

# Lesson 16: Joshua and the Promised Land

## Reading Preparation:

- Joshua 1-11; 14; 23-24

## Outline:

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## Lesson Notes:

### [1. Book of Joshua](#)

Adam Clark states,

*"The Book of Joshua is one of the most important writings in the old covenant and should never be separated from the Pentateuch, of which it is at once both the continuation and completion. Between this book and the five Books of Moses there is the same analogy as between the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The Pentateuch contains a history of the Acts of the great Jewish legislator, and the laws on which the Jewish church should be established. The Book of Joshua gives an account of the establishment of that church in the land of Canaan, according to the oft-repeated promises and declarations of God. The Gospels given an account of the transactions of Jesus Christ, the great Christian Legislator, and of those laws on which His Church should be established, and by which it should be governed. The Acts of the Apostles gives an account of the actual establishment of that Church, according to the predictions and promises of its great Founder. Thus, then the Pentateuch bears as pointed relation to the Gospels as the Book of Joshua does to the Acts of the Apostles"* (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1967 [Nineteenth printing, March 1991], 237).

If we see the book of Joshua as the establishment of the children of Israel in the Promised land under the guidelines prescribed by Moses and the continuation of God's covenant with his covenant people, then the connection between the first five books of Moses and the book of Joshua seems apparent.

The LDS Bible Dictionary states,

*"The Book of Joshua is so called not because he [Joshua] is the author, but because he is the principal figure in it."* (Joshua, Book of. LDS Bible Dictionary in Holy Bible. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1979, 718)

The LDS Bible Dictionary continues,

*"The Three The Major Divisions of book of Joshua are:*

1. *"[T]he Conquest of Canaan (Joshua 1-12).*
2. *"[T]he allotment of the land among the tribes (Joshua 13-22).*
3. *"Joshua's Farewell address (Joshua 23-24).*

*"The book [of Joshua] was regarded by the Jews as the first of the "former prophets, but it is more properly a continuation of the first Five books."* (Joshua, Book of. LDS Bible Dictionary in Holy Bible. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1979, 718).

Adam Clarke states,

*“Joshua, son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, was first called Oshea or Hoshea (Numbers 13:16) which signifies saved, a savior, or salvation, but afterward, Moses, guided no doubt by a prophetic spirit, changed his name into Yehoshua or Joshua, which signifies he shall save or the salvation of Jehovah; referring no doubt to his being God’s instrument in saving the people from the hands of their enemies and leading them from victory to victory over the different Canaanitish nations, till he put them in possession of the Promised Land.” (Adam Clark’s Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1967, [Nineteenth printing, 1991], 236).*

## 2. Lord Calls Joshua

Moses is no longer Israel’s prophet. Joshua has been called as her leader. As previously noted, the Lord had instructed Moses to call Joshua and to then present themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation (Deuteronomy 31:14-15). The Lord gives Joshua a “charge,” meaning that he is anointed to serve as his prophet and then receives instructions.

Deuteronomy 34:9

**9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.**

Moses lays his hands on Joshua, acting in behalf of the Lord, and conveys a blessing upon him. Following the death of Moses, the Lord speaks directly to Joshua and gives him the following direction.

Joshua 1:1-3

**1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying,  
2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.  
3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.**

Following these directions, Joshua, as the Lord’s anointed prophet, is to go forth and lead the Israelites into the Promised land. The Lord now gives Joshua special instructions and blessings.

Joshua 1:5-9

**5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.  
6 Be strong and of good courage:...  
7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.  
8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.  
9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.**

Here the Lord gives Joshua a formula for success as a prophet. These are the attributes he must refine: Be strong and not weak or vacillate as he carries out the Lord’s directions to the people; follow the law as given to Moses and do not deviate from it; study the law or read the scriptures and then follow them, and do not be afraid regardless of the obstacles you will face or how overwhelming the odds may be. In turn the Lord gives Joshua this reassurance: I will be with thee, whether so ever he is. I will strengthen you and guide you and never forsake you and you will prosper and have good success.

## 3. Rahab Helps the Spies

The first city on the other side of the Jordan River is Jericho. In preparation for the conquest of the land, Joshua sends spies. In our errand from the Lord, I believe, we are expected to do all we can to accomplish the Lord’s purposes. We must not sit back and expect the Lord to do his part without first doing all we can.

Joshua 2:1, 4

1 And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house named Rahab, and lodged there.  
4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them...

Incredulously, you might ask, was Rahab a harlot?

