

JOSHUA OVERVIEW –

The book of Joshua begins where the book of Deuteronomy left off. It is a book of **Transition**. The new generation of Israelites is gathered in the plains of Moab just across the Jordan River from the Promised Land and the key city of Jericho. They are preparing to cross over the river and enter Canaan to eradicate its inhabitants according to God's command and take possession of their promised inheritance. They have mourned the loss of their respected leader Moses and are ready to rally behind the new leadership of Joshua.

As I tackle this book of Joshua I feel like one of those contestants on the Voice or American Idol where they choose to sing a song that was made famous by one of the judges – quite a daunting task. You might remember that Dr. Harmon has written a commentary on Joshua based on his sermon series delivered from this pulpit . . . so I will offer my insights recognizing that I am standing within the shadow of his expertise. We are blessed to sit under the ministry of such a faithful expositor of God's Word.

First, just a mention about the historical and geographic movement of the story line of the people of Israel through the first 17 historical books of the OT. We have just finished studying the Pentateuch – the 5 books of the Law. Only 3 of the 5 books really moved the plot line forward: Genesis, Exodus and Numbers. Leviticus and Deuteronomy were more supplemental and informational. Now the nation is going to move out once again as we track through to the Period of the Conquest, the Judges, the United Kingdom, the Divided Kingdom all the way to the post-exilic period after the Babylonian Captivity with only the 4 books of Ruth, 1&2 Chronicles, and Esther being supplemental. The 8 books beginning with Joshua that cover Israel's remaining history cover a time span of about 1000 years from the 14th to the 4th century B.C.

Authorship and Title:

Chuck Swindoll: Who Wrote the Book?

The book's primary figure gives it its title. Joshua means "*Yahweh saves*," an appropriate name for the man who led Israel, under God's command, to victorious conquest of the Promised Land. Scholars believe that Joshua himself or a scribe under his direction penned most of the book. Early chapters include firsthand experiences (the NIV uses the pronouns "*we*" and "*us*" in **Joshua 5:1, 6**, for example) and military details worthy of being known and recorded by a general. **Joshua 24:26** refers to Joshua writing a portion of the book himself. After Joshua's death, the high priests Eleazar or Phinehas may have supplemented some material in this book that alludes to events after the conquest (**15:13–19; 19:47; 24:29–33**).

So we are immediately reminded that the **Commander in Chief** of God's troops is actually the Lord – Jesus is the one who conquers our enemies and gives us the victory. Joshua is simply his human instrument.

(1:1-5) Mission of Joshua

"Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying, Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving

to them, to the sons of Israel. ³ Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. ⁴ From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun, will be your territory. ⁵ No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.”

The boundaries of the Promised Land are given here – a very large chunk of territory that will need to be apportioned out.

The Assurance of God’s Presence is not a passive thing – as if God stands by and watches us fail. It is an Active Presence that facilitates our success.

Joshua is presented as a **type of Christ**. It is important to recognize that the great OT leaders of Moses, Joshua, David, etc. are all presented as types of Christ who is the Head of the Church. They are not types of local pastors. Even though the lessons we learn from their leadership all **apply** to how Christ’s undershepherds need to perform their duties with authority delegated from Christ. In other words we must never lose sight of the invisible but very real leadership of Jesus Christ over every aspect of God’s kingdom agenda. It is so easy to place our trust in human leaders rather than in the God who is accomplishing our victory.

Big Idea: Claiming God’s promises for **spiritual victory** requires engaging and conquering the enemy by grace through faith.

This is a book about **spiritual victory in this life** – not about reaching the rest of heaven in eternity. A key to understanding the book is defining what the **rest of Canaan** involves. Some have suggested that crossing the Jordan River into Canaan is parallel to entering into heaven. But there will be no more enemies for us to face and conquer when we reach glory. There will be no more giants in fortified cities to threaten our peace and prosperity. The victory spoken of in Joshua is one of claiming and appropriating by faith the victory the Lord has already provided for us in this life. How sad that so many Christians are living defeated lives. Maybe you are struggling today with really experiencing the victory that the Apostle Paul talks about in **Romans 6-8**. Yes we still struggle with indwelling sin. *But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [1 Cor. 15:57] We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us* (Rom. 8:37). So this is a very **practical book** for our sanctification.

