

JOSHUA



STRONG & COURAGEOUS

(7 BIBLE STUDIES)

EXAMINATION

BIBLE STUDIES

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THE SMALL PRINT

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Your Commitment

I would encourage you to make a commitment to attending your group regularly. I realise that sometimes there are things that get in the way, but do prioritise studying the Bible with other. This will involve sacrifice, and effective use of your time, but I really believe that in doing so you will get the most out of studying the Bible and praying together in your small group.

Your Contribution

What you put into the group is going to determine what you get out of the group. I encourage you to contribute honestly to the discussion and workings of the group. I understand people come from different backgrounds with unique personalities & life experiences. But, we all have a big part to play, so I encourage you to be fully present and take ownership of your group.

Your Preparation

These materials are primarily for use in preparing and/or leading group discussions, but they will also be useful in keeping your thoughts together in one place. The materials provide you with the passage so that you can identify and highlight recurring themes and note down your own thoughts and questions. Also, the materials include questions designed to provoke thought, and help you reflect on what the passage meant, both at the time it was written, and also what it means for us now.

I would encourage you to make good use of these materials, as doing so will help you contribute and get the most out of the group discussions. The materials are, however, only “tools” – they are there to help you, and not to restrict you, or force you to think in a certain manner. I want to see God speaking to you through these passages, and if the questions or notes don't help you, simply don't use them!

I have also included within these materials an introduction to the book. Make of this what you will, but I hope that it is helpful in getting you started with these studies!

Your Leadership

Here are some useful pointers in how to lead your Bible study group. Be aware that included in this study guide are more questions than you can possibly ask and/or answer in one session. They are not designed to be used rigidly, and there will rarely be a need to ask every question! Make sure that you spend some time praying at the start and ensure you read & re-read the passages as much as possible. In relation to the passages, then consider the suggested questions with an open mind. There is rarely “a single right answer” and I would encourage you to share your thoughts with your group.

I have also included a number of quotations from relevant Christian literature, most of which are readily available online if you want to do further thinking or study. My prayer is that as you study together you would grow to love Jesus and experience Him more deeply.

I would appreciate your feedback and suggestions on how to make these materials even better!

*Steve McClure
Spring 2019*

INTRODUCING JOSHUA

We move away from the Torah and into the collection of books known in the Hebrew Bible as the Former Prophets - Joshua - 2 Kings. These books contain the history of Israel, from entry into the land to exile from the land. They show the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy working out in the life of the people.

They are history, but not as we would tell history. They are a combination of records and stories, stories of the key characters involved, told in a gripping and engaging way. Joshua is the story of the people's entry into the land. It tells of victory in conquest, and of promises fulfilled. And yet it is a book that has given readers through the centuries difficulties with its account of God's command to completely destroy the Canaanites being fulfilled at different points by Israel. Worse still it has even given some readers justification for dispossessing natives of various lands and racist policies (North America, South Africa, Ireland, South America and Christian Zionist supporters - although intriguingly I believe it has not been much used by Jewish Zionists in the actual history of modern Israel).

I think the first thing to bear in mind is that God's command to place the Canaanites under '*herem*' (the word usually translated 'devote to God by completely destroying') is more to do with making sure that Israel stay completely away from Canaanite religion than meaning that every single Canaanite had to be completely destroyed. It is worth noting that in Jeremiah Nebuchadnezzar is described as carrying out *herem* on Israel and the surrounding nations when he carries Israel into exile.

Also vital to bear in mind when reading Joshua is that the picture of complete and total victory in obedience to Yahweh that we might get at first glimpse is complicated by stories that do not reflect so well on Israel, and that challenge our understanding of who is in, and who is out. The first Canaanite we meet is Rahab, an 'inn-keeper/prostitute' who harbours two Israelite spies. Why does Joshua need spies we wonder, when the last Israelite spy mission did not exactly go well? And why are they at Rahab's? Whatever the answer to those questions it becomes clear that Rahab has a model understanding of God's work. She and her family come under the protection of Israel and Israel's God.

Just before the battle of Jericho, Joshua meets a mysterious warrior figure, who it seems is actually the angel of the LORD, a visible representation of God's presence. Asked whose side he belongs to the warrior replies 'no - but as the captain of the LORD's armies I have come'. The question is not whether God is on our side, but whether we are on his. After Jericho we have the episode of Achan's sin, where an Israelite comes under the curse. A Canaanite has effectively become an Israelite, and now an Israelite becomes a Canaanite. Then it is Israel's protection of the Gibeonites, because of the Gibeonites crafty deception, that triggers more conflicts in the land.