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual notes,

*"[I]t is now universally admitted by every sound Hebrew scholar that 'zonah,' [by which Rahab is called] means 'harlot,' and not 'hostess.' .... There were no inns; and when certain substitutes for inns subsequently came into use, they were never, in any Eastern country, kept by women. .... The house of such a woman was also the only one to which they, as perfect strangers, could have had access, and certainly the only one in which they could calculate on obtaining the information they required without danger from male inmates." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 236-237).*

It appears to me that whether Rahab was a "harlot," or "hostess," is less important than her actions and subsequent life. Let her actions speak for themselves.

Preceding her hiding the two men in her house, when the king of Jericho learns there are two men at Rahab's house, she denies the fact, and then sends the king's men another direction (see Joshua 1:2-3, 5).

After hiding them, she comes to them and tells them the word that has come to the city regarding the Israelites.

Joshua 2:9-11

9 And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.  
10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when you came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, ...whom ye utterly destroyed.  
11 And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

It seems to me that Rahab's heart has been softened, whatever her occupation, and she has been given a witness that these men are servants of the Lord and she is to assist them! Her only request is for the protection of her family.

Joshua 2:12-13

12 Now, therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:  
13 And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

Her request is granted.

Joshua 2:14

14 And the men answered her, Our life for yours, ... And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

Having received the promise for her family, she lets them down the wall and gives them instructions as to how to be protected from any who may pursue them. A sign is given to mark her home.

Joshua 2:18

18 Behold, when we come into the land, thou shall bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by:...

Both Rahab and the two spies have made an oath that her family will be spared during the battle of Jericho. This information is reported to Joshua.

Joshua 2:23

**23 So the two men returned,... and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befell them:**

Joshua received their report and honors their oath.

Joshua 6:25

**25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.**

Rahab [Rachab] will remain with the Israelites –“and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day” (Joshua 6:25).

The Bible Encyclopedia states

*She will marry a prince of Judea named “Salmon, [which] implies her previous conversion to Judaism” (Fallows, Bible Encyclopedia, s.v. “Rahab.” Vol. 3:1424; see also Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 237).*

If Rahab and Rachab are the same person, she will later become the mother of Booz (Matthew 1:5), which is part of the Jewish genealogy descending from Abraham to Jesus Christ. It is of importance to note that both Paul and James cite her as an example of faith (Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25), lending yet further support to her spiritual conversion.

Spangler and Syswerda observe,

*“Rahab’s story is a dramatic one. It shows us that God’s grace accepts no boundaries. The red cord that saved Rahab and her family reminds us of the red blood of Jesus, who still saves us today...Rahab put her faith in the God of Israel and was not disappointed.” (Women of the Bible. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1999, 102).*

What is most important in each of our lives, I believe, is not our beginning, but our striving to become more like Jesus Christ each day of our lives. Rahab certainly qualified for great blessings as she befriended the two spies and positively impacts the attitude of the Israelites regarding conquering Jericho. She was instrumental in saving the lives of her family as well as her own after the fall of Jericho and there is evidence that supports her uniting with the children of Israel, including accepting the principles of God’s covenant with Israel.

#### 4. Crossing Jordan

The crossing of the Jordan River, during flood stages, must have presented a daunting challenge to Israel’s faith. How would the population of Israel surmount this obstacle would be indicative of how they will meet future challenges. What was impossible for Israel, was possible for the Lord if they would just exercise their faith and followed His directions with exactness.

Joshua 3:5

**5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.**

Previously when the children of Israel were to sanctify themselves, they were, among other things, to “wash their clothes (Ex. 19:10).

The LDS Bible footnote (Joshua 3:5) states,

*“Make yourselves clean, holy, by ritual washings and proper behavior.” (Holy Bible. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1979, 311).*

The priests are to bear the ark of the covenant which is to go before the people.

Joshua 3:13, 15, 17

**13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.**

**15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,)**

**17 And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan,**

**and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until  
all the people were passed clean over Jordan.**

I can scarcely imagine the joy that must have come to the children of Israel as they watched the waters of the overflowing river being stopped in its forward movement. Surely they must have reflected upon the events their father's had told them of how the Red Sea had parted, at Moses command, and how they had passed over on dry ground. It had happened again, reaffirming for them, personally, that just as the Lord had been with their fathers, He was now with them!

Joshua had previously asked each tribe to select one man (Joshua 3:12). These twelve men were to gather from the river twelve stones.

Ellis T. Rasmussen states,

*"A monument was to be built of twelve stones taken from the riverbed where the priests bearing the ark had stood. In fact, a marker was built in the middle of the river where the priests had stood, but a monument was built at their night lodging place, so that future generations might be taught to trust in the Lord." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 196).*

What was the purpose of building the monument?

Joshua 4:6-7

**6 That this may be a sign among you, that when your  
children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What  
mean ye by these stones?  
7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan  
were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD;  
when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut  
off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the  
children of Israel for ever.**

Always the Lord is trying to teach Israel to "remember." To remember how merciful he is; how He is always with them regardless of the obstacles they might face; how they are weak, but He is strong and will fight their battles, if, they will only be obedient to His commandments and follow His prophet.

