

Joshua

Joshua 1:1-24:33

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2019-02-17

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Introduction - A defense of God's justice in the destruction of Canaanites

Last week a British newspaper published what the British thought were the top ten most offensive passages in the Bible. Number 2 was God's command to kill the Canaanites. Number 3 was the command, "Do not allow a sorceress to live" (Exodus 22:18). Take a wild guess at which was the number one most offensive Bible passage. Believe it or not, the top most offensive passage did not come from the Old Testament. It was Paul's command in 1 Timothy 2:12, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, she must be silent." That was more offensive than homo rape of the concubine in Judges or any other killings in the Bible. It illustrates how offenses can be a moving target when you don't have an infallible standard. And I think it also illustrates that sinners dislike the passages that describe their own sins far more than they dislike the passages that describe other people's sins.

But having said that, God's direct command to Joshua to kill every man, woman, child, and animal in Jericho and in other cities of Canaan is definitely in the top ten of the most criticized portions of the Bible - and I've looked at a number of surveys. People wonder, "Does that amount to genocide of innocents?" The atheist, Richard Dawkins, certainly thinks so. In fact, His vitriol is so slanderous that I won't read it from the pulpit. I cannot stomach it.¹ But his book, *The God Delusion*, used the book of Joshua to try to embarrass Christians into recognizing their inconsistencies. And many Christians are indeed inconsistent. Citing statistics and surveys of Jews and Christians, Dawkins shows how Christians are embarrassed by this book and believe that these wars were inhumane and unjust, and in the process he proves that the morals of those Christians come from a source outside the Bible. It's one of the few statements in that book that I could agree with. To criticize Joshua shows that your morals come from a source outside the Bible. You are not allowing God to define your sense of justice.

So before I dive into the book, I want to explain why Joshua's conquests that

¹ In an over-the-top diatribe, he said, "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully." Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008) p. 51.

are described in this book were perfectly just in their historical context, even though God later forbids any nation from engaging in this kind of warfare. (That's the confusing part for some people. This was a one-of-a-kind judgment brought by God Himself by inspired revelation.) So here are my responses to a person like Dawkins.

First, God forbade genocidal warfare in numerous passages, such as Deuteronomy 20, 2 Kings 6:8-23, Amos 1-2. Israel's normal rules for war called for a just war theory whereas the "Conquest of Canaan" rules are appropriate for God alone to command. They would not be just if a nation declared such a war. So all I am proving is that it was just for God to do so.

Second, there is a name for those "Conquest of Canaan" rules. God called it *cherem* war - a term that shows that God had judged the nations in His court already and was simply using Israel as a tool for His judgments. This was not normal warfare; it was *cherem* warfare. As such it stood as a symbol for His judgment of hell. And unbelievers hate the doctrine of hell as much as they hate the *cherem* warfare of Joshua. I think both of those doctrines have been included in the Bible to test people's loyalty to Scripture.

Which brings up the third point - the iniquity of these Canaanites was so serious that it was irredeemable. In College I had a professor whose PhD was in Canaanite literature. She said that she felt traumatized just reading through the Canaanite literature, but had to press through to get her degree. She said that the literature portrayed a culture far more depraved than the worst slasher hard core pornography that has begun to creep into America. She felt defiled for life. The degree of their depravity was astonishing. I felt defiled just by the little bit that she described of that Canaanite culture, and I for sure will not be telling you.

But people object, "OK, but what about the children? How was it just to kill those children?" Of course, many of those critics believe in abortion, so they are hypocrites. But are we inconsistent as well? I say "No." My response is three sub points.

- First, while the Bible is crystal clear that human courts have no right to put a baby to death, the Bible explicitly says that God has the right to kill a child (2 Sam. 12:15; Hos. 9:16; Rev. 2:23). In the case of David's child that God killed (and the text explicitly says that God killed that child), he went to paradise, so the child is sure not complaining. We don't have the authority to take a child's life, but God does. And if God wants to kill a child and take Him to paradise, He has the right to do so.
- Next, I would say that there is no injustice in God killing a sinner, and children are sinners. They are not innocent like Dawkins claims. Psalm 58:3 says, "The

wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” Children need a Savior too. Isaiah 48:8 says, “For I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and were called a transgressor from the womb.” So rather than criticizing God, we should be grateful to Him for His generous promise of salvation to our children - and that He even welcomes our children into the covenant. Praise God! But God is not obligated to save any sinner. Salvation is purely an act of Sovereign grace.

- Next, from the pulpit I will not get into why the degeneracy and disease reached even the children. But knowing a little bit about Canaanite culture, God may have spared them a lifetime scarred by the past. One scholar said that even the smallest children would have been ravaged by STDs and as Robert Bowman said, “would have grown up psychologically and spiritually scarred-and perhaps threatened to perpetuate the cycle.”²

But back to the wars against Canaan, God’s patience with sin is incredible. In Genesis 15 God told Abraham that his descendants would be afflicted in Egypt four hundred years. In verse 16 He said, “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” Though the Amorites were already quite sinful in Abraham’s day, God was patient with them. Only when their cup of iniquity was full, did God dispossess them and use Israel as His instrument. And in Deuteronomy 2, you look at the other nations nearby that God told Israel not to mess with, you see this illustrated as well. Even though they were wicked, their cup of iniquity was not yet full. So again, it showcases God’s incredible patience. Most people focus on God’s destruction and forget about 400 years of patience.

Fifth, we have already seen in Genesis that God created all things, owns all things, and is sovereign over all things. God has absolute rights of ownership over everything in this universe. As Romans 9 words it,

Romans 9:21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

And speaking of mercy to Jews and Gentiles, individual Canaanites did become believers. The Gibeonites were saved by deception, and Rahab by God’s special intervention. But there were individuals like Caleb the Kennezeite who were saved even before the conquest, and who became heroes of the faith. Even though Joshua 1:4 commands the extermination of the Hittites, it is clear that God elected some to salvation, like Uriah the Hittite, who was a faithful believer in a later generation. In David’s time,

2 <https://www.namb.net/apologetics-blog/joshua-s-conquest-was-it-justified/>

hundreds of Philistines who were slated for the same cherem destruction became believing body guards for David. His Pelethites and Cherethites were Canaanite Philistines. Likewise Ittai the Gittite was a faithful believer. So even with the cherem principle we see justice and mercy side by side. Every sacrifice that a Jew offered up made it clear that they too deserved to die in a cherem judgment apart from God's grace. The question, "Why didn't God save everyone?" is a bad question. The question that should astonish us is, "Why did God bother to save any of us?" And He did indeed save many Canaanites by His sovereign grace.

