the stuff of nightmares for the Canaanites.

None would have expected a full crossing of all the people until the river dropped later in the year. Because the full assault across the river was expected in several months time, the watching forces at this time would be small in numbers and fairly relaxed. Imagine them looking up that morning and seeing the entire host of Israel in two great army divisions drawn up two kilometres apart, with the Levites and the Ark carried before them in the middle.

Just seeing the full army of Israel with the rising sun behind them would have sent a warning cry through the ranks of the enemy watchers, but then to see them steadily advance towards the raging river must have seemed beyond belief to them. This sight would have had every man in armour and by the river's bank, but then the shock came; the Levites feet touched the river's raging waters and they dry up. Within a minute or two the entire river dries up, and the army that is marching steadily towards the river keeps advancing in line abreast down into the now dry river bed, and advances steadily towards them now in battle order.

Joshua remembers that the enemy scattered in panic at that point to their various cities. All the cities of Canaan receive the news of these events within days; that the Israelites had crossed the river with God's almighty help. God is with them indeed, and the gods of the pagans are powerless to help them. The crops of the Canaanites were still in the fields at this time, but they will shut their gates and wait for the blow from Israel to fall. The crops will be there for Israel to gather and the Canaanites will have to leave their cities to fight, as they will not have the food secured for a siege.

By this means the Lord draws out most of them to fight in the open and leave their cities to be captured intact. Fear grips the enemies of God. It still should grip the enemies of God. Exodus 15:12-18, Psalms 48:4-14. As this judgment rocks the enemies of truth, so the final judgment will also rock the enemies of truth, just as it has done in the ages when the Lord has moved to protect His people and advance His plan. Isaiah 13:6-8, Ezekiel 21:1-17, Daniel 5:1-31.

Verses 2 – 5. The people had been told to circumcise their sons in the manner of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was a sign that the son was an inheritor of the Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis 17:1-14, 23-27, 21:4, 34:15-24. This generation is to inherit the land promised to Abraham and so it is vital that they carry in their bodies the covenant sign of circumcision. The Exodus Generation had failed to do this to all their sons in the wandering years.

Joshua pauses at Gilgal and in the days before the Passover all the uncircumcised men are circumcised and the foreskins are piled up in a heap as a sign that they have now prepared themselves for the first Passover in the land, and the reception of the inheritance of Abraham, in the land. They stand in the tradition of the faith of Abraham and the faith of Moses.

Militarily this is a major step of faith on the people's part, for every man who has had this surgical procedure will be unable to fight for the next three to five days while the wound heals. The Canaanites are already preparing for battle, and if they launch an attack upon Israel in their open camp at this point the people of God will be slaughtered. Joshua steps out in faith and obedience, and in these two things he is safe and secure, and so are we when we follow his example. The Lord will make sure that the enemy do not attack at this time.

Circumcision was performed with a flint or obsidian knife. Each sharp slither of rock is a perfect and sterile surgical blade. This technique for surgery is still used in places where a pre-packed sterile blade is not available. By using only this method no infection is carried from person to person as a different slither of spilt rock is used for each operation.

The second important faith principle identified here is that the Exodus Generation were circumcised, but their disobedience at Kadesh Barnea was the reason for their failure to circumcise their sons. They were standing in the covenant promise made to Abraham until that time, but it would appear that when they were told that they would not inherit the land, that they refused to circumcise their sons from that day onwards.

They resented the fact that their children would inherit the land, and so they denied their sons the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. The spirit that drove the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, (refer to the Commentary on Numbers 16) drove the people and the majority persisted in their disobedience in this matter until that generation died out. Numbers 14:26-38, Deuteronomy 2:13-14.

Verses 6 – 8. The depth of the rebellion of the Exodus Generation is seen in these verses. They truly resented their own sons, and were determined to deny them the covenant sign that proclaimed their right to inherit the land promised to Abraham. They were bitter, rather than being repentant. Bitterness is a dangerous thing, and indicates why this generation was denied the blessing of the Lord. Hebrews 12:12-15. It is a dangerous thing to sit with your bitterness and resentment and fail to face your sinful mental attitudes. To stay in sin, rather than accept the Lord's forgiveness is to live a half life, and fail to make what the Lord would have made of you. Let us step out in faith, and follow Joshua's example, not weep in our tents like that foolish generation. Hebrews 3:7 – 4:11.

Verses 9 – 10. The faith of the people that they expressed as they marched steadily towards the river has been their testimony of confidence in the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua. They have expressed their faith in their advance, and now they express their faith in God by accepting circumcision. For the days of their healing these men must accept the Lord's protection over them for they cannot defend themselves. They have rested in faith, and the Lord counts this to them for righteousness. Genesis 15:6, Psalms 106:31, 43-48, Galatians 3:6-9, James 2:21-24. Their faith works out in dynamic action that testifies that they believe, fear, and honour the Lord their God.

The name of the place is called "Gilgal", meaning "rolling away". This speaks of the rolling away of the rock of offence by their obedience in the matter of accepting circumcision. They now stand with Abraham, in obedience to the Lord, and faith that the Lord will deliver them the promise He made to Abraham. Once again the final editor of this book notes, "until this day", in verse 9, reminding us that a later hand than Joshua's edits this work and brings it into its final form.

The nation camps on the site of Gilgal and remains there until after the days of unleavened bread are over. The Canaanites were kept in suspense at what the next move of Israel might be and they themselves apparently remain inactive through this time, paralysed by their fears of Israel and the Lord their God. It is vital that an army is rested before any battle or campaign, but this rest here is a rest of faith, for they have given their enemies time to regroup and launch an assault upon them. It is not militarily advisable to rest at this point, but it was the Lord's will for them, and so they are safe in it. They are totally dependent upon the protection of the Lord in this time. If the Canaanite Coalition had joined together and brought a joint army into the field against them at this time the Israelites would have been outnumbered 10:1.

There is however always time to worship when the plan and path is the Lord's. It is a good point to remember; let worship open the door of opportunity, and let us rest in the power of the Lord, and then advance to seize the objectives. The battle is the Lord's, and they are confident as they spiritually prepare themselves for the campaign, and the men are all healed and ready by the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread to march and to fight.

Verses 11 – 12. After the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread they harvest corn from the land and eat bread made of that. The enemy are locked in their towns, and the Israelites head out and reap their fields. The very day they eat fresh bread for the first time is the last day the manna falls upon the ground for them. The Lord's special provision had lasted from the days in the wilderness of Sinai, through Arabia and even to the plains of Moab and Jericho, but once they can feed themselves the provision of the Lord ceases.

There is an important principle in this for us today and in all ages of man. If we are able to work to provide for ourselves, then we are expected to do so in the Lord. If we are unable to work due to being in prison for our faith, or ill or elderly, then the church is expected to support us, as we continue to pray for the church. We are still expected to work, just that work is prayer now rather than work for money. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.

There is no concept of "full time Christian work" for wages in the early church period until the burdens of pastoral care meant that the pastor could no longer work in the community for wages. Then the church was to pay the pastor well, so that they were in no way behind their earnings in the world. 1 Timothy 5:17-18. We are to remember that Paul worked to support himself until he was jailed, and that was his pattern into his sixties.

Verses 13 – 15. Joshua meets the real commander of the Lord's Army here, and it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is what is called a "Christophony". Joshua is reminded that he is the "under-shepherd", and that he is responsible to the Lord for the people of Israel.

This appearance of the Lord occurs when Joshua is doing a reconnaissance around the vicinity of Jericho. It was common in this time period for a champion to leave a city under siege and challenge the leader of the other side to single combat, and Joshua thinks this may be what this man is wanting.

Joshua is eighty at this point but he boldly approaches this man and challenges him to identify himself and say whether he is to fight him or not. This is an example of this man's leadership and fitness. He will call his men to fight, and he will lead from the front. He is ready to draw his own sword and use it. A leader must have the respect of his men, and we can see in Joshua a courageous and tough leader. The Lord makes Himself known to Joshua as the "captain of the hosts of God". Revelation 19:11ff. Joshua immediately bows to the ground and worships the Lord, and he experiences the interaction that Moses had in Exodus 3.

He is personally challenged and encouraged by the Lord in person for the great task he has. This sort of experience is rare in scripture and tends to mean that an extra-ordinary tasking is being given. This man has a great challenge before him and he receives great encouragement. The Lord also gives him very specific instruction as to what he is to do to seize the city of Jericho, and we will read these instructions recorded in the next chapter.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Let us not be too quick to stop our paid work in the ministry. If we can support ourselves in any ministry, then that is the best way to advance in that ministry. The Lord expects us to provide for ourselves if we can, and he will cover us if we cannot provide. Manna was there until the people could harvest the land. Welfare for Israel was gleaning the fields, not waiting for a cheque to arrive in the post. Let us work for our daily bread and give thanks for what the Lord enables us to do, and then relax in His provision when we cannot provide for ourselves.

2. Joshua had to see that he was the "under-shepherd" of the flock of Israel, and that the Lord was the Good and Chief Shepherd. As pastors of the Lord's people we are called to servant leadership, and this means that we are to serve as we lead, and that our leadership is humility based. Let us remember that leadership is following the Great Shepherd's example, and that means being ready to die for the sheep, and it means, like Joshua, being ready to fight and work hard at any time. Biblical leadership is "Servant Leadership".

3. The resentment of the Exodus generation, seen in their refusal to circumcise their sons, is a shock. We are challenged by this to examine our own heart in the matter of the resentment, jealousy, and bitterness that can ankle tap our own lives at times. Let us deal with any mental attitude sin that will defile us if we let it fester within.

REFLECTION UPON OUR TRUE SOURCE OF CONFIDENCE

1. The source of confidence. (Jeremiah 17:7)
2. The results of confidence:-
 - a) Protection. (Proverbs 3:25-26)
 - b) Strength. (Isaiah 30:15)
 - c) Blessing. (Jeremiah 17:7)
3. Examples of confidence:-
 - a) in God's provision. (Genesis 22:18)
 - b) in God's sovereignty. (Genesis 50:20)
 - c) in God's deliverance. (Daniel 3:17-18)
 - d) in God's power. (1 Kings 18:36-39)
 - e) in God's presence. (Psalm 71:5)
 - f) in extremity. (Job 13:15)
4. Confidence relating to prayer:-
 - a) confident access. (Ephesians 3:12)
 - b) confidence to draw near. (Hebrews 4:16)
 - c) confidence to enter. (Hebrews 10:19-22)
 - d) confidence to ask. (1 John 5:14-15)
5. Confidence in the day of judgment. (1 John 4:17)
6. Confidence to complete His work in the believer. (Philippians 1:6)
7. Exhortation to maintain confidence. (Hebrews 10:35-39)

REFLECTION UPON THE CORRECT SPIRIT OF CONSECRATION

1. Consecration means full surrender of self to God. (Romans 6:13)
2. This is the attitude of "denying self" and "not my will, but yours be done" (Matthew 16:24, 26:39, Galatians 2:20).
3. This is the only acceptable gift to God. (Romans 12:1,2)
4. The consecration of the Temple is a picture of the believer's life: the Outer Court (the body), the Holy Place (the soul) and the Holy of Holies (spirit)
5. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and therefore must be set apart as a holy vessel (Romans 12:1-2 cf 1 Kings 8:1-11)

Notes

CHAPTER 6**INTRODUCTION**

The old American Spiritual song about this chapter, "Joshua fought de Battle of Jericho", is wrong. How is that? Joshua doesn't really fight any battle of Jericho, for it is the Lord who wins the battle here for them. The Lord has met Joshua, and briefed him on what is going to occur, and he receives very specific and strange instructions regarding the attack upon this town. The instructions indicate that a direct assault upon the town would have been futile as the nature of its fortifications were significant.

Archaeology is conflicted over Jericho around this time. Now the time frame here I believe is around 1400 BC. I take this from the definite dating of Hazor's destruction, and from the facts recorded in Exodus-Numbers. Why is it then, that some archaeologists argue that there was no town, or only an insignificant one on the site in 1400-1350 BC? The answer to that question centres in the nature of the town's construction. Jericho was built of mud brick and its construction means that once a site is abandoned it will deteriorate quickly; in rains the walls of the houses will literally wear away. Early excavations of the top layers of the site also destroyed a great deal of material that may have given clues about the city that the Lord destroyed.

I have personally seen mud brick houses/villages in Africa that were abandoned and left for less than ten years, and they have worn away to half their original size. Jericho will be abandoned after the destruction described here for at least 500 years, and so I personally expect little of this particular city here to remain at all. The place was totally destroyed by the Lord's assault upon it; both by Joshua's fire and God's earthquake. From what I read in Joshua's record here I would not expect to find much except a few house remnants in sheltered places of the tell structure. I would expect the findings to be like that of a small settlement, as after 500 years of exposure to the weather only sheltered remnants of the town's foundations would survive. It will be rebuilt around 910 BC and at that point I would expect further levelling of the main tell site by the new builders adding to the destruction of the last remnants of the earlier dwellings upon it.

When I look at the archaeologists reports on Jericho there are problems with their details and the facts of the account of Joshua, however I believe the answers to these "contradictions" are to be found in more detailed study of the site. Having worked as an archaeologist and seen how much is guess work on a site like this one, I still stand by Joshua's account as history.

JOSHUA 6:1-27

6:1 Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in. **2** And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. **3** And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. **4** And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. **5** And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. **6** And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD. **7** And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD. **8** And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. **9** And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. **10** And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. **11** So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. **12** And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. **13** And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. **14** And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. **15** And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. **16** And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city. **17** And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. **18** And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. **19** But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD. **20** So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. **21** And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. **22** But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye

sware unto her. 23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. 24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. 26 And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. 27 So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country.

REFLECTIONS

Verse 1. This verse is the reminder of the state of siege that the Canaanites felt as a result of the super-natural crossing of the Jordan by the Israelites. The city closed its doors and its people were unable to go in or out. They were cut off from the river and their fields. The Israelites were able to reap these fields right up to within bow shot of the wall. The fields closest to the city would be reaped first by Israel as this would clear the ground for their march around it, and it would also underline the psychological factor of their spiritual, and through God's power with them, military superiority over the Canaanites.

