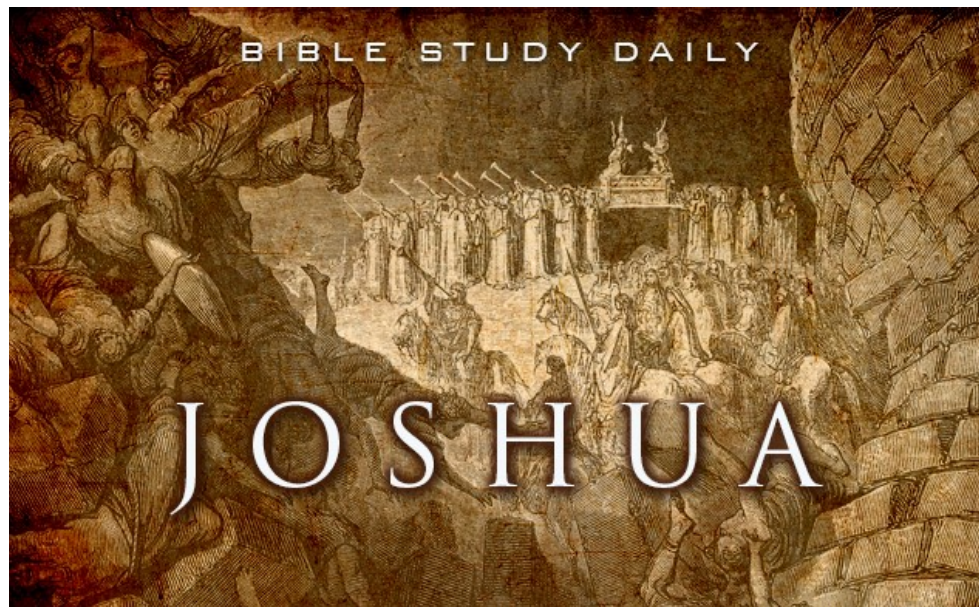




# BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Joshua as well as my study notes for the book.

## Name

The English title “Joshua” comes from the Hebrew *Yehôšūa‘* which means “Yahweh saves,” or “Yahweh is salvation.” The book takes its name from the central figure in the book.

## Author

The author of the book of Joshua has been the subject of much scholarly debate since the author is not specifically identified in the book itself. The use of the words “we” and “us” indicates the book was written by someone who was an eyewitness to the events. Many details are written in the first person (Joshua 1:2-9, 24:1-25) suggesting that Joshua himself wrote the book. The events included in the book following Joshua’s death were likely added by another eye witness. Some scholars suggest these details may well have been added by Eleazar the high priest, or Joshua’s son Phineas.

## Genre

History

## Literary Form

Narrative

## Time Frame

The book of Joshua picks up immediately following the death of Moses. It covers a time span of approximately 20 years, as it records the Israelite’s entrance into the Promised Land, their conquering of the land, the dividing of the land among the tribes, and concludes with Joshua’s farewell address and death.

## Emphasis

Moses has just died, and Joshua is confirmed as the nation’s new leader who is about to lead the people into the Promised Land fulfilling God’s promise.

The book of Joshua emphasizes 4 major themes:

- The fulfillment of God’s promise to the Israelites
- The power of God
- Obedience to God
- Faith in God

## Outline

- The invasion of Canaan (1:1-5:12)
- The conquest of Canaan (5:13 – 12:24)
- The division of Canaan (13:1-21:45)
- Conclusion (22:1-24:33)

# What I Noticed Today (Joshua 1-3)

Finally, the Israelites get to enter the Promised Land! I wonder how they felt. Were they nervous at having a new leader? Were they nervous about going into an unknown country, or were they excited that they would finally experience God's promise being fulfilled?!

## Joshua 1

In Joshua 1 God commissions Joshua as the new leader of the Israelites following Moses' death and Joshua takes command.

In verses 1-9 the Lord spoke to Joshua. God commanded him to go take the land, then God reminded him of the promise given to Moses, and finally God encouraged Joshua saying be strong and courageous promising to always be with him.