Seventh, these stories are a test of our faith and loyalty to God. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the destruction of Canaan was a perfect act of justice. Questioning God's justice and fairness makes us the judge, rather than God. But Deuteronomy 32:4 says, "all God's ways are justice" - by definition. All God's ways are justice. If God does it, it is just. And to think otherwise is arrogance of the highest order because it puts our mind and opinions as the ultimate standard of the universe. Don't stumble over tests like this in the Scripture; embrace them and worship God through them; humble yourselves before God in them. Have faith that our God is righteous and just.

Eighth, everyone deserves the same justice - destruction. As Romans 3 says, "The wages of sin is death." To make exceptions is to edit God. John H. Gerstner, in his book, *Repent or Perish*, put this into perspective very well. He said,

If you recognize that basic Christian teaching [that all deserve hell because all are sinners], you'll understand why I wrote a little primer entitled "The Problem of Pleasure." We talk so much about the Problem of Pain. There's no such thing as the problem of pain! You tell me how excruciating it is and I'll still look you in the face and say there's no problem. Why? Because we're sinners. We deserve the eternal wrath of God. I don't care who you are or where you are. That you are breathing at all is incredibly gracious. What needs explaining is not that there's pain in the world. If there wasn't any pain, we would have a problem.

How can God be holy and this world be wholly sinful and there be anything but pain? It's incredible that there is non-pain... Why is anybody not suffering? That's a problem! Christ solves that problem. Temporary freedom from pain is given you so that you may repent and not perish. The only answer to the problem of pleasure is that God is pleased to give hell-deserving sinners an opportunity to repent.³

And when Canaanites or others don't repent, no one can complain.

And finally, many scholars point out that the cherem destruction of the people of Canaan is a picture of the final judgment. To deny the justice of one you have to deny the other. And of course there are evangelicals who

3 John Gerstner, [Repent Or Perish](#) (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1996), pp. 6-7.

sadly reject both.

I. Key word - inheritance

Let's move on to the key word of this book. If the key word for Deuteronomy was "covenant," the key word for Joshua would be inheritance. Some have argued that it is conquest or conquer, but those terms appear only four times in the book and they were always a means to an end of possessing the inheritance that God had promised. The word "inheritance" occurs 50 times and the word "land" occurs 75 times, but it is a land that they are inheriting, so it amounts to the same thing. The theme of the book is that the meek shall inherit the earth. This land had been promised as an inheritance in every book of the Pentateuch, and now finally comes the fulfillment to a generation that had learned meekness. Meekness is not weakness. The word meek refers to a tamed stallion who obeys the master in everything. And so this theme is a foreshadowing of the church eventually inheriting the entire planet. Jesus said that this principle still applies - the meek shall inherit the earth. The church will not inherit the earth until it becomes tamed by God and useful for God.

II. Key verse - Josh 21:45 (cf. 23:14)

The key verse is Joshua 21:45. I'll go ahead and read it in context. Joshua 21 beginning to read at verse 43.

Josh. 21:43 So the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

God was faithful in bringing them into their inheritance that He had promised. And as I just mentioned, Joshua's conquest of the land foreshadows the work of Christ, which is the next point.

III. The Christ of Joshua

A. Joshua = Yeshua, the Hebrew name for Jesus is a type of Jesus (see Heb. 4:8-11; Acts 13:32-33)

Christ was richly displayed in the previous five books. He is once again richly displayed in this book. Hebrews 4:8-11 clearly identifies Joshua as a type of Jesus. Interestingly, the Greek word for Joshua in Hebrews 4 is identical to the Greek word for Jesus, and the Hebrew word for Joshua in

this book is the same as the Hebrew word for Jesus - Yeshua. It means, Salvation is of Yehowah. His name meant that God would provide salvation in the coming Messiah.

So, like Joshua, the New Testament calls Jesus the Captain of our salvation who brings many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10), and who “always leads us in triumph” (2 Cor. 2:14). And Hebrews 4 calls us to follow Jesus and not be like the wilderness generation who refused to follow Joshua. Jesus guarantees that He will lead us to our eternal inheritance. He is the Greater Joshua.

B. The ark of the testimony/covenant (3,4,6,8)

But the ark of the covenant was also a marvelous type of the work of Christ. It plays a prominent role in the crossing of the Jordan River and in the conquest of Jericho. So let me describe it. The glory cloud came down and rested above the ark. That is why it was called the throne of God, the mercy seat, or the throne of grace, and as such represented the place of God’s rule over Israel. It was a rule of law, represented by the ten commandments inside of it and it was a rule of grace, represented by the blood sprinkled on top of it. The ark was a box made of wood covered with gold. Above the ark were images of cherubim angels, just as cherubim are in the heavenly holy of holies. So it illustrates that our kingdom on earth is related to the kingdom of heaven; our earthly battles are intimately related to the spiritual battles of the cherubim angels. Inside the ark was Aaron’s rod of leadership, the bowl of manna, and the ten commandments. And on the side of the ark was stored the original of the growing canon of Scripture.

All of this richly symbolizes the Person and work of Jesus. When that ark stood in the bed of the Jordan River until everyone had passed through, and then the waters returned the moment the priests carried the ark out of the river bed, it showed that God alone was holding back those waters. Interestingly, Hebrews 1:8 says that Jesus sits upon Yehowah’s throne. But He is also symbolized by the throne itself. The wood represents the humanity of Jesus and the gold represents His deity. The throne represents His sovereign reign. The bowl of manna represents Christ’s provision for us and the closeness of fellowship we can have with God through Jesus (Rev. 2:17). The ten commandments represent the holiness of Christ’s kingdom. There is no kingdom without law. He said, “I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17). So even though the ten commandments on Mt. Sinai brought fear and condemnation, when the ten commandments were placed inside the ark and under the sprinkling of the blood, it shows the

Gospel. The Gospel is not anti-law. It is the good news that through Christ's blood we are friends with the law. The rod represents Christ's leadership.

C. The circumcision

The next type of Christ was circumcision. The circumcision of the second generation of Israelites is an interesting symbol. Because the previous generation had not been believers, they were not allowed to circumcise their children just like we do not allow unbelievers to baptize their children.