The Tell of Jericho is not large, covering about ten acres. The total population may have numbered up to 5000 with the surrounding areas population hiding within the walls. They do not have the men to come out and fight the Israelites in open country, as the Israelite army numbers at least 6000 men. They must sit in behind their walls and hope that others will come to their aid and raise the siege. The Canaanite cities wrote to Egypt asking for help, and some of these letters survive within the Amarna Letters, and I suspect messages were sent to other Canaanite cities asking them to come to their aid against these Israelite invaders.

Verses 2 – 5. The Lord himself gives Joshua instruction as to how the city will be taken. Joshua's orders are strange ones. He is to march the entire army around the city once each day for six days. Seven priests are to go ahead of the Ark, which is to follow the army around the city. The seven priests who follow the entire army around are to carry a ram's horn trumpet (Shofar) each. On the seventh day they are to walk around the city seven times, and the priests are to blow the seven shofars as they walk around each time.

But once they have gone around for the seventh time the priests are to blow really loud and long upon their shofars. At that sign, all the people are to join their voices to the sound of the ram's horns and shout loudly. At that point the Lord tells Joshua, the city walls will fall down flat and the men are to advance into the city straight forward over the ruined walls and slay all the inhabitants they find (except the inhabitants of Rahab's house).

This last instruction indicates that the men are not to look to left or right, but advance straight forward. This indicates that they are probably in single file as they circle the city, and so when they turn to face it they can advance straight forward with no man in ranks in front of them. This would accord well with the rough number of around 6000 men in the army, as that number would surround the city tell site and be able to execute this manoeuvre. The Ark and the priests although at the rear of the column will be close behind the last soldiers when they encircle the city, and the first soldiers in the column will be close behind the Ark.

These instructions also resolve the question about whether Israel would fight on the Sabbath day, for clearly they did fight on that day. If the seventh day here is the Sabbath, then the most serious "work" was done on that day. Later Jewish fighters in the days of the Maccabees would debate whether they could fight on the Sabbath, but Joshua's generation had no such problem, for the Lord ordered them to do this, and they heeded His Word alone.

The Maccabees would have not had any problems either if they had looked at the Scriptures, but they turned to their Rabbis – who had built a wall around the scriptures by this point and only debated the opinions of men! The Israelites will march far further than a Sabbath Day's journey on this last day, and then advance and slay the enemy on this day. Exodus 16:23-29, 20:8-11, 31:14-16, 35:2-3. The Lord their God is "Lord of the Sabbath". Matthew 12:8.

Verses 6 – 7. Joshua briefs the priests on their task through the next seven days. The Ark is to be at the rear of the column for security reasons, as it's presence out front could lead the enemy to make a sally forth to try to capture it. The army will march out in their battalions, probably in tight formation at least three deep, possibly more. They will march to the plain as a tight army, and then form the circle around the city by marching off around the city in single files.

This is a manoeuvre that ancient armies practised constantly, moving from line ahead to abreast and from triple file to single file and back again. This manoeuvre will be watched from the walls closely and would have appeared as if the entire army was going to be sent into the assault on the city against every wall simultaneously. Each day this occurs the inhabitants of Jericho are kept on the edge of their battlements.

Verses 8 – 10. Armies were nearly always noisy as they prepared to attack a city. The psychological warfare was to undermine the enemy by speaking words to them on the battlements that would increase fear and dread of their attackers. We see this technique used by the Assyrians when they attacked Judah in the 700s BC. Isaiah 36-37. Joshua makes it clear that the orders are deliberate here; not a word is to be spoken by anyone during the approach to the city,

the encircling operation of the city, or their departure back to their own camp. All orders to be given are to be given before the army moves forward. They are to do all this without any order given at all. The seven priests are to hold their ram's horn shofars high and they alone are to make a noise with them each day, blowing them as they walk.

Verses 11 – 14. There are six days of identical actions. The priests going out behind the army each day, and the entire army marches around the city once, and then they all return to camp. The writer adds additional information here, that the Ark also had a rear guard for its additional security. By the seventh day the inhabitants of Jericho may be starting to feel seriously worried. Some commentators have felt that they may have been insulting the Israelites by this stage. Even I believed that this may have been possible in the past, but that was before the careful reading of the story and serious reflection this time.

Fear has fully gripped these people. They make no sally forth to harass the Israelites, as could have been expected, nor do they say a word. They are in fear of these people who outnumber them at least six to one, and who walk in silence around them. The only sound is the sound of the ram's horn and the people in Jericho do not know if the tune being played has any meaning relating to orders for the army, they only know it spells their death.

Verses 15 – 16. On the seventh day the army goes around the city seven times, and they were called to cry aloud that day by Joshua through his ordering the priests to blow the long note on the horns. He then cried aloud and added – “the Lord has given you the city”. This cry aloud by Joshua makes sense, and it is often that a general will repeat the order aloud at the point his men respond to what they already have in writing in advance. The order cannot have been given to the army at the time of the attack, as they were surrounding the city and far too spread out to give any order like this and have it heard. The orders we read here and in the next verses must have been given before they headed out from camp while they were still tightly assembled in their battalions so that all could hear.

The sign for the shout and then the attack was the long burst upon the shofars of the priests after the seventh circuit of the city. As the ram's horns sounded the shout would have gone up from the army like a giant wave around the city. Joshua leads the shout and then says aloud the order and affirmation of his faith. He knows the Lord has indeed given them this city.

Verses 17 – 20. These words, although inserted here, have been given well before the army heads off that morning, for only then was the army in a place where they could hear the words. This is a parenthesis and the story takes up again in verse 21. The brief that Joshua gives the men is that the city of Jericho is placed under a curse, or “ban”, with all living things within the place to be killed; only Rahab and her family are to be saved alive from the city.

All items from the city are also to be under a curse, and are to be avoided as accursed things. No items of value are to be removed from the city by any soldier of the army for their own purposes. Every item of value is to be brought to the tabernacle and given over to the Lord. The men are all told that if they take anything they will bring great trouble upon the nation and themselves. No-one has any excuse for taking any item from Jericho, for the words of Joshua are very clear to them all.

Verses 21 – 27. The two spies who had entered the city the fortnight before are specifically detailed off to be the rescue unit for Rahab and her family. Their job is to place themselves opposite that part of the wall where Rahab lives, taking their bearings from the red rope in the window. Their task is to rush into the city beside the section of wall upon which her house is built and stop any Israelite killing her or her family. Joshua has used her name and so all the men of the army know if they are challenged by an soldier to stop at a door and Rahab's name is used, then they will know that house is to be left.

This was a vital thing to do, for in such a situation where all living things are to be killed the men doing the killing can build up such a mental state that they will not stop and ask questions; they will just kill everyone they meet in the city. The two spies have their work cut out for them, standing either side of Rahab's house, keeping their fellow soldiers at bay until the first wave of attackers sweep past Rahab's door, and then they will take Rahab and her family with all the goods from their house that they can carry out to safety.

The family of Rahab are then left outside the camp of Israel where they will be placed under guard by the two spies. They will be taken into the camp once they are formally presented to Joshua after the battle is over, and all the returning army can see them, identify them, and greet them as allies. They will appear as Canaanites, and as all Canaanites are to be killed it is vital that these people are identified by the Army members before they disperse to their tents. By their early departure from the city they escape the worst sights of the slaughter of the inhabitants of this city and this is important, given that they will be “Israelites” themselves after this day and the sights of the trauma of the death of their city are spared them.

It was an evil place, for the orders of the Lord regarding it were clear, but the result is a terrible slaughter of every living thing inside the walls. We need to remember that this will be the result of the Lord's Second Advent. All who stand against Him until that day will be killed on that day of His return. Only believers enter the Millennial Kingdom.

The army ransack every building in the city. This tells us that the earthquake that fells the walls does not cause the houses to all collapse. This is a further testimony to the specific nature of the judgment of God upon the place. The houses and temples are able to be ransacked and all valuable items are taken to the tabernacle and delivered to the Lord. There are around 6000 soldiers and each probably had an item or two to deliver and so it was that the sin of Achan

was not discovered because of the quantity of loot being delivered to the priests at the tabernacle. When the city is totally looted of every valuable thing the entire place is burned to the ground, with every building smashed in on top of the ruins. The destruction described here is a total wiping away of all signs that city was even here. The bare tell is alone left.

Once again the writer records that the descendents of Rahab dwell in Israel "until this day". This is an interesting observation because the descendents of Rachel were men like Boaz, and Jesse, and David himself. This comment may have been made at any time, to the present day, for many of the tribe of Judah have this woman as their ancestor. Over the smoking ruins of the city Joshua utters a solemn curse that is to be upon any man who rebuilds this city, and Joshua curses such a man with the death of his oldest and youngest sons as a specific and unusual judgment that indicates God's displeasure at this site and anyone who tries to sanctify it with a new purpose. This rebuilding would occur around 910 BC. 1 Kings 16:34. The man who did it suffered the death of both his sons, just as the curse indicated he would.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The Lord will judge the evil ones. When we think of the Lord we think of the Lord as He came the first time to minister salvation, but we must remember that He returns to judge this earth for their rejection of His salvation. What happens to this town is a picture of what will happen to the entire world when He returns. Those who have not hidden the saints and accepted their message will be killed by the Lord on His return. Only believers will enter the Millennial Kingdom.

2. The instructions given by the Lord to Joshua are specific and carefully received by Joshua. He is absolutely obedient to the commands of the Lord. He carefully briefs his army so that Rahab is safe, and the commands regarding the items in the city are well understood. Joshua mentors the carefulness in giving orders that is required of all leaders.

Let us be careful and clear in all our instructions, and let us hold the Lord's people to account for their obedience to the things ordered. We are to have zero tolerance for disobedience, for the Lord has zero tolerance. He expects us to take the commands of the scriptures seriously, and mentor obedience to our people.

3. The soldiers of Israel must trust and obey the words of Joshua. Rahab must trust and obey the words of the spies a fortnight before. All the believing people involved in this story need to practise active obedient faith. Let us be active and obedient, and keep the words of the Lord.

REFLECTION UPON THE BIBLICAL SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY

1. Sabbath means Rest.

2. Salvation is the eternal Sabbath. (Matthew 11:28) - we must trust in God to save us, apart from our own works.

3. Trusting in the promises is the daily Sabbath. (Hebrews 3:11) - we must trust in God to provide all our needs.

4. The original Sabbath (Genesis 2:2, 3) God finished His work of creation on the sixth day and rested on the seventh.

5. The Sabbath of Israel. (Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

a) In the Old Testament, the Jews were commanded not to work on the seventh day. They were to trust in the finished work of God to supply their needs.

b) The Sabbath (Saturday) was the remembrance day of the old creation, of the old covenant. (Exodus 20:10-11, 31:12-17, Hebrews 4:4)

c) Legalists burdened the Sabbath with many hundreds of extra-biblical commandments and regulations.

d) Under the Mosaic Law the Jews had a sabbatical year; they were supposed to rest every seventh year. (Exodus 23:10, 11)

e) Because they did not take their sabbaticals they endured the 70 years of Babylonian captivity. (Leviticus 26:33-35, 2 Chronicles 36:20, 21, Daniel 9:2, Jeremiah 25:11, 12, Jeremiah 29:10)

6. The Sabbath spoke of the Old Creation Exodus 20, 31 and Hebrews 4 - the Lord's day speaks of the New Creation Saturday belongs to Israel, the family of God, Sunday belongs to the Church the royal family of God. Matthew 28:9, Galatians 6:15, Hebrews 9:15, 10:20

7. The Lord's Day

a) The Lord's Day (Sunday) is the remembrance of the new creation, the resurrection life of the Church in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Hebrews 9:15, 10:20)

b) In the New Testament, all days are as unto the Lord. (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:1-3)

c) There is a moment by moment Sabbath for the believer in the Church Age. (Hebrews 4:1-3)

8. Why is Sunday so important?

[a] Sunday is resurrection day Matthew 28:1,

[b] It was also the day of the first meeting of the disciples John 20:19,

[c] It was the first day they received instructions from the Lord Luke 24:36-39

[d] It was the day the church began as the day of Pentecost was always on a Sunday Acts 2,

[e] It was the day the early church met Acts 20:6-7

[f] It was the day to give offerings 1 Corinthians 16:2.

9. This day has been blessed by God. If the church was wrong on meeting on a Sunday the Lord would have pointed it out before the Seventh Day Adventists came on the scene.

10. There is no such thing as a Christian Sabbath. Ephesians 4:1-3, Romans 12:1,2 In deed, every day should be lived as unto the Lord, lived in the filling of the Holy Spirit. We meet on the Lord's Day when we celebrate our new birth, the Lord's victory, the birth of the Church. There are no particular rules, a day of joy, rejoicing and celebration.

11. The concept of the moment by moment Sabbath is illustrated in four passages in the Old Testament:

a) Moses at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:10-14)

b) Abraham (Romans 4:17-21, Genesis 22, Hebrews 11:17-19)

c) The bones of Joseph (Hebrews 11:22)

d) Caleb and the Giants (Numbers 13,14, Joshua 14:6-14, 15:14, Judges 1:20)

NOTES

CHAPTER 7**INTRODUCTION**

When we are disobedient to the Lord's clear directions we get into serious trouble and our organization gets into serious trouble. The entire population of the Israelite nation gets into strife with this theft of Achan's of the clothing item and the gold. He is facing a serious temptation as the value of the goods taken here would amount to several hundred thousand dollars. He obviously burst into a wealthy home and fought his way through the house and felt "entitled" to the loot. Keep remembering that the people of Jericho didn't just lie down and ask to be killed. The men of this city would have fought till the last as they knew they were not going to be spared. There was no quarter given or expected here, and all the people were killed. It was bloody and hard work.