The story of Joshua is not as simple as 'destroy all the Canaanites'. Rather it is about Israel entering the land God had promised, and seeing that others can be part of that if they act in line with God's promises - and equally that Israel will forfeit the land if they start to act like Canaanites.

It is about Israel entering the land so that they can show that the land is a taste of what God intends for all creation. After the action of the first 11 chapters or so comes the second half of the book which

seems much less interesting as it describes the apportioning of land, and the success or failure of individual tribes. At the heart of this section though comes a key verse:

*Then the whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them. **Joshua 18:1***

The tent of meeting, the tabernacle has somewhere to rest. Then the word 'subdued' echoes the command to people given in Genesis 1. One commentator writes these key words:

'Israel's possession of Canaan, therefore, together with its presence before God in worship, has a significance far beyond itself, for it stands as a symbol and promise of the human fulfilment of its mandate to "subdue the earth", namely to bring it to that ordering and completion that God's creative purposes intended for it.'

Gordon McConville, Joshua (Two Horizons)

That promise and mandate is brought to full fulfilment in the NT with the coming of Jesus - whose name is simply the Greek spelling of Joshua. No-where makes this clearer than Hebrews 4. The writer of the Hebrews speaks of a rest that remains for us to enter - the people did not enjoy the rest in the land that Joshua offered in the OT because of their disobedience - but that rest remains on offer for us through the work of Jesus, the second Joshua. He offers rest for us - a rest from our work that begins now with the work of the Spirit applying Jesus work to us, and will be completed when Jesus returns to bring in the New Creation, of which the land in Joshua is a foretaste.

So as we read Joshua we can read and apply the lessons from Israel's physical warfare to our spiritual warfare - a battle that as Paul points out is not against flesh and blood:

*¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **Ephesians 6:12-13***

When we do that Joshua reminds us to keep on trusting God's promises. To remember what God has done for us, and build memorials to that into our lives (Chapters 3-4). It reminds us to go about God's work, trusting his instructions, even if that doesn't make much immediate sense (Joshua 5-6). It reminds us that God is holy, and gives commands for a reason (chapter 7). It offers us a fantastic example of persistent faith to emulate (read about Caleb in Joshua 14), and calls us to wholehearted devotion for ourselves (read chapters 23-24).

Quoted in full from <https://rozandmark.wordpress.com/2019/03/11/joshua/>

Mark Arnold, Feb 2019

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STUDY 1 – JOSHUA 1-2 – TRUSTING IN GOD’S PROMISES

INTRODUCTION: Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of Israel and he was a tough act to follow! Joshua needed to know whether Israel would follow him and whether God would be with him. Rahab is a woman they meet in the land who because of her faith, experiences God's kindness (sparing her family) and God's promises to Israel (becoming an ancestor of David and later Jesus).

SETTING THE SCENE: Think of a time when you have experienced a change in leadership: what where the issues regarding handover? What is it like to either pass on to or take over from someone else? How did the change work out for all involved?

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TRANSITIONS (1:1-9): How do you think Joshua was feeling as he took command of the Israelites and prepared to enter the Promised Land (see also Deuteronomy 1:19-46)? What do you think were the biggest issues facing Joshua as he stepped up to take Moses' role as leader of Israel?

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PROMISES: What are the commands and promises that God gives to Joshua here? What is the relationship here between God's promises and His commands? How do you think that God's words strengthened, encouraged and helped prepare him for his task ahead?

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FOLLOW THE LEADER (1:10-18): What do we learn from Joshua's ability to lead God's people through the various events of these chapters (esp. his handling of the Eastern tribes)? Given their previous failure to enter the land how do you respond to their willingness to follow Joshua?

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STEPPING OUT IN FAITH (2:1-11): What risks is Rahab willing to take in order to help the spies? Why do you think she takes this immense risk? What is so significant about what she knows and believes about the God of Israel (v9-11)?

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RAHAB'S FAITH (2:12-22): What do we know about Rahab and why is it so astonishing that she is included in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:5)? How does she demonstrate genuine faith and in so doing find herself listed in Hebrews 11: the great *hall of faith*?