Romans 4:11 says that circumcision was a sign of faith. Though it was applied to the children of believers, the adults had to have faith in what it symbolized. And it symbolized that Jesus would be cut off on their behalf.

Remember that we saw in a previous sermon that "to make a covenant" is literally translated as "to cut a covenant." Often a covenant was made by cutting an animal in two and having the people walk between the pieces of that animal. But with Abraham, God walked between the pieces of the animals foreshadowing the fact that He would be willing to die in their place in the future to pay for our sins.

Well, circumcision that was given to Abraham had the same symbolism. It symbolized the fact that the future seed of Israel (Jesus) would be cut off on our behalf. Colossians 2:11 says that Christ's crucifixion was His circumcision which put off the body of the sins of our flesh. It was also called a baptism (v. 12; cf. Matt. 20:22) since baptism symbolizes exactly the same thing. So you can see that chapter by chapter in this book the Gospel is always mixed with everything that they did. There could be no victory without the Gospel.

D. The Passover-Firstfruits upon entering the land (5:10-12)

We've dealt with how Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits was a symbol of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Let me read Joshua 5:10-12, because this Passover had something unique happen.

Josh. 5:10 Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. 12 Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

Just as baptism must come before the Lord's Table, circumcision had to come before the Passover. But the miraculous manna (which pointed to Jesus) stopped when they were finally able to make bread from the wheat of

the land. Why? Because this is now a transition point into the kingdom. Once the leaven of sin in Passover has been put away, God puts leaven into Pentecost, and the leaven of the kingdom leaves the world.

So several things symbolized the beginning of a new era. This was the first month of the year, Abib. This was the first Passover that they had celebrated in almost 40 years. This is the first time that the bread prescribed in the law was eaten, rather than the manna. In fact, this was the first time in decades that they had eaten something other than manna. This was the first time that they would regularly eat from the land of Canaan. And the third day was Firstfruits.

All of these things under Joshua symbolized a new era in which they would possess their possessions. And Hebrews says all of that foreshadowed the New Covenant when the church would engage in the Great Commission.

E. The Commander of the Army (5:13-15)

The theophany of God in chapter 5 symbolized the fact that Joshua was not the ultimate leader. Joshua had to take His orders from the Divine Commander of the Army of Yehowah. This was the preincarnate Jesus.

F. The stone altar (8:30-35)

And the stone altar that we looked at last week perfectly foreshadowed the Person and work of Jesus. It was set up as prescribed in chapter 8:30-35. They depended upon the coming Messiah for their sins and to strengthen them in the coming battle.

G. sacrifices (13:14, 22:27,29)

And of course, the sacrifices mentioned in chapters 13 and 22 also foreshadowed the work of Jesus.

Here is the point: contrary to what critics say, Christ and Gospel are not absent from this book. It is on the basis of this glorious Gospel that they were able to do so much. Don't think of this book as only a book of Judgment. It is a Gospel book, but when the Gospel is spurned, only judgment is left.

IV. Outline of the book

A. Quick overview of four parts of book

So I'm going to give you a shorter overview of the book. Saturday afternoon

I cut about half an hour's worth of materials out, and I will leave my much more detailed notes related to the second half of the outline for the web.

This book is divided into four major parts. And you can see those on the chart on the bottom of the first page. The first 5 chapters deal with the preparations made for entering the land. Chapters 6 through 13:7 deal with conquering the land. Chapters 13:8 to the end of 21 deal with settling the land. And chapters 22-24 show what will be spiritually needed if they are to retain the land in future generations. So the whole book can be summarized in four words - entering, conquering, settling, and retaining.

Chapters	1-5	6:1-13:7	13:8-33	14-19	20-21	22-24
Topic	Preparing spiritually	Conquest of Canaan	Settlement E. of Jordan	Settlement W. or Jordan	Settlement of Levitical Cities of Refuge	Conditions for covenant succession
Theme	Entering	Conquering	Settling			Retaining
Time	1 month	7 years	8 years			?
Location	Jordan River	Canaan	2 ½ tribes east of Jordan 9 ½ tribes west of Jordan			
Caleb's age	78			85		

And the application of just those headings should be obvious. If we are to take back America, we must go through each of those four steps. If the church is a holy ghetto that never interacts with the world, we will never conquer. Just as Joshua could not conquer the land until he entered the land, the church will never conquer America unless it once again penetrates every facet of society with the law and the Gospel.

And the pietistic, two-kingdom, retreatist church has failed to do that. We have failed to be salt. We have abandoned politics. We have failed to apply the Bible to business, economics, education, science, and other areas. Instead, the land of Canaan has penetrated the church and made virtually every area of Christianity's existence to be married to the world. You look at the counseling that Christians go to - it's the wisdom of man mixed with Scripture. It's pluralism. You look at education - it's government schools, or if it is Christian education, its often secular thinking being taught by Christian teachers. On whatever topic you might think of, Canaan has entered the church rather than the church entering Canaan with the Law and the Gospel.

The second part of this book is conquest. If we are to regain America, we must aggressively seek to bring every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ. But Paul said that the only way we can do that is by putting down the weapons of the world and only picking up the spiritual weapons that God has authorized. This keeps coming up as a theme, doesn't it? But since Scripture keeps repeating it, I will keep repeating it. 2 Corinthians 10:2-6 is

basically an application of part two of the book of Joshua. Paul said,

2 But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

That's Joshua part 2 in a nutshell.

What's part 3? Well, once all humanism has been exposed and torn down (and we are not even remotely near that stage in America), we can enter the third stage of this book, which is settling in with the Gospel and Law and living out the Biblical blueprints positively. You tear down (that's part 2) so that you can rebuild (that's part 3). Can you imagine the blessings America would begin to experience once everything we do is Biblical? It would be tremendous.

But the last section of the book warns the Israelites over and over that unless they pass these principles and passions and vision on to the next generation, it will not stick. The only way they can retain the land that they had possessed was with covenant succession. So the last section of the book gives us what is critical if covenant succession is to happen. So that's the big overview picture.

B. Relation of this book to the Pentateuch and Judges

And if you want to see how Joshua and Judges fits into this seamless flow of the books, let me summarize Genesis to Judges.

Covenantal Structure of Pentateuch

Books	Parts of Covenant	Preparing Israel
Genesis	Transcendence	Creation of Israel
Exodus	Representatives	Redeeming and leading
Leviticus	Ethics/holiness	God's upward call
Numbers	Sanctions	Testing
Deuteronomy	Succession	Maturity

Genesis shows Transcendence - that everything begins with God, who had no beginning. He is the maker of the covenant. He is the Lord of life. And in terms of the right hand side of the chart in your outlines, Genesis shows the creation of Israel.