The rule regarding the curse was known by all, but this man, (of the entire army) felt he had worked particularly hard and felt entitled to take something for himself as a "perk". He probably thought, as people do when they steal without others noticing, that it wasn't going to affect anyone else. The fact is, that all disobedience is going to lead to disaster, and sadly many will die as a result of Achan's actions.

JOSHUA 7:1-26

7:1 But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. **2** And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. **3** And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few. **4** So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. **5** And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. **6** And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. **7** And Joshua said, Alas, O LORD God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! **8** O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! **9** For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? **10** And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? **11** Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. **12** Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. **13** Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. **14** In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. **15** And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel. **16** So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: **17** And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarahites: and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: **18** And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. **19** And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. **20** And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: **21** When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. **22** So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. **23** And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. **24** And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. **25** And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. **26** And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 5. The man who committed the sin is thoroughly identified, down to his great grandfather. He is of the tribe of Judah and had every opportunity to be a leader of men, but has chosen a self centred path. It is amazing that nearly 6000 men were not tempted to the point of falling into sin, but the sin of one is going to be enough to rob the people of blessing. One bad apple will spoil the barrel, and sin unchecked will rot out any group very quickly.

This man's sin is not hidden from God and he will pay the price, but not before thirty six others have died. God is angry at unconfessed sin. Let us be angry at it also. If we hate the evil thing enough we will be assisted in rejecting the very thought of it, but if we tolerate it we will eventually fall into it. No person is an island, and the sin of one overflows in moral consequences to all in society.

The next challenge for Israel is to secure their southern flank against any Canaanite stronghold to the south of them and the small defended city of Ai is identified as a possible threat. While the location is fixed by two other reference points the actual site has just been identified. From 1995-2012 excavations at Khirbet el-Moqatir have discovered a 15th century BC Canaanite Fortress that is most likely to be Ai. It is deceptively strong and prayer was needed before attacking it.

It was not as significant a place as Jericho, but was seen by Joshua to be a threat to them, and that may be due to the ability of the men of Ai to inform the others of the Canaanite Coalition of the movements of the Israelites. Whatever the reason Joshua sends only a small armed group to attack Ai, and he does so without reference to the Lord before the Ark. There are no "small battles" in the Angelic Conflict – all things are dangerous and to be taken to the Lord in prayer.

Remember as you read the numbers here that the word translated "thousands" refer to groups of men, and this could mean 3 groups of 1000, or 3 groups of 100, or 3 groups of 10-50. The casualty figure after the rout of the Israelites of 36 tells us that this number is precise and the response of the rest of the army to these losses indicates that the total number was probably only around a hundred to three hundred men.

In a rout in the ancient world losses were heavy, especially as men with spears and bows and arrows are able to take careful aim before throwing or shooting so the retreating side lose heavily. For only 36 to die tells me the town of Ai is small, and the Israelite army group that attacked it was also very small. This is what the text says, "the men are few". My suspicion is that they send around 100 men and their losses were over one third! That would be the expected losses in a rout, and the men are despondent, because it means they have failed to defeat a small unit of the enemy, and the loss will be broadcast around the Canaanites. The word will get out to all their enemies, "The Israelites can be beaten!"

Verses 6 – 9. Joshua takes his concern to the right place; he goes into the tabernacle of the Lord and falls upon his face before the Lord with the elders beside him, all their faces to the earth. He weeps and laments for the lost men and does not speak to the Lord until the evening. He sits with his grief and frustration long enough to allow his thinking to clarify and then he speaks aloud to the Lord on behalf of the people.

We are often too quick to speak aloud our prayers and do not take the time to reflect and weep over the things that we have felt so powerfully. The Lord wants us to deeply feel the truth that we want to speak to Him of in prayer, and so let us learn from Joshua, and be thoughtful and then prayerful.

The traditional means of showing sorrow was to tear the clothes and put dust on the head and the men who lead the nation all do this and lie on their faces before God all afternoon. Joshua's words focus upon his concern about the impact upon the plan because of the defeat at Ai. He is seriously depressed about this defeat, for he was not expecting it. His expectation was for victory all the way and his decision to send just a small group to Ai was taken without prayerful consideration.

Joshua appears to blame himself for this defeat. It was such a small place, with so few fighting men that he didn't think he needed to pray through such a minor issue. What he is learning is that there is no small or large issue that we bring before the Lord; all things that concern us are small in God's sight. 1 Peter 5:6-7.

Joshua's prayer is similar to prayers I have prayed after minor disasters in my own life; "Lord why did you let this happen to me?" Joshua is baffled, as he has no way of knowing that Achan has disobeyed the orders that were so carefully and fully given. His prayer however despairs and he doesn't need to despair, for the Lord has not brought them across the Jordan to destroy them. He has not done a miracle to bring them to Gilgal to fail them here and now.

Joshua now regrets crossing the Jordan. This is an indication of the impact of stress upon him, and the nature of the loss the people have felt with the deaths of the 36 men. Think today of the impact upon a small community of around 30,000 people when 36 of their fittest and best young men are killed, and you can see the impact of this loss. We don't want to be too critical of Joshua for he faces great pressure here.

Joshua is overwhelmed by the lack of courage of his men also, for he would never turn his back upon an enemy. He has proved his courage again and again and led the people in battle, and he is ashamed of the men who turned their backs and fled. Often men wore no armour at all on their backs, for their thinking was that they didn't deserve to be protected if they turned from facing their enemies.

Joshua sees that psychologically the Canaanites have been given hope from this victory. Israel's numbers are few, not millions (as is incorrectly translated in the older versions of the Bible which followed the Septuagint). The Canaanites can quickly re-take the offensive and could, if they gathered together quickly, surround and annihilate the Israelites. The Lord's good name is threatened here as Joshua sees it. The glory of the Lord is his ultimate concern.

Verses 10 – 15. The Lord does not waste words on Joshua and orders him to his feet immediately. Bluntly Joshua is told there is nothing wrong with him, or the eldership of the nation, but that a man has taken from the cursed things and brought judgment upon the rest. To have taken an accursed thing is to bring a curse upon the people. The Lord is making a strong point to them all; that any evil will destroy them from within. Isaiah 24:1-6, 50:1-11.

They cannot stand against their enemies because they have not dealt with the evil in their midst. The Lord bluntly tells them that unless they are ready to root out the evil that He will withhold His help from them. This is such a vital principle that the people must understand it. They must see that any compromise with evil will destroy their power as a nation. The uncovering of the evil is going to be public. Hosea 6:1-7.

The Lord makes the point to Joshua that the theft was not some spur of the moment thing, but a deliberate pattern of sinful behaviour that was planned and carried through thoroughly. To harbour an accursed thing is to become accursed yourself. We must not have pagan things in our houses even today. The Lord's order to His people is clear; "Be pure, be holy for I am holy!" Leviticus 11:44-45, 19:2, 21:6-8, 1 Corinthians 3:17, Ephesians 1:4, 5:27, 1 Peter 1:12-16, Jude 20.

The polluted things need to be destroyed from amongst them. Every garment is to be burned, no matter what its value, for it is polluted by the previous wearer. Jude 23. The people are called to set themselves apart (sanctify) for the Lord to deal with their sin. Exodus 19:10-15, Joel 2:16-17, Zephaniah 2:1-2. The people are told that there is an accursed thing amongst them, and they have overnight for the items to be destroyed or handed in and forgiveness asked for. Achan could have moved at any point over night and delivered the items up, but he believes he has hidden these things from God! The people are told that the man will be uncovered by the Lord tomorrow and the entire people will be taken before the Lord to see this.

The guilty person is told of his fate; he is to be killed and his body burned. This was the sign that he was a pagan and was not going to inherit eternal life. The manner of his death, and the refusal to confess overnight make it clear that this man was a pagan in his belief system. He believed God was not all powerful but that the gold and clothing would make him powerful enough to hide this evil from God.

Verses 16 – 18. The scene is very dramatic. The tribes are brought before Joshua and then the families, right down to the man. We are not told specifically how this was done. It may have been by lots cast or by direct work of the Lord by means of the Urim and Thumin on the High Priest's breastplate. Whatever the means, within minutes Achan is before Joshua and known to be guilty. His fate is sealed but Joshua will speak with care, concern and sadness to him because of his previous record of service as a soldier and the awfulness of what he has done.

Verses 19 – 21. Achan now makes a full and frank confession of his sin. He acknowledges that it was lust for the money and the item of clothing that moved him to steal from the accursed things. He confesses the sin to the Lord, and recognizes that he sinned against God and has brought evil upon the people as a result. His confession is good but twelve hours too late. He is sorry that he is caught out in sin, but has only confessed when caught. This will not be good enough to save his life, although it may save his soul as he realises that God is indeed the Lord and nothing is hidden from him.

Verses 22 – 26. These verses read terribly to us today, and the violence here is extreme. What has happened to the people of Jericho now happens to the entire adult family of Achan and even all his animals. Now Deuteronomy 24:16 made it clear that children were not to be put to death for their father's sins, and so this must not have happened here. The wife and children of this man are certainly killed, but for their own sin, not their father's sin in the theft. The children must all be over twenty years of age also, as under that they were not held accountable for the sin of their father. Numbers 14:29. Once we get the two other passages open before us it becomes clear what has happened here. The entire adult family of this man have rejected the command of Joshua and actively been a part of their father/husband's decision making process.

The animals, the tent, and all their belongings will also be destroyed. The point is graphically made that all pollution is to be dealt with ruthlessly or the nation will not survive in the land. They are outnumbered by the pagans in Canaan and they cannot afford to have anyone influenced by evil or they will fail in their mission to seize the land. The nation is to value holiness above any goods of value. The clothing, gold and silver of this man are buried beneath the ashes of their bodies and the stones that are heaped upon them. This man and his family pay the ultimate price for their evil, and it is the price that all who love evil rather than goodness will pay. Revelation 20:14-15. When evil is left, through a false view of mercy, then many will suffer and die as a result of its spread. It was terrible what happened to Achan, but more terrible for Israel had it not happened.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Sin has consequences to all around us. Sin never remains where it begins; it always draws the person further and further into evil. Sin has a ripple effect and it destroys as its ripples are allowed to continue outwards. Achan's theft implicated his family and they all joined in his hiding the truth from God and their neighbours. They covered their father's

sin, rather than rebuke him for it. They joined him in active rebellion against God. They had at least twelve hours to confess and bring their sin before the Lord. They didn't have to suffer his fate, and they died with him only because they were agreed with his plan and believed they could hide evil from the Lord God.

2. There are no "small" problems as far as God and ourselves are concerned. There are no little towns to attack; they are all to be taken seriously if they are held by the enemy. Every problem we face is to be prayerfully dealt with and seriously confronted. Let us not make the mistake Joshua made with the little details of our life, lest they prove to be an Ai. All things are to be brought before God and prayed through, and passed thoroughly over.

3. Let us learn from Joshua's posture before he prays. It is always good to just sit with our confusion and grief at times. Even if we get it wrong in our prayer the Lord is patient with us and will correct us gently, for what He seeks is our love and obedience, and He doesn't mind that we express things badly at times. Psalms 103:14.

His prayer is emotional and the Lord silences him, but he is right to sit with his grief as he does. He needs to grieve about what has happened and bring it before the Lord, but he need not doubt that the plan will be successful because God's plan will always be successful. What we need to do is commit to obedience to the plan and get back in line if we have faltered in faith. The Lord will always answer our prayers. Let us cast our cares upon Him.

REFLECTION UPON THE BELIEVER'S CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

1. Forgiveness is by the death of Christ. (Matthew 26:28, Revelation 1 :5)
2. Divine forgiveness is to all who believe in Christ. (Acts 10:43, Acts 16:31)
3. The penalty of sin was paid by Christ on the cross. (Hebrews 9:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21)
4. When a believer sins his fellowship with God is disrupted. God forgives these sins upon confession and cleanses from the unknown sins in the believer's life as well as known sins. (1 John 1: 9).
5. Jesus Christ is our propitiation. (1 John 2:1,2)
6. In human forgiveness we are told to forgive others even as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). This can only be accomplished by the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22,23)
7. Steps towards restoration of fellowship
 - [a] Examine yourself for genuineness of motivation. [2 Corinthians 14:5]
 - [b] Act on what you see [Romans 4:7-8]
 - [c] Deal with any sin by confession. [1 John 1:9, Psalm 66:18]
 - [d] Forget the sin which you have confessed. Do not proceed into a pattern of guilt.[Philippians 3:13-14, Psalm 103:10-12]
 - [e] Resume your active spiritual walk. Avoid areas where you might be tempted by the sin which so easily besets us. [Hebrews 12:12-13]
 - [f] Be reconciled to others once you have been reconciled to God. [James 5:16]
 - [g] Get moving and grow up. [2 Peter 2:17-18]

NOTES

CHAPTER 8**INTRODUCTION**

The Israelites had been beaten by the men of Ai, and the news would have quickly circulated about the fact that these people were not invincible, and that even a small group of Canaanites had defeated them. The Israelite army unit had run away in panic from Ai. This would now be well known throughout the Canaanite confederacy. The next attack on Ai had to be thorough, and it had to deliver a message to the other Canaanite cities that a retreat by Israel did not mean defeat, and that they might even use a retreat to obtain a greater victory. Joshua needed a totally different strategy to defeat Ai than he would otherwise have used. He needed to destroy this small city, but he also needed to send out a message to the rest of the Canaanites by the way he obtained the victory.

The Lord directs him to an attack from the rear of the city, while his army apparently retreats again from the front. This strategy will defeat the city, but it will also send out a message to the other Canaanites that will make them fear the Israelites when they attack, and also when they retreat. By means of the strategy used here the initial defeat is turned into a warning to the enemy. The first defeat may then be seen by the Canaanites as a ruse to suck them in, and may be interpreted by them that the Israelites are prepared to lose men in a feigned retreat to more thoroughly destroy any city.