Quick Summary of the book:

Spiritual Victory is the great theme of the Book of Joshua as God fulfills His covenant promise to lead Abraham’s descendants into possession of the promised land of Canaan despite tremendous obstacles and powerful enemies. The people under Joshua’s leadership needed to engage the enemy by trusting fully in the Lord and turning away from sin. The distribution of the conquered land reminds us of the spiritual rest that comes to God’s people as they enjoy the blessings of victory. This account stands in contrast to the Book of Numbers which highlighted the failure and the wandering in the wilderness of a people who did not inherit the blessing because of unbelief. Consecration is the essential preparation for spiritual conflict. Victory gained must still be maintained by an ongoing commitment of faith and obedience.

The importance of Choosing Life –

- That is how Deuteronomy ended with a challenge from Moses as they prepare to enter the Promised Land on their mission to conquer and possess it
Deut. 30:19-20 *"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, ²⁰ by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."*
- That is how Joshua will end with a challenge issued after the successful conquest of the land – **Josh. 24:15** *"And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

The Structure could not be more simple – 24 chapters – divided right in half

- I. (**Chaps. 1-12**) Conquering the Land – Engaging and Eliminating the Enemies – Preparation and Warfare
- II. (**Chaps. 13-24**) Dividing up the Land and Settling it

This simple structure is supported by looking at the parallel closing verses of each of the major 2 sections – clarifying what God is accomplishing

Purpose of Book:

11:23 – last verse of the conquest section of the land

"So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war."

21:43 – last verse of distribution section

"So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it."

Demonstrates the **faithfulness of God** to his covenant promises to Abraham and the patriarchs; This fulfillment was crucial – 3 things make up a nation:

- common people – descendants of Abraham through the promised son Isaac
- defined constitution – clearly expounded in Deuteronomy
- possession of their own land – 3rd aspect of their nationhood now realized.

Timeframe:

- One month involved before crossing into the land – March to April of 1405 B.C. – right after the death of Moses
- 7 Year period of conquering the land – 1405–1398 B.C – not an easy task.
Caleb reported to be 85 years old by the time of the completion of the conquest (**14:10**);

There will still pockets of resistance remaining; areas where the Israelites had not been aggressive enough in claiming their inheritance

- 18 year period involved in settling the land – 1398–1380 B.C. -- when Joshua dies (110 years old)

We will attempt to work our way through the book this morning, chapter by chapter according to a somewhat expanded outline (spending more time on the first half of the book – **Chaps. 1-12**). We will touch on some of the major highlights of each chapter.

I. (1-5) ENGAGING THE ENEMY — ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

Spiritual, Moral, Physical and Military Preparation for the Conquest

II. (6-12) ELIMINATING THE ENEMY – TAKING POSSESSION OF THE PROMISED LAND

Joshua will lead 3 major campaigns – Victory will be achieved by faith and obedience rather than by military superiority or skillful tactics

- A. **6-9** Center Campaign – slices land in half – prevents any powerful Canaanite coalition; brilliant military tactic
- B. **10** Southern Campaign
- C. **11** Northern Campaign
- D. **12** Summary – will of Canaanites broken; major pockets of resistance conquered

III. (13-22) EARMARKING THE PROMISED LAND FOR ITS DIVINELY INTENDED PURPOSE – DISTRIBUTING IT AMONG THE TRIBES

[skip over most of this section]

- A. **13** – Trans Jordan property to 2.5 tribes on other side of Jordan River
- B. **14-15** -- Judah = crucial central tribe – Jesus would come from Judah – given significant focus; Jerusalem and Bethlehem in this territory
- C. **16-17** -- 2 sons of Joseph – Ephraim and Manasseh
- D. **18-19** -- other 7 tribes
- E. **20** – 6 Cities of Refuge
- F. **21** – 48 Cities for Levites

(23-24) EPILOGUE -- EXHORTING THE NATION OF ISREAL ONE FINAL TIME TO CONTINUED COVENANT OBEDIENCE

I. (1-5) ENGAGING THE ENEMY — ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

A. (**Chap. 1**) Commission to Go to War – Transition from Moses to Joshua
CLAIMING GOD’S PROMISES FOR SPIRITUAL VICTORY REQUIRES A COMMITMENT TO COURAGE AND OBEDIENCE

Once they have crossed the Jordan River, they are fully committed; no turning back ...no calling the rescue helicopters for a quick extraction ... God is not going to part the waters and facilitate their retreat ... Victory or Death ... those are the options.

