

THE DAILY QUIET TIME REFLECTIONS SERIES

CONQUEST

Reflections on the Book of Joshua

EXPANDED EDITION

Eugene Han

*Drawn from more than a decade of shared Quiet Time reflections at
dailyqt.org, and from Sunday School classes at First Baptist Church in
Dallas*

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The introduction draws on the introductory notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable, used with gratitude for his lay-accessible scholarship on the text of Scripture.

This Expanded Edition draws on reflections shared over many years by the community of readers at dailyqt.org. The author is grateful to every member of that community whose questions, insights, and encouragement helped shape these pages.

This book reflects the personal study, reflection, and interpretation of its author and is offered for devotional and educational purposes. It is not a substitute for pastoral counsel or formal theological instruction. Where matters of biblical interpretation remain disputed among careful readers of Scripture, the author has noted this and presented his own considered view alongside other views held by faithful Christians, rather than claiming final or exclusive authority on the question.

An earlier edition of this study appeared as Part One of the combined volume *Conquest, Failure, and Redemption: Reflections on the Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. This Expanded Edition gives Joshua a volume of its own. It follows the previous volume in this series, *Remember: Reflections on the Book of Deuteronomy*.

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Preface to the Expanded Edition

A Fuller Conversation

The first edition of this book grew out of a daily practice: reading a few chapters of Scripture each morning, writing down what we noticed, and sharing it with a community of readers at dailyqt.org. Over more than a decade, that community has left thousands of reflections on these same passages: questions, objections, stories, corrections, and moments of genuine discovery. The first edition drew on only a small part of that conversation. This Expanded Edition draws on all of it.

The result is a longer book, and we hope a better one. Every chapter has been rewritten to take in reflections from the wider community, along with further study of the passages they raised. Where the first edition moved quickly past a difficult text, this edition slows down. Where it stated one view on a disputed question, this edition still states the view we hold, but it also presents the other views faithful Christians hold, as fairly as we can. Each chapter now closes with six discussion questions rather than three or four.

Joshua raises more than its share of hard questions, and many of them came up again and again in the conversation behind this book. How can a God of love command the destruction of the Canaanites? Why did thirty-six soldiers die for Achan's sin, and why was his family judged with him? Must Israel keep an oath obtained by deception? Did the sun really

stand still? Why did Israel fail to drive out the nations God had given into their hands? And what did Joshua mean when he told a people who had just promised to serve the Lord, "You are not able to serve the LORD"? We have not tried to make these questions disappear. We have tried to take them seriously, to say plainly what we believe the text teaches, and to be honest where the text leaves us with difficulty.

Personal stories from the original reflections have been kept where they serve the text, but names and identifying details have been removed. Commentary on current events that would quickly go out of date has been left out. Throughout, the book speaks in a single voice, but that voice owes a great deal to many readers.

One thing has not changed. This book is still meant to be read alongside an open Bible, one day at a time, and not in place of one. If these pages send you back to Joshua with fresh eyes, and from there to the Savior this book anticipates at every turn, they will have done what they were written to do.

How to Use This Book

Reading, Reflecting, Together

This book was not written to be read in a single sitting. It was written to be read one day at a time, the way it was first written, a chapter at a time over the course of several weeks, alongside an open Bible rather than in place of one. The believers in Berea were commended not simply for their eagerness to hear the Word but for their habit of examining "the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11). That daily habit, sustained over years rather than compressed into a season, is the aim of this book and of the Quiet Time practice that produced it.

To help establish that rhythm, we have included, as an appendix at the back of this book, the same daily Bible reading plan we have used at dailyqt.org for well over a decade. It walks through the whole of Scripture in a year, a few chapters at a time, and it does not need to be started in January; you are free to begin on whatever date suits you and simply follow the sequence from there. Each of the seven chapters in this book lines up with exactly one day on that plan, from Joshua 1–4 on the first day to Joshua 22–24 on the seventh, so that this book and your own Bible can move through Joshua together, one day at a time.

Whether you are reading on your own or working through this book with a group, such as one of our Sunday School classes at First Baptist Church in Dallas, we would suggest the following simple rhythm for each day, or for each session if you are meeting weekly:

1. Begin and end in prayer. Ask God, before you open either Bible or book, to teach you something true about Himself that day, and thank Him, when you close both, for whatever He has shown you, even if it is smaller or slower than you expected.

2. Read the assigned Scripture. Using the reading plan in the appendix, read the day's passage directly from your own Bible before turning to our reflections on it. There is no substitute for reading the text itself first, in whatever translation you trust, and letting it raise its own questions before we offer ours.

3. Read the corresponding chapter in this book. Each chapter walks through that day's passage in the order Scripture presents it, drawing out its major movements and, where it seemed useful, the historical background behind them. Treat it as a conversation about the text you just read, not a replacement for it.

4. Answer the discussion questions. Every chapter closes with six questions, enough to fill a forty-five- to sixty-minute group discussion, though they work just as well as slower journaling prompts for a reader working through the book alone. Some ask you to notice something in the text; most ask you to notice something in yourself. A group short on time may simply choose two or three.

If you are part of a group, we would encourage you to read both the day's Scripture and the corresponding chapter individually during the week, and then use your time together for the fourth step: praying together and working through the discussion questions. That is, after all, how the material in this book first took shape, not in a study or a library, but among ordinary readers asking each other what a passage meant and

why it mattered, week after week, for years. We hope it will do the same for you.

Introduction

Conquest

Deuteronomy ends with a funeral. Moses, the man who spoke with God face to face, climbs Mount Nebo, looks out over a land he will never enter, and dies, buried by God in a grave no one has ever found. Joshua begins on the other side of that grief, with a word that must have been both bracing and terrifying to the man who received it: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites" (Joshua 1:2). For those of us who have walked through the five books of Moses, from the garden of Eden to the plains of Moab, this is the moment the whole story has been straining toward. The book of Joshua is the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Abraham: a numerous people, now standing on the riverbank, and a good land, now finally within reach. Joshua himself would say it best at the close of his life: "You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed" (Joshua 23:14).

The book's hero is well named. Joshua was originally called Hoshea, "salvation," until Moses changed his name to Joshua, "the LORD saves" (Numbers 13:16). The Greek form of that Hebrew name is Jesus. The parallel is not accidental, and the New Testament invites us to notice it (Hebrews 4:8). What Jesus is to God's people in the fullest sense, Joshua was to Israel in a smaller one. Both brought God's people into the realization of God's promises. The great difference between them is the means. Joshua achieved God's victory through military

conquest; Jesus achieved it through His own sacrifice. One shed the blood of God's enemies; the other shed His own for them.

The book divides into two halves. The first (chapters 1–12) records the conquest of Canaan: the crossing of the Jordan, the fall of Jericho, the disaster and recovery at Ai, and then sweeping campaigns through the south and north of the land, a work of about seven years. The second half (chapters 13–24) records the division of the land among the tribes, the setting apart of cities of refuge and Levitical towns, and Joshua's final charges to the nation. In this book we have followed the daily readings in three Parts. Part One, Entering and Conquering (Joshua 1–11), follows Israel across the Jordan and through the great campaigns. Part Two, Dividing the Inheritance (Joshua 12–21), follows the allotment of the land. Part Three, Choosing Whom to Serve (Joshua 22–24), gathers Joshua's farewells and the covenant renewal at Shechem.

It is worth knowing that in the Hebrew Bible, Joshua is not grouped with the history books at all. It is the first book of the Former Prophets. Israel understood that this is history written with a prophet's purpose: not a mere record of events, but a selective account designed to teach God's people who He is. It is the second generation's story. Everyone who left Egypt as an adult had died in the wilderness except two men, Joshua and Caleb, the only spies who urged Israel to trust God at Kadesh Barnea forty years earlier. Faithfulness, this book insists from its very cast of characters, is never wasted.

We cannot introduce Joshua honestly without facing its hardest question: how can a God of love command the destruction of the Canaanites, including women and children? Many readers consider this the central problem of the book, and

we will meet it repeatedly in the chapters ahead. Several things should be said at the outset. First, God had been extraordinarily patient. He told Abraham centuries earlier that his descendants would wait four hundred years, because "the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure" (Genesis 15:16). Second, Canaanite religion was not innocent. Scripture repeatedly names its practices, including ritual prostitution and the burning of children in sacrifice (Deuteronomy 12:31), and ancient sources from the region confirm much of that picture. Third, and most searching of all, God's severity fell on Israel too. When one Israelite, Achan, took what was devoted to destruction, the whole nation tasted defeat, and Achan died under the same judgment as Jericho. Later, when Israel committed the same sins as the Canaanites, it was driven from the land in its turn. God wages war against sin wherever He finds it, and He deals especially seriously with His own people, because privilege heightens responsibility.

Christians have understood these passages in several ways. Some emphasize that these were unique, unrepeatable acts of judgment by the Creator, who gives and takes life. Others point out that the language of total destruction resembles the conventional war rhetoric of the ancient world, and that the book itself describes Canaanites still living in the land after their "complete" destruction. Some find no explanation fully satisfying, and hold the difficulty in tension with their trust in the God revealed in Christ. Whatever our view, two things must be said clearly. These commands were given to one nation at one moment in God's plan, and the New Testament gives no one, whether a church, a nation, or an individual, any license to repeat them. And even within the conquest, God's mercy

reached those who turned to Him: Rahab the Canaanite and her family were saved, and she became an ancestor of the Messiah.

If the book of Judges will show us the anatomy of failure, Joshua shows us the victory of faith. Faith here means accepting God's standard of holiness, following God's methods even when they look absurd (marching around a walled city for a week is not military strategy), and acknowledging that every victory is won in God's strength rather than our own. Israel learned all three lessons: at Jericho, where obedience brought walls down; at Ai, where hidden sin brought Israel down; at Gibeon, where failure to pray let deception in. Through every campaign, the lesson repeats: spiritual preparation matters more than military preparation. One Israelite could rout a thousand for a single reason: "because the LORD your God fights for you, just as he promised" (Joshua 23:10).

Many readers have noticed that Joshua is to the Old Testament something like what Ephesians is to the New. Each describes an inheritance for a chosen people; each inheritance is opened by a leader God appointed; each is a gift of grace received by faith; and each, perhaps surprisingly, is a scene of conflict. Canaan is not a simple picture of heaven, since there are no battles in heaven. It is closer to a picture of the believer's present inheritance in Christ: blessings already given that must still be taken hold of, ground already granted that must still be walked. The charge first spoken on the riverbank still stands over every believer who opens this book: "Be strong and very courageous.... Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night" (Joshua 1:7-8).

And yet the book ends on a suspended note. Joshua dies at a hundred and ten, and Israel serves the Lord "throughout the

lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him" (Joshua 24:31). But pockets of Canaanites remain, tolerated rather than removed, and Joshua's final speeches carry a warning of what those compromises will cost. The land has been given; whether it will be kept is another question. That question is the book of Judges.

This Expanded Edition follows the pattern of the series: seven chapters, one for each daily reading through Joshua, drawing on more than a decade of Quiet Time reflections shared by the dailyqt.org community and on Sunday School classes at First Baptist Church in Dallas, where much of this material was first taught and discussed aloud. It follows our studies of the five books of Moses, and it will be followed by *Failure and Redemption*, on the books of Judges and Ruth. We offer it as a companion for the journey across the Jordan, trusting that the God who kept every promise to Israel will keep every promise He has made to us in Christ.

Part One

Entering and Conquering

Chapter One

Joshua 1–4

About forty years have passed since God first commanded Israel to enter the Promised Land. At that time, they were just two years out of Egypt and eleven days' journey from Mount Sinai. Twelve spies went into Canaan; ten brought back a discouraging report, and two urged the people to trust God. Of that entire adult generation, only those two, Joshua and Caleb, survived the wilderness. Everyone else who had refused to trust the Lord died there, exactly as God had said. Now the book of Joshua opens with the conquest of the Promised Land, act two, and with a death: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites" (Joshua 1:2).

It is a bracing way to begin. The man who had spoken with God face to face, who had led Israel out of Egypt and through forty years in the desert, was gone. Everyone must have wondered what would happen now. God's answer was immediate: "No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Joshua 1:5). Leaders change. God does not.

Then God gave Joshua his charge, and it is worth noticing how it is arranged. The expressions "I will be with you," "Be strong and courageous," and "Be careful to obey" are woven into a pattern that scholars call a chiasm. The first and last lines match, the second and second-to-last match, and so on, until a central line stands alone, carrying the main thought. Trace it through Joshua 1:5–9. God begins, "I will be with you" (1:5).

Then: "Be strong and courageous" (1:6–7). Then: "Be careful to obey... that you may be successful" (1:7). And then the center: "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it" (1:8). Then the pattern unwinds: "Then you will be prosperous and successful" (1:8). "Be strong and courageous" (1:9). "The LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (1:9).

The center of the chiasm is the center of the book. For a book about military conquest, Joshua contains remarkably little about military preparation and a great deal about consecration and obedience. With great battles about to begin, you would think Joshua and the people would be busy with weapons, training, and strategy. But the preparation God required was spiritual. Israel's first great victory would be won not by siege engines, but by trusting and obeying God's instructions. And their first great failure would come directly from disobeying them.