Exodus shows the representatives of God in family, church, and civics, so it could be labeled as Hierarchy or Representatives, the second part of the covenant documents. And on the basis of Israel having been saved or redeemed, God gives shepherds to guide His people and represent them.

Leviticus (which we saw was the book of holiness) gives the ethics for Israel, both moral and ceremonial. And its message is about God's upward call for their lives.

Numbers shows God's sanctions, or the fourth part of the covenant. These are His punishments for disobedience and His rewards for obedience. And we saw that that Numbers was the book of testing.

And Deuteronomy shows what must be in place if we are to live Christianly in the land generation after generation - covenant succession. The blueprints of Deuteronomy placed within a covenant document show what maturity in God's grace looks like.

Joshua takes it one step further into inheritance. The vassal (Israel) of the Lord of life (Yehowah) joins together with that Lord in taking the world for God. And Hebrews uses it as a symbol of the Great Commission. Joshua is the first of what was known as the "former prophets." And Joshua 24:26 says that he wrote the book of Joshua right into the canon the moment it was written.⁴ There was no wait for a church council later. Only prophets can canonize a book. So Joshua canonized the book in chapter 24.

But Judges shows what happens when covenant succession is not taught. People fall away. Maturity is not automatic. It must be systematically trained into the very fibre of our children's lives.

C. *Entering the land (1-5)*

Joshua's commission (1:1-9)

Servanthood (v. 1)

But lets back up and I want to at least look at Joshua's commission because it sets the tone for the rest of the book. I won't have time to go through all of

4 See Phillip Kayser, [The Canon of Scripture: A Presuppositional Study](https://www.biblicalblueprints.com/)54fcf88d-fff7-4723-ac1e-2f139fb27d7b (Omaha: Biblical Blueprints, 2018) for a detailed discussion of how the canon was developed and how we can know exactly which books belong in the Bible. At the time Joshua was being written, the canon consisted of five books, with the corpus of Genesis-Deuteronomy being called "the book of the covenant" (Ex. 24:7; 2Kings. 23:2,21; 2Chron. 34:30), "the book of the Law" (Deut. 28:61; 29:21; 30:10; 31:26; Josh 1:8; 8:34; 2Kings 22:8,11; 2Chron. 34:15; Neh. 8:3; Ga. 3:10), "the book of Moses" (2Chron. 25:4; 35:12; Ezra 6:18; Neh. 13:1; Mark 12:26), "the book of the Law of Moses" (Josh. 8:31; 23:6; 2Kings 14:6; Neh. 8:1), "the book of the Law of the LORD" (1Chron. 17:9; 2Chron. 34:14; Neh. 9:3), "the book of the law of God" (Josh. 24:26; Neh. 8:18) or simply "the book" (Exodus 17:14; Neh. 8:8 in context of 8:18). Joshua 24:26 says, "Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God." Since the Pentateuch had spoken of itself as "the Book of the Law of God" over and over again, to write Joshua into the book meant that there was an instant canonization of that book.

my notes of overview, but at least I can put them up on the web.

If we are enter to the land (that's section one of the book), we need to get rid of squishy leaders in the American church and honor and follow the leaders who are like Joshua.

Joshua 1:1-9 gives the commission for Joshua, and it gives several concepts related to leadership.

The first is servanthood. Verse 1 calls Joshua, "Moses' assistant," and the Hebrew word is *sharat*, or menial servant. So if Moses was the servant of the Lord, Joshua was a servant's servant. He did not learn leadership by going to seminary. Like produces like, and if sterile professors who accomplish nothing but academics teach our pastors, our pastors will be academics who have no interest in doing anything but passing on sterile information.

Joshua didn't do that. He learned practical Christianity by serving under Moses. He learned servant leadership by serving. What a novel concept! It should be obvious, but that's not the way the church trains leaders in America. Twenty-two year olds who are still green behind the ears and who have often never done any practical work in their lives get out of seminary and think they can lead a church. That's not God's way. God's way is apprenticeship. That's how Jesus taught His disciples, and how His disciples taught faithful men to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). Even Jesus did not go into ministry until He was thirty and after thirty years of proving humble service as a carpenter. I think if pastors would get a real job in the first years of their lives and learn the kind of tough life that everyone else has to go through, they would be more sensitive in their pastoring. That was the pattern for Moses. He didn't go into ministry till he had watched Jethro's flocks for forty years.

It is rare in the Scriptures to see leaders entering their office without first having humble service. When I was in my twenties, I had just graduated from Bible school and thought I knew my stuff. But pastor Doug Codling wisely involved me in all kinds of menial or less glamorous work to test where my heart was at. And I spent quite a few years in the regular work force while also doing pastoral type ministry - evangelism, teaching, etc. There is no true leadership without submission. The book of Joshua shows the kind of dominion that can be taken when leaders have servant's hearts.

Calling (v. 1)

Second, leadership in office requires calling. Jeremiah 14:15 pronounces woes on people who become leaders when God did not call them to that

office. Jeremiah 23:32 does the same thing. Well, Joshua was called. Verse 1 of Joshua 1 says that God spoke to Joshua, and earlier in the Pentateuch we saw the full nature of that call. Nowadays He guides us through the Scriptures. We are not prophets like Joshua was, so our sense of guidance needs to be confirmed by others - there is no infallible call today. But a strong sense of calling enables leaders to face impossible difficulties. But it also enables us to say “No” to ministry opportunities that belong to others, and not to us. Joshua had a single eyed purpose to fulfill God’s call upon His life.

Action despite risk (v. 2)

In verse 2 God called Joshua to action despite risk. This is a critical test of leadership qualifications. He had no illusions about the difficulties that lay ahead. As a former spy, he had already seen the giants, the huge walled cities, and the numerous hostile tribes. He was moving into an area of huge risk.

We need leaders like that today who won’t play it safe. I have talked to pastors who refuse to preach on critical topics because they might lose their job, or lose their tithers, or might be picketed by homosexuals, or might in other ways face risk. But that is cowardice, and God never honors cowards. In fact, Revelation 21:8 puts the cowardly at the head of the list of those who will spend eternity in hell. America will never be entered, let alone conquered, unless its pastors take action despite risks.

