

A Study of the Book of Joshua

Course Handout

Primary Resource for this study: *Concordia Commentary: Joshua* by Adolph L. Harstad.
Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 2004

Introduction

When you think of Joshua, what stories, images, or thoughts come to mind? Do you recall anything bad about Joshua?

In terms of understanding the Old Testament, what would we lose if the **Book of Joshua** was not part of the Canon of Scripture?

What New Testament book serves this same transitional purpose? _____

Looking at your Bible's introductory or commentary notes for **Joshua** do you see any indications of the approximate date for the historical events of **Joshua**?

One of the Biblical references to help determine that date is **1 Kings 6:1**.

1 Kings 6:1 In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord. ESV

With that, let's take a look at a timeline of the Old Testament to see where the events in Joshua fit into Biblical history.

The Book of Joshua and the partial fulfillment of Abrahamic Covenant

COVENANT *A pact, treaty, alliance, or agreement between two parties of equal or of unequal authority. The covenant or testament is a central, unifying theme in Scripture, God's covenants with individuals and the nation Israel finding final fulfillment in the new covenant in Christ Jesus. God's covenants can be understood by humans because*

they are modelled on human covenants or treaties. (from Holman Bible Dictionary. Copyright © 1991 by Holman Bible Publishers. All rights reserved.)

COVENANT "*Covenant*" in the strict sense, as requiring two independent contracting parties, cannot apply to a covenant between God and man. His covenant must be essentially one of gratuitous promise, an act of pure grace on His part... So in **Psalm 89:28** "*covenant*" is explained by the parallel word "*mercy*." (from Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright © 1998, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

As you read **Genesis 12:1 – 7** what promises/covenant did God make to Abram and how many are yet to be fulfilled at the beginning of the **Book of Joshua**?

In **Genesis 15:7 – 21** God takes a very formal oath affirming His Covenant with Abram. To what does God take an oath?

The methodology of affirming the oath was apparently a common way at that time to establish a covenant between two parties. Each party would walk between the two halves of the carcasses testifying that should they break the covenant they could be cut in two by the offended party and have their carcasses laid out for the birds. Let's look at what happens here a little deeper.

Note that the smoking fire pot and flaming torch remind us of the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that led the Israelites at the time of the exodus and their wandering in the desert. How does this add to the significance of those pillars at the time of Israelites?

Before we are too quick to judge the Israelites, what daily reminders do we have of God's presence in our lives and yet we stray from God's Law?

Note that only the smoking fire pot and flaming torch pass between the carcasses but Abram does not pass between them. What is the significance of that?

If Abram breaks the Covenant, who pays the price and to whom does this point?

Why did God choose Abraham and establish His Covenant with him?

How does **Deuteronomy 7:6 – 10** help answer this question?

How does this apply to us and what type of attitude should that foster toward God and toward each other?

The Abrahamic Covenant is reaffirmed to Abram later when God changes his name to Abraham. God also reaffirms the Covenant with Isaac (**Genesis 26:23 – 24**) and then to Jacob (**Genesis 28:10 – 15**). God again reaffirms His Covenant with Jacob (now called Israel) when Jacob and his family are about to leave Canaan for Egypt at the invitation of Pharaoh and Jacob's son, Joseph, due to the severe famine. See **Genesis 46:1 – 4**.

What do these verses say about Israel's (Jacob's) state of mind and why do you think he is that way?

What does this say about how God deals with us?

At the beginning of **Joshua**, the Israelites are finally now ready to go and take possession of the Land of Canaan. Based on the previous verses and reviewing our OT timeline, what are some lessons God is teaching them/us?

This importance of understanding typology as it pertains to the Book of Joshua

To understand Joshua (and the Old Testament in general) the principle of “Typology” is critical. The following quotes and concepts are from the LCMS booklet published by The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR): *The End Times: A Study on Eschatology and Millennialism*:

“A type is a person, institution, or event which prefigures and foreshadows a new and greater reality (the antitype). The antitype historically and theologically corresponds to, elucidates, fulfills, and eschatologically completes the type. The antitype is no mere repetition of the type but is always greater than its prefiguration. And since the Scriptures are Christological, the Old Testament types (which are so indicated in Scripture) are related to, centered in, and fulfilled in Christ and his People, the church.”

Type = (In Biblical terms) A person, representation, event, or symbol of something to come in the Old Testament that foreshadows another in the New Testament.

Antitype = That which is foreshadowed by or identified with an earlier symbol or type, such as a figure in the New Testament who has a counterpart in the Old Testament.

“The Old Testament dare not be treated as a self-contained entity to be read apart from Christ and the New Testament. This would amount to treating the Old Testament as a non-Christian Jewish book.”

In the ESV (an many other translations) note **Romans 5:14: Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. ESV**

The typology in **Joshua** starts with the man himself. Joshua is considered a type of Jesus. This starts with his name. What do we learn about Joshua and Joshua’s name in the following verses?

Numbers 13:1 – 3, 8 _____

Numbers 13:16 _____

As we study **Joshua**, look for other examples of how Joshua is a type of Jesus as well as other typology in the book.