Joshua uses all his energy and thinking ability to make up what is lost, but not by human effort alone, but by prayerful contemplation and absolute obedience to the revealed will of the Lord for him and his people. Joshua and the people need to learn and rest upon the Word of God, and resist all temptation to the evils that Achan and his family fell into. Joshua will end the campaign against Ai with a reading of the entire Mosaic Law again.

JOSHUA 8:1-35

8:1 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land: **2** And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it. **3** So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night. **4** And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready: **5** And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, **6** (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. **7** Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. **8** And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you. **9** Joshua therefore sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people. **10** And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. **11** And all the people, even the people of war that were with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now there was a valley between them and Ai. **12** And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. **13** And when they had set the people, even all the host that was on the north of the city, and their liers in wait on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley. **14** And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it, that they hastened and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city. **15** And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. **16** And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. **17** And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel. **18** And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that he had in his hand toward the city. **19** And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hastened and set the city on fire. **20** And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. **21** And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai. **22** And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape. **23** And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. **24** And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. **25** And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai. **26** For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. **27** Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. **28** And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day. **29** And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until

eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day. 30 Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, 31 As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32 And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. 33 And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. 34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 - 2. Joshua is seriously debilitated by the defeat. Now he is a tough warrior and would have seen others die in the battles fought to this point, but this defeat has rocked him. It is not that they lost these men, but the way they lost them that upsets Joshua. The fact that the courage of his men is so fragile would have made him extremely concerned about their conduct in future battles, and he also knows that their enemies have been encouraged and strengthened in their plans to attack Israel now. They will face far greater odds in later battles, and are totally outnumbered by the inhabitants of the land. This fear of what lies ahead is not sinful, it is a real assessment of the fate that awaits them if the men do not embrace total obedience to the Lord.

Joshua knows now with absolute certainty, that the army cannot win unless every man is committed to total obedience to the Lord their God. He rightly prays with focused attention for the Lord's strength and encouragement, for he now knows, that in the Lord alone is victory certain. Look at the prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, for she also recognizes this as she faces the end of the days of the Judges. Also look at the following encouraging words to believers down the ages regarding this principle that Joshua has learned here. 2 Samuel 22:33, 1 Chronicles 16:11, Nehemiah 8:10, Psalms 27:1-3, 14, 28:7, 33:13-22, 46:1-11.

Joshua needs a word from the Lord. In troubled times we all need this, and we can always be assured of getting a word from the Lord when we open the Word of God and let the Holy Spirit lead us into all truth. John 14:16-20, 16:8-13. Joshua needs first to lay aside his fear, and replace it with the certainty of God's Plan being fulfilled through his obedient servants. Ephesians 4:20-24, Philippians 3:13-16. He needs to tell himself the truth about what happened to them at Ai and be strengthened in that truth. He needs to experience the defeat of fear by doctrinal truth.

As we rest upon the promises of God's Word our very real, but human fears will be dispersed. God's word to Joshua is to put aside fear and replace it with faith in the plan. There is no need to be dismayed at what happened, for it was simply the outworking of a principle of doctrinal truth; namely, if men walk away from obedience, they walk away from blessing and victory. The opposite principle is also true; if they repent their sin and evil, and return to the path of blessing, they will experience blessing and victory. Jeremiah 16:19, 17:5-15, Habakkuk 3:16-19.

The Lord gives Joshua the instructions to defeat the city, with the assurance that the city and its king are in his hands. Joshua faces the faith test here. The city is behind its strong walls in difficult hill country, but he must see it as God sees it, rather than as the eyes of men see it. This means seeing it already defeated and in their hands and their people judged and dead in the ruins of it. Faith sees the present situation in light of the future reality that God's Word proclaims. God has already given the victory, and the people of God are to advance and seize it, with absolute certainty that what God has promised He will perform.

It is this certainty that the soldiers of the Great Tribulation period are called to show as they fight and resist the overwhelming armies of the evil confederacy that attacks them in those dark days. They are called to see the Lord's return in advance, and rest secure that He is coming to deliver them, and in that certainty fight every day against the odds. By believing doctrinal truth we label the present as a temporary thing, and we tell our self the truth about what God is doing, and we see it as if it has already happened, and act on the basis of that reality. This is the application of biblical CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Technique).

The attack plan is given to Joshua. At this point many ask how Joshua was told this plan. We are simply not told. God spoke "face to face" with Moses, but to Moses alone this way. Deuteronomy 34:10. Was this revelation, (for revelation it clearly was) one that came by vision or by thought inside the mind? We simply do not know, for the Lord speaks to His servants by vision, by dream, by words given deep within the soul. Whatever way the Lord communicated, He gave a clear picture of what Joshua was to do. He was to have his main attack force behind the city, hidden in the valleys there.

Verses 3 - 8. The instructions are now given to the ambush party. The city of Ai is small but they have support from Bethel (verse 17), and the country around it is mountainous so the numbers of men required to ensure the city is captured and few enemy escape is large. Odds of over ten to one are required to spring the trap that Joshua is going to set. He places thirty groups of men to the south and south-west of the city (behind it). Remember, the word

translated “thousand” does not necessarily refer to 1000 at this time in history, but to a group of men. Given the nature of the country and the need to totally overwhelm the place quickly, the number may be anywhere from 300 – 3000.

The orders are clear. They are to get as close to the city as they can without being seen. They are to stay in hiding in the valleys to the south until they hear the men of Ai-Bethel cheer and pursue after the main Israelite Army that will approach from the north-east towards their main gate. When they hear the cheer of the men of Ai they are to prepare to attack, and then when signalled by Joshua’s flashing spear point (verse 18), they are to move quickly around the walls and enter by the open gate and burn the city to the ground and kill all the people they find therein.

Verses 9 – 13. The ambush group is sent out to lie in wait to the south and west of the city. Their job is to move by night in absolute silence from Gilgal up the road towards the city, and then turn away from it, and circle around it. They must find places to hide close to it and lie absolutely still using whatever cover the countryside offers and await the frontal assault and pretended retreat by the main army. This group must practise absolute self control. They must march all night without noise, and when they arrive close to the walls, must lie still, and not speak or move for hours on end.

They must have absolute faith in Joshua and the Lord, for they are in dispersed groups and if spotted would be easy prey for an attack by determined and concentrated troops. They will spend at least twelve hours in wait for the signal. This is a real faith test for this group, for through the entire next day they will have no information coming to them and must just rest through the long hot day.

Having dispatched the ambush army Joshua sleeps in the camp at Gilgal that night and arises the following morning and assembles the rest of the troops. He marches with the entire remnant of the army towards Ai up the main road so as to draw their attention away from their rear and towards the road towards Gilgal. By keeping them focused upon the road he gives his men to their rear time and opportunity to stay hidden. The army pitches camp opposite Ai on the northern side. There is a valley between their camp and the city walls. This provides a natural protection for each group. From his army he takes another five “groups” (250 + men) and places them on the Ai-Bethel road, to the west, to stop any escape of the enemy down that road. Men of Bethel are within the city of Ai (verses 17), which is proof that the message about the earlier attack has been broadcast to other Canaanite strongholds and they are on the way to assist Ai in their stand.

This deployment is apparently done in view of the walls of Ai. This keeps the attention of the enemy towards the north and west, and away from the east and the south. The men of Bethel within the walls of Ai may fear that this group is going to attack their now under manned and poorly defended city. This will make them more desperate to try to end the battle here quickly and rush home to defend their own people. Joshua himself then goes into the valley between his camp and the enemy as it becomes dark that evening. This is cool courage, for he is possibly using himself as “bait” for the enemy. He is keeping their attention firmly focused to their front gate.

Verses 14 – 17. The Hebrew concept of time is different to our own. The first “evening” of each day is between 3-6pm, and the new day begins at 6pm with what they called the “second evening”, from 6 – 9pm. The text here may indicate that Joshua launches his attack that first day (in our terms) after 3pm. The days are lengthening at this time of year in Israel (just after the Passover). The sun would be setting in the south west and so the movement of any of the ambush troops in the valleys there would be hard to spot because anyone on the walls of Ai facing in that direction would have the setting sun in their eyes. From 3pm onwards was the best time to attack the city, as there were at least four hours of daylight to spring the trap and destroy the enemy. The fire of the city will also be a real beacon in the early night.

My belief is that the attack is launched between 3pm and 6pm by the men of Ai. They have taken Joshua’s bait in the valley and they surge out to capture him and to then rout his army. They are filled with confidence after their battle a few days before, and the support of several hundred more men from Bethel. These were not large cities at this time, and with their surrounding villages could muster only several hundred men. Their total combined army may have numbered no more than a thousand men. This would be enough to defeat a larger army in this country if they could seize the initiative, as they did last time. The king of Ai leads his men out on a full frontal assault upon the Israelites to try to capture Joshua and rout the army of Israel.

What I believe happens is that as the men of Ai leave their city and surge forward, Joshua runs back to his army, which on cue pretends panic and flees back towards Gilgal in an agreed manner, and in good battle order, down the road. The ruse works perfectly and all the men of the combined army of Ai and Bethel surge after Israel, and they leave the city gate open as they surge through it, not expecting any more Israelites to be in the vicinity. The men of Bethel will be particularly keen to finish the Israelites off on the road to Gilgal, and then get back after the small group of them that they saw head up the road towards Bethel. All looks like the Israelites are in full flight, but they have had a good start on their run, and so their “retreat” is orderly and they are all still in their own units under their own unit commanders.

Verses 18 – 20. Everything happens in a moment. The ambush parties are ready in the south and west of Ai, and the cry from the men of the city as they chase after the Israelites has roused them, and they are ready to surge into the city. Joshua stops on the retreat path and turns around and points his spear at the city of Ai. This clearly occurs only a few hundred metres from the city, possibly from a low hill, for his men behind the city can see him do this, and they spring into action and enter the city and start the fires to burn it to the ground.

The men of the city now turn around and see the city burning behind them, and the enemy in their city, and blocking the road to Bethel. They are now trapped, with the main Israelite Army turning to face them, with the enemy in their city

behind them, and the detachment on the other road blocking that means of escape. They have no-where to go and their hearts melt with fear and self loathing. They have been fooled and thoroughly trapped and they are all going to die and they know it. The battle will be brief, bloody and now very one sided. The men of Ai and Bethel are possibly all killed.

Verses 21 – 23. The armies of Israel now converge upon the men of Ai and Bethel and they kill all of them that they can. The Israelites who had entered the city surge out of it and the men on the Bethel road surge back towards the army of Ai. All of the Canaanites caught are killed except its king who is brought to Joshua. He is killed by Joshua personally and hung up on a tree outside the city until the next day, then he is cut down and a huge pile of rocks is cast on top of his body. This is blood thirsty stuff and hard to take when ordered by the Lord. Remember, these people have had four hundred years to repent and turn away from their paganism and sexualized evil religious practises. Some do within their nations, but those who do not have run out of time, and they are judged, just as the Lord will judge all the lost on His return. The day comes when judgment falls and when God judges He does so absolutely. Revelation 19:11ff.

Verses 24 – 29. The Israelites chased after the men of Ai into the fields and into the wilderness to try to kill them all. The writer records that they then all went back into the city and killed all the inhabitants that had survived the initial assault. This also makes hard reading for us, but this was the order of the Lord and it must be seen as that. These people were submerged in their paganism and were not able to be brought back from their evil to be safe neighbours of Israel. They had to be killed; men, women and children. This is the hardest thing for us today, but the sexual practises of these people were such that the reasons for the orders must have been extreme ones for the Lord (who loves the little children – Matthew 19:13-14, Mark 10:13-14, Luke 18:16) to order such a thing here. Remember, all children who die before the age of accountability go directly to be with the Lord in heaven. 2 Samuel 12:17-29.

It is a testimony to the extent of their evil that even the children could not be saved from the physical corruption that they had been born into. Sexually transmitted diseases from their evil religious practises was the reason most likely that made them all unable to be married to anyone without infecting them. Note the comment by a later writer, about the city being a ruin “until this day”, indicating that the account is edited many years/centuries after the events described here and none had built it since this day of Joshua. So thorough was the destruction that by the days of the Lord the actual location of Ai was lost.

Verses 30 – 35. The narrative then records that Joshua goes to Mt Ebal and builds an altar to the Lord there. It is unclear whether this visit to Mt Ebal is chronologically in the right place here. Did it occur at this point after the battle at Ai or later, when the people had moved further north? The answer is unclear as to timing, but the things described here certainly occur in the months after Ai. Moses had expressly ordered the uttering of the curses for all who disobey the law to be read aloud from upon Mt Ebal. Deuteronomy 11:26-32, 27:1-14. The altar is to be built upon Mt Ebal, also according to Moses command, and the twelve stones were then to be plastered with white lime plaster. After the sacrifices offered on that altar the “ten words” were to be written in large letters upon the blood soaked altar. Then the curses and blessings of Deuteronomy 27-28 were to be uttered aloud.

The writer records the visit to Mt Ebal here as it makes a clear comment upon the reasons for the total destruction of Ai. These people are under a curse, and that is why they must all die. They have had 400 years since Abraham ministered amongst them to repent of their evil ways, and they have had forty years of information about Israel coming, and God being with them. At any point they could have changed their lives and prepared to meet the true God and serve Him with His people. They receive the curse of God because they have chosen to stay in the kingdom of the evil one. The curses uttered upon Mt Ebal remind the Israelites that they will be dealt with by God in exactly the same way as the Canaanites if they select the same life path.

Joshua goes even further on Mt Ebal than what is ordered by Moses, and he re-reads the entire Law to the people. Every word that Moses wrote Joshua reads aloud to the people, carefully and slowly. Everyone who could understand language was there to hear the words read aloud. The women and children of many ancient cultures were considered second class citizens and not worthy to hear the words of God, but all were to hear God’s truth, and Joshua ensured that everyone heard the words of the Lord.