So if we are to take Joshua’s call seriously here, it might mean going to the abortion clinics with us and praying imprecatory prayers. It might mean handing out tracts at the LGBTQ+ parades. I’ve gotten lots of heat by simply going downtown and handing out loving gospel tracts at those parades. It might mean handing out tracts and talking to students on the government school’s Day of Silence. I’ve been spit at and punched at those places, but the Gospel must penetrate. We need leaders who will take action even if it means there is risk.

Eschatology or vision (v. 3)

Verse 3 gives Joshua an eschatology of victory - God gave him every place that his foot would tread upon. What a tremendous eschatology of hope and victory. God promised victory.

The eschatology of the bulk of the church today is a guarantee of defeat. That’s the message of Dispensationalists, most Amillennialists, Pietists, Two-kingdom retreatists, and others who think it is Biblical for things to get

worse and worse in our kingdom age. God only promised things to get worse and worse in the last days of the Old Covenant leading up to the destruction of Israel in AD 70. That's the only time that things were to get worse and worse.

The eschatology of our age has unfortunately been the eschatology of the previous generation that believed the ten spies rather than Joshua and Caleb. It was an eschatology that killed faith and hope and made them refuse to enter. Without a change in the eschatology of American church leaders, we won't even get past stage zero and even attempt to cross the Jordan, let alone conquer the land.

Keep in mind that eschatology is inescapable. Everyone has a view of the future. There is no such thing as panmillennialism. You either have a dismal view of the future or a faith-filled view of the future; ultimately there are only two eschatologies. One of the essentials of even entering the land to possess it is a strong belief that Christ's kingdom has come and that of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Jesus promised, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Gates are defensive mechanisms and Christ gave an eschatology that would enable to the church to batter down the gates of Hell and take this world for Jesus. But this means repenting of the faith-killing eschatology of the ten spies and embracing the eschatology of verse 3. Pray that this would happen for the leaders of America's churches.

Dominion (v. 3)

But that same verse had Joshua put his feet on the land. To put your foot on something was symbolic of taking dominion over it. We either give way to Satan's dominion or give way to Christ's dominion, but dominion is inescapable. Somebody is going to take dominion. Right now, it is humanism that has its feet on us. Why? Because Jesus said in Matthew 5 that if the church refuses to be salty with the Law and the Gospel, it is good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot of man. That's where we are at - saltless churches in which God has allowed humanism to take dominion. To enter the land of America, we need to regain a theology of dominion under Christ.

Antithesis or boundaries (vv. 4-9)

And in verses 4-9 God gave boundaries or antithesis. He gave physical boundaries in verses 4-5 and moral boundaries in verses 6-9. These boundaries were crystal clear in the word of God, yet they would be

challenged every step of the way by the Canaanites. The world always challenges God's boundaries.

Discouragement, difficulty, and obstacles can make us settle for something less than what God has dictated. But clear cut lines must be drawn by leaders if they are to be successful. We see culture's opposition graying the lines of antithesis in the church so that churches no longer take hard and fast stands on issues like premarital fornication, gender distinctions, socialism (especially if I can get something for free from the state). And when kids see the parents compromising, they often take the compromise even further.

Now, some people might think that drawing lines or boundaries is not nice. It's too hard core. But antithesis or drawing lines is inescapable. If you don't draw the lines where God does, those lines will be drawn elsewhere for you by Satan's kingdom.

Let me illustrate why this is always so. Ours is a culture that pretends to tolerate all viewpoints and to be pluralistic, right? Well, that's a lie. As you may have noticed, Christians are being increasingly marginalized, persecuted and treated as outside the scope of what can be tolerated in the schools, courts, on Facebook, Google, or any other public realm. Humanists are drawing lines. Antithesis is inescapable. It is becoming clear that some Congressmen and women want to make Christianity illegal in the public square. They will tolerate Christian faith if it is kept private and out of the public realm.

Why is every view except the exclusive views of Christ tolerated? Why is pluralism so intolerant of Christianity? Because antithesis is inescapable. If you think there is no antithesis out there, I challenge you to try an experiment. Go to your next sensitivity training seminar at work and when they deal with women's issues, give the Bible's opinion and see if it is tolerated. When they deal with homosexuality, give the Bible's opinion and see if you keep your job. There is always an antithesis. And you can actually be smarter than that in how you maintain antithesis - no point in letting them define the battle lines, but I'm just stating the obvious. Antithesis is inescapable. The only question is, who has the right to define it, God or man? It is inescapable. And until America's church leaders reestablish boundaries, they aren't even ready for square one - to enter the land of Canaan.

Faith in God's promises (v. 5)

God called Joshua to have faith in His promises in verse 5. Joshua sensed his

weaknesses and inadequacy, but God calls leaders to find their strength in the Lord, not in themselves.

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

What an awesome promise! If God is with us, who can be against us? It doesn't matter whether we are a minority or a majority.

Courage (vv. 6,7,9)

And I love the call to courage in verses 6,7, and 9. Courage is not lack of nervousness. It is a willingness to do the right thing despite being nervous. Why does God call him to be strong? Probably because he was nervous and he sensed his weakness and inadequacy.

6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous... [skipping down to verse 9] 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

To be a man of the Bible (vv. 7-8)

And then finally, leaders often think they don't have enough time to get into the Bible, but it would be hard to imagine a busier guy than Joshua, yet he was immersed in the Word. And verses 7-8 call him to this. This again calls for courage, because it takes courage to be a man or a woman of the Bible. Without courage, the church will not enter the land of Canaan and penetrate every aspect of America's society with Law and Gospel. Again, we are trying to get to stage one of this book, right? These are all pre-requisites. God told Joshua,

7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

It takes courage to follow God's laws, but when we courageously do so, God promises to turn the tide and to make the church's way prosperous. And the book of Joshua shows the amazing things that can happen when the leaders show these characteristics.

V. Brief summary of the notes that I will skip in the morning sermon

Now, I am going to be skipping over about half an hour's worth of notes that I'll put up on the web. But let me at least give you a summary of where

those notes would have taken you.

In the rest of chapter 1, Israel takes its cues from the faith, vision, and excitement of Joshua, and they enthusiastically follow Joshua's marching orders. The faith, hope, vision, and courage of leaders can be infectious.