What else do we learn about the man, Joshua, from the following verses?

Exodus 17:8 – 16 _____

Exodus 24:12 – 18 and Exodus 32:15 – 20 _____

Exodus 33:7 – 11 _____

Numbers Chapters 13 – 14 is the account of Moses sending the 12 spies out to investigate the land of Canaan, the Promised Land. Joshua and Caleb two of the 12. Instead of reading this long selection, would someone please summarize what happens in this story and how it pertains?

Numbers 27: 18 – 23 _____

Setting the Stage for the Book of Joshua

To better understand the events in **Joshua** we need to briefly review some additional events prior to the Israelites crossing the Jordan River.

Using **Genesis 35:23 – 26** let's list the 12 sons of Israel that will make up the 12 tribes of Israel.

How does **Genesis 48:3 – 6** impact the make-up of the twelve tribes? Why do you think Jacob (Israel) did this?

What do we learn about the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh in **Numbers 32:1 – 5, 16 – 22, 33**?

Numbers 20:1 – 13 is the account of what Moses did that resulted in God declaring that Moses would not get to cross over into the Promised Land. What did Moses do that was so bad?

After all the faithfulness of Moses, don't you think this sounds a little unfair of God? What can we learn from this?

Read **Deuteronomy 31:1 – 8**.

What basic facts do we learn from these verses? _____

What is there for us to learn about our service to the Lord from Moses' blessing upon Joshua? Our service to each other?

Read **Deuteronomy 34**. What message(s) of God's grace do we find in these verses?

Joshua leads Israel into the Promised Land

Read **Joshua 1:1 – 9**. What is the significance in these verses of the repetitive points we previously read in **Deuteronomy 31:1 – 8**?

What is the significance of verse 2 and 3 relative to the Israelites and us?

How certain can the Israelites be that they will be given the Land and why?

Of what is the Land a type and what certainty do we have?

Why does God choose this geographical location for his people? See **Ezekiel 5:5** for a hint.

Read **Joshua 1:10 – 18**.

What is meant by “rest” in verse 13?

Do you have “rest” in your life? What does that mean and how do we get there? See **Hebrews 4**.

Joshua 1:16 – 18 could be considered a contract. What are the terms of that contract?

How does that apply to leaders today in the church and the state?

Read **Joshua 2:1**. Since God has promised Joshua and the people of Israel that He will be with them and that the land will be delivered up to them, why does Joshua need to send out two spies?

How does this apply to future planning as an individual and a congregation?

How does Joshua's method of sending out the spies differ from Moses'? Why? (Refer to **Numbers 13:1 – 3** again for the account of Moses sending out the spies.)

Why would the two spies, members of God's chosen people, enter the house of a prostitute?

Read **Joshua 2:2 – 15**.

What do we learn about Rahab's faith in these verses? _____

Rahab lied to the King of Jericho's messenger in order to save the spies. How do we know when this is appropriate? See also **Hebrews 11:1 – 2, 29 – 31** and **James 2:25 – 26**.

What does Rahab's confession say about her fellow Canaanites and why did she believe in the one true God and not them?

What is the significance of **Matthew 1:5** and how does that relate to us?

Read **Joshua 2:16 – 24**.

What is the significance of the method by which Rahab's household will be identified and spared?

Note the detail of the oath given by the men. Why was it so detailed?

How does that relate to us taking oaths?

How does the report of the two spies given to Joshua in verse 24 differ from the report of the 10 spies that reported to Moses and the people? What has changed between the time of the two reports?

How do we apply this to our lives?

Read **Joshua 3**.

What does the Ark of the Covenant represent?

What is the significance of the Jordan river in the Bible? What other great events in the Bible occurred at the Jordan?

Compare **Genesis 10:1, 6, 15 – 20** to **Joshua 3:10**. What similarity do you see?

What is the significance of Ham and his son, Canaan? See **Genesis 9:20 – 27**.

The Israelites drove out other peoples from the Land. Why do you think only these are mentioned?

Prior to dams and modern diversion of the waters of the Jordan, the flooding of the Jordan in this area was significant. See photo of flooding of the Jordan in 1935. Even when not flooding, the Jordan river was estimated to be 90 – 100 feet across and up to 12 feet deep with very strong currents.

What is the significance of how the Jordan ceased to flow as soon as the priests stepped into the water and how the water did not flow until they stepped out?

What is the significance of the Israelites passing through the Jordan?

Note that **Joshua 3:9** is the first time that it is recorded that Joshua explicitly states to the Israelites that he is speaking the words of the Lord. What is the impact of the crossing of the Jordan on this proclamation?

“Liberal scholars” will often point out that it is not unusual for mud slides to occur and temporarily stop the Jordan from flowing. There are at least 3 documented times of this happening (1267 AD, 1906, and 1921). How would you respond to them when they say that the Israelite crossing was not a miracle?