In verses 10-18 having been commissioned by God, Joshua gave the order for the people to prepare to set out in three days. The people then affirmed Joshua as their leader, and they encouraged him saying they would follow him just as they had Moses. Anyone who rebelled or did not do what Joshua commanded they promised to put to death.

## Joshua 2

In Joshua 2 we have the story of Rahab the harlot hiding the spies Joshua sent to Jericho.

In verses 1-7 Joshua sent spies into Jericho. The spies came to the house of Rahab the prostitute and they stayed there.

- Word got back to the king of Jericho about the Israelite spies being inside the city. The king sent word to Rahab to bring out the spies.
- But Rahab hid the spies on her roof and lied to the king saying the men had been there but had left about the time the city gates were closing.
- The king's men did not search Rahab's house but chased after the spies outside the city.

In verses 8-21 by faith Rahab declared that she knew the Lord, the God of the Israelites, had given them the land. She also declared that the Lord your God is the God of all heaven and earth.

- Rahab reported to the spies how the whole land was in a panic because of them. They had heard of how the Lord had dried up the Red Sea, and how they had conquered Sihon and Og, the Amorite kings.
- Rahab asked the spies to deal kindly with her because of her kindness to them. The spies agreed to protect Rahab if she did not betray them, and if

she tied a scarlet cord in the window. They promised no one in her house would be harmed when the Israelites invaded the land.

In verses 22-24 the spies left Rahab and went into the hill country for three days, then returned across the Jordan and reported to Joshua.

- When the spies return they give a good report to Joshua affirming that God had given the land into their hands (quite a difference from the spies of 40 years before!).

## Joshua 3

In Joshua 3, Joshua rose early in the morning to begin the journey into the Promised Land (the first of four references to Joshua being an early riser).

In verses 1-13 Joshua gave instructions for the people to prepare to cross into the Promised Land:

- The Israelites journeyed to the Jordan river and stayed there three days.
- Then the commanders went through the camp and told the people when the Ark of the Covenant was carried by the Levites they were to break camp. They must stay 1,000 away from the Ark because the Ark would lead the way.
- The Lord spoke to Joshua saying He would exalt Joshua in the sight of the Israelites. The Lord told Joshua to command the priests carrying the Ark to come and stand in the Jordan river.

In verses 14-17 Joshua placed the Ark of the Covenant in front of the people, so God was indeed leading the people into the Promised Land.

- As the priests carrying the Ark stepped into the Jordan River, which was at flood stage, the river stopped flowing and the people walked across the river on dry ground.

**Note:** The people had to step out in faith and when they did they crossed over on dry ground. This was not unlike the prior generation when God held back the Red Sea and the people crossed through on dry ground!

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *When God called Joshua, He first equipped him by putting him in the position of second in command to Moses for years. Then when it was Joshua's turn to lead, God encouraged and reassured him by telling him He would always be with him. Finally, God enabled Joshua by building his faith when Joshua obeyed God's commands.*
- *Whatever it is God has called us to do for the Kingdom, God will first equip us for the work. God will encourage us. And finally, God will enable us with the strength to do his work as we trust in Him and follow Him in faith!*

# What I Noticed Today (Joshua 4-6)

There is so much symbolism in these chapters!

## Joshua 4

In Joshua 4, God directs Joshua to have a man from each tribe get one stone from the middle of the Jordan and bring it to where they camp and build a memorial altar. It was to be a reminder of the miracle that God did leading them across the Jordan river on dry ground.

- The men did exactly as Joshua commanded by carrying a stone from the middle of the Jordan and place it as a memorial testifying to what the Lord had done in stopping the Jordan river while the people crossed over.
- Joshua also set up a memorial of 12 stones in the middle of the Jordan river.
- The Gadites, Reubenites and the half-tribe of Manasseh assembled an army of 40,000 fighting men and they also crossed the Jordan river.
- The Lord exalted Joshua that day and the people revered him just as they had Moses.
- Joshua commanded the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant to come up out of the river and as soon as they did the river started flowing again.
- The people came across the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and camped at Gilgal.
- Joshua set up another memorial altar of 12 stones taken from the Jordan as another reminder for the people to teach their children what the Lord had done for them that day.