1. Divine Charge and Reassurance (1:5-9)

"No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷ Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. ⁸ This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Characteristics necessary for victory: bravery, valor, fearlessness, heroism, confidence, nerve, guts, grit, backbone
Engaging the enemy on the spiritual battlefield ... that takes courage!
How can God command courage?

Presence of the Lord with us guarantees our success – cf. the importance of the Shekinah Glory and the ark of the covenant – cf. the Incarnation of Christ as He comes to dwell among His people – God with us – and then sends us His Holy Spirit to indwell and empower us

Attention to the Word of God is our key resource – track this throughout the book

2. Everybody Must Pull Their Weight – No Slackers (1:12-15)

Some people have trouble catching the vision --
Gives a reminder to the Trans Jordan tribes – give priority to fighting with the nation; then you can go possess your land

3. Commitment to Obey God's Appointed Leadership Unconditionally (1:16-18)

Conclusion: *"ONLY BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS"* Repeating of this key charge

B. (Chap. 2) Avoiding the Grasshopper Mentality – The Mission of the Two Spies

We talked about this danger in the earlier account in Numbers of the first mission of the spies – where only Joshua and Caleb brought back a positive report. Here we have the account of Rahab providentially hiding the spies so they could complete their mission.

Grasshopper Mentality = that mindset that sees obstacles as Giants and ourselves as powerless grasshoppers.

GOD ASSURES HIS PEOPLE OF VICTORY BY EXPOSING THE FEAR AND
DEFEATIST ATTITUDE OF OUR ENEMIES
(HERE HE USES A PROPHETIC PROSTITUTE = RAHAB)

We are not the ones who should be in fear and trembling. The victory has been won for us; Satan was defeated at the cross. Our enemies know that they cannot stand against the power of the Almighty. They are ready to be driven out. We must step out in faith and take the land that has been promised to us.

SPIRITUAL RECONNAISSANCE: SWOT ANALYSIS – Jericho a strategic city on the crossroads of important trade routes – guarded by a 30’ high wall - in fact a double wall --- 12 feet between the thinner outer wall and thicker inner wall

STRENGTHS / WEAKNESSES / OPPORTUNITIES / THREATS – I used to be in charge of performing these in my business management role -- whether with the Caterpillar dealership or with Johnson & Towers – we didn’t just try to grow our business in haphazard fashion – we had limited resources and needed to deploy them strategically – make a plan and work the plan

How did they end up in the house of Rahab? Providence of God – a place where it would not be unusual to have strangers coming and going

Moral Problem – Was it legitimate for Rahab to lie in order to protect the spies from Jericho’s soldiers?

- Some people answer No and claim that such lying is always wrong
- But look at how the NT Scriptures commend Rahab as a model of Gentile faith
 - o Commended for her faith in welcoming and protecting the spies in **Heb. 11:31**
“By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace”
 - o Commended for her model of faith in action; living faith in **James 2:25**
“And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?”
 - o Commended most importantly by being included in the royal line of Joseph – **Matt. 1:5** – amazing grace of God to so elevate this former prostitute
Establishing the legal right of Jesus to be the promised Messiah of the Seed of David; Her descendants became the kings of Israel and Judah!
- I would argue that in times of war and spying there is a legitimate need for deception –
 - o How would you respond if enemies came into your home looking for your daughters – Oh they are hiding in the attic, let me get them for you??
 - o What about deception in sports – When the QB fakes a handoff on a play action pass, does he call out: Just a fake .. I am actually planning to pass the ball
 - o I don’t think this legitimizes an entire mindset of situation ethics

2:8-11 Insight into the Victory God would Provide

“Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, ⁹ and said to the men, ‘I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the

LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”

C. **(Chap. 3) Avoiding the Victim Mentality – Crossing the Jordan**

STEPPING OUT IN FAITH SEEMS RISKY BUT IS THE ONLY COURSE OF ACTION THAT ALLOWS THE LIVING GOD TO WORK ON OUR BEHALF

Chapters 3-4 belong together – both discuss the crossing of the Jordan River – reminiscent of the crossing of the Red Sea earlier.