Joshua 4 is a unit with **Joshua 3**. The two chapters work together with Chapter 4 giving us additional detail of the crossing in a similar fashion to how **Genesis 2** gives more detail about the creation, especially Adam and Eve. The emphasis of Chapter 4 is the memorial stones.

Read **Joshua 4:1 – 9**.

Why do the Israelites need the stone memorial and how can we apply that to us?

What is Joshua doing in verse 9? Why do you think he did that?

What is the significance of the last sentence of verse 9?

Read **Joshua 4:10 – 24**.

What is the significance of the verse 10 in that the people hurried across the river?

The fact that the river started flowing when the priests stepped back onto the original bank of the river has what significance?

We are told that the crossing took place on the 10th day of the first month. Professor Harstad in the *Concordia Commentary* makes the following points about this timing:

1. *It is a reminder that the Lord stopped the Jordan in the springtime when its waters surge their strongest at flood stage.*
2. *It links the Jordan miracle with the Red Sea miracle, which also took place in this first month, and thus again connects Joshua with Moses.*
3. *It anticipates the first celebration of Passover in the promised land, which will take place four days later, on the fourteenth of the same month.*
4. *Each subsequent year, when the Israelites would select their Passover lambs, which anticipated “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29), they would also remember the saving act of the Lord at the Jordan. According to Ex 12:3 – 6, the Passover lambs were*

to be selected on the tenth day of Abib – the same day that Israel crossed the Jordan – and sacrificed and eaten on the fourteenth day.

Read **Joshua 5:1 – 9**.

The fact that the kings of Amorites and Canaanites knew of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River implies what about the crossing?

Note any footnotes you may have on **Joshua 5:1** regarding the translation of “we” vs “they” crossing over the Jordan. What is the implication of that wording?

What is the significance of circumcision in the Old Testament? See **Genesis 17:9 – 14**.

Of what is circumcision a type? See **Colossians 2:9 – 14**.

Harstad comments in the *Concordia Commentary*:

Circumcision was not unique to Israel. It was a common practice in the Near East many centuries before Abraham’s time, as evident from Old Kingdom Egyptian tomb art...and ancient stone model found near Nineveh in Mesopotamia...What was unique to Israel was the theological significance that God attached to circumcision. He made it a sign and seal of his covenant promises to Abraham...Apart from special occasions such as the circumcision in [Joshua] 5:2-3, God directed that normally an infant boy would be circumcised on the eighth day (Gen 17:12). It is evident that those infants were not choosing the Lord, but that he in grace was choosing them to be members of his covenant family. If other ancient cultures circumcised twelve- or thirteen-year-olds primarily as a rite of passage from puberty to adulthood, the Lord’s command to circumcise infant boys on the eighth day comes as a radical departure from the old practice and accents its divine purpose of grace toward Israel. It seems that the practice of infant circumcision as God mandated for Israel was unique in antiquity (TWOT, 495).

Relate **Joshua 5:1** to **Joshua 5:8**. How does this show God’s protection of His people?

Read **Joshua 5:10 – 12**.

Concordia Commentary notes:

The last time Israel had celebrated Passover was one year after the exodus, while in the Desert of Sinai (Num 9:1-5). The nation had observed only two Passovers to date, the original one in Egypt

(Exodus 12) and the one in the desert (Numbers 9). This is the very first Passover in the promised land. Moreover, this Passover is a new experience for the vast majority of Israel. Those younger than thirty-nine years old had never participated in a Passover, not even as infants.

After the Passover, the manna stopped and the people started eating from the produce of the Promised Land. How did they come by this food? (Hint: see **Joshua 6:1**)

What was the likely reaction to the manna stopping?

How is their eating of the produce of the land similar to the manna?

Of what was the manna a type? (Hint: remember the Ark of the Covenant.)

Read Joshua 5:13 – 15.

When Joshua is “by Jericho” (v 13) what he likely doing or thinking? (Hint: Think about the time and resources spent on Jericho that we have discussed and realize that he may have been to Jericho 40 years earlier.)

What is the significance that the “man” standing before Joshua has a drawn sword?

What is Joshua’s initial response to this man? What is Joshua ready to do? (Realize that Joshua is probably around 80 years of age.)

What indications do we have in the text that the “commander of the army of the Lord” is the preincarnate Christ or least a representation of God? See also **Revelation 19:9 – 10**.

What is the significance of the “Commander’s” response to Joshua’s initial question and how do we reconcile that response with all of the promises that God has made to Joshua that He would be with Joshua as they conquer the Promised Land?

How do we reconcile the Lord's response to Joshua with **Romans 8:31 – 32**?

Think for a moment about what Joshua was likely praying and possibly wrestling with God about on how the Israelites could conquer Jericho. Then consider how Jericho actually fell. What can we learn for own pray life in this account?

There is some controversy that these verses of **Joshua** are not in chronological order. However, most consider Joshua 6 to be a continuation of what the “Commander” told Joshua. *Concordia Commentary* notes:

Some say these verses stand all by themselves as an unattached episode. Others think they are linked directly to the first five verses of chapter 6, where the Lord himself commands the battle strategy for taking Jericho... We prefer the latter interpretation... Some Jewish interpreters have said that the “Commander” is the angel Michael... Luther considered the Commander to be the pre-incarnate Christ.