The word translated "meditate" is worth a closer look. The Hebrew verb means more than silent thinking. It is used of a lion growling over its prey (Isaiah 31:4) and of a dove's low moaning. It suggests a murmuring, repeating sound. In the ancient world, people normally read aloud, and to meditate on Scripture was to speak it over and over, under one's breath, until it sank deep into the heart. That is why God says the Book of the Law must not depart from Joshua's mouth. Meditation in this sense is very close to memorization: keeping God's words so near that they shape what we think and say.

The same verb appears in the first psalm, which describes the blessed person as one "whose delight is in the law of the

LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers" (Psalm 1:2–3). The connection is probably intentional. Israel's commander and the ordinary faithful worshiper were called to the same practice. Leadership among God's people does not bypass the disciplines expected of every believer; it depends on them. Deuteronomy had already required Israel's future kings to write out their own copy of the Law and read it every day, "so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God" and "not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites" (Deuteronomy 17:19–20). Knowing God's Word was meant to keep leaders humble, not to make them unanswerable.

We should also be careful about what "prosperous and successful" means. The Hebrew words carry the sense of acting wisely and having one's way go well. This is not a guarantee that nothing will ever go wrong. Joshua himself would suffer a painful defeat at Ai just a few chapters later, a defeat that came from disobedience in the camp. And Hebrews honors faithful believers who were tortured, imprisoned, and killed (Hebrews 11:35–38). The promise to Joshua is that a life ordered by God's Word will be a wise life, moving in the right direction, and that he would succeed in the mission God had given him. It is not a promise of personal wealth or of an easy road.

The rest of Scripture echoes this emphasis on God's Word. "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Romans 10:17). Jesus prayed for His disciples, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and

training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16–17). "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

When Martha was frantically busy serving and complained that her sister Mary was just sitting at Jesus' feet listening, Jesus said, "Martha, Martha... you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41–42). Jesus was not saying that service is unimportant; His own ministry joined teaching with compassionate care. But He was saying that listening to Him must come first, so that our service flows from His Word rather than replacing it.

Each of us gets up in the morning with the same number of hours in the day. We cannot recapture time that has passed, and only God knows how much we have left. Our lives can be filled with activities, most of them good and respectable: work, family, exercise, rest. Most of what crowds out time with Scripture is not sin but legitimate obligation, which makes it harder to address than an obvious vice. But when God's Word is not shaping our lives, something is out of order.

It is sobering how little many Christians know of the Bible. Some know more about the world from the nightly news than they know about their faith. Many are content with whatever Scripture they hear in a forty-five-minute message once a week, filtered through someone else's interpretation. Pastors and teachers are a gift to the church. God gave them "to equip his people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:12), and we need their

help. But we cannot hand over our knowledge of God's Word to professionals. This is one area where every believer is called to grow. If you have goals for your life, make this your chief goal: to give more time and attention to knowing and obeying God's Word. Choose a manageable portion, pay attention to its context, notice what it actually says, and return to it through the day. The measure of progress is not only knowledge, but greater courage to do right, humility to be corrected, and love shaped by God's instruction.

Then God said to Joshua, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Joshua heard the command to be strong and courageous four times in this one chapter (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, 18). That suggests he needed to hear it. Scripture's great commands to courage are almost always given to people who are afraid. Gideon was hiding in a winepress when the angel called him a "mighty warrior" (Judges 6:12). Paul told the Corinthians, "I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling" (1 Corinthians 2:3).

One member of our community, a master in the martial arts, once listed his fears with striking honesty. He feared uncertainty. He feared loud and unruly people. He feared failure, and strangely, he also feared too much success. He feared his own lack of self-control. And he feared living a wasted life. Physical strength and skill did not remove fear. Many of our fears have nothing to do with physical danger. But is God's presence limited to military conflict? When Paul asks, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31), the whole universe is in view.

The reason Scripture gives for courage is never the strength of the one who is commanded, but the presence of God. "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid'" (Hebrews 13:5–6). We have God's presence because His Spirit lives in us. In Christ we have every spiritual blessing. God will not withhold anything good from us, and He works all things together for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28, 32). So we can be strong and courageous in whatever He calls us to do.

Joshua then prepared the people to cross the Jordan within three days. He reminded the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who had already received land east of the Jordan, of their promise to cross over and fight alongside their brothers. Their answer sounds wholehearted: "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses" (Joshua 1:16–17).

But look closely at that last sentence. "The LORD your God." They hoped God would be with Joshua, as He had been with Moses. When would they be able to say that the Lord was their God, rather than Joshua's God? Moses had asked the previous generation in his final song, "Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?" (Deuteronomy 32:6). The Law was never given merely as a way to secure blessings. It was given so that Israel would have a real relationship with God as His children, and keeping it was meant to be their expression of love for Him. Jesus said, "Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be

loved by my Father" (John 14:21). The psalmist wrote, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103).

This is a danger in every generation. A congregation's faith can come to rest more on its pastor's relationship with God than on its own. When that happens, people are outsourcing their walk with God to whoever currently holds spiritual authority, and that kind of faith is shallow and easily collapses when the leader changes. Let us not fall into empty religious habit, but love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Chapter 2 introduces one of the most remarkable people in the Old Testament. "Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. 'Go, look over the land,' he said, 'especially Jericho.' So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there" (Joshua 2:1). When the king of Jericho learned that Israelite spies had come, he sent men to Rahab's house. She hid the spies under stalks of flax on her roof and sent the king's men off in the wrong direction.

Then she spoke to the spies, and her words are a genuine confession of faith: "I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us.... We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below" (Joshua 2:9–11).

Everyone in Jericho had heard the same reports. Everyone was afraid. But only Rahab drew the right conclusion: the God of Israel is the true God, and the only hope is to turn to Him. She asked the spies to swear by the Lord that they would spare her family. They agreed, and told her to tie a scarlet cord in the window through which she let them down, and to gather her family inside her house. "And she tied the scarlet cord in the window" (Joshua 2:21). Many Christians have seen in that scarlet cord a picture that recalls the blood on the doorposts at Passover, a sign marking a house for rescue in the day of judgment. The text does not draw that comparison, so we should hold it lightly. But the parallel is hard to miss: a household spared because it trusted God's promise and displayed the sign it was given.

Some readers are troubled that Rahab lied to protect the spies. Scripture does not commend her lie. It commends her faith. "By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient" (Hebrews 11:31). James points to her actions, receiving the messengers and sending them away safely, as evidence that her faith was real (James 2:25). God met Rahab where she was, a woman living in a pagan city with pagan habits, and He honored her faith even before her life had been fully reshaped by His ways.

It is interesting to compare Rahab with the apostle Thomas. Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had risen until he saw the nail marks for himself. When Jesus appeared to him, Thomas confessed, "My Lord and my God!" And Jesus said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:28–29). Rahab had

never seen any of the wonders she described. She had only heard. Yet she believed.

We often assume that if God revealed Himself more spectacularly, more people would believe. But Israel witnessed the plagues, the parting of the sea, and bread from heaven, and still repeatedly failed to trust Him. In Jesus' day, religious leaders watched Him cast out demons and accused Him of doing it by the power of the devil (Mark 3:22). Meanwhile Jesus told the chief priests and elders, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you" (Matthew 21:31). Why them? Because of their humility. Like the tax collector who beat his breast and prayed, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner" (Luke 18:13), they knew they had no righteousness of their own to offer.

And Rahab's story does not end in Jericho. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus tells us that Salmon was "the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab" (Matthew 1:5). This former Canaanite prostitute became the great-great-grandmother of King David, and an ancestor of Jesus Christ Himself. She was not only welcomed into God's people; she was woven into the very family line through which the Messiah would come. That is how God treats those who come to Him in humble faith.

The spies returned to Joshua with a report very different from the one given forty years earlier: "The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us" (Joshua 2:24). The people of Jericho were terrified. For forty years, Israel had been afraid of Canaan. It turned out that Canaan had been afraid of Israel's God all along.

Chapters 3 and 4 describe the crossing of the Jordan. The people were told, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the

LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before" (Joshua 3:3-4). Israel had never been this way before, and neither have we, on any given day of our lives. The only safe way forward is to follow where God leads.

Then Joshua said, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you" (Joshua 3:5). Before God acted, His people were to set themselves apart for Him. And God told Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses" (Joshua 3:7).

The crossing was a miracle, and the timing made it more so. "Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam" (Joshua 3:15-16).

Notice the order of events. The water did not part first so that the priests could step in. The priests had to step into the flooded river first, and then the water stopped. God asked for obedience before He gave the miracle. So often we want God to show us the dry ground before we take a step. But faith often means putting our feet into the water, trusting that God will do what He has promised. The priests stood in the middle of the riverbed with the ark "until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground" (Joshua 3:17).

The crossing echoed the parting of the Red Sea forty years earlier. The first generation had seen God open the sea; now their children saw Him open the river. And this was how Israel

would know "that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites" (Joshua 3:10). The God who began their journey was the same God who would bring them into the land.

Chapter 4 records how God commanded Joshua to have one man from each tribe take a stone from the middle of the Jordan and set them up at the camp as a memorial. The purpose was explicitly for the next generation: "In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD.... These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever" (Joshua 4:6–7).

After a whole book of Deuteronomy calling Israel to remember, here is remembering made visible. The stones were a question waiting to be asked. Children would see them and ask, and parents would tell the story of what God had done. We need our own memorials: ways of marking and retelling what God has done, so that the next generation will ask, and we will have an answer.

"That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him all the days of his life, just as they had stood in awe of Moses" (Joshua 4:14). And there is a small detail in the dating of the crossing: "On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal" (Joshua 4:19). The tenth day of the first month was the day each family chose its lamb for Passover (Exodus 12:3). Forty years after the first Passover, Israel entered the land on the very day they would begin preparing to celebrate it again.

Joshua ends the chapter by explaining the purpose of the miracle to the people: "For the LORD your God dried up the

Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God" (Joshua 4:23–24).

God's mighty acts had two audiences. The nations were to learn that His hand is powerful. And His own people were to learn to fear Him. Rahab had already learned that lesson. Now it was Israel's turn. The same is true of everything God has done for us in Christ. It is meant to make His power known in the world, and to teach us to walk before Him in reverence and love. Joshua's name means "The LORD saves," and in Greek it is the same name as Jesus. The first Joshua brought Israel across the river into the land of promise. The greater Joshua brings His people into a rest that no defeat can overturn (Hebrews 4:8–9).

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. With battles ahead, the only preparation God required of Joshua was to meditate on His Word and obey it. What would it look like for God's Word to be "always on your lips" this week? What legitimate activities tend to crowd it out?
2. Joshua was told four times in one chapter to be strong and courageous, which suggests he was afraid. What fears are you facing right now, including ones that have nothing to do with physical danger? How does God's promise of His presence speak to each of them?
3. The eastern tribes said, "May the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses." Is God your God, or are you

depending on someone else's relationship with Him? How can you cultivate a faith that is truly your own?

4. Rahab believed what she had only heard, while many who saw God's wonders did not. What does her story teach you about humility and faith? How does it encourage you that God wove a former Canaanite prostitute into the line of the Messiah?
5. The priests had to step into the flooded Jordan before the water stopped. Where is God asking you to take a step of obedience before you can see how He will provide?
6. The twelve stones were set up so that children would ask, "What do these stones mean?" What "memorials" of God's faithfulness do you have in your life, and how are you passing those stories on to the next generation?

Chapter Two

Joshua 5–8

Israel had crossed the Jordan. The kings of Canaan had heard what the Lord had done, and "their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites" (Joshua 5:1). If there was ever a moment to press the military advantage, this was it. But God's first command on the far side of the Jordan was not "Attack." It was "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again" (Joshua 5:2).

The text explains why this was necessary: all the men who had come out of Egypt had been circumcised, but those born during the forty years in the wilderness had not. "So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way" (Joshua 5:7). Scripture does not tell us why the wilderness generation had neglected this. Perhaps it was part of their broader rebellion, since God had made circumcision the sign of His covenant with Abraham, and He had once nearly taken Moses' life for failing to circumcise his own son (Exodus 4:24–26). Perhaps it was the hardship of constant travel. We can only infer. But now, before the new generation took possession of the land promised to Abraham, they had to bear the sign of Abraham's covenant.

Consider what this meant from a military point of view. The entire fighting force of Israel was circumcised on the same day, in enemy territory, within sight of the most heavily fortified city in the region. "And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed" (Joshua 5:8). For several days, the army would be in pain and

nearly defenseless. Genesis records exactly how dangerous that could be: Simeon and Levi once persuaded the men of Shechem to be circumcised, then attacked the city while the men were still in pain, and killed them all (Genesis 34:25). No military commander would choose to make his army that vulnerable on the eve of a campaign. Joshua did it because God commanded it, trusting God's hand to protect them. It is one of Scripture's quieter demonstrations of faith: not a dramatic act, but a willingness to accept real risk simply because God had spoken.

"Then the LORD said to Joshua, 'Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.' So the place has been called Gilgal to this day" (Joshua 5:9). The name Gilgal sounds like the Hebrew word for "roll." On that day, God rolled away their past: the shame of slavery in Egypt, and the forty years of wandering and dying in the wilderness. A new chapter was beginning.

Then Israel celebrated the Passover on the plains of Jericho, the first recorded Passover since the second year in the wilderness. The next day, they ate the produce of the land for the first time: unleavened bread and roasted grain. And "The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan" (Joshua 5:12). For forty years, every morning, God had provided bread from heaven. Now it stopped, not because God had stopped providing, but because He was providing in a new way. How wonderful that first taste of the land's produce must have been!