To achieve spiritual victory in our Christian walk we must avoid **the Victim Mentality --**

3 Manifestations of a Victim Mentality: (Instead of a Victor Mentality) – children of Israel were locked into these types of negative thought patterns as they wandered for 40 years in the wilderness ... missing out on God’s best for them –

1) Playing the **Beat Yourself Up Game (Woe is Me Game)** -- Mindset that bad things are destined to happen to you – expectation that things will go wrong; self-pity party
We aren’t going to have anything to drink – We aren’t going to have anything to eat ...
God has led us out into this wilderness and forgotten all about us ...
Meanwhile, God is performing one spectacular miracle after another to demonstrate His glory and to show the people His Providential love and provision for them.

2) Playing the **Blame Game** -- Mindset that it is not ultimately your fault for your bad lot in life – blaming environment or someone else; never facing your own responsibility
– Placed the blame on Moses and Aaron – determined to appoint new leaders that would take them safely back to bondage in Egypt.

3) Playing the **Bitterness Game** – sense of resignation; giving up
“*Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!*”

Stepping out in Faith is the only answer to the Victim Mentality

4 INITIATIVES IN STEPPING OUT IN FAITH

1. (:1) PUT IT IN GEAR WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT --

“Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and he and all the sons of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and they lodged there before they crossed.”

2. (:2-6) PURSUE THE PRESENCE OF GOD -- FAITH RALLIES AROUND THE PRESENCE OF GOD – COUNTING ON HIS BLESSING – STAYING FOCUSED ON HIM

“When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God with the Levitical priests carrying it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.”

(:5) Consecration Precedes Any Demonstration of God's Power

"Then Joshua said to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.'"

3. (:7-13) PROVE THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE POWER OF GOD -- FAITH THAT IS WILLING TO TAKE GREAT RISKS WILL SEE DRAMATIC RESULTS -- The Demonstration of God's Awesome Power

"And it shall come about when the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, and the waters which are flowing down from above shall stand in one heap."

4.(:14-17) PERSEVERE IN ORDER TO FULLY CARRY OUT GOD'S PLAN

I like the worship song from Singspiration Music:

*Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?
God specializes in things thought impossible –
He does the things others cannot do.*

Review:

- Avoid the Grasshopper Mentality
- Avoid the Victim Mentality
- Now:

D. (Chap. 4) Avoiding the Bigshot Mentality – Commemorating Spiritual Milestones ESTABLISHING PHYSICAL MEMORIALS TO SPIRITUAL MILESTONES REINFORCES THE REALITY OF GOD'S POWER IN OUR LIVES AND ENHANCES OUR WORSHIP

The Big Shot Mentality = looking back at our past experience and giving ourselves too much credit instead of giving God all the glory – especially dangerous for spiritual leaders. We love to cultivate a hero worship type of mentality – look at all the memorials we erect to key leaders (usually after they have passed away).

Why has the Lord ordained that we practice the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? We need visual reminders of spiritual truths.

2 Special Stone Monuments:

- 1) **Stones of Burial** – set up in the middle of the Jordan River (:8)
- 2) **Stones of Resurrection** – set up on the west bank in Gilgal (:3)

Leaving a Legacy for the next generation of God's saving Power

Gives you the opportunity to answer the question: *"What do these signs mean?"*

Perhaps you have heard the story of the little boy who asked his father, "How tall is the Eiffel Tower?" His father said, "I don't know, son; I don't have any idea." The boy said,

"How far is it from here to China?" His dad said, "I just don't know, son." "Well, how deep is the deepest part of the ocean?" His father said, "I really don't have any idea." The little boy said, "Daddy, how-oh never mind." His dad said, "That's all right, son. Ask questions. It's the only way you can get answers!"