Once the children of Israel were safely across the river, Joshua commanded the priests.

Joshua 4:17-18

**17 ...Come ye up out of Jordan.  
18 And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the  
ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the  
midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were  
lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters Jordan  
returned unto their place,...**

Joshua, as one of the two remaining witnesses of the crossing of the Red sea, speaks further to the people regarding the memorial.

Joshua 4:23-24

**23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan  
from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD  
your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from  
before us, until we were gone over:  
24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand  
of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear  
[reverence] the LORD your God for ever.**

Once the children of Israel were on the other side, and the memorial had been dedicated, Joshua turned to an important ritual that had been neglected regarding the children who had been born— they had not been circumcised. It was important that sacred procedure be performed for it was symbolic of the covenant that God had made with Abraham (Geneses 17:10-11, 23-27).

You will remember Moses had told them during their forty years in the wilderness, that neither their clothes nor their shoes would wear out (see Deuteronomy 29:5). This, along with the manna they had received morning and evening with a double portion for the Sabbath, will end.

Joshua 5:12

**12 And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had  
eaten of the old corn of the land: neither had thy**



**children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.**

I share the following true story that brings the giving of manna and its discontinuance, as it were, to the present. It is told by Gerald Quinn.

*"I was raised in San Bernardino ... during the depression. I was taught a marvelous lesson in faith when I was about nine years old. We were living in what could best be described as a converted chicken coop. We owned a piece of ground that bordered a very busy highway. On one occasion our father called us together and said, "I have been impressed that we should spend a day fasting and praying to see if the Lord can't direct us in a path that will help us have enough money to build a home.*

*"...father had a job and all that job paid during the depression was enough for food and clothing for the family and that was all. At the end of this day of fasting, Bro. Quinn approached his children again. [Gerald Quinn at this point was about nine.] He said, "I have been impressed that if we will go out in front of our house on this busy street, that we'll be able to find enough change dropped from passing motorists to feed our family." And he said, "then I can take the money I get at work, buy the materials for the house and we can build the house ourselves." Sister Quinn was very supportive and she said, "if that's what you think is right, we'll do it."*

*"Gerald and his young sister were assigned the task of going out and searching the highway. The next morning they went out and spent about 45 minutes walking up and down this highway about 600 yards on either side of the house. They came back with \$.75 that they had found. Those of you that remember the depression, \$.75 was a lot of money. It bought food for the day. The next day they went out and did the same thing and brought back about \$1.23. This was in nickels, dimes, and pennies. [This went on for four years.] Every day they would come back with anywhere from \$.25 to \$1.50 in change.*

*"Bro. Quinn did exactly what he committed to the Lord he would do; took his money from work, bought the materials and they built a home. It was not a palatial place, but it was home. Bro. Quinn said, "I'll never forget the day we finished the home. We had a ceremonial burning of the chicken coop out back. Mom fixed a really neat meal and we all had just kind of a special day.*

*"He said, "the next day, because it had become our habit, my sister and I went out to the street to collect our "daily manna". We spent an hour and didn't find one penny. We came back to the house frantic, approached our mother and said, "Mother, there is no money out there today."*

*"Mom sat them down and taught them a powerful lesson and said, "You didn't expect there to be any money today, did you?" And Jerry, not really understanding this whole process, said, "well, it's been there for four years, why not today?" And then his gracious mother said, "Because we don't need it anymore. And there won't be any money anymore. The Lord provided that while we were building our home. Our home is completed. There won't be any money anymore."*

*"Jerry Quinn had to prove that. For the next three weeks he went out every day and never found another dime" [From an audio recording by Hyrum M. Smith, "A Testimony of the Principles of Faith," quoted in Ted Gibbons, Old Testament #18. [www.ldsliving.com/Sunday18.asp2002](http://www.ldsliving.com/Sunday18.asp2002)).*

It is striking to me that the same principle that was operative with the children of Israel, came into play in the life of Gerald Quinn's family. They were blessed in a miraculous manner during a time of need and it also ended when it was no longer required.

## **5. Battle at Jericho**

Prior to the battle at Jericho, Joshua had an extraordinary experience involving a heavenly visitor.