Then comes one of the most mysterious encounters in the Old Testament. "Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, 'Are you for us or

for our enemies?' 'Neither,' he replied, 'but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.' Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, 'What message does my Lord have for his servant?' The commander of the LORD's army replied, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so" (Joshua 5:13–15).

Joshua saw a warrior with a drawn sword, and his first instinct was to find out whether to fight him or recruit him. The answer was "Neither." What Joshua needed to realize was that he was not the one in charge of this conquest. The question was not whether this commander was on Joshua's side, but whether Joshua and Israel would be on His.

The words "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy" are almost exactly what God said to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:5). The reader is meant to understand that Joshua has not arrived at a military briefing, but at the same kind of encounter Moses had. Who was this commander? Christians have debated the question since the early church. Some believe he was a created angel. Others believe he was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, partly because he accepted Joshua's worship without correction, while angels elsewhere in Scripture refuse worship (Revelation 22:8–9). Whatever conclusion we reach, the passage settles the direction of the relationship: the commander does not join Joshua's army. Joshua joins His.

This is a searching question for us. Are we dictating terms to God? Are we trying to enlist Him in our ambitions, asking Him to bless plans we have already made? Is His will merely one consideration among many in a busy life? Or have we taken off

our sandals and asked, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

Chapter 6 tells the story of Jericho, one of the most famous stories in the Bible. "Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in" (Joshua 6:1). Jericho was one of the oldest cities in the world, and its fortifications would have seemed invincible to a people who had spent forty years in tents. Conventional siege warfare of the time would have involved battering rams, siege towers, or starving the city into surrender over many months.

God's plan was none of these. "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men" (Joshua 6:2). The army was to march around the city once a day for six days, with seven priests carrying trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times, and then, at a long blast of the trumpets, the whole army was to shout. And until then, silence: "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" (Joshua 6:10).

To any military observer, this would have looked like nonsense. That was likely the whole point. The greater the gap between the method God commanded and the size of the obstacle, the less room anyone would have to credit Israel's own cleverness for what happened. For six days, the people of Jericho watched a silent procession circle their walls and then go back to camp. Perhaps they laughed. Perhaps they were unnerved. Israel had to obey without seeing any result at all, day after day.

On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times. "When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the

wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city" (Joshua 6:20). Hebrews explains what really brought the walls down: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days" (Hebrews 11:30). It was not the marching, the trumpets, or the shout. It was faith expressed in obedience.

That distinction is important, because stories like this one are easily misused. Some years ago, a group of Christian students visited a famous temple of another religion in their own country and walked in and around it repeatedly, praying and praising God, calling it "treading the land" and modeling it explicitly on Jericho. The act provoked widespread public criticism, and their school's leader had to apologize publicly. Why was this not biblical? Because God gave Israel a specific instruction for a specific purpose at a specific moment: handing that particular city into their hands. The marching was not a technique that caused walls to fall. It was an act of obedience to a command God had given. Treating it as a repeatable method misses the point entirely.

Israel itself made the same mistake later in its history. Facing defeat at the hands of the Philistines, the elders said, "Let us bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from Shiloh, so that he may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies" (1 Samuel 4:3). They treated the ark like a lucky charm. Israel lost the battle, and the ark was captured. Was the ark itself powerful? No. God was. Obedience, not imitation, is what God honors. And that is a question for our own lives: are there places where we have imitated the outward forms of faithfulness without the obedience that gave them meaning?

The city was "devoted to the LORD" (Joshua 6:17). As we have seen before, this meant that nothing was to be taken for personal use. "But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury" (Joshua 6:18–19). Jericho was the firstfruits of the land, and like all firstfruits, it belonged entirely to God.

The destruction of Jericho is one of the passages that raises the hardest questions in this book, and we will return to them. But notice one thing here. In the middle of the judgment, one household was spared: "But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day" (Joshua 6:25). The judgment on Jericho was not ethnic. A Canaanite woman who turned to the God of Israel in faith was saved, and her family with her.

Joshua also pronounced a curse on anyone who would rebuild Jericho: "At the cost of his firstborn son he will lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest he will set up its gates" (Joshua 6:26). Centuries later, in the days of King Ahab, a man named Hiel of Bethel rebuilt the city, and he "laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken by Joshua son of Nun" (1 Kings 16:34). God's word does not fail, even across the centuries.

Chapter 7 begins with a single, ominous sentence: "But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan

son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel" (Joshua 7:1). The reader knows what Israel does not.

Joshua sent spies to the small town of Ai, and they returned confident: "Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a few people live there" (Joshua 7:3). Notice what is missing. After Jericho, there is no record of Joshua seeking the Lord's direction before attacking Ai. So about three thousand men went up, and they were routed. About thirty-six Israelites were killed, "At this the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water" (Joshua 7:5). The very phrase used of the Canaanites' fear was now used of Israel.

Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown before the ark until evening. "Alas, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us?... What then will you do for your own great name?" (Joshua 7:7, 9). His prayer sounds much like the complaints of the previous generation in the wilderness.

God's answer was blunt: "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions" (Joshua 7:10–11). And God added a sobering warning: "I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction" (Joshua 7:12). There is a time for prayer and a time to act. Joshua needed to stop lamenting and deal with the sin in the camp.

Then came a slow and solemn process. The next morning, the tribes came forward one by one, and the tribe of Judah was taken. Then the clans of Judah came forward, and the clan of the Zerahites was taken. Then the families, then the individuals, until Achan was taken (Joshua 7:16–18).

Why such a drawn-out process? God could simply have named Achan. Imagine the whole camp waiting to see who would be identified, knowing that thirty-six men were dead because of someone's sin. Perhaps each stage was another opportunity for Achan to come forward on his own before he was exposed. We see something similar with Ananias and Sapphira in the early church. Ananias lied and was struck down. Three hours later, his wife was given her own chance to tell the truth, and she repeated the lie (Acts 5:7–10). God often gives us room to confess before He exposes us. Achan never took that opportunity.

When he was finally identified, Joshua spoke to him with surprising gentleness: "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me." And Achan confessed: "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath" (Joshua 7:19–21).

Notice the progression: I saw, I coveted, I took, I hid. It is the same pattern as the first sin in the garden: "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye... she took some and ate it" (Genesis 3:6). And James

describes it exactly: "each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:14–15). The first look was not yet the sin. But Achan kept looking, and wanting, and then he took, and then he hid. We should learn to recognize that pattern in ourselves early, before it reaches the end.

Achan, his family, and all his possessions were taken to a valley, where the people stoned them and burned what remained. Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today" (Joshua 7:25). The place was called the Valley of Achor, meaning "trouble."

This story raises hard questions, and many readers ask them honestly. Why did thirty-six soldiers die for one man's sin? Why was Achan's family put to death with him, when the Law itself said that children were not to be put to death for their parents' sins (Deuteronomy 24:16)? Scripture does not answer every question. Some suggest that Achan's family must have known what he had buried inside their tent and chose to conceal it, which would have made them complicit. That is possible, but the text does not say so directly, and we should be careful not to claim more certainty than it gives.

What we can say is that under the old covenant, Israel's life before God was deeply interconnected. The nation stood or fell together. That is why the whole camp could be affected by the sin of one man, and why leaders like Daniel and Nehemiah, centuries later, confessed not only their own sins but the sins of their whole people (Daniel 9:5; Nehemiah 1:6). Under the new covenant, the prophets promised a change: "The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the

parent" (Ezekiel 18:20; see also Jeremiah 31:29–30). Each person answers to God for his own sin and receives forgiveness through his own confession (1 John 1:9).

That does not mean that Christian communities have no shared responsibility. The New Testament still addresses churches as bodies. The risen Christ rebuked the church at Thyatira: "Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel" (Revelation 2:20). Paul warned the Corinthians that tolerated sin in their midst would spread: "Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). The question for us is usually not "Am I guilty for a stranger's sin?" but "What am I tolerating in my own community, and in my own life?"

Achan's story also raises questions about how we correct one another. Scripture calls believers to "teach and admonish one another with all wisdom" (Colossians 3:16) and to restore those who fall into sin, gently and with the goal of restoration (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15). When it comes to the children of others, parents carry the primary responsibility (Ephesians 6:4), and it is usually wiser to speak to the parents first. Most churches are not yet the kind of communities where loving correction and restoration are practiced regularly. That is something to pray for.

There is a beautiful postscript to the story of the Valley of Achor. Centuries later, through the prophet Hosea, God promised His unfaithful people that He would one day restore them: "There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope" (Hosea 2:15). The valley of trouble would become a door of hope. God can take even the

places of our worst failure and turn them into doorways of grace.

With the sin removed, God spoke to Joshua again in the words that had opened the book: "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (Joshua 8:1). He gave Joshua a battle plan for Ai: an ambush behind the city, while the main army drew the defenders out. The plan worked, and Ai was taken. And God added something striking: "you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves" (Joshua 8:2). The very thing Achan had stolen at Jericho would have been given freely to Israel at the very next city. If he had only waited and obeyed, he would have received what he wanted without sin. How often do we grab for ourselves what God intended to give us in His time?

Then, immediately after the victory at Ai, something remarkable happened. Instead of pressing on to the next city, Joshua led the whole nation north to Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, exactly as Moses had commanded in Deuteronomy. He built "an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used" (Joshua 8:31), and offered sacrifices. "There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses" (Joshua 8:32). Then the people stood on the two mountains while the blessings and curses were read.

"Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them" (Joshua 8:34–35).

What a way to celebrate a victory! They wrote out the Law on stones and read every word of it aloud to the entire

community. No one was left out: not the women, not the children, not the foreigners. After the painful lesson of Ai, Israel returned to the Word of God.

We throw parties and celebrate achievements. But do we celebrate the Lord for our victories? Is He not the reason for them? Israel's great celebrations were always tied to remembering: the Passover, the Festival of Tabernacles, and later the great reading of the Law under Ezra (Nehemiah 8). Paul calls us to the same posture in ordinary life: "whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17). When God gives you a victory, whether a restored relationship, a completed task, or an answered prayer, take time to celebrate Him. Plan it, and do it.

Chapter 5 began with God rolling away the reproach of Egypt, and chapter 8 ends with God's Word written on stone in the heart of the land. Between them lie the two great lessons of Israel's first battles. At Jericho, obedience brought the walls down. At Ai, hidden sin brought Israel down. The difference was never military. It was always spiritual.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Joshua circumcised the whole army on the eve of battle, accepting real risk because God commanded it. Is there an act of obedience God is asking of you that seems unwise from a human point of view? What keeps you from taking it?
2. When Joshua asked the commander of the Lord's army, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" the answer was "Neither." How might you be trying to enlist God in your plans rather

than asking, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

3. The walls of Jericho fell by faith, not because marching was a technique. Where are you tempted to treat spiritual practices as methods for getting results, rather than as acts of obedience to God?
4. Achan saw, coveted, took, and hid. Where do you see that progression at work in your own temptations? At what point can you learn to stop it?
5. The whole camp suffered for one man's hidden sin, and the risen Christ rebuked a church for what it tolerated. What sins might your church or family be tolerating? What would faithful, loving correction look like?
6. After their first victory, Israel stopped to read every word of God's Law to the whole community. How do you celebrate the victories God gives you? How could you make those celebrations more about Him?

Chapter Three

Joshua 9–11

After the victories at Jericho and Ai, the kings of Canaan finally understood that Israel was not going away. "Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things... they came together to wage war against Joshua and Israel" (Joshua 9:1–2). These three chapters record the conquest of the land in two great campaigns, one in the south and one in the north. But before either campaign, they record a mistake, and the way Israel handled that mistake tells us a great deal about the seriousness of a promise.

"However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy" (Joshua 9:3–5). They came to Joshua at Gilgal and said, "We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us" (Joshua 9:6).

The Gibeonites knew that God had commanded Israel to make no treaties with the peoples of Canaan, but that Israel was permitted to make peace with cities far away (Deuteronomy 20:10–15). So they pretended to be foreigners from a distant land. Their moldy bread, they said, had been warm when they left home. Their wineskins had been new. Their clothes and sandals had worn out on the long journey.

The Israelites were not completely careless. They examined the evidence. But then comes the key sentence: "The Israelites sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the LORD"

(Joshua 9:14). They checked the obvious things. What they did not do was ask God. And so "Joshua made a treaty of peace with them to let them live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it by oath" (Joshua 9:15). Three days later, they discovered that the Gibeonites were their neighbors, living just a few miles away.

Israel had just learned at Ai the cost of acting without seeking God. Now, only a chapter later, they made the same mistake in a different form. This time it was not military overconfidence but a hasty decision that seemed obviously right, based on evidence that looked convincing. That is often when we are most vulnerable: not when a decision looks difficult, but when it looks easy. If Israel had asked the Lord, He would presumably have revealed the deception. How many of our mistakes come from decisions we thought were too simple to pray about?

Many of us have signed documents or clicked "I agree" to pages of legal language without reading what we were agreeing to. We do it out of convenience, assuming the other party means us no harm. Israel's experience with Gibeon is a reminder that commitments made carelessly still bind us. Every precaution should be taken before we give our word, and the most important precaution is to seek the Lord.