**Note:** Gilgal was only about two miles from Jericho.

## Joshua 5

In Joshua 5 we read that the Amorite and Canaanite kings had heard of God's miracle at the Jordan and were afraid. It seems like a perfect time to attack but God has them wait while the men undergo circumcision.

In verses 1-9 all the men of the new generation were uncircumcised. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham (Genesis 17). The covenant was being restored and the shame of the prior generation who had rebelled against God was removed.

**Note:** The crossing of the Jordan river and the circumcision is a picture of salvation: the old self being put off, and the new self being put on (Ephesians 4:22-24).

In verses 10-12 while they were camped at Gilgal it came time to celebrate the Passover. This was only the third time they had celebrated Passover (the first time was in Egypt, the second time at Mt. Sinai). The day after they celebrated Passover, the manna stopped, and the people fed themselves from the land.

In verses 13-15 Joshua is near Jericho. He sees a man in front of him bearing a sword, who identifies himself as commander of the Lord's army. Joshua bows and worships him. The man tells him to remove his sandals because the place they are standing is holy ground.

**Note:** The description of the man reminds us of the angel who stood in front of Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22:31). The description of the holy ground reminds us of Exodus 3:5 and Moses' encounter with the burning bush.

## Joshua 6-8

These three chapters describe the Israelite's campaign to possess the lands of central Canaan beginning with Jericho.

## Joshua 6

In Joshua 6, God gives explicit instructions to Joshua for how to take Jericho. Jericho was tightly shut up (no one coming or going) and highly fortified. The people of Jericho knew about God, and they knew about the miracle at the Jordan yet their hearts were hardened against God. If only they had repented and come to God as Rahab did they might have been spared!

In verses 3-21 following God's instructions, Joshua had seven priests with trumpets move forward, followed by the Ark and more priests, and the army as they marched around the city of Jericho. They did the same thing every day for five more days. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times, blew the trumpets and shouted, and the walls of Jericho fell.

In verses 22-23 the city was destroyed and only Rahab and her family were saved.

In verses 24-27 the Israelites plundered and burned everything in the city. Only Rahab and her family were saved. Joshua put a curse on the city stating that anyone who attempted to rebuild it would do so at the cost of their first born son and youngest son.

**Note:** We will see this curse fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34.

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *God dealt with the past as the rebellious people wandered in the desert for 40 years, but now the new generation has come forward in the present renewing the Abrahamic covenant through circumcision, and moving into the future by faith as they trust God to lead them, protect them, and provide for them in the Promised Land.*

- *Our God is a loving God, not desiring that any should perish, but that all would come to Him, and accept Him!*



# What I Noticed Today (Joshua 7-8)

There is an interesting contrast between Joshua 7 and 8.

## Joshua 7

In Joshua 7, Joshua ordered spies to scout the city of Ai, they attack with a small force but are defeated.

In verse 1 we learn that Achan, of the tribe of Judah, had kept for himself some of the spoils from the city of Jericho instead of destroying it all as the Lord had commanded. This infuriated the Lord.

In verses 2-5 Joshua sent some spies up to scout out the city of Ai. When the spies returned they told Joshua only 2,000-3,000 men were needed to attack the city. Then men of Ai struck down 36 Israelites and chased them away from the city. The hearts of the defeated Israelites melted.

In verses 6-9 Joshua was distraught when the men returned from battle in defeat. He and the elders fell down before the Lord and asked three questions:

- Why did You bring us to Jordan to destroy us?
- What can I say now that Israel has been defeated?
- What will You do about Your great name?


In verses 10-15 the reason for the defeat, we learn is that one person had coveted some of the items devoted for destruction in the fall of Jericho and had kept the items for himself in direct defiance of what God had directed. This one person's sin had affected the outcome of the military campaign against Ai and thereby the entire nation of Israel.

**Note:** I do not see where Joshua inquired of God before commanding the troops to advance on Ai. Joshua did not lead the army into battle against Ai, and their defeat is a clear indication that God was not with them in the battle.