Dr J Vernon McGee used to say concerning spiritual truths, “put the cookies on the bottom shelf where the kiddies can get them”. He was right. We need to communicate so that all can hear, believe and apply the living words of God. Mt Ebal stands as a reminder to the nation of the cost of disobedience to the Lord their God. If they disobey or ignore the Lord’s claims upon them, then they will suffer the same fate as the Canaanites. Satan will be judged, and all who stand with him will be judged with him. Revelation 20:10-15.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Let us ensure that all people who can hear the truth about the Lord and His will, hear it from us, and let us ensure that our teaching is simple and clear to all, so that all might understand and apply it into the fabric of their lives.
2. Judgement will come upon this world and it will not be a pretty sight when it comes. All who turn away from the Lord will pay the ultimate price for their rebellion in their eternal death. We must remember that the day of accountability comes for all decisions. The things that happen in this chapter before us are awful, and all judgments are awful, but the consequences associated with leaving the Canaanites alive were far worse. The evil of these people is far worse than we could possibly imagine. These stories are a reminder that evil will be over one day, and when it is those who love evil

rather than good will be eliminated from this earth. It is radical surgery, but the Lord is the surgeon and He cuts carefully and precisely, and only those who hate truth and goodness will be removed. Justice will be done. Luke 17:26-36.

3. Courage and faith were required of Joshua and his men. They all are courageous and obedient, and the plan is executed perfectly, and the enemy is totally overwhelmed and destroyed. That is the objective of all good military operations and this is an example of the best. The men sent to be part of the ambush needed to be ready to lie still all through the day and move only when called to do so. Often we need to simply position ourselves to be ready to serve in a moment at the time of the Lord's call. Let us be ready to lie still at times, as well as speak and act at others. Let us be as obedient as we see these men are in the attack upon Ai.

BIBLICAL COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL TECHNIQUE

As we for our pattern/habit of thinking so our life habits and choices will go. Proverbs 23:7. If unwanted thoughts persist they become the norm, and if temptations are not resisted they will overwhelm the mind in time. When an annoying person says something, or an unwanted thought occurs, we can allow their evil/sinful response to "rent space in our head" or we can deal with them strongly.

All unwanted and immoral mental "clutter" weighs us down and can create great frustration within our mind. It is a result of the Fall of Adam and Eve, and an ever present reminder that we are all fallen creatures, with an easy tendency, from our Old Sin Nature, to sin. We are surrounded by equally fallen people, and often watching television that is actively pushing evil viewpoints, and then we wonder why satanic nonsense dominates our mind.

This simple Cognitive Behavioural technique below may assist you to plan to deal with the specific problems that really irritate you and trip you up. Whatever the challenge, from your dysfunctional thought patterns that you have within yourself coming from early experience, to the annoying people you meet, there is a way to stop these thoughts from controlling you. Evil viewpoints from other people via television, internet and other media may be turned off, but the thoughts sown in the mind by media are harder to eliminate.

The good news is, this tool can be used to deal with our own annoying behaviours also, and is a powerful way to stop yourself doing something that childhood software errors, and poor adult choices on top of the old tendencies, may have programmed you to do! This helps you label such thoughts as something akin to "software errors" (sins), as "not new me" (that is, not my real born again nature, but a reflection of my Old Sin Nature), and enables you to get control over them and re-program your responses into godly pathways. Hebrews 12:12-13. There are three steps to do this.

Before we apply the three steps identify the situations where you find yourself responding in an unacceptable or sinful manner. Write these situations out, identifying the precipitating events, the thoughts you have, the feelings associated, and the things you then say or do that make you ashamed or annoyed. Programmed bad reactions waste time and energy – and bluntly, life is just too short to waste on such things. Bad responses also hurt the people we love and need to be eliminated before they eliminate our relationships!!! The Lord wants us to walk closely with him, and bring every thought into captivity to Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.

Once you have your "hit list" of problem situations/issues that you want to change, ask the following questions of each.

1. WHAT LABEL CAN I USE TO PUT THE PERSON/SITUATION INTO A FUNNY or PROFESSIONAL BOX?

Find a funny label (or at least a neutral one) for the annoying precipitating event, thought or person. Remember, we want to look down upon our old bad habits, not take them seriously (fear them) as if they are more powerful than our new nature in Christ. There is nothing funny about sin, but if we mock it we will find that we have more power over it, for in Christ, we have superior power to call upon than our Old Sin Nature can muster. This label can then be used when the event/thought occurs and it will take the heat of your reaction out of it. You label it as a "stupid thing" rather than accepting it as an integral and permanent part of the new person you are in Christ, for in Christ, and through the Holy Spirit's power, it is not any part of the new you!

2. TELL YOURSELF THE TRUTH.

"The truth is...." Think of a statement that powerfully expresses the reason why you will not let a "twit" or "idiot thought" rent space in your head, but rather you will walk your genuine life path in Christ! This truth statement may be a verse of scripture like some we have seen from 1 John.

3. TAKE ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION TO REINFORCE THE TRUTH.

Identify any action to immediately take to reinforce your true path in life rather than your old reaction which reflected your bad programming from childhood. This is an action that reflects a Holy Spirit filled path, rather than an Old Sin Nature dominated one. It may be a praise or prayer activity that reinforces the doctrinal truth you have used as step 2.

EXPERIMENT with these steps and test yourself in all problematic situations. End with celebration and worship in which you acknowledge the truth to the glory of God.

CHAPTER 9**INTRODUCTION**

The enemy have been slow in addressing the threat posed by Israel. They have remained isolated and individual city states, and up until this point the small walled towns of Ai and Bethel alone have joined in any fighting league against the Israelites. This situation changes after the destruction of Ai and Jericho. The Canaanites now know that these people do not just want to defeat them and absorb them into their population; they want to destroy them totally.

It is war to the finish and they now know it. The preservation of the Israelites is due to the slowness of their enemies getting organized against them. The Lord's miracle in allowing them to cross Jordan in full flood has caught the enemy off guard. It is a reminder to us all, that the Lord's plans are always superior to Satan's plans.

As we read about these people we must remember that they are satanic in their religion and their allegiance, and their destruction is ordered by the Lord. One group amongst the Canaanites has kept the faith of Abraham alive and believes that the God of Israel is the only true God, and they will use a strategy to make an alliance with the Israelites. The Lord will allow Joshua to be fooled by these people and they will become good servants to the nation for generations. They are the Gibeonites. This is another leadership/moral challenge, for their deception is rewarded and approved by God.

JOSHUA 9:1-27

9:1 And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; **2** That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord. **3** And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, **4** They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; **5** And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. **6** And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. **7** And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you? **8** And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye? **9** And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, **10** And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. **11** Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. **12** This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: **13** And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. **14** And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. **15** And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them. **16** And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. **17** And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. **18** And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. **19** But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. **20** This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them. **21** And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them. **22** And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us? **23** Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God. **24** And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing. **25** And now, behold, we are in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do. **26** And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. **27** And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 4. The inhabitants of the land divide immediately into two groups. The majority group stand against Israel and form a fighting alliance to resist them. Their previous differences and warfare amongst themselves is set aside in a new alliance. They do not stand as one army however, and this hinders their effectiveness. These city states are fatally divided by their religions and their ethnic identities, and at least six groupings are noted by Joshua. This inability amongst the satanic forces to join in a cohesive army is a common fruit of evil worship.

Satan is the god of self centeredness and narcissism, and so as such his servants find it difficult to bind together and submerge their own desires and differences. Self centred people find it hard to compromise and work together, for they are always looking for an angle to work to their advantage, and the "ripping off" of the others. This weakness allows Israel to seize all the Shephelah (hill country) of the land over the next few years. Only Jerusalem and the Jebusites there stand out as able to resist the Israelites. They will not fall to Israel finally until the days of David.

Verses 5 – 13. Amongst the people group called the Hivites, were the people of the walled towns of Gibeon. They called a community meeting of their people and they discussed the invasion of the land by Israel. They really discussed it and they decided that they could not stand against the one true God, and they recognized that their gods were useless, and were to be discarded. They recognized that if a nation like Israel, was "under God" and could defeat the kings and places they had already, then they would seize the entire land.

They also knew that the Israelites were not interested in treaties with the Canaanites, but in their destruction, and they knew that it was under the orders of God, due to their paganism. They faced the facts, discarded their old religion, and decided to join, what to the other Canaanites, was the enemy! They prepared an obvious yet clever plan, and they sent their leaders to Joshua at Gilgal less than twenty kilometres away.

The plan was simple. They pretended they were from far away and they were careful in their choice of old clothes, shoes, wine skins and mouldy bread, to make their point that they had been on the road for weeks. They were so good with their presentation the alarm bells should have been raised by the elders. There is an old saying, "when the deal is too good, or too correct be very careful". The writer of the account notes specifically that the elders mentioned that they were not to enter into any treaty with locals and that they had to be convinced that the Gibeonites were distant peoples.

The Gibeonites lives depend upon their ruse and they work hard to convince the Israelites. The writer specifically mentions that the Israelites do not pray about this matter, nor do they seek the Lord's guidance. Once again, like the initial decision to attack Ai, Joshua believes the issue is a minor one and not worth troubling the Lord over. Remember the lesson of Ai, (Joshua Chapter 7), no thing in the life of a believer is too small to be taken to the Lord.

Notice the words of the Gibeonite elders and their similarity to those of Rahab. Joshua 2:10ff. These people have genuinely accepted that the Lord God is truly the Lord of all and have accepted the Lordship of Jehovah. Had Joshua asked of the Lord I suspect he would have been told to make an alliance with these believers, and later Jewish history proves their reliability and faithfulness down to the return of the exiles in 535 BC, over nine hundred years from this point. Nehemiah 3:7, 7:25.

Verses 14 – 15. The Israelites accepted the words of the Gibeonites and didn't seek the Lord's counsel. The language used for diplomacy at this time was Akkadian, and it also formed the basis of the script for use upon the clay tablets that abound from this period and earlier. It was a common language for reading and writing throughout the Middle East from approximately 4000BC through until the days of the Neo-Babylonian Empire around 600 BC, when Aramaic replaces it. Joshua makes peace with these people and swears a treaty with them of mutual protection and friendship. All the elders of both nations swear this treaty together and the Israelites take the mouldy bread off them and give them good clothes and food to eat.

Verses 16 – 21. It is not long before the Gibeonites are discovered in their ruse. They only come from twenty kilometres away and something occurs by the third day that discloses this fact to Joshua. The Israelites then took these men and marched them the twenty kilometres to their area and discovered their four towns, and met their people. At this point, although not mentioned by the historian, they would have had a chance to speak with the people and discover the genuineness of their faith in the true God.

I suspect the meeting of the Israelite Army with these people was a very tense affair as the Gibeonites were aware, if the decision went against them, they all died. The Israelites do not kill them, and the fact that this is mentioned first indicates that a conscious decision was made not to kill them at that point. An oath taken under deception can be broken, as it was made upon false grounds, but the elders of Israel claim the oath here as made in the Lord's name, and so they decide to keep it. The Lord's will is done here, as these people are going to be mighty servants of the Lord.

The elders make a conscious decision to spare the lives of the Gibeonites because of the nature of their oath to them, but the princes of Israel decide to punish them for their deception with permanent servile status. They decree that they will work for the other tribes as wood cutters and water drawers. Now this latter phrase doesn't mean simply men to draw water from wells for them throughout the area of the twelve tribes, but possibly indicates an area of expertise of these people.

At this time the hills around Jerusalem were covered with great woods and these people were clearly expert workers with wood, and apparently also good water diviners and well diggers. These two skills will be used to punish them for their deception, but they will turn their servitude into glorious service to the people of God through the centuries and will become an integral part of Israel through the centuries. Romans 8:28.

These people are an example to how a mental attitude can transform a reality. They are made servants of the twelve tribes to assist in wood working, wood carving, fire wood production, and well digging. They transform their place of servitude into a place of service to the Lord. They are content with their lot as living servants of God, rather than dead

slaves to Satan. They recognize that it is better to be the door keeper of the house of God than a prince in the palaces of the ungodly. Psalms 84:10-12.

When people are saved we need to apply the principles of the Gibeonites to their status, and not try to change their lot, but rather serve where they find themselves and let the Lord promote them in His time. 1 Corinthians 7:17-27, Philippians 4:10-11, 1 Peter 5:5-7.

Verses 22 – 27. Joshua is very upset with the Gibeonites, but he should not be. He doesn't need to ask why, for they simply wanted to save their lives by accepting the truth about God! Joshua changes the nature of the bondage for the Gibeonites; it will not now be to the entire nation, but specific bondage to the tabernacle of the Lord, which is presently at Gilgal and will later be at Shiloh. Neither of these places was too far for these men to be able to ensure the tabernacle always had servants to provide wood and water for it. Joshua curses them, yet he has actually blessed them, for he has given them the opportunity to deepen their faith in the one true God by their service to the tabernacle.

The Gibeonites repeat their statement of faith in the power and majesty of the one true God. They genuinely believe in the Lord God over all and they tell Joshua that bluntly. They accept that they feared the wrath of God through the Israelites and that is why they prepared the ruse they did. They accept the judgment upon them and commit themselves to this task until the day their name ceases to exist in the land. The later editor adds the note that even to his own day these people serve the tabernacle/temple.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The Gibeonites will do anything to stay alive and serve the one they can see is the only true God. Let us devote ourselves to the service of the Lord in such a focused and energetic manner as they have done. These people accept the ruling of Joshua, taking a servile role and they win greatness through it. It is not the job we do that matters, it is the fact that the Lord has given it to us and that we are committed to the Lord and will always do our best. Let us not seek the roles of others, but do our own work as unto the Lord.
2. The Lord protects the Israelites from any alliance of Canaanite City States. They cannot get themselves coordinated in time and with enough power to oppose and defeat the Israelites. The Lord brings their counsel to confusion. The Lord will enable us to defeat far superior enemies if He wants us to win. The only variable we need to be sure of is the path the Lord wants us to walk, and then we need to walk it with focused strength. Let us be the people of the Lord and trust Him to guide us through to victory every time we fight the enemy.
3. There is no small issue to the Lord. All basic direction needs to be sought at the hands of the Lord. The Gibeonites are out to fool the Israelites to save their own lives and who can blame them for that, but their motives stem from their acceptance of the truth about God. Their faith will save them, just as ours has saved us. Let us walk in faith, as we were saved by faith.