Read **Joshua 6:1 – 5**

Joshua 6 is the story of the fall of Jericho and thus is the best-known chapter of the **Book of Joshua**. *Concordia Commentary* believes that **Joshua 6:2 – 5** is an extension of chapter 5 with the “Commander” telling Joshua what to do. Verse 1 is therefore similar to a parenthetical comment within this understanding. Dr. Harstad in the *Concordia Commentary* believes that beginning with 5:13, **Joshua** now begins a long narrative through **Joshua 12:24** that describes the capture of the Promised Land.

Contrast verse 1 from a human perspective and verse 2 from a divine perspective. How would “normal” human Israelites (rather than divinely inspired, filled with the Holy Spirit Israelites) view the situation in verse 1?

How is verse 2 an example of God's grace?

Why is God having the Israelites go through this seven-day ritual?

Why all the references to “seven”?

“Liberal Scholars” point out that the area around Jericho is prone to earthquakes and that is how the walls came down. How would you respond?

Read **Joshua 6:6 – 14**.

What is the significance of the priests with the Ark of the Covenant leading the way in the procession around the city?

What likely impact does the silence have on the residents of Jericho inside the city walls?

Read **Joshua 6:15 – 21**.

When is it likely that Joshua gave the commands in verses 16 – 19 and what does that indicate about the chronology of the text of the **Book of Joshua**?

The Lord has commanded that every living thing in Jericho must die, including women and children/babies. This is counter to our current Western Cultural values. Many would say this is no different than Hitler trying to exterminate the Jews. How would you respond to this? See **Deuteronomy 20:16 – 18** and **Ezekiel 33:11**.

Of what is the destruction of Jericho a type? _____

What other events parallel the destruction of Jericho in Biblical and world history? How can God allow these things to occur?

How would you respond to the person who says, “I can’t believe in a God who would order the killing of innocent children”?

Read **Joshua 6:22 – 25**.

What would have happened had all of the citizens of Jericho and the King of Jericho been like Rahab?

What is the significance of verse 23? See **Leviticus 13:40 – 46** for some possible insight into this verse and how does verse 25 help resolve the situation.

What purposes does verse 25 fulfill or affirm?

Read **Joshua 6:26 – 27**.

What would be possible reasons why God would not want Jericho re-built?

How would this be in contrast to the stone memorial set up by Joshua at Gilgal?

See **1 Kings 16:29 – 34**. How is this “fair” to the family of Hiel?

How do you think Joshua reacted to his fame described in verse 27? See also **Numbers 12:3** for possible insight into this question.

Read Joshua 7:1 – 5.

Verse one says that *“the Israelites acted unfaithfully”*. How is it “fair” that a just God would blame the whole nation of Israel for the act of one man?

How does **Romans 5:12 – 19** provide additional insight and “balance”?

Read Joshua 7:6 – 15.

How does God respond to Joshua’s prayer and why?

Joshua’s prayer is not all bad, what is good and bad about it and what lessons are there for us?

What is the significance of verse 12 to the Israelites and to us?

How does it show us the need for a Savior? _____

Read Joshua 7:16 – 26.

What is the significance that Achan is of the tribe of Judah?

The process of finding Achan guilty is long and dramatic. Why do you think God did it this way rather than just identifying Achan immediately?

What do you think about Achan's confession?

What is God's purpose in having a big pile of rocks on Achan's body?

Read **Joshua 8:1 – 9**.

How is verse one a comfort to us all?

In **Joshua 7**, the Israelites are punished and Achan is condemned to death because he took a relatively small amount of plunder. How do you explain God's directive in **Joshua 8:2**?

What is the military strategy here and why is God's plan different than that of Jericho?

Read **Joshua 8:10 – 29**

What is the significance of the javelin? _____

Once again, all of the people are killed at the directive of the Lord. Professor Harstad in his *Concordia Commentary* on Joshua quotes Luther as follows on this:

Even though those Gentiles were worthy of death, nobody, not even the Israelites, was permitted to kill them unless prompted by a sure and evident command and Word of God, so that the pronouncement should stand (Matt. 26:52): "He who seizes the sword shall perish by the sword," an again (Rom. 12:19): "Vengeance is Mine, and I shall requite," and again: "The Lord judges the peoples. [See Ps 96:10 and Heb 10:30.] For He who gave life can rightfully take it away from those who have sinned against Him alone. Here, therefore, He used the Israelites for His service in order to execute His wrath through their hand. (AE 9:83)

Why was the body of the King of Ai removed before nightfall? (See **Deuteronomy 21:22 – 23**)

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Why was the body of the King of Ai removed before nightfall? (See **Deuteronomy 21:22 – 23**)

Some authorities believe that **Joshua 8:30 – 35** is not in chronological order. A fragment from the Dead Sea Scrolls places it at the end of Chapter 4 just after the Israelites cross the Jordan river. (However, no one equates the altar constructed in **Joshua 8** with the altar built with the 12 stones from the Jordan River.) The most reliable complete Hebrew text (called the Masoretic Text) places the text at its current location in the Bible. Note that the building of this altar is at the direct command of Moses. Compare **Deuteronomy 27:1 – 13** with **Joshua 8:30 – 35**.