What God has done in the past for others, He can do in the present for you:

4:23 – the nation was never to forget these 2 great miracles that God accomplished for them:

“For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the Lord your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed.”

4:24 – Personal Application

1. Impressing our Enemies and Witnessing to the World: Reinforcing the Reality of God’s Power in Our Lives

“that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty”

2. Enhancing our Worship and Commitment to God’s Authority in our lives

“so that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”

E. **(Chap. 5)** First Things First – Stepping Out in Faith Requires Submission to the Sign of the Covenant

MAKING HOLINESS AND WORSHIP TOP PRIORITY PREPARE GOD’S PEOPLE FOR VICTORY IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

3 episodes in this chapter that involve spiritual preparation and consecration for Conquest:

1) Ceremony of circumcision – the sign of God’s covenant with His people (:2-9)

Doug Goins: Imagine yourself as an Israeli soldier who has just been circumcised, waiting to get better, looking at this city in front of you, and thinking, "Why couldn't we have done this on the other side of the river? We can't move for a few days, and if they come after us, we're sitting ducks." It was a tremendous act of faith to remain in their places, waiting to heal. Joshua had to exercise faith in performing this amazing act on all these men. The people had to wait, obey the Lord, and trust him even though they were weak, in pain, and vulnerable to attack at this time. But the spiritual reality is that in weakness they were made strong.

2) Celebration of Passover (:10-12)

Kenneth Gangel: The celebration of Passover was important because the Israelites needed a reminder of God's commitment to them. Their dramatic and miraculous deliverance from Egypt provided a powerful demonstration of God's love for the nation and his intention to settle them in the promised land. Since most of the Israelites present were not even born at the time of the exodus, this memorial celebration became crucial.

Then their diet was upgraded (v. 11-12) and they started to eat the first fruits of the Promised Land.

3) Vision of the Commander In Chief (:13-15)

“Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, ‘Are you for us or for our adversaries?’¹⁴ And he said, ‘No, rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the LORD.’ [Seems like a strange answer] And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, ‘What has my lord to say to his servant?’¹⁵ And the captain of the LORD's host said to Joshua, ‘Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.’ And Joshua did so.”

cf. Moses at burning bush; preincarnate theophany – appearance of Christ prior to His incarnation

This will not ultimately be a conflict between the Israelites and the Canaanites ... it is the Lord Himself who is in charge and who will win the conflict as we submit to His leadership. It is the Lord's team that we must choose to align ourselves with.

II. (6-12) ELIMINATING THE ENEMY – TAKING POSSESSION OF THE PROMISED LAND

A. (Chap. 6) Central Campaign Begins -- Faith Celebrates Victory Before the Walls Even Fall **WHEN PROPERLY PREPPED FOR BATTLE, GOD'S ARMY VANQUISHES ITS FOES BY A SIMPLE VICTORY SHOUT THAT UNLEASHES SUPERNATURAL POWER AND TOPPLES STRONGHOLDS**

- 1) (:1-5) Unorthodox Battle Plan – essentially a ritual ceremony – a victory parade demonstrating faith in the Lord alone
 - Jericho a sinful city and a strategic city
 - 6 days of obedient repetition; 1 day of intensified activity
 - Prominence of the ark of the covenant and the ministry of the priests
 - Preservation of Rahab and her family (v. 17, 22-25)
 - Utter destruction (v. 21)
 - Exaltation of the Captain of our salvation (:27)
 - “So the LORD was with Joshua, and his [Joshua's] fame was in all the land.”

B. (Chap. 7) Sin Snatches Defeat From the Jaws of Victory **THE MOMENTUM OF DEFEAT SNOWBALLS UNTIL RENEWED CONSECRATION DEALS WITH THE SIN IN OUR MIDST**

- The sin of Achan leads to surprising defeat at Ai
- The anger of God
- The judgment against Israel
- The initial wrong response on the part of Joshua – making false assumptions
- Need for Renewed Consecration

God's response might seem like **overkill**; we recoil at reality and severity of God's holy justice; we might tend to excuse Achan; maybe God should give the poor guy a break; commands of God clearly communicated; items were banned without slightest ambiguity; Achan rationalized his disobedience; you cannot allow sin in the camp; don't trifle with God's holiness; you reap what you sow; Do I have any idols under my tent?