Joshua 5:13-15

**13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?**

**14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?**

**15 And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.**

The important information is that the heavenly visitor is a man who is seen holding a sword drawn ready for battle. Joshua is unsure if he has been sent to assist them in the coming battle or to hinder them. He states that he has come as the captain of the host of the Lord. Is the visitor an angel sent by the Lord as part of the Lord's promise to provide him assistance or is this the same pre-mortal Lord who appeared to Moses out of the burning bush (see Exodus 3:4-6). The striking similarity is that Moses was told "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is

holy ground" (Ex.3:5) which are the same instructions that Joshua received. While in Moses' experience, the visitor identifies himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, there would be no need for a full introduction for Joshua as it was Moses' initial experience with deity, his call to lead Israel out of bondage, while that is not case with Joshua. It is also noteworthy that following the visitor's introduction as the "captain of the host of the LORD, Joshua falls on his face to the earth to worship him and the visitor did not prevent him! (see Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9, where John is forbidden by an angel to worship him). If the visitor is the Lord himself it would have surely given Joshua further personal confirmation that the Lord would be with him during the pending battle for Jericho.

Adam Clarke states,

*"It has been a very general opinion, both among the ancients and moderns, that the person mentioned here was no other than the Lord Jesus in that form which, in the fullness of times, He was actually to assume for the redemption of man."* (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Barker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth printing, March 1991], 242).

If this particular division of the Bible into chapters is in error and chapter 5 were extended to include the first five verses of chapter 6, then the matter is resolved for in Joshua 6:2, the Lord is identified as speaking to Joshua.

Adam Clarke states his opinion regarding this matter,

*"There is scarcely a more unfortunate division of chapters in the whole Bible than that here. Through this very circumstance many persons have been puzzled to know what was intended by this extraordinary appearance, because they supposed that the whole business ends with the chapter, whereas it is continued in the succeeding one, the first verse of which is a mere parenthesis, simply relating the state of Jericho at the time that Joshua was favored by this encouraging vision."* (Adam Clarke Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth printing, 1991], 242-243).

The Lord, as captain of the hosts, gives Joshua specific instructions regarding the action of the Israelites for the pending destruction of Jericho. It is striking to me that later in history, Abijah, a righteous king in Judah who will go into battle against Jeroboam, refers to "God himself [who] is with us for [he is] our captain" (2 Chronicles 13:12), and "God smote Jeroboam and all Israel [who had become unrighteous] before Abijah and Judah" (2 Chronicles 13:15). In both instances, the Lord will serve as the military leader.

Joshua 6:2-5

**2 And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.**  
**3 And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.**  
**4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.**  
**5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.**

To anyone trained in the military, the plan to conquer Jericho must have seemed unusual at best. People marching around the city six times in silence with only the blast of ram horns and then on the seventh day, with the blast of the ram horns and the shout of the people, the walls of the city would collapse must have sounded preposterous just as it does to many today. What the doubters do not understand is this is not a usual battle nor is this military maneuver designed by a mere mortal. The head of Israel's army is the Lord Jehovah himself and His power and knowledge is so much greater than mortal men it even puts the experts to shame.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual reminds us,

*"The prevalence of the number seven in the Lord's dealing with Jericho's defense is significant. Throughout the law of Moses, seven, was used numerous times to signify the covenant. Its association with the covenant probably stems from the idea that "seven....is associated with completion, fulfillment, and perfection."* (J.D. Douglas. New Bible Dictionary, s.v. "number," 898).

*"By patterning the conquest of Jericho in sevens the Lord taught Israel that their success lay in the covenant with Jehovah; his perfect power brought conquest, not their own"* (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 238-239).

What position does the Ark of the Covenant occupy as the children of Israel march around the city?

Joshua 6:6-9

6 And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.

7 And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.

8 And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them.

9 And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rearward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

In other words, at the front of the people were the armed men, followed by the seven priests with the ram's horns and then the Ark of the Covenant.

What is the symbolic importance of the Ark of the Covenant?

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

*"...the ark of the covenant symbolized the presence of God in the tabernacle's Holy of Holies, so it symbolized his leadership of the armies of Israel as they carried it before them while they marched around the city.... This was not a mere mortal conflict: Canaan was to be destroyed by the very God of Israel. This truth was impressively taught to Israel by the presence of the ark." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 239).*

This was not going to be just any military encounter. This battle was going to be led and fought by the Lord himself, under His terms and by His direction to His prophet. Man did not design the battle of Jericho nor stand at the head of her army. This position was filled by the Lord Himself.

Joshua gives the final instructions by the Lord to the people regarding the inhabitants of the city and their animals.

Joshua 6:17-19

17 And the city shall be accursed [under a curse], even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD; only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18 And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

The children of Israel followed the directive of the Lord with exactness. The result of their obedience to the Lord's plan is recorded.

Joshua 6:20-21; 24-25

20 So the people shouted when the priest blew with the trumpets [on the seventh day]: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him and they took the city.

21 And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she



**dwelleth in Israel even unto this day;...**

The plan of the Lord was perfectly executed and the city and all her inhabitants, except Rahab and her father's household, and their animals were destroyed. It was important the city of Jericho be destroyed as the inhabitants had become wicked in spite of their having been warned of the Lord to repent. Jericho represented the gateway city to the land of Canaan and her fall put the other inhabitants on notice that the promises of the Lord would be fulfilled.