How does **Deuteronomy 27:2** possibly support that the Joshua text should be placed at the end of Chapter 4?

Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim are adjacent to each other with a natural amphitheater valley in between that has good acoustics. It is thought that the law was read in the valley so all could hear. This celebration reconnects the people of Israel with both the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. We have already examined the Abrahamic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant was established on Mount Sinai with Moses and reiterated, at least in part, throughout Exodus, Leviticus, and in particular Deuteronomy. We will study the Mosaic Covenant in detail later but in general this Covenant is conditional in that God promises to bless the people if they follow the stipulations of the Law. How does this differ from the Abrahamic Covenant?

Of interest *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* notes that:

“To this day Mount Gerizim is forested while Mount Ebal is barren. Thus the blessings of faithfully keeping the covenant were proclaimed from Mount Gerizim, while the curses of breaking the covenant were proclaimed from Mount Ebal.”

How does this sacrificial event re-link the Israelites to the Abrahamic Covenant? Read **Genesis 12:4 – 7** and then locate Shechem on a map.

Why do you think that the Altar was to be made with uncut stones and covered with plaster? See **Exodus 20:22 – 26**.

What is the difference in purpose between a burnt offering and a peace offering? See **Leviticus 1:3 – 4** and **Leviticus 7:11 – 15**.

Many liberal “scholars” assert that the Pentateuch did not assume written form until centuries after this event. How does **Joshua 8:32** counter this and how would you respond to these critics?

What is the significance of verses 33 and 35? _____

The immediate area around Mt Ebal and Mt Gerizim had ongoing historic and sacred significance to Old Testament Israel and points us to Christ in the New Testament as well. We have already noted that the Abrahamic Covenant was first established by God at Shechem which was located on the slope of Mt Ebal.

For instance, following the death of Solomon around 930 B.C., his son, Rehoboam went to Mount Gerizim to be anointed king instead of being anointed in Jerusalem in Judah. Why do you think he would choose that place?

Dr. Harstad points out that *“Over the centuries, Mount Gerizim has been the center of worship of the Samaritans, who appealed to it as the site of the blessings in Deuteronomy 27 – 28 and Joshua 8”*. In that light, what is the significance of Jesus’ response to the Samaritan woman at the well in **John 4:1 – 6, 16 – 26**?

There are remains of an ancient structure at the top of Mount Gilgal that does contain uncut stones. Archeologists have argued whether this is the site of Joshua’s alter with the majority denying it. Interestingly, when viewed from above the outline is that of sandal footprint. If this were Joshua’s alter how might **Joshua 10:24 – 25** give evidence that it is truly the site of the alter?

Read **Joshua 9:1 – 15**.

Concordia Commentary states that *“Gibeon is only six miles northwest of Jerusalem and about the same distance southwest of the possible location of Ai. The short distance between Gibeon and Ai indicates that the Gibeonites know well what just happened there (Joshua 7 – 8)”*

Contrast the tactics of the Gibeonites from all of the kings mentioned in verses 1 and 2. What does this tell us about our true enemies?

What is the significance of verse 14? _____

We are not told specifically how they did not inquire of the Lord. How can we inquire of the Lord?

Read **Joshua 9:16 – 21**.

Why are the Israelites so upset at Joshua and the leaders?

Is their course of action toward the Gibeonites Law or Gospel? What is the message for us?

Read **Joshua 9:22 – 2**.

How would you describe the attitude of the Gibeonites as they responded to Joshua?

How does this apply to us if we find ourselves in a situation where someone has the upper hand over us?

Why is Joshua's "curse" really not a curse?

Read **Joshua 10:1 – 5**.

Joshua 10:1 and **3** is the first time that the name "Jerusalem" appears in the Bible. It means "foundation of peace". Previous Biblical references to that city or location would be the site of Abraham's aborted sacrifice of Isaac (Mount Moriah) and "Salem" when Melchizedek, King of Salem, came out and blessed Abram after Abraham rescued Lot and the people who had been taken captive from Sodom and the surrounding cities. Melchizedek is interpreted as "priest of God Most High". The king of Jerusalem that Joshua is facing is named Adonizedek which means "The Lord is righteous". However, how do Melchizedek and Adonizedek differ (Hint see **Hebrews 5:5 – 10**)?

Considering the type/antitype nature of the Bible how does the Melchizedek/Adonizedek comparison relate and what is the message for us today?

Read **Joshua 10:6 – 11.**

Considering the recent history with the Gibeonites, what possible/reasonable positions could Joshua have taken in responding to the Gibeonites request for help?

As we have discussed, Joshua is a type of Jesus. How does Joshua's response to the Gibeonites an image of Christ's relationship to us?