In verses 16-26 ultimately, Achan's sin was found out and he confessed, but he still faced judgement for his sin of disobeying God.

- All the nation of Israel was affected by his sin and all the nation took part in his punishment.
- Achan, his family, his cattle and all his possessions to the Valley of Achor. The people of Israel stoned them, burned their bodies, and heaped stones on top of them.
- The Lord's burning anger was turned away from the Israelites.





**Note:** Achor lived up to his name which means “Troubler.” Because of his greed and disobedience, he brought trouble on himself, his family, and the entire nation of Israel.

## Joshua 8

Joshua 8 begins with God reassuring and encouraging Joshua.

In verses 1-2 the Lord directs Joshua to march against Ai, because God has assured their victory. The Lord even goes so far as to provide Joshua with the military battle plan!

In verses 3-29 the order of the battle is described:

- Joshua leads an army of 30,000 Israelite soldiers against Ai.
- They planned to set up an ambush so that when the men of Ai came out of the city one contingent of the army would draw them away while another contingent attacked from behind and took the city.
- The next morning Joshua and the elders led the attack. 5,000 Israelites drew the men of Ai away from the city, while the rest of the Israelite army went into the city, captured it, and burned it.
- The men of Ai saw their city burning and tried to return but they were trapped. All the soldiers were killed and then all the people in the city were killed.
- Once Ai was conquered, the people were given permission by the Lord to take spoils from the city. If Achan had only waited and obeyed God!

In verses 30-35 once Ai was destroyed, Joshua built an altar and wrote the Words of the Law on it, as commanded by Moses in Deuteronomy 27.

- They offered burnt offers and fellowship offerings on the altar.
- Afterward, Joshua read aloud all the blessing and curses of the law to the people that the Lord had given Moses.

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *In the midst of victory, we may be tempted, and like Achan may covet the wrong things. But our sin, like Achan’s, affects others and ultimately cannot be hidden. We may be able to hide the sin from man, but we cannot hide our sin from God.*

# What I Noticed Today (Joshua 9-10)

## Joshua 9

Just two chapters ago in Joshua 7 Israel suffered defeat because they did not consult God before going into battle. Now the Gibeonites deceived them by coming to them in worn out clothes trying to make peace claiming they live far away.

**Note:** Gibeon is only six miles northwest of Jerusalem and about six miles southwest of Ai.

**Note:** The men from Gibeon were Hivites, descendants of Cain through Ham.

**Note:** It is interesting that the claim of the Gibeonites about God (Joshua 9:9-10) is similar to the claim made by Rahab (Joshua 2:9-11).

In verses 14-15 rather than consulting God, Joshua and the leaders of Israel made a pact with the Gibeonites.

In verses 16-27 after three days the Israelites realized they had been deceived. They honored their agreement with the Gibeonites, but consigned them to be workers for the congregation.

## Joshua 10

With word of Israel's victory over Ai, and the submission of the Gibeonites, word was getting around to surrounding kings.

In verses 1-15 Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem was greatly concerned and sent word to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon asking them to join forces with him against the Israelites:

- These five kings banded together to attack the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites called out to Joshua for help.
- The Lord assured Joshua that He would give them victory.
- So Joshua and the entire Israelite army marched overnight to Gilgal and took the five kings by surprise.
- The Lord threw the five kings into great confusion. As they fled the Lord threw large hailstones upon them.
- As the battle wore on by mid-day Joshua knew he would need more time to secure victory. He prayed to the Lord for the sun to stand still and the Lord answered his prayer. It remained daylight until Joshua vanquished the enemy.



**Note:** The Book of Jashar referenced in Joshua 10:13 is a book of Hebrew songs written as poetry to honor their leaders.

In verses 16-27 Joshua heard that the five kings had hidden themselves inside a cave so he ordered rocks to be placed in front of the cave and guards stationed to prevent the kings from escaping.

- The soldiers then pursued the rest of the armies of the five kings leaving only a few survivors who made it back to their walled cities.
- Joshua then executed the five kings and hung their bodies on trees until evening. Then he had their bodies thrown into the cave where they had been hiding.