REFLECTION UPON THE MEANS TO RECEIVE DIVINE GUIDANCE – KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

1. There are three categories of will in history
 - a) Divine will (sovereignty)
 - b) Angelic will.
 - c) Human will.
2. Main areas of the will of God (1 John 3:23)
 - a) For the unbeliever - salvation (2 Peter 3:9)
 - b) For the believer - spirituality (Ephesians 5:18)
3. Christ has free will (Matthew 26:42, Hebrews 10:7, 9)
 - a) No free will in mankind would imply no free will in Christ.
 - b) The basic principles of divine guidance however is based on the fact that man possesses free will to choose for or against God.
4. Type of will of God as related to the human race (e.g. Balaam)
 - a) Directive (Numbers 22:12) -what God directs.
 - b) Permissive (Numbers 22:20) - What God allows
 - c) Overruling (Numbers 23) - When God overrules
5. Principles of Guidance
 - a) Knowledge of biblical principles in the believer (Psalm 32:8, Proverbs 3:1-6, Isaiah 58:11, Romans 12:2)
 - b) Surrender and filling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:13, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 5:17-18, 1 John 1:9)
 - c) Growth - to eat meat and not rely on milk (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)
6. Categories of the will of God
 - a) Viewpoint will of God - What does He want me to think?
 - b) Operational will of God - What does He want me to do?
 - c) Geographical will of God - Where does He want me to be?

7. An example of the will of God (Acts 11) - the Guidance of Peter
- a) Guidance through prayer (vs 5)
 - b) Guidance through the mind (vs 6)
 - c) Guidance through the word (vs 7-10)
 - d) Guidance through providential circumstances (vs 11)
 - e) Guidance through the filling of the Spirit (vs 12)
 - f) Guidance through fellowship and comparison of data (vs 13-15)
 - g) Guidance through remembering Scripture (vs 16)

NOTES

CHAPTER 10**INTRODUCTION**

The next phase of the invasion and capture of the land occurs as a result of the impact of the peace treaty with Gibeon. The Gibeonites have alienated themselves from their previous allies and the Amorites who surround them are not pleased that they have joined the enemy. Five city-states join together under the king of Jerusalem and launch an assault upon the cities of Gibeon.

Joshua shows masterly military strategy here in response and marches all night in silence and attacks the combined forces of the enemy when they are not expecting him and seriously defeats their superior numbers. He then spiritually senses the moment of opportunity and follows up his victory in the field immediately, so that all the city states represented in the attacking forces, except Jerusalem, are captured and the people put to the sword. All the cities in the area fall into the hands of the Israelites intact, and will become the territory of Benjamin, Judah and Simeon. This phase of the invasion of the land is called the "Southern Campaign" and last several weeks.

JOSHUA 10:1-43

10:1 Now it came to pass, when Adonizedec king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; **2** That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty. **3** Wherefore Adonizedec king of Jerusalem, sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, **4** Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel. **5** Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it. **6** And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us. **7** So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. **8** And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. **9** Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night. **10** And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. **11** And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. **12** Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. **13** And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. **14** And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel. **15** And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal. **16** But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. **17** And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah. **18** And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them: **19** And stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand. **20** And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities. **21** And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel. **22** Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave. **23** And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. **24** And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. **25** And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight. **26** And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. **27** And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day. **28** And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho. **29** Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah: **30** And the LORD delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho. **31** And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it: **32** And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and

smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah. 33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining. 34 And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it: 35 And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish. 36 And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it: 37 And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that were therein. 38 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and fought against it: 39 And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king. 40 So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded. 41 And Joshua smote them from Kadeshbarnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon. 42 And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. 43 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 5. The first king of Jerusalem we meet in the scripture is called Melchizedek, meaning literally, “the king of righteousness”. Genesis 14:18. This man here, nearly five hundred years later is called, Adonizedek, meaning, “the Lord of righteousness”. He has a godly name, (although the “lord” here may refer to Baal) like his forefather, but he lacks the godly nature of his ancestor, and his city will continue to successfully resist the Israelites, and only be taken by the skill of one of David’s commanders four hundred years later. 2 Samuel 5:5ff.

This man’s name is a reminder to us that the outer appearance, and the name or reputation of a person or organization is not to be trusted, unless the fruit of righteousness is seen. A man may say he “loves the Lord”, but you must see evidence of that love, and evidence of the identity of the “lord”. Matthew 7:13-23.

The Gibeonites have been referred to as Hivites previously, and they were one branch/tribe of the Amorite peoples. The leader of this southern group of the Canaanites is apparently the city state of Jerusalem, although it may have previously been Gibeon. The king of Jerusalem sends messengers to the other key city states of the southern confederacy and they agree to declare war first on Gibeon and then on the Israelites.

From the words here we learn that Gibeon itself is seen by their peers as a “great city”, and was also one of the leading cities of the southern Canaanite Confederacy, and considered a city of a great king, or at least a place where the great kings of the Canaanites originated from. Joshua does not talk about the king of Gibeon, and the fact that he is not mentioned may indicate a coup has occurred in order to work the strategy they have actioned to become allies of Israel.

There is a lot more going on here than Joshua has recorded. We are also told that the soldiers of this area were considered mighty men of valour, not wimps. The fact that they are able to resist the assault of the army of the five kings also tells us that Joshua has not disarmed these men, but trusted them to bear arms in their own defence and possibly as allies in the coming battles.

The other kings come from the other key city states of the area, men who ruled over their people and the surrounding villages. Each city mentioned was defended by a strong wall, and the population of the surrounding areas and unwalled villages would flee to the protection of that city when threat appeared. Note in the maps at the back of your Bible the places mentioned, as each has been identified and major archaeological excavations have been held on some of them, so a great deal is known about several of these places.

Several of these cities will play a big part in later Israelite history. Gilgal will be the headquarters of the prophet Samuel, during the last of the days of the Judges, 1 Samuel 11:14-15, and Hebron will be made the capital of the nation under King David. 2 Samuel 2:1ff. He will then seize Jerusalem as his capital. Caleb will especially ask Joshua for Hebron as his family seat and he deals with the last of the great warriors of the area around it and settles there. The other cities also figure in Israelite history.

Jarmuth will never be famous but was a significant hill country town and will be resettled by the returning exiles from Babylon whose forefathers came from there. Lachish becomes one of the key defended cities of the south for all the days of Israel and Judah. Lachish has been extensively excavated and a great deal of information on this city is available on line. Its history parallels the life of the Jewish people. It is settled immediately after Joshua seizes it from the Canaanites, but destroyed by the Philistines and deserted from around 1200 – 1000, built again by David, and destroyed then by the Assyrians in 700 BC, rebuilt by Manasseh as a fortress in the 600s and then finally destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC. It was settled again from the days of the Maccabees until the end of the Roman Empire period around 450 AD. It has been deserted ever since and so is a great place for archaeology.

Eglon (also known as Adullam) is further south west of Lachish and will be a key border city with the Philistines several hundred years later. Its excavation in the 1890s established biblical archaeology, and a great deal is able to be read on line and in encyclopaedias about this town, that was important from the Bronze Age through until Persian times in the

fifth century BC. Each of these cities is worth study from an archaeological perspective. Each city here was captured intact by the Israelites. There is no destruction of the dwellings here, as they will be simply “moved into” by the Israelites later; only the people are killed or driven away. In these cases the animals also are kept alive. Only Jericho and Ai are “cursed” and everything within them destroyed.

Verses 6 – 11. When the Gibeonites hear of the Amorite alliance’s plan they send a messenger immediately to Joshua at Gilgal twenty kilometres away. Their message is urgent. They expect the blow to fall with overwhelming force and they expect it within the next twenty four hours. It appears the alliance gathered and encircled Gibeon quickly. The Gibeonite messenger was able to escape the net unseen, but it was touch and go. The expectation is that the attack will be launched the next day, and the forces are so superior in numbers that the Gibeonites do not believe they will be able to hold out against their old allies’ combined assault on their wall.

Joshua’s response is immediate. It is now that his previous marches are useful as good training for this campaign. He has marched part of his army all night to attack Ai and so they are ready for the challenges of a night attack and can brief their colleagues who have not executed such a manoeuvre. They have all walked up and down the road to Gibeon just days before and so the road and surrounding hills are known to them.

Joshua can lay his plan well in advance and give very specific orders to his twelve battalions so that no noise or talking is needed at the battle area. The units can be deployed in silence, and the first thing the enemy know is when the Israelites burst upon them. Every man of war is taken on this march. None are left in camp to protect the women and children. Joshua takes a great risk here, but is relaxed about this, as he is in the Lord’s hands and under His orders.

The Lord gives encouragement directly to Joshua about the battle, repeating the general assurance given the other side of Jordan. Deuteronomy 20:1-4, Joshua 3:7-10. Joshua has the assurance that none will be able to stand against the assault of the Israelites. The Lord is with them and the enemy is already defeated. Psalms 27:1-4, Isaiah 41:8-14, Romans 8:30-39. The Army marches all night and falls upon the enemy camp while it is still dark, or just around dawn. There is enough light for the Israelites to see the enemy to launch their attack, and they attack from the East, and so have the rising sun behind them. Their numbers will appear much greater in this way, and the enemy, still half asleep and still not dressed in their armour are vulnerable.

The Israelites chase the enemy north-west towards Beth-Horon (possibly it was the remnant of the Jebusites of Jerusalem that fled this way attempting to then circle around, back to their city). Another group they chased south west towards Azekah (possibly this was remnants of the Eglon/Jarmuth group), and another south-west towards Makkedah (possibly this was elements of the Lachish/Hebron contingent). Both these last places are beyond Jarmuth, which must have been over run. As the enemy army contingents flee a great hail storm hits them and there are more killed by the hail in the open country (without their helmets) than are killed by the Israelite swords.

Verses 12 – 14. Re-read these verses and pause and reflect upon them. What has happened here? This is a miracle like no other and the writer/editor notes this many years later. There has been no day like this day in the history of the world. Immanuel Velikovsky wrote his book “Worlds in Collision” about this and other events recorded in the Bible around this time and later. While I do not support his many and varied theories, he identifies that there are many records of a long day in many cultures around the world. Whatever the explanation here, and I have not read one that satisfies me, we are face to face with a miracle here of amazing proportions.

Joshua asks for a miracle and he gets one. He does it in front of his Army so that if there is not one he will be made to appear a fool in the sight of his people. The Lord gives him a great miracle, that will undermine all the religious leaders of Canaan and Egypt beyond it. A long day will cause panic amongst all the religious systems of paganism, for they have no answer to the cosmological questions it poses, or explanation of it. Paganism centres in cosmological rituals and when they face this their “gods” are seen to be powerless. A religious crisis is created in all the pagan religions, and this undermines the resolve of those who could oppose Israel.

Egypt will abruptly change its worship to Monotheism at Amarna within years of this event and the peoples of the land of Canaan will melt before Israel’s armies and none will come to their aid. This is an incredible thing, and there will be around forty years for Israel to be established before the first major challenges to them come. Only a major miracle can explain these things.

Another question comes out of this section. What is the “Book of Jasher”? It is one of the many lost books that were written around this time which did not make it into the settled canon of Scripture when Ezra and others finally formulated those books that would be accepted, and those that while important, were not in the category of scripture. 2 Samuel 1:17-18. A fake book of Jasher was written in southern Italy in the Medieval period, but it clearly is an invention. The real book was lost after the days of David, possibly at the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC. Another ancient book is also mentioned in Numbers 21:14.

Verses 15 – 20. Verse 15 records the final destination of the Israelite Army, but the following verses tells us what they did before returning to their camp in Gilgal. To our mind the insertion of verse 15 here breaks up the narrative, but the Hebrew way of thinking demanded the final destination be given, and then the explanation of the events before they got there. There may be several days or even weeks before they returned to Gilgal. The army returns to Gilgal only after the entire southern region is in their hands and pacified.

While the enemy army splits into at least three groups and flees in three directions, the five kings are clearly camped together, or are in conference when the attack comes. This means that their flight is in company and they all end up taking refuge and hiding in a cave at Makkedah. They mean to hide until the pursuit stops and then return to their cities. Pursuing Israelite forces discover their hiding place and report it to Joshua who orders the cave be sealed and guarded, and the pursuit of the armies continue.

Joshua wants to kill as many of the enemy as he can, as that will make the taking of the cities later that much easier and the morale within them that much lower. The majority of the enemy army are slaughtered but a number escape into the "fenced cities"; that is the five cities named. Enough men escape to Jerusalem to hold it against assault, but the other four cities fall easily. Jerusalem may initially fall, but it is certainly retaken by the Canaanites and they hold it until David's day.

Verses 21 – 27. The entire army returns to Makkedah. The distances from the final place of pursuit of the three army groups would indicate at least a day or two is required for the army to regroup at Makkedah. Check your maps at the back of your Bible and measure the distances from Beth-Horon and Azekah to the new camp. When they gather there and make their camp Joshua brings out the five captured kings from their cave prison. The army leaders of the twelve tribes are then asked to place their feet upon the necks of the pagan kings who had desired to kill all the Gibeonites and then all the Israelites.

The kings are then killed and their bodies hung on trees to signify the execution of capital punishment upon criminals. Deuteronomy 21:22. At night fall the bodies are taken down and thrown into the cave and great stones are used to block the entrance. Once again we have the later editor's note that the great stones remained in front of the cave until his own day.