God reassured Joshua he would win the battle. What battle tactic did Joshua use to defend the Gibeonites and how does that relate to us?

What did it say to the Gibeonites that God brought down hailstones on the Amorites to bring about their defeat?

Read **Joshua 10:12 – 14.**

Professor Harstad believes that when Joshua commands the sun and moon to be still, he is located between Gibeon and the Valley of Aijalon so that the sun is rising in the east over Gibeon and the moon is setting in the west over Aijalon. (Note that it is likely that the all-night march by Joshua and his men was by moonlight.) What example and lessons about prayer do we learn from these passages?

Liberal skeptics scoff at this miracle and provide a variety of possible natural explanations for what happened. On the other hand, Luther used these passages to argue (in error) against the Copernican theory that the earth rotated on its axis to produce apparent movement of the sun and moon throughout the day. How do we respond to the skeptics about the truth of what happened in these passages and yet not fall into the trap Luther did?

The text mentions that Joshua's prayer is written the Book of Jashar. The Book of Jashar was lost to history? Is this lost Scripture? If a copy was discovered would it be equivalent to Scripture?

Read **Joshua 10:15 – 27**.

What is being said in verse 21? Note the comparison to **Exodus 11:7**.

What is the purpose of Joshua having his commanders put their feet on the necks of these five kings?

What other Bible passages allude to this concept and apply to us?

Joshua 10:28 – 39 continues the description of the southern conquest. It is notable that even though the King of Jerusalem, Adoni-zedek, was killed as one of the five kings who hid in the cave, Jerusalem itself is not listed among the fallen cities. It would be centuries later before it completely falls to King David.

Read **Joshua 10:40 – 43**. These verses summarize the campaign to conquer the southern half of Canaan. Compare verse 43 to **Joshua 10:15**. The latter verse is placed right after the account of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still, yet the verses following continue the account of what happened after the sun stood still, including the killing of the five kings and the rest of the southern campaign. What would be some possible explanations of how to reconcile the chronology of **Joshua 10:15**, especially considering that **Joshua 10:43** is identical to it?

Joshua 11:1 – 14 describes the campaign to conquer the northern Canaan. Let's read the verses following, **Joshua 11:15 – 20**.

Verse 15 has meaning for us individually and as an organized church body. What lessons do you see for both?

How do your translations render verse 18 in terms of describing the amount of time Joshua waged war to take the land?

Read **Joshua 14:6 – 10**. With this information about Caleb's age, what do we learn about the length of time in the previous question?

Again, in verse 20 we read of God "hardening" the hearts of those who fought against Israel. How, again, do we explain the apparent unfairness of God? See also **Ezekiel 18:25 – 32**.

See again **Genesis 15:12 – 16** (especially verse 16) noting that this story about Abram/Abraham occurs about 700 years before Joshua has completed his war campaigns. Why wait 700 years?

Read **Joshua 11:21 – 23**.

What is the significance of the defeat of the Anakim for the Israelites? (See **Numbers 13:30 – 33** and **Deuteronomy 1:26 – 28**)

Who or what are some "Anakim" to our congregations?

Who or what are some "Anakim" to individual Christians? To you?

Bible trivia time 😊 Note verse 22. What is the significance that some of the Anakim escaped to Gath?

Of what concept does verse 23 recall/remind us from **Joshua 1**?

Joshua 12 gives a listing of 31 kings, east and west of the Jordan, defeated by the Israelites through the power and will of God. We won't read this chapter to spare all of the fun pronunciations 😊. However, what are some possible reason(s) God would have in providing us this information in His Holy Word?

At the beginning of **Joshua 13** we are told that Joshua is “advanced in years”. He is probably in his late 80's or 90's at this point. Compare **Joshua 13:1 – 7** to **Judges 3:1 – 4**. Why did God allow these “enemy” nations to continue to exist?

What does it mean the God used these nations to test Israel; doesn't He know their hearts?

What kind of tests do we have? What do we have yet to learn?

The remainder of **Joshua 13** describes the allotment of territory to half of the tribe of Manasseh, the Reubenites, and the Gadites in the land east of the Jordan river. We will return later to comments in this section regarding the Levites.

Read **Joshua 14:1 – 5**. What is the significance of the repeated use of the word “inheritances” that we read throughout Joshua that also appears in verse 1 and how does that apply to us as well?

What is the significance that the distribution was by lot?

Let's read **Joshua 14:6 – 15**.

Note verse 6. Note that the people of Judah present Caleb to Joshua so that Caleb can make his case to be given a special inheritance in the land. However, Caleb is described as “the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite”. Compare **Genesis 15:18 – 20** with **Numbers 13:6**. What is a possible explanation for Caleb's heritage?

How would you describe Caleb? Where is his passion?

Note verses 11 and 12. What is the significance of his request in light of our previous discussion about the Anakim?

What implication is there in verse 15?

Read **Numbers 13:30 – 33** again. What is so fitting/ironic (and a good example of how God works) in the specific land Caleb requested and received in the Promised Land?