In chapter 2 we have the marvelous story of faithful spies that God used in a strange providence to bring the Gospel to Rahab. And both Hebrews 11 and James 2 say that she was soundly saved. And God mysteriously put her into Christ's genealogy (along with two other Gentiles) to show that He is the Savior for all the world - Jew and Gentile.

Aaron Fox gave a great devotional on memorials at this past Thursday morning at the Men's Prayer breakfast. Chapter 4 gives some wonderful lessons on memorials and the importance of remembering the past. Tyrants want to rewrite history because they know how important it is to destroy powerful providential history if they are to keep people in servile submission. Providential history and memorials are one of the tools to break that pattern.

Chapter 5 deals with the circumcision of the second generation. This too was a very tangible commitment to the Lord. Think of it - God had them get circumcised in enemy territory. It would take them a while to get healed up and be ready to fight. So they were putting themselves in jeopardy. This was a major test of their faith. And there are other lessons that can be learned of helping our children put off the reproach of Egypt and be separated unto God.

We already looked at the Passover-Firstfruits celebration in chapter 5.

But that chapter also shows the commander of the heavenly armies showing the relationship between our battles on earth and the battles of heaven. All of these things were preparatory to conquest.

Once the land was entered by faith, faith won victory after victory. Jericho is a thrilling story with numerous applications to our modern life.

Ai is a sombre warning that we must depend upon the Lord and do things His way. Private sins can weaken the whole church. Past victories are no excuse for growing lazy.

But chapters 6-13:7 show that the meek shall inherit the earth. And Joshua ends that section by pointing out that none of God's promises had failed them. They inherited all the boundaries that God had promised, even though there were pockets of resistance within that would take some generations to

complete. But they inherited all the promised boundaries.

Chapters 13-21 then deal with building a positive civilization within Canaan. The library cities of the Canaanites that housed their pornographic literature had already been burned to ground. And once the old civilization had been torn down, the new one had to be step by step constructed according to God's word.

And the command is given in chapter 18 to not be content with where they are at, but to dispossess all God's enemies. I think this was the problem in early America. They were satisfied with a predominantly Christian nation but didn't bother to take things further than the Puritans had taken them - to make every venture more and more Biblically consistent. But here is the problem in life - if you aren't going forward, you will end up going backwards. And that is the story of Judges, for next week. So settling the land does not mean your work is done. Our work is not done till we are dead.

In the last section of the book Joshua tells them what each generation must do if they are to retain the land. Though I don't have time to comment on each point, they are worth at least listing. In Joshua 23 he tells them they must 1. remember God's faithfulness 2. make plans for the future 3. be committed to the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the bible 4. Maintain antithesis and resist all compromise 5. Have faith that it is worth it - that our labors in the Lord are not in vain - that God does indeed bless our faithful efforts. 6. And the final call to diligently pass on the worldview and character issues learned to the next generation.

So we have seen in Genesis through Joshua that there is a seamless and logical movement forward. All these books give us clues on what must be in place if the church is to make the nations of this world to be Christian nations under God. May God bring such Reformation to the church that this would be possible. Amen.

I wish I had had time to preach on the glorious battle against Jericho, but we will end by singing the key principles of that chapter. Please stand as we sing Lift High the Banners.

Notes skipped in sermon

Israel's marching orders (1:10-18)

So in verses 10-18 Joshua gives Israel their marching orders, and they respond enthusiastically. Faith, hope, vision, courage is infectious. If

America's leaders and the church's leaders would have what Joshua had, I think the people would get hope for the first time in their lives, would get excited, and would follow. I won't get into all of the applications of that section, but they are many.

The faith of the spies and Rahab and the fear of the Canaanites (2)

In chapter 2 God uses the story of the spies and Rahab to illustrate three things. First, Rahab tells them that the Canaanites are shaking in their boots. You might think that Israel was intimidated, but no, it was the Canaanites who were intimidated. This announcement of what the Canaanites thought would have been encouraging news.

Second, we find out that the spies have faith; they are quite different than the spies that had been sent out forty years before.

But the most remarkable story is that of Rahab. It is a marvelous story of sovereign grace. God did not save her because she was more receptive to the Gospel than others. He did not save her because she deserved a break. There were many other abused women in that culture, and they were all destroyed. It was God's sovereign good pleasure to lead the two spies to her house rather than any other house. It was sovereign grace pure and simple. This ought to give comfort to those of you who have been from rough backgrounds. God saves us despite ourselves. He saves us out of our own personal hell holes. He saves us because of how good He is, not because of how good we are.

But it also illustrates that though Hebrews 11:31 uses Rahab to prove that we are justified by faith alone, James 2:25 uses Rahab to show that genuine faith always has repentance and a change in life. Her repentance can be seen in that she took the scarlet cord (the sign of her trade) off the front door and put it on the wall facing God. She was giving God her sins and God gave her His righteousness.

She is also an example of how God can save an entire household through the faith of one person.

And God deliberately put her into the genealogical line of Christ to illustrate how Jesus became a friend of sinners and gives hope to sinners. He's not just connected to Jews, but in His genealogy He is connected to several gentiles. Not only did she become a great model of faith in the Bible, but a great model of faithful works.

The miraculous crossing of the Jordan (3-4)

The miraculous crossing of the Jordan is covered in chapters 3-4 and establishes Joshua almost like a second Moses. In a sense this is like Cortez burning his ships behind him. There was no retreat. They were committed to take the land. This was the time of the flooding of the Jordan.

And the big pile of memorial stones from the bed of the river that were placed on land in chapter 4 was preparation for future generations who ever doubted God's miraculous provision. Aaron Fox gave a wonderful talk on memorials at Thursday morning's prayer breakfast. We need to remind ourselves and our children of the victories of the past so that we will be inspired to trust God for victories in the future. Verses 6-7 say,

...that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, "What do these stones mean to you?" 7 Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

We all have a tendency to forget. I may have even more of a tendency to forget than some of you, but we all have a tendency to forget things. I forget some of the exact details of events in my parents lives. Here are children who need to be reminded, "What do these stones mean to you?" And memorials are great ways of keeping our memories of God's goodness fresh.

Some people jog their memories by reading their journals once a year. There have been times of dryness in my life when I have read my journal, and it has been so encouraging. I had forgotten all of the incredible things God has done for me. Others do it by setting aside a special day to go through their collectibles, and each collectible has a memory they can talk through. When the grandkids ask, "Why do you have that funny stitched picture?" it gives an opportunity for the grandparent to explain God's goodness from the past that this picture reminds him of. Sometimes it is simply sitting down with great grandpa and asking lots and lots of questions. But we need our memories jogged concerning the past, and memorials are one way of doing so.