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"By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient." Hebrews 11:31

MELTING IN FEAR (2:22-24): In what ways is the outcome of this mission of espionage completely different than the one Joshua was part of previously (Deuteronomy 1:19-46)? What impact did all of these things have on the people of Israel as they began to move forward with God?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: If genuine faith is demonstrated through boldness and actions for our God, what specific things do you think that God wants you to do (or be) in obedience to Him? What steps do you need to take in order to be strong and courageous in whatever changes are coming your way?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Discuss what learning points you have noticed from the characters in this story (e.g. Rahab, Joshua, spies, God & Israel). Pray into some of these things and ask God to help enable you to go forward with Him in strength, courage, encouragement and faith.

MEMORY VERSES: JOSHUA 1:8-9

STUDY 2 – JOSHUA 3:1-5:1 – REMEMBERING GOD’S GOODNESS

INTRODUCTION: As Israel begins to enter the land God reminds the Israelites of all that He had done for them in leading them from Egypt to the Promised Land. God told them to build a memorial to help remind them (and future generations) of all that He had done for them.

SETTING THE SCENE: Identify some key moments in your life when God has poured out His goodness on you: what was it that made these moments so significant? Why do you think we find it so easy to forget these moments?

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ARK OF THE COVENANT (3:1-4): What was the significance of the *Ark of the Covenant* (Exodus 25:10-22) and why was it such a big deal? What do you make of the instructions to follow the leading of the Ark (v3-4) but not to go within 900meters of it?

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CONSECRATION (3:5-6): What was consecration and why do you think that it was so important for Israel (v5 and Exodus 19:10-15)? How do you respond to Joshua’s assurance that God would do *amazing things* amongst them? What might be the modern day equivalent of this today?

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EXALTED IN ISRAEL’S EYES (3:7-17, 4:14-5:1): What do you think that God meant when He said that He would begin to exalt Joshua (3:7 & 4:14)? Why was this so important for the relationship between Joshua and Israel? What purpose did it serve among the people?

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PARTING THE RED SEA (3:13-17, 4:14-18): What do we learn from the incredible miracle God performs to allow them to cross the Red Sea? What is the impact on Israel (see 3:10, 4:24b)?

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Some explain this away as a natural occurrence (it can happen): how might the timing of the miracle (both start and finish) but much more difficult to explain away? Why do we find it so hard to believe the miraculous? On what basis should we deal with instances like this in the Bible?

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TWELVE STONES (4:1-12): God instructed them to build a memorial so that they would remind Israel what He had done for them: in what ways do you envisage that this would happen? How do we celebrate what God has done for us in Christ on both a corporate and an individual level?

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THE SURROUNDING NATIONS (4:19-5:1): What was the impact of this miracle on the surrounding nations? What significance is there in the comparison drawn between what God did to the Jordan (the Exodus) and what God did to the Red Sea (v23-24)?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: What can we learn from this passage about God and the way He relates to His people, about trusting God, and about celebrating all that He is and has done in our lives? How does this chapter affirm Joshua's leadership and help prepare the people for their next steps?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Share together about your own experiences of God's abundant blessings in your lives and thank God for those things. Ask God to do amazing things in your lives and to help you to find ways to reflect and remember those things rather than allow them to be forgotten.

MEMORY VERSE: JOSHUA 4:24

STUDY 3 – JOSHUA 5:2-6:27 – THE SECRET OF VICTORY IN BATTLE

INTRODUCTION: Conquering the Promised Land was no easy task and 40 years earlier they had lamented “the land we explored devours those living in it” (Numbers 13:32). Now Israel has finally entered the land, and is set to conquer their first city (Jericho). God uses this experience to teach both Israel (and subsequent generations) how to be victorious in Him.

SETTING THE SCENE: When have you (or have your observed others to have) made a firm agreement to do something: what were the signs of that agreement? What were the consequences of breaking it? What helps you to remember the agreement that you have made?

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A SIGN OF THE COVENANT (5:2-9): As Israel entered the Promised Land why was it important for this generation to be circumcised? Why did God say that He had rolled away the reproach of Egypt from them that day (see v9 and footnote regarding the meaning of Gilgal)?

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FIRST PASSOVER (5:10-12): What do you think it would have meant for Israel to celebrate this Passover meal (see Exodus 12:1-30 for the first Passover)? How does the Lord’s Supper function for us in a similar way to help us remember all God’s deliverance?

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HOLY GROUND (5:13-15): This is a fairly unusual occurrence: why do you think God sends the commander of the army of the LORD? How would Joshua have been impacted by the encounter? How do you respond to his answer to Joshua’s question about whose side he was on? What is the distinction between the LORD joining our side and us joining the LORD’s side?