When the truth came out, "the whole assembly grumbled against the leaders" (Joshua 9:18). But the leaders answered, "We have given them our oath by the LORD, the God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now" (Joshua 9:19). Even though the treaty had been obtained by fraud, Israel kept it. The Gibeonites were spared, though they were made "woodcutters and water

carriers for the assembly, to provide for the needs of the altar of the LORD at the place the LORD would choose" (Joshua 9:27).

This shows how seriously God takes oaths, even ones made under deception. Something similar happened when Jacob deceived his blind father Isaac into giving him the blessing intended for Esau. When Isaac discovered the deception, he trembled, but he said, "I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!" (Genesis 27:33). Once a solemn commitment had been made before the Lord, it could not simply be undone.

We know that God regarded Israel's oath to the Gibeonites as binding, because of what happened centuries later. During David's reign, there was a famine for three years. "David sought the face of the LORD. The LORD said, 'It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death'" (2 Samuel 21:1). Scripture explains: "Now the Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were survivors of the Amorites; the Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them" (2 Samuel 21:2). Saul had broken Joshua's oath, and the consequence fell on the whole land generations later, during the reign of a king who had no part in it. Broken covenant obligations do not simply disappear with time or a change of leadership. They can become a community's unfinished business until someone finally addresses them.

The psalmist describes the person who may dwell in God's presence as one "who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind" (Psalm 15:4). Because oaths are so serious, both Jesus and James counsel us not to make them lightly at all: "Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to

say is a simple 'Yes' or 'No.' Otherwise you will be condemned" (James 5:12; see Matthew 5:33–37). God keeps every promise He makes, and He calls His people to be people whose word can be trusted.

There is a surprising epilogue to the Gibeonites' story. Their city, Gibeon, later became one of the towns given to the Levites (Joshua 21:17). In the days of David and Solomon, the tabernacle itself stood at Gibeon (1 Chronicles 16:39), and it was there that the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and offered him whatever he asked (1 Kings 3:4–5). The deceivers who were sentenced to cut wood and carry water for the altar ended up living near the very center of Israel's worship. God can bring grace out of even a deception, and He can use a curse for good.

Chapter 10 shows that Israel's oath to the Gibeonites was not only binding but costly. When the five Amorite kings of the south learned that Gibeon had made peace with Israel, they joined forces and attacked Gibeon. The Gibeonites sent an urgent message to Joshua: "Do not abandon your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us!" (Joshua 10:6).

Joshua could have reasoned that the Gibeonites had deceived him and deserved no help. Instead, he honored the treaty fully. "The LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.' After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua took them by surprise" (Joshua 10:8–9). He marched his army all night, uphill, to defend people he had been tricked into protecting. A treaty made in haste became an obligation kept at real cost. That is a far more demanding understanding of what a promise is than most of us practice.

And God fought for Israel. As the Amorites fled, "the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites" (Joshua 10:11). The decisive victory was not won primarily by Israel's weapons at all. Even nature itself did more damage to the enemy than the human army. God's strength, not Israel's military skill, determined the outcome.

Then comes one of the most famous and debated moments in the Old Testament. "On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: 'Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.' So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!" (Joshua 10:12–14).

What exactly happened? Christians have understood this passage in different ways. Many take it as a literal miracle in which God extended the daylight so that Israel could complete its victory. Others suggest that God provided prolonged light in some other way, or that the language, partly quoted from an ancient poetic source, the Book of Jashar, describes the event in vivid, poetic terms. We do not need to know the mechanism to grasp the point. The God who created the sun and moon can do whatever He wills with them. What the text emphasizes is not the astronomy, but the astonishing fact that "the LORD listened to a human being." God answered Joshua's bold prayer because He was fighting for His people.

After the battle, the five kings were found hiding in a cave at Makkedah. Joshua had his commanders put their feet on the kings' necks, a common symbol of total victory in the ancient world. Then he said to his men, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight" (Joshua 10:25). The words God had spoken to Joshua at the beginning of the book, Joshua now spoke to his army. The encouragement he had received, he passed on.

The rest of chapter 10 summarizes the southern campaign, city by city. And its conclusion is plain: "All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel" (Joshua 10:42). The narrative repeatedly states that Israel left no survivors in these cities, as God had commanded. These are among the passages in this book that are hardest to read, and we have addressed the question of the conquest more fully in the Introduction. We should not pass over them lightly. But neither should we forget their context: judgment on nations whose wickedness God had endured for centuries, carried out once, at His command, and never to be repeated by His people.

Chapter 11 records the northern campaign. Jabin, king of the great city of Hazor, gathered a coalition of northern kings, and "They came out with all their troops and a large number of horses and chariots—a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore" (Joshua 11:4). Chariots were the most advanced military technology of the age. Israel had none.

But God said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them, slain, over to Israel. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots"

(Joshua 11:6). Israel attacked suddenly, and the Lord gave them the victory.

Why would God command Israel to destroy the horses and chariots rather than keep them? Surely the most advanced weapons of the day would have been useful in the battles ahead. But God did not want Israel to rely on them. He had already told Israel that its future king "must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself" (Deuteronomy 17:16). The psalmist would later sing, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7). Israel's security was not to rest on military technology, but on God alone. If they kept the chariots, it would not be long before they began trusting them instead.

That is a question for us, too. What are the "chariots" that we are tempted to trust: savings, skills, connections, reputation? None of these things is evil in itself. But God sometimes asks us to set aside the very things we would most naturally rely on, so that we will rely on Him.

Joshua burned Hazor, the head of all these kingdoms. And the narrator gives Joshua a remarkable commendation: "As the LORD commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses" (Joshua 11:15). Joshua's faithfulness was not in his military brilliance, but in his complete obedience.

We also learn that the conquest was not quick: "Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time" (Joshua 11:18). From Caleb's ages mentioned later in the book, it appears the main campaigns took about seven years (Joshua 14:7, 10). The victories came one after another, but they required years of persistent faithfulness.

Then comes a verse that troubles many readers: "Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, not one city made a treaty of peace with the Israelites, who took them all in battle. For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses" (Joshua 11:19–20).

Notice the first sentence. Gibeon sought peace, even through deception, and was spared. Rahab sought mercy and was saved. The door was not entirely closed. But the other cities chose war. And the text says that God hardened their hearts, as He had hardened Pharaoh's heart in Exodus and Sihon's in Deuteronomy. As in those cases, Scripture holds together God's sovereignty and the real choices of those who resisted Him, without explaining exactly how they fit together. These nations were not innocent victims; they chose to fight against the God whose power they had heard about for forty years. And yet their resistance also served God's purpose of judgment. We should resist the temptation to soften either truth.

The chapter also records that Joshua destroyed the Anakites, the giants who had so terrified the ten spies forty years earlier (Joshua 11:21). The very people whose size had once convinced a whole generation that the land could not be taken were defeated. "No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive" (Joshua 11:22). That small note has a long echo. Centuries later, a giant from Gath named Goliath would challenge the armies of Israel, and a shepherd boy would face him in the name of the Lord.

And the chapter ends with rest: "So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an

inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war" (Joshua 11:23).

Throughout these chapters, one principle runs clear. Under the Mosaic covenant, Israel's success depended on obedience. When Israel obeyed, God fought for them and they won. When they disobeyed or acted without seeking Him, they suffered. After Joshua's death, Israel would not remain faithful, leaving Canaanites in the land contrary to God's command, and God would stop giving them victory.

What does this mean for us? We should not conclude that if we fully obey as Christians, God will make every earthly pursuit prosper. That kind of territorial, military promise was given to Israel under the Mosaic covenant, and it is not promised to Christians under the new covenant. A faithful believer may lose a job, endure illness, or see an honorable project fail. The New Testament repeatedly presents suffering as compatible with obedience. And even in Joshua's own day, God's presence did not mean Israel won every encounter: the book records the defeat at Ai and the mistake with Gibeon.

But we have something greater. God's grace in Christ is unconditional and eternal, and His Spirit lives within us. We are still called to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12–13). His Spirit continually prompts us toward Christlike living, and we must choose each day to respond. That is what Paul means when he writes, "walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). The fruit of that walk is "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22–23). Pursuing that fruit is our

equivalent of Joshua's charge to be strong and courageous and careful to obey.

What matters most in life, then, is to trust and obey God, whatever our circumstances. It does not ultimately matter how smart, how financially secure, or even how happy we are. Our aim is not to find fulfillment in a life that is swiftly passing, but to please the One who is preparing a place for us for all eternity.

That does not make ordinary joys and needs worthless. Scripture treats work, food, family, and rest as places where God may be honored. The problem is not enjoying them, but allowing them to become rivals to God or the final measure of our lives. And resurrection hope gives dignity to our present service rather than making it disposable: "Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Some of us pray a simple prayer each morning: "Father, let me live to please You this day. Grant me wisdom and discernment not to fill my hours with vain things, but to think, plan, and do what pleases and glorifies You most." Our days still fall short of that prayer. But it keeps our attention on faithfulness before we know the outcomes, and it makes room for God's correction when our schedules are crowded with things that seem urgent but do not ultimately matter. The Lord's faithfulness makes beginning again possible every morning.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. The Israelites examined the Gibeonites' provisions "but did not inquire of the LORD." What decisions are you tempted to make without prayer because they seem obvious or simple?

2. Israel kept its oath to the Gibeonites even though it had been obtained by deception, and later marched all night to defend them. How seriously do you take your promises, especially when keeping them becomes costly?
3. The Gibeonites, sentenced to serve at the altar, ended up living near the center of Israel's worship. Where have you seen God bring grace out of a mistake or a deception?
4. "There has never been a day like it... a day when the LORD listened to a human being." What bold prayers are you afraid to pray? What does Joshua's example teach you about asking God for great things in line with His purposes?
5. God commanded Israel to burn the chariots rather than keep them. What "chariots" are you tempted to trust instead of God?
6. Under the Mosaic covenant, obedience brought victory, but Christians are not promised earthly success. How would you describe what faithful obedience looks like, and what it promises, under the new covenant?

Part Two

Dividing the Inheritance

Chapter One

Joshua 12–15

With chapter 12, the book of Joshua turns a corner. The first half of the book told the story of the conquest; the second half describes the division of the land. Chapter 12 serves as a bridge, listing every king Israel had defeated: first the two kings east of the Jordan under Moses, Sihon and Og, and then, one by one, the kings west of the Jordan under Joshua. The list ends simply: "thirty-one kings in all" (Joshua 12:24).

To many readers, a list like this seems tedious. But every name on it represented a city that had once seemed invincible, and a victory that God had given. A long list of defeated kings is a record of God's sovereignty. Nations rise and fall by His authority. Daniel would later say to a pagan emperor who assumed his power was his own, "He deposes kings and raises up others" (Daniel 2:21). The conquest narrative is not really a story about Israel's military competence. It is an extended demonstration of God's rule over the nations.

Then chapter 13 opens with a sobering sentence: "When Joshua had grown old, the LORD said to him, 'You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over'" (Joshua 13:1). Joshua had spent his life faithfully fighting for the land God had promised. Yet he would not live to see the work completed.

It is striking how often this pattern appears in Scripture. Moses spent his life leading Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness, only to die on Mount Nebo, looking at a land he would not enter. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob followed the Lord faithfully, yet none of them lived to see the great promises of

God fully realized. Hebrews explains: "All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.... Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them" (Hebrews 11:13, 16).

We should be careful not to overstate this. God did keep real promises within their lifetimes. Abraham received Isaac; Hebrews says that "after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised" (Hebrews 6:15). Joshua did see most of the land conquered. The distinction is between genuine, partial fulfillment and the final fulfillment they still hoped for. And Hebrews gives the reason: "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39–40).

That challenges the assumption that a faithful life must reach visible completion before it ends. A person may serve well, hand responsibility to others, and die still waiting for much of what God has promised. Faith receives present gifts with gratitude while trusting a fulfillment larger than one lifetime.

It also challenges how earthly-minded many of us are. Our concerns and ambitions can be tied so tightly to this life, which is only a drop in the bucket compared to eternity. We can become preoccupied with what we eat, drink, and wear, with our houses, cars, vacations, and careers. Even our prayers can reflect this. It is easy for our prayer lists to become almost entirely about our own health, comfort, and success, with little attention to God's kingdom, holiness, or the good of others. Jesus

said, "Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:31–33).

That does not mean we should stop bringing ordinary needs to God. The same Lord's Prayer that begins with God's name, kingdom, and will goes on to ask, "Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Paul writes, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6–7). God's knowledge of our needs is a reason to trust Him with them, not a reason to keep silent. Praying for a friend with cancer, or for a family member who needs work, is an act of love, and love is never detached from righteousness.

The issue is the order and the spirit of our prayers. The Lord's Prayer teaches us to begin with God's priorities, and to bring our needs within that larger frame. Paul had learned "to be content whatever the circumstances," whether in plenty or in want, because his focus was on Christ: "I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:11, 13). Prayer is not merely a way to carry a list of preferred circumstances to heaven. It is a way God forms us, aligning our desires with His. So we bring our real needs with thanksgiving, ask that God's purposes shape the outcome, pray for the character we will need whatever the answer, and remember those whose needs are greater than ours. The hope of eternity frees us from making

any earthly outcome absolute, without asking us to pretend we have no earthly needs.