Chuck Swindoll: Four lessons from **chapter 7**:

- (1) Surprising defeats can often be traced back to secret sins.
- (2) Very private sins can lead to very public consequences.
- (3) Temptation's lies can blind us to reality and deafen us to consequences.
- (4) Sweeping acts of disobedience call for severe responses of discipline.

A different kind of memorial of stones (**v. 26**)

"And they raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor [= trouble] to this day."

C. (Chap. 8) Regaining Lost Ground – the Spirit Succeeds Where the Flesh Failed
Conquest of Ai

OUR MERCIFUL GOD STANDS READY TO LEAD US INTO VICTORY
(WHERE PREVIOUSLY WE HAVE FAILED) BY ENCOURAGING US TO
COURAGE AND FAITH IN OBEYING HIS BATTLE PLAN AND ALLOWING
HIM TO BLESS INSTEAD OF CURSE

FOLLOWING GOD'S BATTLE PLAN GRANTS VICTORY WHERE
PREVIOUSLY THERE HAD BEEN DEFEAT

Vs. 24-25 – How can God Command Total Annihilation of an Entire City?

Many people consider this to be a serious moral problem.

- A holy war – commanded by God – not Joshua's idea
- Cup of iniquity overflowing; Mercy exhausted – immoral and depraved religion
- Foreshadowing of final judgment and destruction
- Israelites function as instruments of God's judgment
- Prevent contamination of God's people (cf. surgeon cutting out cancer)
- Concept of Harem – everything devoted to the Lord

11:20 – most severe verse in the book – God presents Himself as central actor—story of the God who conquers

"For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to meet Israel in battle in order that he might utterly destroy them, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses."

Question: Why does God let any of us continue to live?

(:34-35) stood and listened to Joshua reread to them all of the law of Moses –
powerful time of teaching

D. **(Chap. 9) Rash Commitments – Deception Takes Advantage of Our Limited Perception** -- Spiritual Victory is Compromised When We Make Rash Commitments Apart from Seeking the Guidance of the Lord

SPIRITUAL VICTORY IS COMPROMISED WHEN WE MAKE RASH
COMMITMENTS APART FROM SEEKING THE GUIDANCE OF THE LORD

Crafty scheme concocted by the inhabitants of Gibeon to deceive the Israelites and escape God's judgment. Presented evidence to back up their story.

Crucial mistake (:14) *they did not ask for the counsel of the Lord.*

Went ahead and presumptuously entered into a peace treaty that would come back to bite them later on.

Joshua did his best to try to mitigate a bad situation – cursed them by consigning them to act as slaves by making them woodcutters and water carriers (vs. 27).

E. **(Chap. 10) Southern Campaign** -- Unlimited Divine Weapons and Resources – We Can Rout Our Enemies By Relying on the Lord's Unlimited Weapons and Resources

- DEADLY TARGETED HAIL (vs. 11)

“And it came about as they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, that the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword.”

- MIRACULOUS EXTENDED DAYLIGHT (vs. 13-14)

“So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. ¹⁴ And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.”

Coalition of 5 kings launch campaign against Gibeon; Joshua keeps his word – stands by the treaty he had made with Gibeonites despite their deception

Documents the victories the Lord gave Joshua in the southern campaign.

Theme: vs. 42 *“And Joshua captured all these kings and their lands at one time, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.”*

Conquest Isn't Over Until It's Over

WHEN GOD CALLS US TO VICTORY WE MUST FINISH OFF THE ENEMY --
GOD GIVES THE VICTORY WHEN HIS PEOPLE UNITE TO ENGAGE THE
ENEMY BEHIND THE LEADERSHIP OF HIS ANOINTED COMMANDER

I hate it in movies when the good guy strikes the bad guy down but then doesn't finish him off.
Next thing you know he rises back up and attacks and you have to defeat him all over again.