## **6. No Private Sins**

Following the victory at Jericho, Joshua began his campaign by focusing upon the city of Ai. He again sent spies to evaluate the strength of the city and they brought back the following report.

Joshua 7:3

**3 And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.**

Even though Joshua sent "about three thousand men," (Joshua 7:4), they were soundly defeated. The reaction of the children of Israel to the news of the defeat was that "the hearts of the people melted, and became as water" (Joshua 7:5). Not only did the defeat have a detrimental effect upon the moral of the people, it also had a stunning effect upon Joshua.

Joshua 7:6-8

**6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.**

**7 And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!**

**8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!**

Remember the Lord God is no respecter of His children. Each of His previous prophets had been tested in order to strengthen their personal faith in both His promises and in His power to fulfill them. It was now Joshua's turn to be taught not to doubt.

Joshua 7:10-12

**10 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?**

**11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.**

**12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.**

It seems that the Lord is saying to Joshua, and even to us, when things go wrong don't believe it is because I, the Lord, have broken my promise to you. Look within yourself and see if you have been diligent in keeping all my commandments. The reason for the defeat at Ai was that those who undertook the battle were disobedient and kept the spoils for themselves, contrary to my commandments. I will not be with Israel until the guilty are punished. The punishment is to be severe and immediate.

Joshua 7:15

**15 And it shall be that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly [foolish thing] in Israel.**

The guilty individual is identified and given the opportunity to confess his transgression.

Joshua 7:20-21; 24-26

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:

21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

24 And Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

How tragic the consequences when we fail to heed the directive of the Lord. Today the punishment would have been limited only to those who were found guilty of breaking the law. At this time in history, the breaking of a law also caused the same penalty to be applied to their family members. One might ask, why was it necessary for other members of the guilty family to also suffer death? Is it possible that some, if not all, were completely innocent? I don't know the answer, but I do know all Israel were aware of the penalty for transgressions and the immediate action that would follow the breaking of their covenants. I also believe punishment will follow our unrepentant transgressions beyond this life and there our final judgment will be governed by justice as well as by mercy.

## 7. Altar Mount Ebal

Moses had instructed Israel to go to mount Ebal and to build an altar of stones in remembrance of the covenants the children of Israel had made with the Lord (see Deuteronomy 27:1-8). Half the tribes were to go to mount Gerizim as representative of the blessings of the covenant and half were to ascend mount Ebal as representative of the cursings if they disobeyed the covenant. Following the directive of the Lord as given to the children of Israel through Moses, Joshua will implement the instructions.

Joshua 8:30-31; 34-35

30 Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal,

31 As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel... and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

The commandments that were given through Moses, the lawgiver, are implemented through Joshua. The instructions which the Lord had given to Moses, prior to Israel entering the land of Canaan, are precisely executed by Joshua. Joshua, like Moses, knows that one of the greatest problems that Israel, and many of us has, is remembering.

Spencer W. Kimball states,

*"When you look in the dictionary for the most important word, do you know what it is? It could be remember. Because... you have made covenants-you know what to do and you know how to do it-our greatest need is to remember."* ("Circles of Exaltation" in *The Charge to Religious Educators. Church Education System. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, 23, emphasis added*).

Moses had previously chosen these two mounts which, due to their height, are visible throughout most of Israel as visual reminders to Israel of both the blessings the Lord has for them if they are obedient, and the cursing they will receive if they are not obedient to the covenants they have made. Just as Moses read to Israel before his death

(translation) the law before they entered the Promised land, Joshua repeats the process while Israel is gathered on the specific mount. I trust Joshua believed that by renewing their covenants including the blessings and cursings, while on the actual mount that Moses had identified, would help them be obedient. These two mounts would serve as a daily reminder for them to choose the right when they were confronted with the temptations that would come upon them.

## 8. Traitors Become Slaves

Upon hearing of the success the Israelites were having both in the land of Canaan and prior to their entrance, the princes of four cities ["Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim"—Joshua 9:18] devised a plan in order to spare their people from destruction. In disguise, they would go to Joshua and make an oath of allegiance with them.

Joshua 9:8-9, 14-15

**8 And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? And from whence come ye?**

**9 And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt.**

**14 And the men too of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.**

**15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.**

Through deceit the princes were able to fool the people and the Israelites made an oath of peace with them. One might ask, why did the Lord let Joshua and the children of Israel enter into an oath with their enemies? Why didn't the Lord disclose unto Joshua who they were? Moses had warned them not to make covenants with the Canaanites (see Deuteronomy 7:2). One simple answer is they "asked not counsel...of the Lord." Israel must learn to rely on the Lord, and not act completely on their own, especially in matters of such importance as entering into an oath with strangers! The Lord accepted Joshua's decision to honor his oath and to exercise the option of entering into contract of peace with the inhabitants (see Deuteronomy 20:10-12). If they are willing to become Israel's tributary, the city need not be destroyed. In this instance, in spite of the original deceit, Joshua honored his oath, and did not destroy the city.