Chapter 13 describes the land that still remained to be conquered, and then the land east of the Jordan that Moses had already given to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. In the middle of the chapter comes a small but significant note: "But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day" (Joshua 13:13). This is the first recorded instance of Israel failing to drive out the inhabitants of the land. Sadly, it would not be the last. The book of Judges begins with a long list of such failures (Judges 1:21, 27–33).

In a few places, the text says Israel "could not" drive out the inhabitants. At the end of chapter 15, for example: "Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah" (Joshua 15:63). Does that mean the task was simply too hard? The book of Judges explains what was happening. The angel of the Lord told Israel, "you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars. Yet you have disobeyed me.... And I have also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; they will become traps for you, and their gods will become snares to you'" (Judges 2:2–3). And God said, "I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD" (Judges 2:22).

In other words, they "could not" because they "would not." What began as a command became, after refusal, a condition. We saw the same pattern at Kadesh Barnea, when Israel refused to enter the land and then, after God's judgment, tried to take it anyway and was defeated. The important thing was never

simply whether Israel drove out its enemies, but whether Israel trusted and obeyed God when He commanded it. And notice what Judges names as the real danger: not the presence of foreigners as such, but that "their gods will become snares." The concern throughout was the corruption of Israel's worship, which is exactly what the rest of Judges describes. Jerusalem itself would remain a Jebusite stronghold until David captured it centuries later (2 Samuel 5:6-7).

Chapter 13 also notes, twice, that the tribe of Levi received no territory: "the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them" (Joshua 13:33). And it records, almost in passing, that "the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination" (Joshua 13:22). Every detail of God's word was being fulfilled.

Chapter 14 brings us back to one of the great heroes of faith in the Old Testament. As the land west of the Jordan was about to be divided by lot, Caleb came to Joshua at Gilgal. And what he said deserves to be heard in full:

"You know what the LORD said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.... Now then, just as the LORD promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this

hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said" (Joshua 14:6–12).

Caleb was forty at Kadesh Barnea. He wandered with Israel for thirty-eight years, and now he was eighty-five, which means the conquest had taken about seven years. For forty-five years, he had lived with a promise. And what did he ask for? Not an easy, already-conquered piece of land as a reward for long service. He asked for the hill country where the Anakites lived, the giants whose size had terrified the ten spies.

There is a pointed irony here. The hill country Caleb requested included Hebron, the very place where the twelve spies had first seen the descendants of Anak (Numbers 13:22). It was at Hebron that ten spies became convinced that Israel looked "like grasshoppers" beside its inhabitants (Numbers 13:33). Forty-five years later, Caleb asked for that same place. He volunteered for the very assignment that had frightened a whole generation, as though confirming that his confidence about that particular place had been right all along. The consistency between a young man's confident words and an old man's matching actions is itself remarkable.

Notice how Caleb framed his confidence: "the LORD helping me, I will drive them out just as he said." He did not boast in his own strength, even though he mentioned it. His confidence rested on God's promise and God's help. His vigor at eighty-five was a gift of God's faithfulness, not a personal achievement.

"Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance. So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he followed the

LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly" (Joshua 14:13–14). Three times in this chapter, Caleb is described as one who followed the Lord "wholeheartedly" (Joshua 14:8, 9, 14). It is the same description God gave of him forty-five years earlier: "because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly" (Numbers 14:24).

Notice also that Caleb is called "the Kenizzite" (Joshua 14:6, 14). Genesis lists the Kenizzites among the peoples living in the land promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:19). That suggests Caleb's family may have been of non-Israelite origin, and had joined the tribe of Judah. If so, one of the most faithful men of the conquest generation came from outside Israel's ancestral line. It is a pattern Scripture repeats with Rahab, Ruth, and others, and fulfills in the gospel: "remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise.... But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:12–13).

Caleb's example is a rebuke to spiritual weariness. It is sadly common for people to serve the Lord zealously for a season, then gradually burn out and lose their zeal, until faith becomes a Sunday habit rather than a living devotion. Serving the Lord can be discouraging at times, with frustration coming from every direction. But Paul writes, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). Caleb kept trusting the same promise from youth to old age.

We should apply his example carefully, though. Caleb's strength at eighty-five was God's gift to him, not a promise to every believer. Many faithful people grow weaker with age, and

many hard circumstances are not removed. Caleb's example is not a guarantee of physical vigor. It is a picture of a whole life that kept trusting God's word from beginning to end, and that is available to every believer, whatever their strength. In the deepest sense, it is true that if the Lord is with us, we will overcome: nothing can separate us from God's love, and "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Chapter 15 describes the territory given to the tribe of Judah, the largest allotment in the land, with long lists of boundaries and towns. And in the middle of those lists, the story of Caleb continues. "From Hebron Caleb drove out the three Anakites—Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai, the sons of Anak" (Joshua 15:14). These were the very names the spies had reported forty-five years earlier (Numbers 13:22). The old man did exactly what he said he would do.

Then Caleb offered his daughter Aksah in marriage to whoever captured the city of Kiriath Sepher. "Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's brother, took it; so Caleb gave his daughter Aksah to him in marriage" (Joshua 15:17). Othniel would later become the first of Israel's judges, delivering the nation from eight years of oppression (Judges 3:9–11). Caleb's courage did not end with him. It shaped the next generation.

Then comes a charming little scene: "One day when she came to Othniel, she urged him to ask her father for a field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, 'What can I do for you?' She replied, 'Do me a special favor. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water.' So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs" (Joshua 15:18–19). Land in the dry

south was of little use without water. Aksah asked boldly, and her father gave generously, more than she had asked.

Some readers notice that different Bible translations tell this story slightly differently. Some say that Aksah urged her husband to ask for a field; others say that he urged her. That is because ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament, in Hebrew and in the early Greek translation, do not always agree in every small detail. Translators choose the reading they think is original and often note the alternative in a footnote. The careful study of these differences is called textual criticism, and it is a specialized field. But its basic principle is one every reader can practice: let the context guide the meaning. Most study Bibles note the significant variants in their footnotes. And it is worth noticing how rarely such differences change the meaning of a passage. Whoever did the urging, the point of the story remains the same: Caleb's family was blessed generously, beyond the minimum.

The chapter closes with that sobering note about Jerusalem: "Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites" (Joshua 15:63). Side by side in this one chapter stand an old man who took the hardest territory because he trusted God, and a tribe that left a stronghold in place. The difference between them was not strength. It was wholehearted faith.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. God told Joshua, "You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over." How does it change your view of success to know that many faithful people die before seeing God's promises fully realized?

2. Look at your recent prayers. How many of them concern God's name, kingdom, and will, and how many concern your own comfort? How can you bring your real needs to God while letting His priorities shape your prayers?
3. Israel "could not" drive out some inhabitants because they first "would not." Is there an area of your life where delayed obedience has become harder, or even impossible, over time?
4. At eighty-five, Caleb asked for the hardest territory, the very place that had frightened the spies decades earlier. What would it look like for you to keep trusting God with the same wholeheartedness at every stage of life?
5. Caleb may have come from a family outside Israel's ancestral line, yet he became a model of faithfulness. How does that encourage you about God's welcome of outsiders, including yourself?
6. Aksah asked her father boldly for springs of water, and he gave her more than she asked. What does this picture teach you about approaching your heavenly Father?

Chapter Two

Joshua 16–18

These chapters continue the division of the land, describing the territories of the descendants of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, and then the survey of the land for the seven tribes still waiting for their inheritance. Some of the descriptions can be hard to follow: long lists of boundaries, valleys, springs, and towns whose locations are now uncertain. A good Bible atlas or the maps in the back of a study Bible can help a great deal. Trace one tribe at a time, notice its neighbors, and then ask what the narrative is teaching about promise, obedience, and provision. We should remember, too, that maps show different things: ideal tribal boundaries, actual settlements, or later political situations. They are guides, not photographs of a single moment. And behind all these names lies a simple truth: God's faithfulness was being expressed in real places, where real families would live, farm, and pass their inheritance on to the next generation.

Chapter 16 describes the territory given to Ephraim, and it ends with a familiar and troubling note: "They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labor" (Joshua 16:10). The same thing happened in Manasseh's territory: "Yet the Manassites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely" (Joshua 17:12–13).

Notice the detail in that last verse. The failure came "when the Israelites grew stronger." It was not a failure of weakness, but of compromise. Once Israel was strong enough to act, they chose economic advantage over obedience. Why drive out a population that could be put to work? It seemed practical. But God had warned that the Canaanites who remained would become "barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides" (Numbers 33:55), and that their gods would become a snare. Israel's later history would prove exactly how right that warning was. Israel mixed the evil practices of the Canaanites with the Law it was supposed to follow, rather than turning away from them completely. Obedience that stops halfway is not really obedience at all.

What lesson does this hold for us? The Old Testament demanded the complete removal of the Canaanites because of their immoral and idolatrous influence. The New Testament gives believers a different but related command. We are not told to drive anyone out of a territory. We are told to flee. "Flee from sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18). "Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10:14). Israel got into trouble because it allowed influences God had forbidden to remain in the land, and those influences gradually turned Israel away from the Lord.

Do we fully obey the Lord in this? Where do we allow corrupting influences to remain in our lives? For many of us, the answer includes what we watch and read: movies, television, the internet, and social media. Our eyes are a gateway to our hearts, and we are not immune to the influence of what we take in. Some believers have concluded that the wisest course for them is to cancel certain streaming services and delete certain

apps altogether. Others choose very carefully what they watch. This is a matter where believers draw lines differently, and Paul's counsel applies: "Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind" (Romans 14:5). But the principle underneath is one we all share. We must not let influences remain that draw us into immorality and idolatry. And fleeing sin is always paired with pursuing something better: "Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace" (2 Timothy 2:22). "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

Chapter 17 describes the land given to Manasseh, and it includes a quiet note of justice. The daughters of Zelophehad, whose father had died without sons, came to Eleazar and Joshua and said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our relatives." And "Joshua gave them an inheritance along with the brothers of their father, according to the LORD's command" (Joshua 17:4). In a society where women did not normally inherit land, these five sisters had brought their case to Moses in the wilderness, and God had ruled in their favor (Numbers 27). Now, years later, under new leadership, the ruling was carried out. It is a good example of God's law working as good law should: a single case producing a lasting principle that protected others long after the original circumstances had passed.

The chapter also mentions the city of Shechem, on the border between Ephraim and Manasseh (Joshua 17:7). It is worth pausing over, because few places in the Bible carry more history. Shechem was the first place Abraham came to in

Canaan, where the Lord appeared to him and said, "To your offspring I will give this land," and where Abraham built his first altar in the land (Genesis 12:6-7). Jacob later bought land there, pitched his tent, and built an altar he called "El Elohe Israel," meaning "God, the God of Israel" (Genesis 33:18-20). It was at Shechem that Simeon and Levi massacred the men of the city after their sister Dinah was violated (Genesis 34). On his deathbed, Jacob gave Joseph "one more ridge of land than to your brothers" (Genesis 48:22), and Joseph made the Israelites swear to carry his bones out of Egypt (Genesis 50:25). At the very end of the book of Joshua, we will read that those bones were buried at Shechem, "in the tract of land that Jacob bought" (Joshua 24:32).

The story continues. Shechem lies in the valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, where Joshua read the blessings and curses of the Law (Joshua 8:30-35). It became a city of refuge and a Levitical town. Joshua would gather all Israel there for his final covenant renewal (Joshua 24). Centuries later, it was at Shechem that the kingdom of Israel was torn in two (1 Kings 12:1), and the region became the heart of the Samaritans' worship, centered on Mount Gerizim.

And it was near Shechem that Jesus sat by Jacob's well and spoke with a Samaritan woman: "So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there" (John 4:5-6). When she raised the old dispute, "Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem" (John 4:20), Jesus answered, "a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.... a time is coming and has now come

when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth" (John 4:21, 23).

There is something fitting about that. Jesus made His clearest statement that worship would no longer be tied to any particular place at one of the places that had mattered most, and for the longest time, in Israel's story. No matter how much history a place carries, what God seeks is not a location but worshipers who come to Him in Spirit and in truth.

Later in chapter 17, the people of Joseph came to Joshua with a complaint: "Why have you given us only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? We are a numerous people, and the LORD has blessed us abundantly" (Joshua 17:14). Joshua's answer was practical: "If you are so numerous... and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves" (Joshua 17:15). But they objected again: "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots fitted with iron" (Joshua 17:16).

Joshua would not accept their excuse: "You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment but the forested hill country as well. Clear it, and its farthest limits will be yours; though the Canaanites have chariots fitted with iron and though they are strong, you can drive them out" (Joshua 17:17–18).

The land had already been given to Israel as an inheritance, yet the tribes were struggling to take hold of it. First they had been frightened by their enemies' size; now they were frightened by their enemies' weapons. Joshua's answer was essentially this: you have what you need. Use it. The gift was

real, and so was the work required to possess it. Scripture does not seem troubled by holding both truths together.

That is a helpful picture of the Christian life. Our salvation is a gift, secured not by our performance but by Christ. Jesus said of His sheep, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28). And yet Paul tells us, "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12–13). The gift is secure, and it calls for our active engagement. Neither truth cancels the other.

Our own conviction is that those whom God has truly saved will never finally be lost, because their security rests on His faithfulness rather than their own. Other Christians understand the warnings of Scripture differently, but all agree that grace does not make obedience unnecessary. And the assurance of salvation should never produce pride. If someone were pulled from a raging river by a rescuer, would he boast that he had been chosen to be saved? Or would he be overwhelmed with gratitude? The right response to secure salvation is not elitism, but praise.