In verses 28-43 once the five kings and their cities had been destroyed Joshua led the nation of Israel on a conquest of all of southern Canaan.

- They went from conquering Makkedah to Libnah, to Lachish, to Gezer, to Eglon, to Hebron, and finally to Debir.
- After this continuous campaign the Israelites returned to Gilgal and camped there.

**Note:** For some reason Joshua did not attack two cities of the five kings: Jerusalem and Jarmuth.

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *It seems that when we haven't learned a lesson, God gives us another opportunity to learn. The Israelites suffered defeat at Ai because they didn't consult God, then made a poor alliance with Gibeon because they didn't consult God. As soon as they started consulting God and follow His direction they secured one victory after another. When God is for us who can be against us?*
- *I haven't prayed to God to stop the sun, but I have felt totally overwhelmed by what I needed to do, and cried out to God, "help me." The sun didn't stop, but God certainly seemed to multiply my time and the work that needed to get done, got done!*

# What I Noticed Today (Joshua 11-13)

## Joshua 11

In verses 1-5 Jabin, king of Hazor, was the leader of the kings in the northern region. When he heard about how Israel had conquered the southern region he called kings in the north together to form a united army to attack Israel.

**Note:** Hazor was a very important city in the north, it governed trade throughout the northern region.

In verses 6-15 the Lord came to Joshua, reassured him and told him the very next day they would hamstring the horses of the opposing army, and burn their chariots with fire.

- The next day Joshua and the entire Israelite army attacked the kings of the north.
- The Lord was in the midst of the battle.
- Joshua did exactly as God had directed by hamstringing the horses and burning the chariots.
- All of their enemies were struck down with the sword.
- Joshua burned the city of Hazor to the ground.
- The people were allowed to take spoils from all the cities in the north that they conquered.

**Note:** Josephus, the Jewish historian, estimated the army of the northern confederacy of kings to be 300,000 infantry soldiers, 10,000 cavalry soldiers, and 20,000 chariots.

In verses 6-23 Joshua had taken all the land that God had spoken of to Moses. Joshua gave the land to the people as an inheritance and they had rest from war.


**Note:** Joshua 11:23 is the first of many references to the inheritance of the Israelites in Joshua.

## Joshua 12

Joshua 12 is a listing of all the cities and lands conquered by Moses east of the Jordan, and then the cities and lands conquered by Joshua west of the Jordan. The sixteen kings of the southern region are listed first (vv. 9-16), followed by the 15 kings in the northern region (vv. 17-24).

## Joshua 13

In Joshua 13 Joshua is described as getting on in years with much of the land



the Lord promised still to be claimed.

- The Lord describes the land yet to be conquered beginning in the south and moving north
- The Lord reassures Joshua that He will drive the people out, but wants the land divided and given to the people as an inheritance.

In verses 8-33 specific direction for how the land on the east side of the Jordan was divided and given to each tribe as an inheritance is provided:

- On the east side of the Jordan River the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh received their inheritance.
- The tribe of Levi received no specific land as an inheritance but received 48 towns and cities throughout the land of the Israelites.

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *In chapter 11 God reassured Joshua before the battle and gave him instructions, God delivered the enemy into Joshua's hands, and Joshua did everything that God required after the battle.*
- *There are times when enemies will band together against God's people. But what they fail to realize is that in reality they are fighting against God Himself, not just God's people. God is with us before, during, and after the battle. We are never alone!*

# What I Noticed Today

## (Joshua 14-16)

Joshua 14-16 describes the division of the land according to lot as God had directed.

### Joshua 14

In verses 1-5 the instructions for the inheritance of the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan River are repeated.

In verses 6-12 Caleb approached Joshua and asked Joshua to give his tribe the hill country promised him by Moses when he spied out the land 45 years earlier.

- It is interesting that Caleb came to Joshua asking for permission to take the hill country (Hebron) where the Anakim lived.
- These Anakim are the giants of the land that scared the spies 40 years earlier into not going into the Promised Land (Genesis 23:2).
- Caleb, now 85 years old is still strong and willing to fight to fulfill God's promise made to him 45 years earlier.
- In Joshua 14:12, Caleb continues to rely on God knowing that God will be with him and drive the Anakim out.