Joshua 9:20

**20 This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.**

While the residents of the city are spared destruction, there is a penalty for the deceit of their leaders.

Joshua 9:22-23, 27

**22 And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us?**

**23 Now therefore ye are cursed and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.**

**27 And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.**

Ellis T. Rasmussen observes,

*"Such subterfuge was not necessary; Gibeon could simply have accepted an overture of peace from Israel and become a 'tributary' to Israel, a status similar to what they negotiated (Deut. 20:10-12)." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 200).*

There are at least three lessons to be learned from this event. First, it is important, at all times, to be honest in your dealings with others. Second, if you will open communications with your adversary, you may learn there are other solutions than going to battle. Third, always counsel with the Lord regarding important decisions. Those we make on our own will not be successful and will work to our detriment.

## 9. Sun vs. Earth Stand Still

Before we address this unusual phenomenon, let us understand the events that preceded its occurrence. Joshua had entered into a agreement of peace with the city of Gibeon. When Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem heard of the

destruction of the cities of Jericho and Ai and had made peace with Gibeon, he was upset. He sent the following word to five other kings.

Joshua 10:4

**4 Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.**

When the leaders of Gibeon learned of the planned attack on their city, they sought help from Joshua.

Joshua 10:6-8

**6 And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp of Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.**

**7 So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.**

**8 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.**

It is important for us to understand when the Lord agrees to fight our battles, in His battles, we may expect, He will use all of His power in order to accomplish his righteous objectives. This may include intervention beyond that which we might otherwise anticipate. This was the case for the battle with the Amorites as the scriptures record two extraordinary events. The first was great stones falling from the heavens.

Joshua 10:10-11

**10 And the LORD discomfited [put to flight] them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makedah.**

**11 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.**

There are those who doubt the report of great stones being cast down from heaven, but they will recall the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by brimstone and fire being rained down from the LORD" (see Genesis 19:24). This manifestation by the Lord is followed by a second event that may be considered even more miraculous.

Joshua 10:12-14

**12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon**

**13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.**

**14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.**

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

*"The Book of Mormon makes it clear that it was the earth, not the sun, that was involved in Joshua's miracle ['Yea, if he say unto the earth-Thou shalt go back, that it lengthen out the day for many hours-it is done; And thus, according to his word the earth goeth back and it appeareth unto man that the sun standeth still; yea, and behold, this is so; for surely it is the earth that moveth and not the sun" (Helaman 12:13-14).]....So here we have the words of a Book of Mormon prophet confirming the fact that God can-and would, when necessary-cause that the earth should stop in its rotation to lengthen a day. And since on the occasion in question he was fighting to bring victory to Israel, this was one of his means of doing so." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 240).*

The Lord had stated he would fight Israel's battles. Those who were killed in the battle had reached a point in their unrighteousness that repentance or peace was no longer an option and they were destroyed just as the Lord had said would occur (see Joshua 11:19-20). It is important to note this was the Lord's battle and "there were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword" (Joshua 10:11).

As a brief note to those whose rational thinking is greater than their faith in the scriptures. Someday they too will come to know the truths as found in scriptures [the Old and New Testament], in spite of their seeming incredulous content, will someday be verified. May we both be patient until that future day.

## 10. Conquest of Northern Canaan

While Joshua conquered many cities under the direction of the Lord, not all cities were conquered.

Victor L. Ludlow notes,

*"At first reading, it appears that the Israelites easily and completely conquered Canaan under Joshua's leadership. However, more careful reading indicated that important cities and section of Canaan, especially in the west, were not immediately brought under Israelite control. The Israelites did not conquer Canaan-they settled in the area....note how the rolling hills and plains of the Philistines and Sharon, along with the strategic valley of Jezreel and its fortress cities of Megiddo and Beth-shan, remained unconquered...It was the responsibility of the generations of Israelites after Joshua to conquer these lands, but they failed to do so. (See Judges 2:20-23.)." (Unlocking the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 60).*

Why were not all the cities of Canaan conquered at this time? Two possible reasons come to mind for we know that the Lord had the power to destroy all the Canaanites, just as he destroyed the cities he did. Joshua had "waxed old and was stricken in age" (Joshua 22:1). He may have been unable to continue the battle and the Lord saw fit to end the conquest. Secondly, the weak link in God's relationship with man is always man. God is prepared to keep his covenants with Israel, however, Israel may not have been prepared to keep her covenants with God. A result of Israel, living side by side with her non-Israelite neighbors, she is not to adapt to their ways and, thereby, demonstrate unto the Lord their complete obedience to their covenants.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual notes,

*"The thirty-one Canaanite city-states destroyed by Joshua in his day were not all that the Lord intended to purge from Israel (see Numbers 23:4-5). Since men tend to adopt the values or habits of those with whom they associate, it was imperative that all idolatrous nations in Canaan be destroyed." (Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2nd Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 241).*

All the cities-states of Canaan were not conquered by Joshua.