Chapter 18 opens with a significant moment: "The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The country was brought under their control" (Joshua 18:1). For the first time since Sinai, the tabernacle had a settled home in the land. Shiloh would remain Israel's center of worship for generations, until the days of Eli and Samuel.

But there was a problem: "there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance. So Joshua said to the Israelites: 'How long will you wait before you begin to

take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you?" (Joshua 18:2-3).

Seven tribes were simply waiting. They had fought alongside the others, and now that the most urgent battles were over, they seemed content to stay where they were. Perhaps they were tired. Perhaps they were comfortable. Perhaps they were daunted by the work that remained. Whatever the reason, they were delaying the possession of what God had already given them.

How long will you wait? It is a question worth asking ourselves. God has given us every spiritual blessing in Christ. Yet we can be slow to take hold of what He has given: slow to grow in His Word, slow to use the gifts He has entrusted to us, slow to obey what we already know He wants. Procrastination in spiritual things can feel harmless, but it leaves the inheritance unclaimed.

Joshua's solution was practical. He had each of the seven tribes appoint three men to walk through the land and write a description of it, dividing it into seven parts. "Then return to me, and I will cast lots for you here at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD" (Joshua 18:8). The surveyors went, wrote the description in a scroll, and returned. "Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the LORD" (Joshua 18:10).

Notice that the distribution of the land was not a matter of tribal bargaining or political power. It happened "in the presence of the LORD," at the tabernacle. The lot was a way of placing the decision in God's hands. Practical organization served shared life, and it did so within worship. Every tribe had to make room for the others, and every tribe received its portion from God.

The first lot fell to Benjamin, the smallest tribe, whose territory lay between Judah and Joseph. And among its towns was "Jebus (that is, Jerusalem)" (Joshua 18:28), the city that neither Judah nor Benjamin would fully take until the days of David. That little city, sitting on the border between two tribes, would one day become the place God chose for His name, the city of the great King.

These chapters may seem like the dry bookkeeping of an ancient nation. But they show us something important about the way God works. His promises were not vague spiritual ideas. They were fulfilled in real ground, with boundaries, springs, and towns. And Israel's response to His gifts mattered in those concrete places. Where they obeyed fully, they flourished. Where they compromised, the compromise took root and grew. The same is true of us.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Israel put the Canaanites to forced labor "when the Israelites grew stronger," choosing economic advantage over obedience. Where are you tempted to keep something God has told you to remove because it seems useful or convenient?
2. Paul tells us to "flee from sexual immorality" and "flee from idolatry." What influences do you allow in your life that draw you away from God? What would fleeing them, and pursuing something better, look like for you?
3. Shechem carried nearly two thousand years of history, yet Jesus said true worship is not tied to any place. What "places," traditions, or settings are you tempted to treat as

essential to worship? What does it mean to worship "in the Spirit and in truth"?

4. The people of Joseph complained that their land was too small and their enemies too strong. Joshua told them, in effect, "You have what you need. Use it." Where might God be saying the same thing to you?
5. Our salvation is a secure gift, yet we are called to work it out with fear and trembling. How do you hold those two truths together? How should assurance of salvation affect the way you treat others?
6. "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land?" Is there something God has already given or shown you that you have been slow to take hold of? What is one step you can take this week?

Chapter Three

Joshua 19–21

These chapters complete the division of the land. Chapter 19 records the allotments of the last six tribes, and then something unexpected: the leader himself receives his portion last of all. Chapter 20 sets apart the cities of refuge. Chapter 21 gives the Levites their towns scattered through the land. And then comes one of the great summary statements of the Old Testament: "Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled" (Joshua 21:45).

Chapter 19 begins with the tribe of Simeon. "The second lot came out for the tribe of Simeon according to its clans. Their inheritance lay within the territory of Judah" (Joshua 19:1). The reason is given a few verses later: "The inheritance of the Simeonites was taken from the share of Judah, because Judah's portion was more than they needed" (Joshua 19:9). Simeon never received a separate territory of its own. Centuries earlier, Jacob had spoken over his sons Simeon and Levi, whose violence at Shechem he condemned: "I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel" (Genesis 49:7). Here we see that word fulfilled. Simeon was absorbed into Judah. And as we will see in chapter 21, Levi was scattered too, but in a very different way.

Then come the allotments of Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali, each with its boundaries and towns. Most readers pass quickly over these lists. But one small detail in Zebulun's list is worth noticing: among its towns was a place called Bethlehem (Joshua 19:15). This is not the Bethlehem where Jesus was born. There were two towns called Bethlehem in the Bible. The one in Zebulun, in the north near Nazareth, is mentioned only here.

Every other reference is to Bethlehem in Judah, also known as Ephrath or Ephrathah (Genesis 35:19; Ruth 1:2; 4:11).

That small distinction turns out to matter a great deal. When Micah prophesied the birthplace of the Messiah, he did not simply say "Bethlehem." He said, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:2). He named the town precisely, ruling out any confusion. And seven centuries later, when Herod asked the religious leaders where the Messiah would be born, they answered immediately: "In Bethlehem in Judea... for this is what the prophet has written" (Matthew 2:5). A minor geographic detail in Joshua reminds us how precisely God's Word speaks.

The last lot fell to the tribe of Dan. At the second census in the wilderness, Dan had been the second largest tribe (Numbers 26:42–43). They received a small area in central Israel, between Judah and Ephraim and bordering the Philistine coast. But the book of Judges tells us that "The Amorites confined the Danites to the hill country, not allowing them to come down into the plain" (Judges 1:34). Joshua 19:47 records that when the Danites could not secure their inheritance, they went far to the north, attacked the city of Leshem (also called Laish), and renamed it Dan.

The book of Judges tells the rest of the story, and it is a sad one. Rather than trusting God to help them take the land He had given them, the Danites found an easier target: a peaceful, isolated city in the far north. They conquered it and set up an idol there, with a descendant of Moses as their priest (Judges 18:27–31). The idolatrous shrine at Dan operated all the time

the tabernacle stood at Shiloh, which suggests that the Danites may have stopped worshiping at the tabernacle altogether. Centuries later, when the kingdom divided, Jeroboam set up two golden calves for the northern tribes so that they would not travel to Jerusalem to worship: "One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan" (1 Kings 12:29). A tribe that abandoned its God-given inheritance ended up at the center of the nation's later religious disaster.

Dan's story reads like a slow-motion warning. A single early act of unfaithfulness, choosing a convenient conquest over the harder obedience God had assigned, compounded over generations. Even from a military point of view, the choice was unwise; Israel's later enemies, Assyria and Babylon, both came from the north, and Dan would have been among the first cities to fall. It is striking that when the tribes of Israel are listed in Revelation 7, Dan is not among them. We should be careful not to read too much into that omission, but it fits the pattern of a tribe that turned away from what God had given.

We too have an inheritance, an eternal one, "that can never perish, spoil or fade" (1 Peter 1:4). What God gives is good, and worth holding onto. The easier path that leaves His assignment behind may seem attractive in the moment, but its consequences can reach far into the future.

Then comes one of the most beautiful details in the book of Joshua: "When they had finished dividing the land into its allotted portions, the Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them, as the LORD had commanded. They gave him the town he asked for—Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim. And he built up the town and settled there" (Joshua 19:49–50).

Joshua received his inheritance last. He had led the conquest. He had every right to claim the best land first. Instead, he waited until every tribe had received its portion, and then asked for a modest town in the hill country of his own tribe, which he had to build up himself. The leader served the people before he served himself. That is exactly the kind of leadership Jesus described: "whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:44–45).

Chapter 20 turns to the cities of refuge. God reminded Joshua of what He had commanded through Moses: "Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge... so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood" (Joshua 20:2–3). Someone who had killed another person by accident could flee to one of these cities, explain his case to the elders at the gate, and be protected until he stood trial before the assembly. If he was found innocent of murder, he was to remain there "until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time" (Joshua 20:6), and then he could return home.

Six cities were named: Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem in Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba, which is Hebron, in Judah, west of the Jordan; and Bezer, Ramoth in Gilead, and Golan east of the Jordan (Joshua 20:7–8). They were spread throughout the land so that anyone could reach one quickly. And, as so often in God's law, the protection extended to outsiders: "Any of the Israelites or any foreigner residing among them who killed someone accidentally could flee to these designated cities" (Joshua 20:9).

It is worth noticing that Hebron, Caleb's hard-won city, was one of them. The place where the giants had once lived became a place of refuge.

The cities of refuge were a remarkable provision of mercy within a system of justice. They protected someone who had caused real harm without intending it, and ensured that no one was killed in the heat of grief before the facts were established. Christians have long seen in them a picture of Christ. Hebrews describes believers as those "who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18). And the reality is far greater than the picture. The cities of refuge protected only those who had killed by accident; Christ receives even those who have sinned deliberately. The refugee had to wait for the death of the high priest to go free; our High Priest has already died, and lives forever, so our freedom is immediate and permanent. Whatever you are running from today, there is a refuge.

Chapter 21 describes the towns given to the Levites. It begins with the Levites coming to Eleazar and Joshua and reminding them of God's command: "The LORD commanded through Moses that you give us towns to live in, with pasturelands for our livestock" (Joshua 21:2). The Levites had received no tribal territory, because the Lord Himself was their inheritance. But they needed places to live. And "as the LORD had commanded, the Israelites gave the Levites the following towns and pasturelands out of their own inheritance" (Joshua 21:3).

Notice that each tribe gave from its own inheritance. The Levites' portion came from the generosity of the other tribes, in obedience to God's command. And the Levitical towns were scattered throughout the land, in every tribe's territory: "The

towns of the Levites in the territory held by the Israelites were forty-eight in all, together with their pasturelands" (Joshua 21:41).

Here we see the other half of Jacob's ancient word. Simeon and Levi were both scattered in Israel. Simeon's scattering meant being absorbed into Judah and gradually fading from prominence. But Levi's scattering became a blessing. The Levites were placed in towns throughout every tribe, so that no part of Israel would be without those who served the Lord and taught His Law. Moses had said of Levi, "He teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel" (Deuteronomy 33:10). What had been pronounced as a consequence of sin was redeemed into a means of blessing for the whole nation. God can do that with our failures too.

Among the Levites, the descendants of Aaron the priest received thirteen towns in the territories of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin (Joshua 21:4). Those towns were close to the place God would later choose for His temple in Jerusalem. Long before anyone knew where the temple would stand, God had placed the priestly families nearby.

Then the book of Joshua pauses to sum up everything that had happened: "So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hands. Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled" (Joshua 21:43–45).

This is a magnificent declaration of God's faithfulness. Centuries earlier, God had promised Abraham descendants as

numerous as the stars and a land for them to possess. Seventy people had gone down to Egypt; a nation had come out. And now that nation lived in the land. God had kept His word.

But careful readers may notice a tension. Just a few chapters earlier we read that "there are still very large areas of land to be taken over" (Joshua 13:1), and that various tribes did not drive out the Canaanites. The book of Judges opens with a long list of such failures. How can it be said that every promise was fulfilled?

The answer lies in understanding what God promised. God promised to give Israel the land, and He did. He fought for them and gave them victory whenever they obeyed. He did not promise that any given generation would fully take hold of what He gave, or keep it. What remained unconquered was not a failure of God's promise, but a failure of Israel's obedience. The promise concerns what God gives, not what any generation receives. Once that is clear, Joshua 21 and Judges 1 are not in conflict.

It is also significant how God made His covenant with Abraham in the first place. In Genesis 15, God told Abraham to cut animals in half and lay the pieces opposite each other. In the ancient world, both parties to a covenant would walk between the pieces, as if to say, "May this happen to me if I break this agreement." But when the covenant was made, Abraham was in a deep sleep, and "a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces" (Genesis 15:17). God alone passed through. He bound only Himself.

That pattern runs through the whole Old Testament. Every covenant had a human party who failed to keep his part: Adam, Israel at Sinai, the kings descended from David. God's promise

of an eternal throne to David was true, yet David's descendants failed to live up to it because of their disobedience. The pattern is so consistent that it begins to look like the point. That is why the New Covenant became necessary. God promised through Jeremiah a covenant "not... like the covenant I made with their ancestors... because they broke my covenant," in which He would write His law on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:32–33). The problem to be solved was never the content of God's law, but the heart of the people receiving it.

In Christ, what generations of Israel failed to do has been accomplished. "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:20). Not one of God's good promises to us will fail either. Every one will be fulfilled.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Simeon and Levi were both "scattered" in Israel, but Simeon faded while Levi became a blessing to the whole nation. How has God redeemed a failure or a hard consequence in your life into something that blesses others?
2. The Danites abandoned their difficult God-given inheritance for an easier conquest, and the consequences reached across centuries. Where are you tempted to take an easier path than the one God has given you?
3. Joshua received his inheritance last, after every tribe had been served. What would it look like for you to put others' needs before your own in your family, church, or workplace?

4. The cities of refuge protected those who had killed accidentally until the high priest died. In what ways is Christ a far better refuge? What are you running to Him for today?
5. The Levites' towns came from the generosity of the other tribes. How do you contribute from your own "inheritance" to support those who serve God's people?
6. "Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed." Yet Israel did not take hold of everything God gave. What promises of God are you trusting today, and what might God be calling you to take hold of?