The message Joshua gives his men is the repeat of the encouragement that the Lord gave to him. The men need the Lord's encouragement, for they still face great cities to besiege and seize, and serious warriors to fight. They have not comprehended the impact of the great miracle done upon their enemies yet and so the Lord, through his leader, encourages them. This is how the Lord deals with us today; we are challenged to advance in obedience, and given encouragement in the process. They are told not to let fear get a hold of them. They are told not to despair when they see the obstacles still to be seized. They are commanded to be strong in their faith and their bodies, for the Lord will deliver all their enemies into their hands, just as He has given them these five kings.

Verses 28 – 30. Have your map of the southern countryside of Judah at the back of your Bible open as you read the next verses. The day they pull the bodies off the trees they attack the city of Makkedah. The entire drama of the capture of the kings has been played out so that it can be seen from the walls and so the defenders will have been psychologically debilitated well before the entire army surges over the wall and kills all the inhabitants. The king of Makkedah was treated as the king of Jericho.

Now this hasn't been precisely mentioned in chapter 8, but it may have been some variant on the hanging of the king in a manner that was of significance to the Canaanites given the religious cultic significance of their kings. It is likely that he was impaled near the city gate so that the place was defiled for pagan worship thereafter. We must remember that the "kings" were the cultic leaders of the pagan religions in this day and were in fact the satanic leadership centre of each community. It may be that this is the reason why the Gibeonites king is not mentioned, for to effect their plan to surrender to Israel they had to kill him themselves.

Having destroyed the population of Makkedah, the entire army of Israel moves on to Libnah. It too will become a major Israelite fortress in later years and was a significant walled city at this time. Its men did not join the coalition and so this is a fully defended town. The attack is launched immediately on arrival and the fighting is hard. Joshua launches his entire army against each city. My estimate is that it is around 6000 fighting men and in a concentrated group could swarm over defences, but the military strategies are significant, as they have to defend themselves against arrows and stones thrown from the walls as they advance. The city falls in the first day and all the inhabitants are killed. This will be the pattern for each city in the south. The animals are left alive and become the basis for the new herds and flocks, and the crops are in the fields and so will be the Israelites later.

Verses 31 – 33. Lachish is another significantly fortified town and it falls the second day of the siege. The first day would have involved attacks to discover the weaknesses and the manner of their defences, and may also have been tied up dealing with the army of Gezer that came out to assist Lachish. The first days work is done with the defeat of Gezer and the second day the assault is launched on Lachish and it is totally overwhelmed. All that is done here is the same as in the other towns.

The total population is to be destroyed, but the animals are taken alive for later use by Israel. It may be that they are left in the fields to care for themselves until the tribal groups arrive to take ownership of the region. The defeated towns are left vacant for a few months before the main body of the Israelites arrive to settle. It may also be that this is a purifying period, when the crops are left to self sow and the animals to fend for themselves and the houses to be cleansed of any blood shed within them. When the Israelite settlers arrive they simply move in and clean up the dwellings of the previous people and use their goods even down to the pots and pans.

Verses 34 – 37. The army now moves to Eglon. The army does the same to Eglon as it did to the other places and captures the entire city and destroys its entire population. They then march across country to Hebron and besiege it

and take it. The destruction referred to is the population, for the towns are taken intact, and the dwellings are able to be used. The towns will be broken up a bit by the battle, but all are able to be repaired. These forced marches across the land keep the enemy on their toes, not knowing where the blow will fall next. Joshua does not divide his forces, but keeps the entire army concentrated so that he is superior to all forces he may meet. By crisscrossing the countryside he keeps the enemy behind their walls until they are ready to be killed. Do not feel sympathy for these people, for their paganism has brought this judgment upon them and it is thorough, because it needs to be.

Verses 38 – 43. From Hebron he crosses with the army back west to Debir and takes it. The army is moving and fighting day after day by this account. It is a testimony to the fitness and strength of the Israelite soldiers that they are able to sustain this pace. Joshua keeps the pace up so that momentum is not lost, and the enemy do not have time to regroup at all. They just hear of one disaster when another is being reported to them. Those who do not flee south to Egypt or to the coastal cities north of Gaza do not survive. Having taken the major cities Joshua then does a clockwise sweep through the southern region as far south as Beersheba, across to Gaza and then up the coastal hill country back to the land of the Gibeonites.

All this countryside is under their control by the time of their return to the camp at Gilgal. It has been a major risk for their women and children to do this, for any attack by the northern forces of the Canaanites would have found the camp unguarded. Joshua has trusted the Lord to defend his people and the Lord through the miracle of the long day has so frightened the northern people that it will be months before they are able to establish an alliance to fight Israel. The northern group are divided from the southern, and although they are related, they clearly do not feel any bonds of love that might unite them. Division is a fruit of satanic activity and so these people are divided as satanic forces often are, and so there is no concerted defence against Israel. God has sown confusion amongst them, and with satanic thinking dividing them they are able to be defeated by the forces of God.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Joshua uses good military strategies to capture the places he attacks, but the Lord goes before him sowing confusion and fear amongst the satanic forces, and the men of Israel are encouraged by the work of God, and are courageous and fit. God prepares the way for prepared people. Let us be like the soldiers of Joshua's army; fit, strong, trained in theology, and courageous in our advance along the plan for our lives.

2. For forty years the Israelites have been in training, and now they are required to act decisively and with strength of body and spirit. Often we can seem as if we are marking time, but if we are learning all we can at such times, and staying as fit and strong as we can, then we are ready to move when the order to advance comes. Let us be ready to move forward at all times in the Lord's work, and that means both physically and spiritually so we are in good condition. There is a time for prayer and study and a time for dynamic action; let us know the difference and act decisively in study and application.

3. The miracle of the long day has no human explanation. It was a sovereign act of God and it opened the door to the land for the Israelites. By means of this miracle all the religious systems of the pagans were disrupted for over forty years. When God does a miracle it is for a purpose and with power. If a miracle is required then it will be provided. Let us place the reality of miracles within the biblical context of them; if they are needed, or in accordance with the plan, then the Lord will provide one. Joshua is walking by faith and knows the plan, and so he can ask for this and it is granted. It is able to be used to advantage by his men because they are so physically fit and strong also. A miracle has no value if the people asking for it are unable, untrained or unwilling to follow it up.

NOTES

CHAPTER 11**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter covers what is known as the "Northern Campaign". It also was initiated by Canaanite action, and responded to by Joshua. By this means he has absolute confidence in the Lord's direction and has a sense of being guided in each step he takes. There is also absolute encouragement for the men of Israel to be able to kill their enemies, as they see the absolute and final nature of the battles they are undertaking. Do not doubt the genocidal thinking of these Canaanites – for they were evil to the core in their thinking.

These people hate the Israelites and they are as determined to wipe them out, just as the Lord is decided to eliminate them from the earth. It is the Lord's counsel that prevails and these people are defeated. They have run their course in world history and their time has come, as the time of judgment will come for all who reject their Creator and Saviour. Daniel 5:25-30, Revelation 6:9-11, 14:13-20, 17:1-8, 19:11-21, 20:10-15.

JOSHUA 11:1-23

11:1 And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard those things, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, **2** And to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west, **3** And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and to the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh. **4** And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many. **5** And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. **6** And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire. **7** So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them **8** And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephothmaim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining. **9** And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire. **10** And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. **11** And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire. **12** And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. **13** But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn. **14** And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe. **15** As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses. **16** So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same; **17** Even from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them. **18** Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. **19** There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. **20** For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses. **21** And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. **22** There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. **23** So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 3. The king of Hazor was the leading king of the north, and this city had ruled the others in the past and they still looked to this place to provide leadership in a crisis now that Egypt was silent to their pleas for help. The Canaanites were alone, and after the miracle of the "Long Day" they were in fear and terror at what all the things they were seeing meant. They will gather all the mighty forces they can, but their hearts are melted within them before they start.

They would not bow their knee to the God of Israel, as the Gibeonites had, and they gathered their strength to fight against Israel and of course that meant also against God. As the angelic host led by Satan fought in eternity past, and fights still against God, so all men who reject the legitimate claims of their Creator will gather together to mock and fight their Maker. The self defeating nature of this hatred of God still will baffle godly men and women. Do not under-estimate the consistent malice of those who prefer Satan's viewpoint to bowing their knee before God.

The king of Hazor's name is given as Jabin. This is a common name, as it means "the intelligent one", or "the man making good distinctions and decisions". It was a name or possibly title of another king of Canaan in the later days of Deborah. Judges 4. This city was a significant one, and will be rebuilt after its destruction here and become a major city of the land under Solomon. 1 Kings 9:15. It is finally destroyed again totally by the Assyrians in the 720s BC. 2 Kings 15:29. Numerous major archaeological excavations have been held on this mound and it can be looked up on the web or in encyclopaedias.

This first King Jabin gathers three other key kings, the rulers of Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, but then also draws forces from a wide area that the writer describes. The three key kings noted may have sent heavy chariot forces while the others sent their infantry and scouting cavalry forces only. The point the writer is making is that this is a formidable army of tens of thousands, and it has the heavy chariot forces that made the Canaanites mighty. It would be like an infantry brigade (4,000 – 6,000 men) coming up against an armoured division (20,000 – 40,000 men with all their heavy equipment). If the Lord did not guide the Israelite strategy and confuse their enemies they were sure to be slaughtered. This is a David versus Goliath battle.

Verses 4 – 6. Joshua hears about the northern alliance's plans only when they are on the move towards them and are camped at the waters of Merom organizing themselves ready to advance to the attack the next day. This concentration site for their camp is at a highway intersection of a number of trade routes from the Galilee, and from this site an army could move in any of four directions to the south and east. It is uneven ground and not suitable for the chariot forces, and they clearly intended to move from here to engage Joshua on open ground further south.

The Lord speaks to Joshua and gives him a key specific tactic to defeat the chariot forces and orders an immediate attack before the Canaanites are fully prepared. The Lord's plan calls for two elements to be applied. When the chariots attack, the infantry are to send men out ahead of the main army specifically to attack the great draught horses that the Canaanites used to pull their heavy chariots. They are to cut the tendons of the horses and then use fire under the wooden chariots.

This instruction from the Lord may also refer to the tactic of placing combustible material in the path of the chariot forces and at a critical moment infantry spring forward from hiding places and "hough" the horses (cut their Achilles tendons), while others light the material that is on the ground over which the chariot forces are advancing. The fire then gets hold on the dry wood and the entire force is burned on the field of battle in a great tangled mess. If the attack is made over uneven ground the chariots have not had the opportunity to build up speed, and the tactic they used then, of getting their horses to rear up and kick at infantry, would mean that skilled infantry could scythe the horses legs with a long weapon.

The Canaanites used four horse chariots, (a number of figurines of chariots have been discovered in sites around this region) and their relief carvings show their horses rearing up to kick at infantry forces, and then surging forward to trample them. To face a great cavalry or chariot charge was to be on the receiving end of a death dealing machine, but the Israelites were to stand firm, and not fear these apparently superior enemy forces, for they could be defeated. Deuteronomy 20:1ff. They are to see that these evil men are on the wrong side of history, and if the Israelites obey the Lord they are sure of victory.

Verses 7 – 9. Once again Joshua uses the strategy of rapid, silent advance and sudden attack with all forces committed to the battle on a tight front(s). Joshua does not give the enemy time to organize their forces in a workable battle array and their differences in race, religion and culture would have meant that they would have required some time to organize their battle array, and the acceptance and understanding of the specific orders that they would follow as a group. Joshua concentrates superior forces at the point of attack, even though he faces a numerically superior force. His army is used to working together in day and night attack and is a well oiled fighting machine.

His enemies, though larger in size, lack the cohesion and experience working together and so are easily panicked and broken up. They are not ready to fight as a combined fighting force when Joshua attacks. They are also unable to concentrate their forces on the broken ground against his smaller force, and the panic as their heavy forces are killed spreads to all their units, and they flee in terror before Israel. The pursuit is like that of the southern forces, and the Israelites kill the majority of this army.

Just a note here about the animals killed. Cruelty to animals is forbidden by the Law of Moses. This is why the animals were to be allowed to eat while they worked, and were not to be unequally yoked together. Deuteronomy 22:10, 25:4. Joshua is not being asked to do a cruel thing to the animals here after the battle, but to defeat the enemy forces by this tactic of concentrating upon the horses in the battle so that the chariots are disabled and then can be dealt with easily.

The chariots are to be burned and the horses are to be destroyed in the end, for these horses were bred for fighting only, and could not be used for agriculture. The Israelites were forbidden to breed such horses. Deuteronomy 17:16. This principle applies today in the breeding of some dogs for fighting, as the result is an adult dog that is a danger to all children and other animals. They must be put down without mercy, for they are not good for anything other than killing other dogs, and children. No sympathy for animals is ever to put at risk the life of a human being.

Verses 10 – 15. Hazor is burned with fire. The only city, other than Jericho and Ai so dealt with. It is a total destruction that is in view here and the archaeological excavations indicate this occurred around 1400 BC. The destruction of the army of the northern coalition was apparently fairly total, so few escaped back to their town and cities to defend them. The text indicates that Joshua then moved on to seize most of the towns and cities in the region and kill

or drive off all their people, but he tries to capture all their animals alive as breeding stock for the new Israelite settlers. As in the south, this leaves a waste land, without people, but with all cities intact except for Hazor, and the animals grazing on the abandoned hills. The north, as the south, is now ready for the settlement to occur.

Some commentators believe that verse thirteen indicates that he was unable to capture the hill fortresses at all, and that the Canaanites stayed in their fortresses and resisted. Now it is clear that Jerusalem did hold out, and the tribe of Ephraim certainly had difficulties with some fortified towns that resisted them. Joshua 17:16-18. My interpretation of verse thirteen is however that even though the hill forts were strong, they were undermanned after the battle at Merom, and so the army was able to surge over the defences and seize almost all the towns and exterminate almost all the people in this region.