Victor L. Ludlow states,

*"The Lord then preserved these [unconquered] areas and their Canaanite inhabitants from Israelite dominion for over two centuries, until they were finally subdued by David and Solomon..." (Unlocking the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981, 60).*

## 11. Caleb Receives Hebron

Caleb, the other faithful survivor from the Exodus from Egypt, did not receive the honor or responsibility of becoming Israel's prophet. He did, however, maintain a steadfast and immovable example to others. It is now time for the distribution of land to be given to the tribes. He will speak for the tribe of Judah.

Joshua 14:6, 9-14

**6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea.**  
**9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.**  
**10 ...and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.**  
**11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.**  
**12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and**



fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.

13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

14 Hebron, therefore became the inheritance of Caleb...unto this day, because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

Caleb is one of my heroes of the Old Testament. He was one of Israel's common, uncommon men. From the very beginning, we learn of his complete devotion to the Lord and how in the face of disagreement from others, he held firm to his convictions in spite of the seeming overwhelming fortification of the cities in Canaan and the strength of their warriors. He tried to convince the other ten leaders that regardless of the circumstances, the Lord would keep his promise to Israel and they could conquer the land. He and Joshua stood alone. It would take forty years before his faith in the Lord would become knowledge. He had remained faithful throughout his years and was blessed with health and strength to the extent that he, at age eighty-five, felt as strong as he had at age forty. What is even more important to me is that in spite of all he had experience during his life time, he continued to believe that, if the Lord was with him, he could overcome all obstacles and achieve his righteous desire. He "wholly followed the LORD God of Israel" (Joshua 14:14). He did not doubt the Lord.

In Map 4, note division of land among the tribes of Israel.



# The 12 Tribes of Israel

Map 4



(Reference: Cutting Edge Ministries, [www.cuttingedge.org](http://www.cuttingedge.org), <http://www.cuttingedge.org/newsletters/071605.html>)

## 12. Joshua's Final Addresses

Joshua served as Israel's prophet for many years. He is old and stricken in age. As noted he was not able to conquer all the lands in Canaan (see Joshua 13:1-6). The Lord directs him to divide the land amongst the tribes and they will, of necessity, have to settle in the area yet occupied by the Canaanites. This will present in the eyes of Joshua, several problems for the children of Israel. Joshua outlines these in his first of two farewell speeches to them.

### 12.1. First Address

First and foremost, Joshua wants Israel to understand the success they have experienced in conquering the lands of the Canaanites is due to Lord.

Joshua 23:3

**3 And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you.**

Their success in battle has not been due to either to Joshua or the military expertise of his leaders, the credit goes entirely to the Lord.

Joshua 23:6

**6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left.**

Do not deviate from your obedience to the law as given to Moses and renewed on mount Ebal (see Joshua 8:34-35).

Joshua 23:7-8

**7 That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, not cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:**

**8 But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.**

Your neighbors are idol worshippers. Their gods are made of wood and stone. They have no power. The Lord is real. He has watched over you and defeated your enemies. He has made promises and as you know has the power to keep them. Your responsibility is to cleave unto the Lord at all times.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary states,

*To cleave means "to adhere firmly and closely or loyally and unwaveringly." (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc., 1991, 247).*

Joshua admonished the children of Israel to be loyal to the Lord thy God and unwavering in their devotion and obedience to him.

Joshua 23:12-13

**12 ...if you do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you:**

**13 Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.**

Do not intermarry within your non-covenant neighbors. If you do, you will lose all the promises the Lord has for you and great will be your suffering.

Joshua 23:16

**16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.**

Do not violate the first commandment and serve the gods of the Canaanites. If you do the Lord's anger will turn against you and you will no longer enjoy his protection and guidance. Your enemies will be able to defeat you.

The Old Testament Institute Student Manual states,

*"Summary of topics of Joshua's first address:*

*"(1) [B]eware of social intercourse with your heathen neighbors..."*

“(2) [R]efrain from worshipping their false gods...

“(3) [A]void intermarriage with them...”

(Old Testament Institute Student Manual: Genesis-2 Samuel. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 241-242).

## 12.2. Second Address

Joshua reminds Israel land they possess was given to them as a gift from the Lord. They do not possess it as the reward of their labors.