Part Three

Choosing Whom to Serve

Chapter One

Joshua 22–24

The book of Joshua ends not with a battle but with a series of farewells. In chapter 22, Joshua sends the eastern tribes home after years of faithful service, and a misunderstanding nearly leads to civil war. In chapter 23, the aged Joshua gathers Israel's leaders for his final charge. And in chapter 24, he gathers the whole nation at Shechem, retells the story of everything God has done for them, and calls them to choose whom they will serve. Then Joshua dies, and the book closes with three burials.

Chapter 22 opens with Joshua commending the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Years earlier, they had promised Moses that they would cross the Jordan and fight alongside their brothers until the whole land was taken, even though their own inheritance lay east of the river. They had kept that promise. Now Joshua blessed them and sent them home with a charge: "But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Joshua 22:5).

Look at how the verbs pile up: love, walk, keep, hold fast, serve. At the height of Israel's conquests, near the end of his own commission, Joshua's concern was not leadership, management, strategy, or logistics. His concern was that the people remain faithful to the Lord. The word translated "hold fast" is the same word Genesis uses when it says that a man will "be united to his wife" (Genesis 2:24). Faithfulness to God is pictured as a relationship of devoted attachment. It is the same priority Jesus

gave: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). Our success, our jobs, and even our families are important, but they are meant to be outworkings of our faithfulness to God, not substitutes for it.

Then comes a strange episode. On their way home, the eastern tribes "built an imposing altar there by the Jordan" (Joshua 22:10). When the rest of Israel heard about it, "the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them" (Joshua 22:12).

Why such a strong reaction? Israel remembered the Law, which said that sacrifices could be offered only at the one place God would choose: "Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please. Offer them only at the place the LORD will choose" (Deuteronomy 12:13–14). A second altar looked like rebellion, the beginning of a rival worship. And Israel remembered what rebellion had cost them before. The delegation said, "Was not the sin of Peor enough for us?" (Joshua 22:17), recalling the plague that killed twenty-four thousand. And "When Achan son of Zerah was unfaithful in regard to the devoted things, did not wrath come on the whole community of Israel? He was not the only one who died for his sin" (Joshua 22:20). For once, Israel had remembered its history, and it was determined not to let sin spread through the community again.

But before going to war, they sent a delegation led by Phinehas the priest, the same Phinehas whose zeal had turned away God's wrath at Peor. And the eastern tribes explained. The altar was not for sacrifices at all. "We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, 'What do you have to do with the LORD, the God of Israel?'" (Joshua 22:24). They feared that the Jordan River would one day become a spiritual

boundary, and that their children would be cut off from the worship of the Lord. "That is why we said, 'Let us get ready and build an altar—but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.' On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the LORD at his sanctuary" (Joshua 22:26–27).

Phinehas and the leaders were satisfied. "Today we know that the LORD is with us, because you have not been unfaithful to the LORD in this matter" (Joshua 22:31). War was averted by a conversation. And the eastern tribes named the altar "A Witness Between Us—that the LORD is God" (Joshua 22:34).

Phinehas is a remarkable figure. At Peor, he had acted instantly and decisively, and Scripture says his zeal "was credited to him as righteousness for endless generations to come" (Psalm 106:31). Here he was sent out prepared for bloodshed again, yet he took the time to understand the situation fully before acting. His zeal had not changed. What changed was his wisdom in recognizing which moment called for swift action and which called for careful questions. Zeal governed by wisdom returned home not with a story of bloodshed, but with a story of peace.

This chapter holds several lessons for us. First, don't jump to conclusions. Israel assumed the worst, and things were not as they appeared. Notice, too, that Israel's first instinct was to mobilize for war; the delegation came afterward. The good outcome happened in spite of that first instinct, not because of it. Even communities that end up handling conflict well can start by assuming the worst.

Second, there are always two sides to a story. Anyone who has tried to help friends through a conflict knows how each

person's account can sound perfectly justified on its own. "In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines" (Proverbs 18:17). When someone confides in us about a conflict with another person, we need to remember that there is another side we have not heard.

Third, direct conversation is far better than gossip or quiet resentment. Jesus taught, "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you" (Matthew 18:15). Speaking directly to the people involved clears up misunderstandings that talking about them never will.

Fourth, it is wise to consider how our actions may appear to others. The eastern tribes' motives were good, but their choice created a serious misunderstanding. Even in our freedom, we should think about how our choices may be read by others, and be ready to explain them.

And finally, the whole chapter shows a community that takes sin seriously while also taking the time to learn the facts. Both matter.

Chapter 23 records Joshua's farewell to Israel's leaders. "After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then a very old man, summoned all Israel—their elders, leaders, judges and officials" (Joshua 23:1–2). His message echoed the words God had spoken to him at the very beginning of the book: "Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left" (Joshua 23:6).

He warned them not to mix with the nations that remained: "Do not associate with these nations that remain among you; do not invoke the names of their gods or swear by them. You must

not serve them or bow down to them. But you are to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have until now" (Joshua 23:7-8). He reminded them of the source of their victories: "One of you routs a thousand, because the LORD your God fights for you, just as he promised. So be very careful to love the LORD your God" (Joshua 23:10-11). And he warned them of what would happen if they turned away: the nations that remained "will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes" (Joshua 23:13).

Then Joshua said something deeply moving: "Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed" (Joshua 23:14). At the end of a long life, looking back over everything he had seen, from the plagues of Egypt to the walls of Jericho, Joshua could testify that God had kept every word.

Joshua's warning not even to mention the names of the Canaanite gods raises a question about how we pursue knowledge. In our desire for truth, we sometimes feel we need to know everything about everything. But who has the time? And Scripture warns, "Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know" (1 Corinthians 8:2). All truth is God's truth, but not all truth is of equal value. The truth about how to throw a ball is not as significant as the truth about how to please God. We need discernment as well as knowledge. And Scripture ties discernment to practice and to love, not to study alone: "solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (Hebrews 5:14). Paul prayed "that your love may abound more

and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best" (Philippians 1:9–10). Knowing more is not the same as knowing better. The highest truth is God's Word, and our pursuit of every other kind of knowledge should lead us back to it.

Chapter 24 records Joshua's final address, and he delivered it at Shechem, the place where Abraham had first received the promise of the land and built his first altar. Joshua began not with commands but with history. Speaking in God's name, he retold Israel's story from the very beginning: "Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods" (Joshua 24:2).

What a way to begin! Israel's story did not start with a righteous family. It started with idolaters. God called Abraham out of that background by grace. Then Joshua recounted God's acts: giving Isaac to Abraham, sending Moses and Aaron, bringing Israel out of Egypt, parting the sea, defeating the Amorites, turning Balaam's curse into a blessing, and giving them the land. And God said, "So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant" (Joshua 24:13).

Everything they had was a gift. And only after reminding them of that did Joshua call them to respond: "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond

the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:14–15).

Those last words have been painted on walls and carved over doorways for centuries. And notice their order. The call to serve God came after the story of what God had done. Israel was not asked to invent a relationship with God by sheer effort. They were asked to answer the God who had already acted for them.

The people responded with enthusiasm: "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods!" (Joshua 24:16). They retold, in their own words, what God had done, and declared, "We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God" (Joshua 24:18).

But Joshua's reply is startling: "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you" (Joshua 24:19–20).

Why would Joshua say that? He had just called them to choose. Now he told them they were not able to follow through. Perhaps he was exposing the shallowness of an easy verbal commitment. He knew the history of this people, and he knew how quickly enthusiasm could fade. He refused to let a crowd's confident promise take the place of the far harder reality of lasting faithfulness.

Joshua's words also point to something deeper. Left to ourselves, we cannot serve God as He deserves. Paul writes, "The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7–8). Our own

conviction is that God must first give new life by His Spirit before anyone can truly choose Him. Other faithful Christians understand the relationship between human inability and genuine choice differently, holding that God's grace enables a real response that can be accepted or refused. But all agree on what Joshua's words make plain: our ability to serve God is not a native strength we bring to Him. It is a gift He supplies.

The people insisted, "No! We will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:21). So Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:22). And then comes a revealing command: "Now then, throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel" (Joshua 24:23). There were still idols in the camp. Even as they promised to serve the Lord, some of them were holding onto other gods. Their promise had to be matched by action.

What rival loyalties make our own profession of faith easier than its practice? What would it mean for us to throw away the "foreign gods" among us and yield our hearts to the Lord?

"And the people said to Joshua, 'We will serve the LORD our God and obey him'" (Joshua 24:24). Joshua made a covenant with them, recorded the decrees in the Book of the Law of God, and set up a large stone under an oak near the holy place. "'See!' he said to all the people. 'This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us'" (Joshua 24:27).

Then the book ends with three burials. "After these things, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten" (Joshua 24:29). At the beginning of the book,

Moses was called "the servant of the LORD" and Joshua was his aide. Now, at the end of his life, Joshua bears the same title.

What made Joshua the man he became? Scripture gives us a small clue in a verse that is easy to overlook. When Moses met with God in the tent of meeting, "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent" (Exodus 33:11). We usually marvel at the first part of that verse and miss the second. When Moses left, the young Joshua stayed. Like Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, Joshua lingered in God's presence. Years later, when God handed him the hardest assignment of his life, He said, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (Joshua 1:5). Private devotion that no one else witnessed became the foundation for a very public calling. Could there be a message for us in that?

The book then gives a sobering summary: "Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel" (Joshua 24:31). Israel was faithful as long as the generation that had seen God's works was alive. But what would happen when that generation was gone? The book of Judges gives the answer: "After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10). Faith cannot be inherited automatically. Each generation must learn it anew.

The second burial is one of the most moving details in the Old Testament: "And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the

sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem" (Joshua 24:32). Centuries earlier, as Joseph was dying in Egypt, he made the Israelites swear, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place" (Genesis 50:25). Hebrews counts that request as an act of faith: "By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones" (Hebrews 11:22). Israel carried those bones out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, through forty years in the wilderness, across the Jordan, and through the years of conquest. And now, at last, Joseph was laid to rest in the land of promise, in the very field his father Jacob had bought. God keeps His promises, even across hundreds of years.

And the third burial: "And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim" (Joshua 24:33). The generation that had come out of the wilderness was passing away. The torch was passing to a new generation.

The book of Joshua began with the death of Moses and the charge to be strong and courageous. It ends with the death of Joshua and the charge to choose whom you will serve. Between those two deaths lies the story of God keeping every promise He had made. The only question left was whether Israel would keep theirs.

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. Joshua's final charge to the eastern tribes was not about strategy, but to "love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him

and to serve him." Which of those verbs most needs attention in your life right now?

2. Israel mobilized for war over the altar at the Jordan before asking what it meant. When have you assumed the worst about someone before hearing their side? What does Proverbs 18:17 teach you about handling conflict?
3. Phinehas acted swiftly at Peor but patiently at the Jordan. How can you tell when a situation calls for decisive action and when it calls for careful questions?
4. Joshua began his final address by reminding Israel that their ancestors had worshiped other gods, and that everything they had was a gift. How does remembering God's grace change the way you respond to His call?
5. Joshua told the eager crowd, "You are not able to serve the LORD," and then told them to throw away the foreign gods still among them. What "foreign gods" might you still be holding onto, even while professing to serve the Lord?
6. When Moses left the tent, young Joshua "did not leave the tent." What would it look like for you to linger in God's presence? How might private devotion today prepare you for what God will call you to tomorrow?

Conclusion

The Victory of Faith

The book of Joshua opens with a river at flood stage and closes with three graves in a land of rest, and between them, every promise kept. "Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled" (Joshua 21:45). That is the verdict of the book, and it was reached the hard way: through a river that parted only after the priests' feet were wet, walls that fell only after seven days of apparently pointless marching, a defeat at Ai that taught the cost of hidden sin, a deception at Gibeon that taught the weight of a sworn word, and a slow, uneven settling of the land that exposed how much easier it is to receive a gift than to take hold of it.

If the book has taught us anything, it is that the decisive battles were never really military. The central command of the whole conquest was not "sharpen your swords," but "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night" (Joshua 1:8). Israel won when they trusted and obeyed, whatever the odds. They lost, or stalled, or compromised whenever they leaned on their own judgment: sampling the provisions but not inquiring of the Lord, sparing the Canaanites who seemed more useful alive. And standing near the head of the book, sword drawn, is the commander of the Lord's army, correcting the question we still instinctively ask. Not "Is God for us or against us?" but "Are we for Him?" He does not enlist in our campaigns; we surrender to His.

And grace ran through the conquest like a scarlet cord. A Canaanite prostitute believed a report and was grafted into the ancestry of the Messiah. An oath obtained by fraud was honored

by God with hailstones and a lengthened day. A land was given to a people whose later history would prove beyond argument that they had not earned it. Even the book's great summary carries a forward lean. God's giving was perfect, but Israel's grasping was not, and the gap between them is the space into which the New Covenant would one day be spoken: "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33). What the old covenant required, the new one supplies.

But that is to run ahead. The book ends on a knife's edge that its first readers would have felt keenly: "Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him" (Joshua 24:31). Faithfulness, one lifetime deep. The stone of witness was standing at Shechem; the Law was written and read; the people had answered, "We will serve the LORD." Joshua, who knew them, had answered back, "You are not able." Both statements were about to be tested in the generations that had not seen Jericho fall and had not stood at the covenant renewals, the generations for whom the memorial stones would be silent unless someone told them the story. Whether anyone did, and what happened when the telling stopped, is the burden of the book of Judges. Joshua has shown us the victory of faith. Judges will show us, with equal honesty, what happens when God's people forget.