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A SYMBOLIC VICTORY (6:1-5): Why do you think that God orchestrates victory this plan for victory in the way that he does here? What do you think was the significance (if any) to the various aspects of the Lord’s instructions for the attack of Jericho?

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CLAIMING VICTORY (6:6-16): During the seven day spectacle how do you imagine it would have felt like to be (a) one of the people of Jericho and (b) one of God's people? What lessons was God teaching about how to claim God's victories?

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DEVOTED TO GOD (6:17-24): Why did Joshua need to be so clear about what to do with the devoted things (v18-20)? What was the danger here? What was the significance of devoting the city to the LORD (v21)? How do you respond to the fact that they destroyed every living thing in the city?

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CONSEQUENCES (6:17b, 25-27): As promised Joshua spares Rahab: what was the key difference with her and her family? Why do you think Joshua cursed any who would undertake to rebuild Jericho?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: We too are in a spiritual battle: what lessons can we learn from God's victory over Jericho that will help us claim God's victories in battle? If you have time check out Ephesians 6:10-18 and identify the different pieces of armour that Paul describes for this battle?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Thank God that in Him alone we have victory. Share together about the battles you are facing right now. Pray together about the spiritual battle we are all a part of and ask God to help you put on the Armour of God.

MEMORY VERSE: JOSHUA 6:27

STUDY 4 – JOSHUA 7-8 – GOD’S FIERCE ANGER TO UNFAITHFULNESS

INTRODUCTION: Israel has entered the Promised Land and enjoyed success at Jericho. God was surely pleased with them and conquering the city of Ai should have been straightforward enough! However when they attacked the city their confidence crumbled and they were routed. Why? The effects of the sin of one man had a dramatic impact upon the whole community.

SETTING THE SCENE: When have the actions of one person (perhaps even you) impacted upon a group or community that you have been part of: why are our choices never taken in isolation? How would you feel about others being punished because of some hidden thing that you had done?

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ACHAN’S SIN (7:1-5): What was so serious about Achan’s sin that God was willing to allow it to result in defeat for the army of Israel? The loss of men and defeat in battle had big consequences for the people of Israel (v5): how would this have impacted how they felt about continuing their mission?

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THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM (7:6-15): How does the passage contrast the concerns of Joshua (v6-9) and God (v10-15)? To what extent can you identify with Joshua tearing his clothes, falling facedown and saying if only you had stayed on the other side of the Jordan?

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GIVING ACCOUNT (7:16-22): What do you think it would have been like for Achor both as he tried to sleep and in the process of having to present himself before God? Why does Joshua urge Achan to *give glory to God and honour Him (v19)*?

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A FITTING PUNISHMENT (7:23-26): How do you respond to Achan's severe punishment despite *giving glory to God* by confessing his sin? Is this justice? Why or why not? If the Valley of Achor was a place of Judgement how does Hosea 2:14-15 help us to see how it might become a door of hope?

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*¹⁴ Therefore I am now going to allure her [Israel]; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her. ¹⁵ There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will respond as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt. **Hosea 2:14-15***

GOD'S VICTORY (8:1-29): What is different the second time they attack the city of Ai and what was it that made the difference in victory? Where do you see the hand of God working through all of this in a battle that was already won? What about us: in what sense is our spiritual battle already won?

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COVENANT RENEWAL (8:30-35): Why was it so important for the people to renew the covenant at Mount Ebal as Moses had instructed in Deuteronomy 27-28? What impact would this renewal and the reading of the words of the law (v34-35) have had on Israel?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: The Israelites build two large piles of rocks (7:26 & 8:29): as you imagine those rocks what do you think would have come to mind for the Israelites as they passed by? What reminders help you to choose not to sin?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Pray together that God would convict each of you of any unconfessed sin in your lives. Thank God for His grace, forgiveness and that there is no condemnation for those in Christ (Romans 8:1). Ask God to work in you to put away anything that displeases God.

MEMORY VERSE: JOSHUA 8:1

STUDY 5 – JOSHUA 9:1-10:27– RUSE AND REDEMPTION

INTRODUCTION: Defeat in Ai was down to the sin of Achan and God told them that they would not be able to stand against their enemies until they had dealt with the sin. In this chapter 9 Israel suffers a further setback but this time their disobedience is the result of deception. Then in chapter 10, despite victories in battle the Israelites still needed to be reassured of God's presence with them.

SETTING THE SCENE: Think of a time when have you agreed to something without really thinking it through and found yourself to have been deceived: what were the circumstances of this incident? What were the consequences? How easily would you say that you are deceived by others?