Considering Caleb's Kenizzite background what lesson(s) and encouragement are there for us in Caleb?

Joshua 15:1 – 12 is a description of the borders of the inheritance given to the tribe of Judah. We will look at the map of that later. Interestingly, **Joshua 15:13 – 19** continues the story of Caleb's inheritance within the land of Judah. Let's read that section.

Why do you think it is mentioned again about Caleb defeating the three sons of Anak?

What do you think of Achsah? _____

How do we know that Achsah was a woman of faith?

Note Caleb's response to her request. How do we know he was not upset by her request?

What do we learn about Israel and Othniel in **Judges 3:7 – 11**?

The remainder of **Joshua 15** delineates the cities and inheritance given to the Judahites. Verse 63 makes a comment about Jerusalem even though it is technically in the territory of Benjamin. However, it should be noted that the surrounding area just south of Jerusalem is in northern Judah. How does **Joshua 15:63** help us determine a range of time for the authorship of the **Book of Joshua**?

Joshua 16 describes the allotment of land to the tribe of Ephraim.

Why did the tribe of Ephraim receive their inheritance before the tribe of Manasseh and what is the significance that Joshua remembered this? See **Genesis 48:8 – 14, 17 – 19**.

Joshua 16:10 is similar to **Joshua 15:63** and the theme of tribes not being able to drive out the Canaanites or other pagan people is repeated elsewhere in **Joshua**.

What is the significance of what is being pointed out in these verses as it relates to the Israelites?

How do these verses relate to us and our daily walk with Christ?

Joshua 17 describes the allotment of land to the tribe of Manasseh. Within this chapter is an interesting account of the place of women in Israelite society. Compare **Joshua 17:3 – 4** to **Numbers 27:1 – 11**.

What do these verses say about Israelite society at the time?

What do these verses say about Moses and Joshua?

What do these verses indicate about God's viewpoint toward women?

What is the message for Lutherans in general and us specifically?

Let's read **Joshua 18:1**. In this verse we have the first mention of the town of Shiloh in the Bible and the first mention of the Tent of Meeting. The Tent of Meeting (with the Ark of the Covenant) will remain at Shiloh for around 300 years.

See **Genesis 49:10** and compare various translations (especially the KJV, NKJV, Amplified) to ESV and NIV. What is meant by "Shiloh" in this verse?

Looking at a map and considering **Genesis 49:10** what are some reasons for establishing the Tent of Meeting at Shiloh? (Also, note the last sentence of **Joshua 18:1** for another reason.)

Read **Joshua 18:2 – 10**.

How would you describe Joshua's tone? (Note: Harstad points out both Law and Gospel here. Do you see it?)

What is the situation and why is he frustrated? _____

How does Joshua's solution show wisdom? _____

The remainder of **Joshua 18** describes Benjamin's allotment. We will return to that later. Let's read **Joshua 19:1 – 9** and compare that Jacob's blessing of Simeon and Levi in **Genesis 49:5 – 7**.

How is Simeon's allotment consistent with Jacob's "blessing"?

What is the background for Jacob's "blessing" (it is more of a curse)? See **Genesis 34**.

The rest of **Joshua 19** describes the distribution of land to the tribes of Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan finishing with an inheritance to Joshua himself. Most modern Bible translations include a map showing the rough distribution of the tribes throughout the Land of Israel. Of note, is that the town of Nazareth lies within the inheritance of Zebulun and the cities often mentioned in the Gospels around the Sea of Galilee lie within Naphtali. See **Matthew 4:12 – 16**.

Joshua 19:49 – 51 serves as a "bookend" to Caleb getting his inheritance first in **Joshua 14** that we previously discussed.

What is the significance that Joshua gets his inheritance last?

How is that an example for leaders and for us in general?

As background to **Joshua 20**, let's first read **Genesis 9:1 – 7**.

What do these verses say about human life?

What do these verses say about animal life?

What do these verses say about capital punishment?

Numbers 35:9 – 29 gives us more specific background to capital punishment and **Joshua 20:1 – 6**.

What is the point of God referencing the various weapons of death?

Who would be the avenger of death in that day and age and who would be our modern equivalent?

Describe the concept of a “City of Refuge”?

Read **Numbers 35:30 – 34**. How do these verses clarify the implementation of capital punishment and what do they say about how God wants us to implement justice?

Why do we see this emphasis on blood?

How does the reference to the High Priest point us to Christ?

Note on a map the location of the Cities of Refuge and their even distribution around Israel.

The majority of **Joshua 21** is a listing of the cities given to the Levites. To get a better understanding of the job of the Levites let’s read **Numbers 18:1 – 7**.

Aaron is also a Levite. What is the difference in function between Aaron and his descendants verses the Levites?

What other function is given to the Levites in **Deuteronomy 3:10**?

How are the Levites supposed to be supported (at least in part)? See **Numbers 18:21 – 26**.

What is the approximate New Testament equivalent to the Levites and what would be the implications of **Numbers 18:21 – 26** to the Church today?

Read **Joshua 21:43 – 45**.