Joshua 24:13

**13 And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which you planted not do ye eat.**

If you will continue to serve the Lord, He will be with you and bless you, but you must turn away from the idolatry your fathers practiced while in Egypt.

Joshua 23:14

**14 Now therefore fear [reverence] the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.**

Joshua now shares probably his own most familiar statement regarding his commitment to the Lord.

Joshua 23:15

**15 And if it seems evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**

There is no deviation in Joshua's allegiance to his Lord, nor that of his family. He is unequivocal in his declaration both to the children of Israel and to us.

Joshua will again address Israel's allegiance to the worship of the Lord.

Joshua 24:19-20

**19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot [not] serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.  
20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.**

Surely Joshua remembers the counsel he and Moses received before Moses death (translation) (see Deuteronomy 31:14-18), in which the Lord told his two prophets that Israel would go “whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land;” “And I will surely hide my face,” meaning that the Lord would turn away from them and would no longer protect them. Joshua wants, if possible, to impress upon them yet again the serious consequences they would face.

Joshua 24:21-22

**21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.  
22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.**

Joshua will now do three things to help Israel remember the covenant they have made this day to serve the Lord:

(1) He made a formal covenant with the people and “set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem” (Joshua 24:25).

Adam Clarke clarifies,

*“...a statute and an ordinance. He made a solemn and public act of the whole, which was signed and witnessed by himself and the people in the presence of Jehovah; and having done so, he wrote the words of the covenant in the book of the law of the God, probably in some part of the skin constituting the great roll, on which the laws of God*

were written....” (Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible. Abridged by Ralph Earl. Grand Rapids, Michigan.: Baker Book House, 1967, [Nineteenth printing, 1991], 263).

(2) The covenant of the people was written on the same roll where the laws of God were written, and,

(3) A stone was placed in a visible area that was to serve as a witness [reminder] of the covenant which had been made. Each of these three actions were taken by Joshua in order to assist the people to remember the witness and obligation they had taken upon themselves to walk uprightly before the Lord and to serve him only.

Joshua 24:29

**29 And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.**

Joshua had fulfilled his mission. He had brought the children of Israel across the Jordan River. He had implemented the conquering of many cities in Canaan under the direction of the Lord. He had divided the land upon the tribes of Israel. He had taught Israel the steps they must take in order to continue to have the guidance and direction of the Lord. He also warned them of the consequences that would follow if they disobeyed the Lord’s commandments. He had been faithful all the days of his life.

As a tribute to Joshua’s efforts, we learn that Israel was obedient.

Joshua 24:31

**31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.**

The LDS Bible Dictionary defines “elders”:

*“The term elders is used in various ways in the Bible. In many instances in the O.T. it has reference to the older men in a tribe, usually entrusted with the governmental affairs. Their age and experience made their counsel sought often.” (Elders. LDS Bible Dictionary in Holy Bible.. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1979, 662).*

How long was Israel obedient after Joshua’s death? The length is determined by the age of the “elders,” at the time of Joshua’s death. We know that they were older men, (age seventy or eighty years of age), and if they lived as long as Joshua then the approximate length would be thirty or forty years. Given the many manifestations of the Lord unto the children of Israel, it seems like a relatively short time of righteousness.

### **13. Conclusions**

I must admit Joshua also stands out as one of my heroes of the Old Testament. He was a common man, who through his undeviating obedience to the Lord, became uncommon. He served his tribe as a spokesman when one from his tribe was selected to go to Canaan and bring a report back to Israel’s leaders. Only he and Caleb, another hero, brought back a report that in spite of the challenges and obstacles that confronted them, with the help of the Lord, they would succeed. The other ten allowed their fear of the inhabitants of the land and their strength to squelch their faith. As a result, they were only two of those who left Egypt who physically entered the land that was to be the inheritance the Lord had previously promised to Abraham and his seed.

With Joshua now as Israel’s prophet, they passed over the river Jordan which was then at flood stage “on dry ground” (Joshua 3:17), repeating the miracle that had occurred when the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea (see Exodus 14:16). This experience, followed by the appearance of the pre-mortal Christ to Joshua (see Joshua 5:13-15), were events that had followed the exercise of Joshua’s faith in the Lord. They were a visual reminder to all that the Lord was with Joshua. Joshua, the common man, was very uncommon in the eyes of the Lord.

As we, like Joshua, face our challenges and adversity both today and tomorrow, it will also be our underlying trust in the Lord we have gained day after day that will enable us to also pass over “on dry ground” whatever obstacles we may face. Someday, we too will enter the Promised Land, beyond the grave, and there we will find true rest and peace. Until that day, let us go forward, strengthening our faith in the Lord, who I believe, will never fail us.