One of the first four things that tyrants do in order to remove freedom from the people is to rewrite history. They make them forget their past. That's what the government schools have done with the history books. Even when my wife was a little kid, the history books had become false revisionist history, but they are far worse now. If you can cause people to forget past judgments or past blessings it can help to erase the idea of a cause and effect universe. So remembering the past is critically important for dominion.

Circumcision of the second generation (5:1-9)

Chapter 5 deals with the circumcision of the second generation. This too was a very tangible commitment to the Lord. Think of it - God had them get circumcised in enemy territory. It would take them a while to get healed up and be ready to fight. This was a major test of their faith.

But what a powerful sign that God was calling them to be separated from the world. In chapter 5:9 it says, "Then the LORD said to Joshua, 'This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.'" They had left Egypt 40 years before, but it was just now, on this day, that the reproach of Egypt was finally eliminated. That is an amazing statement. It didn't matter that they were believers; the reproach of Egypt was still clinging to them. It didn't matter that they had previously won some battles. By failing to be circumcised, they were still identifying with the world. And it is a shame that so many parents baptize their children as a sign that they are separate from the world, and then send them to government education. It makes no sense.

Before Israel could take the conquest of Canaan, God wanted them to have a radical renunciation of the world and commitment to His ways of doing things. Were they God's people? Yes. But were they prepared for the conflict? No. God wanted it to be unmistakably clear that they were committed to Him unto death. These were all necessary steps for entering the land.

Passover-Firstfruits (5:10-12)

Having received circumcision and having testified of their faith, they were now ready to take Passover in verses 10-12. The Passover meal too was preparatory. Without the strength of Christ's grace (symbolized in the meal) they could not succeed in this grand venture.

Allegiance pledged to Yehowah as Commander in Chief (5:13-15)

And finally, in verses 13-15 Joshua pledges allegiance to Yehowah, the Commander in Chief of all His armies in heaven and on earth. I would love to preach through those verses, but I don't have time. But they illustrated two things: Without the hosts of heaven on their side, Israel would not win. And second, without total submission to the Commander of the armies of heaven, the armies of heaven would not be on their side.

Joshua knows these battles on earth were ultimately won by spiritual battles between angels and demons. And in these verses Joshua shows the humility, worship, prayer, and submission that would result in blessing. When Joshua

prays, he asks, “What does my Lord say to His servant?” Prayer is essential for victory, but notice this prayer was about God’s will to be done on earth (and being willing to carry out that will), not about Joshua’s will being done in heaven.

This passage shows that Joshua was a sold-out servant for Yehowah’s cause. It is a marvelous finale to the first section of the book.

A. Conquest of the land (6:1-13:7)

Tests at Jericho (6)

The conquest of the land takes eight chapters, and it starts with Jericho, which is full of lessons.

I’ll mention one that might otherwise be missed. Chapter 6, verse 3 says that they marched around the city one time on each of six days in a row. Verse 15 says,

But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times.

We aren’t told which day of the week they started their marching, but it is clear that there were seven days in a row in which there was marching around Jericho at least one time. This meant that they marched at least once around the city on a Sabbath. This was the passage that convinced the Maccabees that they could defend themselves when they were attacked on the Sabbath. But I think it also has implications for travel, and that the Pharisees were adding to the Bible when they wouldn’t allow people to travel more than a certain short distance.

Another area of testing that these Israelites had was to follow orders exactly. They might have thought getting up at a certain hour to march around the city was a little strange. And by day six it may have seemed even stranger. The priests may not have understood why they were to blow the trumpets on all seven days but Israel was to be silent on the first six. There were symbolical elements that God was teaching, and whether they understood it or not, they followed. The trumpets were summons to warfare in Scripture. I believe they were calling the heavenly hosts to this place. But details is details, and God expects them to be done. How are you with the tiny details of God’s plan?

As you read through the chapter you see that they were taught to trust God’s power that can take on any problem, God’s wisdom even when you don’t

understand God's commands, God's timing even though you may wish He would speed up, and God's methods even when you think other methods would be better. They were tested on contentment by forbidding them to rescue any gold, clothing, or anything else. It may have seemed like a waste, but hey, if that's what God wants, that's what I'll give God. And they were tested on whether they would trust God's justice. And they passed most of the tests. Verse 21 says, "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword."

That last verse is the scandal of this chapter in modern eyes. In 1996 Theodore Drange said of this verse, "It seems quite unethical for God to order the execution of so many people, whatever their offense might have been, especially in the case of the children, who were presumably innocent." Really? Whatever their offense may have been? What's the assumption of this objection? That man is the determiner of ethics, not God, and that man is therefore never worthy of death. But it is missing the true problem, isn't it? We've already seen that there is no problem of pain and suffering. What is amazing is all the evidences of God's Gospel of grace and mercy in this book.

Tests at Ai (7)

Chapter 7 shows God testing the Israelites at Ai. Achan disobeyed God by taking plunder. So why does God punish all Israel? Because there is such a thing as corporate guilt. Your private sins don't just impact you; they negatively impact this whole church. That's one of the messages of chapter 7. Verse 12 says,

Josh. 7:12 "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you.

Can you see why I as a pastor am so concerned that we confess our sins regularly? God doesn't call us to be perfect. He only calls us to confess our sins, to hate our sins, to forsake our sins and to keep fighting against our sins.

This sin needed discipline because it was a sin against knowledge that was willfully engaged in and was defiant. The reason I say it was defiant was because God had already said that He would destroy anyone who took plunder from Jericho (6:18). Achan took plunder anyway.

His sin led to defeat of the whole army in battle. God exposes Achan and He

is executed at God's command. This reversed things and God's pleasure once again rested upon them, and they were easily able to defeat Ai.

The point is that it's not by our strength or wit or tactics that we win, but by God's pleasure resting upon us. And sin held onto removes God's good pleasure. Interestingly, verses 24 and 26 call the place where Achan was executed "the Valley of Achor," which means the Valley of Disturbance. But because the disturbance was dealt with God's way, that valley became a reminder that if God is with us, no one can stand against us. So Hosea 2:15 calls that same Valley of Achor, "a door of hope."