Verse 19 indicates they "took" the other cities in battle. Some Canaanite pockets do survive into the time of the Judges, so the victory is not final, nor is it as thorough as they are ordered to make it. We will see the significance of this later in Joshua and Judges when the populations of the remnant of the Canaanites has got back to higher levels and the Egyptians re-enter the land in force.

Verses 16 – 23. The writer sums up the northern campaign and the entire conquest so far. The time taken to complete the northern campaign after the battle at the waters of Merom may have been many months (verse 18). The feeling that emerges from these verses is that the army is tired out from their work and the constant battles and sieges and slaughter of their enemies. That tiredness, or war weariness, stops them staying together as a battle group, and when the tribal groups are assigned the land, they must individually deal with the Canaanite remnants, and some are significant. Joshua 17:16ff.

The Canaanites will remain a thorn in the side of Israel for another four hundred years and their evil religion will pervert the Israelites and lead to their destruction under the Philistines, the Arabs, the Syrians, the Assyrians, and finally the Babylonians. Only the Babylonian Captivity (605-535 BC) will rid Israel of their Canaanite religious remnants.

The serious giants (the Anakim) were also taken in those days. Battles were fought all over the land whenever these people were caught in the open and they were destroyed. Their cities were captured and the Israelites settled later in them. We are told of only three pockets of the Anakim, in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod where some remain and cannot be shifted by the Israelites. This is the first indication that the army does not follow through and settle the entire land, but, as we will see in chapter 17, only holds the hill country where the Canaanite chariot forces cannot operate.

The Lord has given them the technique to defeat the chariot forces, but having applied it once at Merom, they doubt their ability to face these forces on the plains of the coastal strip, and so lose that land to the Canaanites and later to the Philistines, who will give them grief for over 200 years. God wanted them to persist in war for another 20 months and destroy all the enemy, but they falter and so get 200 years of warfare and defeat.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Once people have rejected the one true God they will cling with tenacity to their paganism. We see this amongst the Canaanites. They hate Israel and reject the miracles they have seen, believing their own gods will fight for them and defeat the wonder working God. It will always be a sad thing to confront this hatred of God and God's people amongst otherwise cultured and intelligent people. The sadness of the Lord over Jerusalem is the sadness of the mature believer also as they face total rejection of the Lord. Matthew 23:37, Luke 13:34.

2. "Touch not their filthy things!" James 1:21, Jude 20-23. We are too easily enticed by the wiles of Satanic culture and religion ourselves in our own day. Cultured pagans can slide past our defences and we enter into compromises that can be fatal to our spiritual life. We are to hate the enemy, and hate all aspects of his filthy culture. Let us hate what the enemy can do by his wiles, for only then will we be safe from destruction. Joshua's army did not go far enough and subsequent generations suffered greatly as a result. There is to be no compromise with evil.

3. Joshua moves quickly and catches the enemy before they are fully trained as a group. His readiness to march all night and fight all day is the inspiration to us. Let us train and be ready to move to any objective the Lord requires us to seize, and let us not rest until we enter heaven. Joshua and this army will "retire", but the peace is fragile and false, and their descendents will regret that enough enemy were left alive to regroup and destroy their children.

NOTES

CHAPTER 12**INTRODUCTION**

The writer now does a summary of the kings defeated by Israel in their seizure of the land. This sort of list is common from the Egyptian chronicles of the time and later Assyrian rulers will list the cities of the land in the same way after their defeat of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the 720s and 701 – 700 BC. This is a list for the people of the present and later generations to read, and for them all to celebrate the victories that the Lord had given them.

The Egyptians, and later the Assyrians, used such lists for their rulers to say, “look at me, I am the greatest, don’t fight against me, because I will defeat you!” This list here has the purpose of bringing the people to their knees in thankfulness to the Lord their God who delivered such powerful forces into the hands of the Israelites, and handed their land to the people as He promised He would do. The pagan lists proclaimed the glory and power of the pagan king, but this biblical list proclaimed, “God is great!”

JOSHUA 12:1-24

12:1 Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east: **2** Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and ruled from Aroer, which is upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon; **3** And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, even the salt sea on the east, the way to Bethjeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdathpispah: **4** And the coast of Og king of Bashan, which was of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, **5** And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. **6** Them did Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it for a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh. **7** And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions; **8** In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: **9** The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which is beside Bethel, one; **10** The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; **11** The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; **12** The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; **13** The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; **14** The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; **15** The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; **16** The king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; **17** The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; **18** The king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; **19** The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; **20** The king of Shimronmeron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; **21** The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; **22** The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one; **23** The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one; **24** The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 3. The first of the pagan kings that the Lord gave into their hands was Sihon, the ruler of the Eastern bank of the Jordan River. When the Israelites crossed the Arnon River they entered the land of the Amorites and the attack upon them by these people brought disaster to Sihon their king. His entire kingdom was lost to Israel. The writer describes the boundaries of his land, from the Arnon to the Gilead, from the mountains of Arabia to the river Jordan. From the Dead (Salt) Sea to the Sea of Galilee the Israelites were given his land. Numbers 21:13-31.

Verses 4 – 6. The second king who opposed them was Og of Bashan. His kingdom covered the hill country of the Gilead right up to the slopes of Mt Hermon. Numbers 21:32-33, Deuteronomy 2:1-17. He also came out to fight against Israel when they destroyed Sihon the Amorite, and he also was handed by the Lord to the Israelites and they were empowered against him and destroyed his people and seized his land. This entire area east of the Jordan was given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and part of Manasseh. Numbers 32:1ff.

In the king list the writer does not mention the punitive expedition of Phinehas against the Midianites who supported and paid for the cursings of the prophet Balaam. Numbers 31:1-8. The reason the five kings of the Midianites are not on the list here, is that their land was not given to the Israelites, and they died as a result of their hatred and bad treatment of Israel only.

Verses 7 – 8. The overview of the Western bank of the Jordan is now given. The land from the most northerly point in the land that was attacked and defeated, through to the southern most mountain that looked out towards Edom from the Judean wilderness, there were thirty one kings there who were handed to the Israelites by the Lord in battle. The message is recorded here for the people to rejoice in the victories that the Lord gave them and for them to never be arrogant in their own power. It was also to be a reminder that no matter how powerful and numerous the people of Satan are, that the Lord is always able to hand them over to His own people and deliver their lands and goods to them.

We must remember as we read this list that this records victory in the Angelic Conflict. The kings were satanically controlled men, and their peoples were addicted to the sexualised paganism of the Canaanites. This was the battle against good and evil, and there was no alternative to victory over the pagan kings and nations and their extermination, except the death of God's people.

Verses 9 – 24. The list now continues of all the kings in order of their defeats and deaths. This list is useful in another way, as it gives us the actual route march of the Army of Israel on it's southern and northern campaign. Check these places out in a biblical encyclopaedia and on a map.

1. The pagan Cult Leader/King of Jericho.
2. The King of Ai.
3. The king of Jerusalem.
4. The King of Hebron.
5. The King of Jarmuth.
6. The king of Lachish.
7. The king of Eglon.
8. The king of Gezer.
9. The king of Debir.
10. The king of Geder.
11. The king of Hormah.
12. The king of Arad.
13. The king of Libnah.
14. The king of Adullam.
15. The king of Makkedah.
16. The King of Bethel.
17. The king of Tappuah.
18. The king of Hopher.
19. The king of Aphek.
20. The king of Lasharon.
21. The king of Madon.
22. The king of Hazor.
23. The king of Shimronmeron.
24. The king of Achshaph.
25. The king of Taanach.
26. The king of Megiddo.
27. The king of Kedesh.
28. The king of Jokneam of Carmel.
29. The king of Dor.
30. The king of the nations(Gentiles) of Gilgal.
31. The king of Tirzah.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. There is one source of victory in the battles of this life, and that is the power of God as expressed within the plan of God. To be a recipient of the blessings of the power of God there is a need for us to be walking in accordance with the plan of God. Let us examine our path today and be sure we are walking as and where the Lord wants us to walk, and then with confidence we can claim the power of God to flow through us to achieve all that the plan requires.
2. We are in battle in this world. The forces of the enemy are active and powerful, but are always able to be beaten by God's people walking in holiness of life along God's path, in God's power. Let us be alert every day and have our spiritual armour on every day.

REFLECTION – THE REALITY OF DEMONS

1. Occult practices such as astrology, divination and spiritism are condemned by the scriptures, as they are backed by the demonic. (Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:9-12). Active worship of the demonic was punishable by death in Israel. (Leviticus 20:27)
2. Demonism has exercised much influence in history (Ezekiel 21:21, Daniel 10:13). Evil is associated with the rule of demon possessed kings who have the same malice as Satan does towards God's people. (2 Kings 21:1-17) WE see this in history in the Nazis.
3. The judgment of demons involved the destruction of demon possessed people and religious systems associated with idolatry. (Isaiah 19:1-3, cf Deuteronomy 7:5.)
4. Many nations have been destroyed for demon practices.
 - a) Canaanites (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)
 - b) Babylonians (Isaiah 46:1-7, 47:1-15)
 - c) The judgment of Egypt's first born included the judgment of demons (Exodus 12:12)

5. The commitment of nations to the battle of Armageddon is by demon influence. (Revelation 16:13-16).
6. Satan and the occult forces will be imprisoned during the Millennium. (Isaiah 24:21-23; Revelation 20:1-3).
7. Fallen Angels are called "hairy ones" (Leviticus 17:7), destroyers (Deuteronomy 32:17), and demons.
8. Demons
 - a) seek to possess men or animals (Mark 5:1-13).
 - b) deceive man into false doctrines (1 Timothy 4:1).
 - c) believe and tremble (James 2:19).
 - d) speak both truth and lies (2 Chronicles 18:21; Acts 16:17-18).
9. Satan rules the demon world (Matthew 12:24-28). Demons have a hierarchy, with some exercising more power than others, and they hate each other with equal vehemence to their hatred of us. (Daniel 10:12,13,20; Ephesians 6:12).
10. Sacrificing to idols is worship of demons. (Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalm 106:36-38, 1 Corinthians 10:19-21).
11. The following activities can lead to demon possession (for the unbeliever) or demon influence (for the believer):
 - a) Submission to demons through idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:19-21) and occult practices such as mental telepathy, clairvoyance and spiritism (Deuteronomy 18:9-12).
 - b) Specific dedication of one's body to demons, such as the Hindu soma and shamanism.
 - c) Any practice in which you "lose control" of your mind and senses, such as drugs and alcohol (Galatians 5:20, the Greek word for "sorcery" is "pharmakeia"), meditation and trances, hypnotic rhythms in music and dance.
 - d) Sexual cults, such as the asherah (Judges 6:25-28, 2 Kings 21:3)
12. When people reject God, He may allow Satan and demons to administer discipline, even death. (John 8:44, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 3:6-7).
13. Demon influence can cause abnormal psychological behaviour, physical strength, sickness, etc. (Mark 5:1-5, Job 2:6-8)
14. Jesus Christ has conquered all demon power (Matthew 10:8). Greater is He that is in us than the demonic forces that may previously have been powerful attackers of us. 1 John 4:4.

REFLECTION UPON THE NATURE OF "EVIL"

1. DEFINITION: Evil is Satan's policy in opposition to God's doctrine. Evil is therefore a collection of beliefs and practises that back up Satan's viewpoint rather than God's.
2. Evil is not necessarily obviously bad, it is simply a policy that will take you away from the path that God prepared for you.
3. False religion may be very moral and even ascetic (and therefore look "holy"), but if it is leading people away from God's revealed will it is evil.
4. Often evil can masquerade as "good". People who believe that their "good works" can satisfy God's holy demands are deceived by evil doctrine. Romans 7:19,20,
5. Only God's Word, Bible Doctrine can help the believer distinguish between true good and evil, Hebrews 3:13,14.
6. Only a soul saturated in God's Word is truly protected from the subtlety of Satan's policy of evil. Proverbs 2:10-14, 3:7, 19:23.
7. Only applied knowledge of God's Word negates and neutralises evil. Psalms 54:5, Romans 12:21, Isaiah 45.
8. The issue for the believer is the daily choice to accept God's Word and therefore protect oneself against evil. God watches for our choices. Proverbs 11:18,19, 22:3, 24:1-4, Ephesians 5:16, 2 Thessalonians 3:2,3.
9. The company of evil people will distort the thinking of the believer and confuse his/her witness. Isaiah 5:20, 1 Corinthians 15:23.
10. There is no evil in God at all. Psalm 5:4, 1 John 1:5, 4:4.

11. God judges evil and will condemn it to the lake of fire for ever at the final judgement. Psalm 34:16, Isaiah 13:11, Revelation 20:11ff
12. In spite of evil still existing in the world due to Satan's on-going presence throughout the Church Age, the Lord is still on the throne, and his hand is on all things.
13. Satan only does things by "permission" and we are in the Lord's hands and so are, in Christ, safe. Job 1:6-12, Proverbs 16:3, 4, Isaiah 45 : 6, 7.

RELIGION

1. Satan's religion is a humanly acceptable one: no sin, no judgment, no Saviour and no Hell. Satan appears as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:13-19,26)
2. Many pastors in the churches are servants of Satan's policy, knowingly or unknowingly. (Isaiah 30:12, Jeremiah 2:8, 2 Peter 2:1-10)
3. Satan's strategy towards unbelievers is to keep them blinded to the gospel. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)
4. Satan's strategy towards believers is:-
 - a) To confuse by false teaching. (Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:18)
 - b) To appeal to pride. (2 Corinthians 10:12)
 - c) To promote idolatry. (Habakkuk 2:18,19)
 - d) To promote legalism. (1 Timothy 1:7-8)
5. Satan's policy calls for counterfeit faith:-
 - a) Counterfeit gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
 - b) Counterfeit pastors. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - c) Counterfeit communion. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)
 - d) Counterfeit doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1)
 - e) Counterfeit righteousness. (Matthew 19:16-28)
 - f) Counterfeit way of life. (Matthew 23)
 - g) Counterfeit power. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
 - h) Counterfeit gods. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)