Considering that there were still pockets of Canaanite that were not driven out of the land or annihilated, how can these verses be true?

What is the overall importance of these verses for the Israelites and for us?

Professor Harstad, in the *Concordia Commentary* on **Joshua**, comments, in part, as follows about the three remaining chapters of **Joshua**:

Each of the last three chapters in the book of Joshua contains a sermon by the book's namesake. Joshua 22 gives his first farewell sermon and his blessing and dismissal of the Transjordan tribes. Joshua 23 has his second farewell sermon, and Joshua 24 records his third farewell sermon. In all three, Joshua's aim is to preserve the unique covenant relationship that Israel has with the Lord by grace in the newly given land inheritance. His speeches and their content give unity to Joshua 22 – 24...As the content of the sermons and related material will reveal, chapters 22 – 24 center on how Israel is to live in their land inheritance as the heirs according to the Lord's covenant of grace now that He has given them the victory in the war and has brought to pass all of His gracious promises to them.

With this observation in mind from Professor Harstad, let's read **Joshua 22:1 – 9**.

Briefly describe what is happening in this account?

What can we say about the overall character of the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (Transjordanian Israelites)?

Of what “Five-Fold” commandment does Joshua remind them (and us) that was commanded by Moses?

What other admonition does Joshua give them regarding the spoils of battle and what is the lesson for them and us?

Professor Harstad in the *Concordia Commentary* points out that the author of **Joshua** refers to the tribes that settled west of the Jordan as “the people of Israel” or the “children of Israel” while those that are east of the Jordan are listed out by tribe. He comments that this portends the rift that we will see in **Joshua 22:10 – 12**.

Read **Joshua 22:10 – 12**. Why would the Israelites be so incensed by the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh building an altar just west of the Jordan River?

Read **Joshua 22:13 – 34**.

Explain in your own words why the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh built an altar?

What positive step did the Israelites do before going to war against their brothers?

What lessons are there for the church in this significant episode of miscommunication?

Anything to add that would be a lesson for us as individuals?

Why do we have monuments and should we?

Joshua 23 gives an account of Joshua's second farewell address approximately 20 years after the events of Chapter 22. We are not told of the location of this second address. It was probably at Shiloh or Shechem but could have been in Joshua's hometown of Timnath-serah. The second address may have only been to the leadership of the Israelites. However, the third and final address in **Joshua 24** appears to be to all of the people as well as the leaders and we are told that this address occurs at Shechem. Although each address has a similar pattern and warnings, the content is different. Let's read **Joshua 23:1 – 13**.

What theme do we see repeated in verse one? _____

What theme is alluded to in verse six? _____

Joshua starts out reminding the leaders of what God has done and then warns them of the consequences of turning away from God. Why is this a good pattern?

What four outward forms of religious practice are the Israelites warned against in verse 7?

Can you think of any ways (intentional or casual) that our society today participates in these activities?

How does Joshua commend the Israelites in verse 8 and considering the history of the Israelites when they wandered in the desert, what is the significance of that?

To what can we attribute that positive behavior and what is the message for us?

What four figures of speech are stated in verse 13 (and to what general activity are they alluding to) that describe how the Israelites will be harmed by inter-marrying and associating with the Canaanites?

How does this verse have application for us today?

Going back to verse 11 we read **“Be very careful, therefore, to love the Lord your God.”** (ESV). What does it look like/feel like to “love the Lord”?

Joshua 23:14 – 16 is restatement of verses 1 – 13 in a more compact or summarized form.

How does the tone change in verse 14 compared to verse 13?

How do you picture Joshua’s countenance as he is saying these words (in verses 14 – 16) to the Israelites and what is he saying in the first phrase of verse 14?

Read **Joshua 24:1 – 13**.

Why is Joshua recounting this history and why is it at Shechem? (Think back to our discussions about Abraham 😊)

What is the emphasis of this history? Law or Gospel?

Read **Joshua 24:14 – 27** noting that verse 15 (the concluding verse of Joshua’s last “sermon”) is probably the most well-known verse in **Joshua** and one of the most well-known in the Bible?

Verse 15 is often used by reformed pastors as a “proof text” for “Decision Theology” that emphasizes that we must make a choice to come to Christ. How would you explain this verse to neutralize that argument?

In what ways do we have “a choice” in serving the Lord?

In verses 19 – 20 Joshua rejects the passionate response of the Israelites to his challenge in verse 15. Why would he do that?

How can a stone be “a witness” to what was said “having heard” what was said and promised?

Let's finish reading **Joshua!** Read **Joshua 24:29 – 33.**

See **Genesis 50:22 – 26** and **Exodus 13:19** for the background on **Joshua 24:32.**

Considering that the coffin of Joseph was over 400 years old at this point, it shows that God's Word and the oath taken by his brothers was carried on for generations.

What is the significance of verse 31 and of what does this again remind us?

I pray that God has blessed you in this study. Thank you for your participation!

May we all remember God's often repeated command and promise throughout the book of Joshua:

***Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.
Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the
Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”***

Joshua 1:9 ESV