Your very defeats can become valleys of hope. God allows us to fall so that our hatred for sin will be strengthened. He comforts us in the Valley of Achor because His forgiveness and His mercies are new every morning. No matter how deep your valley may be, your valley of Achor can be a valley of hope.

Victory at Ai (8)

It's no wonder then that chapter 8 shows a renewed confidence, joy, and faith in God's promises in verse 1. Verse 2 shows a renewal of stewardship and fulfillment. And verses 1-29 shows a willingness to be instructed by the Lord, a full fledged obedience, and victory. So at the end of that chapter, they renew their covenant pledges to the Lord before the altar of stone. Connecting that altar of stone with Ai is such a beautiful testimony to the fact that all our victories are yes and amen in Christ and in Christ alone.

Satan's tactics in chapter 9

In chapter 9 we see several tactics of Satan at work. In verses 1-3 he seeks to intimidate Israel. In verse 4 he uses deceit. And by failing to look to the Lord in guidance, they have the wool pull over their eyes, and a covenant is made with the Gibeonites, who become a part of Israel. Initially they are slaves, but they eventually come to freedom and excel the Israelites in their devotion to Yehowah. They become a symbol of the Gentiles coming into the church of the New Covenant.

God's control of the sun in the battle against Adoni-Zedek (10:1-15)

In chapter 10 we have the amazing story of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still in the sky, and it does not set for a prolonged period of time until they could win against the coalition of Canaanites under Adoni-Zedek. God can move heaven and earth to accomplish His kingdom purposes.

The conquest of Southland (10:28-43)

And I'll skip over most of the remaining conquests that Israel successfully engaged in. The point is, they learned from past failures and past successes. We too must do the same.

The conquest of the Northern land (11)

Chapter 11:23 says, "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land rested from war." Though it rested from war, chapter 13:1 says that there still remained much land yet to be possessed. This is no contradiction to 11:23, since Moses had promised,

And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you.

A list of all the kings conquered (12-13:7)

So even though they possessed the whole land in terms of outward geographic boundaries, there were still pockets of resistance that God had remain. And the purpose for this is given in Judges 3:1-2 - to teach the next generation spiritual warfare and dependence.

B. Settling the land (13:8-21:45)

But from chapter 13:8 through the end of chapter 21 Joshua divides the land up among all the tribes and the people. This would have been a very difficult job to do equitably. In 17:14 the descendants of Joseph complain that their lot was too small, "since we are a great people." And Joshua's response is, "If you are a great people, then go up to the forest country and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you." If you are so great, let's see you do something great. So there are challenges in apportioning the land, but it is accomplished.

And the command is given in chapter 18 to not be content with where they are at, but to dispossess all God's enemies. I think this was the problem in early America. They were satisfied with a predominantly Christian nation but didn't bother to take things further than the Puritans had taken them - to make every venture more and more Biblically consistent. But if you aren't going forward, you will end up going backwards. And that is the story of Judges, for next week. So settling the land does not mean your work is done. That simply gives the opportunity to become more thoroughly consistent in

dominion.

C. Retaining the land (22-24)

And finally, in chapters 22-24 Joshua tells them what they must do if they are to retain the land. He first praises them for their past faithfulness, but then warns them that it would be so easy to backslide.

The people on the west side of the Jordan take his words seriously, and they build a memorial. At first, Joshua thinks they have made a competing altar with the one in the Tabernacle, and he was ready to go to war against them. But when he finds out that they didn't plan to offer any sacrifices there, but rather it was a memorial to remind them of the importance of steadfast commitment to God and to His tabernacle, Joshua is pleased.

And in the final chapters God lays out some key things that must be in place if the land is to be retained for the future. I won't get into the details, but briefly:

They must remember God's faithfulness (23:3-4)

23:3-4 says that they must remember God's faithfulness in the past. Providential history inspires people to imitate and to remain faithful.

They must continue to advance God's kingdom (v. 5)

Second, they must continue to make plans to advance God's kingdom (verse 5). Never be satisfied until every square inch of planet earth is put under the feet of King Jesus. It's so easy to rest after a few victories and think we have done our work. But our work is not done until we are dead. Caleb as an old man is ready to take on new challenges.

They must continue in faithfulness to the whole counsel of God (v. 6)

Verse 6 called them to continue in faithfulness to the whole counsel of God. This cannot be taken for granted. How many men in the Bible started well but ended poorly, like Hezekiah. How many ministers of the Gospel had fantastic ministry before the Lord in their first years, but allowed compromises to make them soft and eventually ineffectual in their last years.

They must maintain antithesis (v. 7-13)

In verses 7-13 of his speech Joshua called them once again to maintain antithesis. This is one of the great failings of our generation - the church has

blurred the lines to avoid persecution. I was greatly offended by the “Fairness for All” document that was recently pushed forward by the National Association of Evangelicals, Council for Christian Colleges, and other evangelical leaders. It is supposed to be a productive compromise with the LGBTQ+ community. It purports to protect religious liberties and at the same time protect LGBTQ+ rights. But what it really does is give special rights to the LGBTQ+ people that no one else has and to give special protections to pastors and colleges that no member of a church or member of a college has. To me it is a cowardly way of pastors and Christian colleges protecting themselves against persecution and leaving the bakers, florists, artists, photographers, and others in their congregations completely unprotected from lawsuits. It’s cowardly. Far from being fair, it denies freedom for Christians and as Alliance Defending Freedom words it, “makes conformity the price of citizenship.”⁵ There is no antithesis in this approach; only concession. And it is sad that the president of Covenant College and of Wheaton College both signed it, as did the National Association of Evangelicals and the Council for Christian Colleges. Thankfully some Christian colleges are leaving that association in order to maintain their antithesis.

They must keep in mind God’s covenant faithfulness to both bless (v. 14) and curse (15-16)

Verse 14 reminds them that our God is not just faithful to bless obedience, He is also faithful to punish disobedience. Think of blessings and discipline as part of the laws of harvest. Whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, you will reap dandelions if you plant dandelions, and you will reap curses if you sow compromise.

They must pass on the covenant to the next generation (24:1-33)

The last chapter shows that if they are to retain the land, they must pass the covenant on to their children.

So we have seen in Genesis through Joshua that there is a seamless and logical movement forward. All these books give us clues on what must be in place if the church is to make the nations of this world to be Christian nations under God. May God bring such Reformation to the church that this would be possible. Amen.

5 <https://www.adflegal.org/detailspages/press-release-details/fairness-for-all-proposal-isn-t-fair-at-all>