**Note:** In Joshua 15:14 Caleb does indeed drive out the Anakim.

In verses 13-15 Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron and the hill country he had been promised.

### Joshua 15

In verses 1-12 the inheritance for the tribe of Judah is described. Judah's land was sandwiched between the northern tip of the Dead Sea in the south and ran west to the Mediterranean Sea. The border on the north zigzagged across natural formations from the bay of the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

In verses 13-19 Caleb's inheritance is repeated from Joshua 14:6-15 with the addition of specific places to be given to his children.

In verses 20-63 the towns of Judah are listed in four major geographic sections:

- 29 towns plus their villages in the south.
- 42 towns plus their villages in the western foothills.
- 38 towns plus their villages in the central hill country.

- 6 towns plus their villages in the Judean wilderness that slopes down to the Dead Sea.

**Note:** 29 towns are in the south, but 36 towns are listed. The difference is seven of these towns were later given to Simeon's tribe (see Joshua 19:1-7: Moladah, Hazar-Shual, Beersheba, Ezem, Eltolad, Hormah, and Ziklag).

## Joshua 16

In Joshua 16 the people of Joseph, (Ephraim and Manasseh) receive their inheritance.

- Their inheritance was north of the land of Dan and Benjamin. The northern border was the Kishon River from the Jordan River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.
- But, they failed to drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer. Instead, they made the Canaanites do forced labor.

**Note:** The fact that they did not drive out the Canaanites is going to be a problem by the time we get to Judges.

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *Caleb impresses me. He was a man of great faith from the time he spied out the Promised Land and knew by faith that God would be with them, through all the wilderness journeys, and now in all the battles to drive out God's enemies he maintained his faith. Even at 85 years old he was determined to finish the battle and drive out the very giants that had scared everyone else 40 years before. Such great faith in God and God's promises over an entire lifetime is unusual among the Biblical leaders we have studied and certainly unusual among our leaders today!*

# What I Noticed Today (Joshua 17-19)

## Joshua 17

Joshua 17 announces the inheritance of Manasseh, Joseph's first born.

In verses 1-2 Makir, Manasseh's firstborn son received his inheritance on the eastern side of the Jordan River. The rest of Manasseh's sons received their inheritance on the western side of the Jordan River.

In verses 3-6 the daughters of Zelophehad are called out because their father had no sons. The daughters had been promised an inheritance by the Lord through Moses (Numbers 36:1-13). They appeared before Eleazar the priest and Joshua who gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers.

**Note:** Zelophehad was a great-great-grandson of Manasseh.

In verses 7-11 the towns and villages of Manasseh are listed.

In verses 12-13 within the borders of their allotment were some Canaanite cities who they did not drive out but did submit to forced labor (Beth Shan, Ibleam, Dor aka Napoth, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo).

In verses 14-18 Joseph's descendants complained that they did not get an inheritance large enough for the size of their tribe, so Joshua told them to also take the forest lands of the Perizzites and Rephaim and drive them out.

**Note:** The people of Manasseh seem to have little faith that they could drive out the remaining Canaanites in their land. This is quite a contrast to the courage and faith displayed by Caleb!

## Joshua 18

In Joshua 18 the entire Israelite community gathered at Shiloh and they set up the Tent of Meeting. Shiloh which was the center of the land that had been acquired so far.

In verses 3-10 The inheritance for seven tribes had not yet been allotted. Joshua ordered three men from each of the seven remaining tribes to go scout out the land. They returned with descriptions of the cities and countryside.

- In the presence of God at the Tent of Meeting, Joshua cast lots for the remaining tribe's inheritance. Benjamin's, Simeon's, Zebulun's, Issachar's, Asher's, Naphtali's, and Dan's inheritances were given based on the casting of lots.

In verses 11-28 the first lot fell to Benjamin. The borders of the tribe of Benjamin are described along with a listing of 14 of their major cities (including Jerusalem, fulfilling Moses' prophecy in Deuteronomy 33:12).



## Joshua 19

Joshua 19 describes the inheritances of the remaining six tribes of Israel.