F. **(Chap. 11)** Victory over the **Northern Coalition** in Obedience to the Lord's Commands
WE CAN BE CONFIDENT OF VICTORY WHEN WE OBEY GOD'S
COMMANDS AND EXECUTE HIS GAMEPLAN

(:1-3) Impressive Geographic Coalition

"Then it came about, when Jabin king of Hazor heard of it, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon and to the king of Shimron and to the king of Achshaph, 2 and to the kings who were of the north in the hill country, and in the Arabah-- south of Chinneroth and in the lowland and on the heights of Dor on the west-- 3 to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the Hivite at the foot of Hermon in the land of Mizpeh."

(:4-5) Impressive Number of Forces and Sophistication of Weaponry

"And they came out, they and all their armies with them, as many people as the sand that is on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots. 5 So all of these kings having agreed to meet, came and encamped together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel."

(:6) Divine Initiative in Promising Victory

"Then the LORD said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow at this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel; you shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire.'"

(:23) Overall Summary

Joshua recounted a story of contradictions. On the one hand, God gave the land that He had promised to the nation. On the other hand, the people failed to possess the land completely, allowing some inhabitants to remain. God fulfilled His side of the bargain, but the Israelites did not finish the job. The Canaanite peoples became a damaging influence on Israel as years went by.

G. Chap. 12 – Summary of Kings defeated by Israel

III.(13-22) EARMARKING THE PROMISED LAND FOR ITS DIVINELY INTENDED PURPOSE – DISTRIBUTING IT AMONG THE TRIBES

- A. (13:1-7) Joshua's Final Clean-Up Instructions From the Lord – Specific Areas of Canaan Still Needed to be Conquered and Possessed
- B. (13:8-33) Earmarking Land for the Eastern Tribes (Reubenites and Gadites) — Transjordan
- C. (14:1 – 19:51) Earmarking Land for the Western Tribes
- D. (20:1-9) Designation of the 6 Cities of Refuge
 - a person could go for protection if involved in manslaughter but not homicide
- E. (21:1-45) Designation of the 48 Levitical Cities
- F. (22:1-34) Dismissal of Eastern Tribes Back to Their Homes

(23-24) EPILOGUE -- EXHORTING THE NATION OF ISREAL ONE FINAL TIME TO CONTINUED COVENANT OBEDIENCE

A. (**Chap. 23**) JOSHUA'S FAREWELL CHARGE:
STAY FAITHFUL TO THE LORD IF YOU WANT TO ENJOY GOD'S PROMISED BLESSINGS

B. (**Chap. 24**) DECISION TIME – AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE . . .
CONSIDERATION OF COVENANT HISTORY SHOULD PROMPT RENEWAL OF COVENANT COMMITMENT

- (:1-13) REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES IN COVENANT HISTORY
- (:14-24) RENEWAL OF COVENANT COMMITMENT
- (:25-28) RATIFICATION OF COVENANT AFFIRMATION

Almost sounds like Joshua is trying to dissuade the people from making the commitment to serve the Lord. Actually Joshua trying to make sure they understand the seriousness of the choice they are making -- **24:14ff** – We will serve the Lord our God and obey Him.

(:**29-33**) EPILOGUE – ASSOCIATION OF JOSHUA'S BURIAL WITH THOSE OF JOSEPH AND ELEAZAR –
ALL IN THE PROMISED LAND AS A TESTIMONY TO THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

WHY STUDY THIS BOOK?

- To understand the intensity of the spiritual warfare of the believer (both as an individual and corporately as a local church) and what faith steps we need to take to successfully engage the enemy and overcome all obstacles
- To consecrate our hearts and then develop a commitment to courage and obedience in following the Lord's battle plan
- To appreciate that God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ as we step out in faith and trust Him rather than in our own resources
- To learn lessons about spiritual leadership
- To grow in our confidence that God is faithful to keep His promises
- To take our sin seriously in light of the holiness of God who cannot compromise with sin
- To acknowledge God's sovereignty over all the nations and over all the forces that would oppose His kingdom agenda
- To expect God to accomplish great things