For us, the lesson of Joshua is both a warning and an encouragement. The same God who parted the Jordan, brought down the walls of Jericho, and kept every promise to Israel has promised to bring His people into their inheritance in Christ. "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:20). Like Israel on the riverbank, we are called to be strong and courageous, to keep God's Word on

our lips and in our hearts, and to choose, every day, whom we will serve. And like Joshua, we can say, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

Appendix

Daily Bible Reading Plan

This is the same daily Bible reading plan we use at dailyqt.org, covering the entire Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, in three hundred sixty-five daily readings. It does not begin on January 1st, and neither must you; begin on whatever date suits you and simply follow the sequence from there. The seven readings that correspond to the chapters of this book, Joshua 1–4 through Joshua 22–24, fall a little over two months into the full sequence, but the complete year-long plan is reprinted here, as it is in every volume of this series, so that wherever you are in your reading you always have the whole plan close at hand. Check off each day's passage as you complete it, and feel no need to catch up all at once if you fall behind by a day or a week; simply pick up with the current day's reading. The goal was never a perfect record. It was a daily habit of opening God's Word, kept up faithfully enough, and long enough, that it becomes less a task to complete than simply the shape of an ordinary day.

Date	Passage	Date	Passage
1/10	Gen 1-3	1/11	Gen 4-7
1/12	Gen 8-11	1/13	Gen 12-15
1/14	Gen 16-18	1/15	Gen 19-21
1/16	Gen 22-24	1/17	Gen 25-26
1/18	Gen 27-29	1/19	Gen 30-31
1/20	Gen 32-34	1/21	Gen 35-37
1/22	Gen 38-40	1/23	Gen 41-42
1/24	Gen 43-45	1/25	Gen 46-47
1/26	Gen 48-50	1/27	Ex 1-3

Date	Passage	Date	Passage
1/28	Ex 4-6	1/29	Ex 7-9
1/30	Ex 10-12	1/31	Ex 13-15
2/1	Ex 16-18	2/2	Ex 19-21
2/3	Ex 22-24	2/4	Ex 25-27
2/5	Ex 28-29	2/6	Ex 30-32
2/7	Ex 33-35	2/8	Ex 36-38
2/9	Ex 39-40	2/10	Lev 1-4
2/11	Lev 5-7	2/12	Lev 8-10
2/13	Lev 11-13	2/14	Lev 14-15
2/15	Lev 16-18	2/16	Lev 19-21
2/17	Lev 22-23	2/18	Lev 24-25
2/19	Lev 26-27	2/20	Nu 1-2
2/21	Nu 3-4	2/22	Nu 5-6
2/23	Nu 7	2/24	Nu 8-10
2/25	Nu 11-13	2/26	Nu 14-15
2/27	Nu 16-17	2/28	Nu 18-20
3/1	Nu 21-22	3/2	Nu 23-25
3/3	Nu 26-27	3/4	Nu 28-30
3/5	Nu 31-32	3/6	Nu 33-34
3/7	Nu 35-36	3/8	Dt 1-2
3/9	Dt 3-4	3/10	Dt 5-7
3/11	Dt 8-10	3/12	Dt 11-13
3/13	Dt 14-16	3/14	Dt 17-20
3/15	Dt 21-23	3/16	Dt 24-27
3/17	Dt 28-29	3/18	Dt 30-31
3/19	Dt 32-34	3/20	Jos 1-4
3/21	Jos 5-8	3/22	Jos 9-11
3/23	Jos 12-15	3/24	Jos 16-18
3/25	Jos 19-21	3/26	Jos 22-24
3/27	Jdg 1-2	3/28	Jdg 3-5
3/29	Jdg 6-7	3/30	Jdg 8-9
3/31	Jdg 10-12	4/1	Jdg 13-15
4/2	Jdg 16-18	4/3	Jdg 19-21
4/4	Ruth	4/5	1 Sa 1-3
4/6	1 Sa 4-8	4/7	1 Sa 9-12
4/8	1 Sa 13-14	4/9	1 Sa 15-17
4/10	1 Sa 18-20	4/11	1 Sa 21-24

Date	Passage	Date	Passage
4/12	1 Sa 25-27	4/13	1 Sa 28-31
4/14	2 Sa 1-3	4/15	2 Sa 4-7
4/16	2 Sa 8-12	4/17	2 Sa 13-15
4/18	2 Sa 16-18	4/19	2 Sa 19-21
4/20	2 Sa 22-24	4/21	1 Ki 1-2
4/22	1 Ki 3-5	4/23	1 Ki 6-7
4/24	1 Ki 8-9	4/25	1 Ki 10-11
4/26	1 Ki 12-14	4/27	1 Ki 15-17
4/28	1 Ki 18-20	4/29	1 Ki 21-22
4/30	2 Ki 1-3	5/1	2 Ki 4-5
5/2	2 Ki 6-8	5/3	2 Ki 9-11
5/4	2 Ki 12-14	5/5	2 Ki 15-17
5/6	2 Ki 18-19	5/7	2 Ki 20-22
5/8	2 Ki 23-25	5/9	1 Ch 1-2
5/10	1 Ch 3-5	5/11	1 Ch 6
5/12	1 Ch 7-8	5/13	1 Ch 9-11
5/14	1 Ch 12-14	5/15	1 Ch 15-17
5/16	1 Ch 18-21	5/17	1 Ch 22-24
5/18	1 Ch 25-27	5/19	1 Ch 28-2 Ch 1
5/20	2 Ch 2-5	5/21	2 Ch 6-8
5/22	2 Ch 9-12	5/23	2 Ch 13-17
5/24	2 Ch 18-20	5/25	2 Ch 21-24
5/26	2 Ch 25-27	5/27	2 Ch 28-31
5/28	2 Ch 32-34	5/29	2 Ch 35-36
5/30	Ezr 1-3	5/31	Ezr 4-7
6/1	Ezr 8-10	6/2	Neh 1-3
6/3	Neh 4-6	6/4	Neh 7
6/5	Neh 8-9	6/6	Neh 10-11
6/7	Neh 12-13	6/8	Esth 1-5
6/9	Esth 6-10	6/10	Job 1-4
6/11	Job 5-7	6/12	Job 8-10
6/13	Job 11-13	6/14	Job 14-16
6/15	Job 17-20	6/16	Job 21-23
6/17	Job 24-28	6/18	Job 29-31
6/19	Job 32-34	6/20	Job 35-37
6/21	Job 38-39	6/22	Job 40-42
6/23	Ps 1-8	6/24	Ps 9-16

Date	Passage	Date	Passage
6/25	Ps 17-20	6/26	Ps 21-25
6/27	Ps 26-31	6/28	Ps 32-35
6/29	Ps 36-39	6/30	Ps 40-45
7/1	Ps 46-50	7/2	Ps 51-57
7/3	Ps 58-65	7/4	Ps 66-69
7/5	Ps 70-73	7/6	Ps 74-77
7/7	Ps 78-79	7/8	Ps 80-85
7/9	Ps 86-89	7/10	Ps 90-95
7/11	Ps 96-102	7/12	Ps 103-105
7/13	Ps 106-107	7/14	Ps 108-114
7/15	Ps 115-118	7/16	Ps 119:1-88
7/17	Ps 119:89-176	7/18	Ps 120-132
7/19	Ps 133-139	7/20	Ps 140-145
7/21	Ps 146-150	7/22	Prov 1-3
7/23	Prov 4-6	7/24	Prov 7-9
7/25	Prov 10-12	7/26	Prov 13-15
7/27	Prov 16-18	7/28	Prov 19-21
7/29	Prov 22-23	7/30	Prov 24-26
7/31	Prov 27-29	8/1	Prov 30-31
8/2	Ecc 1-4	8/3	Ecc 5-8
8/4	Ecc 9-12	8/5	Ss 1-8
8/6	Isa 1-4	8/7	Isa 5-8
8/8	Isa 9-12	8/9	Isa 13-17
8/10	Isa 18-22	8/11	Isa 23-27
8/12	Isa 28-30	8/13	Isa 31-35
8/14	Isa 36-41	8/15	Isa 42-44
8/16	Isa 45-48	8/17	Isa 49-53
8/18	Isa 54-58	8/19	Isa 59-63
8/20	Isa 64-66	8/21	Jer 1-3
8/22	Jer 4-6	8/23	Jer 7-9
8/24	Jer 10-13	8/25	Jer 14-17
8/26	Jer 18-22	8/27	Jer 23-25
8/28	Jer 26-29	8/29	Jer 30-31
8/30	Jer 32-34	8/31	Jer 35-37
9/1	Jer 38-41	9/2	Jer 42-45
9/3	Jer 46-48	9/4	Jer 49-50
9/5	Jer 51-52	9/6	Lam 1:1-3:36

Date	Passage	Date	Passage
9/7	Lam 3:37-5:22	9/8	Eze 1-4
9/9	Eze 5-8	9/10	Eze 9-12
9/11	Eze 13-15	9/12	Eze 16-17
9/13	Eze 18-20	9/14	Eze 21-22
9/15	Eze 23-24	9/16	Eze 25-27
9/17	Eze 28-30	9/18	Eze 31-33
9/19	Eze 34-36	9/20	Eze 37-39
9/21	Eze 40-42	9/22	Eze 43-45
9/23	Eze 46-48	9/24	Dan 1-3
9/25	Dan 4-6	9/26	Dan 7-9
9/27	Dan 10-12	9/28	Hos 1-7
9/29	Hos 8-14	9/30	Joel
10/1	Amos 1-5	10/2	Amos 6-9
10/3	Ob-Jonah	10/4	Micah
10/5	Nahum	10/6	Hab-Zeph
10/7	Haggai 1-2	10/8	Zech 1-7
10/9	Zech 8-14	10/10	Mal 1-4
10/11	Mat 1-4	10/12	Mat 5-6
10/13	Mat 7-8	10/14	Mat 9-10
10/15	Mat 11-12	10/16	Mat 13-14
10/17	Mat 15-17	10/18	Mat 18-19
10/19	Mat 20-21	10/20	Mat 22-23
10/21	Mat 24-25	10/22	Mat 26
10/23	Mat 27-28	10/24	Mark 1-3
10/25	Mark 4-5	10/26	Mark 6-7
10/27	Mark 8-9	10/28	Mark 10-11
10/29	Mark 12-13	10/30	Mark 14
10/31	Mark 15-16	11/1	Luke 1
11/2	Luke 2-3	11/3	Luke 4-5
11/4	Luke 6-7	11/5	Luke 8-9
11/6	Luke 10-11	11/7	Luke 12-13
11/8	Luke 14-16	11/9	Luke 17-18
11/10	Luke 19-20	11/11	Luke 21-22
11/12	Luke 23-24	11/13	John 1-2
11/14	John 3-4	11/15	John 5-6
11/16	John 7-8	11/17	John 9-10
11/18	John 11-12	11/19	John 13-15

Date	Passage	Date	Passage
11/20	John 16-18	11/21	John 19-21
11/22	Acts 1-3	11/23	Acts 4-6
11/24	Acts 7-8	11/25	Acts 9-10
11/26	Acts 11-13	11/27	Acts 14-15
11/28	Acts 16-17	11/29	Acts 18-20
11/30	Acts 21-23	12/1	Acts 24-26
12/2	Acts 27-28	12/3	Rom 1-3
12/4	Rom 4-7	12/5	Rom 8-10
12/6	Rom 11-13	12/7	Rom 14-16
12/8	1 Cor 1-4	12/9	1 Cor 5-8
12/10	1 Cor 9-11	12/11	1 Cor 12-14
12/12	1 Cor 15-16	12/13	2 Cor 1-4
12/14	2 Cor 5-9	12/15	2 Cor 10-13
12/16	Gal 1-3	12/17	Gal 4-6
12/18	Eph 1-3	12/19	Eph 4-6
12/20	Phi 1-4	12/21	Col 1-4
12/22	1 Thess 1-5	12/23	2 Thess 1-3
12/24	1 Tim 1-6	12/25	2 Tim 1-4
12/26	Titus-Phm	12/27	Heb 1-6
12/28	Heb 7-10	12/29	Heb 11-13
12/30	James	12/31	1 Pe
1/1	2 Pe	1/2	1 John
1/3	2 John-Jude	1/4	Rev 1-3
1/5	Rev 4-8	1/6	Rev 9-12
1/7	Rev 13-16	1/8	Rev 17-19
1/9	Rev 20-22		

About the Author

Eugene Han is the founder of dailyqt.org, an online community where readers have shared daily reflections on Scripture for more than a decade, following the reading plan printed in this book. He has taught Sunday School classes at First Baptist Church in Dallas for many years, and much of the material in *The Daily Quiet Time Reflections Series* was first discussed aloud in those classrooms. He previously worked at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health, and he has written books on personal finance and biblical theology as well as devotional works. He and his wife, Chi, live in Dallas, where their family runs a Taekwondo school together.

The Daily Quiet Time Reflections Series walks through the entire Bible, book by book, in daily readings designed to be read alongside an open Bible. More resources, including the daily readings and audio reflections, are available at dailyqt.org.