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THE GIBEONITE RUSE (9:1-15): How did the Gibeonites go about deceiving the Israelites and what made their deception so convincing? Why do you think that God did not want His people to make treaties with other nations (Deuteronomy 7:2, 20:10-18)? Why then do you think that the Israelites made a treaty (all be it with what they thought was a distant nation) when God had been so clear?

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Why do you think that the Israelites did not enquire of the Lord (v14)? What might such an enquiry have looked like both for them and also for us today? Can you recall times when you have found yourself in a similar position and failed to seek God about it?

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DEALING WITH THE DECEPTION (9:16-27): Why do the Israelites take their oath so seriously even though it was based on a lie (v16-19)? Why do they not get the same kind of attention in the Bible that Rahab did who also fought for her life through a lie? How did Joshua's curse help resolve the issue?

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KILLED AND AVENGED (2 SAMUEL 21:1-9): David realises that they had suffered three years of famine because Saul had tried to kill off the Gibeonites: what does this tell us about seriously God takes our commitments? What do you think of we way that they were then avenged?

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GOD'S VICTORY (10:1-15): After all they had been through, why does Joshua need further reassurance that God had given the Amorites over to them (v8)? Why do you think God fought this battle for them in such an extraordinary way (v10-14)? How would this have encouraged them?

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FEET ON THEIR NECKS (10:16-27): What was the significance of this striking picture of Israel's dominance (1 Kings 5:3, Psalm 110:1)? In what way would this victory have served to encourage Israel for the future? How does the NT develop this picture regarding God's ultimate victory in 1 Corinthians 15:26-27 & Ephesians 1:22?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: The conquest was continuing to throw up quite a few challenges but God continued to demonstrate that He was with them: how as the events of these chapters encouraged you to seek God and not to be afraid of all those who would oppose us or our God?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Ask God to help you to be people of your word (keeping your commitments) and people who seek God before throwing ourselves into things we haven't worked through. Pray for one another that in doing so you would experience God's victory in your lives.

MEMORY VERSES: JOSHUA 10:13-14

STUDY 6 – JOSHUA 10:28-22:34 – DIVIDING UP THE LAND

INTRODUCTION: This huge section is a real challenge to cover in one study! I think it is best served by drawing out the big picture rather than drilling down in detail. We see firstly how Israel is victorious over the Southern and Northern Kings. Then having grown old (13:1) God tells Joshua to divide up the land as per Moses' instructions. Finally in chapter 22 we see the Eastern tribes return home.

SETTING THE SCENE: For some of us leaving a task unfinished is deeply unsatisfactory while for others there is a strong eagerness to get on to the next task as soon as possible: which camp would you place yourself in and why? What characteristics are needed to be a *finisher* rather than a pioneer?

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THE BATTLES CONTINUE (10:28-12:24): How does God continue to remain faithful to Israel as they engage with the Kings of the South (10:28-43) and the North (11:1-23)? How did the Israelites get on with God's command to totally destroy these nations (10:30, 35, 37, 39 & 40, 11:14-15)?

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EXTERMINATE WITHOUT MERCY (11:16-20): What is your response to God's role in hardening of the hearts of the Northern Kings and the mandate to totally exterminate them without mercy (v18-20)? Thirty one Kings and their lands were conquered: how do you square a God of love with the brutal process of extermination Israel carried out (see also Genesis 15:13-16)?

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DIVISION OF THE LAND (13:8-21:45): What do you imagine would be the challenges associated with the division of the land? How much of this task lay unfinished (13:1-7, 18:1-10) and had these lands not yet been taken? What do you see as the significance of 18:1 regarding the tent of meeting and their exploits to that point (notice the echoes of God command in Genesis 1:28 to subdue the earth)?

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WHOLEHEARTED CALEB (14:6-15): Caleb (who with Joshua was one of the two spies to urge Israel to enter the land 40 previously) gets his own land: what do you understand by the description of his wholeheartedness (v8-9)? What do you think enabled him to stick wholeheartedly to serving God without giving up? What can we learn from the scale of his rest and reward?

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REST ON EVERY SIDE (21:43-45): So finally Israel gets rest on every side and we have this declaration that not one of God's promised had failed them: what do you think would have been the response of the people of Israel to this incredible provision? How do Hebrews 4:8-11 help us to appreciate that this rest was only a shadow of what was to come through the work of Jesus?