In verses 1-9 the second lot fell to Simeon. They were given an inheritance in the southern section of Judah's territory along with 17 towns and villages.

**Note:** The people of Simeon were eventually incorporated into the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh. This is why in the time of Solomon there were 10 tribes described in the north and two (Benjamin and Judah) in the south.

In verses 10-16 the third lot fell to Zebulun who received their inheritance along with 12 towns and villages.

**Note:** The Bethlehem listed in verse 15 is not the Bethlehem in Judah where Jesus was born.

In verses 17-23 the fourth lot fell to Issachar who received their inheritance.

In verses 24-31 the fifth lot fell to the tribe of Asher who received their inheritance along with 22 towns and villages.

In verses 32-39 the sixth lot fell to Naphtali who received their inheritance.

In verses 40-48 the seventh lot fell to the Danites who received their inheritance along with 17 villages and towns.

In verses 49-51 Joshua accepted his inheritance last. Joshua was given the city of Timnath Serah which lay within the mountainous region of his tribe of Ephraim.

**Note:** According to Jewish tradition, the distribution of the lands by lot was accomplished by placing the names of each tribe in a clay pot, and a description of the separate lands in another clay pot. A tribal name was drawn at the same time as a land description was drawn. This was not considered blind chance but controlled by God.

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *Caleb and Joshua were the faithful spies of the original Exodus generation, and the only ones allowed to pass into the Promised Land. Both Caleb and Joshua received a special inheritance from God. Caleb took possession of his inheritance first (Joshua 14:6-15), and Joshua took his inheritance last (Joshua 19:49-51).*
- *Caleb, though old, was fully committed to leading his tribe into the Promised land. Joshua, in particular, demonstrated his commitment to completing the work that God had given him, and humbly waited until everyone else had received their inheritance before accepting his own.*
- *We could use a few more leaders with these traits today!*

# What I Noticed Today (Joshua 20-21)

## Joshua 20

Joshua 20 names the cities of refuge (mentioned previously in Exodus 21:12-24, Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 4:41, and Deuteronomy 19:1-10).

- Three cities were east of the Jordan and three cities were west just as Moses had commanded.
- West of the Jordan: Kadesh in Galilee, Shechem in Ephraim, and Kiriath-Arba (Hebron) in Judah.
- East of the Jordan: Bezer in Reuben's land, Ramoth in Gilead, and Golan in Bashan.
- The individual who killed someone could flee to the city of refuge where he would undergo a trial headed by the city elders. The individual who killed someone without premeditation could stay in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest and then would be free to return home without fear of the avenger of death.

## Joshua 21


Joshua 21 describes the cities given to the Levites throughout the Promised land. A total of 48 cities and their pasturelands were given to the Levites (including the six cities of refuge). It was important that the Levites live among the people.

In verses 4-8 the Levitical cities were chosen:

- 13 cities were chosen by lot for the Levites from the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.
- 10 cities were chosen by lot for the Levites from the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.
- 13 cities were chosen by lot for the Levites from the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.
- 12 cities were chosen by lot for the Levites from the tribes of Reuben Gad, and Zebulun.

In verses 9-19 thirteen cities were given to the Levites from the Kohathite descendants of Aaron: 9 cities in the tribes of Judah and Simeon, and four in the tribe of Benjamin.

In verses 20-26 ten more cities were given to the Levites from other branches of Kohathites in Ephraim, Dan and the half-tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan.



In verses 27-33 thirteen cities were given to the Levites from the Gershonite descendants in the eastern half-tribe of Manasseh, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali.

In verses 34-40 twelve cities were given to the Levites from the Merarite descendants in Zebulun, Reuben, and Gad

In verses 43-45, Joshua 21 closes with three important affirmations:

- 1) God fulfilled His covenant to give the Promised land to the Israelites (Joshua 1:3),
- 2) God gave them victory over their enemies, and rest on every side (Joshua 1:13), and
- 3) God fulfilled every aspect of His promises (Joshua 23:14)!