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THE EASTERN TRIBES (22:1-34): Joshua sends the Eastern tribes back to their land having done all that he and Moses had commanded. How did controversy soon bubble up regarding the issue of the altar (v10-20) and how was this situation diffused (v21-34)?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: What would be the key lessons you have learned from this huge and fairly complex section? How do they encourage you to bring glory to the one who never fails to keep His promises? How do these chapters point forward to the blessings we now have in Christ?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Ask God to help you keep on keeping on as you live to love and serve God in your everyday lives. Pray for one another that you would trust God as He leads you in to His rest.

MEMORY VERSE: JOSHUA 14:9

STUDY 7 – JOSHUA 23-24 – WHOM WILL YOU SERVE?

INTRODUCTION: We are now approx. 20 years since the end of the conquest of the land (11:23) and during Joshua's leadership Israel has walked faithfully with God. As new change is now on the horizon, Joshua seeks to challenge, warn and encourage Israel about the future. God had been continually faithful to His promises, but at this key moment He asks Israel "whom will you serve"?

SETTING THE SCENE: Imagine that you are nearing the end of your life: what would be the messages of challenge and encouragement that you would want to give the people around you? When in the past have you been on the receiving end of such help?

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GRATITUDE (23:1-5): In what ways does Joshua attest to God's goodness to them since entering the land? How also has God been good to you and fought for you? The Land had been divided up but there was still work to be done (v4): how does Joshua encourage them to complete the job?

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THE PROMISES OF GOD (23:6, 8-11): These words hark back to the stirring encouragement given back in chapter 1: what might it look like for them to *hold fast* (v8) to the LORD? In what sense is our love for God so vital if we want God to fight for us as He had promised (v9-11)?

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SEPARATION (23:7-8, 12-13): God prohibited Israel from associating, intermarrying or allying themselves with the nations around them: why was this separation so important? What aspects of our culture could become snares, traps, whips on our backs and thorns in our eyes today (v13)? Look forward to the period after Joshua in Judges 3:7-8: how did this work out for them?

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GOD DOES WHAT HE SAYS HE WILL (23:14-16): God is faithful both to His promises and also to His warnings: what warnings had God given them? How do they apply to us today? What is your experience of God's promises: could you stand with Joshua and say that none had failed?

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COVENANT RENEWAL (24:1-13): What do you notice about how they had come to be where they now were? Why is it so important for us to see how God has led us and given us victory?

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SERVE GOD (24:14-28): The word "serve" is emphasised here (v14-16, v18-22, v24 & v31): why do you think that it may have seemed undesirable (v15)? What is it that makes Joshua so adamant that he and his family will serve the LORD (v15)? Why does Joshua appear to reject their initial statement about serving God (v19-20)? What was the significance of the covenant renewal and the large stone?

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JOSHUA'S LIFETIME (24:29-33): What is it going to take for you to serve God throughout your own lifetimes just as Joshua had done (v31)? What would you say is the secret of Joshua's success?

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DRAWING IT TOGETHER: How are you working out the challenge to serve the Lord alone in your own life? What daily choices do we face about who we will serve? What makes serving the Lord difficult and how will you reaffirm your commitment to Him today?

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IDEAS FOR PRAYER: Thank God for His goodness over your lifetime and ask Him to help you remember all that He has taught you. Pray for ongoing faithfulness in all that lies ahead of you.

MEMORY VERSE: JOSHUA 24:15

MEMORY VERSES

STUDY 1: JOSHUA 1-2 – TRUSTING GOD’S PROMISES

⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.’

Joshua 1:8-9

STUDY 2: JOSHUA 3-4 – REMEMBERING GOD’S GOODNESS

²⁴ He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.’

Joshua 4:24

STUDY 3: JOSHUA 5-6 – THE SECRET OF VICTORY IN BATTLE

²⁷ So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

Joshua 6:27

STUDY 4: JOSHUA 7-8 – GOD’S FIERCE ANGER TO UNFAITHFULNESS

Then the LORD said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. **Joshua 8:1**

STUDY 5: JOSHUA 9:1-10:27 – RUSE AND REDEMPTION

¹³ So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. ¹⁴ There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!

Joshua 10:13-14

STUDY 6: JOSHUA 10:28-22:34 – DIVIDING UP THE LAND

⁹ So on that day Moses swore to me, “The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children for ever, because you have followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.”

Joshua 14:9

STUDY 7: JOSHUA 23-24 – WHOM WILL YOU SERVE?

¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.’

Joshua 24:15