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *It is interesting that the establishment of the cities of refuge is mentioned several times, but we never read where the city of refuge was utilized. Regardless, the concept of the city of refuge is a glorious picture of God's grace to us. We may flee to Christ who is our refuge and strength, and protection in times of trouble!*
- *As children of God, we claim these same affirmations by faith. God's covenant with us will not fail. God's power and wisdom will bring us victory. God's promises will all be fulfilled. God's covenant, God's power, God's promises all by faith in Jesus Christ!*

# What I Noticed Today

## (Joshua 22-24)

### Joshua 22

In verses 1-8 Joshua summoned the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

- He blessed them and sent them on their way back across the Jordan to their land.
- Joshua first commends them for their faithful service in helping the other tribes secure their land.
- Then he commands them to keep the Law of God, to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to obey His commands, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him faithfully.
- And finally, Joshua cautions them to share the spoils of the land with their brethren.

In verses 9-12 when the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over to the east side of the Jordan they built an altar. At first, this was misunderstood by the other Israelite tribes who threatened to go to war thinking the eastern tribes had already abandoned God.

In verses 13- 29 the Israelites sent Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest, and 10 leaders, one from each tribe, across the Jordan to confront the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

- They accused them of treachery, in turning away from God by building the altar.
- They implored them not to turn away from God like Peor and Achan who brought destruction upon their people.
- The Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh responded saying the altar was not for offering sacrifices but served as a reminder of their relationship with the Lord and the rest of the Israelite tribes. The altar was a witness to future generations so they would never rebel or turn away from the Lord.

In verses 30-34 Phinehas and the ten leaders were pleased with the explanation given by the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh. They returned to their land across the Jordan and reported the good news to the rest of the Israelites.

### Joshua 23

Joshua gives his farewell address in Joshua 23.

- Joshua summoned the elders, leaders, judges, and officers to make his farewell remarks.
- Joshua first magnified God, reminding the people of all that God had done for them as a people.
- But then he challenged them to keep trusting and serving God.
- Joshua spoke of all God's good promises that had been fulfilled, then warned them that God would judge them harshly if they abandoned God to serve other gods.

## Joshua 24

Joshua 24 includes Joshua's final charge to the leaders and people of Israel.

- Joshua assembled all the tribal elders, leaders, judges, and officers at Shechem and they presented themselves before the Lord.

**Note:** Shechem was an important place to the nation of Israel. Besides being at the center of the Promised land and the place where the Tent of Meeting was, Shechem was where God appeared to Moses (Genesis 12:6-7), and Jacob gathered his family there (Genesis 35:1).

- Joshua reviewed all of the blessings the Lord had bestowed upon the Israelites people from the time He brought them out of Egypt.

**Note:** In verses 1-13 God recounts all He had done for the Israelites people. The personal pronoun "I" is used 18 times. This serves as a reminder that the Israelite people did not do this on their own but it was God's actions that led them from Egypt to the Promised Land.

- Joshua admonished the leaders to fear God and worship Him sincerely and faithfully.
- He commanded them to get rid of their foreign gods and commit themselves to serving God.
- If they promised to serve God at this point, and then rejected Him, God promised to utterly destroy them (Joshua 24:20).
- The people swore to Joshua that they would worship the Lord and obey Him.
- Joshua renewed the covenant between the Lord and the people by recording their agreement in the Book of the Law of God (Deuteronomy 31:24-27). He also inscribed the agreement on a stone as a witness to the people's agreement to the covenant.

In verses 29-33 Joshua died when he was 110 years old and was buried in Ephraim. Eleazar, son of Aaron, who was a contemporary of Joshua's, also died and was buried at Gibeah.

**Note:** The people worshipped God faithfully during the lifetime of Joshua and the lives of the elders who outlived him. However, we will see (in



Judges) that it didn't take long before they abandoned God.

*Some thoughts for further consideration:*

- *The recounting of the Israelites nearly going to war over misunderstanding the purpose of the altar is a stark reminder of the importance of not acting on rumor or jumping to conclusions. Perhaps if the people had asked first, seeking to understand, tensions would not have risen so quickly!*
- *God's promises are always fulfilled while His children are faithful to Him. But, rejecting God in any way ultimately leads to judgement.*